



Brian Casey

CLASS AND COMMUNITY
IN PROVINCIAL IRELAND,
1851–1914



Class and Community in Provincial
Ireland, 1851–1914

Brian Casey

Class and Community
in Provincial Ireland,
1851–1914

palgrave
macmillan

Brian Casey
University College Dublin
Dublin, Ireland

ISBN 978-3-319-71119-5 ISBN 978-3-319-71120-1 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71120-1>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018930260

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2018

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use. The publisher, the authors, and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover illustration: © Historical Images Archive / Alamy Stock Photo

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer International Publishing AG part of Springer Nature.
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

For Mam—thank you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Now that this book is completed, it is a pleasure to be finally able to thank all those who helped me in researching it and also in writing it. My first thanks goes to Terence Dooley, who was my PhD supervisor; I learned a great deal from him. Vincent Comerford had faith in me when I first started postgraduate research and I am grateful to him for that. Marian Lyons and Eugenio Biagini were insightful examiners and have encouraged my endeavours subsequently. The Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (now the Irish Research Council) awarded me a postgraduate scholarship and I thank them all for their generosity and belief in my abilities, even when I may have wavered on occasion.

My thanks to the Dublin Diocesan Archive, the Director of the National Archives of Ireland and the Director of the National Library of Ireland for allowing me to quote from their collections. Excerpts were taken from the Francis Tully Papers at the Jackie Clarke Collection, Ballina, County Mayo and the Egan/Mac Fhinn papers, James Hardiman Library Archives, NUI Galway, and a version of chapter 4 was published in *New Hibernia Review* Vol. 20, No. 1 (2016).

I have had the pleasure of calling upon the help, friendship, counsel and feedback of numerous colleagues, scholars, archivists and librarians. Thank you to Leanne Blaney, Cormac Begadon, Kate Breslin, Anne Bergin, Fergus Brady, Sarah-Anne Buckley, James Caffery, Ewen Cameron, Peter Connell, John Joe Conwell, Patrick Cosgrove, Virginia Crossman, Emer Croke, John Cunningham, Christy Cuniffe, Perry Curtis, Danny Cusack, Ian d'Alton, the wonderful Tom Desmond, Jim Donnelly, Antoinette Doran, Noelle Dowling, Mark Duncan, William Duncan,

Michael Dwyer, Lindsey Earner-Byrne, Mel Farrell, Diarmaid Ferriter, the late Caroline Gallagher, Jim Gilligan, Edel Golden, Brian Hanley, James Harte, Brian Heffernan, Helen Hewson, Eugene Hynes, Colette Jordan, Jimmy Kelly, Tim Keane, Brendan Kelly, Daire Keogh, Carla King, Marie Leoutre, Emma Lyons, Seamus MacGabhann, John McCafferty, Richard McElligott, Richard McMahon, Conor McNamara, Ita Mangan, Gerry Moran, Karol Mullaney-Dignam, Mahon Murphy, Yvonne Murphy, Conor Mulvagh, Thomas O'Connor, Daithi O Corrain, Colette O'Daly, Colette O'Flaherty, Sean O'Riain, Maria O'Shea, Jacinta Prunty, Ken Robinson, Marion Rogan, James S. Rogers, Paddy Sarsfield, Pauline Scott, Hanne Sheeran, Cathal Smith, William A. Smyth, Keith Snell, Matthew Stout, Chris Swift, Nora Thornton, Annie Tindley, Mark Wehrly and Nick Wolf. I also want to thank my aunt and uncle, Nancy and Seán Óg Hurley, for helping me with my questions about Dubarry shoes. The Benedictine Community at Glenstal Abbey provided me with the necessary solitude in one of their God Pods to get the final manuscript together. For those who helped and are not included, please accept my apologies and gratitude.

Ciara Breathnach, Mary Daly, Andrew Newby and Paul Rouse have all been very supportive of me. They have always been sage and honest in their comments and have helped me improve my skills as a historian. Kevin McKenna and Sean Lucey have been wonderful friends in my travails in the late nineteenth century and I thank them for their company over the years.

Friends have humoured, indulged and encouraged me, allowing me to escape the bubble, and some even hosted me on occasion. Particular thanks to Mike Burns, Michael Byrnes, Mike Caherly, Paul Clogher, Darren Cogavin, Pat Conroy, J.P. Cormican, Mike Cormican, Bernie Costello, Christy and Margaret Costello, Eilis Cusack, Eoin Deasy, the late Geraldine Dowling, Leanne Doyle, Marcella Fallon, Eoin Fenton, Ross Finn, Clement Flanagan, Pádraig Fleury, Lorraine Flynn, John Galvin, Alan Harney, Tony Harty, Darragh, Mairead and Sam Hurley, Eoin and Jenny Hurst, Declan Hynes, Sandra Jackson, the late Brendan Kearns, Tom Kehoe, Conor Kennedy, Bishop John Kirby, Bryan Lohan, Ian Lohan, Ciara Lynch, Sheila McCarthy, Stephen, Leanne, Maya and Arlo McDonald, Brendan McGrath, James Maher, Elaine and Elliott Mitchell, Eamonn, Cathy and Ava Mullins, Alex Nolan, Todd Pooser, John and Ann Sherry, Niall Sherry, Chrissie Tse, Carole Williams and the many, many others who have been good to me over the years. My former teachers in Ballinasloe, Patricia and Johnny Johnstone, Michael Lally and Joe

Molloy continue to inspire. Pat Bermingham helped me see the wood for the trees when I was really very lost. The week I was completing the manuscript, my friend Pat Cormican passed away in New York. He was the most decent person I have ever known and I will never forget his many kindnesses and constant words of encouragement.

Molly Beck at Palgrave has been an utter joy to work with. Her enthusiasm and positive energy were much appreciated, and Oliver Dyer has been a source of great help throughout the final, challenging stages. The National University of Ireland provided a grant-in-aid towards the cost of publication. Damian Mac Con Uladh compiled the index and commented on the text.

My extended family has always been a source of strength and support. My aunt Joan and cousin Suzanne have been great throughout the entire process. My immediate family continues to put up with me! Thank you Mike, Marie and Tommy, Kevin, Enda, Cecilie, Caoimhe and Yasmina. Finally, my mother Maureen has been my greatest supporter. While saying thank you is never going to be enough, I hope that by dedicating this book to her it will go some way. Thanks, Mam.

Ballinasloe
October 2017

Brian Casey

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
2	The Post-Famine Landscape, Estate Management and Agricultural Improvement in East Galway, 1851–1914	25
3	The Third Earl of Clancarty, Proselytism and Evangelicalism in Ballinasloe in the 1850s and 1860s	63
4	A Check on Deference: Electioneering, the Fenians and the Catholic Church—Galway, 1872 and Mayo, 1874	91
5	The Construction of a Proletarian Political Movement: The Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association, 1876–1879	129
6	The First Phase of the Land War and Beyond, 1879–1885	161
7	The Era of the Plan of Campaign, 1886–1891	199
8	<i>Plus ça change</i> : Continuity and Change in a Community, 1891–1914	229

9 Conclusion	255
Bibliography	269
Index	285

ABBREVIATIONS

CDB	Congested Districts Board
INL	Irish National League
IPP	Irish Parliamentary Party
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood
MP	Member of Parliament
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NLI	National Library of Ireland
PDA	Property Defence Association
RIC	Royal Irish Constabulary
UIL	United Irish League



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

I took a chance [with] the movement (the Land League), but I was rather inclined to think that so far from assisting in bringing about the independence of Ireland, that it would have the opposite effect; that when farmers would be emancipated and get their lands, such men would look on the boundary of their farms as the boundary of their country, because as a rule, farmers are very selfish men.¹

Matt Harris, MP for East Galway, 1889

A well-armed siege train set out from Portumna early in the morning on 26 August 1886 to evict Thomas Saunders from his thirty-four-acre farm at Drumeen, near Woodford. Woodford was the citadel for the Plan of Campaign, and the miserly Marquess of Clanricarde was provoking his tenants as he tried to get his rents at any cost. Such was the tension surrounding this particular eviction that twenty redcoats and 314 heavily armed policemen were involved, as the government was determined not to be humiliated by the locals.²

A crowd of 8000 people turned out to support Thomas Saunders in resisting this eviction. They became very animated by the arrival of the siege train. A large group barricaded themselves into the Saunders house and they were informed as to the progress of the eviction party; they were prepared to battle it out to the end. As soon as the party arrived, the crowd engaged in a ferocious fight to prevent the ‘emergency men’ and other members from taking ‘Saunders Fort’. As they began to charge at the house to gain control, those inside threw rocks, boiling water and even

beehives to repel the party. Following a ferocious battle, the house was surrounded by the authorities in the face of a hostile and angry crowd. Twenty-two inside the house were arrested and received harsh prison sentences for their actions in order to set an example. One, Thomas Larkin, subsequently died in Kilkenny prison and became a martyr for the people in the community, with 4000 people attending his funeral. Clanricarde's demands meant that each eviction was a pyrrhic victory as the cost in carrying them out was so high. The 'Battle of Saunders Fort' became a propaganda victory for the nationalist movement. The community in Woodford tried and failed to resist evictions; they were not assisted by the nationalist leaders who convinced them to be martyrs for the wider movement. This resulted in hundreds being forced to reside in League huts for years, even decades, after and the divisions following the Parnellite split saw the more middle-class elements of the movement assert their ideology over its direction.³

The story of Thomas Saunders is a story that is repeated across rural Ireland, in areas where the land agitation reordered Irish society. His story is unique unto itself only in particular details. Rural Ireland was remade in the experiences of ordinary people who lived on the land in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. But what was this remaking? And how can we grapple with the complexities of local conditions? While the experience of ordinary people is privileged throughout this work, this is a challenge to the haphazard nature of the archival record for the lower classes—that is, small farmers, labourers and town tenants. While they lived ordinary lives, their collective contribution to the changes that took place in provincial Ireland during this formative period was extraordinary. The nature of political movements, such as the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association, Land League, Irish National League and United Irish League, as well as lectures and provincial newspapers that provided educational outlets for them, were also vehicles for political change and agitation. They challenged the grip, which was interpreted as being almost feudal, that landlords could hold on local politics as they expected 'their inferiors to submit to their authority. Such an attitude ran counter to the democratic impulses of the time' and the 'continuing attachment to the importance of rank ran ill with the younger generation of countrymen in the 1880s and 1890s'.⁴ Like the Welsh rural poor explored by David Howell, the peasant of Eugen Weber's rural France, James Hunter's Highland Crofters or E.P. Thompson's English working class, the lower classes in Ireland have generally been written out of history. Consigned to statistical

fodder, the Irish rural poor have been quietly lost to posterity because they did not leave a paper trail, and what we know of them generally survives in testimony to various Special Commissions on poverty and the land question, and through speeches made on nationalist platforms and through the letters pages of local and national newspapers. Studies of them rely heavily on statistical data, inferences and generalisations. Social radicals like Michael Davitt and Matt Harris succeeded in creating an imagined community of small farmers which could only have been perpetuated if this sense of community was real. For people, the parish was their community; it was real, embedded in their social and economic reality and had strong emotional appeal. 'A strong feeling of local and parochial belonging existed over a very long period, and it declined slowly, and late, along with the civil and ecclesiastical parochial organisation that fostered it'.⁵ While the language of local political leaders at meetings and in letters to newspapers was heavily nuanced, their audience did not necessarily appreciate that and responded with violence on occasion. In relation to the Welsh poor, Howell rightly highlighted the challenge of trying to understand what their sentiments were and what grievances they actually had.⁶ This study faced similar challenges.

Through a re-examination of sources, along with a systematic interrogation and close reading of the local press, this book takes greater cognisance of the political engagement of this West of Ireland community in east Galway. By examining Ballinasloe—a large market town with a significant rural hinterland—it offers new insights into the shared experiences of class and identity formation. It explores the dynamics of rural proletarianisation in the West of Ireland through the prism of a community in flux in the town of Ballinasloe and its east Galway rural hinterland. It is true that historians cannot engage in participant observation of their subject matter, but 'advocates of an anthropologically informed approach...warn...that the cultural distance separating the historian from his/her "acting subject" is an even greater problem than the limitations of the sources'.⁷ The rural/urban chasm in historical endeavour is often presented as a polar rather than a symbiotic relationship; this can be traced to high political attitudes seeking to deal with either urban or rural problems separately. Cultural formations associated with popular liberalism were formed as its language extended to Ireland. While the West of Ireland was seen to be impervious to modernisation, the seeds of the Irish National Land League were sown in Ballinasloe through the prism of the Ballinasloe Tenant

Defence Association as the west became the citadel of the revolutionary change in rural Ireland in the late Victorian period.

The wide array of sources used gives a more textured picture to life in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ireland. Extensive engagement with local newspapers is critical in assessing the provincial experience as they give a fairly representative account of life in provincial Ireland at this time. The fact that they also reported on affairs beyond the confines of the locality ensured that residents of local communities could be informed of events beyond their immediate world, which was an important process in the modernisation of Irish society. In this context, modernisation refers to the social variables that contributed to social progress. Therefore, developments in education, literacy, communications, transport and political awareness amongst the lower classes all helped in the modernisation of rural Ireland in the time frame being examined. This gave western nationalism a more cosmopolitan hue as speeches that were reported had inflections of Enlightenment and Chartist thought. This painful march into modernisation was not a post-Famine or even an Irish phenomenon. Michael Huggins has previously explored such challenges in pre-Famine Roscommon and found that pre-Famine popular protest had a more complex and sophisticated set of beliefs, influences and objectives than had been understood previously. Liana Vardi has made similar arguments in her work on a village in northern France and Eugen Weber does similar in his sophisticated work on rural France.⁸

This study relies upon a wide array of parliamentary papers, newspapers, estate papers and diocesan archives which have been utilised to give as authentic a voice as possible to the lower classes. Estate papers are a rich resource but limited in the story that they can tell. While the voice of tenants can come through, deference to the landlord is obvious; this makes them useful for assessing the deferential dialectic, but they need to be approached with caution (this is explained in further detail below). Religious archives are rarely interrogated effectively as there is a lack of understanding of how and why certain records were created. Historians tend not to see the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland beyond the political acts that it was involved in and they ignore the fact that the Irish Catholic Church is a subset of a global church. Religious archives offer an indication as to the cultural attitudes of a particular period as the pastoral initiative of the clergy transcended the spiritual and entered the political and social world. By engaging with other sources—such as parliamentary papers, the Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers and police reports—

this book does offer a fresh perspective on the provincial experience that goes beyond socio-economic factors. While agriculture was the mainstay of the Irish economy, my interpretation of the sources presents the human stories behind the macro-economics. This work argues that the rural poor were not an inarticulate mass, but rather they were sophisticated and politically aware in their own right. With a few exceptions, their history has been largely neglected by scholars, and this book redresses this imbalance in historiography by deliberately focusing upon the rural poor's experiences in order to further develop our understanding of the complex class relations in provincial Ireland.⁹ Martyn Lyons has argued that writing and literacy served a range of essential functions during this period. Writers expressed themselves in pamphlets, letters to newspapers, threatening letters and petitions to the government, landlords and employers. Even the illiterate 'were writers with the help of intermediaries, and they were also part of the scribal culture of ordinary people'.¹⁰ They developed their own identity and interests which were expressed in a vigorous, democratic popular culture. This book provides a reconstruction of rural Irish social life and its complex class hierarchies, and contends that, in this formative era, the lower classes were self-aware and their respective identities as tenant farmer, labourer or grazier marked the limitations to their upward mobility.

The growth of local democracy expedited a shift in local power structures, and landlords were at a loss as to how this happened, resulting in an impotent response to the agitation. Landlords were often the centre of estate life and offered extensive employment to tenants, resulting in loyalty that fostered a sense of order which was interpreted as benevolence. In central New York, for example, the landholding system encouraged the persistence of paternalistic attitudes, and land was let as a reward for loyalty.¹¹ While class structures remained rigid because of tenants' sense of deference, they became more fluid as nationalists became increasingly confident, due to a more active participation in popular politics resulting from the democratic fervour that was capturing imaginations in Britain and Ireland. The approach taken here will allow for a recapturing of the nuances, ambiguities and contradictions of popular experience by examining the 'apparently irrational features of working class behaviour' as well as the rational, while accepting the varieties of ambiguity and the uneven survival of records to reconstruct the experience.¹²

In his examination of rural radicalism in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Norfolk, Alun Howkins presented how such radicalism

provided a basis for the Liberal and Labour electoral success that continued into the 1960s. He argued:

relationships between master and man on the farms of Norfolk in the period 1870–1925 were exploitative. This currently unfashionable notion means simply that in the pre-mechanised but capitalist agriculture, labour is the main source of value, and that the labourers were consistently underpaid for the production of that value...If we ignore the face of exploitation, the delicate balance of a deferential relationship is elevated to a permanent and harmonious reality.¹³

Building upon Howkins' argument, this study contends that the complexities of social relations in provincial Ireland are best understood through a study of this kind. It further posits that in the late nineteenth century, tenant farmers and labourers began to develop more sophisticated methods of social and cultural formation that were the result of improved literacy, communication and transport. While it concentrates primarily on the lower orders, the influence of landlords was all-pervasive and cannot be ignored. Therefore, the changing nature of social relations necessitates the assessment of the aristocracy from the perspectives of agrarian issues, class relations, denominationalism and proselytism within the wider West of Ireland milieu. In addition, it argues that the fall of aristocratic privilege must be read in the context of the rising Catholic and nationalist elites, while simultaneously examining the challenges presented to this community by the shifting axis of power/knowledge to tenant farmers and artisans. 'As with any relationship of inequality, the landlord-tenant type of relationship is likely to be an implicitly tense one in any society or any manifestation. In Ireland, the relationship appear[ed] tense by any European standard'.¹⁴ With the decline of aristocratic influence, middle-class elites sought to secure their respectability, which did not embrace the paternalistic endeavours of the landlord class—condescending as they could be. Nowhere was that more evident than in Victorian and Edwardian Ireland, where the urban poor suffered greatly because of the hubris of their new bourgeois overlords.¹⁵

The decline of aristocratic power in the late nineteenth century was a silent revolution that took place in Britain and Ireland. This revolution has generally been presented in terms of major movements. Recently, it has been reconceived as a fundamental change between the aristocracy, strong farmers, small farmers and other classes in provincial Ireland.¹⁶ However, these works have generally not captured the minutiae of the reformulation

of social relations. By using east Galway as a regional case study encompassing a sizeable market town and large agricultural tracts, the fundamental power dynamics of the urban/rural chasm will be assessed. During the course of the late nineteenth century the nature of elites evolved in the Irish countryside from a mostly Protestant aristocracy to a mostly Catholic middle class that adopted some of the affectations of respectability in order to reinforce the legitimacy of the social hierarchy as they saw it. They all embraced the concept of ‘community’ as an ideological gloss on their monopoly of power.¹⁷ They had a lot in common with landlords, whose influence waned at the twilight of the nineteenth century. They were now superordinate in the social hierarchy, so it was in their interests to ‘persuade those in subordinate positions to subscribe to the position which endorsed their own inferiority’.¹⁸ The Land War had succeeded in legitimating their authority in order to ‘maintain a set of values which confer status honour on those in dominant positions’.¹⁹

1 DEFERENCE AND NEW RELATIONSHIP FORMATION IN PROVINCIAL IRELAND

While deference can be seen to be the endorsement of a hierarchical class structure and a pattern of ingratiating behaviour, it can also be seen as part of a false consciousness amongst the lower classes. This study uses a framework formulated by Howard Newby to reassess how deference manifested and changed in Ireland. Central to Newby’s framework are the definition and critical components of deference, for example stability. Stability is at the heart of deference and it has the habit of stressing the superiority and legitimacy of a social hierarchy as elites are concerned with preserving their own traditions while offering a legitimation of power. Newby argued that deference can be calculative because some who behave deferentially wish to regard themselves as non-deferential. Newby has argued that behaviour *per se* cannot simply be regarded as deference and this presents problems in interpreting the meaning of the behaviour of various actors. Further to this, sporadic outbreaks of violence, anger and frustration that manifested through the Land War were too deep-seated to be aberrations. The lower classes were vociferous in their efforts to protect their own sense of self-respect.²⁰ Deferential interaction is generally embedded in a certain system of social interaction, rarely occurring within a social vacuum, and tensions in the deferential dialectic can be controlled by elite groups in order to assert their hegemony by employing a variety of techniques.²¹

The countryside played a vital role in the local economy of east Galway, with towns ‘pulsating to the rhythm of the agricultural season’; urban/rural tensions were a key measurement of social relations in provincial Ireland.²² Rural tenants were suspicious of urban centres, while town tenants were aggrieved that they were so dependent upon the supposedly insular and backward rustics for survival, and this mutual circumspection that frequently bordered on contempt will be examined.

This book unravels the intricate web of relationships that existed in rural Ireland while exploring the complexities of these social relations between 1851 and 1914. By paying attention to the lives of the lower classes in provincial Ireland, it will be possible to assess the various highs and lows of life that they faced while showing a level of sophistication that elites found inconvenient and threatening, and ‘all has provided a complex and disturbing picture of the multiple everyday ambiguities of ordinary, nonconformity’, as this kind of history requires a ‘complex reconstruction of a variety of independent lives and experiences’.²³ There are historians who ‘argue that ordinary human beings seldom understand and have little real power to alter the anonymous structures, forces and processes that determined their everyday lives’.²⁴ However, the power of public opinion manifested through the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association, Land League, Irish National League and United Irish League challenges this. How these mass movements produced a country of quasi-independent and individualistic tenant farmers is a great irony. In addition, this book examines how large processes were passively experienced in the small worlds of everyday existence, and the social practices of the subaltern classes take centre stage. It asks ‘social historians to examine working class cultures as well as social structures, popular experiences as well as political processes’.²⁵ It shows that the actors being examined, through challenging the nature of the deferential dialectic, began to refuse to accept assigned roles as passive objects of impersonal historical development and instead became active historical subjects. David Howell contends that Welsh landlords were culturally alien and therefore not ‘fit leaders of the changed Welsh Society’, with Mac Philib remarking that tenants were sometimes obliged to engage in elaborate forms of deference to landlords; folk memory comments on dire consequences if some did not doff their caps and bow before their landlord.²⁶ A generational attitudinal change that came about through increased literacy, confidence and politicisation brought this to an end and it was intensified because of the Land War. It is important to stress that conflicting ideas and actions are also explored

through the re-examination of sources and by drawing upon anthropological concepts while being aware of the cultural gap that separates the present from the past, a 'necessary correction to the cultural arrogance of historians who assume that their ways of knowing are superior to those of their subjects' or even scholars that came before them'.²⁷ Paul Rouse has observed: 'It is commonplace almost beyond parody for historians to justify their endeavours by railing at the previous (and always inexplicable) omission from the canon of Irish history of their latest project'.²⁸

This book draws upon a number of seemingly unconnected events through the prism of land, politics and religion, exploring the class relationships that existed in rural Ireland and applying E.P. Thompson's concept of class. Literature regarding Irish landlordism has heretofore focused upon the estate management policies, with attention being paid to the lives of landlords, their families and others involved in the operation of estates and the 'Big House', relegating the opinions and experiences of tenants that made up the estate to secondary importance. The burning resentment of these voiceless players in the Irish question needs now to be explored in its own right. As well as being neglected by historians, they were frequently marginalised in nationalist discourse, which imagined the Irish nation as one of strong and sturdy farmers, and this often forced them to engage in periods of localised violence against those above them in the rural class system.

The aloofness of landlords was partially due to their insipid response to the Land War and a belief that deference would spring eternal. Current literature rehabilitates the reputation of landlords after they were demonised by nationalists during the Land War, and it is correct to assert that many landlords were unfortunate recipients of belligerent treatment from formerly loyal tenants because of the actions of a few recalcitrant brethren. While evictions were legal, L.P. Curtis argues that the ethics of these events were highly dubious from policing and humanitarian perspectives. The political and cultural dynamics of land have been explored at length to the neglect of the experiences lived by the small farmers, labourers and town tenants. This book will argue that the actions of the rural working class and nationalists have not been fully understood, supporting Thompson's argument that 'their aspirations were valid in terms of their own experiences' and 'consciousness of class arises in the same way in different times and places, but never in just the same way'. Defining class and class relations in a theoretical framework to the neglect of the actual lived experiences causes our understanding to be severely shackled. Furthermore,

this book sheds light on the problem of paternalism. While paternalistic landlords frequently prevented tenants from falling into penury, ideological baggage prevented both landlords and politicians from properly tackling involuntary and structural poverty. The development of a public space through the provincial press helped politicise poverty during the 1870s, though this had been done by Quaker campaigners such as James Hack Tuke and also through the Congested Districts Board.²⁹ Landlord hostility appealed to rustic orators and the suggestion that landlords thought the lower classes were unable to absorb political arguments placed them in an invidious position on the eve of the Land War.

The growth of a wider popular liberal movement challenged aristocratic privilege through the prism of the Irish question as the extension of the franchise also saw a greater democratic movement now emerging in Britain. In Ireland, following the 1872 by-election in Galway and the elections in Mayo in 1874, the lower classes were no longer extraneous to the political process, and their actions also witnessed brief resistance to the overwhelming power wielded and exerted by the Catholic Church, with a shout of ‘Hurrah for Bismarck...Hurrah for Oliver Cromwell’ being uttered at an election meeting in the county in 1874.³⁰ The neo-Fenians of late Victorian Mayo and Galway were keen to construct an alternative sphere of political discourse, away from the malign and conservative influence of the landlord, clergy, shopkeeper and strong farmer. Rural classes adapted to the rapidly changing milieu stimulated by Gladstonian liberalism in Britain and this influenced popular political engagement in Ireland.

Also explored is the extent of intra-tenant conflict, which subtly bifurcated local society and saw the emergence of an avaricious element within the Catholic urban middle class as they sought to denigrate the poorest in their communities, partially as a response to a threatened increase in the striking of rates. This low-level class war was initially driven by anti-grazing rhetoric, which was quite strong and driven by grassroots leaders like Matt Harris, who was suspicious of the motives of graziers. He contended that they were a self-serving group that was interested only in arriving amongst the ranks of respectability with the declining aristocratic influence.

2 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

By taking an episodic approach in each chapter, this will allow for a greater understanding of the numerous challenges people faced as deference towards the aristocratic elite was challenged more forthrightly. The wider

British popular liberal challenge to privilege manifested itself through a virulent anti-landlord campaign in Ireland, and hostility towards aristocratic privilege was also witnessed in Britain. The seismic changes wrought by the ravages of the Great Famine, along with the facilitation of land purchase through the Encumbered Estates Courts, allowed for the more astute landowning families and business-orientated ‘new’ families to consolidate and increase their influence. Chapter 2 pays particular attention to aspects of the socio-economic conditions of the lower classes after the Famine and also focuses upon the estate management policies of landlords in east Galway, which were frequently disseminated through the auspices of the Ballinasloe Agricultural Society, agricultural instructors and pamphlets. The society’s operation was discussed at length in evidence given to the Devon Commission in the pages of the local press and the *Irish Farmers’ Gazette*. While the Devon Commission sat prior to the period being examined in this book, the evidence gathered paints a picture of the socio-economic conditions, improvements and management policies in the immediate post-Famine period.

The varying estate management policies amongst east Galway landlords also warrant assessment. Lords Clonbrock and Clancarty were hostile to the subdivision of holdings prior to the Famine and generally preferred estates of small farmers, while others such as Lords Ashtown, Clanricarde, Dunsandle and Allan Pollok were amenable to the highly profitable and labour-light grazing because it meant less risk for the landlord than subdivision, which could place an inordinate burden on landlords if the tenants were particularly poor. The fact that small farmers were cheek-by-jowl with graziers set the scene for significant animus towards these avaricious ‘shoneens’ who challenged traditional notions of sharing. The capitalistic nature of grazing challenged traditional notions of subsistence and is an example of the obstacles presented to the lower classes, who were grappling with various challenges presented to them, and it set the scene for further struggles in the late Victorian period, which are explored in later chapters. Fergus Campbell, whose work has also focused on east Galway, downplays the significance and extent of anti-grazier animus. This study challenges his assertions by pointing to the full extent of grazier farming in the region. While he cites Samuel Clark’s report of there being no anti-grazing sentiment expressed on Land League platforms, this book firmly challenges such contentions in subsequent chapters.³¹

Chapter 3 explores how provocative proselytism naturally attracted hostility in the region. While the most notorious examples of this took

place in Connemara during the Famine, embers still burned in a post-Famine revival, with aristocratic resistance to the Cullenisation of Ireland as Paul Cullen—archbishop of Armagh and subsequently cardinal archbishop of Dublin—implemented a series of changes to make the Irish Roman Catholic Church more ultramontane in its practices than before. Nuns were an important part of this counter-charge and the third Earl of Clancarty's hostility towards the Sisters of Mercy exacerbated tensions which, while generally class-based, were now taking on a confessional hue. He was chairman of the Ballinasloe Board of Guardians, and his refusal to let them enter the Ballinasloe workhouse threatened a breakdown of order that had previously been in place in the region. It was also a public manifestation of varying opinions amongst Protestant landlords, especially those who were not as unwavering in their religious zeal as Clancarty. The repeated attempts to have the Sisters of Mercy admitted between 1853 and 1863 symbolised open defiance against Clancarty and was the first serious threat to the total domination the Trench family had in local affairs in the post-Famine period. The previous ineffectiveness of the Catholic Church to adequately deal with the abject poverty, both temporal and spiritual, and a dearth of adequate educational facilities in the west ensured that the workhouse was ripe for a proselytising mission. The splenetic hostility of Archbishop John MacHale of Tuam to non-denominational education in the 1860s saw educational facilities in the west become stunted, and Bible schools were presented as a nefarious threat to the education of Catholics.³²

This chapter deals with four key events in Ballinasloe between 1851 and 1863 relating to Clancarty's proselytising activities, namely: provocative proselytism in Ballinasloe and its hinterland, souperism, educational provisions and the consequences of the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy in Ballinasloe for the control exerted by the family, as the third Earl's belligerent attitude towards their presence was a check on his control over affairs in the community.

Those engaged in the proselytising mission in the West of Ireland failed to fully understand the conditions in which these people were living. Attempts at forced conversions belied the sincerity of true evangelicals as this would be abhorrent to them. This is something not necessarily appreciated by historians, whose criticisms have often focused upon the Catholic response, condemning it for being unnecessarily hostile. Meanwhile, contemporaries and historians such as P.K. Egan—a Catholic priest—placed Lord Clancarty's evangelicalism into a simplistic confessional paradigm in

an effort to portray the Catholic poor as the victors in a struggle against an oppressive, bigoted landlord.³³ This trope was successfully deployed on future occasions in order to denigrate the Clancarty family in pursuance of a political agenda that was overtly Catholic.

Chapter 4 turns its attention to the 1872 by-election in Galway between Captain John Philip Nolan of Ballinderry, Tuam and Captain William le Poer Trench, third son of the third Earl of Clancarty. This became one of the most contentious by-election campaigns in late nineteenth-century Ireland and was the last before the Secret Ballot Act of 1872. The excessive influence of the Catholic clergy resulted in Judge William Keogh delivering a withering judgement and annulling the result, with the newly enthroned bishop of Clonfert, Patrick Duggan, and other clergy subsequently being returned for trial, accused of inciting violence. Such was the fallout from the judgement and subsequent trial that Gladstone feared it would start an imperial crisis. Nolan gave *de facto* recognition to tenant-right through the Portacarron award. The award followed clearances on his estate in 1864 and 1867 and the arrival of a grazier to farm 4000 acres outside Oughterard, west Galway. Nolan's expedience saw him become a more acceptable candidate to the clergy and this *volte-face* saw landlords form a superficial and doomed alliance behind Captain Trench. However, recently discovered correspondence between the first Marquess of Clanricarde and other Galway landlords showed that they always knew Trench's candidature was destined to failure because of his father's previous behaviour, and their desire was to limit the contagion that would spread from his candidature. This tranche of correspondence also reveals their hostility towards the lower classes' engagement in the political process as they saw that it presented a real threat to their power. Trench's tactical gamble of appealing the result worked in his favour as he took Nolan's seat after the result was annulled. The over-exuberance of the clergy angered Bishop John MacEvilly of Galway and formerly doctrinaire neo-Fenians who were beginning to flirt with constitutional politics. They started a rather short-lived and disjointed effort at a grassroots culture war against the institutional Catholic Church, which culminated in John O'Connor Power's election in Mayo in 1874 that reflected the popular will of the people, yet was in the face of clerical opposition. This chapter will show that Fenians had a greater appreciation of the democratic framework being constructed than had previously been thought, as the 1870s saw the debates on democracy that had taken place in the 1860s now being played out on the political stage in the regions. Fenians were hostile

to the forcefulness of the Catholic clergy in attempting to influence the result of the election and decide who could run for election. Members of O'Connor Power's election campaign team, such as Matt Harris and Michael Malachy O'Sullivan, had learned about the process of electioneering during the 1872 by-election in Galway and they formed an influential bloc that tried to stymie the hostility of the Catholic Church to the emergent democratic process.

Farmers clubs and tenant defence associations sprung up across the country from the 1860s as the lower classes became more politically engaged. Chapter 5 explores the aftermath of the failed 1867 rebellion as western Fenians begin to explore the merits of a constitutional movement that culminated in a series of New Departures. As part of this process of change, they were withering in their assessment of clerical interference in Galway in 1872 and Mayo in 1874, and this continued afterwards. These post-1867 Fenians were influenced by anti-clerical events in Europe, believing that religion could bind conservative forces together, reflecting Gambetta's maxim: 'Clericalism: there's the enemy'.³⁴ Fenians thought that the clergy were hostile to the burgeoning democratic framework as they tried to impose 'respectable' (ie middle-class) candidates for the electorate to mull over. The nascent small-town bourgeoisie saw politics as a means to gain respectability with associational benefits that could also be derived from political engagement. Along with other members of the 'challenging collectivity' of clergy and strong farmers, they wanted to challenge landlord dominance in local politics, with the local priest generally acting as final arbiter.³⁵

Despite the influence of the 'challenging collectivity' in local affairs, the establishment of the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association was an affront to notions of 'respectability' and its leaders had a greater understanding of the experience of the lower classes because they were of those classes and were firmly rooted in the communities in which they campaigned. Various attempts at courting popular support for progressive social reform were reported extensively in the local press. Increased literacy levels in post-Famine Ireland, along with the growth of the mass meeting and popular liberal sentiment, saw these ideas being diffused to a wider audience than was previously possible. The holding of meetings on market days or after mass, along with improved forms of transport, also aided in the development of class consciousness because politics now became more accessible and this shows that the lower classes were sophisticated in their own ways.

While Chartism had died as a movement in the 1840s, its legacy remained an integral part of the culture of certain communities and its influence lingered with the Great Reform Act of 1867 and the Secret Ballot Act of 1872. This reached a crescendo in the 1870s as Gladstonian liberalism saw the Grand Old Man appreciating the role the masses could play in challenging privilege. The proliferation of the provincial press and Fenian efforts to link the lower classes in Ireland together in a wider class struggle was an effort to encompass these classes in provincial Ireland into collective organisation, and it shows that the influence of Chartism transcended into political thought in the West of Ireland. The Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association attempted to organise farmers and foster a sense of class consciousness in order to challenge both the authority of landlords and the threat posed by graziers to small farmers. This chapter explores the influences surrounding the establishment of the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association and its attempts to organise farmers and foster a sense of class consciousness in order to challenge both the authority of landlords and the threat posed by graziers to small farmers and labourers in the district.

The lack of formal, tangible organisations akin to trade unions has led some historians to argue that there was no effective leadership outside of the clergy for tenant farmers.³⁶ Yet the existence of informal associations in small towns and villages produced a precocious leadership in waiting and E.P. Thompson has argued that having a locally based leadership could ensure support. While the lower classes were generally passive, efforts were made to organise them and educate them politically, and latent radicalism could be brought out in times of crisis.³⁷ The formalisation of protest was a form of social disciplining and the emergence of the Land League was the culmination of several years' growth in political engagement amongst the lower classes; this is the focus of Chapter 6. While Isaac Butt and Charles Stewart Parnell were advocating the cause of Home Rule, grassroots social radicals, attuned to the desperate conditions in the West of Ireland, had been advocating land reforms as the most pressing social and political concern. Parnell realised this in 1878 in Ballinasloe, and by the time of the Land League meeting in Westport in April 1879, 'land for the people' was the phrase that was most important for any aspiring member of parliament to embrace.

The precarious position of small farmers, due to their marginal holdings and lack of security, increased their vulnerability during the crisis that precipitated the Land War. Their indebtedness to landlords and shopkeepers

saw the Land War become a bitter conflict between two sets of creditors. Previously, localised agrarian violence tended to be sporadic and lacking in any direction or sophistication, and this was common in peasant communities across Europe. This ribbon-type activity was generally a response to breaches of unwritten laws and was a form of extra-legal jurisprudence. Violence is a good vehicle to explore social relations at a micro-level as the conflict between peasant and elite culture manifested itself through this activity. Popular, unofficial courts settled disputes, especially in more remote areas where judicial authority was not recognised by communities and the moral authority of the community and unwritten laws superseded the official law.³⁸ The Land War gave these unwritten laws a greater sophistication and focus, and the Land League tried to direct violence into peaceful protests and mass meetings. The success of this could be seen when the law of the league superseded the ordinary law in bringing stability to the countryside. While the dichotomy of oppressor and oppressed was a fundamental factor of Land War dynamics, a little-understood phenomenon was that of intra-tenant conflict, which can only be extrapolated effectively through a study of this nature. This chapter pays particular attention to this while juxtaposing it with anti-landlord rhetoric, as the Land League eventually failed to reflect/represent the needs of the poorest farmers. It will also explore the cracks that emerged in the nationalist movement as popular agitation for land grew, culminating in the bulwark of strong farmers and shopkeepers coming out on top, to the detriment of small farmers and labourers.

Chapter 7 explores how the challenge to landlord deference was reflective of a wider popular/radical liberal phenomenon within the union, as explored by Eugenio Biagini, Ewen Cameron, Patricia Lynch and Andrew Newby amongst others.³⁹ Modernisation brought notions of respectability, and democratic structures were slowly coming into place as a result of anti-landlordism, which was in essence anti-privilege. Landlords were of the opinion that nationalists vilified them indiscriminately, with the improver being as reprehensible as the evictor. While there is justification for them feeling unjustly maligned, they often did very little to counteract public perception and their withdrawal from public life was interpreted as hubris, which antagonised tenants further. Challenges to aristocratic privilege were part of a wider popular liberal movement following the Third Reform Act of 1884. The tantalising nature of popular political engagement saw increased plebeian participation in democratic institutions, while the small-town bourgeoisie began to desire the respectability once held by

their landed masters in local politics. Land legislation and declining deference resulted in the slow disintegration of estates in Ireland. This silent revolution of aristocratic decline presented landlords with a multiplicity of problems in controlling their remaining local interests as they became increasingly isolated. Because of tenant action, landlords became increasingly apathetic and this alienated them from even their most ardent defenders in the Conservative Party.

In east Galway, previously infrequent criticisms of Clancarty and Clonbrock became more regular, with hostility towards other landlords such as Ashtown, Clanricarde and Dunsandle becoming much more vocal and animated. Prior to the mid-1880s, deference towards landlords was reasonably solid, though there had been some sporadic challenges to it previously. Rather than trying to turn public opinion totally against them, nationalists concentrated their efforts on local government boards. This chapter explores all these issues while examining how the highly disturbed area of Loughrea did not affect the peace of its neighbouring district of Ballinasloe.

Chapter 8 explores the unravelling of the world in which the aristocracy lived in the West of Ireland, while juxtaposing that with the emerging dominance of new local elites and their reticence about assisting the poorest as they sought to augment their new-found positions of influence. The myriad forces at play in late Victorian Ireland saw the Irish National League emerge as a quasi-governmental force that regulated the countryside. Irish landlords were at a loss after the vigour of the Land War and the Plan of Campaign as they realised that they would not be playing a significant role in local government, especially after the chief secretary, Arthur Balfour, refused to enact legislation to protect minority interests because of his desire to abolish class distinctions. In Britain, David Cannadine contended that members of the British aristocracy were reticent about becoming involved in new forms of local democracy due to 'the financial anxieties of many landowners [which] meant that they were less inclined to shoulder these traditional responsibilities or to assume new ones, while the break-up of their estates before and after the First World War only accentuated this withdrawal from county politics and local leadership', and Irish landlords faced similar anxieties.⁴⁰ This was further compounded by the rise of the 'gombeen man', whom George Russell called a more avaricious individual than the landlord, especially considering the associational links the Catholic middle class built with the poor that were consolidated during the Land War. Historiography has suggested that landlords were

excluded from participating in local government by an almost atavistic nationalism, though they frequently dislocated themselves from their tenantry. This chapter also explores the emergence of trade union organisation amongst shop assistants, the contentious issue of housing and working-class representation on the Urban District Council, all issues that dominated on the eve of World War One.

NOTES

1. Evidence of Matt Harris, 16 July 1889, Parnell Commission, vol. 1, p. 179, Q. 94,630.
2. Brian Casey, 'The battle of Saunders' Fort', in *South East Galway Archaeological and Historical Society Newsletter* (Spring 2013).
3. For published and unpublished work on Woodford and the Saunders eviction, see Casey, 'The battle of Saunders' Fort'; L.P. Curtis, *The depiction of eviction in Ireland, 1845–1910*; Anne Finnegan, 'The land war in south-east Galway, 1879–1890' (MA thesis, NUI Galway, 1974); Thomas Feeney, 'The Woodford evictions' (MED thesis, NUI Galway, 1976) and Miriam Moffit, *The Clanricarde planters and land agitation in east Galway* (Dublin, 2011).
4. David W. Howell, 'The land question in nineteenth-century Wales, Ireland and Scotland: A comparative study', *Agricultural Historical Review* 61, no. 1 (2013), p. 90.
5. K.D.M. Snell, *Parish and belonging: Community, identity and welfare in England and Wales, 1700–1950* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 13–14.
6. David Howell, *The rural poor in eighteenth-century Wales* (Cardiff, 2000); James Hunter, *The making of the Crofting community* (Edinburgh, 1976, 2000, 2010); E.P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class* (London, 1963); Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The modernization of rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, 1976).
7. David F. Crew, 'Alltagsgeschichte: A new history from below', *Central European History* 22, no. 3/4 (1989), p. 397.
8. Michael Huggins, *Social conflict in pre-Famine Ireland: The case of county Roscommon* (Dublin, 2007); Liana Vardi, *The land and the loom: Peasants and profit in northern France, 1630–1800* (Durham, NC, 1993); Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*.
9. For some examples of discussions on class relations in Ireland, see: Paul Bew, *Land and the national question in Ireland, 1858–82* (London, 1980); idem, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland, 1890–1910* (Oxford, 1987); John W. Boyle, 'A marginal figure: The Irish rural labourer' in Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly Jr. (eds.), *Irish peasants: Violence and political unrest, 1780–1914* (Dublin, 1983), pp. 311–38; Fergus Campbell, *Land*

- and revolution: *Nationalist politics in the west of Ireland, 1891–1921* (Oxford, 2005); Maura Cronin, *Country, class or craft? The politicisation of the skilled artisan in nineteenth-century Cork* (Cork, 1994); John Cunningham, *Labour in the west of Ireland, working life and struggle, 1890–1914* (Belfast, 1995); L.P. Curtis Jr., ‘On class and class conflict in the Land War’ in *Irish Economic and Social History* viii (1981), pp. 86–94; David Fitzpatrick, ‘Class, family and rural unrest in nineteenth century Ireland’, in P.J. Drudy (ed.), *Ireland, land, politics and people* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 37–75; Brian Graham and Susan Hood, “Every creed and party”: Town tenant protest in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ireland’, *Journal of Historical Geography* xxiv, no. 2 (Apr. 1998), pp. 170–87; Donald Jordan, *Land and popular politics in Ireland: County Mayo from the Plantation to the Land War* (Cambridge, 1994); Fintan Lane, ‘Rural labourers, social change and politics in late nineteenth century Ireland’, in Fintan Lane and Donal Ó Drisceoil (eds.), *Politics and the Irish working class, 1830–1945* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 113–39; P.G. Lane, ‘Agricultural labourers and the land question’, in Carla King (ed.), *Famine, land and culture in Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 101–16; Gerard Moran, ‘The Land War, urban destitution and town tenant protest, 1879–1882’, *Saothar* 20 (1995), p. 17–32.
10. Martyn Lyons, *The writing culture of ordinary people in Europe, c. 1860–1920* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 1–2.
 11. Thomas Summerhill, *Harvest of dissent: Agrarianism in nineteenth-century New York* (Chicago, 2005), p. 173.
 12. Crew, ‘*Alltagsgeschichte*’, pp. 398, 406.
 13. Alun Howkins, *Poor labouring men: Rural radicalism in Norfolk, 1870–1923* (London, 1985), p. 15.
 14. Séamas Mac Philib, ‘The Irish landlord system in folk tradition: Impact and image’ (PhD thesis, Department of Irish Folklore, UCD, 1990), p. 2.
 15. For more, see David Dickson, *Dublin: The making of a capital* (Dublin, 2014); Mary E. Daly, *Dublin, the deposed capital: A social and economic history, 1860–1914* (Cork, 1984); Jacinta Prunty, *Dublin slums, 1800–1925: A study in urban geography* (Dublin, 1998) and Ruth McManus, *Dublin, 1910–1940: Shaping the city and suburbs* (Dublin, 2001).
 16. See Philip Bull, *Land, politics and nationalism: a study of the Irish land question* (Dublin, 1996); Campbell, *Land and revolution*; Samuel Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish War* (Princeton, 1979); Terence Dooley, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland. A study of Irish landed families 1860–1960* (Dublin, 2001); David Seth Jones, *Graziers, land reform and political conflict in Ireland* (Washington, DC, 1995).
 17. Howard Newby, ‘The deferential dialectic’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17, no. 2 (Apr. 1975), p. 158.

18. Howard Newby, *The deferential worker: A study of farm workers in East Anglia* (London, 1977), p. 48.
19. Newby, *The deferential worker*, p. 49.
20. Newby, 'The deferential dialectic', pp. 144–51.
21. Newby, 'The deferential dialectic', p. 150.
22. Kevin Whelan, 'Towns and village in Ireland: A socio-cultural perspective', *The Irish Review* 5 (1988), p. 36.
23. Crew, 'Alltagsgeschichte', pp. 402–3, 405.
24. Crew, 'Alltagsgeschichte', p. 396.
25. Crew, 'Alltagsgeschichte', p. 395.
26. Howell, 'The land question', p. 91; Mac Philib, 'The Irish landlord system', pp. 107–9.
27. Crew, 'Alltagsgeschichte', pp. 395–7.
28. Paul Rouse, *Ireland's own soil: Government and agriculture in Ireland, 1945 to 1965* (Dublin, 2000), p. xiii.
29. See Ciara Breathnach, *The congested districts boards of Ireland, 1891–1923* (Dublin, 2005); Gerard Moran, 'James Hack Tuke and his schemes for assisted emigration from the west of Ireland', *History Ireland* 21 (May/June 2013).
30. K.T. Hoppen, *Elections, politics and society in Ireland, 1832–1885* (Oxford, 1984), p. 242.
31. See Campbell, *Land and revolution*, conclusion.
32. See Maeve Mulryan-Moloney, *Nineteenth-century elementary education in the archdiocese of Tuam* (Dublin, 2001).
33. P.K. Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe: its history from the earliest time to the present century* (Galway, 1994), chapter 12.
34. Cit. in Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, p. 359.
35. On the 'challenging collectivity', see Samuel Clark, *Social origins of the Irish Land War* (Princeton, 1979), chapter 8.
36. R.V. Comerford, *The Fenians in context: Irish politics and society, 1848–82* (Dublin, 1998), W.L. Feingold, *The revolt of the tenantry: The transformation of local government in Ireland, 1872–1886* (Boston, 1984).
37. Thompson, *The making*, pp. 663, 669.
38. Stephen P. Frank, 'Popular justice, community and culture amongst the Russian peasantry, 1870–1900', in Ben Elko and Stephen P. Frank (eds.), *The world of the Russian peasant: Post-emancipation culture and society* (London, 1990), pp. 134–6.
39. Eugenio Biagini, *Liberty, retrenchment and reform. Popular liberalism in the age of Gladstone, 1860–1880* (Cambridge, 1992); idem, *British democracy and Irish nationalism, 1876–1906* (Cambridge, 2007); idem, *Citizenship and community. Liberals, radicals and collective identities in the*

British Isles, 1865–1931 (Cambridge, 1996); Ewen A. Cameron, *Land for the people? The British government and the Scottish Highlands, c.1880–1925* (East Linton, 1996); Patricia Lynch, *The Liberal party in rural England 1885–1910: Radicalism and community* (Oxford, 2003); Andrew G. Newby, *The life and times of Edward McHugh (1853–1915), Land reformer, trade unionist and labour activist* (New York, 2005); idem, *Ireland, radicalism and the Scottish Highlands, c.1870–1912* (Edinburgh, 2007).

40. David Cannadine, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy* (London, 1990), p. 139.

REFERENCES

OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

Parnell Commission, (1889).

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Bew, Paul, *Land and the national question in Ireland, 1858–82* (London, 1980).
 Bew, Paul, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland, 1890–1910* (Oxford, 1987).
 Biagini, Eugenio F., *Liberty, retrenchment and reform. Popular liberalism in the age of Gladstone, 1860–1880* (Cambridge, 1992).
 Biagini, Eugenio F. (ed.), *Citizenship and community. Liberals, radicals and collective identities in the British Isles, 1865–1931* (Cambridge, 1996).
 Biagini, Eugenio F., *British democracy and Irish nationalism, 1876–1906* (Cambridge, 2007).
 Boyle, John W., ‘A marginal figure: The Irish rural labourer’, in Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly Jr. (eds.), *Irish peasants: Violence and political unrest, 1780–1914* (Dublin, 1983), pp. 311–38.
 Breathnach, Ciara, *The congested districts boards of Ireland, 1891–1923* (Dublin, 2005).
 Bull, Philip, *Land, politics and nationalism: A study of the Irish land question* (Dublin, 1996).
 Campbell, Fergus, *Land and revolution: Nationalist politics in the west of Ireland, 1891–1921* (Oxford, 2005).
 Cameron, Ewen A., *Land for the people? The British government and the Scottish Highlands, c.1880–1925* (East Linton, 1996).
 Cannadine, David, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy* (London, 1990).
 Casey, Brian, ‘The battle of Saunders’ Fort’, in *South East Galway Archaeological and Historical Society Newsletter* (Spring 2013).

- Clark, Samuel, *Social origins of the Irish Land War* (Princeton, 1979).
- Comerford, R.V., *The Fenians in context: Irish politics and society, 1848–82* (Dublin, 1998).
- Crew, David F., ‘*Alltagsgeschichte: A new history from below*’, *Central European History* 22, no. 3/4 (1989), pp. 393–407.
- Cronin, Maura, *Country, class or craft? The politicisation of the skilled artisan in nineteenth-century Cork* (Cork, 1994).
- Cunningham, John, *Labour in the west of Ireland, working life and struggle, 1890–1914* (Belfast, 1995).
- Curtis, L.P. Jr., ‘On class and class conflict in the Land War’, *Irish Economic and Social History* viii (1981), pp. 86–94.
- Curtis, L.P., *The depiction of eviction in Ireland, 1845–1910* (Dublin, 2011).
- Daly, Mary E., *Dublin, the deposed capital: A social and economic history, 1860–1914* (Cork, 1984).
- Dickson, David, *Dublin: The making of a capital* (Dublin, 2014).
- Dooley, Terence, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland. A study of Irish landed families 1860–1960* (Dublin, 2001).
- Egan, P.K., *The parish of Ballinasloe: Its history from the earliest time to the present century* (Galway, 1994).
- Feeney, Thomas, ‘The Woodford evictions’ (MEd thesis, NUI Galway, 1976).
- Feingold, W.L., *The revolt of the tenantry: The transformation of local government in Ireland, 1872–1886* (Boston, 1984).
- Finnegan, Anne, ‘The land war in south-east Galway, 1879–1890’ (MA thesis, NUI Galway, 1974).
- Fitzpatrick, David, ‘Class, family and rural unrest in nineteenth century Ireland’, in P.J. Drudy (ed.), *Ireland, land, politics and people* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 37–75.
- Frank, Stephen P., ‘Popular justice, community and culture amongst the Russian peasantry, 1870–1900’, in Ben Elko and Stephen P. Frank (eds.), *The world of the Russian peasant: Post-emancipation culture and society* (London, 1990), pp. 134–6.
- Graham, Brian and Susan Hood, ‘“Every creed and party”: Town tenant protest in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ireland’, *Journal of Historical Geography* xxiv, no. 2 (Apr. 1998), pp. 170–87.
- Hoppen, K.T., *Elections, politics and society in Ireland, 1832–1885* (Oxford, 1984).
- Howell, David W., *The rural poor in eighteenth-century Wales* (Cardiff, 2000).
- Howell, David W., ‘The land question in nineteenth-century Wales, Ireland and Scotland: A comparative study’, *Agricultural Historical Review* 61, no. 1 (2013), pp. 83–110.
- Howkins, Alun, *Poor labouring men: Rural radicalism in Norfolk, 1870–1923* (London, 1985).

- Huggins, Michael, *Social conflict in pre-Famine Ireland: The case of county Roscommon* (Dublin, 2007).
- Hunter, James, *The making of the Crofting community* (Edinburgh, 1976, 2000, 2010).
- Jones, David Seth, *Graziers, land reform and political conflict in Ireland* (Washington, DC, 1995).
- Jordan, Donald, *Land and popular politics in Ireland: County Mayo from the Plantation to the Land War* (Cambridge, 1994).
- Lane, Fintan, 'Rural labourers, social change and politics in late nineteenth century Ireland', in Fintan Lane and Donal Ó Drisceoil (eds.), *Politics and the Irish working class, 1830–1945* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 113–39.
- Lane, P.G., 'Agricultural labourers and the land question', in Carla King (ed.), *Famine, land and culture in Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 101–16.
- Lynch, Patricia, *The Liberal party in rural England 1885–1910: Radicalism and community* (Oxford, 2003).
- Lyons, Martyn, *The writing culture of ordinary people in Europe, c. 1860–1920* (Cambridge, 2013).
- McManus, Ruth, *Dublin, 1910–1940: Shaping the city and suburbs* (Dublin, 2001).
- Mac Philib, Seamus, 'The Irish landlord system in folk tradition: Impact and image' (PhD thesis, UCD, 1990).
- Moffit, Miriam, *The Clanricarde planters and land agitation in east Galway* (Dublin, 2011).
- Moran, Gerard, 'The Land War, urban destitution and town tenant protest, 1879–1882', *Saothar* 20 (1995), pp. 17–32.
- Moran, Gerard, 'James Hack Tuke and his schemes for assisted emigration from the west of Ireland', *History Ireland* 21 (May/June 2013).
- Mulryan-Moloney, Maeve, *Nineteenth-century elementary education in the archdiocese of Tuam* (Dublin, 2001).
- Newby, Andrew G., *The life and times of Edward McHugh (1853–1915), Land reformer, trade unionist and labour activist* (New York, 2005).
- Newby, Andrew G., *Ireland, radicalism and the Scottish Highlands, c.1870–1912* (Edinburgh, 2007).
- Newby, Howard, 'The deferential dialectic', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17, no. 2 (Apr. 1975), pp. 139–64.
- Newby, Howard, *The deferential worker: A study of farm workers in East Anglia* (London, 1977).
- Prunty, Jacinta, *Dublin slums, 1800–1925: A study in urban geography* (Dublin, 1998).
- Rouse, Paul, *Ireland's own soil: Government and agriculture in Ireland, 1945 to 1965* (Dublin, 2000).
- Snell, K.D.M., *Parish and belonging: Community, identity and welfare in England and Wales, 1700–1950* (Cambridge, 2006).

- Summerhill, Thomas, *Harvest of dissent: Agrarianism in nineteenth-century New York* (Chicago, 2005).
- Thompson, E.P., *The making of the English working class* (London, 1963).
- Vardi, Liana, *The land and the loom: Peasants and profit in northern France, 1630–1800* (Durham, NC, 1993).
- Weber, Eugen, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The modernization of rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, 1976).
- Whelan, Kevin, 'Towns and village in Ireland: A socio-cultural perspective', *The Irish Review* 5 (1988), pp. 34–43.



CHAPTER 2

The Post-Famine Landscape, Estate Management and Agricultural Improvement in East Galway, 1851–1914

1 INTRODUCTION

It has pleased an all-wise Providence, through some mysterious agency, to deprive you of that article of food which has hitherto constituted your chief subsistence—the potato; and the present appearances do not by any means justify the expectation of its ultimate recovery.¹

The River Suck, the largest tributary of the River Shannon, rises in Castlerea, County Roscommon approximately 50 miles north of Ballinasloe, which is the largest and most significant town built on this river. The river divides the town into two unequal parts, with the larger section being located in County Galway.² Ballinasloe is located within the baronies of Clonmacnowen in Galway and Moycarn in Roscommon. While the population of the country was decimated by the Famine, the district of Ballinasloe did not see as severe a decline as other parts of Connaught, and the perspicacity of the third Earl of Clancarty played an important role in this regard. The 1841 census records 14,715 and 2888 persons as living in the Clonmacnowen and Moycarn baronies, and there was only a slight decline by the time of the 1851 census, with 13,614 persons accounted for in Clonmacnowen and 2205 in Moycarn. However, there was a serious collapse in the population of the Clonmacnowen barony between 1851 and 1861, with the number of people residing there falling to 9744, and by 1881 it stood at 7856 persons, with slight falls in population recorded thereafter.³ While Ballinasloe forms the nucleus of

this book, Loughrea and Portumna and their respective hinterlands are also discussed, as personalities, landlords, nationalists and priests were all inter-connected as the geographical idea of locality was challenged and an imagined community of farmers, shopkeepers and priests all conspired to oversee the demise of aristocratic privilege in this region. Portumna was described by Samuel Lewis as a market town on the River Shannon in the parish of Lickmolassy and in the barony of Longford. There, the Earl of Clanricarde reigned as landlord from his see at Portumna Castle. He was also the landlord of the town of Loughrea, on the shores of Lough Rea in the barony of Loughrea.⁴ The presence of Bishop Patrick Duggan, known as the ‘bishop of the Land War’, was a primary factor in influencing local popular political opinion from the 1870s, which was vicariously carried through his clergy, and this is a significant theme explored in subsequent chapters. The various forms of resistance indicate that the lower classes did not consent to dominance and were unwilling to passively embrace it, and some examples include a reticence to engage with the Ballinasloe Agricultural Society, converting religion or active political engagement that was the antithesis of their landlord’s political affiliation and view of how tenants could carry themselves. While modernisation brought challenges to the way of life of small farmers, it also brought new opportunities for them to resist domination.

The end of the Napoleonic wars saw new challenges facing Irish agriculture that reached a crescendo with the Famine. Inspid responses to subsistence crises were the norm in the pre-Famine period, though there were landlords who engaged in estate administration reform. They began to reorder their estates by ridding them of the ruinously negligent middleman system: ‘thus, out of the predicted and predictable Malthusian catastrophe of the late 1840s, at a terrible human cost, emerged a stronger agricultural economy and a reinvigorated system of estate administration’.⁵ The Great Famine removed weaker landlords, acting as a Darwinian agent, and those who survived could now present a stronger front; landlords who still had their estates felt optimistic, prosperous and strong.⁶ While most of the challenges presented to progressive proprietors were daunting, they were mostly surmountable and could prove highly profitable for those willing to undertake such investments.⁷ Land ownership structures also changed in east Galway with the arrival of Scottish planters and others buying up bankrupt estates and consolidating their influence and power in the countryside and towns, all in the name of progress. For example, Ballinlass, between Newbridge and Mountbellew,

saw cruel and unnecessary evictions take place during the Famine on Marcella Gerrard's estate, and Allan Pollok, known to be relatively benevolent around the Ballinasloe district, cleared his estate in Glinsk/Creggs, again in the north of the county, on the Galway/Roscommon border. These incidents lived on in social memory, yet it can appear that some historians try to play down the significance of eviction and the impact it had on the rural countryside, irrespective of its prevalence, and underplaying this has become a new orthodoxy that is the flip side to the nationalist orthodoxy a generation of historians were determined to challenge. Pauline Scott has challenged Barbara Solow's work as she did not count caretakers as having been evicted because they were readmitted following eviction, yet this was for only nine months and they had to clear arrears to be readmitted. Solow and others since have failed to acknowledge or understand the rather precarious and unsettled nature of caretaking. Impoverished tenants could not repay arrears as they struggled to survive on marginal holdings, though it is probable that others refused to pay anything at all and the return of a diligent and prudent landlord following a generation of a careless one could be antagonistic. The third Earl of Leitrim, who assumed the moniker 'Wicked Earl', was the most extreme example prior to the Land War.⁸ His successor to this ignoble title was the miserly second Marquess of Clanricarde, disparaged in the nationalist press as 'The Most Noble' or 'Clan-rack-rent'.

In Scotland, Highland landowners came to dominate the countryside as they brought an end to the quasi-collective economy of the Highland peasant world. Eric Richards commented that 'the backwardness of the peasantry has been standard wisdom since at least the time of Adam Smith'.⁹ Similar ideas to those in the Highlands were infused in the Irish countryside as estate improvement could the displacement of large numbers of insolvent tenants. Evictions that took place during the Famine were still within living memory by the time of the Land War, and nationalists successfully exploited this for propaganda purposes. This placed landlords in a quandary and James S. Donnelly asked rhetorically: 'does one excoriate the improving landlord for callous insensitivity to human suffering or applaud him for his enlightened economic rationality? Or does one both condemn and praise him?'¹⁰ The quality of the estate management policies of the Ashtown, Clancarty, Clanricarde, Dunsandle and Pollok estates in east Galway was progressive, but there were smaller landlords who disappeared as a result of the Famine because they were ineffectual or indifferent or had large swathes of impoverished tenants.

This chapter pays particular attention to the socio-economic condition and management policies implemented around the vicinity of Ballinasloe in the aftermath of the Famine until the eve of World War One. This is done through the prism of the Ballinasloe Agricultural Society, established by the third Earl of Clancarty, principal landlord of Ballinasloe. The society was a forum to disseminate new techniques and practices that were reported upon in the local press and also in national publications like the *Irish Farmers' Gazette*. The scope of its operations was also discussed at length in evidence given to the Devon Commission. While the commission sat prior to the period being examined in this work, the evidence presented gives an indication of the socio-economic condition of the region, improvements and the management policies of various landed families and others interested in agricultural improvement.

2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Reflective of the decline of the middleman system, or perhaps because of landlord insouciance towards it, the Clancarty family and other landlords in the area did not allow their tenants to sublet and there were very few cottier tenants. P.K. Egan noted: 'up to 1834, consolidation of holdings and evictions for the purpose [of consolidation] had not taken place in Ballinasloe parish, nor is there evidence of such in the remaining years of the decade'.¹¹ This post-Famine shift towards grazing in east Galway was not embraced by the third Earl of Clancarty because he did not think it could be feasible without a large capital outlay. His preservation of small farms was appreciated in the district, with sycophantic utterings frequent at the annual society dinner.¹²

As well as huge levels of death and emigration, the Famine also saw a significant transformation of the physical landscape. The rundale system, cottiers and middlemen effectively disappeared and what arrived was a new kind of landlord who purchased their estates in the Encumbered Estates Court, which facilitated the sale of bankrupt estates. The hope surrounding the court was that new capital would be injected into Irish agriculture, as the lack of capital investment was a critical conclusion of the report of the Devon Commission. Existing landlords also purchased land in an effort to expand their existing estates. For example, the third Earl of Clancarty purchased an estate in Kellysgrove, near to his seat in Garbally, for £11,000 in 1850. It is unclear which estate he purchased, but what is evident is that it was heavily encumbered, resulting in him clearing its

tenants and paying for their passage to America. Furthermore, he bought an estate in Fairfield, outside Eyrecourt, but attempted to have this sale reversed after he discovered that many of the tenants there were tied into perpetual leases, which was a reflection of his policy of having an estate of tenants-at-will, with the exception of urban tenancies, which is discussed below.¹³

Evictions were carried out for a variety of reasons and one was to restore order on an estate. Few evictions were carried out in Ballinasloe throughout the period examined in this book, though they became much more noticeable and evocative during the Land War. Neighbouring districts, especially Loughrea and Portumna, became notorious for the number of evictions taking place, with Loughrea being called ‘that den of infamy’ by police during the Land War.¹⁴ One example of this was reported in the *Western Star* on 25 January 1851, which focused on the rare event of twenty evictions taking place on the Clancarty estate: ‘there was a want of merciful consideration, of Christian forbearance, in forcibly breaking the houses over their heads, in the most inclement, the severest week we have had since the winter season commenced, but they should have submitted’.¹⁵ These evictions were carried out in response to tenants who resisted paying the rents demanded of them. Clancarty was eager to portray himself as a fair and reasonable landlord, but the actions of these tenants challenged his paternalistic authority and he responded accordingly. He was willing to negotiate with tenants on an individual basis, but if his control over the estate was threatened he was not afraid to use his power as landlord to assert his position in the social hierarchy.

Tenants were not allowed to fall into arrears on the estate. The ‘hanging gale’ was a common form of control on estates and was carried out at an earlier period in the estate’s management. The third Earl was willing to come to an arrangement with those who were struggling to pay rent and allow them to pay it over time. Most tenants were tenants-at-will, because he thought that they would be more likely to carry out improvements than those tied into a lease. However, an exception to this was in relation to leases in Townparks, which were held in perpetuity on the estate. This had the advantage of encouraging the construction of good-quality tenements in the town.¹⁶

That Ireland was primarily a rural country is axiomatic. The construction of towns and villages in Ireland was not a process of urbanisation; rather it was a scheme of landlord improvement that turned these centres into focal points for trade. In her examination of estate policies in

Strokestown, County Roscommon, Susan Hood argued that the policy of giving long leases in urban areas ensured that leaseholders gained considerable freedoms, though landlords saw a diminution in their authority as tenants began to obtain a certain degree of autonomy. Despite the anxiety of losing power, landlords benefited from such arrangements because the physical and infrastructural condition of the estate town improved. Markets benefited the tenants through trade and the landlords through the tolls collected.¹⁷ Hood further contended that:

The social hierarchy and mutual interests which existed between the various elements of society...provides a useful framework into which the relationship between landowners and their urban tenantry can be placed. By creating such physical improvement to the landscape as the establishment of infrastructural improvement of an urban settlement on their estates, landlords not only insured their own economic, political and social interests, but brought benefits to others too...By means of favourable leases many landowners attracted reliable tenants such as merchants or skilled workers to participate in the improvement of existing or recently established towns and villages.¹⁸

Landlords were never keen to implement rent reductions, and by the 1870s landlords such as the fourth Earl of Clancarty acknowledged that there were numerous uneconomic holdings in the country but did not think a reduction in rent was the correct solution. Neither he nor his agent, Edward Fowler, objected to farmers' engaging in tillage because the quality of land in the district was so poor due to a lack of drainage.¹⁹ This is an interesting juxtaposition with other landlords in the area who were accused of turning arable land into 'sheep walks', though this was not unique to Ireland, with contemporary observers in the Highlands of Scotland and Norfolk, England also commenting upon this worrying trend for small farmers.²⁰

The issue of the drainage of the River Suck was a long-running affair that appears never to have been adequately resolved. The third Earl of Clancarty wrote to Lord Abercorn, the lord lieutenant of Ireland, in 1867, expressing his desire that the Rivers Suck and Shannon be drained under one programme and asking that the Suck be included as part of an arterial drainage scheme for the Shannon region. However, this was to no avail.²¹ Landowners along the rivers had varied attitudes towards the benefits of drainage. The O'Connor Don of Roscommon was in favour of it and was

keenly involved in various efforts, but they were never effective. This is but one example of the limited effectiveness of private enterprise in becoming involved in extensive infrastructural investment.

Landlords embraced the idea of 'order' prior to the Famine and used this concept, which had a Christian hue to it, throughout to improve estate towns as well as the rural hinterland. This Christian outlook was also a form of social control, and paternalistic landlords sincerely believed that they were benevolent in their actions and succeeded in giving this system of management a rather benign face. Examples of paternalistic endeavours included investing in the widening of streets, the cleaning of dung heaps, the paving of footpaths and the improvement of housing. These were carried out in Ballinasloe at the behest of the second Earl of Clancarty's agent and brother, Charles le Poer Trench, who was also archdeacon of Ardagh and an active proselytiser: 'he neglected his ordinary duty to his Protestant flock to become, after the Evangelical enthusiasm had taken hold of him, a scourge to the poor tenantry and workers on the estate of his brother, the earl, and fomentor of much religious bitterness about Ballinasloe'. He was succeeded as agent by his brother, Rear-Admiral William Le Poer Trench.²² Archdeacon Trench, known as the 'flogging parson', frequently threatened to call in the 'hanging gale' against tenants in order to force them to send their children to the Bible schools that began to emerge on the estate from 1818.²³ While the hanging gale was often constructed as an example of landlord benevolence, in reality it was a form of control and an effort to instil order on the estate. Breaching estate rules would see it called in at a time when a tenant might not have the resources to pay.

The general condition of the poor in the Ballinasloe district remained stable and did not deteriorate between 1815 and the eve of the Famine: 'there are no details of the condition of the poorer classes in the town [of Ballinasloe], who must have formed a majority, but it can be taken that their condition was somewhat less precarious than that of a large part of the rural population', which serves as a useful explanation as to why there was a large migration from the rural hinterland to the town.²⁴ P.K. Egan further stated that the urban population of the Clancarty estate doubled between 1821 and 1831 as a result of the proliferation of small industries in the town at this time.²⁵

The third and fourth Earls of Clancarty had a keen interest in improving inadequate housing, in particular third- and fourth-class housing. An undated pre-Famine poster in the Bellew papers illustrates such interest

Table 2.1 Prizes offered for the neatest habitation in the four different classes of houses

Class	Neatest habitation		
	Prize		
	£	s.	d.
1	4	11	0
2	3	3	3
3	2	2	6
4	1	1	9

demonstrated by the Clancarty family in encouraging their tenants to keep their houses in good order (see Table 2.1).

The qualifications to enter for any of the above classes of premiums are: an [sic] house with a chimney regularly built and drawing well. A paved or gravelled space before the door. Six feet by eight feet the house whitewashed inside and outside once (at least) with the year. The dunghill to the rear of the house, and six feet from the wall there of. A window to each room to open with a hinge or sash. An outhouse for pigs or cows if either in possession of claimant.²⁶

The evidence presented above indicates that the most substantial estate management policies took place prior to the Famine, which paralleled improvements that were taking place in other estate towns, such as Strokestown. Despite such conscientious endeavours to improve housing on the estate, the third Earl of Clancarty expressed his dismay at the condition of cabins in Ballinasloe in 1852 and the failure of tenants to maintain them properly. His efforts to effect order on the estate amongst what he perceived to be an ignorant peasantry left him exasperated. Yet he failed to understand that subsistence rather than capitalisation of their farms was what dominated their world view:

after repeated remonstrations to some of my poorer neighbours at the condition of their dwellings, and promises on their part that all should be clean on the next occasion, I have found that the dirt continued as bad as ever, in fact whether as a habit or as a substance, it (dirt) sticks to the person.²⁷

Housing was essential to the fabric of an estate. Neat and well-constructed housing not only ensured that the poorest were content and less likely to

engage in episodic violence, it was also indicative of order on the estate. This idea was something appreciated by contemporaries, and historians have paid particular attention to this in large urban centres. However, the sheer destitution and condition of hovels in the countryside saw further efforts at improving the condition of small farmers and labourers through the construction of good-quality housing, though this was generally a failure. In 1866 Lord Dunlo had designs drawn up for improved labourers' cottages in Deerpark, resulting in him being awarded a gold medal from the Royal Agricultural Society. The cost of constructing these four cottages came to £278 17s. 8d.²⁸ There was a desire to expand the Artisan Dwelling Act of 1875 that allowed urban local authorities to demolish unsanitary dwellings and provide for their replacement to tackle the acute problem of rural housing. Similar problems were being experienced in rural Britain, but there was a great determination on the part of the Irish Parliamentary Party to win landless labourers over to constitutional nationalism. Yet some landlords were hostile to any form of state intervention but were frequently found wanting in providing such housing on their estates.²⁹

It is important to stress that labourer cottages were generally the preserve of the deserving poor in an area as labourers did have ready access to farmland and they came with gardens. Jeremy Burchardt has shown how allotments were interpreted by some landlords as being a key factor in preserving rural calm in England.³⁰ However, in Ireland there was some hostility amongst smaller farmers towards giving labourers gardens as there was a belief that they would then put less effort into their main jobs, and this would breed laziness and give an illusion of economic independence. The challenge, according to Jonathan Bell and Mervyn Watson, was to temper unrealistic expectations of material improvement and social advancement. Some members of the farming community were anxious that labourers would not try to rise above their station once they gained access to a garden or allotment, as some called themselves farmers because of the status attached to such a title.³¹

Prior to the Famine, the agent on the Clonbrock estate, Thomas Bermingham, wrote the *Social state of Great Britain and Ireland* in 1835. He discussed efforts made by Clonbrock at improvements, such as the colony at Castlesampson, approximately ten miles outside of Ballinasloe, near the parish of Taughmaconnell, County Roscommon. He criticised the general condition of labourers, arguing that both landlords and Poor Law guardians were ignoring their plight and the lack of active utilisation of wastelands was the tip of a large-scale humanitarian crisis in the making, as

the poorest did not have adequate access to land, which was supported by the Devon Commission on the eve of the Famine.³² The post-Famine prosperity did not trickle down; the utterly destitute remained and were only one bad harvest away from being in serious trouble. Prosperity in post-Famine rural Ireland saw increased consumption of luxury items such as tea and tobacco and ‘the growing number of retail shops in towns was indicative of the increased spending power of rural society’.³³ Towns were now becoming distinct entities in the rural landscape as the primacy of agriculture was facilitated by the presence of an urban settlement nearby, and they ‘developed distinctive administrative, commercial and social functions, features that set them apart from their surrounding rural hinterlands’.³⁴

3 THE BALLINASLOE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY AND ITS ROLE IN THE AGRICULTURAL IMPROVEMENT OF SMALL FARMERS

Agricultural societies began to emerge in Ireland from 1731 with the establishment of the Dublin Society, which subsequently became the Royal Dublin Society. Other societies were later established in Antrim, Kildare and Louth, which grew in tandem with national organisations, and they were local representations of the level of interest that was being developed in efforts to effect beneficial improvement in agricultural practices in Ireland, which became particularly obvious following the Famine. The Farming Society of Ireland was established in Ballinasloe in 1800 and became incorporated in 1815. It received an annual grant of £5000, but it is unclear where this money came from, possibly the Royal Dublin Society. The Farming Society of Ireland received this award on an annual basis until it became defunct in 1828.³⁵

The potential of agricultural organisations to alleviate the condition of the poorest through the promotion of advanced agricultural practice was great. On the eve of the Famine, a Wexford agricultural writer, Reverend William Hickey, argued that these societies were vital for the improvement of farm husbandry. Thomas Baldwin was sceptical about the level of support they attracted, contending that they failed in their efforts to ‘reach the numerous class of small farmers to whom this system (prize giving) is addressed’.³⁶ Their effectiveness was limited through the dislocation between what they thought farmers should do and what could actually be done, and they were part of an overall failure to adequately respond to the overwhelming crises in the Famine.

The third Earl of Clancarty was an enthusiastic apostle of agricultural reform, as evidenced by the establishment of the Ballinasloe Agricultural Society in 1841, which was the product of his 'earnest desire to improve the farming of the small occupiers around, by providing rewards to stimulate industry'.³⁷ He made a conspicuous effort to use the society as a tool to improve the condition of farmers within the vicinity of his estate. A local farmer, Laurence Egan, testified to the Devon Commission in 1843 that he was grateful to the society for the assistance it provided him, because prior to its existence he was a farmer in name only.³⁸ Clancarty and his neighbour Lord Clonbrock were zealous improvers, with Clonbrock's agent, Thomas Bermingham, making a radical interpretation of how to improve the condition of the labouring poor and small farmers. It is likely that this influenced the Ballinasloe Agricultural Society's outlook.³⁹ Its primary objective was to improve the condition of the more vulnerable farmers in the region: 'under the society's regulations, all rewards of money premiums have been confined exclusively to the humbler classes of the rural population...The special regard shown to the interests of the poorer classes has rendered the institution eminently popular amongst those for whom it was most required'.⁴⁰

1851 saw Clancarty suggest that farmers from the Clifden, Galway, Oughterard, Loughrea and Tuam Unions should be allowed to enter competitions sponsored by the society. At the 1852 dinner, he said that the success of the society was down to the interest of 'every class and every individual, from the highest to the lowest within the district...and were similar societies instituted in every district of Ireland and supported...the country would speedily realise a state of prosperity'.⁴¹ His evangelical zeal informed his desire to construct a new moral order on his estate and the Ballinasloe Agricultural Society was the prism by which he did this. This missionary fervour saw him keen to expand the society's sphere of influence beyond the Ballinasloe Poor Law Union in the hope that it would foster greater social harmony and prosperity in the countryside.⁴² This was a legacy of the aristocratic confidence following the Napoleonic Wars, which was reaffirmed for those who survived the Famine intact as they now felt invincible. As Irene Whelan argued: 'Defenders of the existing social order and advocates of a free market economy combined to produce what in effect was a new moral order designed to accommodate the political and economic realities of the nineteenth century'.⁴³

Thomas Baldwin was an optimistic critic of Irish farming methods and he believed that it was essential for small farmers to adopt improved

agricultural techniques, such as deep tillage and early harvesting.⁴⁴ He stated that the vast majority of farmers failed to do this which resulted in them living wretchedly.⁴⁵ Baldwin further suggested that it would be more remunerative for small farmers to plough their farms using spades instead of horses, especially when the farm was less than ten acres. He argued that if farmers managed their farms in a more productive fashion, such as the adoption of deep ploughing, weeding and proper crop rotation, it could add £5.5 million to the value of tillage in the country.⁴⁶

The language that Clancarty used in his discourses on agriculture had evangelical Protestant inflections. In 1864, he remarked that 'Ireland has too long been proverbial for her backwardness in civilisation' and the people were in a wretched condition. He attacked his absentee brethren in the same breath, and his evangelical bent manifested itself as he contended that Protestantism offered justice and liberality, principles that had never been embraced by the people because their religion was dominated by superstition and fanaticism. Education was important for improving national character; constitutional liberty and self-improvement were also central to changing agricultural practices in the country.⁴⁷ However, the ability of farmers to instigate change for their own benefit was debatable, especially as tenant-right or Ulster Custom was frequently not recognised outside of the province. Authors of agricultural improvement guides could be patronising in their opinions of the more impoverished farmer and failed to appreciate the obstacles they faced, as the methods that they encouraged were not within the means of most Irish farmers, nor were they suitable for the conditions they were in.⁴⁸

The Christian ethic of charity and benevolence infused Clancarty's thought as well as that of other landlords who formed the 'Bible gentry'. Clancarty was associated with this group that was mostly based in the province of Ulster; therefore his presence in east Galway was an anomaly to their geographical spread.⁴⁹ Clancarty was particularly convinced that landlords had a moral obligation to their tenants to ensure that they maximised the potential of their holdings, and anything less than the total improvement of the condition of the land was unacceptable. He argued that Irish farming methods were inefficient: 'why do farmers in general, exhibit such waste, such ill-fenced, ill squared and dirty fields, such as a total absence of skill and economy, so much land lying unproductive, and that which is cultivated not producing half as much as it should'.⁵⁰

In hope that they would adopt more scientific methods of farming, Clancarty offered financial inducements that he hoped would also lead to

social harmony.⁵¹ In addition to this, he established a model farm in the townland of Deerpark, at the edge of his demesne and hired a Scottish agriculturalist, James Clapperton, to visit both landlords and tenants to instruct them on the benefits of good farming practices. It appears that these agriculturalists were retained after the Famine, but for how long after is not clear. In his testimony to the Devon Commission, Clapperton said he ‘found...friendly social intercourse between landlord and tenant. [This] is eminently calculated to stimulate and arouse the latent energy of the small farmer’, though that rarely happened.⁵² He encouraged a system of farming called four- or five-shift rotation on the estate in an effort to improve yields and explained its operation to the Devon Commission:

It is according to the ground. If I see it suited to the four courses, we begin with manure. The first year it is put under potatoes or turnips, or mangel wurzel; then the second year it is wheat, oats or barley—clover or grass being sown along with the crop. The third year it is clover and grass; and the fourth year it is broken up and put under oats—and the same course recommences after it is manured. The fifth course rotation is by letting it remain two years in grass.⁵³

Following the horrors of the Famine, Clapperton wrote a pamphlet for improved farming practices, arguing that subsistence farming and over-reliance on the potato were responsible for the Famine causing such intense destruction, which was the general opinion of the time. In his writings, Clapperton stressed that farmers needed to move away from constructing and maintaining lazy beds—ridges on the landscape for cultivation—and embrace the drill method of sowing. Yet he was not totally dismissive of lazy beds, remarking that they should only be used when it was necessary to break up soil and, ‘by the adoption of a proper routine of cropping, your ground would be always both rich and clean, and you would be enabled to maintain the fertility of your farms with a much less quantity of manure, than is requisite to renovate an exhausted soil’.⁵⁴

Clapperton promoted progressive farming methods during the Famine. He had argued that the utter level of depravation which visited Ireland was because of poorly manured and prepared soil that led to a decrease in fertility. Manuring and the growing of pulses and grain to improve soil were encouraged. He stated that the potato robbed a great deal from the soil when compared to other crops and, ‘By the adoption of a proper routine

of cropping, your ground would be always both rich and clean, and you would be enabled to maintain the fertility of your farms with a much less quantity of manure, than is requisite to renovate an exhausted soil'. He wanted farmers to change their techniques, 'For the time has now come when you must abandon your former mode of practice, and crops must be introduced to which you have been hitherto strangers'.⁵⁵

Clancarty believed that farms in Ballinasloe were generally badly managed and covered in weeds.⁵⁶ Digging competitions for farmers and labourers were organised by the society in the hope that this would increase tillage production, eventually provide employment for labourers and act as a useful conduit for instruction.⁵⁷ They were generally concentrated where land had been exhausted from over-cropping; where this land '[is] sufficiently deep to admit of being sub-soiled or where there is a hard substratum that does not allow the water to sink through it, deep digging is unquestionably beneficial' as it aerates the soil and allows for proper manuring to take place. Surplus prize money from the 1851 show was used to hire extra labourers to dig exhausted soil over the winter months, and in 1852 they were commended for digging the soil to a depth of between twelve and seventeen inches. Poor weather resulted in ploughs being used in 1853 because the soil was too heavy for spades and this resulted in fewer labourers being employed during this particular winter. Members generally thought it to be successful in the 1850s, and Alderman John Reynolds proposed a toast of gratitude to Clancarty at the 1857 society dinner because of his concern for the welfare of the poor in the district. This was despite the animosity between the two men over the Sisters of Mercy débâcle that was ongoing at this time and which is discussed in further detail in Chap. 3. Despite such praise, there was a consensus that these competitions were not fully appreciated and they eventually ceased in 1874. Yet in 1876, W.E. Duffy suggested that they needed to be revived and the fourth earl of Clancarty concurred, promising to pledge the necessary resources to ensure that they would succeed.⁵⁸

The ability of landlords to effect improvements on their estates was limited by the lack of interest of some of their brethren in following suit. Small tenant farmers were suspicious of the efforts made by the well-to-do landowners in carrying out improvements, because they feared there would be an increase in rents if they did.⁵⁹ The challenge of deciphering a lease was that it was a complex legal document, incomprehensible to illiterate and precarious small farmers, and evidence is lacking as to how

effective estate managers were in communicating the impact of various leases. Furthermore, leases were also a form of surveillance and control, with threats of inspections included in them.

The Victorian period saw a clear distinction emerge amongst landlords in east Galway regarding the example that they and strong farmers needed to set for smaller farmers. This exemplar of paternalism stemmed from the evangelical sentiments of the third Earl of Clancarty, who said: 'good farming on the part of noble lords or wealthy proprietors is never looked on as an example for the smaller occupiers who obtain their subsistence by manual labour in the field'.⁶⁰ Tensions did exist in the countryside amongst the lower classes, particularly where cottiers were employed by farmers. Cottiers were keen to be kept on for more than one year and were wholly dependent on the good will of their employers, which meant that they were vulnerable in any economic downturn.⁶¹ Unlike Britain, there was no strong move to embrace allotments for the labouring poor in Ireland, despite them being seen as key to self-improvement and leading to the spread of moral and economic betterment. Many labourers with even a small bit of land called themselves farmers, partially because of the status afforded to such a title.⁶² Landlords in Britain believed that allotments could reform labourers of bad character—'reclaim the indolent and reward the industrious'—while also presenting a genuine hope that they would do something to mitigate the conditions of the labouring poor. Farmers resented this and failed to look beyond their immediate social concerns, arguing that the land for allotments was removed from other uses.⁶³ In Ireland, cottiers (or 'cottars' in the north of the country) were concentrated in areas of high-density tillage. They attracted a great deal of attention from commentators because of their precarious nature and because they were the most common users of gardens. 'The place of cottars in the rural economy shows the complex co-existence between subsistence and cash sectors of the Irish economy before the Great Famine, as cottars and the farmers who employed them bartered land for labour'.⁶⁴

The realigned post-Famine system destabilised the rural labourer population, though this decline was not necessarily seen as a bad thing. To outside observers their savage-looking appearance was a debasement of humanity, and there was relief that 'this form of Irish life...has been broken upon'.⁶⁵ While discussions of housing take place in more detail in Chap. 8, for the purposes of this chapter and landlord *mentalitiés*, examining rural housing briefly is relevant. The commentary of travellers such as Arthur Young demeaned the appearance of the labouring poor. The provision of

labourer cottages was becoming an important element of rural life. Like Britain, there was a hope that a better class of labourer could be attracted if they could have access to land with less pressure also being exerted on employers in terms of wages. In 1825, an article was published that encouraged farmers to build cottages for labourers because they were the ‘nerves and sinew of agriculture’, and it was important for social mobility, though the tone of this article was quite paternalistic and moralising in its tone.⁶⁶ Such debates continued into the twentieth century, reflecting a collective failure on the part of the prosperous classes and government to ensure social stability through access to affordable housing for the lower classes. ‘By 1900, a number of local and national institutions were actively involved in building and improving rural houses. Paradoxically, however, as state action to provide housing and gardens for labourers began to become more effective, agricultural labourers were rapidly decreasing in numbers’.⁶⁷

4 THE BALLINASLOE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY SHOW

The Ballinasloe Agricultural Society Show was the place for stock to be displayed and for farmers and landlords to compete against each other to win prizes for the best-quality livestock. While the quality of the stock at the show in 1862 was poor, Clancarty stated that he would improve the schedule of prizes if it would encourage potential competitors to enter; he also wanted to remove the discrepancies which had crept into the competitions that saw smaller farmers competing against larger farmers, especially as their stock was inferior.⁶⁸ By the 1860s, shopkeeper-graziers began to enter these competitions, which caused some animosity as farmers thought these competitions should be their exclusive preserve:

some dissatisfaction was expressed by tenant farmers that the prizes offered them for competition were often taken by persons who had other means of living, beside the profits of their farms, it is recommended that for future, the prizes offered for competition in the second and third classes be strictly confined to farmers whose sole, or principle means of living are derived from the profit of their farms.⁶⁹

The tensions arising from this are a very significant manifestation of relations in the countryside as the shopkeeper-graziers became more confident in asserting themselves in positions of influence along with landlords. It was

this provincial middle class that eventually took the place of landlords in positions of responsibility.

Dunlo's marriage to Lady Adeliza Hervey, daughter of the second Marquess of Bristol, triggered a massive celebration on the estate, and tenants lined the streets to show their affection for the newly married couple and their allegiance to their next landlord. This is an example of the deferential dialectic in action. The horses were yoked from the newlyweds' carriage as it was pulled by the tenantry of the estate through the principal streets of the town. This gave Dunlo an opportunity to view 'the ornamentation in each house for him and his wife'.⁷⁰ A cup for best bull was donated by the third Marquess of Bristol to commemorate the marriage. Once Dunlo became Lord Clancarty in 1872, he oversaw the introduction of premium bulls across the region and allowed his tenants to use his own bull in order to improve the quality of their livestock. However, only a small number of tenants utilised this offer, because they believed that any improvements they made would result in an increase in rent, which was a strong reflection of the resoluteness of the peasant mentality and their fear in the face of modernisation, increased literacy and infrastructural improvements.⁷¹ Eugene Hynes argued that such 'exaggerated displays of deference towards landlords masked tenants' sense of powerlessness', while K.T. Hoppen claimed: 'certain estates built up distinct feelings of social and political *esprit de corps* which cut across most other barriers and distinctions'.⁷² It was somewhere in between, though, that elaborate forms of deference remained, with Seamus Mac Philib remarking how some tenants removed their hats and bowed before the landlord and his family, and how tenants of a landlord family in Waterford had to attend the funeral of every member of the family as some would get quite upset if no deference was shown towards them.⁷³ Similarly fawning displays of deference were obvious on the Clonbrock estate for coming-of-age celebrations. They were quite resplendent affairs as the principal tenants of the estate were keen to show their loyalty to the heir and their future landlord.⁷⁴

The Ballinasloe Agricultural Society was seen to be the preserve of the landed elite and strong farmers who desired the respectability held by their aristocratic superiors. The fact that nationalists consciously remained aloof offers a partial explanation as to farmers' insouciance to it, particularly from the 1870s. Nevertheless, a notable local nationalist, James Kilmartin—a farmer of 112 acres in Sralea, a townland four miles east of Ballinasloe—acted as a judge in 1878. He was disappointed with the condition of some holdings in the district and held tenants partially

responsible. He had 'seen ample evidence of prosperity in the condition of the people on some estates, while on a few others there was equal evidence of sloth and indigence'.⁷⁵ There was a clear urban/rural chasm as some grievance was directed towards tradesmen because, as J. Ward claimed, they had not suffered to the same extent as farmers did from the various downturns that had affected the country since 1878. The urban/rural relationship was symbiotic if desperate at times and cannot be overstated because there was a strong mutual inter-dependence, explored in further detail in later chapters.⁷⁶

While cotton dominated the global capitalist economy during this time, linen production had been an important element of the Irish provincial cottage economy until its collapse in 1837, which saw small farmers hit particularly hard.⁷⁷ Despite a resurgence in the 1850s and 1860s, its collapse led to the rise of graziers as members of the new capitalist elite in the countryside. Landed families in east Galway had always been acutely aware of the necessity of tenants supplementing their income. For example, the third Earl of Clancarty and his wife encouraged their tenants to engage in weaving, needlework and butter production during the 1850s. In an effort to showcase what could be done, Clancarty sowed five statute acres of flax in the hope that his tenants would follow his example and use it for manufacturing purposes, because it had the potential of being financially remunerative for farmers. However, his hopes were dashed by the poor-quality exhibits at the 1864 show, which supports Barbara Solow's argument that it was futile for farmers to turn to flax outside of Ulster as a financial supplement.⁷⁸

Women were encouraged to supplement family income by engaging in needlework: 'while the men labour abroad, it is a gratifying thing to find the females at home employed in industry, in producing clothing for their families'. There was no produce on display at the 1851 show, despite the girls who attended the estate schools being taught needlepoint at the behest of Lady Clancarty.⁷⁹ A local curate in Ballinasloe, Fr Malachy Green took particular umbrage at Lady Clancarty's initiative and ensured that the Sisters of Mercy taught lace-craft when they established their school in Ballinasloe, in an attempt to counteract any potential proselytising activity that would have taken place.⁸⁰

The expansion of the butter market to the British Empire and beyond in the nineteenth century presented farmers with another opportunity to supplement their income. Increased consumption of dairy products between 1850 and 1873 in Britain made butter production especially

lucrative, with Clancarty believing that it could be a useful pursuit for farmers, but he failed to appreciate that the quality of the grass was quite poor in the region due to a lack of adequate drainage, which meant that it was quite difficult for farmers to produce a decent standard of butter.⁸¹ £4500 had been invested in arterial drainage by the mid-1880s by the fourth Earl of Clancarty, and Edward Fowler remarked that the land was now of similar quality to the 'butter land' of Blarney, County Cork. However, no evidence has been uncovered as to whether any renewed efforts to engage in butter production took place in the district after the completion of this arterial drainage work.⁸² The initial capital outlay precluded many farmers from investing in improvements such as fencing and drainage, which needed the co-operation of other landlords to ensure their success. The problems were multifaceted and W.E. Vaughan stated that farmers did not interpret infrastructural changes as improvements, but rather measured improvement as increased prosperity.⁸³ However, the fear of rent increases for subsistence farmers, the lack of security of tenure for tenants-at-will, as well as the lack of clarity from the estate office regarding any conditions that might be attached to improvements also stymied efforts at improvement. The *Western Star* said that 'landlords were unwilling to lend their assent to real improvements that would have secured an increase in rents'.⁸⁴ Many rarely looked beyond their immediate circumstances, and significant obstacles presented themselves for those trying to change such a mindset. William Bence-Jones argued that 'it is a mere delusion that farmers in Ireland are burning to carry out useful improvements and are kept back by landlords. It is earnestly to be wished the fact was so, for the remedy would then be easy'.⁸⁵ There were landlords eager to blame tenants for the lack of improvements taking place, but they did not encourage their tenants to carry out such improvements, and furthermore, the 'Ulster Custom' or something analogous to it did not exist on many estates outside the province. There was a collective responsibility amongst all classes for a lack of adequate investment and improvement.

5 THE OCTOBER FAIR

Fairs were an important form of exchange in provincial Ireland in the nineteenth century and had a geographical influence beyond the immediate hinterland of where they were held.⁸⁶ The extension of the railway and the diffusion of the provincial press aided in the expansion and success of certain fairs, such as that in October in Ballinasloe. This was one of the

most important fairs in the rural economy in the nineteenth century, as the prices commanded there were amongst the most substantial returns of prices and were a good indication of the strength of Irish agriculture. The returns were published in *Thom's Directory*, local newspapers and cited in parliamentary inquiries.⁸⁷

There is a strong possibility that there was a fair in operation prior to the eighteenth century, but there is no evidence of a patent for the Ballinasloe fair appearing until 1758, when 'Richard Trench Esq., of Garbally, got one for holding a fair at Dunlo, on [17] May and [13] July. The great fair for fat cattle in October, it is probable, was established before this period'.⁸⁸ While the October fair was the most famous and the subject of discussion here, other fairs were held in January, May and July. Ballinasloe was called a 'somewhat unpretentious town that achieved worldwide celebrity'⁸⁹ because of the October fair. 'The fair commences on Tuesday morning according to custom, but also according to custom, the fair commences on Sunday. This is a contradictory statement but true nevertheless'.⁹⁰ The layout of the week's events for the fair was as follows: ewes, wethers and some rams were sold on Monday, with the remaining stock then sold on Tuesday. Some horses were then displayed on Tuesday evening and sold on Wednesday. Bullocks were sold on Thursday and Friday.⁹¹ Country Fair Day, also known as 'Poor man's market', held on the last Saturday of the fair, saw any remaining stock sold.⁹²

A series of fortuitous circumstances ensured the success of the 1854 fair. A late rainfall had seen the quality of the pasture improve and the Crimean War led to an increased demand for stock: 'the joyous vociferations of the Irish herdsmen in charge of the stock loudly uttered in all the richness of the deepest brogue, echoed throughout the woodlands of Garbally'. Similar excitement was experienced at the 1855 fair: 'the immense breadth of "whitened fleeces" which contrasted deeply with the foliage of the Garbally woodlands, formed a scene of rustic splendour only to be witnessed at a Ballinasloe fair'. Buyers were left disappointed after the 1857 fair because the supply of sheep could not match demand. There was a significant drop in the sale of sheep in 1859 and this was attributed to a severe drought that year, which was then followed by very wet weather that affected sales at the 1860 fair.⁹³

This was the start of a significant and harsh agricultural depression that lasted from 1859 until 1864; rivers burst their banks in June 1860 and fields around Loughrea became totally flooded. The consequence of this was that the land could not be worked and pasture was either bare or

infested with weeds. Even though the winter of 1861–1862 was mild, the promise of renewed prosperity quickly faded as there was an increased risk of disease, which created difficulties selling animals. The misery was further compounded because the weather was unfavourable to the fattening of stock, with ‘livestock production seriously injured not only indirectly through crop deficiencies but also directly by adverse weather conditions...This appalling catalogue of meteorological adversities imposed huge losses on the agricultural economy’. This cycle of droughts and excessive rainfall stunted crops and saw the price of hay double between 1858 and 1860, and the vegetation that appeared in the spring of 1863 was not sufficient for the nourishment of stock.⁹⁴ While the number of cattle sold had a consistent fluctuation, the same could not be said for the numbers unsold, which varied greatly. The high level of unsold stock indicated its poor quality for that year, and foot-and-mouth distemper, poor quality pasture and bad weather all played roles in this.

Prices remained high for cattle at the 1860 fair, despite their poor quality and the lack of adequate fodder to sufficiently fatten them and produce good-quality meat. This crisis was described as a ‘fodder famine’ because ‘the crop deficiencies curtailed production in the far more important livestock sector’ and there was an increase in the costs of harvesting crops. There was no noteworthy outbreak of discontent at this time in the Irish countryside because shopkeepers extended credit, which eased the burden on farmers. Even though it presented the Irish Republican Brotherhood—a secret, oath-bound, seditious organisation founded in 1858—with an excellent opportunity to mobilise the countryside, they failed to do so because they had not formulated a coherent agricultural policy at this time, as their attention was solely on revolutionary insurrection, which changed following the failure of the 1867 rebellion (this is explored in subsequent chapters).⁹⁵

Foot-and-mouth disease was a worry when it struck because of the damage it could inflict on a rural economy; it could derail the entire system if not adequately contained. Despite its presence in 1852, most of the stock changed hands: ‘in fact, there never was before on the Green of Ballinasloe a finer display of cattle...The great demand for horned cattle and sheep for the purpose of stock land heretofore devoted to tillage, gives the most convincing proof that tillage farming is no longer remunerative’ and there was little proof of any prosperity for farmers. While the quality of the stock at the 1853 fair was poor due to the inclement weather, a good number of horses still managed to be sold.⁹⁶

The intensity and duration of the bad weather saw the arrival of foot-and-mouth disease and sheep rot in the winter of 1862–1863. The results were devastating, with up to 60 per cent of sheep being declared unsound by March 1863, which naturally led to widespread panic amongst buyers. It returned in 1869 and poor-quality store cattle saw sluggish trade. While favourable weather ensured that the 1871 fair was a success, there was a large decline in the number of sheep being sold from 1870. 56,900 were sold in 1871 in comparison to 60,921 in 1870. Breeders were conspicuous by their absence, with very few sheep from Roscommon and none from Mayo. The crisis in Ballinasloe was further intensified by the arrival of new fairs at Banagher and Tuam. Sellers were also accused of exploiting the fair's *facile princeps* through their demands for extortionate prices. Despite this, it was maintained that 'this arbitrary power is more imaginary than real, that is to say, bowed down to rather on account of the prestige of the institution than of the power which it actually possesses'. This is a strong indication that the fair was struggling to maintain its dominant position in the Irish agricultural and rural calendar as the nineteenth century drew to a close, but no comprehensive study of the fair has ever been carried out to assess the veracity of these assumptions. The *Irish Farmers' Gazette* argued that these changing circumstances provided a welcome respite for farmers: 'the doings of the buyer and seller at Ballinasloe in October of each year regulate the price of a stale article of food, and change the value of almost everything that is consumed in the domestic economy'.⁹⁷ Because foot-and-mouth distemper affected sales at numerous fairs in the same period, by 1873 more vigorous veterinary inspections of stock took place when trains arrived at Ballinasloe in an attempt to minimise the threat of the disease spreading.

To the Irish graziers, amongst whom an exchange of stock at the great fair of Ballinasloe, varying from 50–80,000 sheep and 10–15,000 cattle on each occasion, takes place, it is of no small importance of a gratifying nature to learn, on the authority of Professor Ferguson, at the head of her Majesty's Veterinary Department in Ireland, that in the week ending 27 September there were only four farms or places in all the province of Connaught under restriction and in all Ireland only eighty-three.⁹⁸

However, it returned again in 1875 and farmers sold stock on their farms rather than risk bringing them to fairs.⁹⁹ More stringent precautions were introduced in 1883 that superseded those adopted a decade earlier:

the results of the Ballinasloe fair have this year been anxiously looked for by all in the cattle trade of Ireland. Although the district in which this important agricultural gathering takes place is fortunately, free from disease, the prevalence of foot-and-mouth distemper in Leinster and the restrictions on the movement of stock imposed both in this country and in England and Scotland necessarily had a very marked effect on business.¹⁰⁰

The 1876 fair was slow to take off and the Garbally demesne—where live-stock was allowed to graze prior to the beginning of the markets in the town—was reported not to have been as lively as it had been ten years previously, with ‘neither buyers or sellers [able to make] up their minds as to what the prices should be’ and the supply of sheep reported to be one of the lowest in years. In 1877, buyers and sellers were reticent about closing a deal until they managed to figure out the pulse of the fair, and a shift in the reasons for purchasing emerged that year as ‘the fairs of the future will chiefly consist of young animals for exportation or agricultural purposes’. The 1879 fair was not as bad as had been initially feared. Prices in 1880 were at 1878 levels, which reflected the impact of a few months’ good pasturage. Uncertainty in the cattle trade emerged in 1883, and by 1884 it was felt that the sheep fair existed in name only. Such was the decline in numbers that it was moved from Garbally to the fair green, and by 1906 numbers for sale collapsed by between 10,000 and 12,000 from the peak of the fair.¹⁰¹

The fair declined somewhat following the death of the third Earl of Clancarty in 1872, and by 1878 it was reported: ‘the fame of the Ballinasloe fair seems to be gradually departing. All the life, bustle and excitement for which the great western gathering was so eminently distinguished has gone dead out of it’. The paucity of transactions in 1881 led some to fear that ‘it has had its day, and while it may not for a very long time pass into history, as some maintain it soon will, it has undoubtedly reached its declining years’.¹⁰²

The *Irish Farmers’ Gazette* stated that the 1882 show challenged assumptions held in the countryside that farmers did not want to be seen to be convivial with landlords.¹⁰³ Yet the intensity of the Land War agitation in east Galway saw participation decline throughout the 1880s, though there was a hope that this would change when signs of an economic recovery appeared in 1888: ‘we feel ourselves again afloat on the tide of prosperity, after years of retrogression, in which the hopes and spirits of many of our farming friends were some several degrees below

zero'.¹⁰⁴ For the rest of the century, commentary was made as to the declining quality and quantity of stock. Despite such gloomy outlooks regarding its future, it was still seen to be the great fair of the country at the *fin de siècle*.¹⁰⁵

6 THE DECLINING INFLUENCE OF THE BALLINASLOE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

Subscriptions from local landlords were the main source of income for the Ballinasloe Agricultural Society, and the Irish Peasantry Society—which advised on the employment of peasants in Ireland—also made significant financial contributions: ‘as the object of that society is the improvement of the condition of the Irish peasantry, there is, in this respect, a perfect agreement between it and the Ballinasloe District Agricultural Society’. While Clancarty had hoped that landlords would increase the level of their subscriptions, the changing dynamics of the post-Famine countryside, coupled with increased indebtedness, meant that this was not possible.¹⁰⁶

Clancarty’s agent, Edward Fowler, was forced to reflect on the prize sheet in 1888 because of the collapse in subscriptions, the poor quality of stock on display and nationalist boycotting of the show. He asked members to make an additional contribution to prevent the society from going into debt, but there was a poor response to this request. Nationalist members attempted to pressurise Fowler into granting all awards because they thought it would be harmful to agriculture in the district if this did not happen. In an effort to reach a compromise, Robert Ronaldson and John Ward suggested that the prize fund be reduced by half and the judges be asked to work *pro bono*. The finances of the society improved by 1889 and in its annual report R.J. Gill stated that ‘the tide has at last set in favour of the society, in spite of the prophecies of its enemies’. There was an increase in its credit balance from £29 10s. 9d. to £40 13s. 0d.¹⁰⁷

The 1870s saw the gentry become subject to frequent criticism for their poor support of the society, and in September 1876 Major Seymour said that the society was receiving more support from tenant farmers than the gentry.¹⁰⁸ This poor support saw Hon. Charles Trench suggest that they cease granting awards for livestock and divert the funds into the creation of more prizes for tillage in January 1871.¹⁰⁹ A glimmer of hope arrived in 1874 with a revival in the quality of horned stock, though the show declined again two years later, with members expressing their disappointment and some suggesting that it needed to be discontinued. It was

further suggested that judges from outside the district should be appointed and changed on a regular basis in order to maintain impartiality and integrity. The *Irish Farmers' Gazette* said the stock displayed was not representative of what was really in the district.¹¹⁰ After the disastrous 1868 show, Lord Dunlo commented that large graziers like Allan Pollok of Lismanny needed to be coaxed into sending good-quality stock to shows in the hope that such an example would encourage other farmers to do the same.¹¹¹ The deference expressed towards landlords was beginning to be challenged in subtle ways during the 1870s and the *Tuam Herald* expressed embarrassment at their treatment in 1876: 'it was painful to see the number of respectable people, male and female, who were refused admission while the judges were making their awards for no apparent reason other than the caprice of the person who was in charge of the gate leading to the show yard'.¹¹² By 1886 there was a general apathy in the district regarding the show, and townspeople were blamed for this, though the *Western News* argued that this disinterest was widespread amongst all classes. The increased farmer apathy towards the society probably reflected the extent of nationalist influence in the countryside, and nationalists would have exerted pressure on farmers in the district not to participate in the society's activities.¹¹³

The society's dinner afforded an opportunity for the gentry and large graziers to engage in praise of Lord Clancarty and was an example of deferential behaviour, with sycophantic utterings extolling the virtues of the Clancarty family:

We were much gratified in perceiving the harmony and kind feeling manifested by all present. Were such scenes more common throughout the country, we would hear less of landlord tyranny, or want of confidence in the higher classes. Such considerate condescension on the part of the earl of Clancarty is, to say the least of it creditable to his lordship and a worthy example of others.¹¹⁴

Speeches were an important facet of these dinners, and the material condition of the district, various agricultural developments and awards were announced during the proceedings. Toasts generally honoured the Queen, the Lord Lieutenant, the army and navy, the judges of the show and the incumbent Lord Clancarty, with the slogan 'speed the plough' on display over his table, which was a call for increased tillage.¹¹⁵ Clancarty's wide-ranging interests were then praised in sycophantic tones. For example, in

1860 the *Galway Press* said: 'the versatility of his Lordship's genius enables him to range over a wide field of display from the production of prize turnips to that of biblical phenomena', which was reflective of a time of deference for landlords.¹¹⁶ The allure of the dinner receded after the death of the third Earl in 1872, and this was manifested by the presence of only forty people at the 1874 dinner. The small numbers saw it being held in Hayden's Hotel and not the Agricultural Hall as had previously been the custom. The fourth Earl did not attend in 1876 and Major D'Arcy of Castlepark chaired proceedings. By 1880 the tensions that were being felt in the district because of the actions of the Land League and the rise of nationalist politics were replicated at the dinner when nationalists remained seated when the toast to the Lord Lieutenant was proposed. The toast was drunk 'with dumb show, there was no applause whatever'.¹¹⁷

From the time of the society's establishment, the boardroom of the workhouse was where the committee meetings of the Ballinasloe Agricultural Society were held.¹¹⁸ Collapsing deference to landlords saw nationalists on the board of guardians eager to establish an alternative agricultural society with no landlord involvement, and they requested £100 from the local government board to 'give prizes annually to the farmers of the Union whose Poor Law Valuation does not exceed £40 for the improvement of stock and crops, thereby contributing to the permanent wealth of the district and diminishing pauperism by promoting the permanent wealth of the community'.¹¹⁹ The *ex-officio* guardians found this action to be petty and were taken aback by it. Major Thornhill said, 'I don't belong to it, but when they met here for so many years; they have a kind of prescriptive right'.¹²⁰ William Reddy wanted these privileges revoked, contending that it was Lord Clancarty's society and was detrimental to the welfare of tenant farmers. Such hostilities were common across boardrooms at this time, and other examples are discussed in further detail in Chaps. 6 and 7.¹²¹

Fowler was taken aback by the hostility engendered by nationalist members of the board of guardians: 'some of the guardians have queer views of [the society] and said they were an Orange society and another said it was a landlord society in which the tenants had nothing to do whatever'. Fowler was of the opinion that it was a quasi-egalitarian organisation which came to the assistance of small tenant farmers. Despite such a belief, it was Lord Clancarty who had the final say over the sanctioning of the prize sheet, which dismisses the notion that it was even remotely egalitarian.¹²² Nationalist attempts at establishing a parallel society never succeeded

in going any further than this and, despite such failure, this was indicative of both their desire and confidence in wanting to challenge the local *status quo*. While it did not succeed, it brought attention to their cause and this is discussed in further detail in Chaps. 6 and 7.

7 CONCLUSION

I wouldn't care to change my life for yours...I admit mine is dull, but at least we have no worries. You live in grander style, but you must do a great deal of business or you'll be ruined. One day you are rich and the next you might find yourself on the street. Here in the country we don't have those ups and downs. A peasant's life may be poor, but it's long. Although we may never be rich, we'll always have enough to eat.¹²³

The second, third and fourth Earls of Clancarty shared their passion for agricultural advancement and estate improvement with the likes of the third Earl of Leitrim; though they had a different management style to William Sydney Clements, who could be quite acerbic, authoritarian and confrontational. He was a strong and evocative symbol of capricious landlordism that has lived long in social memory. Nevertheless, they all were of the opinion that good farming could lead to social harmony. The death of the Ballinasloe Agricultural Society's driving force, the third Earl of Clancarty, in 1872, was a significant factor in the society's stagnation and subsequent decline in the nineteenth century, and a new direction was needed to ensure its survival. The third Earl was a well-regarded landlord and through the auspices of the society he attempted to alleviate the distress of farmers and labourers in the district. The society attempted to carve out an important role in the district by trying to formulate substantive agricultural policies in order to improve the condition of poorer farmers. Despite some glaring misadventures in agricultural experimentation, such as flax cultivation and butter production, the third Earl of Clancarty was altruistic towards small tenant farmers, who were inspired by his evangelicalism, even though they did not embrace the society with his fervour and they resented the proselytising efforts.

The third Earl struggled to get other landowners involved with the society as a combination of landlord hubris and tenant farmer apathy prevented it from becoming a resolute success. The organisation faced difficulties in getting farmers to carry out improvements because of the communal resistance the farmers presented. Eugene Hynes argued that, 'whether they realised it or not, the innovations these people championed

threatened the very foundation of the claimed communal solidarity' of tenant farmers.¹²⁴

The Ballinasloe Agricultural Society was a vanity exercise for the Clancarty family, presenting them as progressive and respected landlords, and the society dinner magnified this perception. While this was the case, the society failed to respond to the changing nature of social relations in the countryside as small farmers began to shape their own lives. They were actively involved in directing their economic conditions at times, and while they struggled frequently, seeking assistance from landlords to survive, they were becoming more confident agents in their economic sphere because of the emergence of market forces. There was a vitality in towns because of this, which allowed for a greater engagement with outside influences that they may not have dealt with in a previous milieu as they became aware of its condescending nature. This became clearer during the Land War era, with anti-landlord sentiments being expressed more assertively. The insipidness of the attempted reforms of the society showed the general failure of landlords to properly react to the changing dynamics in the countryside as tenants began to gain the upper hand in power relations.

NOTES

1. James Clapperton, *Instructions for the small farmers for the cropping and culture of their farms* (Dublin, 1847), p. 1.
2. Samuel Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland* (London, 1837), pp. 110–11. The River Suck used to be the dividing line between Galway and Roscommon. However, following the 1898 Local Government Act, the border was redrawn to ensure that the Ballinasloe Urban District, part of which is in the parish of Creagh, became part of County Galway, and it has remained that way since.
3. Census of Ireland, 1841–1861.
4. Samuel Lewis, *A topographical history of Ireland* (1837), pp. 469–70.
5. James S. Donnelly, Jr. 'The journals of Sir John Benn-Walsh relating to the management of his Irish estates, 1823–1864', *Journal of the Cork Archaeological and Historical Society* (July–December 1974), p. 86.
6. K.T. Hoppen, *Elections, politics and society in Ireland, 1832–1887* (London, 1984), p. 106; idem, 'Landownership and power in the nineteenth-century Ireland: The decline of an elite' in Ralph Gibson and Martin Blinkhorn (eds.), *Landownership and power in modern Europe* (London, 1991), pp. 164, 168.

7. Donnelly, Jr. 'The journals of Sir John Benn-Walsh', p. 89.
8. Pauline Scott, 'Rural radicals or mercenary men? Resistance to evictions on the Glinsk/Creggs estate of Allan Pollok', in Brian Casey (ed.), *Defying the law of the land: Agrarian radicals in Irish history* (Dublin, 2013), pp. 65–79; eadem, 'Evictions on the Glinsk estate of Allan and Margaret Pollok in the 1850s' (PhD thesis, NUI Galway, 2014).
9. Eric Richards, *The Highland clearances* (Edinburgh, 2015), p. xii.
10. Donnelly, Jr. 'The journals of Sir John Benn-Walsh', p. 90.
11. P.K. Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe* (Dublin, 1960), pp. 153–5.
12. Patrick Melvin, 'The landed gentry of Galway, 1820–1880' (PhD, Trinity College Dublin, 1991), p. 163.
13. Melvin, 'The landed gentry of Galway', p. 163.
14. Pat Finnegan, *Loughbrea, that den of infamy: The Land War in County Galway, 1879–82* (Dublin, 2014).
15. *Western Star*, 25 Jan. 1851.
16. *Report from her majesty's commissioners of inquiry into the state of law and practice in respect of the occupation of land in Ireland minutes of evidence pt. ii* [616], HC 1845, 498–500.
17. Susan Hood, 'The landlord-planned nexus at Strokestown, county Roscommon: A case study of an Irish estate town, c. 1660–c. 1925' (PhD thesis, University of Ulster, 1994), pp. 3–23.
18. Hood, 'The landlord-planned nexus at Strokestown, county Roscommon', pp. 23–4.
19. *Irish Farmers' Gazette*, 24 May 1879, p. 165; 4 Oct. 1879, p. 332.
20. See Alun Howkins, *Poor labouring men: Rural radicalism in Norfolk, 1870–1923* (London, 1985); James Hunter, *The making of the Crofting community* (Edinburgh, 1976, 2000, 2010).
21. Lord Clancarty to Lord Abercorn (National Library of Ireland, Mayo papers, MS 43, 839/1).
22. Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, p. 182.
23. For more, see <http://places.galwaylibrary.ie/history/chapter34.html> [date accessed 20 September 2017].
24. Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, pp. 143–53, 230–1.
25. *Pigot's directory* (Dublin, 1824), pp. 197–8.
26. Undated poster (probably pre-Famine) (National Library of Ireland, Bellew of Mountbellew papers MS 31, 761).
27. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 16 Oct. 1852, pp. 499, 501.
28. *Irish Builder*, 15 Sept. 1866, p. 262. This edition also has plans for the cottages included, *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 5 Oct. 1867, p. 377.
29. Virginia Crossman, *Politics, pauperism and power in the late nineteenth century* (Manchester, 2006), pp. 144–8.
30. Jeremy Burchardt, *The allotment movement in England, 1793–1873* (London, 2002).

31. Jonathan Bell and Mervyn Watson, *Rooted in the soil: A history of cottage gardens and allotments in Ireland since 1750* (Dublin, 2012), pp. 11–14.
32. Thomas Bermingham, *Social state of Great Britain and Ireland* (1835), pp. iii–vii.
33. Hood, ‘The landlord–planned nexus at Strokestown, county Roscommon’, pp. 212–13.
34. Hood, ‘The landlord–planned nexus at Strokestown, county Roscommon’, p. 213.
35. Jonathan Bell and Mervyn Watson, *Irish farming implements and techniques, 1750–1900* (Edinburgh, 1986), pp. 3–5.
36. Thomas Baldwin, *Public opinion on the application of the prize system to the improvement of the agricultural practices of the small farmers of Ireland with the introductory remarks* (Dublin, 1879), p. ix. For more on William Hickey, see *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, vol. 4, pp. 674–5.
37. *Irish Farmer’s Gazette*, 16 Oct. 1852, pp. 499, 501.
38. *Report from Her Majesty’s Commissioners of Inquiry into the state of the law and practice in respect to the occupation of land in Ireland*, [605] [606] HC 1845 Appendix 8, pp. 30–1.
39. For example, see Thomas Bermingham, *Social state of Great Britain and Ireland* (1835).
40. *Irish Farmer’s Gazette*, 6 Sept. 1851, p. 434.
41. *Irish Farmer’s Gazette*, 16 Oct. 1852, pp. 499, 501.
42. *Irish Farmer’s Gazette*, 16 Oct. 1852, pp. 499, 501.
43. Irene Whelan, Irene Whelan, ‘The Bible gentry: Evangelical religion, aristocracy, and the new moral order in the early nineteenth century’, in Crawford Gribben and Andrew R. Holmes (eds.), *Protestant millennialism, evangelicalism and Irish society, 1790–2005* (Basingstoke, 2006), p. 53.
44. W.E. Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford, 1994), p. 84.
45. Baldwin, *Public opinion on the application of the prize system to the improvement of the agricultural practices of the small farmers of Ireland*, pp. v–vi, ix.
46. Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland*, pp. 83–4.
47. The earl of Clancarty, *Ireland, its present condition and what it might be* (Dublin, 1864), pp. 5–11.
48. Bell and Watson, *Irish farming, implements and techniques*, pp. 2–511.
49. Whelan, ‘The Bible gentry’, p. 62.
50. *Irish Farmer’s Gazette*, 16 Oct. 1852, pp. 499, 501.
51. *Irish Farmer’s Gazette*, 16 Oct. 1852, p. 499; 10 Oct. 1857, pp. 865–6; 24 May 1879, p. 165; 4 Oct. 1879, p. 332; Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, pp. 153–5; A.P.W. Malcomson, *Virtues of a wicked earl: The life and legend of William Sydney Clements, third earl of Leitrim 1806–78* (Dublin, 2009), pp. 212, 221.

52. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 30 Sept. 1854, p. 478; Melvin, 'The landed gentry of Galway, 1820–1880', pp. 127–8.
53. *Report from Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the state of the law and practice in respect to the occupation of land in Ireland minutes of evidence pt. ii* [616], HC 1845, 516–17.
54. Clapperton, *Instructions for the small farmers of Ireland*, pp. 4, 6, 9.
55. Clapperton, *Instructions for the small farmers of Ireland*, pp. 4–9, 13.
56. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 16 Oct. 1852, p. 499, 501.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 578.
58. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 6 Sept. 1851, p. 434; 27 Sept. 1851, p. 473; 16 Oct. 1852, pp. 499–501; 27 Nov. 1852, p. 578; 3 Dec. 1853, p. 607; 1 Oct. 1853, p. 485; 10 Oct. 1857, pp. 865–6; 19 Mar. 1859, p. 133; 31 Dec. 1859, p. 647; 5 Oct. 1878, p. 358; *Tuam Herald*, 9 Sept. 1876.
59. *Ibid.*
60. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 28 Feb. 1857.
61. Jonathan Bell and Mervyn Watson, *Irish farming: History and heritage* (Dublin, 2009), p. 74.
62. Burchardt, *The allotment movement in England, 1793–1873*, pp. 178, 184; Bell and Watson, *Rooted in the soil* (Dublin, 2012), p. 11.
63. Burchardt, *The allotment movement in England*, pp. 179, 183–5.
64. Bell and Watson, *Rooted in the soil*, pp. 15–17.
65. Bell and Watson, *Rooted in the soil*, pp. 20–1.
66. Bell and Watson, *Rooted in the soil*, pp. 25–7.
67. Bell and Watson, *Rooted in the soil*, p. 29.
68. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 4 Oct. 1862, p. 332.
69. *Western Star*, 14 Jan. 1865; *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 17 Apr. 1869, p. 136.
70. *Tuam Herald*, 22 Dec. 1866.
71. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 3 Oct. 1874, pp. 361–2.
72. Hoppen, *Elections, politics and society in Ireland*, p. 134; Eugene Hynes, *Knock, the Virgin's apparition in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Cork, 2009), p. 142.
73. Seamus Mac Philib, 'The Irish landlord system in folk tradition: Impact and image' (PhD thesis, UCD, 1990), pp. 107–10.
74. See Kevin McKenna, 'Power, resistance, and ritual: Paternalism on the Clonbrock Estates 1826–1908' (PhD thesis, Maynooth University, 2011); idem, 'Charity, paternalism and power on the Clonbrock estates, county Galway, 1833–44', in Laurence M. Geary and Oonagh Walsh (eds.), *Philanthropy in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2015), pp. 97–114.
75. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 5 Oct. 1878, p. 358.
76. *Western News*, 9 Oct. 1886.

77. For more on cotton, see Sven Beckert, *Empire of cotton: A new history of global capitalism* (London, 2015).
78. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 6 Sept. 1851, p. 473; 1 Oct. 1853, p. 486; 19 Mar. 1859, p. 492; *Western Star*, 14 Jan. 1865; Donald Jordan, *Land and popular politics in Ireland: County Mayo from the Plantation to the Land War* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 60–1; Barbara Solow, *The land question and the Irish economy, 1870–1903* (Cambridge, MA, 1971), p. 31.
79. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 6 Sept. 1851, p. 473; 1 Oct. 1853, p. 486.
80. Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, p. 255.
81. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 6 Sept. 1851, p. 473; 1 Oct. 1853, p. 486; 19 Mar. 1859, p. 492; *Western Star*, 14 Jan. 1865; J.S. Donnelly Jr., 'Cork market: Its role in the nineteenth century butter trade', *Studia Hibernica*, no. 11 (1971), p. 132.
82. *Report of the royal commission on the Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 and the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1885* [C4969] HC 1887, 1; *minutes of evidence and appendices*, [C496], HC 1887 xxvi, qs 21,617, 21,666–8.
83. Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland*, p. 85.
84. *Western Star*, 14 Nov. 1868.
85. Solow, *The land question and the Irish economy, 1870–1903*, p. 39.
86. Hood, 'The landlord-planned nexus at Strokestown', pp. 218–19.
87. Liam Kennedy and Peter M. Solar, *Irish agriculture: A price history from the mid eighteenth century to the eve of the First World War* (Dublin, 2007), p. 11.
88. *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, xxiii (1893), pp. 88–9.
89. *Western News*, 6 Oct. 1900.
90. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 6 Oct. 1900, p. 776.
91. *Western News*, 6 Oct. 1900.
92. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 8 Oct. 1853.
93. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 6 Oct. 1855, p. 541; 10 Oct. 1857, pp. 865–6, 877; 13 Oct. 1860, pp. 505, 513.
94. J.S. Donnelly, Jr., 'The Irish agricultural depression of 1859–64', *Irish Economic and Social History* iii (1976), pp. 34–8.
95. Donnelly, 'The Irish agricultural depression of 1859–64', pp. 34–8. For more on the IRB, see R.V. Comerford, *The Fenians in context, Irish politics and society, 1848–82* (Dublin, 1978 and 1994); M.J. Kelly, *The Fenian ideal and Irish nationalism, 1882–1916*; Owen McGee, *The IRB: The Irish Republican Brotherhood, from the Land League to Sinn Féin* (Dublin, 2007).
96. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 9 Oct. 1852; p. 489, 16 Oct. 1852, p. 499; 8 Oct. 1853, p. 226.

97. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 16 Oct. 1869, p. 399; 15 Oct. 1870, p. 240; 1871, p. 386; 9 Oct. 1875, p. 359.
98. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 4 Oct. 1873, p. 343.
99. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 9 Oct. 1875, p. 359.
100. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 6 Oct. 1883, p. 587.
101. *Tuam Herald*, 7 Oct. 1876; *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 6 Oct. 1877, p. 363; 11 Oct. 1879, p. 349; 16 Oct. 1880, pp. 393–4; 6 Oct. 1883, p. 587; 11 Oct. 1884, p. 621.
102. *Tuam Herald*, 7 Oct. 1876; *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 12 Oct. 1878, p. 363; 8 Oct. 1881, p. 395.
103. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 30 Sept. 1882, p. 572.
104. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 6 Oct. 1888, p. 443.
105. *Western News*, 6 Oct. 1900; *Tuam Herald*, 5 Oct. 1901.
106. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 5 Feb. 1852, p. 69.
107. *Western News*, 9 Oct. 1886; 6 August 1887; 17 Sept. 1887; 16 June 1888; 10 Sept. 1888; 15 Feb. 1890.
108. *Western Star*, 3 Oct. 1868; 31 Oct. 1868; 14 Nov. 1868; *Tuam Herald*, 7 Jan. 1871; 4 Oct. 1873; *ibid.*, 9 Sept. 1876.
109. *Tuam Herald*, 7 Jan. 1871, *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 3 Oct. 1874, pp. 361–2.
110. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 9 Sept. 1876, pp. 351–2; *Western News*, 15 Feb. 1890.
111. *Western Star*, 14 Nov. 1868; for more on the Pollok Family, see Joe Molloy (ed.), *The parish of Clontuskert: Glimpses into its past* (Ballinasloe, 2009), pp. 205–38.
112. *Western Star*, 4 Oct. 1873; 9 Sept. 1876.
113. *Western News*, 9 Oct. 1886.
114. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 5 Feb. 1852, p. 69.
115. *Western Star*, 14 Oct. 1865.
116. *Galway Press*, 28 Nov. 1860.
117. *Irish Farmer's Gazette*, 3 Oct. 1874; p. 361, 9 Sept. 1876, p. 351; *Western News*, 9 Oct. 1886.
118. *Western News*, 17 Sept. 1880.
119. C.S.O., R.P. 1888/14700 in the National Archives of Ireland.
120. *Western News*, 1 October 1888.
121. For more on the antagonistic relations between elected and *ex-officio* guardians, see Crossman, *Politics pauperism and power* and W.L. Feingold, *The revolt of the tenantry: The transformation of local government in Ireland, 1872–1886* (Boston, 1984).
122. *Western News*, 10 Sept. 1888.
123. Leo Tolstoy, *How much land does a man need?* (London, 2015), p. 1.
124. Hynes, *Knock: The Virgin's apparition in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Cork, 2009), p. 16.

REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF IRELAND

Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND

Bellew of Mountbellew papers MS 31, 761.

Mayo papers, MS 43, 839/1.

NEWSPAPER SOURCES

Irish Farmers' Gazette.

Tuam Herald.

Western News.

Western Star.

OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

Census of Ireland, 1841, 1851, 1861.

Report from Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the state of the law and practice in respect to the occupation of land in Ireland, [605] [606] HC 1845.

Report from her majesty's commissioners of inquiry into the state of law and practice in respect of the occupation of land in Ireland minutes of evidence pt. ii, [616], HC 1845.

Report of the royal commission on the Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 and the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1885, [C4969] HC 1887, 1; *minutes of evidence and appendices*, [C496], HC 1887.

CONTEMPORARY PUBLICATIONS, TRADE DIRECTORIES AND TRAVELLER ACCOUNTS

Baldwin, Thomas, *Public opinion on the application of the prize system to the improvement of the agricultural practices of the small farmers of Ireland with the introductory remarks* (Dublin, 1879).

Birmingham, Thomas, *Social state of Great Britain and Ireland* (1835).

The earl of Clancarty, *Ireland, its present condition and what it might be* (Dublin, 1864).

- Clapperton, James, *Instructions for the small farmers for the cropping and culture of their farms* (Dublin, 1847).
Irish Builder.
Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, xxiii (1893).
 Lewis, Samuel, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland* (London, 1837).
Pigot's directory (Dublin, 1824).

WORKS OF REFERENCE

- McGuire, James (ed.), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009).

WEBSITES

- Maguire, Samuel J., *Honourable and venerable Charles le Poer Trench*, <http://places.galwaylibrary.ie/history/chapter34.html>

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Beckert, Sven, *Empire of Cotton: A new history of global capitalism* (London, 2015).
 Bell, Jonathan and Mervyn Watson, *Irish farming implements and techniques, 1750–1900* (Edinburgh, 1986).
 Bell, Jonathan and Mervyn Watson, *Irish farming: History and heritage* (Dublin, 2009).
 Bell, Jonathan and Mervyn Watson, *Rooted in the soil: A history of cottage farming and allotments in Ireland since 1750* (Dublin, 2012).
 Burchardt, Jeremy, *The allotment movement in England, 1793–1873* (London, 2002).
 Comerford, R.V., *The Fenians in context, Irish politics and society, 1848–82* (Dublin, 1978 and 1994).
 Crossman, Virginia, *Politics, pauperism and power in the late nineteenth century* (Manchester, 2006).
 Donnelly, James S. Jr., ‘Cork market: Its role in the nineteenth century butter trade’, *Studia Hibernica*, no. 11 (1971), pp. 130–53.
 Donnelly, James S. Jr., ‘The journals of Sir John Benn-Walsh relating to the management of his Irish estates, 1823–64’, *Journal of the Cork Archaeological and Historical Society* (July–December 1974), pp. 86–123.
 Donnelly, James S. Jr., ‘The Irish agricultural depression of 1859–64’, *Irish Economic and Social History* iii (1976), pp. 33–54.
 Egan, P.K., *The parish of Ballinasloe, its history from the earliest time to the present century* (Dublin, 1960; Galway, 1994).

- Feingold, W.L., *The revolt of the tenantry: The transformation of local government in Ireland, 1872–1886* (Boston, 1984).
- Finnegan, Pat, *Loughrea, that den of infamy: The Land War in County Galway, 1879–82* (Dublin, 2014).
- Hood, Susan, 'The landlord-planned nexus at Strokestown, county Roscommon: A case study of an Irish estate town, c. 1660–c. 1925' (PhD thesis, University of Ulster, 1994).
- Hoppen, K.T., *Elections, politics and society in Ireland, 1832–1887* (London, 1984).
- Hoppen, K.T., 'Landownership and power in the nineteenth-century Ireland: The decline of an elite', in Ralph Gibson and Martin Blinkhorn (eds.), *Landownership and power in modern Europe* (London, 1991), pp. 164–80.
- Hynes, Eugene, *Knock: The Virgin's apparition in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Cork, 2009).
- Jordan, Donald, *Land and popular politics in Ireland: County Mayo from the Plantation to the Land War* (Cambridge, 1994).
- Kelly, M.J., *The Fenian ideal and Irish nationalism, 1882–1916* (Suffolk, 2006).
- Kennedy, Liam and Peter M. Solar, *Irish agriculture: A price history from the mid eighteenth century to the eve of the First World War* (Dublin, 2007).
- Malcomson, A.P.W., *Virtues of a wicked earl: The life and legend of William Sydney Clements, third earl of Leitrim 1806–78* (Dublin, 2009).
- Melvin, Patrick, 'The landed gentry of Galway, 1820–1880' (PhD, Trinity College Dublin, 1991).
- Molloy, Joe (ed.), *The parish of Clontuskert: Glimpses into its past* (Ballinasloe, 2009).
- McGee, Owen, *The I.R.B., The Irish Republican Brotherhood: From the Land League to Sinn Féin* (Dublin, 2007).
- McKenna, Kevin, 'Power, resistance, and ritual: Paternalism on the Clonbrock Estates 1826–1908' (PhD thesis, Maynooth University, 2011).
- McKenna, Kevin, 'Charity, paternalism and power on the Clonbrock estates, county Galway, 1833–44', in Laurence M. Geary and Oonagh Walsh (eds.), *Philanthropy in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2015), pp. 97–114.
- Mac Philib, Seamus, 'The Irish landlord system in folk tradition: Impact and image' (PhD thesis, UCD, 1990).
- Richards, Eric, *The Highland clearances* (Edinburgh, 2015).
- Scott, Pauline, 'Rural radicals or mercenary men? Resistance to evictions on the Glinsk/Creggs estate of Allan Pollok', in Brian Casey (ed.), *Defying the law of the land: Agrarian radicals in Irish history* (Dublin, 2013), pp. 65–79.
- Scott, Pauline, 'Evictions on the Glinsk estate of Allan and Margaret Pollok in the 1850s' (PhD thesis, NUI Galway, 2014).
- Solow, Barbara, *The land question and the Irish economy, 1870–1903* (Cambridge, MA, 1971).

- Tolstoy, Leo, *How much land does a man need?* (London, 2015).
- Vaughan, W.E., *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford, 1994).
- Whelan, Irene, 'The Bible gentry: Evangelical religion, aristocracy and the new moral order in the early nineteenth century', in Crawford Gribben and Andrew R. Homes (eds.), *Protestant millennialism, evangelicalism and Irish society* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp. 52–82.



CHAPTER 3

The Third Earl of Clancarty, Proselytism and Evangelicalism in Ballinasloe in the 1850s and 1860s

1 INTRODUCTION

The Sisters of Mercy carried hope and rejoicing to the desolate hearth, and poured oil on the wounds of the afflicted. The Scripture readers excited rancorous feelings and angry dissensions. The Sisters of Mercy brought with them the glad tidings of heavenly hope and conciliation; the Scripture readers brought exasperation mockery, and insult in their trail [sic]. The Sisters of Mercy were the harbingers of peace and serenity; the Scripture readers were the missionaries of discord and uncharitableness.¹

[T]he petty czar of Garbally has again been despotic against the nuns... the great ingredient in the religion of Lord Clancarty is a hatred of papists.²

There were landlords that used the Famine as a pretext to clear uneconomic holdings and to reorganise their estates in the name of improvement, but others did not do this. East Galway landlords Lord Clonbrock, Lord Ashtown and Allan Pollok were representative of the new wave of ‘second landlordism’ that emerged in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars.³ Socially and politically conservative, these east Galway landlords proved to be adept at effective estate management and succeeded in augmenting the solvency of their estates in the post-Famine period while other landlords were going bankrupt. The previous chapter discussed how paternalism fostered a loyal tenantry. Paternalism could have a religious hue and this was the case upon a number of estates; in this chapter attention will focus upon proselytism around Ballinasloe, as religion could also be a prism to highlight cultural differences between a mainly Roman

Catholic tenantry and a mainly Protestant landlord class. The consistent proselytising efforts of the third Earl of Clancarty—in conjunction with his various charitable and relief works—were frowned upon, especially by the clergy and Catholic press, such as the *Galway Vindicator* and *Western Star*. Despite his benevolence and attempts at improving the condition of his tenants, Clancarty's refusal to allow the Sisters of Mercy to enter the Ballinasloe workhouse risked a breakdown of order on the estate which heretofore had been in place. Such tensions were a result of Catholics and Protestants being convinced 'that their religion—and only theirs—was the one true faith'.⁴ Social memory did not endear the family to a popular legacy as a result of this, as folk stories tend to undermine the family for their evangelical zeal and even private commentary amongst the Galway landlords and it also became part of the folklore locally. One such example was a story collected from Mrs Scanlon of Creagh, Ballinasloe in 1935. She stated that when the Sisters of Mercy convent was built in the 1850s, Lady Clancarty ordered that trees be planted around it, because she found the edifice to be an eyesore, but the trees 'grew thin and lanky and failed to fulfil their purpose'. Such a story, or one similar to it, was repeated on five occasions to the Folklore Commission schools collection. In fact, the stories collected do not criticise the Earls of Clancarty; rather odium is directed towards the third Earl's wife. Another story claimed that Clancarty allowed some nuns to use his carriage to return to the convent after alighting from the train at Ballinasloe, but once his wife heard this, she ordered that the carriage be disinfected before she would use it. While such stories need to be treated with circumspection, they are indicative of the power of popular memory regarding attitudes towards landlords and are significant in this exploration of attitudes towards the Clancarty family between 1851 and 1914.⁵

From the late eighteenth century, the Catholic Church in Ireland began expanding more and more into the lives of its flock.⁶ This became more pronounced upon the return of Paul Cullen from Rome in 1850. Cullen was an agent of great change who typified the vast evolution that came over the spirit of the Catholic Church in the following decades as 'his ascetic temper cut him off from the cultivated, easy, tolerant ecclesiastics of a past generation'. For him, Rome was everything and he 'governed in a perpetual state of siege'.⁷ His convening of the Synod of Thurles 'proceeded to legislate a comprehensive canonical frame that would provide for a thoroughgoing and radical transformation of the Irish church in a

generation'. It laid the foundations for the transformation of the church into an ultramontane institution, and the appointments made to the vacant sees following the arrival of Cullen helped shape the Irish Catholic Church into a more singular institution.⁸ Obedience was prized most in ultramontan-ism. Eamon Duffy commented 'that militant, Roman, globalised understanding of Catholicism, impatient of local idiosyncrasy, resolutely centralising' was not created out of thin air; it had existed as a theory since the council of Trent, but following the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the Congress of Vienna of 1814–1815 it became a more visible form of administration for the universal global church as it coalesced around the figure of the Pope.⁹ The fact that Cullen had been exposed to ultramontan-ism early in his formation in Rome was critical as the 'contours of his inner life were laid down in the context of his Roman education and experience'.¹⁰

Cullen had a genuine concern for the condition of the poor and he was aware that they were at risk of proselytising from Protestant missionaries, as Connemara—in west County Galway—became a key battleground in the post-Famine period. He believed that the authorities were irresponsible in their responses to poverty, but 'the message of Cullen in the face of extreme poverty focused more on an appeal for compassion from the oppressors of the poor rather than a call for justice from them'.¹¹ He realised that the poor were susceptible to proselytism, in particular in workhouses. This is one reason why religious sisters such as the Sisters of Mercy engaged in pastoral care in workhouses in order to counteract any threat to the souls of its inmates. Furthermore, the overly Protestant make-up of the Poor Law administration across the country was offensive to Cullen and the hierarchy as they felt they were not being effectively responsive to the spiritual needs of the overwhelmingly Catholic population of the workhouse system. Catholic chaplains were aggrieved at what they perceived to be a lack of support from the authorities in carrying out their work.

The modernising zeal of landlords was at variance with the traditional way of life of their tenants, and efforts to find a middle ground could prove challenging, especially if they were coupled with an evangelical fervour. In order to understand these tensions, Miriam Moffitt suggested that: 'from the viewpoint of a mid-nineteenth century evangelical, popery or Romanism was not based on the scriptures but was grounded on a collection of orders, rites and traditions, while evangelicalism was firmly based on the word of God'.¹² Therefore, the repeated attempts to have the

Sisters of Mercy admitted to the Ballinasloe workhouse represented open defiance against Clancarty and were the first serious threat to the total domination of landlords in political affairs in post-Famine east Galway. At this time, the continued extremities of depravation in the west of Ireland, especially in Connemara and Achill, saw proselytising activity continue, as converts were sought and desperate people 'jumped' in order to take care of their families; therefore, the sincerity of the overwhelming number of conversions was questionable. This activity was carried out by the Irish Church Missions under the direction of the English evangelical Alexander Dallas, whose religious views were offensive to moderate Protestant thought.¹³ Rome was concerned with Archbishop MacHale's intransigence regarding the spiritual threat being posed to the poor in the west and his failure to respond appropriately to what they saw as a threat to the welfare of his flock, and Cullen was horrified by McHale's actions. Cullen's distrust towards Protestants was further fuelled by evangelical activity in the west of Ireland, resulting in him becoming almost paranoid about them, and his extensive correspondence to Rome and bishops across the English-speaking world reflects his suspicion.¹⁴

The third Earl of Clancarty was accused of being manipulative by attempting to carry out a proselytising mission in the workhouse and refusing to allow the Sisters of Mercy admission at the same time. Recently discovered correspondence amongst landlords also reflects this opinion amongst his landed brethren, and their frustrations were exasperated by his stubbornness. P.K. Egan further stated that the Clancarty family had engaged in an onslaught against the Catholic residents of Ballinasloe and their evangelicalism caused antagonism in the region because they were 'using all the influence of their position...to win proselytes from Catholicism'. This statement by Egan reflected his own bias as a Catholic priest and is an unnuanced view of this being a heroic struggle of Catholics in their efforts to hold steadfastly to their faith in the face of the activities of an evangelical bigot. Furthermore, his assessment places a rather complicated issue into a very simplistic confessional paradigm that needs to be treated with caution.¹⁵

This chapter deals with four key events in Ballinasloe between 1851 and 1863 that relate to Clancarty's evangelical fervour, namely: provocative proselytism on the estate, souperism, educational provisions and the consequences of the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy in Ballinasloe. His obstinacy regarding their admittance to assist the Catholic chaplain in tending to the spiritual needs of the Catholic paupers resident there, and to

counteract his proselytising mission, had repercussions for the family, such as Lord Dunlo's bid to be elected as an MP in 1859. These events saw landlord dominance of local affairs under his purview being challenged more forthrightly. This was carried out within the pages of local newspapers such as the *Galway Vindicator* and *Western Star*, who challenged Clancarty in his activity, and the *Galway Express*, the only Protestant newspaper in Galway, which supported Clancarty. This saw the emergence of a provincial public sphere that manifested itself through the local press and, by the time of the Land War, the public meeting and the local Catholic/nationalist press became part of a Catholic counter-charge, infused in part by the return of Paul Cullen to Ireland. As well as being an ecclesiastical mission, the Cullenisation of Ireland was a real threat to aristocratic power and assisted in the rising power both of the Catholic clergy and the Catholic middle class in provincial Ireland.¹⁶

2 PROVOCATIVE PROSELYTISM ON THE CLANCARTY ESTATE AND WITHIN THE BALLINASLOE WORKHOUSE

Evangelicalism was a biblically orientated faith and became popular amongst members of the aristocracy in the aftermath of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. This conservative piety underpinned their sense of self as they sought to reassert their hegemony as many believed that Protestantism saved Great Britain from the same fate as the French aristocrats. 'British aristocrats in particular [were] to look again at the utility of the Christian religion as the binding agent of a stable social order and a guarantor of good government'.¹⁷ Two million people were nearing destitution in Ireland by the end of the eighteenth century. Louis Cullen argued: 'much of the promise of betterment in the eighteenth century was to be undone by a rural crisis whose first signs were already evident in the late eighteenth century'. The spectre of poverty was either due to harvest failures or low prices, with prices from the 1740s tending to favour the seller.¹⁸ The subsistence crisis that took place between 1782 and 1784 was prevented from degenerating into a famine thanks to private relief initiatives granted by charities and benevolent landlords, though 'not all were prepared to combat distress actively'.¹⁹ Such crises continued into the nineteenth century, and in 1804 a 'select committee of the House of Commons respecting the poor in Ireland' was established, with the objective of exploring the possibility of creating some form of poor relief in Ireland. It came to the conclusion that a Poor Law system similar to

Britain's would be injurious to Ireland. Further select committees in 1819, 1823 and 1830 also came to no real consensus as to how to tackle the ever-growing and serious problem of poverty in the country. 1836 saw the government establish relief works in order to develop resources and provide employment to the destitute masses. There were few incentives for politicians to tackle the issues of Irish poverty when they had not addressed the issues pertaining to the English Poor Law.²⁰

Poor Law was only one aspect of a whole structure of relief and there were myriad difficulties surrounding its implementation as some peers were resistant to it. In 1838, the anti-Poor Law Irish peers and MPs met under the leadership of an east Galway landlord, the first Marquess of Clanricarde, to discuss its implementation. While they agreed that relief should be provided to the aged and infirm, these were the only reforms they would support. On the other hand, Clanricarde's neighbour, the third Earl of Clancarty, supported the development of a comprehensive Poor Law system, which saw an ideological chasm emerge between the two men that was never reconciled, and some of the implications of this are discussed in the next chapter. Clancarty was inspired by the Christian ethic of charity, possessing an idea that it could provide necessary shelter for the poor.²¹ He was part of a new breed of landlord that was committed to the moral welfare of the tenantry, and 'the economic dimension of the new moral order involved a more streamlined system of estate management, especially the punctual payment of rent and the personal commitment of the landlord to the welfare of the tenant'.²² Clanricarde's sympathies lay with the prevailing free-market ideology and he was of the opinion that the implementation of the Poor Law as proposed by the government would impose excessive rates on already overstretched landlords, and would aggravate rather than alleviate poverty.²³

While the construction of workhouses was initially frowned upon, they soon became critical to the operation of the Poor Law following the Irish Poor Law Act of 1838. They were mostly located in market towns with a wide rural hinterland, and Ballinasloe saw its first admission on 1 January 1842.²⁴ While there were strict guidelines on admissions to the workhouse, interpretations of poverty varied across the country and according to the ideological inclination of the guardians or staff, and in evangelical language were laced with judgemental overtones as to the character of the people who entered the workhouse.²⁵

The gaping wounds left on the collective psyche of the country following the devastation of the Famine were manipulated by some fanatical

elements within Protestantism that sought to attract converts amongst the desperately poor. While some may have been sincere in their efforts to seek converts, there was a strong element of sinister manipulation. Ewen Cameron has argued that the Free Church of Scotland was seen to be intertwined with crofter identity in the early nineteenth-century Highlands. It was perceived that they were receptive to the evangelical message because of the social and psychological traumas associated with the collapse of the old order, and the Free Church established itself as a stout defender of the people initially and fundraised for Highland Famine relief.²⁶ In Ireland, Desmond Bowen has argued that: 'the poor people of Ireland in the post-Famine years were to find themselves fought over by fanatical men—men who talked of concern for the soul, but showed great interest in body counts'.²⁷

In the early nineteenth century, the sense of foreboding of the 'Second Reformation' presented a sense of apocalyptic doom, despite the new-found confidence in Great Britain following the Napoleonic Wars. Conservative piety now had a radical social reform that would transcend class, and this was resolute. 'Defenders of the existing social order and advocates of a free market economy combined to produce what in effect was a new moral order designed to accommodate the political and economic realities of the nineteenth century'.²⁸ Similar efforts made by their brethren in Ireland were more limited and left a bitter legacy as they engaged in deliberately provocative proselytism and tried to couch it in the language of evangelicalism, thus deliberately misinterpreting sincere evangelical Protestants. The more zealous proselytisers saw this as a perfect opportunity to attract converts, believing that the Catholic Church had failed to properly sustain its flock. Jacinta Prunty quotes a contemporary witness to this activity: 'two hundred thousand Catholics! What a mass of souls wandering on in ignorance of their danger rushing onto destruction and no cry to warn them of their danger, no hand outstretched to save. Something must be done!'²⁹ This activity was led by Alexander Dallas, the confrontational founder of the Irish Church Missions. Members of the Irish Society remarked: 'how naive...his assumption was that English middle-class morality and evangelical religious practice would have universal appeal among the lower classes in Ireland'.³⁰

Dallas' divisive hubris isolated him from both Irish Catholics and evangelicals, as the Irish Church Mission could be almost forceful in its efforts to attract converts to evangelical Protestantism, and 'if the people could not be converted to evangelical Protestantism, the Irish Church Mission

had no interest in providing an education for them'.³¹ Such aggressive tactics deepened inter-faith tensions, especially in Connemara, where their activity was concentrated.³² This threat to the spiritual well-being alarmed the Catholic hierarchy.³³ Clancarty's efforts were symptomatic of the evangelical zeal of his family and his endeavours at improvement were reflective of overt displays of Protestant evangelicalism mixed with philanthropy, which began in Dublin in the eighteenth century.³⁴

Horrendous conditions endured by the vast majority of the poor at the time would have tempted many to convert in order to improve their situation, especially considering the frequently inadequate response of Catholic clergy to poverty. Offering soup as a means of alleviating distress and attracting converts garnered much contemporary attention and hostility. M.C. Ní Ghiobúin defined 'souperism' as 'a system of gaining adherents or camp followers to Protestantism by bribery or other means', such as through food or monetary awards. 'Jumpers' converted from Catholics to Protestantism in the hope that their material well-being would improve.³⁵ 'Soupers' were seen to be of deficient character and were equated with the devil by Catholic clergy due to their provocative proselytising methods. Rumours of landlords such as Lord Clancarty being involved in souperism were malicious attempts to tarnish them as bigots and reflected public opinion at the time. Two apparent cases of souperism are discussed below and, while there is no definitive evidence to suggest that Clancarty was involved in either, contemporaries believed that he had some implicit influence.³⁶

In January 1851 the Roman Catholic chaplain of the Ballinasloe workhouse discovered that Catholic children were in possession of Protestant religious books and accused the Protestant school mistress of proselytising. While curious to know how this occurred, the chaplain was of the opinion that by not having Catholic books available, the board of guardians was deliberately neglecting the religious instruction of Catholic children and they were at risk of unwelcome Protestant influence; he also believed that Protestant children were getting preferential treatment in the workhouse. His efforts to have the offending material locked away were not entertained by the board of guardians as they stated that doing this would be an unacceptable affront to Protestantism, but it did seek an assurance from the school mistress that such an occurrence would not happen in the future.³⁷

In May 1852 Patrick Nestor was charged with assaulting Stephen Johnstone, who had been employed by Reverend John Cotton Walker—the Church of Ireland rector of Ballinasloe between 1845 and 1876—to

stand outside Nestor's bakery with a banner stating the benefits converting to Protestantism would bring. When Johnstone refused to desist, he was forcibly removed and the following day Walker returned with the boy and demanded an apology from Nestor for this action. They were again forcibly removed from the premises after refusing to leave. John Larkin stated that Johnstone's placard was offensive and deliberately provocative and counter-charges of assault against Johnston and Walker were dismissed by the all-Protestant magistrates. Because of this verdict, they were demonised as 'Orange magistrates'.³⁸ Sectarianism was endemic in Ballinasloe according to the *Galway Packet* as the courts were dominated by members of the local Protestant elite: 'the means by which the proselytising missionaries attempt to achieve their ends, are so grossly unchristian, so mean, petty and virulent, as to excite the disgust and animadversion of all beholders, save the most besotted fanatics'.³⁹

A former employee of Lord Clancarty's, Mrs Kenny, left her children in the workhouse in March 1854. Prior to this she had written to Walker and stated her desire to have her children raised as Protestants. The Catholic chaplain of the workhouse refused to accept the veracity of these events, in particular because Kenny could not be contacted to verify Walker's assertion.⁴⁰ John Curley⁴¹ testified that Kenny had lodged with him for four years and she always brought her children to Catholic mass because she thought it was 'her duty'. He argued that Kenny had used Walker to ensure the material well-being of her children and would not leave them in the care of Protestants on a long-term basis, even for 'hundreds of pounds'.⁴² Reverend Francis Hassard testified that when Kenny left Clancarty's employment she asked him to take care of her children, telling him that she wanted them to be raised as Protestants. This delighted Clancarty because he thought Protestantism was a truer religion than Catholicism.⁴³

Curley accused Walker of paying Kenny money subsequent to her children entering the workhouse. This could have been construed as a souper-style activity, but no evidence supports this. It was further alleged that she met Fr Dillon at the train station and informed him that she wished her children to be raised as Protestants. Another witness, John Abbot met with Kenny and she also informed him that she wanted her children to be raised as Protestants. Alderman John Reynolds dismissed this as flawed evidence, stating that Abbot was not certain of Mrs Kenny's or her children's religion. Walker denied granting her assistance on the condition that she would raise her children as Protestants, insisting that the charity

undertaken by members of the Established Church was extended to all children, irrespective of their religion, and no pressure was exerted upon them to convert.⁴⁴

Kenny did not object to the children being enrolled as Protestants when they attended school at Creagh. While they received no financial inducements for attending this estate school, they were alleged to have received a shilling a week for attending another estate school in Ballinasloe town, and Alderman John Reynolds claimed this was for financial gain.⁴⁵ Further contradictory stories saw them being accused of reciting Protestant prayers, but not in front of their mother, while also attending Catholic services and reciting Catholic prayers as taught by their mother.⁴⁶

Kenny's eldest daughter further compounded the confusion regarding their religion and testified that, while she never attended Protestant services with her mother, she now believed she was one. The board of guardians concurred and the children's ages were entered into the registry to reflect this.⁴⁷ It is likely that Kenny came under the influence of 'souters', who sought to exploit the precarious and vulnerable position in which she found herself. By agreeing to have her children raised in the Protestant faith, Kenny thought that she was guaranteeing their material welfare, though whether she sincerely wanted them to convert is unclear.

Walker believed this investigation evolved into an effort to sully his reputation. He accused Alderman Reynolds of instigating this and sent a letter to the board of guardians outlining his grievances. He said that the investigation was indicative of intolerant attitudes in Ballinasloe and requested that his letter defending his character be entered into the minutes of the board of guardians; the board agreed that he had been treated unfairly and his correspondence was entered into the minutes.⁴⁸ This reflected the Protestant make-up of the board and an implicit hostility towards Catholicism.

Soon after this, another investigation determining the religion of a child under the care of the board of guardians was established. Mrs Gyles left her daughter Ellen in the workhouse in January 1854. She subsequently wrote to Walker asking that she be raised as a Protestant, but she was entered into the registry as a Catholic. Her sister (who was twenty-two) stated that her parents were always Protestants and asked that her sister's religion be changed to indicate as such. Following lengthy discussion, Andrew Banfield proposed that Ellen be registered as a Protestant, as was customary in law, and this proposal was accepted.⁴⁹

3 THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION IN THE 1850s AND 1860s

The Irish Society was established in 1818 with the aim of '[making] the truth of God's blessed word known to the Irish people' by preaching scripture to them in the vernacular. The society also taught poor Irish speakers how to read, using the Bible as a textbook.⁵⁰ Clancarty praised the 'positive impact' that the society was having upon the evangelical movement in Ireland at a meeting held in Ballinasloe in April 1854. He further praised it for spreading knowledge of the Bible, which reflected the enjoyment of Protestant liberty by those who converted.⁵¹

It was alleged that there were mass conversions to Protestantism between 1850 and 1853 and that Clancarty wanted such conversions to occur in Ballinasloe.⁵² John Derry was bishop of Clonfert between 1847 and 1870 and it was during his episcopacy that significant evangelical activity took place on the Clancarty estate.⁵³ While few appeared to take the rhetoric of evangelical preachers seriously, Derry condemned the provocative methods employed by proselytisers, calling them 'mercenary missionaries of heresy'. He described Lord Clancarty as 'a landlord notorious for his hereditary hatred of Catholicity' and said he had played an important role in the revitalised evangelical movement, even though most of its activity was concentrated in Connemara and Dublin after the Famine. He accused Clancarty of 'attacking the [Catholic] faith' and terrorising his tenants into sending their children to estate schools. Derry was disappointed with Catholics who converted to Protestantism in order for their children to receive an education, accusing them of treating their religion with contempt. The following quote reflects his awareness of the challenges presented to him as the local bishop:

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the faith is not attacked here with those and the other kindred agencies usually employed against it...Schools under the Church Education Society are multiplied in a diocese in which none can be expected to attend them but the children of Catholic parents. Industrial education is perverted into a trap for religion. A landlord...upholds in one neighbourhood as many as four proselytising schools.⁵⁴

Clancarty said that conversion to Protestantism would be a guarantee of improving material conditions for Catholics, but if they failed to convert

‘they could continue in serfdom while they had the means of obtaining liberty’.⁵⁵ He asserted that the original Reformation failed because Elizabeth I did not utilise the vernacular effectively. This paralleled the thoughts of Alexander Dallas, who wanted to evangelise to the entire country in order to ‘accomplish the unfinished business of the Reformation in Ireland’.⁵⁶ Clancarty said that Catholicism did not give sufficient spiritual guidance to its members and was a false doctrine, which reflected the opinion of other evangelicals such as Dallas and Edward Nangle, the founder of the Achill Mission. The Irish Society believed that there was something lacking in the faith of Catholics because they did not read scripture, and Irish Society missions attempted to counteract this while teaching the Irish lower classes how to read by using the Bible as a text.⁵⁷ Major Seymour of Somerset House, Clontuskert—and a neighbouring landlord of Clancarty—called ‘Romanism’ a ‘soul destroying system’, arguing that it was subversive to Christian morality and that it was essential that it be pushed out of its strongholds. He praised the ‘principles of Protestant truth, as opposed to popish error...Popery...should be destroyed in the height of her power by the brightness of the coming of Jesus’.⁵⁸

Catholic education in Connaught was under-developed because Archbishop John MacHale of Tuam was an incredibly hostile opponent to the provision of non-denominational education. His stance on this important issue influenced his suffragan bishops and left large numbers of Catholics with no alternative but to turn to Protestant educational facilities. The intransigence of Catholics and Protestants in relation to the provision of educational facilities to the poor resulted in the delayed development of adequate facilities in the West of Ireland. MacHale’s exclusion of national schools from his archdiocese impacted Connaught and provided fertile ground for proselytisers, especially as they began to reorientate their proselytising activities towards children⁵⁹ and Ballinasloe became a focal point between the Catholic clergy and evangelicals for the ‘minds of the youth’.⁶⁰

The Irish Missionary College was established in 1846 by Rev James Lancaster, secretary of the Connaught Auxiliary of the Irish Society in Portnick, Ballinasloe for the purposes of instructing Church of Ireland clergy in the Irish language and proselytising to monoglot Irish speakers.⁶¹ It had seventeen pupils by 1850 and its first principal was Rev R.H. Orr.⁶² Clancarty was a major benefactor to its establishment and contributed a sizeable portion of the £3000 expended on its construction, saying that it had a national objective: ‘edifices [in the town] are only of

local interest, not so the Irish Missionary College'.⁶³ Clancarty claimed that the Catholic Church failed to provide for the education of its adherents, which resulted in Protestant evangelical associations, such as the Kildare Place Society, establishing schools.⁶⁴ The Irish Missionary College closed well before the end of the nineteenth century and served as the Clonfert Diocesan School between 1902 and the diocese's purchase of Garbally House in 1922.⁶⁵ It declined, partially because of the arrogance and obnoxious personality of Alexander Dallas, whose Irish Church Mission came to dominate evangelical and Bible-related teaching in Ireland; the Irish Society was almost helpless to resist because of its poorly organised state.⁶⁶

4 THE SISTERS OF MERCY AND THE BALLINASLOE WORKHOUSE

Because the pre-Cullen Catholic Church was badly organised, it presented numerous possibilities for proselytism. Cullen's zeal in reorganising the Catholic Church in Ireland hindered any chance proselytisers may have had.⁶⁷ His episcopacy saw a substantial growth in the number of nuns in Ireland, and they played a significant role in counteracting Protestant proselytisers. In 1800, there were only 122 nuns in Ireland, but this increased thirteenfold in fifty years and resulted in there being 1500 nuns in the country by 1850.⁶⁸ Catherine McAuley established the Sisters of Mercy in 1828 with the intention of bringing comfort to the sick and the dying. She believed that poverty was the chief danger in nineteenth-century society and was adamant that those who joined the Sisters of Mercy would have 'commitment to outgoing merciful service, to the poor, sick, homeless, dying and uneducated'.⁶⁹ This philanthropic work was praised by the Catholic Church. Rev T.A. Finlay S.J. said: 'it was a rare providence...that God chooses for the great enterprises of his services, individuals whose natural gifts are wholly out of proportion with the task appointed them'.⁷⁰ W.H. Lecky commented: 'in the Sisters of Mercy, the religious orders of Catholicism have produced one of the most perfect types of all womanhood'.⁷¹

Bishop John Derry of Clonfert invited the Sisters of Mercy to Ballinasloe in 1853 to establish a convent, tend to the poor of the workhouse and provide Catholic educational facilities in Ballinasloe. Their arrival was also an attempt to bolster a Catholic counter-charge against proselytisers who were still trying to attract converts, especially as child-centred proselytism

was seen to be a more effective method, though the establishment of Catholic schools lowered the risks of conversions.⁷² Because Ballinasloe was the major urban centre in east Galway, it attracted both large proselytising missions and the Catholic counter-charge, with Derry's actions paralleling what Cullen was attempting in Dublin, although on a much smaller and less sophisticated scale. Derry hoped that the Sisters of Mercy would succeed in counteracting the proselytising mission that Clancarty and Walker were attempting to establish in the workhouse. Both Derry and Reynolds were at the forefront of the campaign to have the sisters attend to the poor in the Ballinasloe workhouse. Neither man envisaged the numerous efforts Clancarty would make to block their admission. What was initially perceived to be a mere formality became a decade-long saga that dominated the local press in Ballinasloe between 1853 and 1863 and is a salient example of the shifting power structures emerging in the region.⁷³

Catholics were bemused by this hostility, especially when compared to the warm reception received by the sisters in Ennis upon their arrival in 1853. There, they attended the workhouse every Saturday and Sunday to console the sick and dying and provide religious instructions to the resident Catholic paupers. On 20 July 1855 they were allowed to attend the Kilrush workhouse every Sunday for the same purpose, with two Protestant members of the board of guardians, Francis Coffey and Randal Borough, proposing and seconding the motion for their admittance, believing that the paupers would benefit greatly from this. The staff of the workhouse at Kilrush admired the work they carried out there; the medical officer Dr Elliot said: 'no doubt there is something wonderful in your religion...it astonished me to see ladies of high social position and refined education...so devoted to the sick...witness the calm resignation of the poor...with which they leave the world. I can see nothing like it in Protestantism'.⁷⁴

Clancarty refused to bow to pressure to have them admitted and stated that their work in other workhouses was irrelevant to the situation in Ballinasloe; he did not develop this statement any further.⁷⁵ His position as chairman of the board of guardians ensured that other board members concurred with him on this. The 900 Protestants in Ballinasloe, out of a population of 7700, had the influence, status and social level of an oligarchy that allowed Clancarty to control affairs in the community.⁷⁶ The Sisters of Mercy were a real threat to his control over his Catholic tenants and this débâcle saw the control that he exerted over the running of the workhouse come under more intense scrutiny as the 1850s progressed.

The local press commented on the controversy and Clancarty's efforts to control the entry of those tending to the pastoral needs of workhouse residents. The degree of influence he held over the running of the workhouse was controversial even though he argued that he was adhering to the rigours of the Poor Law.⁷⁷

There were 238 Catholics and sixteen Protestants in the workhouse when this controversy began.⁷⁸ The *Warden of Galway* contended that there was a sinister plot led by Fr Dillon to proselytise to Protestant paupers in the workhouse, despite them only making up 6 per cent of the workhouse population. Naturally Dillon dismissed this and stated that their presence was necessary to tend to the educational and spiritual needs of the Catholic paupers and assist the staff there in tending to them.⁷⁹ An attempt was made to allow scripture readers to enter the workhouse under the same terms and conditions as the Sisters of Mercy in July 1854 when Bridget O'Flaherty and Lucinda Blake asked to be admitted to the workhouse to proselytise to Catholic paupers. However, overwhelming hostility from Catholic board members prevented this from happening.⁸⁰

Walker dismissed Dillon's assertions that Catholic paupers were being neglected in the workhouse, arguing that Clancarty had provided sufficiently for the educational needs of his tenants and residents in the workhouse. Clancarty's son, Robert le Poer Trench expressed his annoyance at Fr Dillon's attempts to introduce this motion without giving the requisite two weeks' notice, believing that he was overstepping the influence he could exert at board of guardians meetings. Walker argued that if the admission of the sisters was sanctioned then it would be an official sanctioning of proselytism, which was against the regulations of the workhouse. This seems to have been a blind spot for some of the Protestant board members as they failed to see how their demands could be seen as hypocritical.⁸¹

Local newspapers helped shape public opinion against Lord Clancarty regarding this matter, and their importance is manifested throughout this book as they acted as a form of provincial public sphere for many events. For example, the *Galway Vindicator* was contemptuous of Clancarty's excessive influence in ensuring the defeat of these motions: 'we have not patience...[with] one of these dried specimens of an effete Protestantism'.⁸² Both Clancarty and Lord Clonbrock demanded that a list of all the sisters be compiled to reduce the risk of impersonation, with Clonbrock further arguing that they would be a disruptive influence. Reynolds was disappointed that no permanent member of the board proposed a motion

allowing the sisters to enter the workhouse, resulting in him having to travel from Boyle to propose it.⁸³

After the defeat of this motion, the *Galway Vindicator* again expressed its disappointment at Clancarty's interference and calling him the 'petty czar of Garbally', implying that he was over-reaching his position as chairman of the board of guardians by acting in a demagogic fashion, and contemporary opinion was certainly frustrated with his behaviour even though it was consistent with his own religious beliefs.⁸⁴ J. Donghue, a Catholic member of the board, voted against the sisters' admittance, but the *Galway Vindicator* believed the only reason he did this was because he was an employee of Lord Clancarty. Clancarty and his fellow Protestant board members were accused of being completely disgusted by their ethos: 'the Clancartyism of the Ballinasloe guardians has denied to the Catholic inmates the benefits of the visits of the Sisters of Mercy'.⁸⁵ Following this, Clancarty believed that there was an attempt to tarnish him as a bigot and he was determined to bring this controversy to a conclusion.⁸⁶

Reynolds argued that the Sisters of Mercy's mission was to assist the paupers because they were 'ladies by birth' and they could bring meaning and discipline to residents in the workhouse. He drew upon the example of Goldenbridge, County Dublin where they had the inmates gardening and providing laundry services, and also claimed the paupers of the Athlone workhouse benefited from their presence. It was argued that the extensive pauperism in Ballinasloe led to increased immorality in the town which was reflective of the moral undertones regarding poverty amongst Protestant and Catholic middle and upper classes. Reynolds and Fr Dillon had hoped that the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy would restore morality, though Dunlo claimed that they had failed to do this.⁸⁷

This decade-old débâcle came to an end in 1863 when Lords Ashtown and Clonbrock turned against Lord Clancarty and agreed that the level of public support felt by the Sisters of Mercy meant that it was no longer feasible to reject their entry.⁸⁸ It was felt that Lord Clancarty had abused his authority on the board of guardians by being over-zealous in his attempts to convert the residents to Protestantism, which alienated his family from the Catholic tenantry on the estate. His demands to allow scripture readers to enter the workhouse on the same terms as the Sisters of Mercy were not necessarily proportionate, considering that 6 per cent of the residents were Protestants. While he had a great desire to attract converts to Protestantism, many converts recanted their conversion once their situation improved.⁸⁹

There were members of the Established Church who were uncomfortable with the over-zealous activities of some missionary preachers and elements of the evangelical movement. By 1864, reputable churchmen found these activities were having a negative impact on their religion, with no concrete evidence to support the alleged success of 'souperism' or 'jumperism'. William Higgin, the bishop of Limerick, Ardfert and Aghadoe said: 'the Church (Established Church) should stand forth as the honest and peaceful dispenser of God's word...she should not assume a position of domination and authority over the conscience of those that do not belong to her communion'.⁹⁰

There is little doubt that Lord Clancarty saw the workhouse as a place of great potential to attract converts to Protestantism. Like the Dublin slums, it soon became a battleground for seeking converts. Derry appreciated the failure of the Roman Catholic Church to fully attend to the spiritual needs of its members, saying: 'while the enemy press on with all this activity, past and present, we must admit to our lasting shame and disgrace that is on the Catholic side, there has been enormous supinity, much of which is still with us'.⁹¹

5 COUNTY ELECTION OF 1859

Catholic priests were a resurgent political bloc by the time of the 1857 election and this must have played a role in Dunlo's comprehensive defeat in the 1859 election.⁹² The holding of this election in the midst of the Sisters of Mercy controversy gave the clergy an opportunity to flex their political muscle and challenge the legitimacy of Clancarty's authority. Clancarty supported Sir William Gregory's candidature in the 1857 election because Gregory supported denominational education. This was despite Clancarty's belief that a Protestant landlord had little prospect of being elected in Galway. He approached two other influential east Galway landlords, Lords Dunsandle and Clonbrock, to support Gregory; Dunsandle was not prepared to do so. Nevertheless, Gregory and Sir Thomas John Burke were returned. Dunlo's candidacy attracted some attention, especially as only 38 per cent of county elections were contested between 1852 and 1868.⁹³ 'Lord Dunlo, it appears, is determined to proceed with an ill-advised and fruitless contest...Lord Dunlo must go to the wall or Garbally and there nurse his newly acquired ardour under the orange flag'.⁹⁴ While Dunlo called for 'perfect religious liberty' and a denominational education system that supported the distinct ethos of the

various religions in the country in his election manifesto, a hostile county press was sceptical of his sincerity.⁹⁵

Gregory's parliamentary ability was praised by the *Galway Vindicator* because he supported the rights of Catholics, while Dunlo was accused of trying to unseat him and was called an anti-Catholic ultra-Protestant.⁹⁶ The *Galway Vindicator* argued that Dunlo had to reject the strongly held beliefs of his ancestors if he wanted to have a chance of being elected: 'as long as Lord Dunlo flaunts the orange flag from the towers of Garbally, so long will he be fighting under the enemies' colours'.⁹⁷ Therefore, because of his politico-religious leanings, it was thought that he could never be truly representative of the entire county.

Dunlo was outwardly gracious in defeat and congratulated his opponents, while the *Galway Vindicator* of 14 May 1859 celebrated the rejection of an 'anti-Catholic candidate'.⁹⁸ It advised Dunlo that his standing on the issue of religion would hinder any chance he had of being elected in a subsequent election: 'it would be preposterous to suppose that a Tory and a bigot in religion should represent this great Catholic constituency'. The evangelical zeal of his father made Dunlo anathema to the largely Catholic electorate. Brian Jenkins argued that: 'Clancarty's efforts to capitalise on the Tories' popularity to recapture one of the Galway seats for his immediate family and his party did perturb Gregory',⁹⁹ though such a concern proved to be groundless. Not getting the support of his neighbour and fellow Tory Lord Clonbrock also hindered any hopes of Dunlo being elected.

6 CONCLUSION

He must have the moral courage to renounce the wisdom of his ancestors which spring from the penal laws, Catholic persecution and Protestant ascendancy...My Lord Dunlo, you must 'reform it altogether' be Irish, liberal and reforming—or be 'no officer of mine'; your chance of representing Galway or any other locality will be of the slenderest description...the influence of Garbally house, and the politics of Ballinasloe, are, and will be totally inefficacious in this county, as long as they shall continue of a stamp un-Irish, bigoted, sectarian and Tory.¹⁰⁰

Clancarty and Walker repeatedly asserted that the Sisters of Mercy were under-qualified to tend to the paupers in the workhouse. They came to Ballinasloe in order to provide education to the Catholic poor in the town.

While there were Catholic schools on the estate, tenants were forbidden to send their children to them for a period, and once they were allowed to do so, a financial penalty of six pence was imposed on each family that sent their children to these schools.¹⁰¹ This became reflective of local power struggles between clergy and Protestant evangelicals as they engaged in a battle for the souls of paupers in order to guarantee 'safe passage through the pearly gates'.¹⁰²

Clancarty's zealotry was overbearing to Catholics and it is likely that he was taken aback by the level of defiance to his authority in Ballinasloe. Despite having contrasting religious views to those of his tenants, Clancarty still retained the deference and respect of the community where he lived, though his authority was now beginning to be challenged more forthrightly. Clancarty was a sincere evangelical because he would not or could not coerce his tenants into converting to Protestantism, believing that this was the wrong approach as 'he had placed the truth within their reach through the medium of scripture schools', thus reflecting the sincerity of his activity; this was the antithesis to Dallas' approach.¹⁰³ However, P.K. Egan asserted that Lord Clancarty's opposition was because of his family's bigotry towards Roman Catholicism. The eventual admission of the Sisters of Mercy to the Ballinasloe workhouse was a significant development on the Clancarty estate and represented the first significant challenge to the legitimacy of Lord Clancarty's authority over the management of institutions on his estate. This undermined his political power as a landlord and was also an example of the success of Cullen's ultramontane mission. The *Galway Vindicator* called Ballinasloe 'not the green, but the Orange spot of Ireland',¹⁰⁴ and one letter-writer to the *Nation* newspaper stated on 30 June 1863 that Ballinasloe had been the 'metropolis of proselytism in this part of Connaught', yet there is no evidence to suggest that significant levels of conversions took place.¹⁰⁵ This dispute had a polarising effect on relationships between the Protestant oligarchy and the Catholic tenants in the town of Ballinasloe, and underlying sectarian animosity lingered.¹⁰⁶

John Cotton Walker was a significant protagonist in the evangelical movement in Ballinasloe and appeared to have exerted nefarious influence upon Clancarty. His letters and speeches were inflammatory and anti-Catholic and added greatly to the emergence of episodic sectarian tensions during this period. His forceful activities were more reflective of the methodology adopted by the Irish Church Mission and this exacerbated the tensions between the Protestant Clancarty and his overwhelmingly Catholic tenantry. Nevertheless, the distinct lack of violence or lingering

animosity towards the Clancarty family reflected the fact that tenants were deferential to the third Earl of Clancarty. As explored in the previous chapter, he was a responsible and shrewd manager of his estate, and his benevolence during the Famine in particular was deeply appreciated by his tenantry and reflected the moral certitude with which he approached the running of his estate. While Egan has asserted that it was the Catholic priests who succeeded in countermanding Clancarty's evangelical influence, he failed to appreciate that Clancarty was a sincere evangelical and did not seek forceful conversions. Despite being acknowledged as a good landlord, his unwillingness to compromise on the admission of the Sisters of Mercy to the workhouse created a great deal of bitterness towards the family for decades to come, with sectarian rhetoric towards the third Earl surfacing in a most forceful way during the 1872 by-election, and this is discussed in the next chapter.

The *Galway Vindicator* believed that the proselytisers should have only sought willing converts to Protestantism, which Clancarty tried to do, while Catholic/nationalist newspapers characterised him as a sectarian bigot, but there is no definitive evidence to support such an assertion. Nevertheless, such a statement is reflective of the power and influence the press could hold over public opinion, as Clancarty was held up to public odium because of his beliefs and, as will be seen in the next chapter, the Catholic reaction to his activity was frequently against perceived rather than actual injustices. While Clancarty was not explicitly involved in some of the proselytising activities on the estate, his influential thoughts on Protestantism did play an important role.¹⁰⁷

Clancarty had a sincere belief that he was doing the right thing by attempting to attract converts from his tenantry, believing that this was the path to both salvation and improvement in their material well-being. He failed to appreciate the attachment his Catholic tenants appear to have had to their faith and such acts were therefore seen to be a gross imposition. The tenants resisted accordingly, thus signalling the declining influence of the family.

NOTES

1. *Galway Vindicator*, 21 Jan. 1854.
2. *Galway Vindicator*, 23 Jul. 1853.
3. Cathal Smith, 'Apostles of agricultural reform: The Ballinasloe Agricultural Improvement Society in an era of high farming and high

- famine, 1840–1850’, *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 64 (2012), p. 205.
4. Miriam Moffitt, *Soupers and jumpers: The Protestant mission in Connemara, 1848–1937* (Dublin, 2008), p. 7.
 5. *National Folklore Collection, schools manuscript collection* (microfilm consulted at Galway County Library, Nun’s Island), reel 8, pp. 183–93.
 6. Nicholas Wolf, *An Irish-speaking island: State, religion, community, and the linguistic landscape in Ireland, 1770–1870* (Madison, 2014), p. 223.
 7. Emmet Larkin, ‘Paul Cullen: The great ultramontane’, in Dáire Keogh and Albert McDonnell (eds.), *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world* (Dublin, 2011), p. 15.
 8. Larkin, ‘Paul Cullen: The great ultramontane’, pp. 21–5.
 9. Eamon Duffy, ‘The age of Pio Nono: The age of Paul Cullen’, in Keogh and McDonnell (eds.), *Cardinal Paul Cullen*, p. 47; Oliver P. Rafferty, ‘The ultramontane spirituality of Paul Cullen’, in Keogh and McDonnell (eds.), *Cardinal Paul Cullen*, p. 62.
 10. Rafferty, ‘The ultramontane spirituality of Paul Cullen’, p. 62.
 11. Ciarán O’Carroll, ‘The pastoral vision of Paul Cullen’, in Keogh and McDonnell (eds.), *Cardinal Paul Cullen*, p. 121.
 12. Miriam Moffitt, *The society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics, 1849–1950*, (Manchester, 2010), p. 20.
 13. Moffitt, *The society for Irish Church Missions*, p. 20.
 14. Desmond Bowen, *The Protestant crusade in Ireland, 1800–1870: A study of Protestant–Catholic relations between the Act of Union and disestablishment* (Dublin, 1978), p. 259; Moffitt, *The society for Irish Church Missions* (Manchester, 2010), p. 266.
 15. P.K. Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe: Its history from the earliest time to the present* (Dublin, 1960), pp. 177–8.
 16. Emmet Larkin, ‘The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850–75’, *American Historical Review* 77, no. 3 (June 1972), pp. 625–52.
 17. Whelan, ‘The Bible gentry’, p. 55.
 18. L.M. Cullen, *Life in Ireland* (London, 1968), p. 118.
 19. James Kelly, ‘Scarcity and poor relief in eighteenth-century Ireland: The subsistence crisis of 1782–4’, *Irish Historical Studies* 28 (May 1992), pp. 38–62.
 20. Virginia Crossman, *The poor law in Ireland* (Dundalk, 2006), pp. 6–10.
 21. Irene Whelan, ‘The Bible gentry: Evangelical religion, aristocracy, and the new moral order in the early nineteenth century’, in Crawford Gribben and Andrew R. Holmes (eds.), *Protestant millennialism, evangelicalism and Irish society, 1790–2005* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp. 56–8.
 22. Whelan, ‘The Bible gentry’, p. 69.

23. John Joseph Conwell, *A Galway landlord during the Great Famine: Ulick John de Burgh, first Marquis of Clanricarde* (Dublin, 2003), p. 14; Peter Gray, *The making of the Irish Poor Law, 1815–43* (Manchester, 2009), pp. 208–9, 321.
24. Virginia Crossman, *The poor law in Ireland* (Dundalk, 2006), pp. 6–10.
25. John O'Connor, *The workhouses of Ireland: The fate of Ireland's poor* (Dublin, 1995), pp. 94–5.
26. Ewen A. Cameron, 'Embracing the past: The Highlands in nineteenth century Scotland', in D.E. Broun, R.J. Finlay, M. Lynch (eds.), *Image and Identity: The making and re-making of Scotland through the ages* (Edinburgh, 1998), pp. 198–200.
27. Bowen, *The Protestant crusade in Ireland*, p. 207.
28. Whelan, 'The Bible gentry', p. 53.
29. Jacinta Prunty, 'Battleplans and battle grounds: Protestant mission activity in the Dublin slums, 1840s–1880s', in Crawford Gribben and A.R. Holmes (eds.), *Protestant millennialism, evangelicalism and Irish society* (New York, 2006), pp. 124–5.
30. Bowen, *The Protestant crusade in Ireland*, p. 227; for more on the Irish Church Missions, see Moffitt, *The society for Irish Church Missions*.
31. Bowen, *The Protestant crusade in Ireland*, p. 227.
32. Moffitt, *The society for Irish Church Missions*, p. 267.
33. See Larkin, 'The Devotional Revolution in Ireland', pp. 625–52.
34. Irene Whelan, *The Bible war in Ireland: The "Second Reformation" and the Polarization of Protestant-Catholic Relations, 1800–1840* (Dublin, 2005), pp. 12–13.
35. M.C. Ní Ghiobúin, 'Societal change in Achill Island in the nineteenth century' (Ph.D thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2006), p. 137; for more on 'souperism', see Desmond Bowen, *Souperism, myth or reality: A study in souperism* (Cork, 1970) and Moffitt, *Soupers and jumpers* (Dublin, 2008).
36. *Galway Vindicator*, 21 Jan. 1854; Bowen: *Souperism*, p. 136.
37. *Western Star*, 11 Jan. 1851; 25 Jan. 1851.
38. *Galway Packet*, 26 May 1852.
39. *Galway Packet*, 26 May 1852.
40. *Western Star*, 4 Mar. 1854.
41. From Griffith's Valuation, it appears that this John Curley lived at Reeves Lane in Townspark, Ballinasloe. His house was valued at £2 5s. 0d.
42. *Western Star*, 4 Mar. 1854.
43. *Western Star*, 4 Mar. 1854.
44. *Western Star*, 4 Mar. 1854.
45. *Western Star*, 4 Mar. 1854.
46. *Western Star*, 4 Mar. 1854.
47. *Western Star*, 4 Mar. 1854.

48. *Western Star*, 11 Mar. 1854.
49. *Western Star*, 11 Mar. 1854.
50. Moffitt, *Soupers and jumpers*, p. 10.
51. *Western Star*, 22 Apr. 1854; 22 Oct. 1854.
52. Bowen, *The Protestant crusade in Ireland*, p. 313.
53. For more on Derry, see Bernard Canning *Bishops of Ireland, 1870–1987* (Paisley, 1987), pp. 330–1.
54. *Western Star*, 22 Oct. 1854.
55. *Western Star*, 22 Oct. 1854.
56. Prunty, 'Battle plans and battlegrounds', pp. 119–22.
57. *Western Star*, 22 Oct. 1854. Desmond Bowen discusses this controversy in *The Protestant Crusade in Ireland, 1800–70.*, pp. 178–9; Theresa McDonald, *Achill Island* (Tullamore, 1997), p. 166; see *Dictionary of Irish Biography* for entries on Dallas, vol. 3, pp. 6–7 and Nangle, vol. 6, pp. 854–6.
58. *Galway Express*, 5 May 1855; for more on the Seymour family, see Joe Molloy (ed.), *The parish of Clontuskert: glimpses into its past* (Galway, 2009), pp. 127–56; and the entry on the family on the Landed Estates Database, the Moore Institute, NUI Galway, <http://landedestates.nuigalway.ie:8080/LandedEstates/jsp/estate-show.jsp?id=966> [date accessed 31 July 2010].
59. Maeve Mulryan-Moloney, *Nineteenth-century elementary education in the archdiocese of Tuam* (Dublin, 2001); Bowen, *Souperism*, p. 155; Moffitt, *Soupers and jumpers*, p. 62.
60. Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, p. 139.
61. Moffitt, *Soupers and jumpers*, p. 10.
62. *Galway Vindicator*, 22 Oct. 1854.
63. *Galway Vindicator*, 22 Oct. 1854.
64. *Galway Vindicator*, 22 Oct. 1854.
65. See *The Seventh Annual Report of the Irish Missionary School, Ballinasloe for the year ending 31 December 1853* (Dublin, 1854); *Galway Express*, 5 May 1855; Moffitt, *Soupers and jumpers*, p. 10.
66. Bowen, *The Protestant crusade in Ireland*, pp. 226–7.
67. Moffitt, *Soupers and jumpers*, p. 20.
68. Larkin, 'The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850–75', p. 626.
69. K.M. Barry, *Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy* (Dublin, 1894), p. 3.
70. *Ibid.*, p. v. See *Dictionary of Irish Biography* for entry on T.A. Finlay, vol. 3, pp. 789–91.
71. Barry, *Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy*, p. 3.
72. Moffitt, *Soupers and jumpers*, p. 78.

73. *Galway Vindicator*, 23 Jul 1853; Bowen, *Souperism*, p. 143; Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, pp. 259, 317.
74. Pius O'Brien, *The Sisters of Mercy of Ennis* (Ennis, 1992), pp. 11, 69; eadem, *The Sisters of Mercy of Kilrush and Kilkee* (Dublin, 1997), pp. 45, 48.
75. *Galway Vindicator*, 21 Jan. 1854.
76. Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, p. 317; Bowen, *Souperism*, p. 143.
77. Prunty, 'Battle plans and battlegrounds: Protestant mission activity in the Dublin slums, 1840s–1880s', p. 119.
78. *Warden of Galway*, 29 Jun 1853; Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, p. 258.
79. *Warden of Galway*, 29 Jun. 1853.
80. *Galway Vindicator*, 9 Jul. 1853.
81. *Warden of Galway*, 29 Jun. 1853.
82. *Warden of Galway*, 29 Jun. 1853; Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, p. 255.
83. *Warden of Galway*, 23 Jul. 1853; *Western Star*, 21 Jan. 1854.
84. *Galway Vindicator*, 23 Jul. 1853.
85. *Galway Vindicator*, 23 Jul. 1853; *Galway Press*, 28 Nov. 1860.
86. *Galway Express*, 26 May 1853; *Galway Vindicator*, 21 Jan. 1854.
87. *Galway Vindicator*, 21 Jan. 1854; 24 Oct. 1857.
88. Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, p. 257.
89. M.C. Ni Ghiobúin, 'Dugort, 1831–1861, A study of the rise and fall of a missionary community' (PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2006), pp. 100, 102.
90. Bowen, *Souperism*, p. 146.
91. Prunty, 'Battle plans and battlegrounds: Protestant mission activity in the Dublin slums, 1840s–1880s', p. 119; Bowen, *Souperism*, pp. 143–4.
92. J.H. Whyte, 'The influence of the Catholic clergy on elections in nineteenth century Ireland', *English Historical Review*, no. 75 (1960), pp. 239–59.
93. Brian Jenkins, *Sir William Gregory of Coole: A biography* (Gerrards Cross, 1986), p. 129; for a more in-depth discussion on this particular election, see K.T. Hoppen, 'Landlords, society and electoral politics in mid-nineteenth century Ireland', in C.H.E. Philpin (ed.), *Nationalism and popular protest in Ireland* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 291; B.M. Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801–1922* (Dublin, 1978), p. 90.
94. *Galway Vindicator*, 11 May 1859.
95. *Galway Vindicator*, 27 Apr. 1859.
96. *Galway Vindicator*, 7 May 1859.
97. *Galway Vindicator*, 14 May 1859.
98. The result of the election was: Sir Thomas John Burke, 2536, William Henry Gregory 2435, and Viscount Dunlo 1496. See Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland*, p. 96. Walker mistakenly states

that Lord Dunlo's name was William Thomas le Poer Trench. In fact, it was Richard Somerset le Poer Trench who was Lord Dunlo in 1859. William Thomas was the third Earl of Clancarty.

99. Jenkins, *Sir William Gregory of Coole*, p. 137.
100. *Galway Vindicator*, 14 May 1859.
101. *Galway Vindicator*, 21 Jan. 1854; 24 Oct. 1857; Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, p. 256.
102. Moffit, *Soupers and jumpers*, p. 7.
103. *Western Star*, 22 Oct. 1854.
104. *Galway Vindicator*, 11 May 1859.
105. *Nation*, 20 June 1863; Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, p. 259.
106. T.J. Kelley, "'Come Lord Jesus, quickly come': The writings and thoughts of Edward Nangle, 1826–1862", in Crawford Gribben and A.R. Holmes (eds.), *Protestant millennialism and Irish society, 1790–2005*, p. 100.
107. *Galway Vindicator*, 2 Feb. 1856; Jacinta Prunty, 'Battle plans and battle-grounds' in pp. 125, 127, 138–9; for an example of Clancarty's evangelicism, see Earl of Clancarty, *Ireland: Her present condition and what it might be* (Dublin, 1864).

REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

NATIONAL FOLKLORE COLLECTION

Schools manuscript collection (microfilm held in Galway County Archive).

NEWSPAPERS

Galway Express.

Galway Packet.

Galway Vindicator.

Warden of Galway.

Western Star.

CONTEMPORARY PUBLICATIONS

Barry, K.M., *Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy* (Dublin, 1894).

Earl of Clancarty, *Ireland: Her present condition and what it might be* (Dublin, 1864).

The Primary Valuation of Ireland (Griffith's Valuation).

The Seventh Annual Report of the Irish Missionary School, Ballinasloe for the year ending 31 December 1853 (Dublin, 1854).

WORKS OF REFERENCE

- Maguire, James (ed.), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009).
Walker, B.M., *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801–1922* (Dublin, 1978).

WEBSITES

- Landed Estates Database, the Moore Institute, NUI Galway, <http://landedestates.nuigalway.ie>

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Bowen, Desmond, *Souperism, myth or reality: A study in souperism* (Cork, 1970).
Bowen, Desmond, *The Protestant crusade in Ireland, 1800–1870: A study of Protestant–Catholic relations between the act of Union and disestablishment* (Dublin, 1978).
Cameron, Ewen A., ‘Embracing the past: The Highlands in nineteenth century Scotland’, in D.E. Broun, R.J. Finlay, and M. Lynch (eds.), *Image and Identity: The making and re-making of Scotland through the ages* (Edinburgh, 1998), pp. 195–219.
Canning, Bernard, *Bishops of Ireland, 1870–1987* (Paisley, 1987).
Conwell, John Joseph, *A Galway landlord during the Great Famine: Ulick John de Burgh, first Marquis of Clanricarde* (Dublin, 2003).
Crossman, Virginia, *The poor law in Ireland* (Dundalk, 2006).
Cullen, L.M., *Life in Ireland* (London, 1968).
Duffy, Eamon, ‘The age of Pio Nono: The age of Paul Cullen’, in Keogh and McDonnell (eds.), *Cardinal Paul Cullen*, pp. 47–61.
Egan, P.K., *The Parish of Ballinasloe: Its history from the earliest time to the present century* (Dublin, 1960).
Gray, Peter, *The making of the Irish Poor Law, 1815–43* (Manchester, 2009).
Hoppen, K.T., ‘Landlords, society and electoral politics in mid-nineteenth century Ireland’, in C.H.E. Philpin (ed.), *Nationalism and popular protest in Ireland* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 284–319.
Jenkins, Brian, *Sir William Gregory of Coole: A biography* (Gerrards Cross, 1986).
Kelly, James, ‘Scarcity and poor relief in eighteenth-century Ireland: The subsistence crisis of 1782–4’, *Irish Historical Studies* 28 (May 1992), pp. 38–62.

- Kelley, T.J., "‘Come Lord Jesus, quickly come’: The writings and thoughts of Edward Nangle, 1826–1862", in Crawford Gribben and A.R. Holmes (eds.), *Protestant millennialism and Irish society, 1790–2005* (London, 2006), pp. 99–118.
- Larkin, Emmet, 'The devotional revolution in Ireland, 1850–75', *American Historical Review* 77, no. 3 (June 1972), pp. 625–52.
- Larkin, Emmet, 'Paul Cullen: The great ultramontane', in Dáire Keogh and Albert McDonnell (eds.), *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world* (Dublin, 2011), pp. 15–22.
- McDonald, Theresa, *Achill Island* (Tullamore, 1997).
- Moffitt, Miriam, *Soupers and jumpers: The Protestant mission in Connemara, 1848–1937* (Dublin, 2008).
- Moffit, Miriam, *The society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics, 1849–1950* (Manchester, 2010).
- Molloy, Joe (ed.), *The parish of Clontuskert: Glimpses into its past* (Galway, 2009).
- Mulryan-Moloney, Maeve, *Nineteenth-century elementary education in the archdiocese of Tuam* (Dublin, 2001).
- Ní Ghiobúin, M.C., 'Societal change in Achill Island in the nineteenth century' (PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2006).
- O'Brien, Pius, *The Sisters of Mercy of Ennis* (Ennis, 1992).
- O'Brien, Pius, *The Sisters of Mercy of Kilrush and Kilkee* (Dublin, 1997).
- O'Carroll, Ciarán, 'The pastoral vision of Paul Cullen', in Dáire Keogh and Albert McDonnell (eds.) *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world* (Dublin, 2011), pp. 115–29.
- O'Connor, John, *The workhouses of Ireland: The fate of Ireland's poor* (Dublin, 1995).
- Prunty, Jacinta, 'Battleplans and battle grounds: Protestant mission activity in the Dublin slums, 1840s–1880s', in Crawford Gribben and A.R. Holmes (eds.), *Protestant millennialism, evangelicalism and Irish society* (New York, 2006), pp. 119–43.
- Rafferty, Oliver P., 'The ultramontane spirituality of Paul Cullen', in Keogh and McDonnell (eds.), *Cardinal Paul Cullen*, pp. 62–77.
- Smith, Cathal, 'Apostles of agricultural reform: The Ballinasloe Agricultural Improvement Society in an era of high farming and high famine, 1840–1850', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 64 (2012), pp. 128–45.
- Whelan, Irene, *The Bible war in Ireland: The "Second Reformation" and the Polarization of Protestant-Catholic Relations, 1800–1840* (Dublin, 2005).
- Whelan, Irene, 'The Bible gentry: Evangelical religion, aristocracy and the new moral order in the early nineteenth century', in Crawford Gribben and Andrew

- R. Holmes (eds.), *Protestant millennialism, evangelicalism and Irish society, 1790–2005* (London, 2006), pp. 52–82.
- Whyte, J.H., ‘The influence of the Catholic clergy on elections in nineteenth century Ireland’, *English Historical Review*, no. 75 (1960), pp. 239–59.
- Wolf, Nicholas, *An Irish-speaking island: State, religion, community, and the linguistic landscape in Ireland, 1770–1870* (Madison, 2014).



CHAPTER 4

A Check on Deference: Electioneering, the Fenians and the Catholic Church— Galway, 1872 and Mayo, 1874

1 INTRODUCTION

When Irish social phenomena are mentioned in any other connection than in reference to this Galway election the Englishman is fond of setting forth, how mutually opposed are the political views of landlord and tenant, and how readily Irish Catholics of the lower class accept every political doctrine set before them by their priests.¹

Never for generations was an Irish county the theatre of a struggle more significant and momentous for the tenant-farmers of Ireland. The entire landlordism of the west have leagued in an unholy alliance to make an example of the courageous and noble hearted gentleman who, as they are pleased to express it, committed treason against the whole order and class by his submission to the arbitration of the Portacarron evictions.²

Conflict between the Catholic rural poor and the clergy was common in pre-Famine Ireland, very often in relation to dues levied for various services. S.J. Connolly contended that the Devotional Revolution started taking place much earlier than the timeline proffered by Emmet Larkin, as pre-Famine bishops made efforts to exert greater discipline over their clergy. Paul Cullen's arrival from Rome to the archdiocese of Armagh with the power of Apostolic Visitor expedited this revolution. This culminated

with the Synod of Thurles in 1850 that consolidated half a century of efforts to whip the Irish Catholic Church into shape and make the people practicing Catholics rather than merely Catholics.³

There had been waves of political engagement at various stages in the modern period in Ireland that did not necessarily transcend into violence. The United Irishmen started life as bearers of the European Enlightenment as it brought its message from the European core to its periphery, and they led Ireland into the 1798 rebellion. Prior to this they tried to transcend religion in order to create a plebeian political movement. They used the press as a novel public space that was, according to Kevin Whelan, 'a culturally produced social space in which the press would plausibly pretend to represent a diversified public. They were equally keen to place their ideological imprint on public opinion'.⁴ Conservatives were alarmed at the erudition of these rustic orators, with the ultra-Protestant remarking that they could attract great edification and admiration from their audiences as they sought to 'make proselytes to the new philosophy'.⁵ They attempted to construct an alternative sphere of political discourse to highlight the gap between social and economic problems. Like the village republicans of Whelan's late eighteenth-century Ireland, the neo-Fenians of late Victorian Mayo and Galway were keen to construct an alternative sphere of political discourse. They used the mass meeting and political rally to coalesce public opinion into a more coherent message than previously as they sought to move away from what they saw to be the malign and conservative triumvirate of the clergy, shopkeeper and strong farmer. They had more in common with these village republicans than members of the Catholic Association or Repeal Movement of the early to mid-nineteenth century, which were generally bourgeois-led and oblivious to the plight of the lower classes. Nicholas Wolf has further argued that 'the period between the reinstatement of Catholic voting rights in 1793 and the Ballot Act of 1872 witnessed the abrupt re-emergence of Irish speakers as significant participants in voting and politics for the first time since the beginning of the eighteenth century if not earlier'.⁶

There had been rather insipid political leadership in Ireland following the trauma of the Famine, and political will and vision to tackle the humanitarian crisis were found to be lacking. Daniel O'Connell's death had left a vacuum as no one had been groomed to succeed him. The Independent Irish Party that emerged in the 1850s was generally ineffectual and almost non-descript in its operation. It was not until the rise of the Home Government Association and Isaac Butt that something resembling a coherent political force emerged in post-Famine Ireland. While

Chartism had failed as a movement during its lifetime, its legacy lingered and, 'like Chartism, popular liberalism had always been, above all, about democracy', as the legitimacy of parliament could only be drawn from the popular will of the people.⁷ Chartism's informed and thoughtful programme and the quest for individual liberty was spearheaded by Whigs such as Lord John Russell and later Liberal leaders, especially William Gladstone, and it saw the Second Reform Act of 1867 pass in Britain, which immediately doubled the franchise to two million. While this was a Liberal idea in a post-Chartist Britain, it was passed by the Conservative Party, who then lost the subsequent election, and Gladstone's mission to pacify Ireland commenced. The rise of popular liberalism swept across Britain and there was a desire amongst the lower classes to see a more plebeian outlook in parliament, but this was slow to take off.

Irish MPs tended to be landlords, their sons or lawyers, as a parliamentary career was seen to be a suitable training ground for the management of an estate. Until the passing of the Secret Ballot Act in 1872, it was rare to have a contested election, and when it did happen it attracted great interest, hostility and occasional violence. This chapter explores three elections: in Galway in 1872 and in Mayo in 1872 and 1874. The 1872 by-election held in Galway was the final one prior to the assent of the Secret Ballot Act; the two elections in 1874 in Mayo are worth exploring because of the obvious tension between the popular will and the preferred clerical candidate. Galway Fenians played an important role in this and subsequent decades, relevant to the themes explored in this book. The discipline of the Fenians in Mayo was paramount in the election of O'Connor Power, who had initially attracted the approval of Archbishop John MacHale, who became known as 'the lion of the west', though Fr Patrick Lavelle, the radical priest of Partry, saw him as an upstart and outsider.⁸ Recently discovered correspondence amongst the Galway landlords sheds important light on the Galway election, indicating that all was not well within the landlord camp as it was clear that Captain Trench was not their preferred candidate.

The age of Gladstonian liberalism excited people a great deal, with tens of thousands turning out to hear him speak across Britain. It was also the time that neo-Fenians in the west began to appreciate the utility of parliamentary participation, as insurrection was going to be doomed to failure for a variety of reasons. The challenge to landlord authority in political affairs became evident between 1872 and 1874. Deference towards landlords, which was always a tenuous way of exerting power and control, was now coming to an end. Younger generations coming through were now more literate than their parents and had a wider world view and access to

radical literature, which saw them begin to think more critically of the system of power as it stood in Britain and Ireland at the time. They were attempting to construct a rural/provincial working-class culture and politics that would remain impervious to middle-class and clerical interference. This was the age of imperialism and a new working-class *mentalité* was emerging in cities and urban areas throughout Europe. While there has been a plethora of works on rural politics in Britain, with the exception of the work of K.T. Hoppen and William Feingold there is still a lacuna in Ireland.⁹ This chapter goes some way to redressing this imbalance by paying particular attention to a series of elections in Galway and Mayo between 1872 and 1874. These elections showed the limitations of effective clerical leadership when a formidable lay leadership was hostile to their very involvement. The elections also show the rapidly declining influence of the landed class in an attempt to direct political affairs, as they saw the 1872 Secret Ballot Act as emasculating the manliness of the Irish elector.

'If your son is clever, advised one Correze proverb, make him a mason; if he is nasty make him a priest'.¹⁰ Paul Cullen was determined to control over-zealous electioneering on the part of priests and he ensured that a decree to this effect was drawn up at the Synod of Thurles in 1850. However, the presence of MacHale in the West of Ireland for over six decades meant that the region was quite impervious to the reforms that Cullen attempted to introduce. The region's impenetrable Gallicanism saw politics and religion go hand-in-hand with frequently explosive consequences. John MacEvilly, bishop of Galway, corresponded with Cullen about this election and identified the problems the church was facing which would not have happened if the priests had adhered to the directions set out during the Synod of Thurles, directions which MacHale appeared to have ignored.¹¹ Clergy were frequently divided in their support for a candidate, as evidenced in Mayo in 1874, yet they were united behind Nolan in Galway in 1872. Lavelle managed to outmanoeuvre MacHale at the first nomination convention, which forced O'Connor Power to withdraw his candidacy. Despite this success, it also spelled the beginning of the end of Lavelle's influence in nationalist circles.¹² Clerical unity in Galway can be explained by a deep-seated hatred felt towards the third Earl of Clancarty, and this election was a way of getting vicarious revenge against the Garbally's 'petty czar'. However, it is important to note that MacEvilly was not in agreement with MacHale as to the approach necessary to counteract the threat of a Trench sitting in parliament, and

his correspondence to Cullen is an honest assessment of his fraught relationship with MacHale.

2 THE VENEER OF LANDLORD UNITY EXPOSED

Captain John Philip Nolan, a Catholic landowner from Ballinderry, near Tuam, had previously sought election following the resignation of Lord Dunkellin (who later became the notorious second Marquess of Clanricarde). However, evictions on his Portacarron estate forced him to withdraw his candidacy. Between this and the 1872 election, a Pauline conversion saw him grant *de facto* tenant-right and atone for previous sins, antagonising his fellow landlords but achieving the approval of the Roman Catholic Church. He established an arbitration committee in May 1871 in order to ascertain what level of compensation the evicted tenants were entitled to and its membership consisted of Fr Patrick Lavelle, A.M. Sullivan and Sir John Gray—men with well-documented nationalist sympathies. He willingly accepted their decision, which was the awarding of compensation to evicted tenants. This antagonised landlords in Galway for two reasons; the first being the nationalistic make-up of the committee, and the second being the dangerous precedent it set because it was a *de facto* recognition of tenant-right.¹³ The Portacarron award is essential to understanding why Galway landlords were so resistant to Nolan's candidature. In 1864 and 1867 Nolan evicted fourteen tenants from his Portacarron estate, near Oughterard, because extensive subdivision had taken place. These evictions resulted in a grazier called Murphy with 4000 acres taking possession of the cleared holdings. Nolan's candidature in the 1871 by-election, which came about after the resignation of Lord Dunkellin, was a non-runner and Mitchell Henry of Kylemore was returned unopposed.¹⁴ By the end of 1871, it became clear that Sir William Gregory of Coole was going to resign his seat and Nolan was determined to win clerical support and do what was necessary to achieve this. Landlords dismissed the award as an empty gesture by Nolan in an attempt to make himself more electable in the eyes of the clergy, with the *Express* remarking that the evicted tenants had long departed to America.¹⁵ While no legal obligation had been imposed upon Nolan to provide compensation to the evicted tenants, he claimed he felt morally obligated to do so. This reeked of political expediency and there were many in the constituency who doubted the sincerity of his repentance.¹⁶ Captain William Le Poer Trench, third son of the third Earl of Clancarty, and the landlord candidate, called the award a

sham and reiterated the fact that many tenants were forced to emigrate after being evicted and none were restored to their holdings. Furthermore, Nolan had no legal right to evict Murphy, which challenged the validity of his boastings.¹⁷ In hyperbole typical of the man, Lavelle called Nolan: 'one of the greatest benefactors to the tenant farmer class which the country has produced within the present century'.¹⁸ While this is a gross exaggeration, it reflects the groundswell of clerical support Nolan received in the aftermath of the award. The *Freeman's Journal* hailed the arbitration and the award as a remarkable event: 'as Captain Nolan matured in judgment as well as years, he recognised that he had done these men a grievous wrong in thus removing them from their holdings'.¹⁹ It further stated that it was 'a great event for the tenantry of Ireland, and it shows how irresistible public opinion is... Captain Nolan by this act has covered himself with honour, and has earned from the Irish tenantry, gratitude that will never fade'.²⁰ Despite receiving endorsements from the nationalist press, the *Tuam Herald* was not enamoured with Nolan's actions, arguing that they reeked of political opportunism. 'Industrious tenants had been cleared off a portion of his property, which was handed over to the large farmer. He discovered that this was a misdeed and repented; but his discovery and repentance only took place when he desired to become a member and found it an obstacle'.²¹

Nolan's willingness to accept the decision of the arbitration committee was the antithesis of what landlords viewed as acceptable behaviour for a landowner, and David Thornley argued that the Portacarron award made Nolan as much a symbol of tenant-right as Home Rule.²² MacHale had given Nolan his unqualified support without any reference to or consultation with his suffragan bishops, which placed MacEvilly in an awkward position because he had no option but to support Nolan for fear of a son of Lord Clancarty being returned as an MP. MacEvilly also thought MacHale made an ill-judged call and that an acrimonious campaign would then result. Some members of the Catholic clergy were circumspect about supporting the Home Government Association because of the sizeable Protestant presence in it.²³ However, the Meath by-election of 1871 showed how co-operation between Catholics and Protestants could become a vital cog in the campaign for legislative autonomy, if it was correctly utilised. This by-election had seen the return of John Martin, a Presbyterian and Young Irelander, and the Home Rule movement was buoyed by this initial success, yet the calling of an election in 1874 caught them off-guard and this is discussed in more detail below. The Catholic

clergy engaged in a battle with landlords and they used hyperbole against the third Earl of Clancarty to damage his son's campaign. This reflected the lingering bitterness felt towards him over the evangelical mission he had attempted to establish on his estate decades previously.²⁴ His proselytising antecedents were repeatedly brought forward by the clergy at election meetings, in churches and through the pages of the local press in order to make the family and Captain Trench reprehensible to Catholic voters. Priests allegedly made speeches against Trench from the altar despite this being prohibited by a hierarchical edict in 1834.²⁵ In relation to one of the more exuberant priests during the campaign, MacEvilly remarked that he 'makes personal denunciation his usual sermon every Sunday of the year and no matter what complaint is made to Dr MacHale, there is no redress'. He further suggested that if the statutes of the church regarding electioneering were made public, it would limit the damage to its reputation as they would prove that his behaviour was not the fault of the church.²⁶ The *Galway Express* contended: 'the sacred precincts of houses of worship were desecrated by being made places where the merits of the rival candidates were compared'.²⁷

An tAthair Eric Mac Fhinn was lecturer in education in University College Galway and a native of Lawrencetown, County Galway. He had spent time working in the Vatican Archives for the Irish Manuscripts Commission following his ordination in the Irish College Rome for the Clonfert Diocese. He spent his life collecting material regarding the folklore, history and archaeology of the diocese, especially in relation to Meelick Abbey, and transcribed letters in Portumna Castle regarding the 1871 and 1872 by-elections in Galway. The existence of these facsimiles remained unknown until discovered by this author in 2014. They offer an important insight into the candid opinions of the Galway landed class regarding the by-elections in Galway in 1871 and 1872, but for this chapter, attention will turn to the letters relating to the 1872 by-election.

The first Marquess of Clanricarde had a harmonious and honest relationship with the Catholic clergy in Galway. He was a well-regarded landlord and was the antithesis to his successor. The miserly second Marquess was known as 'Clan-rack-rent' and caused huge reputational damage to the landed class (this is assessed in more detail in Chap. 7). In December 1871, the parish priest of Woodford, John Larkin, wrote to Clanricarde to express his real concern that a contest between Trench and Nolan would have serious repercussions for landlord-tenant relations in Galway, which had been generally harmonious up to that point: 'God only knows the evil

consequences which will follow, perhaps for years to come'.²⁸ Clanricarde later responded to Larkin, stating that while he did not ask Trench to stand for election, he was not going to ask him to withdraw because he had made a pledge to oppose Nolan. He further remarked that the efforts to try to get non-electors involved were dangerous because they were seen to be allies of Fenians, yet many electors in the post-Famine period were of a middling sort who could be sympathetic to the Fenians or aware of the growing popularity of Home Rule.²⁹ It is important to note T.W. Moody's words at this juncture regarding Fenian involvement in electoral politics, as it sets the scene for the rest of the chapter: 'from an orthodox Fenian standpoint, the Home Rule movement, relying as it did on parliamentary action and explicitly repudiating separation was self-condemned'.³⁰

Despite his lack of belief in Trench's chances, Clanricarde did write to Galway landlords looking for their assistance in this campaign. Lord Westmeath pledged 'to give any assistance in [his] power to Trench'.³¹ His slow response in making a public statement resulted in a letter from Burton Persse in November 1871 that pleaded with Clanricarde to take the lead in publicly declaring support for Trench. Persse said they looked to him for leadership on this matter, promising a united front on the part of others in the county. Persse was keen to stress that he was not 'a partisan of Trench' and that his support was for what was best for the county.³² Clonbrock told Trench before he officially sought the nomination that he needed to get moderate Catholic support on his side if he was to have any hope of being elected, and that being a scion of Garbally was not going to assist him in his efforts.³³ He deplored the idea of Nolan being returned because he was 'the promoter of disturbance in the relations of landlord and tenant' and his support of Home Rule was much more 'mischievous' and a 'delusion'.³⁴ Lord Dunsandle canvassed his tenants on behalf of Trench in January 1872 and came to the conclusion that a contest would be futile and embarrassing. He informed Clanricarde that Bishop Duggan had written to every priest in the diocese, informing them that they needed to mobilise every voter to support Nolan and not to allow anyone to abstain from voting. He thought that if Trench was to retire from the contest at this stage, it would save the landlords from utter public humiliation, and he was of the opinion that other landlords would concur with him. If Trench remained in the contest and sought a petition, he could not see how he would get elected if it were to be run again.³⁵ Clonbrock had identified this challenge the previous December. He questioned the utility

of him withdrawing at that stage and said that it was probably better, in hindsight, to be more forceful in telling him that his efforts were in vain.³⁶ Landlord hostility to a Garbally Trench running was superseded by their determination to oppose Nolan. Sir William Gregory told Clanricarde that many priests were open in their dislike of Nolan, but they were totally unwilling to support Trench.³⁷ The threat of Nolan's election forced the landlords to put their ideological differences to one side and they turned to Clanricarde for leadership. While they publicly supported Trench, they privately admitted that his was a lost cause. The utter pragmatism of this alliance was highlighted by the *Freeman's Journal*, which commented that 'the Whiggish Clanricarde and the ultra-Tory Clancarty were willing to put aside ancient feuds in order to have Trench returned'.³⁸ Gentry politics in Galway had been divided between Tories and those with Whiggish tendencies up to this point, even though the Whig party had been abolished in 1868. Hoppen contended that such dividing lines became blurred when external threats demanded a closing of ranks, which was exemplified by the Whig landlords standing behind Lord Clanricarde and the Tories behind Clancarty.³⁹

In their common hatred of Captain Nolan the lion and the lamb of Connaught politics lay down together. The head of the great Whig house of Clanricarde and the head of the great Tory house of Clancarty forgot their differences, buried the hatchet of war and sent into the field as a candidate a scion of the latter family in the person of Captain Trench.⁴⁰

They were aware of the threat posed by Nolan's candidature and the formidable nature of the clerical electoral machine: 'by implication, [the landlords] pledged themselves to oppose Captain Nolan, the man of the popular choice'.⁴¹ The *Galway Express*—the landlord organ in Galway—acknowledged that the landlord alliance was driven by pragmatism rather than ideology: 'Captain Trench [was] the representative of the intelligence, toleration and independence of the county',⁴² while Nolan's supporters were portrayed as being vulgar and ignorant and expressed concern that the clergy would have too much influence over Nolan in the House of Commons. With this reappraisal of their direction, neo-Fenians began to become a voice for the poor, encouraging them to engage in the political process. However, as Moody argued, 'participation in the Home Rule movement now caused deep divisions among the Fenians. It had been consistently opposed [by] the Fenian old guard...[who believed] that parlia-

mentary politics were futile and demoralising and that Fenianism was in danger of being undermined'.⁴³ Yet John O'Connor Power's election in Mayo showed there was a power vacuum now emerging in the countryside, with frustrations being expressed towards both clergy and landlords. This is discussed in more detail below and in the next chapter.

At any rate, landlords did not think that priests should be involved in electoral politics, and 'their purpose [at the landlord convention] was to prevent Captain Nolan and humbug from coming into the county, and the meeting decided, almost unanimously that the best way of doing so was to bring in Captain Trench'.⁴⁴ The overwhelming majority of landlords backed Trench's candidature because he would maintain the status quo if elected, with landlords further arguing at the meeting that they would be better representatives in parliament as they had not been corrupted by ecclesiasticism.⁴⁵ The clergy were displeased that landlords held this convention, arguing that they had no right to use their prerogative to field a candidate, despite doing something similar themselves. 'If the landlords have united, it has been done in self-defence so that they may prevent the representation of the county being handed over to persons who are incapable of any large or generous sympathies, and who cannot look beyond the interests of the party to which they belong'.⁴⁶

The *Freeman's Journal* did not think Clanricarde wanted to be seen to be overtly supporting Trench due to the ideological differences between him and Clancarty: 'surely not at the bidding of his consistent opponents will the Marquess of Clanricarde sacrifice his name and merge it with that of Clancarty'.⁴⁷ It expressed great contempt towards Trench and did not engage with his election manifesto, which was that of a moderate liberal: 'We need scarcely say anything of Captain Trench's politics; as far as he has any they coincide with those of his family...who opposed the granting of Catholic emancipation, and [in] every other measure which has ameliorated the condition of Ireland, the lords of Clancarty were to be found'.⁴⁸ The *Times* was reticent about the idea of farmers and labourers becoming invigorated with greater confidence after the election because they were subjected to undue influences from priests: 'If a certain notion takes firm possession of the small farmers or labourers who make up the mass of the faithful, it will, unless decidedly anti-clerical, receive the patronage or the tacit assent of the clergy'.⁴⁹ Trench derided Nolan's supporters as not being from the intelligence of the county; rather they were outsiders and from its rougher elements.⁵⁰ This attitude was something that the more astute leaders picked up on during the Land War period as they put for-

ward the idea of landlordism being the last embodiment of feudalism and a social, economic and political problem.⁵¹ The elitist attitude of landlords that became so apparent at the Loughrea meeting consolidated clerical support for Nolan, and MacEvilly told Cullen that landlords had acted in a rabid manner not only at the convention but throughout the subsequent campaign.⁵² Nationalists were keen to exploit the veneer of unity that landlords were presenting. Lord Clonbrock doubted the sincerity of Sir Thomas Burke's support of Trench because he was a Whig. The *Tuam Herald* noted: 'Burke was all his life a determined political opponent of Lord Dunlo, Captain Trench's brother, and would be as soon out of his right hand as see him give member for Galway'.⁵³ Charles J. Blake refused to accept that it was a general meeting of the gentry, 'to give to that meeting the appearance of being general, while, in fact, it was little better than a collection of the Protestant gentlemen of the county, the staunch supporters of the house of Clancarty'.⁵⁴

The 1871 census shows that out of a total population of 228,615 there were 221,316 Catholics, leaving 7299 Protestants living in Galway. This implies that a little over 3 per cent of the population was Protestant.⁵⁵ Because of this, Trench believed that it was best to begin his canvass with Catholic landlords, and he claimed to have received some positive noises on his canvass, with thirty-three Catholic voters pledging to support him, though thirteen refused to do so. Trench commented that his was a generally positive experience, contending that he 'never received an unkind word from peer or peasant, except mobs'.⁵⁶ Despite making such positive remarks, Trench did face resistance from some landlords, partially down to a fear of intimidation from mobs and clergy if they were seen to be overtly supporting Trench. For example, Charles Blake refused to grant permission to Trench to use his house as a base for canvassing because he feared that he would fall victim to intimidation, and added further that he was going to abstain from voting: 'I took no part in the election on either side to make me obnoxious. My answer to all was that I was a man of business and would not make myself obnoxious by voting for either party'.⁵⁷ Lord Dunsandle's agent, William Daly, testified that both he and Dunsandle canvassed the estate on behalf of Trench, but only six tenants would pledge their support for him as some were afraid of voting against the wishes of their priests, while 'others said they would not go against their creed or their country', and because of the challenges faced by Trench supporters that have already been discussed.⁵⁸ Captain John A. Daly canvassed forty voters on his estate,

with twenty pledging their votes for Trench, but fifteen or sixteen would not vote for him because their lives had apparently been threatened.⁵⁹

Trench was a genuinely moderate liberal and tried to distance himself from his father's evangelical activities in order to make himself more appealing to voters, and some Catholic landlords considered voting for him.⁶⁰ The fact that there were Catholic landlords supporting Trench implied that some Catholics did not think there was a religious element to the campaign.⁶¹ He 'got some personal promises and conditional promises, provided the Clanricarde interest worked with [him]' when he canvassed Loughrea. However his hope for Clanricarde's imprimatur was dashed after they met at Portumna: 'shortly before going to England at Christmas I called on Lord Clanricarde at Portumna and thanked him; he accepted my thanks, but gave me to understand I was not the candidate of his choice'.⁶² Clanricarde tenants were not pressurised into voting for Trench, and his agent, John Blake, stated that many tenants were afraid to vote for him, which was substantiated at the election petition by Michael Rushe.⁶³ Despite getting some Whig support in the county, failing to get the support of the most influential landowner in Galway presented Trench with insurmountable difficulties and the Nolan campaign was eager to exploit these.⁶⁴

Nolan appreciated that he attracted hostility from the gentry and wanted to channel this in such a way as to encourage voters to defy their landlords: 'I ask you to dare every form of coercion, and by returning me as your member to give the only fitting reply to the insults levelled by the "general" meeting at Loughrea'.⁶⁵ He argued that if the electors voted for him, they could send a message to landlords that they would not be intimidated into voting.⁶⁶ However, Sir Thomas Burke, a Whig and Catholic landlord, warned his tenants to 'recollect when the election is over, you have no one to expect any favours from, except your landlord or agent'.⁶⁷

Neither manifesto was subject to any detailed assessment by the press despite some overlaps. They both believed that the drainage of the River Suck was an overdue and critical piece of infrastructural development because it could lead to improved industry, farming and landlord-tenant relations. Trench also suggested that the government needed to take control of the railways in order to make the remote parts of the country more accessible, and the potential increase in freight and passengers would be of enormous benefit to the country at large.⁶⁸ Furthermore, he was eager that local resources would be utilised in order to make real improvements to the condition of the people.⁶⁹ Trench said that he wanted tenants to be

treated fairly and not ejected from their holdings once they met their obligations to pay their rent and not challenge the authority of the landlord. Like his father, Trench preferred tillage farming to pasture or grazing in order to sustain as many on the land as possible, thereby affirming the management policies of his father.⁷⁰ Even though he advocated such progressive measures, Trench was 'entirely opposed to any measures which, however, speciously described have, in reality separation from England for their object', fearing such an outcome would 'end in internal warfare and anarchy'.⁷¹ Though opposed to Home Rule, Trench was amenable to some form of local government, especially when local knowledge would be of more benefit to decision-making instead of instructions coming from central government. However, like other members of the aristocracy, he was opposed to the Secret Ballot bill, claiming that open voting reflected the manliness of the Irish people.⁷² Nolan supported Home Rule because he thought this was the only way that the resources of the country could be developed adequately, but 'in other respects [he] was a liberal candidate of the well-established type'.⁷³

Trench supported denominational education, believing it could offer suitable moral guidance for students.⁷⁴ This vexed question was something with which the Irish hierarchy was obsessed. MacHale was initially unaware that he favoured denominational education; he later argued that Trench was not honest in his definition of it because: 'it would be ridiculous to have a Trench expounding Roman Catholic feelings on the subject of education. The Catholics did not seek to infringe on the rights of their fellow Protestants, but demanded for themselves the same privileges they enjoyed'.⁷⁵ Bishop Laurence Gillooly of Elphin accused Trench of being delusional in abandoning the conservative principles of his family in order to make himself more electable: 'the liberals of the county with a few exceptions regard you not as a liberal...but as a representative of the class typified in your father which hitherto has invariably upheld Protestant and landlord domination over our Catholic people'.⁷⁶

Gillooly's suspicion was compounded by previous efforts to force Catholic tenants on the Clancarty estate into sending their children to Bible schools, especially during the pre-Famine period. Trench remained courteous in his replies to Gillooly's letters and agreed to accede to requests regarding the construction of Catholic churches and schools, though what actual influence he could have exerted over his father's estate policy is subject to conjecture. The repeated attacks on his family by Gillooly and the distracting nature of the correspondence resulted in

Trench discontinuing it in order to resume campaigning.⁷⁷ MacHale sought assurances from Trench that he would not evict tenants if they did not send their children to Bible schools, that he would allow Catholic tenants to build their own schools, convents and churches if they wanted to, and that he would reduce emigration and ensure there would be no landlord intimidation of voters who did not cast their vote in his favour.⁷⁸

MacHale was intrigued by Trench's selection because of the apparent alliance between Clancarty and Clanricarde for this by-election campaign. At the petition, Nolan's barrister, MacDonagh, questioned MacHale regarding his letters attacking the Clancarty family: 'you refer to the antecedents of the Clancarty family in one of your letters. Did you think a scion of that noble house was a fitting representative for this county?' MacHale responded: 'on the contrary, I thought him one of the most unfit men; nothing could surprise me more than that he should have been elected by this Catholic county'.⁷⁹

MacHale was accused of dictating to his suffragan bishops in order to ensure that Trench was not returned and he alleged that Trench's candidature was a contributory factor in increased antagonism in the Galway countryside: 'I (MacHale) know...that he had not the slightest chance of success without coercion and by coercion disturbing the peace of the country'.⁸⁰ Such was his contempt for Trench that he published their correspondence in the *Freeman's Journal*, addressing him 'in language which...not even a kindly hearted master would write to his own butler... The idea of employing a public newspaper as a means for replying to a private letter was singular indeed'.⁸¹ While the see at Clonfert was vacant at the time of the election, Patrick Duggan had been installed as bishop by the time of the petition and he also demurred that Trench was unelectable because 'the great majority of members would not poll for a member of the Clancarty family if left to themselves'.⁸²

MacEvilly said that people were laying great stress on Trench's liberalism and he attacked Trench in his correspondence to Cullen: 'moreover, the Clancarty family as such detestable bigots and persecutors of everything Catholic, that the return of one of them, however personally liberal (and that is yet to be seen) would be a great humiliation', and he refused to accept that Trench had different political opinions to his father.⁸³ The Trench camp was accused of using similar tactics to those the clergy were using in their support of Nolan, but no evidence—bar letters containing a rather supercilious and contemptuous tone towards the lower classes—has been uncovered. On 10 February 1872, the *Tuam Herald* said: 'there will

never be divorce between the priests and people of Ireland', and Catholics who voted for Trench were branded as socially and politically inferior.⁸⁴ Nolan's supporters made reference to the activities of Trench's ancestors in order to portray him as a wholly unsuitable candidate for the constituency:

Captain Trench had the...unpardonable misfortune of being a heretic. His family had been accused of assassinating St Ruth at the Battle of Aughrim, made their Catholic employees work on holy days and assisted Garibaldi against the pope. Down with Trench and infamy! Rise for Nolan and Irish freedom!...Down with Cromwellian Trench! Down with the Saxon tyrant.⁸⁵

In an effort to court favour with the estate office, a number of Catholic tenants organised a meeting in Ballinasloe in January 1872, endorsing Trench's candidacy, and there was acceptance amongst Nolan's supporters that it would be unwise to canvass tenants on the Clancarty estate. However, a later election meeting at Ballinasloe saw Trench being heckled while making a speech, resulting in him being barely audible to those in attendance. There was a real threat of violence breaking out and the sub-inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary drew his sword in an effort to restore order.⁸⁶ Nolan's supporters made false accusations that the Clancarty family had evicted thousands because they refused to convert to Protestantism.⁸⁷ 'The antecedents of his predecessors have even been opposed to the free emancipation and free liberty of the Catholic people of Ireland'.⁸⁸ According to subconstable Patrick Donnell, Molony told his parishioners in Gort that it was inappropriate to vote for Trench and accused Clancarty of being unkind to his tenants, calling him: 'an old serpent who had left the bones of many in America...Trench was the son of Lord Clancarty, one of the greatest bigots Ireland ever produced'.⁸⁹ At Ballinasloe, James Donelan—speaking in support of Nolan—said the peers and landlords had no right to interfere with the choice of the electors and they were behaving inappropriately:

the conduct of the peers is both illegal and unprecedented...be not deterred by landlord threats...fearlessly do your duty towards your God and your country...this is a fierce encounter between the people and their would-be taskmasters; it is an abominable attempt...to trample on the rights and liberties of the people. Who is Captain Trench that the landlords are so anxious to return? He must be a stranger in this county, for he addresses you as the free and independent electors of Galway...why add insult to injury, free and independent under landlord coercion...the brave personally Captain Trench

is amiable and an accomplished gentleman, but politically he can do no better than his brother, Lord Dunlo, who would consider it a grievous sin to contribute towards the repairs of a Catholic chapel. The name of his father, the earl of Clancarty, is familiar to all of you on account of it being invariably mixed up with acts of bigotry and intolerance.⁹⁰

This meeting was an anti-Clancarty tirade that focused upon the 'anti-Catholic traditions of the family of Clancarty, their opposition to Catholic education, their bigotry in refusing sites or accommodation for Catholic churches and schools and in opposing the nuns'⁹¹, with Fr Coen arguing that Trench would only get elected if his father influenced voters or threatened evictions.⁹² Trench denied that his father carried out wholesale evictions on the Urachree estate; rather, one tenant was evicted from it in 1848 for non-payment of rent and he was a Protestant.⁹³

Such was the level of antagonism directed against the Clancarty family that Lord Dunlo was assaulted by a mob at Ballinasloe on 19 February.⁹⁴ The tensions of the campaign reached a crescendo by polling day, with violence breaking out at various polling stations. 'Every possible method of vilifying Captain Trench was adopted by his opponents'; drunken mobs threatened Trench supporters, especially at Loughrea, Oughterard and Tuam. After voting for Trench in Loughrea, Mr Bellew Nolan was viciously beaten by a mob outside the courthouse.⁹⁵ The *Tuam Herald* said: 'Captain Trench's father was a great enemy of the Catholic Church and that if he could he would not allow the roof of the chapel in which they stood to be over them'. Pat Egan testified that several men told him their lives would be in danger if they voted for him.⁹⁶

Fr O'Brien, the parish priest of Glenamaddy, said the by-election had presented voters with an opportunity to select a candidate who reflected their own consciences.⁹⁷ Thomas Mullery from Joyce Country did not vote for Nolan because he wanted to consult with his landlord, who instructed him to vote for Trench. Despite this, he abstained because his parish priest exerted undue moral influence upon him to change his mind. Other electors cast their ballot for Nolan, even though they pledged support for Trench, asserting that it was against their religion to vote for him, which could imply that they were being pressurised by their priests.⁹⁸ Captain Blakeney's tenants told him that they would not vote for Trench if it went against their conscience. He then asked that they abstain, which many did. While canvassing Patrick Barrett, Trench was asked: 'are you the Captain Trench that is standing for the county...I am sorry for it for I

have to go against you'.⁹⁹ Even an employee of Trench's, Laurence Walsh, feared there would be unsavoury consequences if he voted for him.¹⁰⁰

Fr Eugene White of Caltra was a dissenting voice amongst the clergy because he had no objection to Trench's candidature, stating that electors should vote for him if they thought he was the most suitable candidate. Some Catholic landowners such as J.J. O'Shaughnessy and John Forde did not think the election had a religious element to it because of the support Trench received from Catholic landowners like Sir Thomas Burke.¹⁰¹ An article entitled 'The priesthood in Irish politics', published in the *Dublin Review* in July 1872, was critical of the role the recently deceased third Earl of Clancarty played in various anti-Catholic movements during his lifetime:

We are far from intending any implication personally disrespectful to the late Lord Clancarty, of whom we know absolutely nothing. But it was universally believed that he was in act a thorough going anti Catholic; that he refused ground for a Catholic chapel and opposed the admission of nuns into a workhouse. It was also universally believed that in acting so, he did but conform to the hereditary habits of his family. Is it probable that his son was an acceptable candidate to Catholics who thus believed?¹⁰²

MacEvilly was also equally forthright in his assessment of Clancarty in a letter to Cullen: 'I need not say I and Dr Duggan entered the contest exclusively to keep out the son of the greatest bigot in Europe, the greatest enemy of Catholicity'.¹⁰³

This opinion of Trench and his family was so ingrained that it proved impossible to rectify, with Trench being called an 'Orange tyrant' in a threatening letter.¹⁰⁴ He found it incredibly difficult to counter accusations that he was a bigot, despite no evidence being uncovered to substantiate such an assertion: 'he has ran [sic] off to Garbally for protection and there coiling his venomous tail around the Orange tree, he still remains in concert with the [most] bigoted scorpion who has ever preyed on the liberties and privileges of the people'.¹⁰⁵ While most of the insidious rhetorical flourishes during this campaign were confined to the pages of the local newspapers or to election platforms, there were some threatening letters sent to landlords from Nolan supporters. One threatening letter discovered near Portumna called Nolan a true patriot and defiled Trench as a 'bigoted Orange Cromwellian'.¹⁰⁶ Lady Ann Daly of Marble Hill received a threatening letter because she canvassed Catholic tenants to vote for Trench and

‘she had acted in a lady like manner...[in order] to purchase the conscience of a downtrodden peasantry’. The author of this letter also sneered at the ‘genteel meeting’ called to endorse Trench’s candidature.¹⁰⁷

Fenians had been playing a significant role in elections since O’Donovan Rossa’s return to Tipperary in 1868, which saw members such as Dr Mark Ryan gain a taste for electioneering, which he used at this by-election.¹⁰⁸ In his memoirs, *Fenian Memories* (1945), Ryan recalled this air of violence: ‘I set to work and...got sixteen or seventeen outside cars, filled with Fenians and a fife and drum band to leave Tuam early on the morning of the meeting. We were armed with sticks, as a precaution against attack by the supporters of Trench’.¹⁰⁹ However, R.V. Comerford implied that something more sinister may have taken place: ‘Mark Ryan, then a young local adherent of the advanced party and subsequently a noted I.R.B. man, recalled in his later years he had marshalled carloads of cudgel-bearing supporters of Captain Nolan’.¹¹⁰

There is no doubt that Nolan was not in control of his election campaign, and the *Galway Express* said that he would be required to adhere to the wishes of the Roman Catholic Church in order to ensure their support.¹¹¹ He denied that his supporters were responsible for any disorder that took place during the campaign, testifying to the petition that landlords were solely responsible for sowing seeds of discord: ‘it commences exclusively with the gentlemen now in the grand jury box’.¹¹²

3 THE ELECTION PETITION AND ITS AFTERMATH

Trench received 658 votes to Nolan’s 2823—a comprehensive defeat: ‘Captain Trench should not feel that any disgrace attaches to his defeat. On the contrary, he should be proud that in the face of powers so formidable he was able to bring as many to the poll as he did’.¹¹³ The only hope that he now had of getting the seat was through a petition, and the clerical scaremongering that took place during the campaign provided a solid basis for one to take place. MacEvilly informed Cullen that ‘the gross conduct of Fr P. Conway alone, which I believe to be proved and not to be refuted, would unseat Nolan’.¹¹⁴ Election petitions were the procedure by which the results of a parliamentary election were challenged. Trench demanded that the result be nullified and that he should be returned as MP for Galway in place of Nolan. The date for the petition was set for 1 April 1872 and Judge William Keogh presided over it.¹¹⁵

Keogh practiced in the Connaught circuit after being called to the bar in 1840, and he stood for election in the rotten borough of Athlone in 1847. He had to face the hostility of the clergy to his candidacy because of his pro-establishment opinions, which he expressed in a pamphlet in 1844. Desmond McCabe said that judicious bribery ensured his election by six votes, which resulted in him being the only Catholic Tory in the House of Commons. In August 1850 he was one of two Irish MPs to attend the inaugural Tenant League meeting in Dublin. He helped establish the Catholic Tenant Defence Association in Dublin in 1851, which aimed to restore the Roman Catholic Church to good standing within the United Kingdom, but Cardinal Cullen ousted him as secretary of the association in December 1851. Prior to the formation of the Aberdeen administration in 1852, Keogh and Richard Sadlier both lobbied for appointments to government. Keogh's appointment as Irish solicitor-general created consternation amongst Irish nationalists, though Cullen was very pleased to see Catholics in high office. This election petition saw him come to public prominence once again and his antipathy towards the Roman Catholic Church and its priests may have reflected some bitterness over the treatment he had received over twenty years previously.¹¹⁶

Trench believed that he had been promised approximately 60 per cent of the vote, having been told: 'we like you very much; we will go with our landlords...and if they go for you, we will go likewise'. Despite such alleged pledges, he only polled 19 per cent of the vote and alleged that phantom and duplicate votes had been cast. His legal team contended that he 'should not...be called upon to go to the expense of another contest' and be awarded the seat, arguing that undue influence had been exerted at the election and that 'the acts done in transgression of the statute were notorious'.¹¹⁷ Nolan was accused of corruptly influencing the vote in the Tuam area by providing alcohol and food to voters, with the clergy alleged to have exerted undue moral and physical pressure upon parishioners to vote for Nolan.¹¹⁸ While Keogh agreed that the clergy could use their influence to have candidates elected, 'he may not appeal to the fears, or terrors, or superstitions of those he addresses'. He accused them of acting hypocritically in their advocacy of Nolan, especially after forcing his withdrawal from the previous election campaign, and he found their near-rabid support for him especially galling.¹¹⁹ Keogh's acerbic dealings with the clergy left 'many observers [feeling that] his court management was disgracefully one sided'.¹²⁰

Nolan's brother and election agent Sebastian Nolan testified that the clergy were essential for getting people to the polls, but Keogh found the level of interference to be repugnant, arguing that the clergy overstepped the influence they should have, as 'the constitution requires that every voter should come to the poll free and independent'.¹²¹ Cullen was scandalised by the reports of what priests had done during the campaign and it appeared to both him and MacEvilly that MacHale had little control over some of his priests. As the petition went on, it became clear to MacEvilly that Nolan was going to be unseated, but he believed Trench would not be awarded the seat.¹²² At the petition, Trench argued that many who had promised to vote for him were coerced into voting for Nolan. Michael Killeen assured Clanricarde that he would 'vote for his friend; I did so for the last forty years, and mean to do so as long as I live; I voted for Captain Trench; coming out from mass we were hooted by the neighbours as Trenchites after the election'.¹²³

Keogh invalidated the election result, awarded the seat to Trench and ordered that Nolan bear all costs associated with the petition, amounting to £14,000, which a national appeal soon covered.¹²⁴ Keogh accused Duggan and MacHale of being 'guilty of an organised attempt to defeat the free franchise'.¹²⁵ Public opinion suggested that there was a desire in Britain for the government to prosecute members of the clergy in order to reaffirm that there was no class above the law.¹²⁶ According to E.R. Norman: 'it was the manner of Keogh's judgment, which gave to the whole affair the qualities of sensationalism. If the evidence outraged English opinion, it cut the Irish Catholics deeply'.¹²⁷ There was widespread revulsion in the United Kingdom over the political clout exerted by the Catholic clergy at this election and the *Express* was pleased with the government response: 'it was not expected that they (the government) would display such a degree of moral courage, but at the same time, much of the value of their decision depends on the manner in which the prosecutions are conducted'.¹²⁸

Keogh believed that there were priests and bishops in breach of the Corrupt Practices Prevention Act, 1854, which stated that 'every person...who shall make use of or threaten any force, or violence...against any persons on order to induce or compel such person to vote or to refrain from voting...shall be deemed to have committed the offence of undue influence'.¹²⁹ His 'report had put the government in a difficult position, as Gladstone had no desire for lengthy prosecutions against members of the clergy, which would obviously be hugely unpopular in Ireland'.¹³⁰ Bishop Duggan and nineteen other priests were returned to stand trial because of

their participation in the campaign and this sparked nationwide indignation and protests against the judge. While John Carter claimed to have heard Duggan pledging to hurl anathema at anyone who would vote for Trench, no other witnesses were discovered to be able to substantiate this claim, resulting in Duggan being acquitted at his trial. Carter held a grudge against the priests in Ballinasloe because he voted for Trench, probably because he was employed by Lord Clancarty, and after doing this he was no longer asked to sing in choir and his children were removed from the local convent school.¹³¹

As a result of the petition, it was decreed that Trench should be returned as the member for Galway, though Sir Colman O'Loughlin, MP for County Clare, was concerned that a dangerous precedent was set because the sovereign will of the people had not been met.¹³² The behaviour of the clergy worried the government because it threatened to undermine its authority in Ireland; therefore, the prosecutions were an attempt by the government to reassert its authority. In hindsight, this is ironic, considering its reliance on the clergy to maintain order during the Land War. It was inevitable that Keogh was going to attract condemnation after his judgement, especially considering its polemical nature. He stated that the behaviour of the clergy was the worst case of ecclesiastical despotism that he had ever witnessed and that those who had voted for Nolan were brainless cowards who were instruments in the hands of ecclesiastical despots.¹³³ While it was never sympathetic towards Nolan, the *Tuam Herald* was displeased with Keogh's vituperation of the clergy, especially after he called them 'rabble rousers' and condemned the judgement as intemperate, disagreeing with his argument that the clergy were 'ecclesiastical despots'.¹³⁴

The English press was apprehensive that priests would act in a more provocative manner in order to solidify their influence amongst the people, such as using the confessional as a place to canvass voters to choose the preferred clerical candidates. The *Times* argued that the petition highlighted that Ireland would be controlled by priests if Home Rule was granted.¹³⁵ Keogh's Catholicism exacerbated the anger that was felt towards him after the judgement, especially as he brought clerical influence under scrutiny to which it never had been subjected previously. The *Express* praised the judgement and asserted that such was the extensive undue influence of the clergy that it was enough to invalidate a dozen elections. Keogh became anathema not only in Galway but throughout the country, and effigies of him were burned and the Dublin clergy signed a petition condemning him for what he had done.¹³⁶

The clergy was determined that no one from Garbally would be returned and Trench correctly believed that they were determined to sabotage his chances of being returned. MacHale thought the election was a contest ‘which [Trench] could not hope to win but by the unconstitutional coercion of the Catholic constituents, who form the great mass of the Galway electors’.¹³⁷ Priests had access to the people Trench could never hope to have because they lived amongst them.

4 THE MAYO ELECTIONS, 1874

Our attention now turns to the elections in Mayo in 1874, which eventually saw John O’Connor Power become the first Fenian to be elected and take his seat in parliament, and the first man of no property to be elected in Ireland, ‘[defying] the vested interests of the establishment and the Catholic Church’.¹³⁸ This was also the first election where votes were cast within the privacy of the ballot box. Donald Jordan identified three distinct phases in politics in post-Famine Mayo. The first was between 1846 and 1857, which saw a struggle between conservative landlords under the leadership of the Marquess of Sligo and a popular coalition of priests, tenant farmers and townsmen who supported George Henry Moore, Sligo’s cousin. Moore was an important figure in the Irish Parliamentary Party and a liberal supporter of tenant-right. The second phase was between 1857 and 1874, when there was an unofficial clerical–landlord alliance that brought political stability to the county, though Moore had been unseated in 1857 because of undue clerical influence. The third phase began in 1874 with the election of John O’Connor Power, which according to Jordan ‘demonstrated the degree to which the social and cultural transformation of post-Famine Mayo had eroded the base for landlord and clerical political dominance’.¹³⁹ Moore’s uncle had been president of Connaught for a time following the 1798 rebellion, and while he had retired from politics in 1857, Fr Lavelle and Canon Ulick Bourke convinced him to campaign in 1868 on amnesty for Fenian prisoners, land reform and disestablishment; with the enlargement of the franchise in 1867, candidates had a new electorate to court. Support for Home Rule had become more noticeable in the 1874 election in England, especially in constituencies which were largely working class and in possession of an Irish community.¹⁴⁰ Nationalist sentiment struggled to find a strong platform during the 1850s and 1860s. Fenian pragmatism, in moving towards constitutionalism, was highlighted by Hoppen, who said: ‘a series of by-

elections between 1869 and 1873 showed that mere re-iteration of mild Liberal panacea was no longer enough, that Fenians or crypto-Fenian candidates were now capable of attracting significant support'.¹⁴¹ 1868 saw constitutional nationalism return to the centre stage. It was also where Fenians got their first taste of electioneering during Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa's successful election campaign in Tipperary. His support in the countryside outweighed what he could hope for in towns, and once the nationalist bandwagon started, the waverers were probably helped to support the popular cause because of this. Elections were generally uncontested prior to this, but that was now coming to an end as small farmers became better educated and more militant in making demands of their politicians. There was a belief in some quarters that disestablishment and the 1870 Land Act were partially responses to Fenian pressures, and while rejecting 'any engagement with the British political process, it seemed clear that their actions had generated British attempts to ameliorate the condition of the Catholic majority in Ireland'. Matthew Kelly remarked that the question that now needed to be asked was how far could they legitimately engage in the British political process to achieve change.¹⁴² This renewed interest in national politics in rural constituencies is what distinguishes the 1870s from its preceding decades, and in Mayo the increasingly nationalist milieu and growing Fenian influence meant that the laity were no longer willing to be subservient to the clergy in political matters.¹⁴³ While Isaac Butt enhanced his reputation with his defence of Fenians, there were uncertainties as to the potential of the association because of clerical hostility due to the presence of Protestants in its ranks, which limited its success.

Following the failure of the Fenian rising in 1867, the passing of the Secret Ballot Act of 1872 and growing support for Home Rule, western Fenians began to see both the importance and necessity of engaging in some form of a rapprochement with constitutional politics, thus signifying the birth of the New Departure. The Galway 1872 by-election was the last before the passage of the Secret Ballot Act and it saw western Fenians involve themselves in electoral politics for the first time; this continued in Mayo in 1874 and they formed the nucleus of the subsequent land movement, proving that they could work with constitutional nationalists such as James Daly. The New Departure resulted from a meeting held at the Rotunda in 1873, where a secret agreement was reached between Fenians and MPs to support Butt's movement for three years. This also saw O'Connor Power first become involved in constitutional politics. Butt had made his name as an eloquent champion of land reform and for defending

Fenians.¹⁴⁴ Yet his effectiveness in bringing the Home Rule movement further along was becoming obviously limited.

John O'Connor Power's election in Mayo was significant because he was the first Fenian to take his seat in parliament and swear the oath of allegiance to the Crown. While O'Donovan Rossa had been elected in Tipperary in 1869, he was precluded from taking his seat because he was in prison at the time. Nevertheless, he would not have taken his seat because he was a doctrinaire Fenian and swearing the oath of allegiance was not an option. The two election campaigns in Mayo in 1874 were quite interesting because of the activities of the Fenians in resisting the Catholic Church's diktat in trying to prevent O'Connor Power's efforts to run for election. Gerard Moran argued: 'Mayo Fenians were prepared to take the initiative in displacing the priests from their roles as political power brokers within the community'.¹⁴⁵ The clash between the clergy and neo-Fenians in Mayo came down to a choice over a suitable candidate. O'Connor Power came with a radical and republican pedigree, and despite being an outsider from the county, the Fenians backed him and it appeared that he had the support of the electors. Born in Ballygill near Ballinasloe, he spent a great deal of his childhood in Lancashire and was educated in St Jarlath's College, Tuam, which had a reputation for fomenting radical ideas under the tutelage of Canon Ulick Bourke. T.M. Healy described O'Connor Power as reeking of the common clay, and Parnell's sensibilities were offended by him in parliament. Yet he became an effective operator of obstructionism that helped bring Irish causes to greater attention in parliament, assisted by his fiery temper and eloquence when speaking.¹⁴⁶ His oratorical skills made a favourable impression at the Home Rule conference in the Rotunda and he soon won the backing of the *Irishman* newspaper. He had toured across Britain, speaking to Irish communities about amnesty for Fenian prisoners, and after joining the Home Government Association in 1873 his stock quickly rose as he spoke extensively and passionately about this matter.¹⁴⁷ The 1874 election caught the Home Rule League by surprise, yet it was important for two reasons: firstly, constitutional nationalism was returning to the centre stage after being in hibernation for a considerable length of time; and secondly, Home Rule was now becoming important, though the challenge was trying to separate the opportunistic carpetbaggers from the sincere believers.¹⁴⁸ No coherent Home Rule Party existed prior to the election, meaning that those who were sympathetic were generally of a liberal persuasion and needed the support of the clergy to get elected. The clergy were a bur-

geoning leadership for the people and their hand had been strengthened by the Secret Ballot Act.¹⁴⁹

O'Connor Power had an enigmatic and controversial personality. Healy said that he had a 'profound contempt for ignorance'. Parnell wanted to destroy him because O'Connor Power dismissed him as a mediocrity.¹⁵⁰ Despite facing such hostility, O'Connor Power remained immensely popular amongst the great masses of the people, which meant that Parnell could not sideline him as easily as he hoped. Jane Stanford stresses that his awareness of the impenetrable nature of the class system in parliamentary politics and his influences from touring America, as well as his superb oratory, assisted in his popularity.¹⁵¹ His candidature saw neo-Fenians such as Matt Harris become actively involved in electoral politics for the first time, which grated with their more orthodox and aloof brethren, and O'Connor Power's 'constitutionalism was particularly obnoxious to the American Fenian activists'.¹⁵² They were well disciplined and organised and the treatment of O'Connor Power by the clergy annoyed them greatly and made them more resolute to ensure his election.

The candidates seeking the blessing of the clergy in Mayo were George Browne, Thomas Tighe and O'Connor Power. The clergy were united behind Moore and Tighe, making it futile for O'Connor Power to seek the nomination, and he withdrew, resulting in these men being returned unopposed.¹⁵³ However, all was not well in the clerical ranks. Fr Lavelle of Partry was losing the influence he had once had within the advanced nationalist community in Mayo and he was not the influence he once thought he was. He ensured that the clergy invited Thomas Tighe to stand over O'Connor Power. MacHale had planned to nominate O'Connor Power at this convention, but he was outmanoeuvred by Lavelle and had no choice but to support Tighe in order to keep unity within the ranks of the clergy. Lavelle's hand was obvious in this assembly as he ensured that his curate, Fr John O'Malley, nominated Tighe, and he also succeeded in ensuring that the candidates would accept the decision of the committee that would consolidate the supremacy of the clergy; Power then had to withdraw. Sir George O'Donnell appealed the election result, which was then overturned, so a by-election took place. O'Donnell was forced to withdraw his candidature and the contest—the first in Mayo since 1857—came down to the three remaining candidates. Tighe lost to O'Connor Power by a little over 100 votes. When news of the ensuing contest filtered across the county, Fenians and nationalists mobilised to ensure that O'Connor Power would be elected. There was great annoyance at this clerical zeal,

with the Galway by-election still fresh in people's minds. Shouts of 'Hurrah for Bismarck' and other anti-Catholic utterances were heard at meetings, an expression of popular frustration with Lavelle's hubris.¹⁵⁴ Lavelle engaged in a character assassination of O'Connor Power during the by-election campaign, calling him a political adventurer and intruder. This treatment of O'Connor Power annoyed the advanced nationalist element of the movement, and the fact that he was returned highlighted the complacent arrogance of the clergy that had existed up to this point. The fact that they controlled access to places where he could hold public meetings indicated that they were truly hostile to him and the burgeoning democratic movement growing in the county. O'Connor Power's Fenian support was vast, well organised and eager to challenge the arrogance of the clergy in their efforts to stymie his return. His election was a real humiliation for Catholic clergy and showed that their control over the people was not as resolute as they thought. Their diffident attitude towards the Land League later in the decade soon changed when they came to realise that popular attitudes towards the organisation were not going to change. The fear of violence from an uncouth element of the masses proved to be largely unfounded, which was significantly different from Galway two years previously. While the police were eager to have reinforcements on polling day, the Resident Magistrates' reports to Dublin Castle showed that this was futile. When O'Connor Power made a speech in Castlebar on 12 May 1874, with 800 in attendance, the County Inspector remarked: 'I cannot say that his reception was by any means of an enthusiastic character'. However, he further feared that because this election was going to a poll, 'much excitement will prevail', which would require additional police. However, despite the additional 286 police who were on duty, nothing of note transpired.¹⁵⁵

The 1874 elections in Mayo were paradigmatic shifts in four ways: landlord influence was now overtly challenged, clerical interference and political sway were dismissed, there was active and willing engagement of Fenians in politics, and finally, there was a Fenian candidate content to take the oath of allegiance and sit in the House of Commons as an MP. The emergence of Fenians in politics paved the way for the series of New Departures that dominated nationalist politics. It also challenged the notion that the clergy could dictate the way the people should go, as they had now proved that they could control the political direction in which they wished to travel. The significant forces and the restricted franchise that should have stood against O'Connor Power's ability to get elected,

and the fact that he was elected, made his victory more remarkable. However, it is important to stress that he only defeated Tighe by over 100 votes and his support was not widespread across the constituency. Tighe was an unfortunate and innocent victim caught in the crossfire between the clergy and the Fenians. The Fenians embraced the burgeoning ideas of popular democracy in the country with more fervour than may have been previously appreciated and later Land League meetings saw evocations of the ideas of liberty being uttered by plebeian speakers. Getting the middle-class support of shopkeepers was down to James Daly, who believed that a strong voice was needed to represent Mayo, and because of O'Connor Power's rather fiery personality, he thought he would be the best candidate. Ten Castlebar merchants signed his nomination papers and this reflected both the real ambiguity and vitality of the nationalist movement.¹⁵⁶ The ability of these neo-Fenians and constitutional nationalists to work together in Mayo set the scene for what was to come with the establishment of the Land League in 1879.

5 CONCLUSION

[W]e are here to record our claims to franchise freedom...we the tenant electors of Galway...ask that we be left in the undisturbed exercise of a privilege, which the constitution has secured as fully to the humblest electors among you as to the most arrogant elector over there (pointing to the Trench supporters in the courthouse)...the iron of Protestant ascendancy has burned deeply and I fear...indelibly into your servile souls.¹⁵⁷ (Fr O'Brien, parish priest, Glenamaddy, County Galway)

Landlord intimidation in all its most frightening forms was again and again brought to bear upon the poverty, the helplessness, and the timidity of the tenants...it was a misfortune of Captain Trench that he came from a house that can never hope to represent the electors of the county Galway.¹⁵⁸

The neo-Fenians of late Victorian Mayo and Galway were keen to construct an alternative sphere of political discourse, away from the malign and conservative influence of the landlords, clergy, shopkeepers and strong farmers. William Feingold argued that 'abstract notions of liberty and justice had little meaning for the small Irish farmer'.¹⁵⁹ Yet a closer reading of the provincial press challenges this assertion. Prior to the 1870s, popular political participation generally excluded the lower classes. Merchants and priests were conservatising influences in the countryside and this suited

aspects of constitutional nationalism in the post-Famine period, while the Fenians were seen to be a bunch of cranks with far-fetched notions, only interested in marching and playing cricket.

The 1870s was an important decade in parliamentary politics in Britain and Ireland. The assent of the Secret Ballot Act and the advent of Gladstonian liberalism saw more people become increasingly engaged in the political process than had hitherto been the case. Prior to this, they had been mere adjuncts to any political movement. For example, Catholic emancipation only benefited a small minority, and after its assent a large number of Catholics actually became disenfranchised because of the increase put on property valuation in order to be able to stand for election and vote. The legacy of Chartism lived on as neo-Chartist leaders took up the mantle and began organising and agitating for reform and the return of working-class candidates to parliament.

The 1872 by-election was the tipping point in the decline of landlord influence in local politics in Galway and this was coupled with an increase in support for Home Rule. Gerard Moran argued that, while ‘the electoral successes in Meath in 1871 and Galway in 1872 may be attributed to the local bishops’ contempt for the alternative candidates available, they represented a tacit acceptance of the cause’.¹⁶⁰ The *Express* refuted nationalist press allegations that Clancarty was reviled in the county, saying he did get support from Catholics—‘though he is a Protestant, he has won the respect and confidence of the Roman Catholic gentry and farmers of Galway’—even if this was, in actuality, a relatively small section of the county.¹⁶¹

It was clergy from outside the vicinity of the Clancarty estate and Ballinasloe who were the main protagonists in this by-election. The consequence of their interference was an increased resistance towards clerical involvement in electoral politics, resulting in Galway Fenians beginning to take a more active role in local political matters as they attempted to present themselves as an alternative leadership to the clergy. Fenians in the county, such as Matt Harris, were angry with the clergy because of their exuberance during the campaign. Mark Ryan stated that there was Fenian involvement in the election campaign and Matt Harris got Fenians to support the popular candidate as Nolan was facing ‘the whole horde of the landed class and garrison [who were] arranged on the side of Trench’.¹⁶² Eugene Hynes stated that ‘Fenianism and the Land War provide abundant evidence that the priests could lead the people only in the direction in which they wished to go’.¹⁶³

While MacEvilly had hoped that the people would be at one with their priests after the by-election, the emergence of Fenian-led movements, such as the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association, challenged both clerical and landlord influence. Despite the fear that the clergy would wield uncontrolled authority over the electorate after the assent of the Secret Ballot Act, this did not happen, with E.R. Norman arguing:

The ballot act had its most significant results in Ireland. But the fear that the priests would simply strengthen their influence by the assumption to themselves of that which the landlords could no longer wield, was not to prove so dire. In the mid-seventies the influence of the clergy at elections declined, partly because of episcopal alarm at the excesses of the Galway case, but more because of the rise of an Irish political party which had a Dublin caucus organising the selection of candidates.¹⁶⁴

The post-Famine period saw tenants become increasingly politicised, and Fenians began to play an important role in this politicisation from the late 1860s as they began to appreciate the importance of the land question. Fenianism was no longer a 'bogeyman' for farmers; they played an important role in establishing tenant farmer movements that began to challenge the authority of landlords in a much more organised and coherent fashion.

NOTES

1. 'The priesthood in Irish politics', *Dublin Review* (July 1872), p. 257.
2. *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Sept. 1871.
3. Michael Huggins, *Social conflict in pre-Famine Ireland: The case of county Roscommon* (Dublin, 2007), p. 42; see also Emmet Larkin, 'The devotional revolution in Ireland, 1850–75', *American Historical Review* 77, no. 3, (June 1972), pp. 625–52.
4. Kevin Whelan, 'The republic in the village: The United Irishmen, the Enlightenment and popular culture', in idem *Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism and the construction of Irish identity, 1760–1830* (Dublin, 1996), p. 59.
5. Whelan, 'The republic in the village', p. 65.
6. Nicholas M. Wolf, *An Irish-speaking island: State, religion and the linguistic landscape in Ireland, 1770–1870* (Madison, 2014), p. 164.
7. Eugenio Biagini, *British democracy and Irish nationalism, 1876–1906* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 51.

8. See Jane Stanford, *That Irishman: The life and times of John O'Connor Power* (Dublin, 2010), pp. 47–8.
9. William Feingold, *The revolt of the tenantry: The transformation of local government in Ireland, 1872–1886* (Boston, 1984); K.T. Hoppen, *Elections, politics and society in Ireland, 1832–1885* (Oxford, 1984).
10. Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The modernisation of rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, 1976), p. 357.
11. P.J. Corish, 'Irish College Rome: Kirby papers', *Archivium Hibernicum* xxx (1972), p. 67; Emmet Larkin, *The Roman Catholic Church and the Home Rule movement in Ireland, 1870–1874* (Chapel Hill, NC), p. 131.
12. Stanford, *That Irishman*, p. 47. See also Gerard Moran, *A radical priest in Mayo: Fr Patrick Lavelle: The rise and fall of an Irish nationalist, 1825–86* (Dublin, 1994).
13. *Tuam Herald*, 27 Jan. 1872.
14. *The Times*, 2 June 1871; *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Jan. 1872; R.V. Comerford, *The Fenians in context: Irish politics and society, 1848–82* (Dublin, 1994), p. 192.
15. *Express*, 16 Dec. 1871.
16. *Express*, 16 Dec. 1871.
17. *Galway Express*, 13 Jan. 1872; *Tuam Herald*, 16 Dec. 1871; 27 Jan. 1872.
18. Gerard Moran, *A radical priest in Mayo*, pp. 136–7.
19. *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Jun. 1871; *Tuam Herald*, 27 Jan. 1872.
20. *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Jun. 1871 quoting the *Mayo Examiner*.
21. *Tuam Herald*, 8 Jun. 1872.
22. David Thornley, *Isaac Butt and Home Rule* (Dublin, 1964), p. 130.
23. Comerford, *The Fenians in context*, p. 188.
24. *Tuam Herald*, 10 Feb. 1872; Moran, *A radical priest in Mayo*, pp. 132, 136.
25. J.H. Whyte, 'The influence of the Catholic clergy on elections in nineteenth-century Ireland', *English Historical Review*, p. 243.
26. MacEvilly to Cullen, 2 May 1872, 328/8/1/36.
27. *Galway Express*, 10 Feb. 1872.
28. John Larkin to Lord Clanricarde, 20 Dec. 1871, in Egan/Mac Fhinn papers, Special Collections, James Hardiman Library, NUI Galway.
29. Larkin to Lord Clanricarde, 20 Dec. 1871. See also Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish nationalism*, p. 51; Wolf, *An Irish-speaking island*, p. 169.
30. T.W. Moody, *Davitt and the Irish revolution, 1846–82* (Oxford, 1984), p. 118.
31. Lord Westmeath to Lord Clanricarde, 25 Jan. 1872.
32. Burton Persse to Lord Clanricarde, 19 Nov. 1871.

33. Lord Clonbrock to Lord Clanricarde, 8 and 10 Dec. 1871.
34. Lord Clonbrock to Lord Clanricarde, 2 Dec. 1871.
35. Lord Dunsandle to Lord Clanricarde, 21 Jan. 1872.
36. Lord Clonbrock to Lord Clanricarde, 8 Dec. 1871.
37. Sir William Gregory to Lord Clanricarde, 1 Dec. 1871.
38. *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Sept. 1871.
39. Hoppen, *Election, politics and society in Ireland, 1832–1885*, pp. 123, 126; Larkin, *The Roman Catholic Church and the Home Rule movement in Ireland*, p. 110.
40. *Tuam Herald*, 16 Dec. 1871; *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Sept. 1871.
41. *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Dec. 1871.
42. *Galway Express*, 27 Jan. 1872.
43. Moody, *Davitt and the Irish revolution*, p. 133.
44. *Galway Express*, 27 Jan. 1872.
45. *Express*, 16 Dec. 1871; *Galway Express*, 27 Jan. 1872.
46. *Tuam Herald*, 13 Apr. 1872.
47. *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Dec. 1871.
48. *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Dec. 1871.
49. *Galway Express*, 3 Feb. 1872, *Tuam Herald*, 13 Apr. 1872; *The Times*, 31 May 1872.
50. *Galway Express*, 27 Jan. 1872; *Times*, 31 May 1872.
51. Biagini, *British democracy and Irish nationalism*, p. 110.
52. Larkin, *The Roman Catholic Church and the Home Rule movement in Ireland*, p. 127.
53. *Tuam Herald*, 27 Apr. 1872.
54. *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Dec. 1871.
55. *Census of Ireland, part one. Area, houses and population: Also the ages, civil condition, occupations, birthplaces, religion and education of the people.* viv. *Province of Connaught*, Table xxxi, Religious professions and sexes of the inhabitants and number of families, in each Parish in the county of Galway, p. 168.
56. *Tuam Herald*, 27 Apr. 1872; *Copy of the minutes of evidence taken at the trial of the Galway county election petition, with an appendix*, Report 1872, p. 896, minute, 15,609.
57. *Tuam Herald*, 16 Mar. 1872.
58. *Tuam Herald*, 13 Apr. 1872.
59. *Tuam Herald*, 13 Apr. 1872.
60. *Tuam Herald*, 16 Dec. 1871; 1 May 1872.
61. J.H. Whyte, 'Landlord influence at elections in Ireland', *English Historical Review* 80 (1965), p. 753.
62. *Tuam Herald*, 20 Apr. 1872, 27 Apr. 1872.
63. *Tuam Herald*, 20 Apr. 1872, 27 Apr. 1872.

64. *Galway county election petition*, 1872, p. 896 (15,609), *Tuam Herald*, 27 Apr. 1872.
65. *Tuam Herald*, 27 Apr. 1872.
66. *Tuam Herald*, 27 Apr. 1872.
67. Larkin, *The Roman Catholic Church and the Home Rule movement in Ireland*, p. 146.
68. *Tuam Herald*, 13 Jan. 1872, 10 Feb. 1872.
69. *Tuam Herald*, 13 Jan. 1872, 10 Feb. 1872.
70. *Tuam Herald*, 13 Jan. 1872, 20 Jan. 1872.
71. *Tuam Herald*, 27 Jan. 1872.
72. *Tuam Herald*, 27 Jan. 1872.
73. R.V. Comerford, 'Isaac Butt and the Home Rule Party, 1870–77', in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi: *Ireland under the Union, 1870–1921* (Oxford, 2005), p. 9.
74. *Tuam Herald*, 13 Jan. 1872.
75. *Tuam Herald*, 10 Feb. 1872.
76. *Tuam Herald*, 20 Jan. 1872.
77. *Tuam Herald*, 13 Jan. 1872; 20 Jan. 1872.
78. *Tuam Herald*, 13 Jan. 1872.
79. *Tuam Herald*, 1 May 1872.
80. *Tuam Herald*, 16 Mar. 1872; for more on the Trench family and their involvement in the Battle of Aughrim, see P.K. Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe: Its history from the earliest time to the present century* and Richard le Poer Trench, *Memoir of the le Poer Trench family* (1874).
81. *Tuam Herald*, 16 Mar. 1872.
82. *Tuam News*, 25 May 1872.
83. MacEvilly to Cullen, 28 Jan. 1871, 328/8/I/11; *Tuam Herald*, 1 May 1872; Larkin, *The Roman Catholic Church and the Home Rule movement in Ireland*, p. 112.
84. *Tuam Herald*, 10 Feb. 1872.
85. *Tuam Herald*, 16 Mar. 1872.
86. *Tuam Herald*, 27 Jan. 1872; 13 Apr. 1872; 10 Feb. 1872.
87. *Galway Express*, 27 Jan. 1872.
88. *Tuam Herald*, 27 Jan. 1872.
89. *Tuam Herald*, 6 Apr. 1872.
90. *Tuam Herald*, 27 Jan. 1872.
91. *Tuam Herald*, 20 Jan. 1872.
92. *Tuam Herald*, 20 Jan. 1872; 6 Apr. 1872.
93. *Tuam Herald*, 21 Dec. 1850; 19 Apr. 1851; *Galway Express*, 27 Jan. 1872; *Tuam Herald*, 20 Jan. 1872; 13 Apr. 1872; Patrick Melvin, 'The landed gentry of Galway, 1820–1880' (PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1991), pp. 43–4.
94. *Tuam Herald*, 6 Apr. 1872; 27 Apr. 1872.

95. *Galway Express*, 10 Feb. 1872; *Tuam Herald*, 20 Apr. 1872.
96. *Tuam Herald*, 16 Mar. 1872. This is in reference to the delay in building St Michael's Church in Ballinasloe, which was delayed because of the onset of the Famine. However, it was eventually built in 1858 and is symbolic of the Gothic revival that was gripping church-building because of the influence of Augustine Welby Pugin. For more on Pugin, see entry in *Oxford National Biography*, 45, pp. 520–4.
97. *Tuam Herald*, 10 Feb. 1872.
98. *Tuam Herald*, 13 Apr. 1872; 20 Apr. 1872.
99. *Tuam Herald*, 27 Apr. 1872.
100. *Tuam Herald*, 6 Apr. 1872; 27 Apr. 1872.
101. *Tuam Herald*, 20 Jan. 1872; 11 May 1872; 13 Apr. 1872; *Galway Express*, 3 Feb. 1872.
102. 'The priesthood in Irish politics' in *Dublin Review* (July 1872), p. 286; for more on the antecedents of the Clancarty family regarding their anti-Catholic opinions, see Jane Conroy, 'Ballinasloe, 1826: Catholic emancipation, political tourism and the French liberal agenda', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 54 (2002), pp. 103–20.
103. Larkin, *The Roman Catholic Church and the Home Rule movement in Ireland*, p. 124.
104. C.S.O., R.P. 1871/22275 and 1871/22250 in the National Archives of Ireland.
105. *Tuam Herald*, 20 Jan. 1872.
106. C.S.O., R.P. 1872/212; C.S.O., R.P. 1872/5879.
107. C.S.O., R.P. 1872/5879.
108. Comerford, *The Fenians in context*, p. 179.
109. Mark Ryan (edited by T.F. O'Sullivan), *Fenian memories* (1945), p. 42.
110. Comerford, 'Isaac Butt and the Home Rule Party, 1870–77', p. 9.
111. *Galway Express*, 27 Jan. 1872.
112. *Tuam Herald*, 10 Feb. 1872.
113. *Galway Express*, 10 Feb. 1872; Ryan, *Fenian memories*, p. 42; B.M. Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801–1922* (Dublin, 1978), pp. 283–4.
114. MacEvilly to Cullen, 4 Apr. 1872, 328/8/I/30.
115. *Tuam Herald*, 17 Feb. 1872; 24 Feb. 1872.
116. Desmond McCabe, 'William Nicholas Keogh', *Dictionary of Irish Biography* 5 (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 149–51.
117. *Tuam Herald*, 6 Apr. 1872; 20 Apr. 1872; 27 Apr. 1872; *Tuam News*, 25 May 1872.
118. *Copy of the minutes of evidence taken at the trial of the Galway county election petition, with an appendix*, Report 1872 (241) (241–I), p. x.
119. *Tuam Herald*, 18 May 1872.

120. *Tuam Herald*, 18 May 1872; McCabe, William Nicholas Keogh, pp. 149–51.
121. *Galway county election petition*, 1872, p. 896 (15,609); *Tuam Herald*, 27 Apr. 1872; 18 May 1872; *Galway Express*, 13 Jan. 1872.
122. Larkin, *The Roman Catholic Church and the Home Rule movement in Ireland*, pp. 123–4.
123. *Tuam Herald*, 13 Apr. 1872.
124. *Tuam Herald*, 27 Apr. 1872; 16 Mar. 1872; Ryan, *Fenian memories*, p. 44.
125. E.R. Norman, *The Catholic Church and Ireland in the age of rebellion* (London, 1965), p. 423.
126. *Daily News*, 24 July 1872; *Express*, 24 July 1872.
127. Norman, *The Catholic Church and Ireland in the age of rebellion*, p. 423.
128. *Tuam Herald*, 18 May 1872; *Express*, 24 July 1872; *Galway election petition*, p. 33.
129. *Tuam Herald*, 1 June 1872; 17 and 18 Vic., c. 102 sec 5.
130. Mike Liffey, 'The 1872 by-election', in Joseph Forde (ed.), *The district of Loughrea, Vol. 1. History, 1791–1918* (Galway, 2003), p. 343.
131. *Tuam Herald*, 18 May 1872; Moran, *A radical priest in Mayo*, pp. 141–3; for more on Bishop Duggan, see the useful if hagiographical Thomas Brett, *Life of the Most Reverend Dr Patrick Duggan, Bishop of Clonfert* (Dublin, 1921).
132. *Hansard*, ccxi 13 June 1872 211, Col 1679 and 1680; *Morning Post*, 29 May 1872; *Daily News*, 30 May 1872; *Times*, 30 May 1872.
133. Larkin, *The Roman Catholic Church and the Home Rule movement in Ireland*, pp. 129–31.
134. *Tuam Herald*, 18 May 1872.
135. *Morning Post*, 29 May 1872; *Times*, 30 May 1872; *Daily News*, 30 May 1872.
136. *Express*, 28 May 1872; 30 May 1872; *Times*, 24 May 1872; 24 July 1872.
137. *Freeman's Journal*, 28 July 1871.
138. Stanford, *That Irishman*, p. 51.
139. Donald Jordan, *Land and popular politics in Ireland: County Mayo from the plantation to the Land War* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 171.
140. Biagini, *British democracy and Irish nationalism*, p. 54; Stanford, *That Irishman*, pp. 35–7.
141. K.T. Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800: Conflict and conformity* (Essex, 1999), pp. 122–3.
142. M. J. Kelly, *The fenian ideal and Irish nationalism, 1882–1916* (Suffolk, 2006), p. 2.
143. Hoppen, *Elections, politics and society in Ireland*, p. 469.
144. Moody, *Davitt and the Irish revolution*, pp. 120–4.

145. Moran, *A radical priest in Mayo*, p. 145.
146. See Donald Jordan, 'John O'Connor Power, Charles Stewart Parnell and the centralization of popular politics in Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies* xxv, no. 97 (1986), pp. 46–66.
147. Thornley, *Isaac Butt and the Home Rule party*, p. 184.
148. Thornley, *Isaac Butt and the Home Rule party*, p. 176.
149. Thornley, *Isaac Butt and the Home Rule party*, p. 179.
150. Jordan, 'John O'Connor Power, Charles Stewart Parnell and the centralization of popular politics in Ireland', p. 46–8.
151. Stanford, *That Irishman*, pp. 54, 69.
152. Jordan, 'John O'Connor Power, Charles Stewart Parnell and the centralization of popular politics in Ireland', p. 54.
153. *Flag of Ireland*, 7 Feb. 1874; Comerford, *The Fenians in context*, p. 201.
154. See Colin Barr, *The European culture wars in Ireland: The Callan schools affair, 1868–81* (Dublin, 2010), introduction.
155. C.S.O., R.P. 1874/7686 and 1874/7144.
156. Stanford, *That Irishman*, p. 49.
157. *Tuam Herald*, 10 Feb. 1872.
158. *Tuam Herald*, 10 Feb. 1872.
159. Feingold, *The revolt of the tenantry*, p. 53.
160. Moran, *A radical priest in Mayo*, pp. 132, 136.
161. *Express*, 16 Dec. 1871.
162. Ryan, *Fenian memories* (1945), p. 42.
163. Eugene Hynes, *Knock: The Virgin's apparition in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Cork, 2009), p. 100.
164. Norman, *The Catholic Church and Ireland in the age of rebellion*, p. 429.

REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

DUBLIN DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

Cullen papers.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF IRELAND

Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, JAMES HARDIMAN LIBRARY,
NUI GALWAY

Egan/Mac Fhinn papers.

NEWSPAPERS

Daily News.

Express.

Flag of Ireland.

Freeman's Journal.

Galway Express.

Mayo Examiner.

Morning Post.

Times.

Tuam Herald.

Tuam News.

OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

14 and 18 Vic., c. 102 sec 5.

Census of Ireland, part one. Area, houses and population: Also the ages, civil condition, occupations, birthplaces, religion and education of the people. viv. Province of Connaught, Table xxxi.

Copy of the minutes of evidence taken at the trial of the Galway county election petition, with an appendix, Report 1872 (241) (241-I).

Hansard.

CONTEMPORARY PUBLICATIONS

Brett, Thomas, *Life of the most Reverend Dr Patrick Duggan, Bishop of Clonfert* (Dublin, 1921).

le Poer Trench, Richard, *Memoir of the le Poer Trench family* (1874).

Ryan, Mark (edited by T.F. O'Sullivan), *Fenian memories* (1945).

'The priesthood in Irish politics', *Dublin Review* (July 1872).

WORKS OF REFERENCE

Maguire, James (ed.), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009).
Oxford National Biography.

Walker, B.M., *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801–1922* (Dublin, 1978).

SECONDARY SOURCES

Barr, Colin, *The European culture wars in Ireland: The Callan schools affair, 1868–81* (Dublin, 2010).

Biagini, Eugenio, *British democracy and Irish nationalism, 1876–1906* (Cambridge, 2007).

Comerford, R.V., *The Fenians in context: Irish politics and society, 1848–82* (Dublin, 1994).

Comerford, R.V., 'Isaac Butt and the Home Rule Party, 1870–77', in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi: *Ireland under the Union, 1870–1921* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 1–25.

Conroy, Jane, 'Ballinasloe, 1826: Catholic emancipation, political tourism and the French liberal agenda', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 54 (2002), pp. 103–20.

Corish, P.J., 'Irish College Rome: Kirby papers', *Archivium Hibernicum* xxx (1972), pp. 29–116.

Egan, P.K., *The Parish of Ballinasloe: Its history from the earliest time to the present century* (Dublin, 1960).

Feingold, William, *The revolt of the tenantry: The transformation of local government in Ireland, 1872–1886* (Boston, 1984).

Hoppen, K.T., *Elections, politics and society in Ireland, 1832–1885* (Oxford, 1984).

Hoppen, K.T., *Ireland since 1800: Conflict and conformity* (Essex, 1999).

Huggins, Michael, *Social conflict in pre-Famine Ireland: The case of county Roscommon* (Dublin, 2007).

Hynes, Eugene, *Knock: The Virgin's apparition in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Cork, 2009).

Jordan, Donald, 'John O'Connor Power, Charles Stewart Parnell and the centralization of popular politics in Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies* xxv, no. 97 (1986), pp. 46–66.

Jordan, Donald, *Land and popular politics in Ireland: County Mayo from the plantation to the Land War* (Cambridge, 1994).

Kelly, Matthew, *The Fenian ideal and Irish nationalism, 1882–1916* (Suffolk, 2006).

Larkin, Emmet, 'The devotional revolution in Ireland, 1850–75', *American Historical Review* 77, no. 3, (June 1972), pp. 625–52.

Larkin, Emmet, *The Roman Catholic Church and the Home Rule movement in Ireland, 1870–1874* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1990).

Liffey, Mike, 'The 1872 by-election', in Joseph Forde (ed.), *The district of Loughrea, Vol. 1. History, 1791–1918* (Galway, 2003), pp. 326–48.

- Melvin, Patrick, 'The landed gentry of Galway, 1820–1880' (PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1991).
- Moody, T.W., *Davitt and the Irish revolution, 1846–82* (Oxford, 1984).
- Moran, Gerard, *A radical priest in Mayo: Fr Patrick Lavelle: The rise and fall of an Irish nationalist, 1825–86* (Dublin, 1994).
- Norman, E.R., *The Catholic Church and Ireland in the age of rebellion* (London, 1965).
- Stanford, Jane, *That Irishman: The life and times of John O'Connor Power* (Dublin, 2010).
- Thornley, David, *Isaac Butt and Home Rule* (London, 1964).
- Weber, Eugene, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The modernisation of rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, 1976).
- Whelan, Kevin, 'The republic in the village: The United Irishmen, the Enlightenment and popular culture', idem, *Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism and the construction of Irish identity, 1760–1830* (Dublin, 1996), pp. 59–98.
- Whyte, J.H., 'The influence of the Catholic clergy on elections in nineteenth-century Ireland', *English Historical Review* 75 (1960), pp. 239–59.
- Whyte, J.H., 'Landlord influence at elections in Ireland', *English Historical Review* 80 (1965), pp. 740–60.
- Wolf, Nicholas M., *An Irish-speaking island: State, religion and the linguistic landscape in Ireland, 1770–1870* (Madison, 2014).



The Construction of a Proletarian Political Movement: The Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association, 1876–1879

1 INTRODUCTION

Farmers clubs and tenant defence associations emerged in the 1860s and 1870s in provincial Ireland. They reflected the emergence of the ‘challenging collectivity’ that consisted of: ‘combinations formed by and claiming to represent the interests of tenant farmers [that] became the predominant type of agrarian collective action in the post-Famine period’.¹ They were keen to affect beneficial change by challenging the existing base of power in the countryside and their rise coincided with increased literacy and a rising political consciousness amongst the lower classes in provincial society, so ‘it was this increasingly Anglicized and literate society which provided a growing audience for newspapers of all kinds and for a new national literature encompassing both the revolutionary and the constitutional traditions’.²

Quoting *Silas Marner*, Liana Vardi stated that, ‘to the peasants of old times, the world outside their own direct experience was a region of vagueness and mystery’, with peasants remaining hostile to the outside world. Modernisation brought them into contact with outside influences, and railways were especially important for this.³ E.P. Thompson makes reference to William Cobbett’s essays and their importance for the existence of political knowledge amongst the poor.⁴ Similar efforts were being made in late Victorian Ireland and this will be explored in this chapter through the prism of the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association.

In 1869 William Gladstone initiated the process of granting legal recognition to the Ulster Custom, and similar practices that existed outside of the province compensated tenants for improvements culminated in his first Land Act of 1870. While landlord and tenant groups criticised the act, it paved the way for much more comprehensive legislation that helped to expedite the decline of landlordism in Ireland. Traditionalists within the land-owning class were horrified, seeing it as an affront to the concept of private property. The Duke of Leinster, for example, tried to circumvent it through the forced application of the Leinster Lease on his vast estate. This was a much more restrictive lease than what was previously in place and it forced tenants to forgo compensation for improvements and a copy of the lease was symbolically burned by Michael Boyton on a 1798 pike in Athy in late 1880.⁵ 'Although landlords had already suffered a series of electoral and psychological setbacks in the 1870s, they were still powerful, wealthy and prepared to fight'.⁶ As F.M.L. Thompson argued: 'deference to the landed classes had a general social basis in habitual acceptance of aristocratic authority and a particular economic basis in the dependence of farmers, servants and the labouring poor on the patronage or benevolence of individual landowners'.⁷

Howard Newby said 'deference, has on various occasions, been used to describe certain forms of obsequious and/or ingratiating behaviour'.⁸ It was both a form of behaviour and a set of attitudes that was predicated on the idea that everyone knew their place in society and acknowledged their superiors by tugging at their forelocks or participating in public displays of loyalty such as harvest festivals, the marriage of an heir or coming-of-age celebrations. The age-old spectacle was designed to reaffirm devotion to the landlord in an overt and ostentatious way, with sycophantic utterings to keep favour with the landlord. This was a ritualised and habitual element of rural society, and while imposed by a superordinate power, it cannot be said for certain that the actors who partook were totally powerless.⁹ However, by the 1870s, the principal of inherited authority was now being held to account as institutional deference to landlords was challenged. Their complacency put them on the back foot and, while they tried to resist, they were fighting a losing battle. The Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association was an example of a more vocal and organised manifestation of this challenge. 'The small farmers, and especially the labourers—the real rural proletariat—were decimated by the famine. The rural proletariat was not so much transformed as buried. The majority of the rural bourgeoisie had always been bourgeoisie, who now flourished on the graves of the proletariat'.¹⁰

Until 1870, agriculture was the key to prosperity in many countries. After this, the large-scale export of grain from the New World, coupled with improved railway and shipping conditions, saw a massive decline in agricultural prices, and the agrarian base of Europe declined and moved towards the tertiary sector.¹¹ 'The very frustration of a popular movement in which thousands of powerless men were pitted against an armed establishment, were released in hyperbole'.¹² In Ireland, Fenians began formulating an agrarian policy in the 1860s which was a manifestation of their growing appreciation of the usefulness of embracing the rustics to garner greater support for their own cause, and this eventually took on an agrarian and anti-landlord hue. Previously it had been an abstract nationalist concept proudly ignorant of the land question, believing that it would only be solved following independence.¹³ The deaths of twelve innocent civilians outside Clerkenwell prison in 1867 forced the Fenians to reappraise their policy of insurrectionary violence, with its western members particularly keen to embrace a social agenda that considered the penury depravation in the west of Ireland.¹⁴ There was a degree of public sympathy for the Fenians following these trials as people saw that the rising 'had been carried out by sincere and dedicated, if very foolish men'.¹⁵ This agrarian policy began to develop a greater coherence with the establishment of the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association in May 1876.¹⁶ Along with the activity in Mayo in 1874, it ensured that the 'masses' were no longer an adjunct to political movements but were now playing an important role.¹⁷

While expanding their support base, Fenians insisted on non-parliamentary agitation because they still prioritised military action and were explicit in asserting that the ultimate goal was national independence. This was an effort to move beyond the localism and insularity of Ribbonism, which was incoherent and fragmented in the pre-Famine period. This new movement was also representative of a modernisation of the political milieu of 1870s Ireland. As discussed in the previous chapter, the election of Supreme Council member John O'Connor Power as MP for Mayo in 1874 was an example of this reappraised ideology. However, obvious tensions remained within the movement as 'the precedent set for constitutional agitation set by John O'Connor Power was not lost on orthodox Fenians, such as Dr Mark Ryan, who saw behind the new departure, the nefarious influence of the member for Mayo'.¹⁸ The New Departure had brought together 'forces which had long been divided and by providing the materials for both local organisation and national authority, furnished the match with which the tinder might be set alight'.¹⁹

Increased literacy, newspaper circulation and infrastructural development were all important aspects of the modernisation of rural Ireland. Ideas and ideology were discussed, honed and expressed in reading rooms, pubs, mechanics' institutes and lectures.²⁰ These generally only appealed to a distinct section of the town tenantry; it saw them develop ideas that had first been discussed by Chartists in Britain. Enlightenment authors such as Thomas Paine and political economists like John Stuart Mill were being read and interpreted for an Irish provincial audience. These autodidactic lower-class leaders began formulating an idealistic yet thoughtful agrarian policy, and according to Paul Bew: 'the Fenian press constantly emphasised the IRB's special links with urban artisans and mechanics, rural smaller peasantry and agricultural labourers' in an effort to encompass the lower classes in provincial Ireland.²¹

This chapter explores the efforts of neo-Fenians to establish the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association as it attempted to organise farmers and foster a sense of class consciousness in order to challenge both the authority of landlords and the threat posed by graziers to small farmers. Its local leadership was possessed of men who were well known in their local communities and provided stability in both local leadership and messages where other movements had previously failed. They knew how to touch upon the frustrations of the voiceless subaltern classes and could break down the language and form of high politics.²² This chapter also explores the wider ramifications of the association's activity and how this led to an obvious dichotomy amongst the non-propertied classes prior to the establishment of the Land League, as it transcended traditional notions of locality and encouraged farmers to go beyond the insular world view that many of them possessed.

2 THE ORIGINS, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE BALLINASLOE TENANT DEFENCE ASSOCIATION

Tenant Defence Associations and Farmers' Clubs were a mechanism by which farmers could articulate their disappointment with the 1870 Land Act, such as its failure to provide for leaseholders when landlords exploited loopholes. Their establishment was also seen to be a contagion that stemmed from increased participation in the democratic process and the Secret Ballot Act of 1872. The Central Tenant Defence Association, which was dominated by large cattle farmers of the east of the country, was the most prominent of these associations. Others—such as the Farney Tenant

Defence Association in Monaghan, established on 21 May 1874—saw its members pledge to oppose any candidate who did not support tenant-right in parliament.²³

The Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association was the first of these to be established in Connaught. The nature of the Connaught land question saw subsistence farmers surviving cheek-by-jowl with large ranches of grazing land, and for the first time small farmers had an advocate for their rights. Many graziers were shopkeepers who sought to acquire land as a status symbol, thus reflecting the importance of land for achieving respectability in provincial Ireland, and there was a genuine anxiety that such a thirst for land threatened to squeeze out small farmers and ruin their livelihoods. Donald Jordan examined the core and periphery of Mayo in relation to this problem and argued: ‘the significant role of merchants and strong farmers in leading a movement that drew large numbers of small farmers into its ranks would appear to lend support...that the post-famine structural changes in Irish society had produced a substantial degree of solidarity within the farming and trading community’.²⁴

In their anthropological exploration of Thomastown, Kilkenny, Gulliver and Silverman challenged the notion of locality being geographically restricted, arguing that its definition varied according to the event or issue.²⁵ The fact that a Mayo paper, the *Connaught Telegraph*, paid particular attention to this Galway-based movement challenges the notion that it was merely a local movement. It managed to transcend geographical boundaries and fostered the notion of an imagined community of small farmers working in solidarity as it tried to challenge ‘individual interests and concerns...[that] informed non-violent politics’.²⁶ However, this solidarity was more apparent than real as mutual suspicion reigned supreme, and this illusory nature is discussed in greater detail in chaps. 6 and 7.

Prior to the 1870s, farmers’ political energies were either dormant or fragmented, despite being the largest group in the countryside, which resulted in the Catholic clergy acting as the main political organisers. Farmers’ clubs and tenant defence associations became a medium by which farmers could focus their discontent in an organised fashion, and this resulted in them becoming a very powerful and influential political entity which was a threat to the two power blocks in the countryside: landlords and Catholic priests. Fenians generally came from the urban artisan classes and, along with town tenants, they played an important role in these organisations,²⁷ resulting in ‘collective action by and for tenant farmers [that] was slowly, but unmistakably expanding’.²⁸ Western neo-Fenians such as Matt Harris,

Michael Malachy O'Sullivan and John O'Connor Power appreciated that it was the land question and not Home Rule that farmers were truly interested in, and the commercialisation of farming created the ideal conditions for radical political activity to grow because of the threat livestock farmers posed to the livelihoods of small farmers. These socialistic-republicans 'took the lead in bringing their radical traditions and organisational experience to the inchoate agrarian movement and there was fertile breeding ground for growth amongst the lower classes'.²⁹ These urban radicals 'formed a picture of the organisation of society, out of their own experience and with the help of their hard-won and erratic education, which was above all, a political picture', and they generally saw their lives as a history of conflict.³⁰ In his study of pre-Famine Roscommon, Michael Huggins argued that 'the relationship with a hedge school master or other intermediary would be one way the poor became familiar with cosmopolitan politics', and the mass meeting, provincial newspapers and branch meetings were a continuation of this.³¹

The Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association immediately attracted the attention and support of James Daly and Alfred O'Hea of the *Connaught Telegraph* at the time of its establishment in May 1876. Both men wanted to see a similar movement established in Mayo, and O'Hea eventually sat on the executive of the association. J.J. Lee argued that the *Connaught Telegraph* became the most effective propaganda machine in Connaught; even though Daly was naturally conservative and did not want to see widespread agitation take place, he succeeded in bringing the plight of small western farmers to greater national attention.³² While the local priests were present at its inaugural meeting, none of them were returned as president as there was a determination to construct an effective lay leadership, and they could become hostile to overly zealous political interference. A large contingent of local nationalists was also in attendance when W.E. Duffy was returned as the inaugural president, and he said in his maiden speech:

there can be no society...without admitting some principle of justice. Man in his lowest stage will not build a hut or tame a wild animal if he were not allowed the right to keep them; but, on the other hand, if he uses his hut or his animal to the injury of the rest of the community they have a right to take them from him.³³

Duffy's words echo those of John Stuart Mill, which indicate that his ideas played a role in the development of plebeian political consciousness, and

Irish radicals were interpreting his ideas for a local context. In *On Liberty*, Mill said: 'everyone who receives the protection of society owes a return for the benefit and the fact of living in society renders it indispensable that each should be bound to observe a certain line of conduct towards the rest'.³⁴ Fenianism and Ribbonism had merged in places and there was 'a pre-existing tradition in certain areas of Fenian involvement in agrarianism'.³⁵ Western Fenians radicalised their ambitions in matters of social concern in order to broaden their appeal to small tenant farmers, and the Ballinasloe association was an example of how this worked.³⁶ Their alacrity as to the primacy of the land question over Home Rule saw Paul Bew remark: 'many Fenians agreed with Matt Harris, who saw the land agitation as part of a revolution that would bring about full national independence without recourse to parliament and without the aid of parliamentarians'.³⁷ Twenty mass meetings were recorded between 13 May 1876 and 8 November 1878 in the *Connaught Telegraph* as this organisation became an important movement to 'beget the Land League'.³⁸ A circular held in the Sweetman papers indicates that the founders of the association wanted as many people as possible to join, with annual membership fees starting at a shilling.³⁹ The explicit reference to labourers was a clear attempt to get them involved in the political process, which paralleled efforts in Kanturk by P.F. Johnson and in the United Kingdom by Joseph Arch, Matthew Vincent and others. This activity had petered away by 1876 in Britain and Johnson's Kanturk organisation existed, in part, to stop Irish scab labour going to Britain. J.P.D. Dunbabin looked at the organisation of agricultural labourers in the aftermath of their 'Great Awakening' and said that 'the world suddenly seemed to lie at agricultural labourers' feet...areas of nucleated villages were more conducive to it (organisation) and better able to support trade unionism than were those of scattered hamlets'.⁴⁰ Ballinasloe was the most important urban centre in east Galway and Harris drew up this circular in April 1878 in the hope that more farmers would become involved.

At the present time public opinion is felt to be a great power, but a power which requires...concentration, guidance and direction. Since its establishment, the Ballinasloe Tenants' Defence Association has incessantly striven to supply these necessary requirements, but has had its operations greatly limited through not getting that practical support without which no public body can exist.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the economic prosperity that the country experienced meant that many were slow to participate in such a movement.⁴²

The lack of trade and commerce in Ireland created a disproportionate dependence upon land and there was a relative absence of medium-sized farms in Connaught, which is indicative of the varying interpretations regarding the land question that will be explored in subsequent chapters. This also highlights a seamless juxtaposition between the urban and rural elements of provincial Ireland because urban centres were hugely underdeveloped, which forced them to maintain strong links with the countryside as a result.⁴³ A symbiotic relationship existed between town and country as they were co-dependent for survival. Gulliver and Silverman argued that 'commerce is involved in the intersection of two functions which the town had always performed. It was a collection centre for commodities destined for regional and international markets and it was a distribution centre for imports and locally produced commodities'.⁴⁴ These networks of exchange connected the village to the outer world, but the proto-artisan was 'no longer physically bounded by the village but he remains a prisoner either of a traditional mentality or of economic forces that he cannot control'.⁴⁵ Bew contended that: 'it is often argued that the poor peasantry and the agricultural proletariat (as opposed to the more independent middle peasantry) rarely initiate militant action, partly because these classes are often enmeshed in relations of dependence with the dominant classes, the landlords and their allies'.⁴⁶

There were numerous interlinking networks of economic interdependence in provincial Ireland and people from commercial and industrial backgrounds in Ballinasloe were encouraged to join the association because, 'as our sole dependence is agriculture, the ruin of our towns will follow that of the country'. While founded at a time of economic prosperity, the mission of the association was to create unity between town and country which was essential to ward off any future crises.⁴⁷ Ballinasloe shopkeepers were dependent upon the trade of small farmers, as graziers were believed to have taken their trade elsewhere in the county because, according to J. Ward in 1879, it was not fashionable for them to be seen to be transacting their business in Ballinasloe. This interconnectivity between town and country saw increased political participation by shopkeepers because 'the shopkeeper who lives by the custom of the farmer cannot meet their engagements if their accounts are not paid'.⁴⁸ William O'Brien called this relationship between shopkeepers and small farmers desperate, and 'the increasing dependence upon retailers either by choice or by necessity was associated with a more general rise in the cost of living'.⁴⁹ Shopkeeper involvement in an agrarian movement could also have been

in the hope of attracting business from small farmers as they became increasingly dependent upon them for business, with later Land League leaders succeeding in distinguishing between rents and other forms of credit that farmers owed.⁵⁰ Farmers had previously been politically impotent, but with the declining aristocratic influence across Europe they were becoming a leadership in waiting.

The establishment of such an organisation during a time of economic prosperity was a challenge to the authority of landlords in Ballinasloe and east Galway, but it did not appear to be a cause of great concern for them. Deference remained resolute as the Fenian threat was not being taken seriously; they were seen just to be venting at meetings and not making any real subversive threats or engaging in violent rhetoric. Furthermore, there was no evidence to suggest that the authorities saw the association as a seditious organisation, even after the police raided the houses of Harris and O'Sullivan under the pretence of searching for arms.⁵¹ Despite this dismissive attitude of the authorities, the movement was a manifestation of the growing political ambitions of the post-Famine political elite and lower classes as they began to focus their attention on the attractiveness of local politics and becoming politicised respectively, and increased prosperity could bring its own grievances. Donald Jordan maintained that 'the wave of national feeling during the 1870s undermined the horizons of many local political activists, but did not nullify their fidelity to local initiative and local responsibility'.⁵² E.P. Thompson showed how working-class political radicalism could become more conscious, sophisticated and organised and eventually become the response of the whole community; this latent radicalism came to the surface during the Land War.⁵³ The end of the 1860s saw Fenian 'influence among the small farmers, shopkeepers and artisans of [Mayo become] such that they were in a position to employ their organisational experience and political consciousness in support of an agrarian movement'.⁵⁴

Like the later Land League, the social composition of many of the leaders of this association did not come from the tenant farmer class, but rather from town tenants, such as Harris and O'Sullivan, though Harris had grown up on a small farm near Athlone, which he inherited but passed on to his sister.⁵⁵ The plebeian make-up of the leadership in this particular association cannot be overstated when compared to other associations across the country. On the Leinster estate in Kerry and within the ranks of the Central Tenant Defence Association, the clergy and the nascent Catholic middle-class notability made up the bulk of the leadership, with

The O'Donoghue, a Kerry landlord, being an important figure in the Kerry Tenant Defence Association. Unlike Ballinasloe, the Kerry Tenant Defence Association was 'dominated by the elites of tenant society' and it was aware of the potential political power of the lower classes in provincial society. Thomas O'Rourke, its secretary, was keen for farmers to get involved, to be 'made conscious of the great power they could muster by uniting together and becoming members of the association'.⁵⁶ There were sections within the movement that were not happy with his involvement and representation in parliament, though he spoke in favour of tenant-right in September 1876.⁵⁷ Therefore, free from the conservatising influence of the notability in the town, the Ballinasloe association could appeal to marginalised figures in the burgeoning popular democratic movement, namely small farmers, labourers and artisans. Gulliver and Silverman have argued that, owing to their peripheral nature, these figures' experiences have generally been unrecorded in the historical record and a lot of homesteads had little intercourse with the outside world.⁵⁸ The Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association is an important manifestation that transcended traditional concepts of locality and it was indicative of how politics tried to bring town and country together. The *Western News*—the newspaper based in Ballinasloe—did not cover the meetings held by the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association in any significant detail, despite being owned by a nationalist, John Callanan. Instead, the *Connaught Telegraph* of Castlebar in Mayo carried extensive reports on its activities. Along with Harris, Kilmartin and O'Sullivan, Daly wanted to foster a campaign for land reform amongst the small tenant farmers of Galway, Mayo and Roscommon especially. Home Rule was the dominant issue of the day in Westminster and amongst MPs, yet it was an abstract concept for most people outside of large urban centres. While there had been discussions on the primacy of the land question since the time of James Fintan Lalor, it was the Ballinasloe association that was most forceful in shifting emphasis to the land question because it was a material demand that affected the majority of people in provincial Ireland, and by doing this it highlighted the dichotomy between high and popular politics. This chasm was appreciated by others who were writing on the land question across the country during this time, and the pages of the *Freeman's Journal* sees letters being published about it.

Landless tenants were constantly excluded from any discussions regarding a resolution to the land question. The idea of including them was

anathema to the sensibilities of some of the more bourgeois elements of the disparate clubs and associations, yet, in Ballinasloe, efforts were made to include them in any potential reimagining of the Irish nation, as urban plebeians were keen that they should also be included in the notion of an Irish nation. In England, there was a kind of land hunger amongst agricultural labourers, and allotments were used as prophylactics against discontent.⁵⁹ However, this failed to materialise in rural Ireland, and tensions between the urban and the rural will be explored in later chapters, in particular Chap. 8.

While being of the same background as those they sought to represent and organise, the leaders of the association were part of what Hobsbawm called the labour aristocracy—that is, a stratum within the working class that was better educated and more moderate.⁶⁰ However, it is questionable whether they were more moderate, and Chaps. 6 and 7 will further explore the challenges presented in controlling the crowd, as fiery rhetoric on the Land League and Irish National League platforms excited them and ‘there was naturally an attempt to even things out by evangelizing in the more backward district’.⁶¹ Rather than merely writing letters to the editor and hosting lectures on land reform, which formed an important element of the provincial intellectual milieu, James Kilmartin stressed the importance of collective action and the holding of meetings as a message of the power of unity. E.P. Thompson argued that rhetoric was supported by the radical disposition of the London crowd, as its most significant manifestation was its anti-authoritarian hue, and in Ballinasloe the local leaders adopted a similar outlook fifty years later.⁶² The Catholic clergy were not active participants at meetings, which ‘set the people whispering [that] the priests are not with the people in their national demands’.⁶³ The reasons for this initial reticence are twofold: firstly, the mutual suspicion between Fenians and the clergy and the fear of violence that could stem from Fenian involvement; and secondly, the dominance of the laity in the executive of the committee which rankled with the clergy. While priests sat on the central committee, none were elected to the central executive positions—president, vice-president, treasurer or secretary—during the existence of the association. Priestly reticence notwithstanding, the parish priest of Shannonbridge, Fr O’Reilly, gave it his unequivocal backing because it ‘had done much good in keeping alive and fostering a health public opinion’ and had the potential to be a powerful weapon to instigate change. Their hostility cooled after the movement received the approval of Archbishop MacHale and his suffragan, Bishop Duggan of Clonfert. Both were men with well-known

nationalist sympathies who resisted the effects of Cardinal Paul Cullen's desire to make the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland more ultramontane, and they were eventually invited to become members in October 1877.⁶⁴ Coming together on this also represented a rapprochement as MacHale had refused to officiate at Duggan's episcopal ordination in 1872.⁶⁵ Duggan's experiences of life as parish priest of Cummer, near Tuam, during the Famine helped formulate his sense of social justice and he subsequently condemned the behaviour of landlords on moral terms: 'though he may not break the law in evicting the tenant from his farm, I venture to say he broke the spirit of the law of God'. He was unwavering in questioning the ethics of evicting impoverished tenants.⁶⁶

The first public meeting of the association was held on 25 May 1876 at Shannonbridge. Its symbolic location at the confluence of the Rivers Shannon and Suck aligned with the fact that the village straddled Roscommon and King's County, and it was important that Ballinasloe in Galway was seven miles away. The 'sentiments characterised an increasing number of such meetings in the later 1870s and underlay the foundation of a number of similar organisations, thus preparing the ground—especially in the west—for the Land League'.⁶⁷ The three Fs—fair rent, fixity of tenure and freedom of sale—were demanded. Fair rent was defined as 'payment to the landlord of a just proportion of all profits which could possibly be made on the farm by an industrious tenant'.⁶⁸ Calling for something similar to the later Land Commission, this meeting proposed that rent needed to be fixed arbitrarily at stated intervals, with the ability to alter it if there was a dramatic change in economic conditions.⁶⁹ The *Connaught Telegraph* was ebullient: 'we shall never cease this agitation until every tenant farmer in Ireland, as long as he pays a fair and equitable rent, is free and independent of his landlord'.⁷⁰ This bore some resemblance to Isaac Butt's ideas about land reform whereby he wanted to see tenants being given leases of sixty years, but it differed wherein he also wanted to see landlord interests protected through an independent review of rents from time to time. In consultation with the Central Tenant Defence Association, Butt drew up a land bill in 1876 in an effort to deal with the inadequacies of the 1870 Land Act. While it probably was always doomed to failure, some blame must also be attributed to the overbearing nature of the Central Tenant Defence Association's influence and its lack of deference to Butt's superior legal and political expertise, as numerous unapproved amendments were made and there was also poor support amongst Irish MPs.⁷¹

While the three Fs were the primary focus for the leadership of the Ballinasloe association, it campaigned on other issues that embraced elements of the burgeoning democracy taking hold within the United Kingdom, such as: ‘to have the grand jury laws so amended that there shall be “no taxation without representation”’.⁷² There was frustration with tenant farmers because they were slow to embrace the association. However, their reticence was partially because they were not self-conscious as a class and their sense of community remained firmly rooted in the local and rural, excluding towns, and they had an alternative form of jurisprudence. This gradually changed as they became increasingly aware of class divisions in the countryside and the failure of the post-Famine prosperity to permeate through all classes.⁷³

In his evidence to the Select Committee on the Irish Land Act, 1870, Matt Harris said that graziers around Ballinasloe were amalgamating small holdings and using bailiffs to remove small farmers. The eviction of Mr Reynolds from his holding in Mackney, for example, bears such characteristics, though evidence is lacking to substantiate his claims. When the sheriff arrived at his house to proceed with the eviction, Redington, the subsheriff, was threatened and told ‘that the first man who would enter the house, he (Reynolds) would take his life’. Patrick Comber of Mackney was promised the holding and when he attempted to break down the door of the house during the sheriff sale he was stabbed with a pitchfork. Reynolds was eventually removed from the house, disarmed and remanded. Lord Clancarty’s agent, Edward Fowler, was keen to emphasise that the eviction was not at the instigation of Clancarty but rather of the new tenant, Comber, who had purchased Reynolds’ interest in the holding.⁷⁴ Harris further added that ‘there is a very great contrast between the class of old landlords that we have about Ballinasloe and the class of new ones that have come in’, which indicates a greater ruthlessness amongst stronger farmers against their smaller counterparts, and this case is an example of this.⁷⁵ Evictions were rare at this stage in east Galway as landlord–tenant relations were generally harmonious, but they deteriorated rapidly in the 1880s.

3 ANTI-LANDLORD AND ANTI-GRAZING RHETORIC AND ACTIVITY

The rhetoric at meetings of the association was an expression of frustration with the system of land ownership and problems with access to land felt by the lower classes in provincial society. Neo-Fenians saw the reliance on the

aristocracy for leadership in previous generations to have been a grave error because landlords did not entertain the same principles as the people they were supposed to represent and, like Chartists, members of the Social and Democratic Federation and Lib-Lab activists in Britain, they wanted to see more working-class representation in the House of Commons. Akin to previous generations of radicals, those in the Victorian period combined political demands with efforts to bring about practical reforms to its members. The Ballinasloe association and the Chartists had striking similarities in that 'socialism in the form of co-operation and community building was one of the questions that occupied the Chartists of the 1840s'.⁷⁶ The clergy played a less significant role in electoral politics in Galway in the aftermath of the 1872 by-election, due in part to their over-exuberant campaigning and the emergence of an effective and well-organised lay leadership, which Harris called a 'new phase in Irish politics and a very hopeful one'.⁷⁷

The Shannonbridge meeting called for a more radical interpretation of the three Fs, rather than an attempt to demonise landlords.

In no hostile spirit to any class or party have we invited you, neither is it too unjustly to blame your landlords, among whom are to be found some excellent and upright men...it is for the higher and nobler purpose of forming an association for the protection not alone of your homes, your honest industry, and your legitimate rights in the soil you till, but also for the protection of interests to you still more dear.⁷⁸

While the tone of the meeting was generally moderate and respectful, mutterings of discontent towards the privileged position of landlords and their arrogant assertiveness was becoming more common as they were portrayed as being the embodiment of an exclusive and unrepresentative body: 'enemies of their country...Irishmen in blood and birth, but aliens in heart and sentiment...it is absolutely indispensable that those who profess to speak in the name of the tenant farmers should not be men whose interests are in direct opposition to those of the people they are supposed to represent'.⁷⁹ The lingering if fragile deference that remained meant that animosity towards landlords was not as strong as nationalists hoped, despite Harris' argument that the establishment of the association indicated to him that they had lost the support of their tenants.⁸⁰

The association wanted agrarian or Home Rule-leaning representatives returned, as happened in Mayo with John O'Connor Power's election in

1874.⁸¹ His election was significant because he was the first old Fenian to co-operate with the constitutional nationalist movement.⁸² Previously, carpetbaggers proclaiming support for Home Rule lacked the necessary sincerity to follow through and it became obvious that they were using it as a scaffold to climb the platform to victory.⁸³ They hoped to eventually see working men returned to parliament, which was reflective of a Chartist legacy that infused its spirit into the movement, partially because Matt Harris was a product of the Chartist era.

The association's constitution stated that they were going to hold public meetings that would hold their representatives to account as necessary. An example of this was the criticism of the O'Connor Don and Charles French, MPs for Roscommon, for their failure to support Butt's land bill; they were accused of using the Home Rule platform to be elected. James Kilmartin did not think that they were acting in the best interests of their constituents, who needed to challenge their MPs more forthrightly.⁸⁴ However, this growing democratic fervour did not necessarily see electors change their voting pattern and the people needed to accept some accountability for MPs who did not actively promote their welfare and advocate suitable reforms.⁸⁵ At a meeting in Taughmaconnell, County Roscommon, near Ballinasloe, those in attendance heard that 'our two members (the O'Connor Don and French)...have done all that lay in their power to spread disunion in the ranks of the Irish party' and acted in defiance of the wishes of the Roscommon electorate in their failure to support Butt's amendment.⁸⁶

Tenants' sense of deference across the country left radical nationalists exasperated and Harris said: 'the greatest enemies of the good landlords are those persons that would make a barrier of them to protect the bad ones'.⁸⁷ He stated that there were three forms of landlord oppression, and this is worth quoting at length:

the landlord who is fond of changing his tenants is a bad man; the landlord who, after evicting his tenants, amalgamates their farms, is still a worse man; but the landlord who, after doing both these things, lays down the land in grass is the worst of all. What I maintain is that there are some bad landlords—not all are bad—and if it be argued that the percentage is very small, and should not influence us in passing a general law that would affect the whole class, I would answer that if their numbers be small and the calamities they have brought to this country are very great, and no where greater than in this province of Connaught...the landlords' power of doing mischief does

not end when he evicts his tenantry and amalgamates their farms, he claims the right, and the law allows his claim, of prohibiting tillage altogether—of putting chains upon the plough (that ancient symbol of industry), striking the spade from the hands of the husband man, and proclaiming throughout the land that on their estate (and their estates are everywhere in this island) industry shall cease; that the Irish soil shall cease to produce food for the use of the Irish people. Why was it that Ireland has fallen into the state of a petty province, her legislature extinct, and that we have to go more than three hundred miles from her shores to look for redress or justice for the tenant-farmers of this country? It is owing to the division of the people. Let us hope in the future, on the land question there will be harmony amongst the tenant-farmers. It will secure to them just rights, and extend to every town and village the objects of this society, which our country has so long needed.⁸⁸

Alluding to the challenge presented by grazing and drawing upon some imagined ideal of a Celtic peasantry that had its land confiscated, Harris further stated that: ‘unless the landlords can prove that they alone are the children of men, they have no right to claim the land as their absolute property’.⁸⁹ Historicist claims to property were not just confined to Ireland, as Highland radicals in Scotland and Welsh radicals also held similar illusions and Michael Davitt tried to imagine a pan-Celtic peasantry to overthrow the yoke of landlordism. The idea of pan-Celticism was particularly strong in the second Highland tour and was part of a wider scheme to forge an alliance with the democratic masses of Britain and Ireland. Michael Hechter previously argued that ‘English hegemony was also reflected in the assimilation of English cultures by indigenous elites’.⁹⁰ Harris’ anti-landlord rhetoric became increasingly radicalised by November 1878 as he argued that the land of Ireland should be held in trust for the people, which could only be done by the overthrowing of landlordism across the country.⁹¹ However, it is unclear what was meant by ‘being held in trust’ and there was no hint of peasant proprietorship or what was to come during the Land War. Harris contended that landlords used agricultural societies to capitalise upon improvements carried out by small farmers, who remained suspicious of their activity. One example was the Ballinasloe Agricultural Society, which tried to alleviate the condition of small farmers.⁹²

Tensions between graziers and small tenant farmers were most obvious where extensive consolidation of holdings was taking place. Harris attested that ‘any person not acquainted with the country would imagine that if

the advocates of high farming got their way they would in a short time change his country into an earthly paradise, and convert all our barren wastelands into the most fertile land'.⁹³ Graziers were accused of being unwilling to invest in drainage, and such reticence about improving land may also have been a by-product of the eleven-month leasing system, which meant that graziers may have moved on once a particular lease expired.⁹⁴ 'In this context it may be worth noting that it had long been an axiom of fixity of tenure that the Irish farmers had hesitated to sink their capital in the land, merely spreading it onto the land (in the form of cattle) and thus avoiding the risk of loss of investment'.⁹⁵ The acquisitiveness of graziers contravened traditional notions of sharing that were redolent amongst small farmers. They consciously isolated themselves from their peasant neighbours and developed pretensions of gentility in an effort to make a clear distinction from their poorer neighbours. While they were generally successful in making a profit, they were slow to invest in land improvements. This irked the Ballinasloe movement, which asserted that small farmers were more effective at draining and reclaiming poor-quality land, though this had been disputed by various land agents of the period and is also discussed in some detail in Chap. 1.⁹⁶

To counteract the rising influence of the grazier as a competitor for land, Harris suggested limiting tenant-right to smaller farmers, arguing that universal tenant-right would only benefit the stronger farmers. It is likely that he was aware of the restrictive and deeply unpopular Leinster Lease that had been foisted upon tenants on the Leinster estate. He feared that universal tenant-right would result in the creation of monster farms and also, because 'it is impossible for any landlord to give even one acre of land that is now in monster farms to a poor man after the law would give fixity of tenure to those occupying those same monster farms...if the law compels them to give possession...to those who now hold these farms, it renders them utterly powerless to give even an acre of it to others'.⁹⁷ He suggested restricting it to farms of sixty acres or less, contending that graziers could otherwise significantly increase their power and influence in the countryside. To him they were 'a class of men who are more exacting and avaricious than the landlords themselves and who, in the course of time, would become more cruel and tyrannical than the landlords are or ever have been'.⁹⁸ They saw themselves as part of a new elite that was emerging in the countryside and they did not have the same sentimental attachment to the land as other landlords may have had. As David Seth Jones argued, they treated land and cattle in the same vein, in that the only

purpose both served was to make money. Harris' utter contempt for the grazier and his desire to exclude them from land reform legislation saw him being accused of begrudging farmer prosperity. His 'answer for the justice of their exclusion is that when contracting with their landlords, they (graziers) were very well able to take care of themselves' because 'the typical grazier cares little for his country'.⁹⁹ Kerry also had to deal with the vexed issue of graziers with Thomas O'Rourke, secretary of the Kerry Tenant Defence Association, informing John Sweetman that they were like vampires sucking 'on the life blood of the nation and whose sole ambition is to turn this old and fertile land into a huge bullock walk'.¹⁰⁰ They engaged in the political process, not necessarily because of an ideological inclination, but rather out of self-interest.

These restrictive proposals were a threat to graziers, who saw 'fixity of tenure is an absolute quantity, and we can see no possible reason for attempting to make it the exclusive prerogative of a section of the agricultural community'.¹⁰¹ The *Connaught Telegraph* highlighted its conservative hue when it dismissed Harris' efforts by arguing the futility of trying to map out boundaries for deserving and undeserving tenants.¹⁰² In an attempt to reach a compromise, Michael O'Sullivan suggested that peasant proprietorship should be restricted to holdings with a valuation of £150 or less.¹⁰³ James Kilmartin dismissed both proposals, stating that 'many things are good in theory and very bad in practice and I am sure Mr Harris's plan is one of those'. He argued that if grasslands were excluded from peasant proprietorship, landlords would rush to clear small holdings and keep an estate of grass farms instead because it was more lucrative.¹⁰⁴ Kilmartin was also perplexed by Harris' efforts to foster animus within the ranks: 'what chance have we, even united, to get tenant right from a landlord parliament'?¹⁰⁵ Such a disagreement reflected the chasm between the radical and moderate wings of the association and the dominance of radical ideas in the overall ideology of this nascent, distinctly western movement towards land reform.

Thomas Robertson, a grazier from Athy, County Kildare and member of the Central Tenant Defence Association, blamed landlords for the shift towards grazing and 'the proof that he [the grazier] is unable to be had in almost every large holding throughout the country'.¹⁰⁶ He correctly asserted that the eleven-month grazing system left larger farmers as vulnerable as their smaller counterparts and accused the Ballinasloe association of trying to sow discord between landlord and tenant.¹⁰⁷ He dismissed Harris' proposals as being regressive and called him 'crochety'.¹⁰⁸

it would afford a splendid opportunity to the landlord of saying that tenant-right is not really wanted by the masses of the people, it would array tenant against tenant, graziers against the tillage farmers, the holders of mountain land against those of the rich level plains...it would break up the tenant movement into embittered fragments, each hating each other more than the landlords. Rather than providing good to tenants, 'incalculable evils' would result from it.¹⁰⁹

The demands of larger farmers won out in the end, partially because they were so forceful in their demands for unity of action, and it was for this reason that western Fenians were not so keen on it.¹¹⁰ The Central Tenant Defence Association did not reflect public opinion in the West of Ireland and Harris did not want them to garner any influence in the fledgling tenant-right movement as their demands would override those of smaller farmers. Harris was confident that public opinion would concur with his argument and this would then stymie grazier influence in the countryside.¹¹¹

The association shifted its allegiance to Parnell once it became clear that he was willing to pursue more advanced ideas and criticise Isaac Butt's policies on land reform, which members came to see as being too moderate and therefore too ineffective.¹¹² They believed that he was the only senior Home Rule politician who had the ability to initiate changes for the benefit of the peasantry, and their support of him resulted in Michael O'Sullivan proposing the motion that 'we consider it the duty of the Irish constituencies to support no one, but men pledged to the policy of action initiated by Mr Parnell and the advanced sections of the Home Rule party'.¹¹³ This reflected similar tactics adopted by tenant defence associations elsewhere in the country, such as in Kerry and in Monaghan with the Farney Tenant Defence Association.¹¹⁴ Parnell had won the support of the Central Tenant Defence Association early in his political career and was determined to sustain it as he began courting the small farmer. By 1877 he had superseded his more radical nemesis, John O'Connor Power, for control of the Irish Parliamentary Party and committed himself to the land question by November 1878. In a perfect example of the sensitive political antenna that defined his political career, he had been hesitant until then because of the radical language that risked isolating graziers. This fear of antagonising the larger farmers was a manifestation of his reluctance to involve himself. His address to a meeting in Ballinasloe in November 1878 afforded it a veneer of respectability that had been lacking heretofore.¹¹⁵ According to

the *Connaught Telegraph*, it was one of the largest tenant-right meetings ever held in Connaught, with 'large contingents of tenant farmers, ready and willing to co-operate with their indefatigable president, vice-president and secretary'.¹¹⁶ James Daly and the recently sidelined O'Connor Power—who was from Ballinasloe—were also in attendance. Donald Jordan has argued that up to this point Parnell was not fully convinced of how useful it would be to utilise the land movement, but 'it is quite likely that during his visit to Ballinasloe in 1878, [he] became intrigued with the possibility that a land movement may have for the nationalist struggle...the vigour of the nascent agitation had caught Parnell off guard, but he had yet to be convinced of its usefulness to his parliamentary campaign'.¹¹⁷

Harris was vocal in expressing his disappointment with the absence of the local MPs, accusing them of being disinterested in the welfare of the people. While Captain Nolan sent his apologies, Mitchell Henry stated that he never attended meetings on a Sunday as a rule. The clergy remained suspicious of the Protestant landlord from Avondale, even though he received letters from Archbishop MacHale of Tuam and Bishop Duggan of Clonfert further indicating their own support for the objectives of the meeting. Duggan also conceded that some of his clergy would not attend as a matter of conscience and he would not force them to attend. Parnell later retreated in his emphasis on peasant proprietorship, possibly because of the poor clerical support he received at this meeting, and argued that it was the three Fs which were the objectives of 'practical land reformers'.¹¹⁸ While Ballinasloe was a large urban centre in the West of Ireland, it was still disconnected from the metropolis, with the Dublin elite apparently unable to fully appreciate the reasoning behind the agitation. However, a Dublin correspondent who visited Ballinasloe in order to observe the new movement was taken aback by the excitement of the people as they listened to speeches from Henry and Nolan pertaining to the land question, which implied to him that it was the land question and not Home Rule in which the people were interested. 'It has often been said by the landlord press and the satellites of the aristocracy that the agitation only exists amongst a few who desire to turn it into their own political advantage'.¹¹⁹

4 CONCLUSION

The informal networks established through the Fenian network allowed members to reconfigure its outlook and move away from the sole notion of violent insurrection, while becoming part of the democratic process

that was emerging in the countryside in the 1870s, replicating similar developments across Britain. The Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association offered a more formal and coherent forum for their radical ideology and this bore a direct relationship to the structure of its membership. As Thompson also stated, some knew how to touch upon this.¹²⁰ 'Everyone who receives the protection of society owes a return for the benefit and the fact of living in society renders it indispensable that each should be bound to observe a certain line of conduct towards the rest'.¹²¹

The Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association was a reaction to a petit bourgeois farming culture that threatened the rural proletariat whose existence was under threat, and men like Matt Harris were acutely aware of this imbalance and wanted to address it. While the Fenians within the association tried to build upon their triumph with the election of John O'Connor Power in Mayo in 1874, they struggled to forge a rural/urban alliance that was proletarian in outlook. The latent radicalism that had been there with the existence of the Fenian network and had been dormant following the failure of the 1867 rebellion was now coming to the surface. Having a local leadership later proved vital for the Land League as it could be guaranteed local support, though tavern bravado and petty squabbles could and did hinder it.¹²² The fortunes of the tenant farmer were linked with those of every other class in Irish society, in particular the shopkeepers. Organisation was the only way to properly effect change according to Harris, as this would give a focus and coherence to the subaltern voice which had been directionless heretofore. Peasants, according to Liana Vardi, aspire to self-sufficiency.¹²³ The capitalisation of farming was a threat to this. They had a disdain for the market culture and could be suspicious of the network of exchanges that connected villages to the outside world. They tried to preserve traditional ways of life that were being threatened by modernisation.¹²⁴ Even when they tried to engage with the outside world, this misapprehension remained. 'Peasant preference for leisure over profits and their rootedness in traditional cultural patterns saw them being slow to become politically engaged'.¹²⁵ People like Harris wanted to educate them at a level that they could understand so that they could become more politically engaged. He wanted to transcend their reactionary nature, and his organisational *élan* was something that Davitt respected and praised in *The fall of feudalism in Ireland* (1904).¹²⁶ Meetings were the most constructive way to counteract their innate con-

servatism, and language of a Chartist inclination played an important role in their political education: 'from the beginning our hopes were centred on the people...they must make up their minds to pander no longer to the worn out ideas of the superiority of aristocrats as representatives of the people'.¹²⁷ F.M.L. Thompson argued that 'the essence of the deference society was the habitual respect which the upper classes, in particular the landed classes, were accustomed to receive from the community at large'.¹²⁸ This unthinking respect for rank and title was now being challenged in a more forthright and assertive manner. 'The economic basis of this deference was shifting with the growth of the market economy as their monopoly on power was becoming increasingly curtailed'.¹²⁹

Mass meetings also reflected the conviviality of collective activity and socialisation that was a significant feature of the mid-Victorian age. The Ballinasloe association succeeded in creating a more politically active and conscious provincial community, so that by the time of the establishment of the Land League, they readily understood the ideas being espoused. The importance of small tenant farmers being involved in a mass movement as active participants was stressed: 'at each of our meetings, some of the tenant farmers came forward and expressed their opinions openly and fearlessly from the public platform'.¹³⁰ R.V. Comerford argued: 'the other tenant associations generally represented the interests of larger farmers and had a decidedly more cautious outlook. What they did have in common with the Mayo and Ballinasloe movements was a membership sensitive to economic crisis and a politically ambitious leadership'.¹³¹ Their objectives were erudite and they identified key local issues of concern, though a resolution of the national question was their main objective. Eric Hobsbawm has correctly asserted that the existence of such movements does not imply that they were egalitarian, as peasants generally distrusted those who were not peasants. They were potentially a massive power base, but this power and influence was more limited, more imagined than actual because 'the normal strategy of the traditional peasantry is passivity'.¹³²

Elites began losing control over the lives of labourers, though there was still a paternalism-deference equilibrium at play on the eve of the Land War. Plebeian culture was not wholly deferential and the very existence of the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association was indicative of this, which poses the question: was their humility towards landlords feigned? Strong farmers had distanced themselves from calendar customs such as hurling, patterns and wakes, which meant that there was a dislocation from small farmer and artisan culture.¹³³ This chasm became more obvious during the

Land War as efforts were made to unite strong and small farmers under the one umbrella.

What Isaac Butt and more especially Charles Stewart Parnell achieved was giving these grassroots organisers a national leadership they could look up to. While they may have sat on a different carriage of the political train that was driving Home Rule, having a national leadership that was slowly developing a coherent if ambidextrous message allowed radicals to slot themselves into the movement with greater ease than might have been previously possible. They were mostly drawn from an articulate proletarian leadership that had not been visible previously. The emergence of the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association and other associations, even though they may have been more conservative in their outlook, was a manifestation of a decline in deferential power as tenants became more vocal in their criticisms of landlords, with peasant proprietorship becoming the panacea to the woes that came about through the economic crisis of 1878–1879. Efforts were made to bridge this gap between urban and rural citizens through the prism of the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association. Popular democratic participation reflected an increased resistance to landlord authority. This plebeian consciousness saw grassroots radicals of the Victorian age succeed Kevin Whelan's village republicans of the late eighteenth century as the key directors of how people would engage in the political process, and they were more confident in challenging landlord power through knowledge as well as less sophisticated but equally effective methods of protest that harked back to a different era.¹³⁴

NOTES

1. Samuel Clark, *Social origins of the Irish Land War* (Princeton, 1979), p. 211.
2. K.T. Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800: Conflict and conformity* (Essex, 1999), p. 107.
3. Liana Vardi, *The land and the loom, peasants and profit in northern France, 1680–1800* (Duke, 1993), p. 1.
4. E.P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class* (London, 1963), p. 679.
5. Terence Dooley, *The decline and fall of the Dukes of Leinster, 1872–1948: Love, war, debt and madness* (Dublin, 2014), pp. 40, 46.
6. Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800*, p. 101.
7. F.M.L. Thompson, *English landed society in the nineteenth century* (London, 1963), p. 184.

8. Howard Newby, 'The deferential dialectic', *Comparative Studies in History and Society* 17, no. 2 (Apr. 1975), p. 140.
9. Newby, 'The deferential dialectic', p. 142.
10. J.J. Lee, 'Irish agriculture', *Agricultural History Review* xvii, pt. I (1969), p. 65.
11. Norman Stone, *Europe transformed: 1878–1919* (London, 1983), pp. 20–4.
12. E.P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class* (London, 1963), p. 682.
13. Paul Bew, *Land and the national question in Ireland, 1858–82* (London, 1980), pp. 38–9; for more on the agricultural depression of 1859–63, see J.S. Donnelly, Jr., 'The Irish agricultural depression of 1859–64', *Irish Economic and Social History* iii (1976), pp. 33–54.
14. R.V. Comerford, *The Fenians in context: Irish politics and society, 1848–1882* (Dublin, 1998), p. 170; Donald Jordan, 'John O'Connor Power, Charles Stewart Parnell and the centralisation of popular politics in Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies* xxv, no. 96 (May 1986), p. 48.
15. Cit. in D.S. Lucey, *Land, popular politics and agrarian violence in Ireland: The case of county Kerry, 1872–86* (Dublin, 2011), p. 29.
16. Comerford, *The Fenians in context*, p. 170.
17. Brian Casey, 'Matt Harris and the Irish land question, 1876–1882', *Rural History* 25, no. 2 (Oct. 2014) pp. 184–5.
18. Bew, *Land and the national question in Ireland*, pp. 38, 40.
19. Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800*, p. 101.
20. See Casey, 'Matt Harris and the Irish land question, 1876–1882' and idem, Matt Harris and the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association in idem *Defying the law of the land: Agrarian radicals in Irish history* (Dublin, 2013), pp. 90–9.
21. Bew, *Land and the national question in Ireland*, p. 1.
22. Thompson, *The making*, pp. 682–3.
23. Micheál McDermott, *Gypsum mining and the Shirley estate in south Monaghan, 1800–1936* (Dublin, 2009), p. 36.
24. Donald Jordan, *Land and popular politics in Ireland: County Mayo from the Plantation to the Land War* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 192.
25. P.H. Gulliver and Marilyn Silverman, *In the valley of the Nore: A social history of Thomastown, county Kilkenny, 1840–1983* (Dublin, 1986), p. 146.
26. Gulliver and Silverman, *In the valley of the Nore*, p. 151.
27. Bew, *Land and the national question in Ireland*, pp. 232–3; R.V. Comerford, 'Isaac Butt and the Home Rule party', in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi: *Ireland under the Union, II, 1870–1921* (Dublin, 1995), pp. 15–16.

28. Clarke, *Social Origins of the Irish War*, p. 219.
29. Jordan, 'John O'Connor Power, Charles Stewart Parnell and the centralisation of popular politics in Ireland', pp. 49–50.
30. Thompson, *The making*, p. 782.
31. Michael Huggins, *Social conflict in pre-Famine Ireland: The case of county Roscommon* (Dublin, 2007), p. 174.
32. For more on James Daly and the *Connaught Telegraph*, see Gerard Moran, 'James Daly and the rise and fall of the Land League in Ireland, 1879–92', *Irish Historical Studies* 29, no. 114 (1994), pp. 189–207; J.J. Lee, *The modernization of Irish society, 1848–1918* (Dublin, 1973), p. 69.
33. *Connaught Telegraph*, 2 Sept. 1876.
34. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and other essays* edited with an introduction and notes by John Gray, p. 83.
35. Bew, *Land and the national question*, p. 45.
36. J.S. Donnelly, Jr., 'The Land question in nationalist politics', in T.E. Hachey and L.J. McCaffrey (eds.), *Perspectives on Irish nationalism* (Kentucky, 1989), pp. 79–98.
37. Bew, *Land and the national question in Ireland*, p. 54.
38. T.P. O'Connor, *The Parnell movement* (1887), p. 170.
39. Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association circular in Sweetman papers, (National Library of Ireland, MS 47,573/3).
40. J.P.D. Dunbabin, 'The incidence and organisation of agricultural trade unions in the 1870s', *Agricultural History Review* xvi, no. 2 (1968), pp. 114, 118.
41. Dunbabin, 'The incidence and organisation of agricultural trade unions in the 1870s', pp. 114, 118.
42. Bew, *Land and the national question in Ireland*, p. 55; Comerford, 'Isaac Butt and the Home Rule party', p. 16; Moran, 'James Daly and the rise and fall of the Land League in Ireland, 1879–92', p. 190; David Thornley, *Isaac Butt and Home Rule* (Dublin, 1964), p. 250.
43. Kevin Whelan, 'Town and village in Ireland: A socio-cultural perspective', *The Irish Review* 5 (1988), pp. 34–43.
44. Gulliver and Silverman, *In the valley of the Nore*, p. 69.
45. Vardi, *The land and the loom*, p. 9.
46. Bew, *Land and the national question in Ireland*, pp. 87, 90.
47. *Connaught Telegraph*, 24 June 1876.
48. Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish War*, p. 232.
49. *Connaught Telegraph*, 12 Jan. 1878; Bew, *Land and the national question in Ireland*, pp. 56–9; Samuel Clark, 'The social composition of the Land League', *Irish Historical Studies* xvii, no. 68 (1971), p. 447; Gulliver and Silverman, p. 71.
50. Bew, *Land and the national question in Ireland*, p. 39.

51. *Connaught Telegraph*, 9 Nov. 1878.
52. Jordan, 'John O'Connor Power, Charles Stewart Parnell and the centralisation of popular politics in Ireland', p. 47.
53. Thompson, *The making*, pp. 662–3.
54. Jordan, *Land and popular politics in Ireland*, pp. 183.
55. *Report from the Select Committee on the Irish Land Act, 1870*, HC 1878 (249), xv, I, p. 270, qs 4987–8.
56. Lucey, *Land, popular politics and agrarian violence in Ireland*, p. 37.
57. Lucey, *Land, popular politics and agrarian violence in Ireland*, p. 37.
58. Gulliver and Silverman, *The valley of the Nore*, p. 140; Dunbabin, 'The incidence and organisation of agricultural trade unions', p. 118.
59. Dunbabin, 'The incidence and organisation of agricultural trade unions', p. 120.
60. Eric Hobsbawm, *Labouring men: Studies in labouring history* (London, 1964), p. 272.
61. Dunbabin, 'The incidence and organisation of agricultural trade unions', p. 126.
62. Thompson, *The making*, p. 661.
63. *Connaught Telegraph*, 13 May 1876.
64. *Connaught Telegraph*, 20 Oct. 1877.
65. P.J. Corish, 'Irish College, Rome: Kirby papers', *Archivium Hibernicum* 30 (1972), p. 66.
66. *Connaught Telegraph*, 23 Dec. 1876.
67. Philip Bull, *Land, politics and nationalism; a study of the Irish land question* (Dublin, 1996), p. 70.
68. *Connaught Telegraph*, 19 Jan. 1878.
69. *Connaught Telegraph*, 14 Aug. 1876; 3 June 1876; 19 Jan. 1878; R.V. Comerford, 'Isaac Butt and the Home Rule party', p. 15.
70. *Connaught Telegraph*, 3 June 1876.
71. Comerford, 'Isaac Butt and the Home Rule party', p. 16.
72. Sweetman Papers, (National Library of Ireland, MS 47,573/3).
73. *Connaught Telegraph*, 24 June 1876; Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780, programme, myth and reality* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 101.
74. *Connaught Telegraph*, 23 Feb. 1878; for more on Sheriff sales, see, Adam Pole, 'Sheriffs' sales during the land war, 1879–82', *Irish Historical Studies* xxxiv, no. 136 (2005), pp. 386–402.
75. *Report from the Select Committee on the Irish Land Act, 1870; together with the Proceedings of the Committee*, pp. 271–2, Qs 5003, 5020.
76. Dorothy Thompson, *The Chartists* (Hounslow, 1984), pp. 300–1.
77. Thompson, *The Chartists*, pp. 300–1.
78. *Connaught Telegraph*, 13 May 1876.
79. *Connaught Telegraph*, 19 Aug. 1876.

80. *Connaught Telegraph*, 24 Jun. 1876.
81. *Connaught Telegraph*, 19 Aug. 1876.
82. Jordan, 'John O'Connor Power, Charles Stewart Parnell and the centralisation of popular politics in Ireland', p. 48.
83. See David Thornley, *Isaac Butt and the Home Rule party* (London, 1964), chapters 5 and 6.
84. *Connaught Telegraph*, 5 May 1877; 22 Sept. 1877.
85. *Connaught Telegraph*, 9 Nov. 1878.
86. *Connaught Telegraph*, 1 Aug. 1876.
87. *Connaught Telegraph*, 2 Sept. 1876.
88. *Connaught Telegraph*, 24 Jun. 1876.
89. *Connaught Telegraph*, 8 July 1876.
90. Cit. in Laurence Marley, *Michael Davitt: Freeland radical and frondeur* (Dublin, 2007), p. 180.
91. *Connaught Telegraph*, 31 Mar. 1877, 9 Nov. 1878.
92. *Connaught Telegraph*, 31 Mar. 1877.
93. *Connaught Telegraph*, 24 June 1876.
94. *Connaught Telegraph*, 8 Jul. 1876.
95. Bew, *Land and the national question in Ireland*, p. 16.
96. *Report from the Select Committee on the Irish Land Act, 1870; together with the Proceedings of the Committee*, p. 272, Q. 5,024; David Seth Jones, *Graziers, land reform and political conflict in Ireland* (Washington, DC, 1995), chapter 5.
97. *Connaught Telegraph*, 13 Apr. 1878; 11 May 1878.
98. *Connaught Telegraph*, 6 Apr. 1878; 13 Apr. 1878; 20 Apr. 1878.
99. *Connaught Telegraph*, 24 Jun. 1876; 13 Apr. 1878; 20 Apr. 1878; Jones, *Graziers, land reform and political conflict*, chapter 5.
100. Lucey, *Land, popular politics and agrarian violence*, p. 15.
101. *Connaught Telegraph*, 6 Apr. 1878.
102. *Connaught Telegraph*, 6 Apr. 1878.
103. *Connaught Telegraph*, 6 Apr. 1878.
104. *Connaught Telegraph*, 6 Apr. 1878; 13 Apr. 1878.
105. *Connaught Telegraph*, 13 Apr. 1878.
106. *Connaught Telegraph*, 6 Apr. 1878; 20 Apr. 1878.
107. *Connaught Telegraph*, 20 Apr. 1878; 11 May 1878.
108. *Connaught Telegraph*, 6 Apr. 1878; 20 Apr. 1878.
109. *Connaught Telegraph*, 6 Apr. 1878.
110. Donnelly, 'The Land question in nationalist politics', pp. 90–1.
111. *Connaught Telegraph*, 6 Apr. 1878; 20 Apr. 1878.
112. Paul Bew, *Ireland, the politics of enmity, 1789–2006* (Oxford, 2007), p. 310.
113. *Connaught Telegraph*, 9 Nov. 1878; Sweetman papers, (National Library of Ireland, Ms 47,573/3).

114. See Lucey, *Land, popular politics and agrarian violence* and Peadar Livingstone, *The Monaghan story: A documented history of the county Monaghan from the earliest times to 1976* (Enniskillen, 1980), chapter 20.
115. Bew, *Land and the national question in Ireland*, pp. 54–5.
116. Paul Bew, *C. S. Parnell* (Dublin, 1980), p. 25.
117. Jordan, *Land and popular politics in Ireland*, p. 213.
118. *Connaught Telegraph*, 9 Nov. 1878; Bew, *Land and the national question in Ireland*, pp. 55–6; idem, *C. S. Parnell* (Dublin, 1980), pp. 25–6.
119. *Connaught Telegraph*, 4 Nov. 1876.
120. Thompson, *The making*, pp. 682–3.
121. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and other essays* reproduced in *On Liberty and other essays* edited with an introduction and notes by John Gray (Oxford, 1991), p. 83.
122. See Thompson, *The making*, pp. 663, 674–5.
123. Vardi, *The land and the loom*, p. 4.
124. Vardi, *The land and the loom*, pp. 7–9.
125. Vardi, *The land and the loom*, p. 9.
126. Michael Davitt, *The fall of feudalism in Ireland, or the story of the Land League revolution* (London, 1904), p. 158.
127. *Connaught Telegraph*, 1 July 1876; 19 Aug. 1876.
128. Thompson, *English landed society*, p. 184.
129. Thompson, *English landed society*, p. 185.
130. *Connaught Telegraph*, 3 June 1876; 19 Aug. 1876.
131. R.V. Comerford, 'The land war and the politics of distress, 1877–82', in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi: *Ireland under the Union, 1870–1921*, p. 35.
132. Eric Hobsbawm, *Uncommon people, resistance, rebellion and jazz* (London, 1998), pp. 198–9, 209–11.
133. Huggins, *Social conflict in pre-Famine Ireland*, pp. 176–9.
134. See Kevin Whelan, 'The republic in the village: The dissemination and reception of popular literature in the 1790s', in Gerard Long (ed.), *Books beyond the Pale: Aspects of the provincial book trade in Ireland before 1850* (Dublin, 1996), pp. 101–40.

REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND

Sweetman family papers, MS 47,573/3.

CONTEMPORARY PUBLICATIONS

- Davitt, Michael, *The fall of feudalism in Ireland, or the story of the Land League revolution* (London, 1904).
 O'Connor, T.P., *The Parnell movement* (1887).
 Mill, John Stuart, *On Liberty*, reproduced in *On Liberty and other essays* edited with an introduction and notes by John Gray.

NEWSPAPERS

Connaught Telegraph.

OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

Report from the Select Committee on the Irish Land Act, 1870, together with the Proceedings of the Committee, HC 1878 (249), xv, I.

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Bew, Paul, *Land and the national question in Ireland, 1858–82* (London, 1980a).
 Bew, Paul, *C. S. Parnell* (Dublin, 1980b).
 Bull, Philip, *Land, politics and nationalism; a study of the Irish land question* (Dublin, 1996).
 Casey, Brian, 'Matt Harris and the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association', in idem, *Defying the law of the land: Agrarian radicals in Irish history* (Dublin, 2013), pp. 90–9.
 Casey, Brian, 'Matt Harris and the Irish land question, 1876–1882', *Rural History* 25, no. 2 (Oct. 2014), pp. 183–201.
 Clark, Samuel, 'The social composition of the Land League', *Irish Historical Studies* xvii, no. 68 (1971), pp. 447–69.
 Clark, Samuel, *Social origins of the Irish Land War* (Princeton, 1979).
 Comerford, R.V., *The Fenians in context: Irish politics and society, 1848–1882* (Dublin, 1998).
 Comerford, R.V., 'Isaac Butt and the Home Rule party', in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi: *Ireland under the Union, II, 1870–1921* (Dublin, 1995), pp. 1–25.
 Comerford, R.V., 'The land war and the politics of distress, 1877–82', in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi: *Ireland under the Union, 1870–1921* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 26–52.
 Corish, P.J., 'Irish College, Rome: Kirby papers', *Archivium Hibernicum* 30 (1972), pp. 29–116.

- Donnelly, J.S. Jr., 'The Irish agricultural depression of 1859–64', *Irish Economic and Social History* iii (1976), pp. 33–54.
- Donnelly, J.S. Jr., 'The Land question in nationalist politics', in T.E. Hachey and L.J. McCaffrey (eds.), *Perspectives on Irish nationalism* (Kentucky, 1989), pp. 79–98.
- Dooley, Terence, *The decline and fall of the Dukes of Leinster, 1872–1948: Love, war, debt and madness* (Dublin, 2014).
- Dunbabin, J.P.D., 'The incidence and organisation of agricultural trade unions in the 1870s', *Agricultural History Review* xvi, no. 2 (1968), pp. 114–41.
- Gulliver, P.H. and Marilyn Silverman, *In the valley of the Nore: A social history of Thomastown, county Kilkenny, 1840–1983* (Dublin, 1986).
- Hobsbawm, Eric, *Labouring men: Studies in labouring history* (London, 1964).
- Hobsbawm, Eric, *Nations and nationalism since 1780, programme, myth and reality* (Cambridge, 1990).
- Hobsbawm, Eric, *Uncommon people, resistance, rebellion and jazz* (London, 1998).
- Hoppen, K.T., *Ireland since 1800: Conflict and conformity* (Essex, 1999).
- Huggins, Michael, *Social conflict in pre-Famine Ireland: The case of county Roscommon* (Dublin, 2007).
- Jordan, Donald, 'John O'Connor Power, Charles Stewart Parnell and the centralisation of popular politics in Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies* xxv, no. 96 (May 1986), pp. 46–66.
- Jordan, Donald, *Land and popular politics in Ireland: County Mayo from the Plantation to the Land War* (Cambridge, 1994).
- Lee, J.J., 'Irish agriculture', *Agricultural History Review* xvii, pt. I (1969), pp. 64–76.
- Lee, J.J., *The modernisation of Irish society, 1848–1918* (Dublin, 1973).
- Livingstone, Peadar, *The Monaghan story: A documented history of the county Monaghan from the earliest times to 1976* (Enniskillen, 1980).
- Lucey, D.S., *Land, popular politics and agrarian violence in Ireland: The case of county Kerry, 1872–86* (Dublin, 2011).
- McDermott, Micheál, *Gypsum mining and the Shirley estate in south Monaghan, 1800–1936* (Dublin, 2009).
- Marley, Laurence, *Michael Davitt: Freeland radical and frondeur* (Dublin, 2007).
- Moran, Gerard, 'James Daly and the rise and fall of the Land League in Ireland, 1879–92', *Irish Historical Studies* 29, no. 114 (1994), pp. 189–207.
- Newby, Howard, 'The deferential dialectic', *Comparative Studies in History and Society* 17, no. 2 (Apr. 1975), pp. 139–64.
- Pole, Adam, 'Sheriffs' sales during the land war, 1879–82', *Irish Historical Studies* xxxiv, no. 136 (2005), pp. 386–402.
- Jones, David Seth, *Graziers, land reform and political conflict in Ireland* (Washington, DC, 1995).
- Stone, Norman, *Europe transformed: 1878–1919* (London, 1983).

- Thompson, Dorothy, *The Chartists* (Hounslow, 1984).
- Thompson, E.P., *The making of the English working class* (London, 1963a).
- Thompson, F.M.L., *English landed society in the nineteenth century* (London, 1963b).
- Thornley, David, *Isaac Butt and Home Rule* (Dublin, 1964).
- Vardi, Liana, *The land and the loom, peasants and profit in northern France, 1680–1800* (Duke, 1993).
- Whelan, Kevin, 'Town and village in Ireland: A socio-cultural perspective', *The Irish Review* 5 (1988), pp. 34–43.
- Whelan, Kevin, 'The republic in the village: The dissemination and reception of popular literature in the 1790s', in Gerard Long (ed.), *Books beyond the Pale: Aspects of the provincial book trade in Ireland before 1850* (Dublin, 1996), pp. 101–40.



CHAPTER 6

The First Phase of the Land War and Beyond, 1879–1885

1 INTRODUCTION

I suppose my position will be altered by the Association, if I require at any time ‘Emergency men’. I think I have the best kind of Property Defence Association here, as Lord Clonbrock also has in a loyal staff of labourers, one half of whom would be in the workhouse or some kind of relief if not employed by us.¹

Conflict, which was so prevalent in pre-Famine Ireland, gave way to a spirit of co-operation between landlords and tenants in the post-Famine period. Harmonious relationships existed wherein tenants paid their rents promptly, but ‘when prosperity came to an end in the late 1870s, the groundwork had been laid by the challenging collectivities...for the greatest challenge to established power in nineteenth-century Ireland’.² On the eve of the Land War, there was no effective leadership for farmers outside of the Catholic clergy and despite the existence of a plethora of farmers’ clubs and tenant defence associations across the country, it was still difficult to organise farmers into something analogous to a trade union. The lack of a shared sense of community was partially owing to self-sufficiency that was garnered from working the land, and many saw no reason to become involved in such movements.³ However, the agitation that emerged as a result of the economic depression of 1877 was different, coming as it did after one of the most prosperous periods witnessed in

Ireland. J.S. Donnelly called it: 'a product not merely of agricultural crisis, but also a revolution of rising expectations'.⁴

Small farmers were particularly precarious because they were indebted both to their landlord and the local shopkeeper, and this crisis meant that they were unable to honour both sets of creditors. Danny Cusack has brought attention to the challenges that tenants sometimes faced prior to the onset of this particular crisis. By focusing upon petitions on the Gormanston estate, County Meath, in November 1874, Cusack has highlighted how tenants invoked harmonious relations with the landlord in order to gain a reduction in rent. The eight petitions that he examined were from substantial tenants, some of whom had seen their farms grow as they took over farms from evicted neighbours, yet they still struggled to recoup a return on their improvements. The deferential language in the petitions was a form of obsequiousness to keep the landlord on side.⁵ The Famine was still within living memory for some in the countryside and they had no desire to return to this bleak hardship; 'for the generation that had grown up with economic prosperity there was no great desire to relinquish it'.⁶ The crisis was further intensified by the collapsing yield in potatoes from 1877, with average yields of 1.8 tons being recorded that year. This was in comparison to an average of 3.3 tons per acre being produced between 1871 and 1876. This collapsed further in 1879, as average yields of 1.4 tons per acre were recorded.⁷ While there had been periods of unrest during previous economic downturns, 'the speed at which economic adversity renewed hostilities indicates that, underlying the apparent harmony that prevailed during most of the 1860s and 1870s, there remained a basic weakness in the Irish landlord-tenant relationship'.⁸

Between 1879 and 1885 significant agrarian and political activity took place in Ireland. In east Galway, the area around Loughrea and Portumna was highly agitated, yet Ballinasloe and its hinterland was an oasis of calm. This chapter explores why this was the case by examining the pragmatic alliances made between landlords and nationalists in attempts to provide relief and rent reductions, the local political struggles and landlord reactions to the agitation. This chapter will also explore intra-tenant divisions as diverging opinions regarding the place of labourers emerged.

2 THE ALLEVIATION OF DISTRESS, 1879–1885

By 1876, 84 per cent of land in Connaught was being used for grazing.⁹ The consequence of this was that graziers were treated with suspicion in the West of Ireland as they did not fit well into traditional communities

and threatened the disintegration of local cultures as ‘the unassimilated rural masses had to be integrated into the dominant culture’.¹⁰ Eugege Hynes remarked that ‘in Mayo, more than a few were foreigners, (English and Scottish) and were detested for their foreign faith as well as their economic practice’.¹¹ He further added:

Many people resented locals who became graziers as upstarts and derided them as ‘shoneens’ whose acquisitiveness violated traditional notions of sharing. Others condemned them as bulwarks of the landlord system because of their demand for land to rent. Many saw them as monopolising access to land that others needed for subsistence. Anti-landlord feeling often spilled over into anti-grazier sentiment.¹²

Small farmers were opposed to the capitalisation of farming and the denial of what they saw as their natural rights and grazing threatened this. One such example was Allan Pollok, who made his fortune in Scotland as a timber merchant and then purchased a significant estate of almost 30,000 acres through the Encumbered Estates Court in the early 1850s. His management techniques were frowned upon as he began clearing and consolidating uneconomic holdings and creating large grazing tracts.¹³

Where consolidation of holdings did not take place, tensions were more pronounced between labourers and small farmers. Graziers were condemned as the curse of the country and as detrimental to the economic well-being of both small farmers and labourers.¹⁴ ‘Discontent among labourers was fostered by their failure to benefit from the relative prosperity enjoyed by farmers during the 1870s’, which resulted in them becoming involved in agrarian movements. In Loughrea, landless labourers and the urban poor besieged board of guardians meetings and Bishop Duggan’s residence in 1880. They hoped that they would derive some benefit from the Land League but were soon disappointed; ‘this contrasted with the situation earlier in the nineteenth century, when there was a greater degree of compatibility between the interests of labourers and farmers’.¹⁵

The casualisation of labourer employment, whereby they were hired at the discretion of farmers, accentuated their precarious nature even if the agricultural boom of the post-Famine period saw their wages increase, especially during harvest times. The shift from payment by conacre to cash wages was the final stage in the proletarianisation of the Irish countryside. While this change moderated the conflict between labourers and the farmers that employed them, it did not totally eliminate it. They were frequently on the precipice of destitution, which was deeply accentuated if

there was a bad harvest.¹⁶ This instability resulted in them becoming reliant upon altruistic landlords to help them through difficult periods, but such optimism often resulted in disappointment.¹⁷ K.T. Hoppen has contended that the Land War occurred 'at the precise moment when labourers were beginning to constitute a rapidly declining proportion of the population' and reforms for tenant farmers were pursued at the expense of their rights.¹⁸

There was a general belief that town tenants were in constant poverty and that this distress was no different, which delayed the establishment of relief committees in towns.¹⁹ By the winter of 1879, a consensus was beginning to emerge that there was a need to increase the employment available for the 'working agricultural classes' on public works. While Beaconsfield's government agreed with this, it refused to become directly involved, which meant that the provision of relief was left to the discretion of landlords and local authorities, who were then encouraged to apply to the Board of Works for grants, despite the problems that bedevilled the awarding of such grants. The Catholic clergy, who were often the most aware of the problems facing the poor, turned to charitable organisations such as the Mansion House Relief Committee and the Duchess of Marlborough Committee, while also establishing local relief committees. Local initiatives were sincere efforts at alleviating the condition of the poorest, but they soon proved to be inadequate and government support for the 'working agricultural classes' remained insipid as it believed that the Poor Law as it stood was sufficient in dealing with the crisis.²⁰

Relief committees across east Galway soon became overwhelmed by the series of crises that they faced. Eighty labourers protested at Loughrea over the reticence of the guardians to provide relief to them. What was provided soon became inadequate to prevent the condition of labourers from deteriorating. By January 1880, many were stretched to capacity and were on the precipice of collapse.²¹ Labourers and artisans were particularly struggling in Ballinasloe, Galway town and Tuam, and little help was forthcoming owing to farmers remaining resistant to the granting of relief works because any increase in rates would hit them the hardest.²²

Labourers were treated shabbily by farmers and they generally failed to attract sympathetic advocates as the land question attracted more publicity and their rights were ignored in pursuit of suitable reforms for farmers. Self-reliance was a fundamental characteristic of farmers in the West of Ireland and they had no interest in being beholden to anyone. Thus, urban labourers seeking relief, which was to be provided from rates paid

by farmers, did not fit into the paradigm of rural Ireland as it was viewed by farmers.²³ At a Land League meeting in Ballinasloe, Fr James Carroll objected to any measures that would see labourers get land on similar terms to farmers and said that it was inappropriate to agitate for reform for labourers until they ‘first get the land for the people...[and] national self-government for Ireland’.²⁴ Jeremy Burchardt highlighted how farmers took exception to labourers calling themselves farmers when they received allotments from landlords.²⁵ The tradition of providing allotments to labourers was not as strong in Ireland and a potential prophylactic did not exist as a result.

The declining condition of the Clonmacnowen and Longford baronies resulted in baronial sessions being organised for 2 February 1880 with the intention of discussing the need, cost, location and benefit of certain relief works in these two baronies. Such was their condition that the Ballinasloe Board of Guardians requested the holding of a further baronial session, and the local government board arranged for it to take place between 6 and 8 March.²⁶ The Grand Jury Act of 1836 limited the power of grand juries in relation to presentments and ‘the baronial sessions dealt with expenditure for the benefit of the barony and was composed of justices and baronial cesspayers’.²⁷ These meetings saw a series of correspondence between Dr Roughan, a local government board inspector, the board of guardians and Dublin Castle pertaining to the provision of relief works. On 28 June 1880 Roughan attended a board of guardians meeting in Ballinasloe and his subsequent correspondence with Under-secretary Burke highlighted the widely differing opinions as to what constituted hardship and what were the conditions necessary to be eligible for relief. It is worth quoting at length:

A great diversity of opinion exists as to the extent to which distress prevails. Some maintaining that it is very severe and that if the people in various localities had not been relieved from charitable funds they should have come either into the workhouse or have perished from want. Distress exists to a large extent in the Ballinasloe and Creagh dispensary districts, but it has been mitigated to a considerable extent by public charity and works which are in operation on Lord Clancarty's property. Work is also given extensively by Lord Ashtown in Killaan electoral division by the Rev Sir William Mahon in Ahascragh, by Mr. Pollok in Lismany and by several other proprietors in different parts of the union. There are very many resident landlords in this union and with the aid given from her graces fund and other sources. I have no doubt that the people will be well maintained until works under the

baronial sessions come into operation. The extent for demand for poor law relief does not exceed that of past years. There are 315 persons in the work-house at present, while there were 319 last year, a slight increase has taken place in the number of persons in receipt of outdoor relief. There are thirty-four persons in receipt of it at present, while there were only twelve at the same period last year.²⁸

The above excerpt indicates Roughan's satisfaction with the relief works being initiated in the district and the adequacy of other government measures. Some government officials and landlords were sceptical about the levels of distress farmers claimed to be suffering: 'if they had livestock and crops that they could sell, then the seriousness of the situation was being misrepresented by the agitators'.²⁹ A local government board inspector said labourers had the option of entering the workhouse until their circumstances improved, whereas 'if these men [tenant farmers] are forced to part with their cow...they are utterly and hopelessly ruined'.³⁰

The Ballinasloe Board of Guardians made a further request for assistance to the local government board: they wanted to extend employment schemes in the union because of the lack of private initiatives being brought in.³¹ However, Roughan disagreed that landlord responses to the crisis were inadequate, reiterating an earlier point that 'a great deal of employment is given by Lord Clancarty and other proprietors and I am credibly informed that it is found most difficult to get labourers to work at present except at very high wages'.³²

Roughan was not convinced of the utility of additional relief works in the Athlone South and Moycarn baronies, again stating that local landlords had provided adequate relief works to assist tenants.³³ Despite this resistance, he did concede that there may have been a need for employment in certain parts of the barony but that he had not witnessed any.³⁴ Roughan was frustrated with the carelessness of the work being carried out by labourers, arguing that they were not performing their duties competently and that such a cavalier attitude increased costs and prevented their timely completion:

a measurement has been made because owing probably to the thoughtlessness the stones were not prepared so as to be measured on the day of measurement. It will be remembered that things of this kind must occur at the beginning of works to which the people are not accustomed. A delay has been seen from the number of persons employed has arisen from this cause. With the approaching harvest, it will be difficult to get men to work at the

ordinary wages of the county. Proprietors complain of the difficulty they experience in carrying out works according to the notices of the board of works, by means of the difficulty they experience in getting labourers.³⁵

Despite being a mixture of prosperity and decay, towns were important centres of communication, transport and local government, but they were treated with suspicion by rural dwellers. The lack of a substantial industrial base in many towns in Ireland resulted in an over-reliance upon farmers for their economic survival and such suspicion became mutual.³⁶ ‘Industrialisation, urbanisation, technological advancement, shifting social norms, and unprecedented population growth radically altered the life-styles of large sections of the British population in the nineteenth century’, whereas Ireland remained resolutely rural in its make-up; yet, ‘in the Irish countryside, class was writ large across the landscape’.³⁷ Gerard Moran correctly asserts that the ‘Land League dwelt on distress among rural groups and never mentioned town dwellers...the overall situation in western towns was not helped by declining opportunities in industry’.³⁸ In January 1883 Bishop Patrick Duggan initiated an exploratory meeting regarding the feasibility of establishing a woollen factory for unemployed labourers in Ballinasloe. His was a theology of the poor and he had made similar efforts for the poorest elsewhere in the diocese of Clonfert when poverty reached a crisis point. In a letter to Cardinal McCabe of Dublin, he said every parish in the diocese had a large number of families in distress and he expressed concern at the prospect of a massive increase in destitution amongst labourers and small farmers.³⁹ Duggan had previously contended that between 1100 and 1200 people out of a total population of 3000 in Loughrea were dependent upon relief and there was increased consolidation of holdings on the Clanricarde estate as a result of the land acts, which, according to Duggan, had deepened the level of poverty being felt.⁴⁰ Duggan accused Clanricarde of ‘flinging the people into the ditch like dogs...We see our towns crowded with idle people who are the victims of ruthless landlordism’.⁴¹

‘People of all creeds and classes’ such as F.A. Harpur, Junius Horne, J.J. Elder, Matt Harris, Michael McGiverin and James Goode attended this exploratory meeting, which hoped that such a factory would alleviate distress and reduce the burden of rates in the town. John Goode remarked that, ‘if the factory was established, we would not have to be contributing £70 or £80 a year to relieve distress in the town’. Clancarty and other landed proprietors were consulted because it was ‘their duty to come

forward and assist...The public have large claims on the landed gentry of the neighbourhood and now is the time for them to prove their desire to assist the people'.⁴²

In a sign of lingering landlord deference, Junius Horne, a Catholic merchant, said: 'they owed a great debt of gratitude to Lord Clancarty for his actions; not only on this occasion, but every time they required his Lordship's assistance'.⁴³ Clancarty wanted to assist his poorer town tenants, because it was 'his responsibility as lord of the soil'.⁴⁴ Duggan thanked him for the 'anxiety he felt in the interests of the town...His lordship (Duggan) said he felt very deeply the interests Lord Clancarty took in the wants of the people and the kindness which he has shown, contrasted with the owners of the soil of Loughrea'.⁴⁵ While deference towards Clanricarde was disappearing, the same could not be said for Clancarty, especially after he promised to 'give any site in his gift declared by competent authority to be suitable for the purpose of establishing a factory', and would subscribe to shares of a limited company if one was established. Michael McGiverin recommended the holding of another public meeting, with John Callanan suggesting that Clancarty be consulted in identifying a suitable site.⁴⁶

No further references were made to this factory in subsequent editions of the *Western News*. Nevertheless, such a fleeting episode reflected the potential of cross-community co-operation in a time of real distress, and it was obvious that even advanced nationalists such as Matt Harris appreciated the necessity of being deferential to the paternalistic endeavours of Clancarty. His co-operation was necessary to achieve any assistance for the destitute, and any attempts to antagonise him could have proven unsuccessful, embarrassing or even had a negative impact on the poorest in the region. This supports Gerard Moran's argument, highlighted above, that the clergy did not care where relief came from, so long as they could get some for the poorest in their communities.⁴⁷ While the conditions were ripe for a renewed proselytising mission, no such activity took place.

3 THE POLITICAL MOBILISATION OF TENANT FARMERS AND LABOURERS

The land question was generally interpreted as land reform for farmers, and labourers were excluded from this imagined community of sturdy and self-sufficient farmers. Michael Davitt expressed their disappointment when the government failed to include any provision for them in the 1881 Land Act.⁴⁸ Parnell appreciated that labourer support was useful for the

advancement of the constitutional nationalist movement, but this had to be done without alienating farmers, and this necessitated his deft political manoeuvrings to find a balance between the two, in order to:

[keep] the labourers happy without showing so much concern for them as to alienate the farmers, who had a highly-developed sense of [property] rights when it came to their dealings with those below them in the economic order...as rural conflict among farmers and labourers would have proved disastrous for constitutional nationalism, this unity between both classes was essential.⁴⁹

Therefore, labourer grievances became integrated into an overall programme of agitation in 1881. Prior to this, labourers participated in the land movement on the premise that farmers would agitate for them once their own grievances were resolved, though their plight was only raised on an intermittent basis.⁵⁰ Such local divisions helped to sustain the dynamic of the agitation as local branches strove to keep the land question central, which meant that discussions of reforms for labourers had the potential of distracting branches from its central aim.⁵¹

The Labourers League was established in the summer of 1882 with the intention of getting labourers more engaged with the national movement, and a branch was established in Ballinasloe in 1882. A number of police officers and note-takers were in attendance owing to the presence of notable nationalists such as James Kilmartin, Matt Harris, John Callanan, Michael McGiverin, William Ivers and J.F. Ward and the fear that there would be a breach of the peace, which did not occur. Kilmartin said there were two reasons for the meeting: the advancement of the labour movement in Ballinasloe and the improvement of agricultural labourers' wages, because they were 'the poorest of any class of man in the civilised world'.⁵² Despite this utterance, Kilmartin's sympathies lay firmly with the tenant farmers as he remarked: 'to my own knowledge, the labouring man is very often better off than the struggling tenant farmer'.⁵³

Access to land was a fundamental aspect of the 'unwritten law', which was, according to Donald Jordan, a 'savvy response to the market economy, one which excluded the landlord class', and labourers did not fit comfortably into this projection of the nation.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, Parnell and Gladstone were responsive to the plight of labourers and the 1883 Labourers' (Ireland) Act was a modest effort to compel farmers to provide housing and a half-acre plot for rural labourers.⁵⁵ 'Parliamentary committees and commissions from the great poor law enquiry of 1832–1834

onwards similarly saw allotments as being essentially connected with agricultural labourers', and there were discussions on them as late as 1913 because industrial workers and rural artisans were also interested in allotments. They were mainly let to the most impoverished working groups and it was believed that they could reclaim labourers of bad character: 'reclaim the indolent and reward the industrious'.⁵⁶

Similar reforms had been advocated by Harris in his *Land reform: A letter to the council of the Irish National Land League* (1881). He proposed that any restrictions on tillage be removed in order to benefit small farmers and labourers. He suggested that farmers with farms of more than fifty acres build adequate housing for labourers and that the government provide purchase money to farmers who had thirty acres or less to enable them to purchase their holdings, which they could repay on an interest-free basis.⁵⁷

Eugenio Biagini has argued that, 'though the Irish National League interceded for the concession of rent-free plots of land for the labourers, and tried to act as a mediator between farmers and farm workers, the latter often felt neglected and manipulated, especially after Gladstone's legislation of 1881–1882'.⁵⁸ He further stated that 'the Liberal government passed [this act], virtually [as] an attempt to outbid Parnell'. While labourers appeared to have been pleased with it, farmers were reluctant to pay the necessary rates, adding further credence to Hugh Brody's assertion of self-sufficiency, while also being reflective of a certain selfishness on the part of farmers.⁵⁹ The Irish National League (INL) was slowly being viewed as the only legitimate authority in Ireland, seeking to revive the nationalist movement from the ashes of the Land League, which had become divided by the time of its proclamation in 1881.⁶⁰ The INL revived 'part of the more radical features of the old Land League's programme, adopted some of the farm workers' demands in a successful bid for their support' by October 1882.⁶¹ The INL was now under greater central control than the Land League. Parnell had positioned himself as the undisputed leader of Irish nationalism, 'which under his leadership had become, and would continue to be, firmly constitutional in its aims and operation'.⁶²

In an example of the complicated structure of the INL at a local level that can be missed in national surveys, the Ballinasloe branch passed a motion supporting the rights of labourers in November 1882, because they were 'perhaps the most vilified people on earth'.⁶³ William Roche said that because farmers were paying extortionate rents to landlords, it hindered

their ability to pay labourers decent wages: ‘twas time for the labourers and artisans of all classes to insist on getting their rights from the so-called government who ruled them’ and this could only be achieved through unity of action.⁶⁴

We cannot yet see the dawn of that prosperous morn when every tenant farmer will rejoice in his emancipation from serfdom, and when the tenant farmer becomes a peasant proprietor, it was hoped that the landless and labourers would not be forgotten either. They were entitled to a fair day’s rent and a fair day’s work. The toiler and the wealth producer shall be also sharers in the fruits of his labour and the enjoyment of the wealth which he has helped to produce.⁶⁵

Such a statement reflected a fundamental of the ‘unwritten law’ that access to land and the opportunity for subsistence were vital, and the ambiguity of language regarding labourers reflected the problems they faced in gaining support for others in the countryside.⁶⁶ There was a stereotype of the agricultural labourer being intellectually and emotionally subnormal, but their engagement in the political process, for example, belied this simplistic narrative constructed by contemporaries. Jeremy Burchardt has drawn attention to Alun Howkins’ work in which he identified a distinctive rural working-class culture and emphasised its dignity and strength, while also emphasising its regionality.⁶⁷ The above statement is also a sophisticated and informed comment that tries to draw upon the experiences of impoverished classes elsewhere in Europe and to create an imagined community of ‘peasants’ within Europe, as serfs and the lower classes in Ireland were both on the periphery of imperial powers. Yet increased literacy and the ability to write ‘makes possible many of the essential building blocks of rational thought...In addition, writing perpetuates generalised norms and laws...which take an abstract form but can be applied in different contexts and interpreted for local conditions’.⁶⁸ By November 1885, T.J. Manning suggested the INL should play a more substantive role in mobilising labourers so they could agitate for improved access to housing and land. The *Connaught People* argued that labourers suffered ‘unceasing toil... periods of distress come now and then to the working classes of other lands, [but] to those of this misgoverned and unfortunate country, they come often’.⁶⁹ Despite Harris’ efforts, the Land League and INL were reluctant to incorporate the grievances of town tenants and labourers into their programme of agitation. There was an acute response to rural distress,

but the reaction to the difficulties of urban residents was insipid. Urban destitution was not perceived as an exclusively Irish phenomenon; rather it was a perpetual problem throughout Europe, as was rural poverty. However, in the Irish context, its extent cannot be fully ascertained because no distinction was made between urban and rural labourers in Poor Law returns.⁷⁰

Nationalists were frustrated with the influence landlords held over the distribution of relief and their 'almost total domination over a comparatively minor political institution such as the local poor-law board gives us some indication of the political power possessed by the landed class on the eve of the Land War'.⁷¹ They dominated county affairs and endured little interference from central government prior to the 1870s because they owned the bulk of the land.⁷² Landlords were the main power brokers in the nineteenth century, and while new groups began to emerge in the second half of the nineteenth century to challenge their authority, they did not totally replace it. The emerging lay leadership had a more fluid and nuanced interpretation of the national question and was not restricted by dogma or ideology like Catholic priests and orthodox Fenians. As has been discussed in Chap. 5, farmers' participation in the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association gave them the necessary political education and confidence to challenge landlord hegemony on local elected boards like the Ballinasloe Board of Guardians and Town Commission.

In his seminal study *The revolt of the tenantry, the transformation of local government in Ireland, 1872–1886*, W.L. Feingold discusses the slow rise of a nationalist middle class that took control of boards of guardians during the 1870s as increased prosperity led them to seek out the respectability the gentry had achieved.⁷³ Similarly, R.V. Comerford argued that, 'despite the incompatibility of the farmer's way of life with active participation in politics, their social and economic weight was not without its impact on political life' and tensions between landlords and tenants in the countryside were often mirrored at board of guardians and town commission meetings.⁷⁴ Poor Law elections were held in the last week in March and usually received superficial coverage in the press. Despite such neglectful reporting, they were important to the people who were affected the most by them. Poor Law administration was a vital mechanism by which relief could be provided to those in the most need of it. Nationalists began to realise during the closing decades of the nineteenth century that boards of guardians could also become an important sphere of nationalist activity, providing a platform from which nationalists could advertise and advance their aims. This posed the risk of the actual work of the board being neglected.⁷⁵

Landowners wielded disproportionate influence over the board of guardians, as there were equal numbers of *ex-officios* and elected guardians. Many of the elected guardians were men without property, but they were often tenants of an *ex-officio* member. Contesting these elections appealed to the left wing of the land movement and helped to quell the radicalism that threatened to overwhelm the countryside, especially during the 1880s. Notwithstanding this, questions lingered as to whether tenants would vote against the wishes of their landlords, as the board of guardians was a microcosm of the community at large. Attempts to wrest control away from landlords was problematic due to the willingness of many elected guardians to be led by the *ex-officios*. This irked nationalists and it meant that ‘the Irish landlord class were prominent in local government and virtually controlled the local administration of their counties until 1898’.⁷⁶ Conservative propaganda talked about the risks of nationalist jobbery and patronage if they were elected. Despite the best efforts of nationalists, they still found it difficult to stymie the influence Clancarty had over the running of Ballinasloe.⁷⁷

The New Departure—a rapprochement between orthodox Fenians and constitutional nationalists to pursue peaceful means for a set period of time—gave way to a realisation amongst nationalists that the board of guardians could be a suitable tool for rallying public opinion to their cause if they could gain control of it. Administrative experience, previously the preserve of the gentry, was now within the grasp of farmers and the ‘shopocracy’ and this was valuable for gaining political experience.⁷⁸ The provincial press played an important role in stressing the relevance of the Poor Law elections in boosting local democratic participation. For example, the *Connaught Telegraph* was utilised by James Daly as a platform to appeal to voters not to elect landlord flunkies or sympathisers. It further argued that guardians who had been elected on previous occasions were unrepresentative of the people.⁷⁹

While the 1872 by-election was the first concerted effort to challenge landlord hegemony in Galway politics, the legitimacy of nationalist success was tainted by the zeal of the clergy, as discussed in Chap. 4. The first real attempt at challenging the political authority of landlords around Ballinasloe took place at the 1877 board of guardians election, which, according to the *Western News*, was contested ‘on Catholic and Liberal grounds’. It argued that Lord Clancarty ‘held the representation of the town in his pocket and put eleven Protestants on the board and four Catholics when none others could be found’, though no other

information on these persons has been located. In spite of this challenge, no significant advances were made by nationalists at this election.⁸⁰ This election is an important example of the new-found confidence of nationalists that was ostensibly derived from the establishment of the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association the year previously.

Yet nationalist control was not resolute. William Ivers objected to J.J. O'Shaughnessy taking the chair following the 1882 board of guardians elections because he believed an agreement had been reached previously whereby he would be elected chairman when the board resumed. As Ivers began to sit in the newly vacated chair, following O'Shaughnessy's resignation to take an appointment with the Land Court, Captain Patrick Cowen suggested that the clerk, Mr Gill, should occupy it until the election of a new chairman. Gill agreed and asked Ivers to vacate it, but he refused until the letter from the local government board regarding his election was read out. This letter stated that his election as chairman was invalid because it had been carried out by the old board and a new chairman was to be appointed on the first Wednesday after 25 March by the incoming board. W.E. Duffy then suggested Ivers should remain as chairman because he was sitting in the chair!⁸¹ Once this election was declared invalid, Junius Horne proposed Lord Clancarty as chairman, Edward Fowler as vice-chairman and John Ward as deputy vice-chairman. Ivers objected and again asserted that he had been elected at the previous meeting: 'that's contrary to law. The election was made this day week. This election is illegal'.⁸² After Ivers was forcibly turned out of the chair by Captain Patrick Cowen, he quipped: 'I am not the first man your family, Captain Patrick Cowen put out of the chair and out of his house too. Though you are a great man in your own estimation you should learn to behave yourself. You are indeed a credit to the *ex-officios*'.⁸³ The *Western News* remarked that the failure to get a chairman elected was due to an erroneous interpretation of the law. Such was the commotion at this meeting that there was a concern the police would have to be called to restore calm.⁸⁴

Nationalists also attempted to gain control of the Ballinasloe Town Commission because it too was controlled by Clancarty. The *Western News* stated that this was due to him being an extensive ratepayer, having paid a total amount of £1963 in 1885.⁸⁵ While William O'Brien had alluded to the board of guardians election being a defining moment in national electoral politics in 1882, the Ballinasloe Town Commission election was also interpreted as the critical election for the advancement of nationalism in Ballinasloe. In fact, town commission elections at this time

attracted as much energy from nationalists as board of guardians elections, and research into them is still lacking. Despite the fact that the election was not scheduled until October, the press started discussing it in its pages in April. Andrew Manning and William Ivers had already been elected due to their membership of the Land League,⁸⁶ and other members including Thomas Carroll, Garrett Larkin and John Ward were also returned in 1882.⁸⁷ The *Western News* was hopeful for nationalist triumph at this election but warned of resistance to ‘anyone professing liberalism’, which resulted in their agenda being ‘sunk in the mire’ as it warned of the risks associated with not electing Land League members.⁸⁸ Members who had been returned on previous occasions as nationalists were told they had abandoned their principles after being elected: ‘there is nothing in the history of local boards to compare with the vanity of men in this town’. They were accused of voting against proposals which would have provided assistance to poorer tenants in the town: ‘it is painful to see men who stood on Land League platforms pretending to sympathise with the people coming into the board rooms to vote against the man who suffered in their cause’.⁸⁹

Some nationalists were suspected of becoming Clancarty minions after their election: ‘when [the conservatives] cannot return a member of their own body, [they] are determined to avenge their own defeat by sticking together to keep out men who would as well as discharging their local duties represent the national cause...when they cannot return conservative Protestants, they seek to return conservative Catholics’.⁹⁰ It was argued that, because of the nature of the franchise, nationalist guardians felt obliged to canvass Protestant and conservative voters in order to be elected, but ‘the nominee of landlordism and of slavery headed the poll in a remarkable degree’.⁹¹ While Thomas Carroll and Garrett Larkin were elected on nationalist principles, they were accused of courting conservative support in order to increase their vote. This manifested itself when Larkin refused to allow Land League members to attend a meeting because Lord Clancarty was in attendance. The *Western News* further questioned the competence of nationalists to act as capable commissioners, arguing that they had failed to reduce rates as promised and had accepted tenders from outside the town: ‘They try to gull the people with an untruthful card, but they do not lay down a programme for the future’.⁹² Despite their election, the *Western News* thought the process of returning candidates in Ballinasloe was biased towards members of the gentry: ‘why, above all towns in Ireland were Catholics excluded from the Ballinasloe

town board? We wish it now to be borne in mind that we are not raising any sectarian question; we are stating facts to which we will adhere, no matter the consequences'.⁹³

Clancarty's tenants were also accused of becoming more conservative in the hope of attracting favours from him. Rohan McWilliam argued that the existence of this 'popular conservatism' had three explanations: deference, populism and support for imperialism, though the first two are certainly most applicable in an Irish context.⁹⁴ Despite aggrieved mutterings in the pages of the *Western News*, there was no evidence to suggest that Clancarty was reviving the anti-Catholic leanings of his predecessors in order to assert his authority over the running of the board or the estate. Nationalists were accused of engaging in unsuitable political rhetoric instead of making an effort to effectively manage the town.⁹⁵ It may also have been the case, as R.V. Comerford argued, that apathy and deference prevented farmers from seeking election to town commissions and boards of guardians, especially when landlord politicians showed some interest in their concerns, and this could be seen as a form of popular conservatism.⁹⁶

Harris' arrest in April 1881 helped smash the militant core of the Land League executive. Following his release from prison in February 1882, he was precluded from speaking on political matters and was the recipient of a huge welcome in Ballinasloe despite the risks involved because of the conditions of his release. While Harris had been asked to sign a declaration upon resuming his attendance at town commission meetings, there were nationalist murmurings that Clancarty was treated in a more deferential manner even though he had not attended town commission meetings between October 1882 and July 1883. The *Western News* asserted that the 'Ballinasloe town board enjoys the unique position of being without a chairman, a position that will not be found in any other municipality in Ireland'.⁹⁷ No attempt was made to replace him until the election of the new commission in October, while they appeared to have been more willing to censure Harris, despite his absence being a result of incarceration.⁹⁸

Harris was part of 'the labour aristocracy' and sceptical of the sincerity of anyone claiming to represent the interests of the labouring classes: 'if you want to improve your own condition and raise yourself in the social status, then it is to your own class that you will have to look'.⁹⁹ Alun Howkins stressed the importance of non-agricultural workers in proletarian political culture, which according to Burchardt 'goes some way to correcting the impression given in other accounts that farmworkers were almost hermetically sealed from influence by other groups of workers'.¹⁰⁰

James Kilmartin recommended that a fund be established to ensure the election of working men to parliament: ‘out of the eighty, artisans and labouring classes would be fairly represented and you would have for the first time in the British House of Commons, tenant farmers, artisans and working men of Ireland’ and this ‘great Labour League will extend the length and breadth of the country and be the means of conferring unheard of blessings on the people of this country’.¹⁰¹ This idea was similar to those being put forward by members of the Lib-Lab coalition and the Social and Democratic Federation in Britain. They were influenced by Chartism in their demands that MPs be paid a wage in order to avoid corruption of members while also enabling members of the working classes to become members. Kilmartin embraced this idea, stating that Irish MPs should receive some form of financial remuneration so that they ‘would be more independent of English and government influence and more under the control of their constituencies and of Irish public opinion if they were paid by the Irish people’, but for this to happen ‘we must put our hands into our pockets and fill our own exchequer and pay our representatives’.¹⁰² By February 1883 Parnell had raised the question of a party pledge, suggesting that a county might pay the expenses of a man pledged to work with the party when in London if elected, as he wanted candidates who could base themselves permanently in London when parliament was in session.¹⁰³

While Matt Harris was held in high regard as a respected local political leader in east Galway, he stated that he had no interest in seeking election, remarking in 1880 that he would be degrading himself as an Irishman if he did so. Yet in 1882 he claimed to be uninspired by those elected because they were the ‘vile nominee of the landlord...candidates that made protestations of patriotism which they never intended to fulfil’.¹⁰⁴ The alliance with moderate Home Rulers and the threat that this presented to the radicalism of the movement he was encouraging undoubtedly alarmed Harris, and the emergence of graziers as the dominant force amongst Irish farmers added to his concerns.¹⁰⁵ This rightward shift also annoyed American funders of the Land League.¹⁰⁶ The Irish Parliamentary Party was hesitant about running working-class candidates for election until the 1885 election. Henry Harrison, a former nationalist MP, said: ‘in Parnell’s days a rich as well as a politically robust parliamentary candidate would be preferred to a poor one, on the grounds, not of class, but of costs to party funds’. Liberal caucuses in Britain also preferred to run bourgeois candidates instead of penniless and expensive working men.¹⁰⁷ However, by

1885 the influence that the INL had now gathered in the countryside, coupled with the expansion of the franchise, made it more feasible and relevant for Irish Parliamentary Party success that Harris would run. He decided to do so at the instigation of Parnell, who called him the ‘Grandfather of the Land League’ and he was comfortably returned, defeating Liberal candidate Richard Anthony Nugent by 4866 to 352 votes.¹⁰⁸ His election was significant because any potential influence the landlords could have exerted in the newly created constituency of Galway East was now gone and deference towards them was rapidly disappearing.

Parnell wanted his MPs to ‘sit, act and vote as one’ in parliament, though Harris issued a caveat to his leader upon his election, stating that he would:

Go into the house, the citadel of the enemy...I go there not for the purpose of assisting that house or the members of that House, in any effort they make to oppress Ireland. If I go in there it will be alone in the interests of my country, and I shall face them in the interests of our common humanity against that monstrous government...that government of inequity that has done more evil than any government has ever done since the creation of the world.¹⁰⁹

It is important to stress that Ballinasloe was never a centre of any sort of sustained agitation during the first phase of the Land War. P.K. Egan stated that, ‘while many of the more stirring events of the Land League and Plan of Campaign took place in the diocese of Clonfert, the agitation did not reach great heights in the parish of Ballinasloe, where landlords were, on the whole, comparatively liberal’. Despite this supposed liberalism, 1200 persons were dependent upon aid from the Mansion House Relief Committee, the Duchess of Marlborough and other similar private charitable initiatives, and loyalty for Clancarty, while implicit, was resolute. However, Tory peers like Clancarty were becoming demoralised by the Land War and the legislation that emerged from it.¹¹⁰

4 LANDLORD REACTIONS TO THE LAND WAR AND RENT REDUCTIONS

The British government did not initially see the land agitation as a significant threat until rent was due at the May gale of 1880, and there was real worry about the condition of farmers in the west because of the intensity

of the distress there. Parnell's speech in Ennis that September, extolling tenants not to be afraid to use a 'moral coventry'—later known as boycotting—against neighbours and landlords who did not conform to the ways of the Land League, increased both his popularity and reinforced the power of the crowd to effect change in the countryside. Such was the growing influence of the Land League that resident magistrates expressed alarm at large displays of strength during the winter of 1880–1881.¹¹¹ Speeches during this period electrified the countryside as pent-up resentment rather than any ideology caused many of the more serious outrages in east Galway. This unrest was also indicative of the various social realignments and tensions that were taking place in nineteenth-century Ireland. While the Galway East Riding saw a massive jump in the number of threatening letters issued to persons in the district, from seventeen in 1879 to 116 in 1882, Ballinasloe town and most of its hinterland was in a relatively peaceful condition.¹¹²

The Land League needed to dampen its radicalism if it was to appeal to farmers outside of Connaught and to become a truly national movement. As this was happening, the growing influence of graziers saw the league lurch towards the right. Matt Harris expressed the resentments of western farmers in relation to such a shift and his comments on the political power of graziers showed a shrewdness that has not been appreciated sufficiently in historiography, especially considering that the Land League was initially established and organised by lower-class politicians.¹¹³ The most significant obstacle presented to small farmers and labourers was that the larger farmers' objectives eventually became the dominant ideology of the Land League. There were no circumstances whereby they would advocate self-immolation by acceding to reforms for either labourers or small farmers. While the social base of the movement was wider than anything that preceded it, motions passed at meetings focused upon the grievances of farmers to the neglect of labourers. This nascent, loose and supposedly pragmatic alliance soon dominated Land League ideology as stronger farmers succeeded in asserting their hegemony.¹¹⁴

There were landlords who did not increase their rents during this time of economic prosperity, so they faced a dilemma when reductions were demanded, and some were aghast at the idea of granting universal reductions.¹¹⁵ The collapsing price of agricultural produce was so significant that some 'prices were not to reach their 1876 levels until 1914'. Some landlords also became cavalier in their attitude towards spending and borrowing because land was seen to be safe collateral. The fickle credit system

lured them into a false sense of security and some could not cope with the shock of the economic collapse of the late 1870s.¹¹⁶ This depression hit landlords in an acute way, with the value of estates collapsing and an increasing number of tenants defaulting on their rents. By 1882, some in Ballinasloe district were not able to afford to manure their holdings.¹¹⁷

Land courts were established as a result of the 1881 Land Act and their purpose was to define a fair rent. Anti-landlordism was now firmly implanted in the collective consciousness of tenants and the three Fs were no longer adequate to satisfy tenants' demands, which meant there were manifold problems with the act operating successfully, the most significant of which was the exclusion of tenants in arrears.¹¹⁸ Landlords could not comprehend the rationale behind reducing rents and believed they had been emphatically failed by the government. The fixing of 'fair rents' coincided with an increase in arrears, which was a further burden for landlords. Rents could be fixed by the two parties concerned through negotiation, but if that failed the land court would fix them through arbitration.¹¹⁹ The *Western News* expressed disappointment with the lack of tenant farmers on any of the sub-committees: 'it is an extraordinary thing that not one out of the 600,000 tenant farmers in Ireland was thought worthy of being appointed a sub-commissioner...Since the landlord meeting in Dublin; the decisions of the Commissioners seem to lean more and more to the landlord side'.¹²⁰

Tenants were presented with two problems in getting their rents reduced. The first was that many could not afford the average cost of an appeal, which could be between £3 and £4. Secondly, many were ignorant of the minutiae of the law and did not realise that they were obliged to pay the negotiated rents for fifteen years. The volatility of the agricultural economy meant that many of those caught unawares may not have acceded to such an agreement if they had been fully informed.¹²¹ The *Western News* objected to landlords using the land courts because of the cost that tenants would be forced to bear. However, because they would 'subject themselves to the public odium which the exposure of their nefarious conduct must sooner or later incur', the newspaper saw some benefit to this.¹²²

Tenant farmers in the Ballinasloe district did not want to go to the land courts, because they believed they would only rule in favour of landlords and 'taking a landlord to court was a dangerous way in which to bargain with him'.¹²³ Their hopes for having their rents reduced to the Poor Law valuation alarmed landlords and their agents. 'Generally speaking, all landlords...regarded the poor law valuation of a holding [as] a danger point,

below which they were very loath to reduce rents'.¹²⁴ In Galway, the Poor Law valuation of a holding was a better indication of its value, rather than its size.¹²⁵

The *Western News* argued that judicially fixed rents favoured landlords who tried to 'evade the law by every means in their power'.¹²⁶ Nationally, 16.7 per cent of all rents were reduced in agreements reached outside of court, with a further 19.5 per cent reduced in court, while in Galway these figures were 19.2 per cent and 21 per cent respectively.¹²⁷ Tenants on the Clancarty estate were frequently granted abatements by the agent, Edward Fowler, once there were no proceedings being initiated in the land courts. This saw Clancarty tenants who paid their rents punctually being accused of damaging the nationalist cause and of obviously not obeying the law of the league.¹²⁸

Urban tenants were excluded from the terms of the land acts; therefore they found it challenging to get the abatements that their rural neighbours received. When urban tenants on the Clancarty estate asked for abatements in 1885, they were refused and there was no legal basis for them to fall back on.¹²⁹ Edward Fowler contended that many tenants did not look for receipts after paying their rent; therefore he did not issue them. Such implicit trust of Clancarty was dismissed as naivety by nationalists, especially as some tenants received ejectment notices for accumulating arrears for two and a half or three years, 'and we are now within a fortnight of another half year being added to the already too heavy arrears...The statement of particulars on the back set forth separately three half year rents at £2 10s. the half year', which the Clancarty tenants were alleged to have owed.¹³⁰ Arthur Blake, a subagent on the estate, denied that extensive evictions were taking place as reported in the press, but admitted that one had taken place in Brackernagh. The *Western News* said: 'in times of distress and when the poor people have barely begun to resuscitate from the past three severe years, we say it is harsh for a rich noble man to resort to such extreme measures...to exact even half the rent for these three years that was paid on previous years we deny to be a just debt'.¹³¹ It further stated that processes for eviction were served for arrears of a year and a half at £7 10s., when it should have been £4 10s. Clancarty was asked to explain this because 'the statement in the process is a complete puzzle...We do not wish to write stronger until we have an explanation of the figures in the processes'. Fowler admitted such demands were a clerical error.¹³² He did not appreciate the opinions of the *Western News* on this matter: 'and now, because Lord Clancarty is enabled to recover his legal rights, he is

held up by you to public odium'.¹³³ Clancarty was accused of serving twenty processes on small holdings in the districts of Killahornia, Kilclooney, Derrymullen and Brackernagh where tenants had accumulated arrears of one-and-a-half-years' rent. The *Western News* was aghast at this and said such writs inflicted undue hardship: 'if the poor people are not able to pay rent, they are less able to pay legal expenses'.¹³⁴ The newspaper contended that the arrears involved did not go beyond £7; therefore the costs were quite harsh. Tenants had complained, but they were worried they would be evicted if their names were published.¹³⁵ The *Western News* was concerned that if evictions did occur and traders began to seek payments from their creditors, workhouses would be filled to capacity: 'is this extermination of the people to be allowed to be continued?...We recommend [Lord Clancarty] and his agent to realize the change in the times and recollect that the people have a stronger claim to the land than the beast that roams it...in order that man may perish and bulls might fatten'.¹³⁶

Fowler echoed the concern of Mark Bence-Jones (the land agent in Cork) that tenants were grossly mismanaging their holdings because 'rents were very much in arrears' on the estate, and while economic stagnation affected the Clancarty estate, no noticeable agitation took place. Fowler claimed that rental income had declined by 20 per cent in the previous seven years and this weakened the influence Clancarty could wield over his estate.¹³⁷ Clancarty tenants demanded a 25 per cent reduction in their rents and they accepted a reduction of 20 per cent on 23 June 1887. This was in stark contrast to the Marquess of Clanricarde, who was one of the most recalcitrant landlords in the country, and he refused to grant any abatements to his tenants, despite the desperate condition of the Loughrea, Portumna and Woodford districts. Such a policy resulted in 541 rents on this estate being fixed between 1881 and July 1903.¹³⁸

In September 1885, rumours emerged that Clancarty was contemplating a series of evictions and the Irish National League encouraged tenants to unite in order to prevent this from happening, as they believed that Clancarty could do nothing if they presented a united front. Despite 'the organisation of popular resistance to evictions [being] an integral part of Land League strategy during the first phase of the Land War', there was little such resistance recorded on the Clancarty estate.¹³⁹ Evictions and the threat thereof were more emotive issues in rural Ireland than high rents and they attracted sensationalist attention. W.E. Vaughan has estimated

that twenty tenants in every 10,000 were evicted every year; therefore the threat of evictions exceeded the actual number of evictions that took place.¹⁴⁰

The intensity of the agitation and farmers' determination to achieve reforms impressed Gladstone and his colleagues. John Morley—the chief secretary of Ireland between February and July 1886, and August 1892 and June 1895—said, 'In my heart, I feel that the League has done downright good work in raising up the tenants against their truly detestable tyrants'.¹⁴¹ The intensity of the agitation forced the government to intervene through various coercion acts, which was anomalous to their love of *laissez-faire*. Gladstone and his government interpreted Irish landlordism as a particularly pernicious system, viewing it beyond its social and economic paradigm once it transcended into the political realm, and this resulted in them formulating an 'intervention to end all interventions'. The government justified their legislative interference by arguing that Irish landlordism was the 'last embodiment of feudalism'.¹⁴²

Lord Clonbrock was opposed to such changes taking place because they had been initiated 'by resistance to the law and by votes in the ballot box', and this reflected the feelings that many Irish landlords had towards the advance of democracy.¹⁴³ They felt betrayed by successive governments and were now isolated in their capacity to meet the challenge presented to their privileged position in Irish society.¹⁴⁴ 'Allegedly, "landlordism" in Ireland was even more monopolistic than in the rest of the United Kingdom, because the landlords controlled not only the land, but also the police, the courts of justice and ultimately Dublin Castle'.¹⁴⁵

The land movement had gathered significant momentum by the time the Property Defence Association (PDA) was established in January 1881. This was a very confrontational organisation, established to assist boycotted landlords in the operation of their estates during a time of significant collective demoralisation. L.P. Curtis called it the antithesis of the Irish Land Committee, which was a short-lived and rather insipid landlord propaganda entity that lobbied against land reform.¹⁴⁶ The PDA was the most effective landlord combination during the Land War and was both well managed and well funded.¹⁴⁷ It worked to counteract boycotts by deploying workers, known as 'emergency men', to work on boycotted estates and organised evictions in Craughwell and Loughrea.¹⁴⁸

It became obvious in the early months of 1881 that, 'where the landlords were prepared to finance agents to bid for the interests of farms,

cattle and other goods sold at sheriff sales, they had the power to unnerve the tenantry'.¹⁴⁹ Lord Clancarty contributed £20 and in a letter to Clonbrock stated that he would continue making financial contributions 'as long as the association may be obliged to continue, which I suppose will be till the government re-establish law and order and renew confidence among all classes in the country, if ever such a happy day should arrive, this side of the millennium'.¹⁵⁰ Pat Finnegan stated that the PDA also sought the public's support to protect the rights of property.¹⁵¹

Despite supporting the PDA, Clancarty had no interest in becoming an active member, because its objectives did not personally concern him and he found some of its tactics to be unnecessarily confrontational.¹⁵² While Clancarty appreciated that emergency men were necessary on some estates, he was concerned that if they continued to act in such a provocative manner this would contribute to a further deterioration in the condition of the countryside. Clonbrock disagreed with this, asserting that they were crucial for preventing harvests from going to waste and for filling labour shortages.¹⁵³

With the proclamation of the Land League as an illegal organisation on 20 October 1881, the authorities hoped that they had seen the last of the agitation that was sweeping the countryside. However, the formation of the INL saw 'plans for the pacification of the Irish countryside frustrated' and there was a revival of meetings in November and December 1882; twenty-five took place, mostly in large market towns.¹⁵⁴ 'At this time of the year when landlords are pressing for rents and when agitators are endeavouring to frighten the farmers into subscribing for their maintenance, protection cannot be further reduced'.¹⁵⁵ The agitation died down after this, but Special Resident Magistrate Clifford Lloyd was concerned that there would be a revival by August 1883 in the West of Ireland. He noted that there was disagreement amongst nationalists, and the movement took divergent roads, with a more obvious urban/rural division beginning to emerge.

There are now in [provincial] Ireland, two parties, one the farming class and other respectable people who wish to take advantage of late legislation and to enjoy its fruits, the other the village members of the late Land League who 'toil not' but are rather anxious to continue to live upon what they can extort from others and to enjoy the local influence which they possess as the recognised commanders of the 'moonlighters' of their districts. It is the opinion of every district officer that if the national league meetings are permitted this

autumn throughout the country that the former class will be thrown again as they were at the beginning of the Land League movement into the arms of the latter. The Irish people will always openly declare whatever their feelings would be for what appears to them to be the strong side. A farmer may be excused believing the party of disorder to be in the ascendant when he finds every element of crime and the circumstances attending it is let loose about the district in which he lives.¹⁵⁶

The primary aim of special resident magistrates was to suppress the agrarian agitation, and they frequently took a rigid and simplistic interpretation.¹⁵⁷ Lloyd believed that the progression of the Land War saw local nationalist leaders assume positions of a dictatorial nature and he was dismissive of anyone who attended land meetings, calling them impulsive and uneducated people who were easily swayed by priestly influences. 'That many priests even in their spirited contact with the people inculcate their doctrine is beyond doubt'.¹⁵⁸ This reflected the fear of the INL emerging as a proto-governmental organisation to which the people demurred. Harris and Kilmartin believed that meetings like this symbolised a form of liberty, but Lloyd thought: 'it is a liberty that every local farmer in his heart prays to be deprived of', and he believed that significant collective pressure was exerted upon tenants to attend these meetings and that there was a massive risk of social ostracisation for non-attendance. Nevertheless, Stephen Ball argued that 'rural communities attempted to become self-regulating under the influence of branch committees, which was reflective of the power of rural collective action'.¹⁵⁹ These efforts were not universally successful as the leadership failed to revive the agitation in many parts of Galway between 1883 and 1885, with Lloyd remarking:

The farmers have shown clearly that they do not want to join the new movement; they have declined to attend its meetings and refused to pay their subscriptions to its funds. The agitation will now if they are allowed by public speeches excite the people and by private pressure compel them to make the national league a success.¹⁶⁰

The vigour of the INL revitalised a dormant movement, and while landlord-tenant relations had improved during 1883, with few outrages recorded in the aftermath of evictions, intimidation was still being used to prevent people from taking evicted farms and giving evidence at criminal trials.¹⁶¹ Lloyd argued that there were professional agitators who intimidated tenants into not paying their rents. He said that they were reviled by

the authorities for stirring up agitation on previous occasions to the point of murder. ‘Harris has fled the country as evidence against him of having instigated the murders in county Galway was accumulating’—though Lloyd was prone to exaggeration in his reports.¹⁶²

They show an almost complete immunity from agrarian crime of any sort and record a complete dying out of every sign of activity in the various secret societies which were organised throughout the country... Hundreds of leaders in the movement of disorder and crime have left the country for America, leaving the people to be guided by their own instincts, in accordance with their own interests.¹⁶³

5 CONCLUSION

The 1880s was a significant decade in the development of popular politics in Ireland, though as Michael Keyes argued, nothing politically spectacular happened between 1882 and 1886.¹⁶⁴ Involvement in political and agrarian agitation gave local nationalists greater confidence to challenge landlord authority. Eugen Weber argued that priests and teachers were local notables whose position was not based on wealth but rather esoteric knowledge, and the role that they played in communal affairs was important because they were often the only people of learning in their parish.¹⁶⁵ The urban middle class in Ballinasloe, which also included merchants and artisans, played an important role in shaping popular political ideas, and the varying interpretations as discussed in this chapter emphasise the complexity and diversity of rural society through the prism of politics and social affairs. The Land War became the critical episode in transforming the position of the landlord class by removing any popular support for landlordism. The rise of the urban bourgeoisie in post-Famine Ireland saw an increased inter-dependency between towns and the rural hinterland. Even though the urban milieu had a disproportionate influence upon the land movement, it would not have achieved the proportions it did without the assistance of those living in towns.¹⁶⁶ Yet the fallacy that emerged from this is that the attitudes of this provincial cultural elite were seen to mirror those of society more widely.

Harris said: ‘the labourers were the great backbone of the great Land League agitation, while if left to those who have derived all the benefit, the farmers, it would never have assumed the proportions that it did’. There was a purity about the feckless labourer for Harris: ‘the poorer he is, the

lower he is, the more despised he is, the better'.¹⁶⁷ Those who claimed to be representatives of the various classes of the countryside outside the landlord class were contemptuous of labourers. While they were courted by revolutionary and constitutional politicians, their plight was not as romantic as the rhetoric suggested. No attempts were made to unite urban and rural labourers in a common agitation, resulting in labourers being isolated in the crisis that they faced: 'no help had been forthcoming from rural Ireland and none was imminent'.¹⁶⁸

R.V. Comerford stated that the Ballinasloe branch of the Land League was a significant branch within the movement, but it comprehensively failed to mobilise Clancarty tenants to agitate against their landlord. Despite such an apparent anomaly, this period saw repeated challenges to Clancarty's authority on various bodies in the town of Ballinasloe, such as the board of guardians and the town commission, and such a challenge to landlord authority was taking place across the country. This was juxtaposed with periods of co-operation between Clancarty, nationalists and the clergy, in efforts to alleviate mendicancy in the town. Tenants still felt a degree of loyalty towards the family, with the *Western News* stating that some still touched their caps as they walked past their agent, Edward Fowler, in the street in December 1885. This was despite the success of the Land League of 'having taught the tenants the simple, but symbolic gesture of not doffing their caps to landlords'.¹⁶⁹ As the agitation began to enter its second phase, opinion against Clancarty became more vehement and nationalists began to challenge the legitimacy of his rule more strenuously and more frequently in the second half of the 1880s.

NOTES

1. Pat Finnegan, *Loughbrea: That den of infamy: The land war in county Galway, 1879–82* (Dublin, 2014), p. 79.
2. Samuel Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish War* (Princeton, 1979), pp. 153–7, 221.
3. W.E. Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford, 1994), p. 204.
4. J.S. Donnelly, Jr., *The land and the people of nineteenth-century Cork: The rural economy and the Irish land question* (London and Boston, 1975), pp. 250–2.
5. Danny Cusack, 'Can't pay, won't pay: Applications for rent abatements on the Gormanston estate in 1874', in Brian Casey (ed.), *Lords, land and labourers: The Big Houses and landed estates of Royal Meath* (Dublin, 2016), pp. 155–70.

6. Donnelly, *The land and the people of nineteenth-century Cork*, pp. 250–2.
7. Gerard Moran, “‘Near famine’: The Roman Catholic Church and the subsistence crisis of 1879–82”, *Studia Hibernica*, no. 32 (2004), p. 156.
8. Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish War*, pp. 153–7.
9. Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish War*, pp. 108–10.
10. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The modernisation of rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, 1976), p. 486.
11. Eugene Hynes, *Knock: The Virgin’s apparition in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Cork, 2009), p. 168.
12. Hynes, *Knock: The Virgin’s apparition in nineteenth-century Ireland*, p. 168.
13. For more on the Pollok family, see Joe Molloy (ed.), *The parish of Clontuskert, glimpses into its past* (Galway, 2009), pp. 205–38.
14. *Report of Her Majesty’s Commissioners of Inquiry into the working of the Landlord and Tenant (Ireland), 1870, and the acts amending the same*, H.C. 1881, xviii, (2779–iii), p. 652, q. 20,018. (Hereafter, Bessborough Commission).
15. Finnegan, *Loughrea: That den of infamy*, pp. 63–4.
16. Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish War*, pp. 113–17; see also David Fitzpatrick, ‘The disappearance of the Irish agricultural labourer, 1841–1912’, *Irish Economic and Social History* vii (1980), pp. 66–92.
17. Moran, “‘Near famine’: The Roman Catholic Church and the subsistence crisis of 1879–82”, p. 159.
18. K.T. Hoppen, ‘Landlords, society and electoral politics in mid-nineteenth century Ireland’, in C.H.E. Philpin (ed.), *Nationalism and popular protest in Ireland* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 287.
19. Gerard Moran, ‘The Land War, urban destitution and town tenant protest, 1879–1882’, *Saothar* 20 (1995), pp. 20, 23–4.
20. R.V. Comerford, ‘The Land War and the politics of distress, 1877–82’, in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi: *Ireland under the Union, II, 1870–1921* (Dublin, 1995), p. 36; Moran, “‘Near famine’: The Roman Catholic Church and the subsistence crisis of 1879–82”, pp. 157–60.
21. Moran, ‘The Land War, urban destitution and town tenant protest’, pp. 21–2.
22. Moran, ‘The Land War, urban destitution and town tenant protest’, pp. 18–19.
23. John W. Boyle, ‘A marginal figure: The Irish rural labourer’, in Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly Jr. (eds.), *Irish peasants: Violence and political unrest, 1780–1914* (Dublin, 1983), p. 322; Hugh Brody, *Iniskillane: Change and decline in the west of Ireland* (London, 1973, 1982), pp. 131–2; Moran, ‘The Land War, urban destitution and town tenant protest, 1879–1882’, pp. 17–28.

24. *Western News*, 4 Nov. 1882; P.G. Lane, 'Agricultural labourers and the land question', in Carla King (ed.), *Famine, land and culture in Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 101–3; Hoppen, 'Landlords, society and electoral politics in mid-nineteenth century Ireland', p. 287; David Fitzpatrick, 'Class, family and rural unrest in nineteenth century Ireland', in P.J. Drudy (ed.), *Ireland, land, politics and people* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 39, 41.
25. Jeremy Burchardt, *The allotment movement in England, 1793–1873* (London, 2002), pp. 183–5.
26. CSO, RP. 1880/3521 in the National Archives of Ireland.
27. J. Collins, 'The beginning of county administration', p. 4, located at http://www.ipa.ie/upload/documents/The_beginnings_of_county_administration_Collins.pdf [date accessed 21 Apr. 2011].
28. C.S.O., R.P. 1880/3521.
29. Clark, *The social origins of the Land war*, pp. 223–7.
30. Clark, *The social origins of the Land war*, 239–40.
31. C.S.O., R.P. 1880/3521.
32. C.S.O., R.P. 1880/4891.
33. C.S.O., R.P. 1880/19311 and 1880/20613.
34. C.S.O., R.P. 1880/19311.
35. C.S.O., R.P. 1880/19311.
36. Brian Graham and Susan Hood, "'Every creed and party': Town tenant protest in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ireland", *Journal of Historical Geography* xxiv, no. 2, Apr. 1998, p. 171.
37. Paul Rouse, *Sport and Ireland: A history* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 124, 160.
38. Moran, 'The Land War, urban destitution and town tenant protest, 1879–1882', pp. 18–22.
39. Letter from Duggan to McCabe 12 Mar. 1880, in McCabe Papers, Section 346/4 File III Shelf 331, box description 1880 Priests, religion, relief of distress, in Dublin Diocesan Archives.
40. *Reports of her majesty's commissioners into the depressed condition of agricultural interests, preliminary report* H.C., 1881 [2778-i], p. 494, qs 14, 133, 14, 141.
41. *Western News*, 20 Jan. 1883; 27 Jan. 1883.
42. *Western News*, 27 Jan. 1883.
43. *Western News*, 27 Jan. 1883. The 1901 census records Junius Horne residing in 18 Society Street, Ballinasloe, with a servant, Mary Hast. Both are registered as Roman Catholic.
44. L.P. Curtis Jr., 'Landlord responses to the Irish Land War, 1879–87', *Eire-Ireland: Journal of Irish Studies* (Fall–Winter 2003), p. 134.
45. *Western News*, 27 Jan. 1883.
46. *Western News*, 20 Jan. 1883; 27 Jan. 1883.
47. Moran, "'Near famine': The Roman Catholic Church and the subsistence crisis of 1879–82", p. 165.

48. Michael Davitt, *The fall of feudalism in Ireland, or the story of the Land League Revolution* (London, 1904), p. 368.
49. Frank Cullen, *Cleansing rural Dublin: Public health and housing initiatives in the South Dublin Poor Law Union, 1880–1920* (Dublin, 2001), pp. 35–6.
50. E.F. Biagini, *British democracy and Irish nationalism, 1876–1906* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 127–8.
51. Donald Jordan, ‘The Irish National League and the “Unwritten Law”’: Rural protest and nation-building in Ireland, 1882–1890’, *Past and Present* 158 (Feb. 1998), p. 148.
52. *Western News*, 29 Jul. 1882.
53. *Western News*, 29 Jul. 1882.
54. Jordan, ‘The Irish National League and the “Unwritten Law”’, pp. 148–9.
55. *Western News*, 21 Oct. 1882; Bew, *Land and the National Question in Ireland*, p. 135.
56. Jeremy Burchardt, *The allotment movement in England, 1793–1873* (London, 2002), pp. 175–9.
57. *Western News*, 21 Oct. 1882; Matthew Harris, *Land Reform, a letter to the council of the Irish National Land League* (Dublin, 1881); Bew, *Land and the National Question in Ireland*, p. 135.
58. Biagini, *British democracy and Irish nationalism*, pp. 127–8.
59. Biagini, *British democracy and Irish nationalism*, p. 129.
60. Jordan, ‘The Irish National League and the “Unwritten Law”’, pp. 146–8.
61. Bew, *Land and the National Question in Ireland*, p. 135.
62. Michael Keyes, *Funding the nation: Money and nationalist politics in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2011), p. 143.
63. *Western News*, 25 Nov. 1882.
64. *Western News*, 4 Nov. 1882.
65. *Western News*, 21 Jan. 1882.
66. Jordan, ‘The Irish National League and the “Unwritten Law”’, p. 148.
67. Jeremy Burchardt, ‘Agricultural history, rural history or countryside history’, *Historical Journal* 50, no. 2 (June 2007), pp. 471–2.
68. Martyn Lyons, *The writing culture of ordinary people in Europe, c. 1860–1920* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 255.
69. *Connaught People*, 14 Nov. 1885.
70. Moran, ‘The Land War, urban destitution and town tenant protest, 1879–1882’, pp. 18–22.
71. Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish War*, p. 192.
72. Patrick Melvin, ‘The landed gentry of Galway, 1820–1880’ (PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1991), p. 335.

73. W.L. Feingold, *The revolt of the tenantry, the transformation of local government in Ireland, 1872–86* (Boston, 1984), pp. 102–3; see also D.S. Lucey, *The Irish National League in Dingle, Co Kerry* (Dublin, 2003).
74. R.V. Comerford, *The Fenians in context: Irish politics and society, 1848–1882* (Dublin, 1998), p. 224.
75. Virginia Crossman, *Politics, pauperism and power in late nineteenth-century Ireland* (Manchester, 2006), p. 65.
76. Fergus Campbell, *The Irish Establishment, 1879–1914* (Oxford, 2009), p. 30.
77. Crossman, *Politics, pauperism and power*, p. 41; Campbell, *The Irish Establishment*, p. 30.
78. W.L. Feingold, 'The tenant's movement to capture the Irish poor law boards, 1877–1886', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 7, no. 3 (1975), p. 218.
79. W.L. Feingold, *The revolt of the tenantry*, pp. 102–3, 114–19.
80. *Western News*, 21 Oct. 1882.
81. *Western News*, 8 Apr. 1882.
82. *Western News*, 8 Apr. 1882.
83. *Western News*, 8 Apr. 1882.
84. *Western News*, 8 Apr. 1882.
85. *Return of the names of one hundred of the largest ratepayers in each county in Ireland, distinguishing whether in the Commission of the Peace 1884–85*, H.C. Papers; accounts and papers. Paper number [219] lxvii.477.
86. *Western News*, 15 Apr. 1882.
87. *Western News*, 7 Oct. 1882.
88. *Western News*, 21 Oct. 1882.
89. *Western News*, 15 Apr. 1882.
90. *Western News*, 21 Oct. 1882.
91. *Western News*, 21 Oct. 1882.
92. *Western News*, 21 Oct. 1882.
93. *Western News*, 7 Oct. 1882.
94. Rohan McWilliams, *Popular politics in nineteenth century England* (London, 1998), p. 94.
95. *Western News*, 4 Nov. 1882.
96. Comerford, *The Fenians in context*, p. 224; McWilliam, *Popular politics in nineteenth-century England*, pp. 90–7.
97. *Western News*, 28 Jul. 1883.
98. For more on Harris' arrest, see the file on him in *Protection of Persons and Property Act*, Box 1 and Box 2, in NAI; *Western News*, 25 Feb. 1882; 28 July 1883; Bew, *Land and the national question in Ireland*, p. 170.

99. *Western News*, 29 Jul. 1882.
100. Burchardt, 'Agricultural history' p. 473.
101. *Western News*, 29 Jul. 1882.
102. *Western News*, 29 Jul. 1882.
103. Keyes, *Funding the nation*, pp. 167–8.
104. *Western News*, 29 Jul. 1882; Text of speech at Ahascragh, County Galway, 19 Dec. 1880, *Irish Land League and Irish National League*. Reports of speeches A-L, 1879–1888 Carton 2, in NAI.
105. Bew, *Land and the national question in Ireland*, p. 75.
106. See Keyes, *Funding the nation*, chapter 4.
107. Biagini, *British democracy and Irish Nationalism*, p. 178.
108. *Western News*, 31 Oct. 1885; B.M. Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801–1922* (Dublin, 1977), p. 132.
109. *Western News*, 5 Dec. 1885.
110. Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe*, pp. 267, 276; David Cannadine, *The decline and fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven, CT, 1990), pp. 63–5.
111. Stephen Ball, 'Policing the Irish Land War: Official responses to political protest and agrarian crime in Ireland, 1879–91' (PhD thesis, University of London, 2000), pp. 57, 62.
112. A.B. Finnegan, 'The Land War in south-east Galway' (MA thesis, NUI Galway, 1974), pp. 39, 51.
113. Owen McGee, *The IRB, The Irish Republican Brotherhood: From the Land League to Sinn Féin* (Dublin, 2007), p. 66.
114. L.P. Curtis, Jr., 'On class and class conflict in the Land War', *Irish Economic and Social History* viii (1981), p. 87.
115. Clark, *The social origins of the Land war*, pp. 153–7, 223–7, 239–40; Terence Dooley, 'Landlords and the land question, 1879–1909', in Carla King (ed.), *Famine, land and culture in Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), p. 117; B.L. Solow, *The land question and the Irish economy, 1870–1903* (Cambridge, MA, 1971), p. 17.
116. Donnelly, Jr., *The land and the people of nineteenth-century Cork*, pp. 250–2.
117. *Western News*, 14 Jan. 1882; Clark, *Social origins of the Irish Land War*.
118. Donnelly, *The land and the people of nineteenth century Cork*, pp. 300–5; see also Bew, *Land and the national question*, pp. 104–11.
119. Terence Dooley, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland: A study of Irish landed families, 1860–1960* (Dublin, 2001), pp. 90–6.
120. *Western News*, 14 Jan. 1882.
121. *Western News*, 14 Jan. 1882; K. Buckley, 'The fixing of rents by agreement in Co. Galway, 1881–85', *Irish Historical Studies* vii, no. 27 (1951), p. 152.

122. *Western News*, 7 Oct. 1882; Buckley, 'The fixing of rents by agreement in Co. Galway, 1881–85', pp. 149–51.
123. Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish War*, p. 179.
124. Buckley, 'The fixing of rents by agreement in Co. Galway, 1881–85', p. 163.
125. Buckley, 'The fixing of rents by agreement in Co. Galway, 1881–85', pp. 152–4, 163, 171.
126. *Western News*, 14 Jan. 1882.
127. *Western News*, 14 Jan. 1882; 8 Apr. 1882; Buckley, 'The fixing of rents by agreement in Co. Galway, 1881–85', pp. 150–1.
128. *Western News*, 14 Oct. 1882; 21 Oct. 1882; 4 Nov. 1882.
129. *Connaught People*, 19 Sept. 1885.
130. *Western News*, 21 Oct. 1882.
131. *Western News*, 21 Oct. 1882; 4 Nov. 1882.
132. *Western News*, 14 Oct. 1882; 21 Oct. 1882.
133. *Western News*, 14 Oct. 1882; 21 Oct. 1882.
134. *Western News*, 4 Nov. 1882.
135. *Western News*, 21 Oct. 1882; 4 Nov. 1882.
136. *Western News*, 7 Oct. 1882.
137. Letter from Edward Fowler to Clonbrock dated 17 Jan. 1883 (National Library of Ireland, Clonbrock papers, MS 35,770).
138. Finnegan, 'The Land War in south-east Galway', pp. 66–7; Laurence Geary, *The Plan of Campaign, 1886–1891* (Cork, 1986), appendix two, p. 159. For more on rent reductions, see Donnelly, *The land and the people of nineteenth century Cork*, p. 301.
139. Ball, 'Policing the Irish Land War', p. 124.
140. W.E. Vaughan, 'Landlord and tenant relations in Ireland between the famine and the Land War, 1850–1875', in L.M. Cullen and Thomas Smout (eds.), *Comparative perspectives of Scottish and Irish economic and social history 1600–1900* (Edinburgh, 1977), pp. 218–19.
141. Cit. in Cannadine, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy*, pp. 63–5.
142. Biagini, *British democracy and Irish nationalism*, pp. 110, 131.
143. Cannadine, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy*, p. 66.
144. Dooley, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland*, pp. 90–6.
145. Biagini, *British democracy and Irish nationalism*, pp. 110, 131.
146. Bew, *Land the national question in Ireland*, pp. 155–6; L.P. Curtis, Jr., 'Landlord responses to the Land War', *Eire-Ireland* xxxviii, nos. 3–4 (2003), pp. 169–70, 178.
147. Curtis, 'Landlord responses to the Land War', p. 173.
148. Curtis, 'Landlord responses to the Land War', p. 176.
149. Bew, *Land the national question in Ireland*, pp. 155–6.

150. Clancarty to Clonbrock letter dated 5 Feb. 1882 (NLI, Clonbrock papers MS 35,771), Minute book of the Galway Irish Land Committee and Property Defence Association (NLI, Clonbrock papers, MS 19,678).
151. Finnegan, *Loughrea: That den of infamy*, p. 79.
152. Finnegan, *Loughrea: That den of infamy*, p. 79.
153. Letter to the Irish Land Committee re the establishment of a branch of the Property Defence Association in Galway (NLI, Clonbrock papers, MS 35,771). For more on landlord responses to the Land War, see Curtis, 'Landlord responses to the Irish Land War, 1879–87', pp. 134–89.
154. Ball, 'Policing the Irish Land War', p. 65.
155. C.S.O., R.P. 1882/45568.
156. C.S.O., R.P. 1883/20404.
157. Ball, 'Policing the Irish Land War', p. 163.
158. C.S.O., R.P. 1880/20404.
159. Ball, 'Policing the Irish Land War', p. 236.
160. C.S.O., R.P. 1880/20404.
161. C.S.O., R.P. 1883/20404.
162. C.S.O., R.P. 1882/45568.
163. C.S.O., R.P. 1883/15227.
164. Ball, 'Policing the Irish Land War', p. 120; Keyes, *Funding the nation*, p. 143.
165. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, p. 362.
166. Ball, 'Policing the Irish Land War', p. 176.
167. *Western News*, 29 July 1882.
168. Moran, 'The Land War, urban destitution and town tenant protest, 1879–1882', pp. 24, 27–8.
169. *Western News*, 5 Dec. 1885; J.J. Lee, *The modernisation of Irish society, 1848–1918* (Dublin, 1972), p. 89.

REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

DUBLIN DIOCESAN ARCHIVE

Cardinal McCabe papers.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF IRELAND

Registered Papers of the Chief Secretary's Office.

Protection of Persons and Property Act, Box 1 and Box 2.

Irish Land League and Irish National League. Reports of speeches A–L, 1879–1888.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND

Clonbrock papers, Mss 19,678, 35,771.

NEWSPAPERS

Connaught People.

Western News.

OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the working of the Landlord and Tenant (Ireland), 1870, and the acts amending the same, H.C. 1881, xviii, (2779–iii).

Reports of her majesty's commissioners into the depressed condition of agricultural interests, preliminary report H.C., 1881 [2778–i].

Return of the names of one hundred of the largest ratepayers in each county in Ireland, distinguishing whether in the Commission of the Peace 1884–85, H.C. Papers; accounts and papers. Paper number [219] lxvii.477.

CONTEMPORARY PUBLICATIONS

Davitt, Michael, *The fall of feudalism in Ireland, or the story of the Land League Revolution* (London, 1904).

Harris, Matthew, *Land Reform, a letter to the council of the Irish National Land League* (Dublin, 1881).

WORKS OF REFERENCE

Walker, B.M., *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801–1922* (Dublin, 1978).

SECONDARY SOURCES

Ball, Stephen, 'Policing the Irish Land War: Official responses to political protest and agrarian crime in Ireland, 1879–91' (PhD thesis, University of London, 2000).

Bew, Paul, *Land and the national question in Ireland, 1858–1882* (Dublin, 1978).

Biagini, E.F., *British democracy and Irish nationalism, 1876–1906* (Cambridge, 2007).

- Boyle, John W., 'A marginal figure: The Irish rural labourer', in Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly Jr. (eds.), *Irish peasants: Violence and political unrest, 1780–1914* (Dublin, 1983), pp. 311–38.
- Brody, Hugh, *Iniskillane: Change and decline in the west of Ireland* (London, 1973, 1982).
- Buckley, K., 'The fixing of rents by agreement in Co. Galway, 1881–85', *Irish Historical Studies* vii, no. 27, (1951), pp. 149–79.
- Burchardt, Jeremy, *The allotment movement in England, 1793–1873* (London, 2002).
- Burchardt, Jeremy, 'Agricultural history, rural history, or countryside history?', *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 2 (June 2007), pp. 465–81.
- Campbell, Fergus, *The Irish Establishment, 1879–1914* (Oxford, 2009).
- Cannadine, David, *The decline and fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven, CT, 1990).
- Clark, Samuel, *Social Origins of the Irish War* (Princeton, 1979).
- Collins, J., 'The beginning of county administration', located at http://www.ipa.ie/upload/documents/The_beginnings_of_county_administration_Collins.pdf [date accessed 21 Apr. 2011].
- Comerford, R.V., 'The Land War and the politics of distress, 1877–82', in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland, vi: Ireland under the Union, II, 1870–1921* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 26–52.
- Comerford, R.V., *The Fenians in context: Irish politics and society, 1848–1882* (Dublin, 1998).
- Crossman, Virginia, *Politics, pauperism and power in late nineteenth-century Ireland* (Manchester, 2006).
- Cullen, Frank, *Cleansing rural Dublin: Public health and housing initiatives in the South Dublin Poor Law Union, 1880–1920* (Dublin, 2001).
- Curtis, L.P. Jr., 'On class and class conflict in the Land War', *Irish Economic and Social History* viii (1981), pp. 86–94.
- Curtis, L.P. Jr., 'Landlord responses to the Irish Land War, 1879–87', *Eire-Ireland: Journal of Irish Studies* (Fall–Winter 2003), pp. 134–88.
- Cusack, Danny, 'Can't pay, won't pay: Applications for rent abatements on the Gormanston estate in 1874', in Brian Casey (ed.), *Lords, land and labourers: The Big Houses and landed estates of Royal Meath* (Dublin, 2016), pp. 155–70.
- Donnelly, J.S. Jr., *The land and the people of nineteenth-century Cork: The rural economy and the Irish land question* (London and Boston, 1975).
- Dooley, Terence, 'Landlords and the land question, 1879–1909', in Carla King (ed.), *Famine, land and culture in Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 116–39.
- Dooley, Terence, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland: A study of Irish landed families, 1860–1960* (Dublin, 2001).
- Egan, P.K., *The Parish of Ballinasloe: Its history from the earliest time to the present century* (Dublin, 1960).

- Feingold, W.L., 'The tenant's movement to capture the Irish poor law boards, 1877–1886', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 7, no. 3 (1975), pp. 216–31.
- Feingold, W.L., *The revolt of the tenantry, the transformation of local government in Ireland, 1872–86* (Boston, 1984).
- Finnegan, A.B., 'The Land War in south-east Galway' (MA thesis, NUI Galway, 1974).
- Finnegan, Pat, *Loughrea: That den of infamy: The land war in county Galway, 1879–82* (Dublin, 2014).
- Fitzpatrick, David, 'The disappearance of the Irish agricultural labourer, 1841–1912', *Irish Economic and Social History* vii (1980), pp. 66–92.
- Fitzpatrick, David, 'Class, family and rural unrest in nineteenth century Ireland', in P.J. Drudy (ed.), *Ireland, land, politics and people* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 37–75.
- Geary, Laurence, *The Plan of Campaign, 1886–1891* (Cork, 1986).
- Graham, Brian and Susan Hood, '"Every creed and party": Town tenant protest in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ireland', *Journal of Historical Geography* xxiv, no. 2, (Apr. 1998), pp. 170–87.
- Hoppen, K.T., 'Landlords, society and electoral politics in mid-nineteenth century Ireland', in C.H.E. Philpin (ed.), *Nationalism and popular protest in Ireland* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 284–310.
- Hynes, Eugene, *Knock: The Virgin's apparition in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Cork, 2009).
- Jordan, Donald, 'The Irish National League and the "Unwritten Law": Rural protest and nation-building in Ireland, 1882–1890', *Past and Present* 158 (Feb. 1998), pp. 146–71.
- Keyes, Michael, *Funding the nation: Money and nationalist politics in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2011).
- Lane, P.G., 'Agricultural labourers and the land question', in Carla King (ed.), *Famine, land and culture in Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 101–16.
- Lee, J.J., *The modernisation of Irish society, 1848–1918* (Dublin, 1972).
- Lucey, D.S., *The Irish National League in Dingle, Co Kerry* (Dublin, 2003).
- Lyons, Martyn, *The writing culture of ordinary people in Europe, c. 1860–1920* (Cambridge, 2013).
- McGee, Owen, *The IRB., The Irish Republican Brotherhood: From the Land League to Sinn Féin* (Dublin, 2007).
- McWilliams, Rohan, *Popular politics in nineteenth century England* (London, 1998).
- Melvin, Patrick, 'The landed gentry of Galway, 1820–1880' (PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1991).
- Molloy, Joe (ed.), *The parish of Clontuskert, glimpses into its past* (Galway, 2009).

- Moran, Gerard, 'The Land War, urban destitution and town tenant protest, 1879–1882', *Saothar* 20 (1995), pp. 17–32.
- Moran, Gerard, "'Near famine': The Roman Catholic Church and the subsistence crisis of 1879–82", *Studia Hibernica* no. 32 (2004), pp. 155–77.
- Solow, B.L., *The land question and the Irish economy, 1870–1903* (Cambridge, MA, 1971).
- Vaughan, W.E., *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford, 1994).
- Vaughan, W.E., 'Landlord and tenant relations in Ireland between the famine and the Land War, 1850–1875', in L.M. Cullen and Thomas Smout (eds.), *Comparative perspectives of Scottish and Irish economic and social history 1600–1900* (Edinburgh, 1977), pp. 216–26.
- Weber, Eugene, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The modernisation of rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, 1976).



CHAPTER 7

The Era of the Plan of Campaign, 1886–1891

1 INTRODUCTION

[T]he nationalists have crushed forever the ascendancy spirit of the board... [they] showed an organisation and resource that completely unnerved them [their] uncompromising patriotism [in] one of the greatest struggles of our time.¹

Landlords became increasingly politically and economically vulnerable following the first phase of the Land War as its indiscriminate nature put progressive and retrograde landlords together as bastions of ‘bastard landlordism’. They could no longer influence the outcome of board of guardians elections and various efforts to democratise power put significant checks on their influence.² Political representation brought with it respectability and the small-town middle classes—shopkeepers, publicans and tenant farmers—desired the respectability and influence once held by their aristocratic overlords.

Once tenants ‘began to operate collectively, the illusory nature of landlord preeminence was exposed’ and such unity of purpose ensured that they began to gain control in local political affairs.³ The British government was losing interest in the plight of landlords, seeing them as an avaricious entity and Irish landlords were doing little to stem their decline. Similarly, W.E. Vaughan remarked that ‘they were a less important vested interest in a rapidly expanding empire than they would have been in an Irish polity’.⁴ Their remaining source of power, their estates, was slowly disintegrating

because of land legislation and declining deference from tenants, which they had believed would spring eternally. All this resulted in landlords facing a multiplicity of problems in controlling local interests as they became increasingly isolated and relationships in the countryside became more poisonous. Irish landlords were not in W.E. Gladstone's vision of a changing empire, though to remove them Gladstonian land purchase required a massive investment of capital, in the hope that it would finally resolve this imperial crisis.⁵ The apathy of Irish landlords isolated them from even their most ardent supporters in the Conservative Party, who were becoming dismayed with their attitudes and somewhat recidivistic estate policies. Nationalist propaganda successfully portrayed them as heartless oppressors and the English press treated them with contemptuous disdain, which intensified during the Plan of Campaign.

In addition to this, any vestiges of loyalty towards the landlord class were irreparably damaged due to the attitude of the incredibly eccentric second Marquess of Clanricarde, who 'single-handedly did more to tarnish the reputation of his class than any other landowner'.⁶ The land question now afforded a moral legitimacy to the Irish National League (INL) as it began to serve as a quasi-governmental organisation in many districts.⁷ The lack of a clearly defined Irish policy on the part of the Conservatives after they came to power left a lacuna regarding the governing of many districts that was filled by the INL. The inspector general of the Royal Irish Constabulary, Sir Andrew Reed, attributed the decline in crime to the efforts of the league.⁸

Around Ballinasloe, this burgeoning nationalist elite wanted to capitalise on the obvious decline of the landlord class. Previous, infrequent criticisms towards landlords became more regular, and in relation to the fourth Earl of Clancarty they focused upon his apparent refusal to co-operate with tenants on matters regarding the management of the estate. These criticisms are the focus of this chapter.

Prior to the mid-1880s, deference towards the Clancarty family was reasonably solid. Rather than trying to turn public opinion against him, nationalists challenged his hegemony on elected boards. This chapter explores all these issues within the town of Ballinasloe and examines how, despite being located so close to the highly disturbed Loughrea district and Clanricarde estate, Ballinasloe managed to escape the worst of the Plan of Campaign. While nationalists were slowly gaining the upper hand in local politics, the animosity of local landowners to their growing influence was never far from the surface, and clashes between nationalists and

ex-officio guardians often resulted in the disruption of the effective management of local government in Ballinasloe and also threatened to irreparably damage hitherto harmonious relations between landlord and tenant, as the more conservative nationalists sowed discord in an effort to consolidate their growing influence.

2 URBAN IMPROVEMENTS AND THE BALLINASLOE TOWN COMMISSION

It was suggested that the Ballinasloe Town Commission acquire the under-used agricultural hall to use as a multipurpose town hall to serve the community. John Ward, the chairman, also suggested that Clancarty could be asked to provide a suitable site *gratis* in 1886. However, he did not respond to repeated communications about this matter and his failure to do so was interpreted as a direct refusal to co-operate with his tenants. William Putrill remarked that this was becoming a frequent occurrence: ‘several public matters dealing with this town are not treated properly by either the rent office or Lord Clancarty’.⁹ Matt Harris believed that the town commission had the power to appropriate the hall and that they should do this as it would have the added effect of showing Clancarty that his influence and control over the running of the town was waning.¹⁰ This matter was not resolved until 1913, when the parish administrator Fr Timothy Joyce succeeded in raising sufficient funds to purchase the agricultural hall from the Clancarty estate, and he then converted it into a town hall, which remained under the control of the Catholic parish. The *East Galway Democrat* commended Fr Joyce for his work and remarked: ‘now within a couple of weeks more there will be opened for Ballinasloe, a town hall, one of the finest and most spacious to be found in any town in Ireland’.¹¹

Clancarty’s unwillingness to relocate the market house became a far more contentious affair. Erected in 1868, ‘the shambles’ consisted of twelve butcher stalls which were rented out to traders for one shilling a week. By 1888 it had become dilapidated and unsanitary due to an accumulation of offal and filth. Town commissioner Patrick O’Connor said its dishevelled appearance resulted in inadequate market facilities being available in the town. Solicitor and commissioner George Gleeson Bowler argued that they were entitled to have it removed because it was a health hazard under Section 88 of the 1887 Public Health Act, which stated that: ‘any urban authority may purchase any premises for the purpose of widening...[or] improving any street’.¹²

A petition was apparently signed by 600 of Clancarty's tenants which requested that he relocate the market house to Reeves Lane. The *Western News* said: 'it was the opinion of the board and the opinion of the people that [Reeves Lane] was a suitable place... Lord Clancarty has always been treated in a very respectful manner by the people of Ballinasloe and his Lordship should have shown more concern for their interests' in this regard'.¹³ Harris had previously asked the Lord Lieutenant whether he was aware that Clancarty had received a significant sum of money through the tolls and customs of the fairs and that nothing had been forwarded for the upkeep of the town. He requested that the Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls hold an inquiry, which happened.¹⁴ Because Clancarty had failed in his role as proprietor of the stalls to maintain them, this suggested that the town commission needed to acquire the market house, though he stated that he had spent £180 cleaning and maintaining it. Neither Patrick O'Connor nor the commissioners accepted this and O'Connor was adamant that no effort had been made to maintain it for twenty years.¹⁵

The commission stated that 'no marketable qualities [were] sold in the shed, which [was] unsuitable for the purpose'. It further attested that, despite being the owner of Ballinasloe and the largest ratepayer, Clancarty made no contribution to the upkeep of the town. The £208 13s. 8d. received in tolls in 1883 went 'into the pockets of Lord Clancarty to the great disadvantage of the ratepayers and the people of the town', who made a more substantial contribution to the maintenance of the town.¹⁶ 'Lord Clancarty is receiving double revenue. He gets rent for the stalls... [in the market house] and he charges tolls for what people sell out in the streets. It is quite clear the whole thing is a gross imposition'.¹⁷ The commission further recommended that the town commission be given compulsory powers to acquire the tolls and customs because they would be able to utilise them in a much more efficient manner than Clancarty. They were a lucrative source of income and adequate compensation needed to be paid if Clancarty was going to relinquish them. Harris further recommended that the town commission investigate whether they had a legal mechanism by which they could remove the house and stated that if they failed to find one, Clancarty's tenants would need to be mobilised to pressure him into removing it.¹⁸ The fact that it also obstructed the view of St Michael's Church from the top of the market square was another reason for the eagerness to have it removed:

Instead of building a handsome two-storeyed [sic] building which he [the third earl of Clancarty] intended to have done, he built the present low shed in order that they not obstruct view of the new chapel from the street, and thus the appearance and much of the usefulness of the market house was sacrificed to please Dr Derry, the bishop of the Roman Catholic citizens... As a specimen of Gothic architecture, our church is an edifice that any man of taste must admire... It appears that Lord Clancarty is not satisfied with refusing the almost unanimous request of the Roman Catholics of Ballinasloe in regard the removal of the eyesore to our Roman Catholic Church.¹⁹

William Putrill suggested sending a deputation to Clancarty, but local nationalist Meagher was sceptical of such an approach as Clancarty had refused to meet any on previous occasions. This repeated refusal to meet deputations resulted in the *Western News* stating that ‘such a state of affairs would not be tolerated in any similar town in Ireland’. His lack of co-operation restricted the options of the town commission and frustrated its members as the ‘entire district [was] in his possession’,²⁰ with Dunlo Hill being suggested as an alternative to Reeves Lane.²¹ Such behaviour on the part of Clancarty resulted in Harris calling him ‘an utterly worthless man’, and he was accused of trying to antagonise Clancarty with the comment.²²

Branches of the INL largely operated independently from each other when it came to adjudicating and punishing violations of the ‘unwritten law’ of the league, with few formal checks on their activity.²³ The Ballinasloe branch held the town commission partially responsible for this débâcle because they had not ‘remove[d] everything inimical to the interest of society and to the interests of the town’. It was keen to be the only recognised authority in the countryside for the people to demur to, further arguing that the town commission was weak because it had been begging Clancarty to remove the market house.²⁴ Bowler also criticised the town commission, saying: ‘they would prefer to herd like a gang of conspirators in a disused shebeen by the canal than seek the open forum of discussion in other towns’.²⁵ This controversy was an evocative symbol of the declining deference being expressed towards Clancarty in a more overt manner. His unwillingness to agree to a compromise did not endear him to his tenants, and the market house was not removed until September 1918.²⁶

The town commission applied to the Board of Works for a grant in 1886 in order to improve the waterworks in the town. This project would also have the added benefit of providing work for unemployed labourers, but it was necessary to secure a lease on the site in Derrymullen from

Clancarty to carry out the work.²⁷ While one existed, there was a lack of clarity around it and this led the town commission to question whether it was operating the gasworks for public benefit or to protect Clancarty's interests. As the commission was paying tax on the site, O'Connor was curious as to why the commission had no right of title to it and accused it of 'attending to the business of Lord Clancarty'. It later transpired that Clancarty had given a £1000 loan to the commission to assist in the construction of the works, but this had not been repaid, and the minutes of the town commission indicated that a previous request had been made to Clancarty on 29 December 1878.²⁸

The third Earl of Clancarty had had a lease drawn up before he died in 1872, but this was not discovered until March 1887. Because he could not bind his successors to it, he would not sign it and the fourth Earl ignored multiple queries about it. There was a sense of exasperation over Clancarty's intransigence on this issue, especially as the object of securing a lease was to get a loan for the construction of artisan dwellings. Clancarty was accused of behaving in a manner that would be detrimental to the welfare of the town, and Patrick O'Connor wanted to pressurise Clancarty into meeting a deputation from the town board, but he refused.²⁹

While public displays of loyalty and deference were now seen as unseemly, there was a large turnout at the funeral of Clancarty's former agent, Major Gascoyne, in May 1886. Shops closed from Monday evening 10 May 1886, the day after his death, until his burial on Wednesday 12 May, as 'relays of Lord Clancarty's [tenants] carried the coffin'. The *Galway Vindicator* said he never treated a tenant badly and that 'he was ever anxious to help the poor and struggling man'. He was interred in the Clancarty family crypt at St John's Church.³⁰

3 CONFLICT ON THE BALLINASLOE BOARD OF GUARDIANS AND TOWN COMMISSION

Boards of guardians were 'the only administrative body in rural areas with a popularly elected element [that] provided tenant farmers and businessmen with a rare opportunity to participate in local government', and increased nationalist control over local government was a nationwide phenomenon.³¹ The advancement of local democracy eroded landlords' political power and ruthlessly exposed the fragility of their influence. As *ex-officios*' influence over the boards of guardians collapsed across the country and meetings became more combative, they stopped attending.

Sensitivity to their treatment by elected guardians was derived from their assumption that they had a natural right to influence the proceedings, and Virginia Crossman maintained that, ‘once that right was challenged, the boards became a hostile environment acting as a constant reminder of their declining influence’. The Ballinasloe Board of Guardians was no exception.³²

In the aftermath of the 1886 Poor Law election, Laurence Conroy was proposed as vice-chairman of the Ballinasloe Board of Guardians by nationalists in opposition to Fowler, because ‘in the past [Fowler] has at all times displayed a great antipathy to the majority of the elected guardians’, but he failed to be returned. In his testimony to the Cowper Commission, Fowler stated that some members were there for political purposes only and were disinterested in the intricacies of the operation of the Poor Law.³³ Nationalists accepted that they faced difficulties in getting control of the board of guardians in 1887 because ‘Lord Clancarty, Mr Fowler and Mr Ward have sent their whips around to bring in their class from all quarters to prevent a nationalist from being returned’. Clancarty was proposed by Fowler as chairman *in absentia* because ‘he has been chairman for a number of years and I hope that he will continue [as] chairman as long as God will leave him life’.³⁴ T.J. Manning proposed George Gleeson Bowler as chairman in 1887 in opposition to Clancarty because he thought the actions of *ex-officio* guardians were inimical to the greater interests of the people. Despite this challenge and being in poor health, Clancarty was elected chairman, but there was stronger resistance to his election on this occasion than previously. His non-attendance yet repeated election as chairman fostered hostility towards him from nationalists and thus the *Western News* reported: ‘it is sufficient for them that he is the lord of the soil and to be chairman of the board of guardians...It would be a good thing to get up a wooden statue of Lord Clancarty to place in the “rotten old chair” for the Maddens and men of that ilk to worship in the absence of the real golden calf’.³⁵ Because of Clancarty’s absence once again, Bowler facetiously commented: ‘I hear a great deal about the election of the phantom chairman who has been conspicuous by his absence over the past year’, and accused him of using ‘every species of tyranny to get his own way’.³⁶

Clancarty’s long-term absences meant that his agent, Fowler, was the *de facto* chairman. It was generally the case that Clancarty or another *ex-officio* was returned as chairman.³⁷ While William Reddy claimed that he had no intention of disparaging Clancarty, he remarked: ‘I disrespect him for

allowing these sycophants to make use of his name as a guardian of the poor...Has he as chairman of this board looked into the interests of the poor?'³⁸ This was in response to the deteriorating condition of the countryside, and Edward Fowler's refusal to acknowledge this is discussed in further detail below. While failing to gain the chairmanship of the board, nationalists still believed that they were gaining the upper hand and they were adulated for their activism.³⁹

Thomas Byrne accused Fowler of exerting undue influence over proceedings on the board because, after arriving late, he attempted to adjourn a meeting held on 1 May 1887 when he discovered that Byrne had signed off on the minutes of the previous meeting. Byrne alleged that Fowler was behaving in an autocratic and bigoted manner, arguing that he was not treating the Catholic tenants in a sufficiently respectful manner. Nationalists were accused of threatening the stability of the board through their actions and *ex-officios* were too domineering.⁴⁰ John Joe Madden had been a founder member of the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association, discussed in Chap. 4, and was treated with great hostility because of his loyalty towards Clancarty. Donohue remarked: 'I would not give John Joe Madden a half glass unless I was sure it would poison him'.⁴¹

Fowler alluded to his role as a magistrate while attempting to defend the presence of the head constable at this meeting. This attracted the ire of T.J. Manning, who proceeded to rebuke him for making such a comment: 'you are no magistrate here. You are simply a guardian and I won't stand this nonsense'. Fowler simply told him to 'shut up'.⁴² Nationalists did not appreciate the presence of police at board meetings in June 1887 due to a concern that violence would break out. Fowler said their presence was inappropriate because it implied that crimes had been committed and asked that they be excluded from the board room because guardians should not get preferential treatment from the police owing to their status or wealth: 'every guardian who came into that board, *ex-officio* or elected, came there on equal terms...[and] they left their dignities and titles outside when coming in'.⁴³

Ex-officio members were accused of behaving cynically once it became obvious that they were losing influence and power over the board of guardians. While their declining influence was clear, they did very little to attempt to counteract this through a more vigorous engagement with the advance of local democracy: 'We are not coming here to suit the convenience of people who only appear once in twelve months to do some job... we are the working majority and we are not going to give these men a

position to which they are not entitled'.⁴⁴ This reflected the lethargic and indifferent attitude towards the growth of democracy felt by many land-owners in the 1880s.⁴⁵ Virginia Crossman argued that the failure of the *ex-officio* guardians to attend meetings was due, in part, to their frustration with the administrative incompetence of nationalist guardians.⁴⁶

What caused such exacerbation amongst *ex-officio* guardians was that their elected counterparts were frequently adopting populist measures, such as the erection of houses, even if such decisions had no sound basis for implementation.⁴⁷ Edward Fowler dismissed them as a 'fad' and was sceptical of their actual benefits, further contending that the guardians in favour of them were not substantial ratepayers.⁴⁸ There was concern that both *ex-officios* and some elected guardians like John Joe Madden would try and stop the continuation of outdoor relief, because 'he [was] without one bit of human kindness or human charity'.⁴⁹ Fowler had little faith in their competence, believing that they would use money expediently with no long-term thinking: 'I do not think they are a class of persons to whom the collection of and supervision of the rates should be entrusted at all'. *Ex-officio* guardians resisted the implementation of such plans in order to keep poor rates under control and they were reticent about granting outdoor relief on an *ad hoc* basis. Because the gentry remained aloof of the poor, they did not feel the need to engage in populist patronage.⁵⁰ However, it was becoming obvious that they were losing their influence and control over its operation and this increased the frequency of belligerent meetings.

The election of the chairman of the board was disputed once again in April 1888, and the Kiltormer guardian, J. Donoghue, decided to occupy the chair in spite of J.J. Madden claiming that he had been elected at the previous meeting, and this being substantiated by Thomas Seymour Blake. However, because he was a certified bankrupt, Blake was not entitled to a vote. The *Western News* said: 'there was brute force used this day week, but the representatives of the sheep and bullocks are not here today. That element is not as strong as last week'.⁵¹ Bowler made a futile effort to propose Andrew Manning, who refused to take the chair because he would have to sign the minutes of the previous meeting. At this, he objected to the presence of Major Thornhill and Blake, who, despite being bankrupt, were still allowed to attend meetings. J.J. Madden reflected the sense of frustration felt by the *ex-officio* guardians when he said: 'we pay a good deal of rates and gentlemen who pay little are dictating to us'.⁵²

Bowler disputed the votes of Blake, Major Thornhill, Orme Handy and J.W. Potts because they were bankrupt, and remarked: 'we have made our objection known, and if we are beaten we will accept honourable defeat; but until the local government board has given their decision, we will not recognise the validity of the election of this day week'. An erroneous interpretation of the law had resulted in John Gairdner's appointment being sanctioned by the local government board. Despite pressure to resign being exerted on him by nationalist guardians, Gairdner refused, stating: 'I am prepared to take the chair and if I am refused, I shall go away. I am chairman until the local government board tells me I am not'. Gairdner physically remonstrated with William Reddy in an attempt to gain possession of the chair and William Reddy told him: 'you won't get the chair; you may put that idea out of your head'. Such was the level of consternation at this meeting that it was abandoned.⁵³

In general, the position with *ex-officio* guardians was complicated. Because of their position, the local government board could not dismiss them, so if they were declared bankrupt or did something criminal, they would have to wait to be removed from the commission of the peace, and it was not until then that they would be removed from their position as *ex-officio* guardians. Virginia Crossman has argued that during disputes, as discussed above, the local government board stuck resolutely to what was presented to them. The repeated obfuscation over Gairdner's election as chairman resulted in the board being disbanded in June 1888 and paid guardians were subsequently appointed to manage the union, which cost £1500. A note attached to a communication to the Chief Secretary's office, dated 24 May 1888, stated: 'the proceedings of the board of guardians of Ballinasloe have, of late, been...disorderly and the business of the union has been neglected [and] we have temporarily disbanded the board of guardians'.⁵⁴ The paid guardians were R.C.C. Lynch and Colonel Robertson, and they were relentless in collecting unpaid rates in the union. There were £1659 in outstanding rates and the guardians said that proceedings would be initiated after 7 July in order to recover outstanding payments, with extra pressure being exerted on the rate collectors to ensure this was done.⁵⁵

MPs were assiduous in bringing issues regarding Poor Law unions in their constituencies to the attention of the government in the House of Commons.⁵⁶ Matt Harris questioned the chief secretary, Arthur Balfour, regarding the disbandment of the board of guardians, highlighting the bitterness around the election of the officers, and the slow response of the

local government board in response to objections to the election of Gairdner. His question is quoted in full:

he was voted into that position by the *ex-officio* guardians, and against the will of the elected guardians, and that this course was at variance with the usage of the board, which up to that time always got the clerk of the union to act as presiding officer at the election of the chairman; whether the local government board have received a formal communication signed by six of the elected guardians claiming the chairmanship for Mr Thomas Byrne, who got eighteen votes, Mr Gardiner getting nineteen at the election of 4 April, on the ground that some of the *ex-officio* guardians who voted for Mr Gardiner had no legal right to vote; whether, at the election held on 16 May, a formal protest was handed to the chairman objecting to a new election on the ground that Mr Byrne was the legally elected chairman of the board, and formal objections lodged against Major Thornhill, Mr Orme Handy, and Mr J.W. Potts, as having no right to vote at the election of chairman; whether it is true that in the interval between [14] May, the day on which these objections were lodged with the local government board, and 23 May, the day on which the new board first met, no answer to these objections had been received from the local government board; that in consequence of such delay the board had to adjourn, being powerless to go on with business while in a state of uncertainty as to their right to act as a legally-constituted body; and, is it on account of this failure on the part of the Ballinasloe poor law board to fulfil duties which, owing to the inaction of the local government board they were powerless to perform, that paid guardians have been sent down to transact the business of the union?⁵⁷

Balfour succeeded Michael Hicks Beach as chief secretary to Ireland in March 1887. While he was initially derided as a lightweight, having been called ‘Tiger Lily’ in school, it was in Ireland that his reputation was made. L.P. Curtis stated that ‘he soon proved himself to be a canny and ruthless operator and a firm proponent of law and order, resulting in him being given the moniker “Bloody Balfour”’. He was less sympathetic to the plight of tenants than his predecessors and had no sympathy for tenants who made no effort to pay rents. He was the mastermind behind the financing of test estates, which were targeted by nationalists because of their precarious financial condition, during the Plan of Campaign, in an effort to destroy the plan and the INL.⁵⁸

The Plan of Campaign was the brainchild of Timothy Harrington, and the INL subsidised evicted tenants as they achieved quasi-martyrdom after being evicted, though nationalists often later ignored those living in

League huts for decades after their evictions. Curtis argued that ‘those tenants who subscribed to the plan welcomed any excuse to reduce their rents’ as divisions deepened between landlords and tenants. Curtis further stated that, after the plan’s publication, Hicks Beach redoubled his efforts to reconcile landlords and their tenants before it was too late. Where cordial landlord–tenant relations prevailed, rents were generally paid, as resistance to rent depended upon three factors: the poverty of the local population, their susceptibility to nationalist propaganda and their fear of the league’s authority. As Balfour was exasperated by the inability of landlords to organise, he decided that Dublin Castle would secretly dedicate their resources to the plan’s test estates and ensured that they were guaranteed significant financial support. Such a policy succeeded in depleting the finances of the INL.⁵⁹

Balfour dismissed Harris’ concerns and stated that the board of guardians had been warned previously about the disorderly conduct that took place at meetings, which resulted in the business of the union being neglected. Because these warnings were unheeded, there was no alternative but to disband the board.⁶⁰ P.A. Chance, MP for Kilkenny South, was of the opinion that the board was dissolved because nationalists objected to the election of a conservative chairman and not because of riotous proceedings, and he was not satisfied with Balfour’s answer: ‘that is not an answer to my question. What I asked was, whether this board was not superseded immediately after they had instituted proceedings to set aside the riotous, disorderly, and grossly illegal election of their conservative chairman?’⁶¹ The paid guardians relinquished control ten months after the board’s dissolution and J.J. Madden was elected chairman. When he ‘rose to return thanks [he] was received with cheers from the Conservative side and derisive applause from the nationalists’ but was then accused by William Putrill of bungling the responsibilities of the chair. William Reddy remarked that he had not seen some of the *ex-officio* guardians prior to this meeting: ‘what brings the ascendancy and landocracy here today?’⁶² Thomas Byrne stated that they impeded the business of the board and were an imposition on the rate-payers in the district.⁶³

Ex-officio members thought nationalists were susceptible to undue influence and neglected the operation of the board in favour of passing overtly political resolutions that had nothing to do with the operation of the board. For example, a motion proposed by Thomas Byrne and seconded by Laurence Conroy on 5 May 1886 stated:

That the best thanks of this board is due to William Ewart Gladstone Esq., First Lord of the Treasury for the large, comprehensive, generous and courageous measure of legislative independence for Ireland he has introduced into the British House of Commons. That we also recognise with pleasure his great effort to settle by his constructive genius and most eminent administrative abilities the land question which is to the agricultural population of this country of burning interest and vital importance and which question caused each broil, riot and turmoil between landlord and tenant and which we trust shall be forever at an end by the passing of the two great heroic and conciliatory measures introduced by the prime minister to whom we owe a debt of eternal gratitude for the able manner in which he has presented those much desired measures before the people of Great Britain and Ireland.⁶⁴

Nationalists portrayed the INL as a non-sectarian organisation in the hope of attracting Protestant support. The reality was completely different, with R.V. Comerford arguing that Home Rule was an assertion of Catholic power that resulted in the ‘polarisation of voting along religious lines [which] was a concomitant of the consolidation of Parnell’s party’.⁶⁵ Such a polarisation was highlighted when the Ballinasloe branch of the league was accused of harbouring anti-Protestant feelings. John Dillon was requested to send ‘Mr Swift MacNeill, Pinkerton or Abraham in order to contradict the assertion of our enemies, that we as Catholics are intolerant of our fellow Protestant brethren’. Despite this hope, Protestants were made to feel isolated at times. Thomas Byrne remarked that only Catholics could be patriotic: ‘It is futile to trifle with Irish catholicity and Irish nationality, even though some Catholic guardians, such as J. Ward were supportive of Clancarty...Mr Fowler now recognises in the person of J. Ward the embodiment of his second self and of every attribute to the anti-Irish Irishman’.⁶⁶ Such attitudes reinforced unionist objectives to Home Rule, as they simultaneously feared the emergence of Tammany Hall-style corruption.⁶⁷

George Gleeson Bowler’s appointment to the town commission as legal advisor was rescinded by the chairman, John Rigney, in August 1888, who was subsequently labelled a Tory and political traitor. The *Western News* said: ‘bodies elected on nationalist principles had no right to ally themselves with the enemies of the people against Mr Bowler. They should have been on the side of the people’.⁶⁸ Rigney denied dismissing Bowler; rather, he stated he had rescinded the resolution that sanctioned his appointment. The *Western News* said: ‘the league saw this action as playing into the

hands of the landlords and conservatives, leaving the nationalists at a distinct disadvantage...It would be better, if this were to go on, to dissolve the whole board and leave it to Lord Clancarty and his agent'. Fr Costello—the administrator of Ballinasloe parish—also defended Bowler, while attacking the commission: 'they had branded their nationalist solicitor a criminal without trial or a reply to his letter'. Costello called Bowler a sincere nationalist who had assisted the cause greatly, and said that 'the town commission should examine their conscience and see had they acted rightly by allying themselves with evictors and coercionists'.⁶⁹ This fiasco saw the INL demand a greater input into the appointments process because it argued that the town commission 'consulted no one, but themselves'.⁷⁰

The INL stated that Rigney's actions threatened unity amongst nationalists, presenting advantages to conservative board members, who could then exploit subsequent divisions. 'The town commission allowed themselves to be dragged at the wheels of the chariot of coercionists and evictors...nationalists should not be found voting on the same side as the enemies of their cause...If Mr Bowler had done anything, it was their duty to bring his conduct before the League' and not the town commission.⁷¹ February 1889 saw him resign membership of the INL after Fr Costello censured him for acting as a solicitor to Patrick Barrett of Woodmount, who had been boycotted by the league for seeking payment of rent from a tenant. The police described Costello as an extreme nationalist when he was appointed as parish priest to Looscaun, near Woodford, in April 1889, and in his report to the divisional commission the county inspector, William Byrne, was concerned that his proximity to Woodford would inflame further agitation there.⁷²

There was a noticeable difficulty in paying the November 1886 gale on the Clancarty estate, especially at Coorheen, near Loughrea, where the land was notoriously poor. Fowler offered a 15 per cent abatement to those who paid their rents in full by December 1886.⁷³ He was aggrieved with the land courts for fixing rents without taking all factors into consideration. He drew on the example of a tenant having his rent reduced from £42 3s. 8d. to £32, even though Clancarty had expended £1300 on drainage, which had not been completed by the time the rent had been fixed. If this was taken into consideration, Fowler was of the opinion that the rent would not have been reduced by as much, especially as the tenant in question had sold his interest in his holding for £100 two weeks later. A letter sent to the Chief Secretary's office, dated 3 September 1887, stated

that there was no evidence of distress on the estate. Nevertheless, tenants who faced difficulties paying the May 1886 gale received assistance. Fowler came to the decision that tenants with holdings under £50 would be offered a 20 per cent reduction on the May 1886 gale if they paid by May 1887. The letter further stated that: ‘although no abatement was offered to judicial tenants, no pressure was put upon them to pay beyond one half years’ rent although many of them are in arrears and it may be added that not more than 8 per cent of the tenantry have had judicial rents fixed’.⁷⁴ While he was initially reticent to grant universal reductions in rent, he eventually sanctioned a 20 per cent reduction in 1887. He further stated to the Cowper Commission that he granted universal reductions because he did not want either side to incur expenses by entering the land court. Therefore, abatements were granted to all tenants not because he thought it was deserved, but because he wanted all tenants to be on an equal footing on the estate.⁷⁵

There were disagreements over the level of poverty in Ballinasloe and its environs between nationalists and Edward Fowler. He refused to accept that the condition of the district was as bad as nationalists claimed, and in his testimony to the Cowper Commission he said: ‘I did not think that the poverty of the tenant and their consequent inability to pay existed generally...[considering] the sum they give for superior feed, horses, clothes and buildings, plus subscriptions to the League’.⁷⁶ L.P. Curtis has argued that such disputes over levels of poverty were frequent, as unionists denied that there was extensive distress in order to prevent any tampering with judicial rents.⁷⁷ T.J. Manning demanded that rents be readjusted because of the economic crisis that affected the ability of many tenants to pay their rents, as many had been set prior to the beginning of the crisis in 1877. He told Fowler that ‘we don’t want to prevent you from getting the rents’ and that if there was a readjustment, tenants would be able to make some effort at fulfilling their obligations.⁷⁸ His concern was that, if tenants were vigorously pursued for rents, it would increase pressure upon the workhouse. While the evidence suggests that Clancarty tenants paid their rents in full with nationalist acceptance, Fowler was frustrated with the government’s inaction over the issue of rents and stated that he ‘told Lord Clancarty a whole year ago that if the government would assist and protect us, that we would get our rents paid [and] that most of the tenants were eager to keep well with us’.⁷⁹

In 1889 Clancarty was accused of becoming disinterested in the welfare of his tenants, as some were living in very poor conditions in Pollboy. One

tenant, Peter Nevin, criticised this neglect and remarked that he 'was not afraid to state that his landlord was doing nothing for his tenants', which reflects the confidence tenants felt as a result of the work of the INL and the declining deference towards landlords that was now firmly ensconced across the country.⁸⁰ In April 1890, Clancarty issued processes of eviction against Mrs Berrane in Pollboy because she sublet part of her holding, in breach of the tenancy, which was frowned upon on the estate. Berrane claimed that her rent and that of her subtenants had been paid in full, but that they had all received notices to quit because her sons had joined the INL. Fowler reiterated that it was because she had sublet part of her holding. She argued that he did nothing to prevent subletting on other holdings, but had singled her out. The *Western News* claimed that 'Mr Fowler would not have treated a person who was not the mother of a nationalist in the same harsh manner', but Fowler was unrepentant about carrying out such evictions, saying: 'I would rather be an evictor than a grabber', which was a deliberately provocative statement.⁸¹

Prior to his departure as chief secretary, Hicks Beach appealed to landlords to be more reasonable about evictions and he was adamant that he would only approve police protection for the eviction of the most intransigent tenants.⁸² Fowler would not carry out evictions without police protection and Hicks Beach's actions meant that it was becoming increasingly difficult to carry out any without incurring significant expenses. On previous occasions that evictions took place on the estate, Fowler claimed that he had been threatened and intimidated but did not seek police protection.⁸³ It is possible that he did not want police protection because of the unwanted attention that it would draw, especially considering that nationalist activity on the estate was faltering and he did not want to give them a reason to revive it.

4 FALTERING AGITATION IN THE BALLINASLOE DISTRICT

As the agitation faltered, Thomas Byrne tried to get more urban support by appealing to shopkeepers' assistants, because they were the sons of farmers and should naturally be sympathetic to the plight of their rural neighbours: 'nobody should be so eager to come into our ranks as shop assistants, as they are generally farmers' sons, and they should be the first to sympathise with the class from which they have sprung'.⁸⁴ Despite such a hope, both shopkeepers' assistants and labourers were not active participants in the land movement, because as Fintan Lane highlighted, the

prioritisation of working-class concerns went against the *raison d'être* of the constitutional nationalist movement. Lane also argued that 'the man who works for a wage for another is an infinitely lower class than the man that works for himself', and such an attitude would surely have rankled with urban tenants.⁸⁵ Rural agitators were central to the formation of a national consciousness, and with labourers being deliberately excluded from this, it became increasingly difficult for them to become effectively integrated into the new milieu being created in provincial Ireland, which meant that they were becoming increasingly marginalised by the new provincial elites. While shopkeepers were now beginning to play a more important role in local politics, their assistants were in a vulnerable position, as their efforts to organise into something that was analogous to a trade union could be problematic. This is explored in more detail in the next chapter.⁸⁶

In February 1888, Arthur Balfour told the House of Commons that the Ballinasloe branch of the INL was in poor financial condition and was not able to cover its liabilities. He said that members wanted the names of those who would not join to be displayed in public in the hope that they would be embarrassed into joining: 'They would show up those men who were an injury to the national cause. There was no alternative, and any punishment that would be inflicted on them they would deserve it'.⁸⁷ He also argued that this reflected the coercive influence of the law of the league and the risk involved in not joining. Thomas Byrne denied that there was a lack of interest in the town, stating that there were hundreds of members, while also hoping that Balfour's statement about its demise would motivate people to join. William Putrill remarked that there was a catchment area of 5000 for potential members, but there were only thirty-four registered in Creagh, thirteen in Kilclooney and eleven in Derrymullen, which contradicted Byrne's claims. Harris suggested that if the affiliation fee was reduced from 5s. to 2s. 6d., more would join. J.S. Donnelly Jr. has illustrated that the INL in Cork exaggerated their claims of success at meetings, and struggles initiated by local branches were failures overall; this certainly seems to have been the case in Ballinasloe.⁸⁸ This is further highlighted by the monthly confidential reports of the divisional commissioners and county inspectors between 1887 and 1890, which highlight the fact that there was no significant league activity in Ballinasloe; rather it was concentrated within the vicinity of the Clanricarde estate. This was supported by Edward Fowler, who testified to the Cowper Commission that no outrages were committed on the estate. As Clancarty was a resident

and a relatively popular landlord, tenants did not feel that it was necessary to agitate against him, and the terms of agreement reached by Edward Fowler in granting reductions stifled any potential there was for agitation. The Plan of Campaign was born on the neighbouring Clanricarde estate and it highlighted how successful resistance could be. It soon spread to other estates, especially those where the landlord was economically vulnerable.⁸⁹

The Tenant Defence Association was formed at a meeting in the Mansion House on 24 October 1889 in order to fund the expenses incurred during the Plan of Campaign,⁹⁰ especially considering that its finances depleted after the Ponsonby evictions in Cork. Parnell was initially eager for the Irish Parliamentary Party to get behind the association and 'he impressed upon them the absolute necessity for united action on their part'. Despite his initial enthusiasm for the organisation: 'Parnell's nonchalance and his capriciousness regarding the Tenant Defence League, after publicly committing himself and the parliamentary party to it, disenchanted several of his followers'. This led to a confrontation with William O'Brien, who seemed to triumph, and resulted in 'the Tenant Defence Association [infusing] new life into the agrarian agitation and for the first time since the autumn of 1886, the whole of nationalist Ireland appeared to support it'. The hierarchy and parish clergy especially embraced it with great enthusiasm and local priests were important fundraisers, with collections being made outside church gates, resulting in an implicit obligation for the people to contribute towards its operation.⁹¹

A branch of the association was established in December 1889 in order to revive the stagnant agitation in Ballinasloe because it was 'a critical juncture of the Irish agrarian struggle'.⁹² The *Western News* stated that 'the work proposed to be done by the association is enormous [and] will require enormous funds to bring it to a successful issue. The sirens of war must be provided. The syndicate of landlords is unusually rich and money is pouring from other sources'. The branch asked members to subscribe three pence in the pound on the valuation of their holdings.⁹³ The early meetings were well attended and the greatest financial support they received was from the 'traders of the town, many of whom have not a perch of land...with their usual generosity subscribed to liberally as to elicit the thanks of all concerned'. The priests of the locality also gave £1 each. 'Some tenant farmers may say they do not want to be protected, that they have good landlords in whom they have confidence and that they, are well able to pay their present rents'. The Tenant Defence Association

thought this was a selfish attitude as they failed to act in solidarity with tenants evicted on other estates. Those who attended this meeting acknowledged that there were very few evictions within the Ballinasloe district, but ‘true also we have evicted tenants in our midst who [need] to be sustained and supported’.⁹⁴ This statement was in reference to the extreme stance taken by the Marquess of Clanricarde on the Woodford estate in 1885, where a tenant defence fund had been established and each tenant had to contribute in proportion to the size of their holding, which worked out at six pence in the pound. Thomas Feeney argued that ‘Clanricarde’s hardline no surrender attitude was tantamount to a declaration of war to the now formidably organised tenants’, with 5000 attending a meeting on 30 May 1886 in Woodford in order to listen to speeches denouncing Clanricarde.⁹⁵

The deaths of John Callanan in April 1888, George Gleeson Bowler in May 1889 and Matt Harris in April 1890 were three significant blows to the nationalist movement in east Galway in such a brief period. Callanan had founded the *Western News* in 1876, and had ‘never ceased to be a fearless and unswerving champion of our holy religion’.⁹⁶ Bowler had been the *de facto* legal advisor of nationalists in Ballinasloe and defended many of those involved in the Woodford evictions: ‘he would make any sacrifice to serve his friends’. George Shaw-Lefevre was impressed by his defence of tenants at Woodford and remarked: ‘I am sure that his death will be a very great misfortune to the tenants of the district’.⁹⁷

Matt Harris’ death was the most significant blow to the nationalist movement in the region. His unquestioned radicalism saw him call the rapprochement between small and large farmers the alliance of the shark and the prey. Paul Bew argued: ‘despite this forthright condemnation of the rancher, Harris had, in effect, to welcome these men into the Land League, though equally characteristically; he was soon to regret this decision’.⁹⁸ Nationalist politics moved beyond the land question after the Kilmainham Treaty and became more conservative in nature, as it focused its efforts on the campaign for Home Rule. While Harris was less visible after his arrest and release in 1881, he still emphasised that the land question was the one that concerned western farmers the most. It was more important to them than Home Rule and the idea of an independent parliament: ‘we must often begin with the less in order to achieve the greater... the land movement, due to its class basis, is in its essence, national’.⁹⁹

Harris was unrivalled in his knowledge of local affairs and he was an effective communicator of such ideas at Land League meetings. His

disdain for landlords was never in question, and he accused them of retarding the welfare of the people and hindering the prospect of an independent Ireland. 'Who are the destroyers of the people? Are they not the landlords and all other agencies that cripple and retard industry?...I dislike this class; because as a Christian and a man, I dislike tyranny and crime...I dislike social distinctions...which reverse the natural order of things'.¹⁰⁰ He consistently advocated for the rights of the lower classes, such as labourers, despite the contempt with which they were treated by other nationalists.

Harris died on 14 April 1890 from stomach cancer, having suffered from health problems for the last decade of his life. There was a genuine sense of loss in the West of Ireland when he died, and according to the *Western News*:

He saw the sword of Damocles hanging over him every day...hopeful he would live a little longer to see the ambition of his life fulfilled...he was never ashamed of his work...he was the workman's friend. He was the determined foe of the oppressors of his country. He was connected with every movement for the regeneration of his country.¹⁰¹

4000 people attended his funeral in Ballinasloe, with William O'Brien MP delivering the graveside oration:

We stand over the coffin of our brave friend, one of the best and truest of those faithful souls that make the Irish cause so sacred and so unconquerable. It is pathetic that he should have fallen just on the eve of victory—victory for the course for which he laboured during many a dark and hopeless day.¹⁰²

O'Brien paid tribute to Harris' powerful rhetoric—'somehow or other the sun will never seem to me to shine quite the same again over a Connaught meeting, now poor Matt Harris is missed'—and concluded his oration by saying: 'may God be good and kind to our dear old comrade and to the country he served well'.¹⁰³

5 CONCLUSION

Nationalists saw the operation of the town commission and board of guardians as a struggle of the masses against the classes, an 'uphill fight of the people against landlordism'. Nationalist guardians believed the *ex-officios* could not be entrusted with the running of the board because they

were ‘elected by the law of the bullock and not the voice of the people’.¹⁰⁴ The influence of Lord Clancarty in local politics receded in the 1880s, to the delight of nationalists in the ‘decaying Tory stronghold of Ballinasloe’, and his personal popularity did not prevent attacks being made on his character.¹⁰⁵ Another Galway landlord, Sir William Gregory, also expressed disappointment at the behaviour of his tenants because they combined to have their rents reduced on his estate. He felt that he had done everything in his power to assist them and that they were not treating him with the respect he felt he had earned through his paternalistic endeavours.¹⁰⁶ This is symptomatic of the inability of some landlords to fathom how the deferential era that they were used to was now coming to an end. While it is not possible to say categorically that Clancarty had the same opinion, his behaviour regarding petitions and his refusal to relocate the market house could be interpreted as disappointment at the activities of nationalists in the town of Ballinasloe. The decline was due in part to the subordinate classes not endorsing ‘a moral order which [legitimated] its own political, material and social subordination and the outburst of anger and frustration through the prism of the Land League and INL were too deep-seated to be mere statistical aberrations’.¹⁰⁷

Landlords had dominated local government until the 1880s, and the 1898 Local Government Act was the final nail in the coffin for their political dominance. Clancarty’s refusal to meet his tenants regarding infra-structural developments indicated that previously harmonious relationships were cooling. Options for labourers became increasingly limited and they became more dependent upon the generosity of private benefactors such as Clancarty, which solidified their loyalty towards the family.

Landlords were now in direct opposition to a new rural alliance of tenant farmers and urban tenants. Landlord alliances manifested themselves through the auspices of the likes of the Irish Land Committee, the Property Defence Association and the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, but most of them remained inchoate and ineffective.¹⁰⁸ Even benevolent resident landlords and those with long ties to the area in which they lived were made to feel like outsiders by their tenants as a result of the first two phases of the Land War. This feeling of alienation gave them a greater incentive to sell, and the only purchasers were their tenants. Landlords were put under greater pressure during the second phase of the Land War, with the renewal of the agricultural depression and those on Plan of Campaign estates feeling the pinch most acutely. The emergence of the United Irish League in 1898 increased the pressure on landlords to sell their estates by

the early twentieth century. A new phase of the agitation took place after the enactment of the 1903 act in the guise of the Ranch War, as farmers fought for a share of untenanted land and the breaking up of large tracts of grazing land.

Landlords failed to see the rationale behind reducing rents, and the fixing of fair rents coincided with an increase in arrears, so many were left in a precarious position. They felt they were not being safeguarded enough and Terence Dooley has stated that 'the fact of the matter was that any reduction, no matter how slight, was decreasing the net income of landlords and bringing them precariously close to bankruptcy'.¹⁰⁹ Landlords felt betrayed and the greater democratisation of the countryside added to their woes. Clonbrock felt that such changes were initiated 'by resistance to the law and by votes in the ballot box' and there was a fear that these changes would also impact British landlords. However, British landowners were isolated from this challenge to the legitimacy of landed property that was taking place in Ireland, though there was similar legislation enacted in Scotland, such as the Crofters Act of 1886, but this piece of legislation was not as radical as that enacted in Ireland.¹¹⁰

Reports from the divisional commissioners show that Ballinasloe was a relatively peaceful district in the Galway East Riding. Even though this was one of the most highly agitated areas in the country, Plan of Campaign-related activity was minimal, which has hitherto been under-appreciated in the historiography of the movement. The agitation was at its most intense in the south-eastern part of the riding, especially within the districts of Loughrea, Portumna and Woodford, which were all part of the Clanricarde estate, with Woodford being called 'the battleground of the agitation'.¹¹¹ The nascent provincial middle class attempted to fill the lacuna left by the departure of the landlords. They were the leaders and instigators of anti-landlord movements throughout the country. Relationships in the countryside became more straightforward, with farmers now only indebted to the shopkeepers. K.T. Hoppen stated that 'the gathering economic and political triumph of Irish farmers was...undoubted and was matched by and related to a concurrent growth in the importance of retailing in general and shopkeepers in particular'.¹¹²

NOTES

1. *Western News*, 26 May 1888.
2. Virginia Crossman, *Politics, pauperism and power in late nineteenth-century Ireland* (Manchester, 2006), p. 36.

3. Crossman, *Politics, pauperism and power*, p. 36.
4. W.E. Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford, 1994), p. 219.
5. Eugenio Biagini, *Gladstone* (New York, 2000), p. 105; R.V. Comerford, *The Fenians in context, Irish politics and society, 1848–1882* (Dublin, 1998), p. 224; Terence Dooley, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland. A study of Irish landed families 1860–1960* (Dublin, 2001), pp. 211–12; Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants*, pp. 221–2.
6. L.P. Curtis, *The depiction of eviction in Ireland, 1845–1910* (Dublin, 2011), p. 137.
7. Philip Bull, 'Land and politics, 1879–1903', in D.G. Boyce (ed.), *The revolution in Ireland, 1879–1923* (Dublin, 1988), pp. 28–9.
8. Virginia Crossman, *Politics, law and order in nineteenth century Ireland* (Dublin, 1996), pp. 153, 156.
9. *Western News*, 8 Mar. 1886.
10. *Western News*, 8 Mar. 1886; 13 Mar. 1886; 27 Mar. 1886; 23 Jan. 1888.
11. *East Galway Democrat*, 29 Mar. 1913.
12. *Western News*, 2 Jun. 1888.
13. *Western News*, 2 Jun. 1888; 28 July 1888.
14. C.S.O., R.P. 1888/12353, in the National Archives of Ireland (NAI).
15. *Western News*, 28 July 1888; *The Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls. Precis of the minutes of evidence taken from the Royal Commissioners and the assistant commissioners in the United Kingdom*, xii [6268–v], pp. 93, 192, 218 qs 8443–6, 8671–2, 8678–80.
16. *Market Tolls (Ireland), return to an order of the Honourable The House of Commons, dated 3 Mar. 1884 for return of the values of the market tolls, of the rates, and of the other sources of local revenue in each of the towns of Galway, Ballinasloe, Loughrea, Portumna and Gort in the county of Galway*; see also C.S.O., R.P. 1888/12353.
17. *Western News*, 28 Jul. 1888.
18. *Western News*, 23 Jan. 1888; 19 May 1888; 28 Jul. 1888; 26 Oct. 1889; *The Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls*, pp. 93, 192, 218, qs 8183–90, 8596–8, 8671–2, 8678–80.
19. *Western News*, 7 Jul. 1888.
20. *Western News*, 5 Jan. 1889.
21. *Western News*, 19 May 1888; 13 Apr. 1889.
22. *Western News*, 7 Jul. 1888.
23. Donald Jordan, 'The Irish National League and the "Unwritten Law": Rural protest and nation-building in Ireland, 1882–1890', *Past and Present* 158 (Feb. 1998), p. 164.
24. *Western News*, 14 Jul. 1888; 28 Jul. 1888.
25. *Western News*, 14 Jul. 1888.

26. Declan Kelly, *Ballinasloe from Garbally Park to the fair green* (Dublin, 2007), p. 32.
27. *Western News*, 13 Mar. 1887.
28. *Western News*, 13 Mar. 1887.
29. *Western News*, 6 Feb. 1886; 1 May 1886; 5 Jun. 1886.
30. *Galway Vindicator*, 19 May 1886.
31. Crossman, *Politics, pauperism and power*, pp. 45–6.
32. Crossman, *Politics, pauperism and power*, pp. 38–41.
33. *Report of the royal commission on the Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 and the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1885 minutes of evidence and appendices*, [496], HC 1887 xxvi, (hereafter cited Cowper Commission), p. 673 q. 21,644.
34. *Western News*, 2 Apr. 1887.
35. *Western News*, 2 Apr. 1887.
36. *Western News*, 18 Jun. 1887.
37. *Western News*, 14 Apr. 1888; 13 Apr. 1889.
38. *Western News*, 2 Apr. 1887.
39. *Western News*, 26 May 1888.
40. *Western News*, 7 May 1887; 18 June 1887.
41. *Western News*, 14 Apr. 1888.
42. *Western News*, 2 Apr. 1887.
43. *Western News*, 18 June 1887.
44. *Western News*, 2 Apr. 1887.
45. Dooley, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland*, pp. 208–9.
46. Virginia Crossman, ‘Middle class attitudes to poverty and welfare in post-Famine Ireland’, in Fintan Lane (ed.), *Politics and the middle class in Modern Ireland* (London, 2010), pp. 130–47.
47. See Stephen Ball, ‘Policing the Irish Land War: Official responses to political protest and agrarian crime in Ireland, 1879–91’ (PhD thesis, University of London, 2000); Jordan, ‘The Irish National League and the “Unwritten Law”’, pp. 146–71.
48. Cowper Commission, p. 674, qs 21,644–5.
49. *Western News*, 2 Apr. 1887.
50. Cowper Commission, p. 676, q. 21,701; Patrick Melvin, ‘The landed gentry of Galway, 1820–80’ (PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin), p. 126.
51. *Western News*, 14 Apr. 1888.
52. *Western News*, 14 Apr. 1888.
53. *Western News*, 26 May 1888.
54. C.S.O., R.P. 1888/10959; *Western News*, 26 May 1888; 2 June 1888; Crossman, *Politics, pauperism and power*, pp. 48, 59. My thanks to Professor Crossman for clarifying this rather tricky issue pertaining to *ex-officio* guardians and bankruptcy in an email dated 25 Jun. 2011.

55. C.S.O., R.P. 1888/12970.
56. Crossman, *Politics, pauperism and power*, pp. 45–6.
57. *Hansard* cccxxvii 991 (22 Jun. 1888).
58. L.P. Curtis, *Coercion and conciliation in Ireland, 1880–1892* (Princeton, 1963), pp. 238–41.
59. Curtis, *Coercion and conciliation in Ireland*, pp. 148–9, 158, 241.
60. *Hansard* cccxxvii 991 (22 Jun. 1888).
61. *Hansard* cccxxvii 990–2 (22 Jun. 1888); P.A. Chance was elected MP for Kilkenny South in 1885, defeating Raymond de la Poer, a Conservative candidate, by 4088 votes to 222. He was returned unopposed in 1886 and defeated de la Poer again in 1892 by 3346 to 253 votes, when he ran as an anti-Parnellite candidate. He resigned as an MP in 1894. See B.M. Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801–1922* (Dublin, 1978), p. 357.
62. *Western News*, 13 Apr. 1889.
63. *Western News*, 13 Apr. 1889.
64. C.S.O., R.P. 1886/8868.
65. R.V. Comerford, 'The Parnell era, 1883–91', in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi: *Ireland under the Union, 1870–1921*, p. 66.
66. *Western News*, 7 May 1887; E.F. Biagini, *British democracy and Irish nationalism, 1876–1906* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 121–2.
67. Comerford, 'The Parnell era, 1883–91', p. 67.
68. *Western News*, 11 Aug. 1888.
69. *Western News*, 18 Aug. 1888.
70. *Western News*, 18 Aug. 1888.
71. *Western News*, 11 Aug. 1888; 18 Aug. 1888.
72. Divisional Commissioners and County Inspectors monthly confidential report of William Byrne for Galway east riding, 22 Feb. 1889 and 18 Apr. 1889 in NAI.
73. Cowper Commission, pp. 672–3, qs. 21,631, 21,635–7.
74. Cowper Commission, p. 671, qs. 21,604, 21,617–20.
75. Cowper Commission, qs. 26,131, 26,135–7, 21,637.
76. Cowper Commission, p. 673, q. 21,637.
77. Curtis, *Coercion and conciliation in Ireland, 1880–1892*, p. 143.
78. *Western News*, 12 Jun. 1886.
79. Cowper Commission, p. 673, q. 21,637.
80. *Western News*, 2 Feb. 1889.
81. *Western News*, 5 Apr. 1890.
82. Curtis, *Coercion and conciliation in Ireland, 1880–1892*, pp. 139–41.
83. Cowper Commission, p. 674, q. 21,657.
84. *Western News*, 30 Jul. 1887.

85. Fintan Lane, 'Rural labourers, social change and politics in late nineteenth century Ireland', in Fintan Lane and Donal Ó Drisceoil (eds.), *Politics and the Irish working class, 1830–1945* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 116, 135.
86. John Cunningham, *Labour in the west of Ireland, working life and struggle, 1890–1914* (Belfast, 1995); Conor McNamara, 'A Tenants' League or a shopkeepers' league? Urban protest and the Town Tenants Association in the west of Ireland, 1909–1918', *Studia Hibernica* 36 (2009–10), p. 148.
87. *Hansard*, cccxxi 741–2 (17 Feb. 1888).
88. *Western News*, 25 Feb., 28 Jan. 1888; J.S. Donnelly, Jr., *The land and the people of nineteenth century Cork: The rural economy and the Irish land question* (London, 1975), pp. 322–4.
89. Curtis, *Coercion and conciliation in Ireland, 1880–1892*, p. 139.
90. Comerford, 'The Parnell era, 1883–91', p. 71.
91. Laurence Geary, *The Plan of Campaign, 1886–1891* (Cork, 1986), pp. 122–8.
92. *Western News*, 14 Dec. 1889.
93. *Western News*, 11 Jan. 1890.
94. *Western News*, 11 and Jan. 1890.
95. Curtis, *The depiction of eviction in Ireland*, p. 138; Thomas Feeney, 'The Woodford evictions' (MEd thesis, NUI Galway, 1978), pp. 24, 30.
96. *Western News*, 21 Apr. 1888.
97. See obituary for Bowler in *Western News*, 11 May 1889 and *Limerick Chronicle*, 7 May 1889.
98. Paul Bew, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland, 1890–1910* (Oxford, 1987), p. 10.
99. Bew, *Land and the national question, 1858–82* (Dublin, 1978); P.K. Egan, *The parish of Ballinasloe: Its history from the earliest time to the present* (Dublin, 1960), p. 267; A.B. Finnegan, 'The Land War in south-east Galway' (MA thesis, NUI Galway, 1974), p. 22.
100. Fergus Campbell, *Land and revolution. Nationalist politics in the West of Ireland, 1891–1921* (Oxford, 2005), p. 18; Finnegan, 'The Land War in south-east Galway', pp. 23–4.
101. *Western News*, 19 Apr. 1890.
102. *Western News*, 19 Apr. 1890.
103. *Western News*, 19 Apr. 1890.
104. *Western News*, 2 Apr. 1887.
105. *Western News*, 7 May 1887.
106. Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland*, p. 216.
107. See Newby, 'Deferential dialectic', pp. 143–4.
108. Dooley, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland*, pp. 211–12.

109. Dooley, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland*, pp. 90–6.
110. David Cannadine, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy* (New Haven, CT, 1990), p. 66.
111. Divisional Commissioners and County Inspectors monthly confidential report of William Byrne for Galway east riding, 4 Nov. 1887, in NAI.
112. K.T. Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800: Conflict and conformity* (London, 1989), p. 108.

REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF IRELAND

Divisional Commissioners and County Inspectors monthly confidential reports.
Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers.

NEWSPAPERS

East Galway Democrat.
Galway Vindicator.
Limerick Chronicle.
Western News.

OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

Hansard.
Market Tolls (Ireland), return to an order of the Honourable The House of Commons, dated 3 Mar. 1884 for return of the values of the market tolls, of the rates, and of the other sources of local revenue in each of the towns of Galway, Ballinasloe, Loughrea, Portumna and Gort in the county of Galway.
Report of the royal commission on the Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 and the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1885 minutes of evidence and appendices, [496], HC 1887 xxvi.
The Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls. Precis of the minutes of evidence taken from the Royal Commissioners and the assistant commissioners in the United Kingdom, xii [6268–v].

WORKS OF REFERENCE

Walker, B.M., *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801–1922* (Dublin, 1978).

SECONDARY SOURCES

Ball, Stephen, 'Policing the Irish Land War: Official responses to political protest and agrarian crime in Ireland, 1879–91' (PhD thesis, University of London, 2000).

Bew, Paul, *Land and the national question, 1858–82* (Dublin, 1978).

Bew, Paul, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland, 1890–1910* (Oxford, 1987).

Eugenio, F. Biagini, *Gladstone* (New York, 2000).

Eugenio, F. Biagini, *British democracy and Irish nationalism, 1876–1906* (Oxford, 2007).

Bull, Philip, 'Land and politics, 1879–1903', in D.G. Boyce (ed.), *The revolution in Ireland, 1879–1923* (Dublin, 1988).

Campbell, Fergus, *Land and revolution. Nationalist politics in the West of Ireland, 1891–1921* (Oxford, 2005).

Cannadine, David, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy* (London, 1990).

Comerford, R.V., *The Fenians in context, Irish politics and society, 1848–1882* (Dublin, 1998).

Comerford, R.V., 'The Parnell era, 1883–91', W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi: *Ireland under the Union, 1870–1921* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 53–80.

Crossman, Virginia, *Politics, pauperism and power in late nineteenth-century Ireland* (Manchester, 2006).

Crossman, Virginia, 'Middle class attitudes to poverty and welfare in post-Famine Ireland', in Fintan Lane (ed.), *Politics and the middle class in Modern Ireland* (London, 2010), pp. 130–47.

Cunningham, John, *Labour in the west of Ireland, working life and struggle, 1890–1914* (Belfast, 1995).

Curtis, L.P., *Coercion and conciliation in Ireland, 1880–1892* (Princeton, 1963).

Curtis, L.P., *The depiction of eviction in Ireland, 1845–1910* (Dublin, 2011).

Donnelly, J.S. Jr., *The land and the people of nineteenth century Cork: The rural economy and the Irish land question* (London, 1975).

Dooley, Terence, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland. A study of Irish landed families 1860–1960* (Dublin, 2001).

Egan, P.K., *The parish of Ballinasloe: Its history from the earliest time to the present* (Dublin, 1960).

Feeney, Thomas, 'The Woodford evictions' (MEd thesis, NUI Galway, 1978).

Finnegan, A.B., 'The Land War in south-east Galway' (MA thesis, NUI Galway, 1974).

- Geary, Laurence, *The Plan of Campaign, 1886–1891* (Cork, 1986).
- Hoppen, K.T., *Ireland since 1800: Conflict and conformity* (London, 1989).
- Jordan, Donald, 'The Irish National League and the "Unwritten Law": Rural protest and nation-building in Ireland, 1882–1890', *Past and Present* 158 (Feb. 1998), pp. 146–71.
- Kelly, Declan, *Ballinasloe from Garbally Park to the fair green* (Dublin, 2007).
- Lane, Fintan, 'Rural labourers, social change and politics in late nineteenth century Ireland', in Fintan Lane and Donal Ó Drisceoil (eds.), *Politics and the Irish working class, 1830–1945* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 113–39.
- McNamara, Conor, 'A Tenants' League or a shopkeepers' league? Urban protest and the Town Tenants Association in the west of Ireland, 1909–1918', *Studia Hibernica* 36 (2009–10), pp. 135–60.
- Melvin, Patrick, 'The landed gentry of Galway, 1820–80' (PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1991).
- Newby, Howard, 'The deferential dialectic', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 7, no. 2 (Apr. 1975), pp. 139–64.
- Vaughan, W.E., *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford, 1994).



CHAPTER 8

Plus ça change: Continuity and Change in a Community, 1891–1914

1 INTRODUCTION

Candidly I may tell you I wish to live and die in the old place where my ancestors and father lived. I am now and always have been on the best of terms with my tenantry; I do not wish to sever that relationship.¹

Irish landlords were at a loss after the vigour of the Land War and the Plan of Campaign. They came to the realisation that they would not be playing a significant role in local government, especially after the chief secretary, Arthur Balfour, refused to enact legislation to protect minority interests, because of his desire to abolish class distinctions.² Their apathy frustrated even their staunchest advocates. Members of the British aristocracy were reticent about becoming involved in new forms of local democracy due to ‘the financial anxieties of many landowners [which] meant that they were less inclined to shoulder these traditional responsibilities or to assume new ones, while the break-up of their estates before and after the First World War only accentuated this withdrawal from county politics and local leadership’.³

The 1885 election saw Charles Stewart Parnell and the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) hold the balance of power in Westminster and this result saw British party politics eventually pivot towards Home Rule by the 1910s. While the Conservatives were keen to suppress the land agitation, they were also aware of the importance of keeping Parnell onside. ‘However, when the Gladstonian camp flew the Hawarden kite,

and so committed the Liberal party to Home Rule, a greatly relieved Salisbury sought to rally conservative ranks around an uncompromising defence of property and the empire'. The result of this was 'an integrated doctrine of strong government and social amelioration that was to remain party orthodoxy until the Great War'.⁴ Irish MPs represented the single greatest internal threat to the stability of the union at this time. Conor Mulvagh has argued that 'the IPP was not merely a momentary anomaly in the House of Commons. It constituted the most powerful third party in the history of British politics until the emergence of Scottish nationalism'.⁵

Parnell was a charismatic leader, treated with hostility by landlords who saw him as a class traitor, which only added to his popularity in Ireland. 'His cult of leadership and the increasingly unilateral manner in which he steered Irish party policy has led some to paint this personality-driven style of leadership onto Parnell's successors'.⁶ Following the Parnellite split and the death of the 'uncrowned King of Ireland', the IPP became impotent and events in Ireland between 1891 and the first decade of the 1900s moved sedately as a result. Parnellites achieved little support outside of Dublin and the anti-Parnellites were bitterly divided between the Healy and Dillon camps.⁷ The Liberal Party was the natural ally of Ireland and their return to government in 1906 should have been an exciting opportunity for nationalist MPs to engage in one final push to achieve Home Rule. However, their overall majority meant that the Irish question was not foremost in their minds. Nevertheless, as the IPP had faced down a rather hostile government for the previous ten years, this new arrangement necessitated a change in tack. There had been behind-the-scenes manoeuvrings prior to this that gave the IPP hope and they hoped that Campbell-Bannerman would have a more sympathetic view of Ireland than his predecessor. However, John Dillon's calculation of the necessity of IPP support backfired as the Liberal Party had over 60 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons.⁸

The government was now taking a gradualist approach to the Irish question and vocal members of the party, like John Dillon, remained decidedly mute in the 1906 parliamentary session. The emergence of the bloody-minded Laurence Ginnell was a manifestation of 'a general malaise in grassroots nationalism back to mid-1906'. Ginnell had made a provocative speech at Finea, County Westmeath, which was largely ignored by the leadership, though these grassroots nationalists represented a strong stance taken by Ginnell and other agrarian agitators as an alternative sphere of nationalist thought began to emerge.⁹

J.C. Beckett stated that ‘the fall of Parnell was a blow both to the Home Rule movement and to its liberal allies in Britain’ and presented a significant advantage to the Conservatives.¹⁰ With the exception of a Liberal interlude between 1892 and 1895, the Tories were the party of government between 1891 and 1906. The failure of the 1894 Home Rule Bill saw Gladstone finally depart from the political scene—the Grand Old Man had spent over sixty years in parliament—and his successor, Lord Rosebery, had no interest in returning to that contentious issue. This period also saw constructive unionism attempt a rapprochement with a new Ireland and, according to Pauric Travers, there were similar conservative policies throughout Europe. Travers further argued that ‘conciliation was added to the traditional Tory policy of coercion’ and they came to believe that land purchase legislation was the only way that social harmony could be achieved.¹¹ Home Rule was now ripe for the killing and Conservatives had the opportunity to make a unionist settlement of the Irish question.¹² Land purchase became the cornerstone of Conservative policy because, as J.J. Lee remarked: ‘moral force unionism was based on the assumption that every native has his price’.¹³

Irish landlords had been the wealthy elites that dominated every facet of the Irish countryside until the 1870s. However, the vigour of the Land War and the legislation that came subsequently neutered their influence and this precipitated their decline in local affairs. This was intensified by the rise of Parnellism, the unpopularity of coercion and the thirst for self-government which was now being felt and expressed by nationalists. In Ballinasloe, the Clancarty family’s decline, while less toxic than in other estates, was nevertheless eventful and somewhat embarrassing, owing to the fifth Earl’s predilection for debt and his father’s disapproval of his marriage to Belle Bilton. Even though he succeeded in proving that the marriage was not a sham, the then Lord Dunlo had to face the ignominy of being disinherited from the non-entailed estates and having the estate placed into the management of trustees. He projected himself as still being a wealthy aristocrat, eventually spending time in prison for fraud in 1920.¹⁴

Investment in railways, land purchase and the establishment of the Congested Districts Board all proved to be successful in defeating the land agitation by 1891.¹⁵ F.S.L. Lyons said that the result of this unionist approach enabled a peaceful social revolution, as the legislation they enacted broke new ground in the settlement of the land question.¹⁶ At the

same time, there was a continued assault on the British landowning class that eventually eroded their political power: 'landownership lost its prerequisite of local political power in Britain, partly because of the democratisation of the national franchise in 1884–1885 and of the county administration in 1889, partly because administration became too complicated to be left to part-time and unqualified squires'.¹⁷ Similar attacks in Ireland stemmed from the land agitation movement, and the increased nationalist control of local elected bodies culminated in the Local Government Act of 1898.¹⁸ Andrew Gailey has contended that this act was the best example of conciliatory unionism as it profoundly shaped the Irish nation that emerged after independence.¹⁹ David Cannadine remarked: 'from the 1880s onwards, it was widely believed that the essential answer to the Irish question was the rapid and complete elimination of traditional landlordism'.²⁰ This meant that traditional forms of control were breaking down and a new order was emerging that was distinctly nationalist, with many of the new participants in local government being former agitators.

Therefore, the world in which landlords lived was unravelling before their eyes and there was nothing that they could do to stop it. New elites were emerging to replace them and this 'shopocracy' was distinct from their aristocratic and 'squirearchical' predecessors. Rural social relationships had been changing prior to the 1903 Wyndham Land Act, and this was particularly obvious in towns. The act intensified such change, 'thus changing the basis for agrarian collection action in Ireland. Rather than agitating against the landlords (for land purchase), farmers began to agitate against each other (for land redistribution)'.²¹ This chapter explores the growing fervour brought about through local democracy that saw local nationalists become the new elites and replace landlords in various elements of the decision-making process in the management of infrastructural developments. Their slow rise ran in tandem with the decline and fall of aristocratic power. This new local elite was keen to augment its sense of respectability and was reticent about assisting the poorest residents of the town, often behaving in an obnoxious manner to the lower classes in society.

2 THE EMERGENCE OF NEW ELITES AND THEIR CONSOLIDATION OF POWER

Conservative policy in Ireland had generally been reactionary prior to 1885 and consisted of 'criticisms of the liberals for their failure to keep order or protect the rights of property owners'.²² The fact that the IPP

held the balance of power in 1885 saw British party politics pivot towards the question of Home Rule for Ireland.²³ Conservatives were in strong disagreement with the Liberal concept of dual ownership that was legislated for under the 1881 Land Act, though they began to advocate land purchase as a solution to this quandary in the 1890s. The Conservative Party was determined to return to a traditional concept of land ownership, even if it meant the destruction of Irish landlordism, believing that by creating a class of owner-occupiers, a level of conflict would be removed.²⁴ The consequence of this and the divisive nature of nationalist politics is exemplified by a letter from Jeremiah Twomey, Fermoy, County Cork, to Francis Tully of the Evicted Tenant Fund. Tully had earned the sobriquet 'Doc Tully' during the Plan of Campaign in Woodford because he said prescribing 'leaden pills' was the best cure for landlords.²⁵ In this letter, Twomey tells Tully about the difficulties of getting people together for a meeting in aid of evicted tenants. 'The purchase act is after killing nationality in this place'. While there was disunion, he believed that a successful meeting could be held if it were organised.²⁶ Fergus Campbell argued that the western problem was 'the juxtaposition of vast tracts of untenanted land...next to the plots of impoverished farmers'.²⁷ Nationalists tended to romanticise the West of Ireland as possessing all things that were authentically nationalist, even if it was plagued by poverty, sporadic food shortages and a lack of industry to supplement income. Michael Davitt had remarked in 1886 that the urgency of poverty was being overlooked because of the excitement around Home Rule. His efforts to highlight this through the pages of the *Freeman's Journal* were lost as they were published in the midst of election fever. He noticed the severity of distress while touring islands off the west coast and wrote an open letter to the chief secretary, John Morley.²⁸

Subsequent to this, and as part of the government's efforts to pacify Ireland after the Plan of Campaign and the Special Commission on Parnellism and Crime, the Congested Districts Board (CDB) was established. Arthur Balfour appeared to have been influenced by special commissions that reported on the levels of poverty in the region, and he 'appears to have brought a thoroughness and determination to bear on the worst examples of regional poverty equal to that with which he harried the Plan of Campaign'.²⁹ The arrival of a potato failure and the risk of food shortage saw Balfour organise extensive relief works as he came to the conclusion that emigration and land purchase were the only solutions to the vexed problem of western poverty.³⁰ The board's initial concentration

was on bad farming practice, as they believed that only once this had been improved could they turn their attention to land purchase: 'in legal terms this was the most complex issue of CDB work and consequently absorbed a lot of energy'. The act was an intermediary and also ensured that lands were in good condition prior to purchase. However, tenants were slow to sell their rights and David Seth Jones argued that it was tenants and not landlords who controlled the supply of land in the market: 'this limitation was exacerbated by another clause, which stipulated that it could not purchase a landlord's interest; meaning the board could only become a tenant'.³¹

A more concerted effort at passing land legislation began in 1891 and by 1900 both nationalists and unionists were committed to the idea of land purchase. The United Irish League was founded by William O'Brien in Mayo in 1898 and became an alternative source of authority in Ireland, like the Land League and the Irish National League before it. It soon had 100,000 members and, while it was essentially non-violent in its outlook, boycotts frequently spilled over into violence and intimidation, resulting in coercive legislation which in turn increased support for the league.³² The league played an important role in land agitation that led to the Land Conference of 1902, which was an attempt to find a rapprochement between landlord and tenant interests, while also trying to achieve a definitive solution to the land question. Captain John Shawe-Taylor, a hitherto relatively unknown landlord, was a driving force behind this initiative, along with O'Brien. Landlords were divided over the findings of the Land Conference, though the chief secretary, George Wyndham, was quite amenable and set about writing the 1903 land bill that became the Wyndham Land Act. In an effort to incentivise landlords to sell, the terms of the act were quite generous. The 12 per cent cash bonus on the final purchase price encouraged many landlords to avail themselves of it, as substantive agreements between landlords and tenants were necessary for the bill to succeed. However, it soon became obvious that it was going to be inadequate and there were tensions surrounding its implementation. There was a question as to whether the Land Conference proposals would result in too high a price being paid to landlords. Philip Bull stated that the generosity to landlords perpetuated an assumption that this was an injustice to tenants, but it was also argued that such generosity was a small price to pay and was necessary in order to expedite the sale of estates. Ideological and cultural contexts of nationalism that existed heretofore had disintegrated because 'agrarian agitation and denunciation of landlordism had become a political cul-de-sac' and there was now a need to

redefine nationalism beyond the land question, the settlement of which presented an opportunity to remove agrarianism from the concept of Irish nationalism.³³ However, as Patrick Cosgrove and Terence Dooley have illustrated, the Wyndham Land Act was not the final solution to the land question and an attempt to find a solution was something that frustrated and stymied successive Free State governments.³⁴ The cash bonus and lower rates of repayment for tenants made this act exceedingly attractive for landlords and many tenants, yet many smaller farmers came to the realisation that, even after purchasing their farms, more land was needed to make them remotely viable. Therefore, the large stock-rearing ranches of many estates became the most obvious source of additional land.³⁵

The whole machinery of an alternative government had emerged by 1902 through the UIL. There was increased UIL discontent in the west by the middle of 1904 and Lord Clonbrock maintained that tenants were determined to coerce landlords into selling; in his opinion such behaviour made the act virtually inoperative. Despite its strong presence in the West of Ireland, the league was relatively inactive around Ballinasloe, concentrating most of its activity in east Galway within the vicinity of Portumna and Loughrea. Nevertheless, a convention was held in Ballinasloe on 18 November 1904 which demanded that Clancarty negotiate the sale of the estate directly with his tenants. The UIL told the tenants that Clancarty could consider making a sale if he had a good rent collection at the November 1904 gale. However, the tenants would not make any payments until there was either a reduction in the gale or a purchase.³⁶ Because the fifth Earl of Clancarty was losing his battle to stave off bankruptcy, this resulted in the estate commissioners handling the sale of both his and his mother's estates. This presented problems for tenants as the commissioners were much more rigid during negotiations for the sale of estates. 512 purchasers were identified from the returns of advances of the 1903 and 1909 acts, with the largest number of advances being made in February 1912, when 182 purchasers paid an average of 19.8 years' worth for their holdings.³⁷

Contrary to popular belief, the Wyndham Land Act did not end landlordism, even though land was now regarded by the gentry as a liability rather than a prerequisite for social position and presented them with multifarious problems.³⁸ In the initial stages of the act's existence, many landlords sold their lands on the assumption that they would receive the purchase money and 'bonus within a reasonable period of time...[and] smaller landlords who were solvent at the time of sale, often faced the

prospect of becoming mired in debt while they waited for their purchase money and bonus'.³⁹ Sir William Mahon of Castlegar, near Ballinasloe, faced such a delay while the sale of his estate was being processed. In a letter from his agent, he was informed: 'In the list of pending cases prepared by the estates commissioners earlier this year, there was £18,287,010 in front of your estate...as the treasury only allows £2 million a year for all cash cases, it will be some years before your estate is reached'.⁴⁰ Landlords became less inclined to sell untenanted land along with the rest of their estates under the terms of the 1909 Birrell Land Act, especially in the West of Ireland, because letting them to large farmers and graziers was highly lucrative.⁴¹

While evicted tenants were held up as martyrs to the nationalist cause, there could be tension when there were mutterings that they would be offered land that resident tenants had hoped would be given to them by the Land Commission or the CDB. For example, there was a fear that evicted tenants would be put on the Tristane estate, and there was hostility to this amongst Clancarty tenants.⁴² Jeremiah Twomey wrote to Francis Tully on 2 May 1899 to express his concerns regarding access to land around Fermoy. His concerns were likely expressed in a similar vein elsewhere:

There are a good share of evicted tenants around Fermoy but most of the farms are grabbed and if for no other purpose than to get the tenants of those farms to take action in the matter, there will never be anything done for the evicted tenants as long as the grabber is left alone but I assure you there are a lot of the tenants and they are not worthy of doing much for them.⁴³

The break-up of grazing land dominated provincial nationalist politics in the half decade preceding the 1916 Rising. For example, the Mullagh branch of the UIL, between Ballinasloe and Loughrea, held a meeting called for the Land Commission to acquire Mrs Ryan's farm in Abbeygormican, which was a large non-residential holding, and to distribute the land amongst farmers in the parish. There were 830 acres of land tied up in grazing in the parish and the UIL thought it would be more appropriate for the Land Commission and the CDB to get involved in distributing this land to the farmers, rather than letting it remain under grass. There was a sense of frustration at this meeting as 'land act, after land act has been passed to graft the people to the land, and yet I (William

Duffy MP) am told that there is close on ten thousand acres of prime land to be found in the parish of Mullagh'. He extolled the people of the parish, stating that there was rich land in the parish and that it was richer for the armies of people living in it. Duffy was keen to stress that the people of the parish were not necessarily objecting to Ryan selling her interest in her farm, but rather that they hoped she would consider selling it to the CDB or the Land Commission rather than a private individual. 'It would be a cruel thing to deprive the small cottier farmers in the neighbourhood of the opportunity of enlarging their small holdings out of this holding'.⁴⁴ Further examples abound in the newspapers and police reports. Another is the sale of farms on several estates around New Inn, with a United Estates Committee consisting of tenants from the Ashtown, O'Hara Trench, Sir William Ross and Mahon estates coming together to demand the sale of farms around the parish. Martin Finnerty, who was very active in the region, led proceedings to ensure that this happened. He encouraged tenants to agitate until their landlords agreed to sell the land that was under grass. Finnerty had also played a role in combinations around the Dunsandle estate, as the Ranch War proved to be 'a new and popular social function for United Irish League branches'.⁴⁵

Farmers did not turn to tillage, and rural unemployment and under-employment remained stubbornly high. The 'new owner-occupiers refused to acknowledge any claims that the "national community" might have on the utilisation of their new found property'.⁴⁶ Born out of a sense of frustration with the consequences of land purchase, cattle drives were developed in an effort to get some land for the landless, with Laurence Ginnell calling for large-scale land redistribution for their benefit. While Ginnell's ideas may not have been official party policy, some of the upper echelons of the UIL did not object to them. The Ranch War, while highlighting some of the hypocrisies deeply embedded within the nationalist movement, also showed that animus against graziers could never be as strong as that directed towards landlords.⁴⁷ Provocateurs demanded the redistribution of grazing land in congested districts as particular attention was paid to non-residential holdings. Increased land hunger was exploited by the UIL in order to engender ill feeling towards ranchers. They were not considered to be authentic farmers because they were not resident on their farms, and shopkeeper-graziers were subjected to particular odium, especially once their power increased owing to their involvement in local politics.⁴⁸ The Royal Commission on Congestion provided great political capital in justifying the break-up and redistribution of grazing lands,

despite warnings that it would be a regressive step and would harm the cattle industry. The idea of resettlement was put forward as it would benefit more congests, though it was intended that compulsory acquisition would be used sparingly.⁴⁹ Many graziers leased land on eleven-month terms, which created a healthy competition for land that benefited landlords and increased hostility to both groups. East Galway had been a hot-bed for land agitation. Royal Irish Constabulary County Inspector Reports state that it was in an unsatisfactory state every month between 1914 and 1921, with regular cattle drives and activities by Sinn Féin which resulted in a highly charged atmosphere in the region. This meant that the Big House became a legitimate target during the revolutionary period as intimidation of landlords by tenants took place. Ann O'Riordan's comments in relation to the burning of Ballydugan House could be applicable to other, similar activities in the countryside: 'the contentious nature of the land question, the complex relationships involved and the diametrically opposed ideologies are all woven into the heart of this local dispute'.⁵⁰

The *Connacht Tribune* stated that the south-east Galway UIL organisation was one of the most powerful in the country. Settlements between tenants and commissioners were negotiated by it, thus ensuring that endless disagreement and litigation did not happen. The newspaper expressed its disappointment with the extraordinarily slow progress which could happen when trying to deal with issues regarding tenanted and untenanted land, and frustration was felt, with continuous representations being made regarding farms and the lack of movement on this.⁵¹ A letter written by *Pro Bono Publico* called the 1903 act the 'Heaven sent act of 1903', but despite this, the author said that there were frequent complaints coming in regarding its operation. The author further stated that the UIL operated with the purpose of trying to get the best deal for tenants where that might be necessary: 'having its own machinery to regulate and mark the enlightened progress of the people and armed with sufficient moral power to execute its decrees when promulgated because they are always based on the well-reasoned and sound judgement of the people'.⁵² A meeting of the UIL East Galway executive heard about the frustrations of farmers in the Ballinasloe hinterland regarding the slowness of the selling of land and the risks involved with the move towards eleven-month leases in Moore, near Ballinasloe. This was referred to as the worst kind of landlordism and 'grazierism', and branches were instructed to reorganise as they had a duty to ensure the effective implementation of the land legislation to the benefit of farmers. John Roche MP stated that it was pointless trying to do

anything if people remained apathetic and uninvolved. As per previous and current generations of agrarian radicals, he also saw land purchase as a panacea to the various problems in the countryside. Naive as this was, it provided a useful framework to attract support and mobilise people for meetings in order to flex the might that the UIL now held.⁵³ Wyndham's land bill, while revolutionary, failed to meet all the needs and demands of farmers, and it was hoped, in the eyes of the *Connacht Tribune*, that the 1909 land bill, which became known as the Birrell Land Act, would remedy the defects of Wyndham's act.⁵⁴

Annoyance with the prevalence of grazing continued into August 1909 and beyond, with the *Connacht Tribune* reporting that the greater part of land in the district was being kept for meadowing or grazing rather than cultivation, which was having a detrimental effect on the well-being of the poorest farmers in the district. 'There has been practically no division of the ranches in this district, and where farms have been surrendered by large graziers, they show no sign of the work of [husbandry]. If the lands are only to change from a larger to a smaller set of graziers, it is not a hopeful sign'. The UIL stressed that a mixed system of farming was the only way to keep people from emigrating and also to ensure that there was enough for everyone to survive.⁵⁵ On the Mahon estate, the Ahascragh town tenants were happy that they had cleared the trustees from the Glebe land, as the 'six individuals who were selected as a committee by the agent sought to rule matters in a truly landlord style'.⁵⁶ This is a perfect example of the 'increasingly visible "double standards" on agrarian matters'.⁵⁷ Paul Bew has alluded to how some agitators were actually graziers and called off pressure being exerted on their friends.⁵⁸

The Local Government Act of 1898 ensured that former members of the Land League and the INL had ensconced themselves onto local elected boards, such as the board of guardians, town commission and Urban District Council, and this became the pinnacle of respectability for many. Thomas Byrne, formerly an active member of the Land League and the Irish National League, described himself as a gentleman farmer in the 1901 census. His rise to the position of justice of the peace was indicative of how a nationalist could succeed in filling the role once held by the landlords who he wanted removed from such spheres of influence. As David Cannadine argued: 'the conservative reform of Irish local government in 1898 merely completed this process of political overthrow: territorial abdication came in its aftermath, rather than brought it about'.⁵⁹ Maura Cronin highlighted how politicisation could be linked with working-class amusements and she

stated that ‘one can hardly stress too much, the importance of such popular social activity as shaper of popular political identities’.⁶⁰ ‘Despite their long hours of labour, shop assistants were prominent in the social, cultural and athletic life of most Connacht towns...there are indications, too, that some shop assistants took an active part in politics’.⁶¹ There was a begrudging yet pragmatic union between urban and rural tenants during the lifetime of the Land League and the INL, though the emergence of trade unions in the late 1890s saw distinct and separate organisations emerging for urban workers and rural farmers. Labour candidates claiming to represent the interests of the urban poor became a feature in local politics in Ballinasloe from the late 1890s through to the first decade of the 1900s, which also saw a growth of representative bodies for town workers. The Ballinasloe Workingmen’s Association was established in 1896 with a primary focus on organising social events for the likes of shop assistants, rather than concentrating on industrial or political matters. The United Trades’ Association was established by carriage-trimmer John Brutin and it later became the Ballinasloe and East Galway Trades Association. The main objective of this association was to prevent the hiring of handymen in place of skilled labour because they argued that the quality of the handymen’s work would not be of the same standard as that of skilled tradesmen.⁶²

While these organisations concentrated on providing leisure outlets for their members, they were still politically engaged and succeeded in organising eight candidates to seek election to the Ballinasloe urban council in 1899. They were led by Brutin, who was the most prominent figure in the labour movement in Ballinasloe. The *Western Star* did not agree with so many labour candidates seeking election because there was the potential for a conflict of interest’.⁶³ Despite this overt hostility, six out of the eight candidates were returned, but ‘the old members [of the board], used their majority to prevent John Brutin’s election to the vice-chairmanship of the council and to block his proposal to hold meetings in the evenings, at a time convenient to those who had jobs’, which was indicative of the difficulties that labour candidates faced in asserting any influence.⁶⁴

At this point, the *Western Star* was the main newspaper in the town and was run by William Hastings, who had arrived in Ballinasloe in the late 1890s. He frequently used the paper to launch tirades or pursue personal

vendettas against those ‘who disturbed his commercial, political or personal sensibilities’. Hastings played an important role in urban politics in the town for over a decade and the nature of his personality meant that his presence at Urban District Council meetings caused such a disturbance that transactions very often could not take place. While he claimed to be sympathetic to the cause of labour, he had been convicted of breaches of the Factory Act in his own business, yet despite such infractions he still won the support of a section of the working class.⁶⁵

Brutin was also a founder member of the Galway Artisans’ and Labourers’ Housing Association and this organisation succeeded in bringing the wretched condition of labourers to greater attention.⁶⁶ Murray Fraser has shown how concerns about the conditions of rural labourers even reached the House of Lords, and while poor housing was a blight in the West of Ireland in particular, there were also appalling conditions amongst the poorest of the English West Country and East Anglia. The IPP offered labourers better housing in an effort to win them over.⁶⁷ However, by the turn of the twentieth century, these promises were reneged upon as new elites in provincial Ireland cited the cost involved and the apparently salubrious conditions in which some labourers were already living. Such was the condition of the urban poor in Ballinasloe that a housing association was set up in late 1900 and it quickly gathered momentum. The county inspector welcomed its establishment because it brought the condition of ‘the most wretched’ in the town to greater attention.⁶⁸

Town tenant leagues began to emerge in 1904 as a response to their neglect under the terms of the 1903 act and they were desirous in attracting support for their plight across the political spectrum. The league claimed that ‘Ireland’s economic future could only be assured by the enactment of legislation designed to remedy the lacunae in contemporary legislation governing the urban rental sector’.⁶⁹ Conor McNamara has contended that, ‘by utilising the political language of the 1880s, the league hoped to tap into the residual pride, anger and self-righteousness that the land struggle aroused in the public...[and] in the west, despite their rhetoric of inclusivity, the organisation struggled to attract significant support for the urban poor’.⁷⁰ Landlords had paid particular attention to the development of towns, which could have attracted some animosity from rural tenants. Following their departure from spheres of influence, no one was really interested in taking effective responsibility for upholding adequate conditions in towns or for tending to the needs of their residents.

'The traditional slogans of agrarian radicalism were, it seems, to be regarded as retaining all of their own relevance. Yet here there is a striking paradox: Michael Davitt, himself the very embodiment of "Land Leagueism", fully admitted in 1906 that the effects of the "fall of feudalism" in Ireland were not those he had expected or hoped for'.⁷¹ At the Creagh branch meeting of the UIL, T.J. Manning expressed his disappointment with the apathy of town tenants and their reticence to join the league, arguing that they would not be able to achieve adequate housing if they did not agitate for effecting beneficial change. 'His opinion was that town tenants would be only too glad to join their movement because rents in towns were exorbitant'. However, John Roche told the meeting that the urban working classes had legitimate cause for complaint, as very little had been done for them in the past.⁷²

The cry 'land for the people' excluded those living in towns. They did not fit into the new paradigm being constructed by nationalists, who now firmly believed that Ireland's future was that of an agrarian society of owner-occupiers. Despite being active participants during the various phases of the Land War, the urban poor were neglected. They naively assumed that their country neighbours would come to their assistance once the land question had come close to resolution. Town tenants felt that they gained nothing in proportion to the sacrifices they had made in favour of peasant proprietorship and the nationalist movement. In June 1915, Thomas Sweeney, a noted nationalist in Loughrea, expressed his disappointment at the indifference of rural farmers to the plight of their urban neighbours, considering the role that they had played in the Land War:

In the Land War, which extended over thirty years, the towns of Ireland played an important part. I am not afraid to say that the brunt of the war has been borne in large measure by the men living in towns. While they looked unceasingly and unselfishly after the interests of the tenant farmer, they unfortunately often neglected their own affairs.⁷³

The commercial elements in towns filled the lacuna left by the departure of the gentry from local politics, and often these new local elites embraced the aloofness that had previously been associated with the gentry, and they embodied a self-serving, parochial type of politics that resulted in the likes of labourers being excluded, or at the very least being subservient in any alliance. Despite this suspicion of towns, F.S.L. Lyons argued that there

was a gradual encroachment of urban ways in Ireland by the early twentieth century and town and country remained inter-dependent.⁷⁴ This interdependency was frequently a begrudging alliance.⁷⁵ Such ingratitude was also apparent amongst those who considered themselves to be the new elite in the countryside. The burgeoning elite of strong farmers and merchants were resistant to any reforms that would assist the urban poor, because of a potential increase in the burden of rates.

Town tenants in Ballinasloe established their own branch of the Town Tenant League in the hope that they would derive some benefit from the land acts. This hope was short-lived as it soon became dominated by the local commercial interest that frustrated 'even episodic attempts at social progress'.⁷⁶ The failure to present a united front regarding issues of real social concern in the town ensured that the poorest suffered the most. Discussions about the levels of rents being paid by town tenants and the condition of their housing were directed by the local merchants rather than by those directly affected, with local auctioneer Edward Rothwell accusing many of those seeking labourer cottages or reductions in rents of being 'quasi-gentlemen'.⁷⁷ This was despite J.J. Ward's testimony to the Royal Commission on Congestion in 1907, in which he said that Ballinasloe had streets in which 'labourers huddled together in filthy slums'.⁷⁸ In addition to this, there were woes when it came to the adequate housing of rural tenants. 1906 saw the first official manual recommend certain styles of housing and by 1914 almost '50,000 houses had been built for agricultural labourers with subsidies from the Imperial exchequer'.⁷⁹

The Ballinasloe Rural District Council heard of the poor condition of labourer cottages in part of the rural district, as reported by the *Connacht Tribune* on 1 July 1911. The local government board's architect had reported a number of defects in these cottages and demanded that they be remedied before any further money regarding their construction would be paid out. While 122 were in various stages of construction, he reported that the quality of the work had not improved since his previous report, and had deteriorated in many instances, such as there being no iron straps on the roofs of outhouses, meaning they were damaged or blown away by wind. In the majority of cases, he found that the masonry beyond the outer skin was built dry and not sufficiently hearted in mortar: 'in a county that is nearly all limestone, it is extraordinary how sparing the contractors are with the lime'. The council engineer, Jack Kempster, was blamed for certifying the houses as worthy and the council was keen to blame him,

though there were members willing to accept some responsibility for placing too much trust in him. These issues with the local government board meant that there was a delay in the construction of the cottages and the council remarked, in a fit of annoyance, that the local government board had taken the management of their construction off the council because of their lack of satisfaction as to the quality of the construction and the futile efforts to establish what progress had been made.⁸⁰

At a branch meeting in February 1914, Fr T.J. Joyce said that town tenants would not be forgotten when it came to the purchase of their houses and he further added that a judicial body would be set up to assist them. The league called upon the Ballinasloe Urban District Council to use their statutory power to force slum property owners to improve the sanitary condition of their properties, and ‘the views of the local shopocracy rather than the local urban poor, whom the association claimed to represent, were expressed by the committee’. There was a degree of bitterness from this meeting, because it was seen as a *volte-face*, with the local ‘shopocracy’ being compared to the landlords they had replaced as plutocrats in the town.⁸¹

In October 1914 the *East Galway Democrat* reported that the committee of the Ballinasloe Town Tenants Association attempted to bring forward a resolution calling on the urban council to establish a fair rent tribunal that would have the power to fix rents, and it wanted to ensure that no one would take a house from a tenant who was unjustly evicted.⁸² The committee then suggested that rent reductions should only be considered on an individual basis, rather than a general reduction being granted. Fr Joyce claimed that four-fifths of the houses in Ballinasloe were unfit for human habitation: ‘these abodes are an insult to God and they degrade men and women made to his image and likeness, herded together in these wretched dens to the level of brutes’.⁸³

Yet despite the apparent vibrancy of community life, particularly in the sphere of politics, the *Connacht Tribune* mourned a certain lethargy that enveloped the town in September of 1909. While there was a branch of the UIL, there was a lack of other organisations such as the Gaelic League or the Town Tenants Association: ‘these organisations are wide and useful in their scope and should receive a very large measure of support in Ballinasloe, where perhaps the greatest agricultural community is to be found gathered together at the great

fairs'.⁸⁴ Local elites eventually influenced the direction of the Town Tenant League as they did not want to see an increase in rates in order to achieve their demands. It failed utterly to address the needs of slum tenants and the urban poor were reluctant to join it, with no 'weekly' tenants joining in Ballinasloe despite the absence of fair rents in the town.⁸⁵ The continued domination of commercial interests meant that it failed to present a united front and 'the gulf between the farmer and the landless man came to mirror all too faithfully the gulf that had formerly existed between landlord and tenant'.⁸⁶ These new elites were especially resistant to reform in order to consolidate their own power base, which was to the detriment of the more vulnerable in the town, as the condition of the urban poor appeared to have worsened following the departure of the Clancarty family.

The Clancarty family's influence had become impotent by the time of the fourth Earl's death in 1891, and the fifth Earl was distracted from the management of the estate by his attempts to regain the unsettled estates and stave off bankruptcy. His disinheritance from the unsettled estates presented problems that he may not have faced had he inherited them. The Wyndham Land Act presented landlords with an opportunity to escape the financial quagmire that many had become entangled in, though in some instances, such as the fifth Earl of Clancarty's, their financial woes were so severe that nothing could be done to save them from financial oblivion. Popular memory portrayed him as inconsolable when forced to sell his estate because the livelihoods of a large number of his staff were at risk. Patrick O'Connor said that he tried to sell staff their houses at a reduced price in order to minimise the burden of repayments, though no evidence survives to support this. While landlords in the country received bad press after their final decline and there were attempts to portray the Clancarty family as indifferent to their tenants, O'Connor also attested that his great-grand-uncle was a former employee of Clancarty's and always remained resolute in his defence of his former employer because of the family's generosity to their staff.⁸⁷ The fifth Earl's imprisonment for fraud added to the humiliation felt by the family in the aftermath of the estate's bankruptcy. He, like so many of his contemporaries, was groomed to manage estates and earn income from them, and when that was taken away from him he was at a loss as to what he could do.

Shortly after his consecration as bishop of Clonfert, Thomas Gilmartin visited Ballinasloe, which the *Connacht Tribune* called an impressive demonstration of Catholicity. Following ostentatious shows of deference, mass

was held and there was a celebration in the Temperance Hall. This was previously the Ballinasloe Agricultural Society Hall, built by the Clancarty family, now departed from Ballinasloe following the fifth Earl's humiliating bankruptcy.⁸⁸ The family was not remembered fondly at this event; the third Earl's alleged aggressive proselytism and his clear hostility towards the Sisters of Mercy was remembered with a degree of triumphalism, now that the family was gone from Ballinasloe:

Trees were planted opposite them [the Sisters of Mercy] so as to shade them into obscurity. Well, the trees had been blown down, and now the convent, with industrial school and nursing confraternity was one of the strongholds of the faith in Ballinasloe. Less than fifty years ago not one of them would be allowed to stand in the Hall where they stood that day, and now it was Church property.⁸⁹

3 CONCLUSION

The sense of apathy that enveloped the landed class irked even their staunchest supporters, some of whom remarked that they did not appear to fight their own corner strongly enough. Some landlords believed, thanks in part to Parnell, that they could lead the people in a Home Rule parliament. However religion, culture and the land question meant that their assumptions were becoming increasingly anachronistic as they came to feel abandoned by successive British governments.⁹⁰ A significant problem, highlighted by Andrew Gailey, was their isolated existence. Southern unionism 'was above all a society confident in its assumptions of place and yet subconsciously plagued by contradictions of loyalty: to their tenancy who a few idolised but most could not appreciate beyond the prism of duty; to English governments on whom they depended but whom as Irishmen and from experience they often distrusted'. The Wyndhamite experiment disturbed both landlords and unionists because of its uncertainty and there was a lack of solidarity from their British counterparts, like in previous crises in 1885 and 1892. Horace Plunkett saw a disturbing moral vacuum now emerging in Ireland and his 'ambition to establish a stable rural order was sacrificed to the immediate gain of the unionist party and the satisfying of popular desire'.⁹¹

Social status mattered and labourers were the lowest, with sharp class distinctions drawn between the labourer and others in the countryside.⁹² A result of the social upheaval of the 1880s was that the farming classes were now equated with the progress of the Irish nation. Towns and their residents were neglected and viewed with deep hostility by rural residents.

Shopkeepers still desired owning land because of the status of respectability that came with it, which added to the rural suspicion of towns. Towns did not fit comfortably into the paradigm of a new Ireland, and the neglect of town tenants in Ballinasloe is an example of this policy being pursued by local elites as communal solidarity was non-existent.

Collective action was frequently taken in response to immediate social concerns, such as the creation of housing associations, and their organisation reflected the underlying class tensions that existed in towns.⁹³ In relation to trade union organisation in the late nineteenth century, Eric Hobsbawm alludes to three different kinds of organisation: craft societies that had a stable if restricted membership, general unions that had fluctuating membership and industrial unions, and 'each of these phases developed its peculiar forms of organisation and policy'. The weakness of labourers meant that they had to rely on political pressure and legislation more than artisans and there was a certain political immaturity about those involved in organising. Yet, there was a belief that 'the rewards of labour [were] to be broadly proportional to merit, and to physical, intellectual and moral superiority'. By the turn of the twentieth century in Ballinasloe, labourers were seen merely as fetchers of things for craftsmen, and a similar argument could be made for shopkeepers' assistants. Hobsbawm remarks: 'the higher wages, the greater respect, the other ponderable and imponderable perquisites of the "aristocrat of labour" would thus be interpreted as a tribute to his peculiar excellence', and artisans exercised effective collective bargaining strength.⁹⁴ The condition of town tenants and labourers was now being brought to greater attention by a new generation of activists, such as John Brutin and Fr T.J. Joyce. Strongly felt class prejudices against labourers meant that they struggled to reach a position of leadership, which was coupled with their restricted financial resources to keep them from participating effectively. Their employers would also frown upon such political activity, viewing their employees as acting in a subversive manner. Despite this, many members of the urban working classes were either not eager or unable to agitate for a change in their circumstances, despite trade unions organising strikes for better pay and conditions. In the case of shop assistants, John Cunningham has argued: 'it may be that some shop assistants thought themselves too "respectable" to strike. Many of them aspired to be shopkeepers themselves and saw their period in employment as training for that eventuality. The prospect of a stake in the community, however intangible and distant, could have influenced their behaviour'.⁹⁵

Despite being established to assist the urban poor, town tenants leagues could struggle to attract support in places like Ballinasloe, because they were dominated by vested interests, and the ingratitude of farmers was the cause of a great deal of anger amongst town tenants.⁹⁶ K.T. Hoppen remarked that merchants and strong farmers were now punching above their weight politically after the decline of landlordism. Despite efforts to move beyond agrarian issues, Hoppen also stated: ‘what in the end is perhaps most remarkable is how a particular kind of farmer culture was able... to align nationalist politics...to its own particular view of it’.⁹⁷

NOTES

1. Speech of Lord Clonbrock regarding the transfer of ownership of land to his tenants, 18 Oct. 1902, National Library of Ireland, Clonbrock Papers, MS 19,668.
2. Andrew Gailey, ‘Unionist rhetoric and Irish local government reform, 1895–99’, *Irish Historical Studies*, no. 24 (1984), p. 59.
3. David Cannadine, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy* (New Haven, CT, 1990), p. 139.
4. Andrew Gailey, *Ireland and the death of kindness: The experience of constructive unionism, 1890–1905* (Cork, 1987), pp. 2–3.
5. Conor Mulvagh, *The Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster* (Manchester, 2016), p. 2.
6. Mulvagh, *The Irish Parliamentary Party*, p. 2.
7. F.S.L. Lyons, ‘The aftermath of Parnell, 1891–1903’, in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi: *Ireland under the Union, 1870–1921*, p. 81.
8. Mulvagh, *The Irish Parliamentary Party*, pp. 64–5.
9. Mulvagh, *The Irish Parliamentary Party*, p. 70.
10. J.C. Beckett, *The making of modern Ireland, 1603–1923* (London, 1966), p. 405.
11. Pauric Travers, *Settlements and divisions, Ireland 1870–1922* (Dublin, 1988), pp. 55–8.
12. Gailey, ‘Unionist rhetoric and Irish local government reform’, p. 57.
13. Beckett, *The making of modern Ireland*, p. 406; J.J. Lee, *The modernisation of Irish society 1848–1918* (Dublin, 1971), p. 127.
14. See Brian Casey, ‘The decline and fall of the Clancarty estate, 1891–1923’, *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 67 (2015), pp. 171–83.
15. Gailey, *Ireland and the death of kindness*, p. 3.
16. Lyons, ‘The aftermath of Parnell’, *A New History of Ireland* vi, pp. 81–6.

17. E.J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and empire* (London, 1969), p. 203.
18. Cannadine, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy*, p. 139; Terence Dooley, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland: A study of Irish landed families, 1860–1960* (Dublin, 2001), p. 212.
19. Gailey, ‘Unionist rhetoric and Irish local government reform, 1895–99’, p. 58.
20. Cannadine, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy*, p. 472.
21. Fergus Campbell, *Land and revolution: Nationalist politics in the West of Ireland, 1891–21* (Oxford, 2005), p. 289.
22. Virginia Crossman, *Politics, law and order in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 1996), p. 153.
23. Gailey, *Ireland and the death of kindness*, p. 2.
24. Terence Dooley, ‘*The land for the people*’: *The land question in independent Ireland* (Dublin, 2004), p. 91.
25. Letter from Jeremiah Twomey Castlelyons Fermoy to Francis Tully, 2 May 1899 in Francis Tully papers, Jackie Clarke Collection, Ballina, county Mayo, Box 5/14; L.P. Curtis, *The depiction of eviction in Ireland, 1845–1910* (Dublin, 2011), p. 236.
26. Letter from Jeremiah Twomey Castlelyons Fermoy to Francis Tully, 2 May 1899.
27. Campbell, *Land and revolution*, p. 9.
28. Carla King, “‘Our destructive countrymen on the west coast’: Relief and development strategies in the congested districts in the 1880s and 1890s”, in Carla King and Conor McNamara (eds.), *The West of Ireland: New perspectives* (Dublin, 2011), pp. 161–5.
29. King, “‘Our destructive countrymen on the western coast’”, p. 170.
30. King, “‘Our destructive countrymen on the western coast’”, p. 171.
31. Ciara Breathnach, *The congested districts boards of Ireland, 1891–1923* (Dublin, 2005), p. 137.
32. Lyons, ‘The aftermath of Parnell’, p. 93.
33. Philip Bull, ‘The significance of the nationalist response to the Irish land act of 1903’, *Irish Historical Studies* 28, no. 111 (May 1993), pp. 283–98.
34. For more, see Patrick John Cosgrove, ‘The Wyndham Land Act, 1903: The final solution to the Irish Land Question?’ (PhD thesis, Maynooth University, 2009), Dooley, *The land for the people*.
35. Patrick Cosgrove, *The Ranch War in Riverstown, Co. Sligo, 1908* (Dublin, 2012), p. 7.
36. Cosgrove, ‘The Wyndham Land Act, 1903’, p. 202.
37. *Returns of advances made under the Irish Land Acts, 1903–1909, during the year ended 31st December, 1912–31st December 1919 1914–21* [Cd. 1142,

- 1247, 1298, 1357, 6507, 6592, 6648, 7223, 7664, 7665, 7761, 7762, 7864, 7925, 8007, 8064, 8093, 8159, 8164, 8118, 8888, 8562, 8646, 8753], [Cmd. 623]; *Return of advances made under the Irish Land Purchase Acts, during the months of July, 1915, January, February and March, 1917 1917–19* [Cmd. 57, 68, 370, 1526, 8562, 8646, 8753].
38. Dooley, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland*, p. 274.
 39. Cosgrove 'The Wyndham Land Act, 1903', pp. 208–9.
 40. Mahon of Castlegar papers, MS 22,373, National Library of Ireland; see also Dooley, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland*, p. 131.
 41. Cosgrove, 'The Wyndham Land Act, 1903', p. 201.
 42. *Connacht Tribune*, 17 Jun. 1911.
 43. Letter from Jeremiah Twomey Castlelyons Fermoy to Francis Tully, 2 May 1899.
 44. *Connacht Tribune*, 14 Oct. 1911.
 45. *Connacht Tribune*, 2 Dec. 1911; Campbell, *Land and revolution*, pp. 94–6.
 46. Paul Bew, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland, 1890–1910* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 205–6, 208.
 47. Bew, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland*, pp. 205–6, 208.
 48. Fergus Campbell discusses the congested districts in greater detail in *Land and revolution*, pp. 9–11.
 49. David Seth Jones, *Graziers, land reform and political conflict in Ireland* (Washington, DC, 1993, pp. 209–13, 230–3.
 50. Ann O'Riordan, *East Galway agrarian agitation and the burning of Ballydugan house, 1922* (Dublin, 2015), pp. 7, 9–11.
 51. *Connacht Tribune*, 5 Jun. 1909.
 52. *Connacht Tribune*, 5 Jun. 1909.
 53. *Connacht Tribune*, 12 Jun. 1909.
 54. *Connacht Tribune*, 19 Jun. 1909.
 55. *Connacht Tribune*, 14 Aug. 1909.
 56. *Connacht Tribune*, 19 Nov. 1910.
 57. Bew, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 206–7.
 58. Bew, *Conflict and conciliation*, p. 207.
 59. Cannadine, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy*, p. 140.
 60. Maura Cronin, *Country, class or craft? The politicisation of the skilled artisan in nineteenth-century Cork* (Cork, 1994), p. 148.
 61. John Cunningham, *Labour in the west of Ireland: Working life and struggle, 1890–1914* (Belfast, 1995), p. 89.
 62. Cunningham, *Labour in the west of Ireland*, p. 89.
 63. *Western Star*, 14 Jan. 1899; Cunningham, *Labour in the west of Ireland* (Belfast, 1995), pp. 137–9.
 64. *Western Star*, 14 Jan. 1899.

65. Cunningham, *Labour in the west of Ireland*, p. 139.
66. Cunningham, *Labour in the west of Ireland*, p. 139.
67. Murray Fraser, *John Bull's other homes: State housing and British policy in Ireland, 1883–1922* (Liverpool, 1996), p. 27.
68. County Inspector's monthly report, east Galway, 4 May 1901 (CO 904/72, The National Archives).
69. Conor McNamara, 'A Tenants' League or a shopkeepers' league? Urban protest and the Town Tenants Association in the west of Ireland, 1909–1918', *Studia Hibernica* 36 (2009–10), p. 135.
70. McNamara, 'A Tenants' League or a shopkeepers' league?', pp. 136–8.
71. Bew, *Conflict and conciliation*, p. 205.
72. *Connacht Tribune*, 19 Jun. 1909.
73. *Connacht Tribune*, 5 Jun. 1915. The 1911 census records a Thomas Sweeney, building contractor, living at Bride Street, Loughrea.
74. F.S.L. Lyons, 'The watershed, 1903–07', in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi: *Ireland under the Union, 1870–1921*.
75. David Seth Jones, 'The cleavage between graziers and peasants in the land struggle, 1890–1910' in Clark and Donnelly, p. 410.
76. McNamara, 'A Tenants' League or a shopkeepers' league?', p. 136.
77. Conor McNamara, 'Politics and Society in East Galway, 1914–21' (PhD thesis, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, 2008), pp. 81–90.
78. Evidence of J.J. Ward, Digest of Evidence, p. Ixv, (57565); *Tenth report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into and report upon the operation of the acts dealing with congestion in Ireland: Evidence and documents*, minutes of evidence taken in counties Galway and Roscommon, 18th September to 4th October, 1907, [Cd, 4007], H.C., 1908, Vol. XLII, p. 5.
79. Fraser, *John Bull's other homes*, p. 21.
80. *Connacht Tribune*, 1 and 8 Jul. 1911.
81. *East Galway Democrat*, 28 Feb. 1914.
82. *East Galway Democrat*, 2 Oct. 1914.
83. McNamara, 'A Tenants' League or a shopkeepers' league?', p. 148.
84. *Connacht Tribune*, 25 Sept. 1909.
85. McNamara, 'A Tenants' League or a shopkeepers' league?', pp. 141–3.
86. *East Galway Democrat*, 2 Oct. 1914; F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine* (Dublin, 1971), p. 26.
87. Interview with Patrick O'Connor, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, 7 June 2009.
88. *Connacht Tribune*, 12 Mar. 1910.
89. *Connacht Tribune*, 12 Mar. 1910.
90. Dooley, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland*, pp. 208–9, 218–19.
91. Gailey, *Ireland and the death of kindness*, pp. 9, 210–13.

92. Fintan Lane, 'Rural labourers, social change and politics in late nineteenth-century Ireland', in Fintan Lane and Donal Ó Drisceoil, *Politics and the Irish working class, 1830–1945* (London, 2005), p. 115.
93. Lane, 'Rural labourers, social change and politics in late nineteenth century Ireland', pp. 116–18.
94. Eric Hobsbawm, *Labouring men: Studies in the history of labour* (London, 1964), pp. 181–4.
95. Cunningham, *Labour in the west of Ireland*, p. 104.
96. McNamara, 'A Tenants' League or a shopkeepers' league?', p. 136.
97. K.T. Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800: Conflict and conformity* (London, 1989), pp. 109–10.

REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

JACKIE CLARKE COLLECTION, BALLINA, COUNTY MAYO

Francis Tully papers Box 5/14.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND

Clonbrock papers MS 19,668.

Mahon of Castlegar papers, MS 22,373.

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, KEW

County Inspector's monthly report, east Galway, CO 904/72.

NEWSPAPERS

East Galway Democrat.

Connacht Tribune.

Western Star.

OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

Returns of advances made under the Irish Land Acts, 1903–1909, during the year ended 31st December, 1912–31st December 1919 1914–21 [Cd. 1142, 1247, 1298, 1357, 6507, 6592, 6648, 7223, 7664, 7665, 7761, 7762, 7864, 7925, 8007, 8064, 8093, 8159, 8164, 8118, 8888, 8562, 8646, 8753], [Cmd. 623].

Returns of advances made under the Irish Land Purchase Acts, during the months of July, 1915, January, February and March, 1917 1917–19 [Cmd. 57, 68, 370, 1526, 8562, 8646, 8753].

Tenth report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into and report upon the operation of the acts dealing with congestion in Ireland: Evidence and documents, [Cd, 4007], H.C., 1908, Vol. XLII.

INTERVIEWS

Interview with Patrick O'Connor, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, 7 June 2009.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Beckett, J.C., *The making of modern Ireland, 1603–1923* (London, 1966).

Bew, Paul, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland, 1890–1910* (Oxford, 1987).

Breathnach, Ciara, *The congested districts boards of Ireland, 1891–1923* (Dublin, 2005).

Bull, Philip, 'The significance of the nationalist response to the Irish land act of 1903', *Irish Historical Studies* 8, no. 111 (May 1993), pp. 283–98.

Campbell, Fergus, *Land and revolution: Nationalist politics in the west of Ireland, 1891–21* (Oxford, 2005).

Cannadine, David, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy* (New Haven, CT, 1990).

Casey, Brian 'The decline and fall of the Clancarty estate, 1891–1923', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 67 (2015), pp. 171–83.

Cosgrove, Patrick John, 'The Wyndham Land Act, 1903: The final solution to the Irish Land Question?' (PhD thesis, Maynooth University, 2009).

Cosgrove, Patrick, *The Ranch War in Riverstown, Co. Sligo, 1908* (Dublin, 2012).

Crossman, Virginia, *Politics, law and order in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 1996).

Cunningham, John, *Labour in the west of Ireland: Working life and struggle, 1890–1914* (Belfast, 1995).

Curtis, L.P., *The depiction of eviction in Ireland, 1845–1910* (Dublin, 2011).

Cronin, Maura, *Country, class or craft? The politicisation of the skilled artisan in nineteenth-century Cork* (Cork, 1994).

Dooley, Terence, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland: A study of Irish landed families, 1860–1960* (Dublin, 2001).

Dooley, Terence, 'The land for the people': *The land question in independent Ireland* (Dublin, 2004).

Fraser, Murray, *John Bull's other homes: State housing and British policy in Ireland, 1883–1922* (Liverpool, 1996).

Gailey, Andrew, 'Unionist rhetoric and Irish local government reform, 1895–99', *Irish Historical Studies*, no. 24 (1984), pp. 52–68.

- Gailey, Andrew, *Ireland and the death of kindness: The experience of constructive unionism 1890–1905* (Cork, 1987).
- Hobsbawm, E.J., *Industry and empire* (London, 1969).
- Hobsbawm, E.J., *Labouring men: Studies in the history of labour* (London, 1964).
- Hoppen, K.T., *Ireland since 1800: Conflict and conformity* (Essex, 1999).
- King, Carla, “Our destructive countrymen on the west coast”: Relief and development strategies in the congested districts in the 1880s and 1890s’, in Carla King and Conor McNamara (eds.), *The West of Ireland: New Perspectives* (Dublin, 2011), pp. 161–84.
- Lane, Fintan, ‘Rural labourers, social change and politics in late nineteenth century Ireland’, in Fintan Lane and Donal Ó Drisceoil (eds.), *Politics and the Irish working class, 1830–1945* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 113–39.
- Lee, J.J., *The modernisation of Irish society 1848–1918* (Dublin, 1971).
- Jones, David Seth, ‘The cleavage between graziers and peasants in the land struggle, 1890–1910’, in Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly, Jr. (eds.), *Irish peasants: Violence and political unrest, 1780–1914* (Dublin, 1983), pp. 374–418.
- Jones, David Seth, *Graziers, land reform and political conflict in Ireland* (Washington, DC, 1993).
- Lyons, F.S.L., *Ireland since the Famine* (Dublin, 1971).
- Lyons, F.S.L., ‘The aftermath of Parnell, 1891–1903’, in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi: *Ireland under the Union, 1870–1921* (Oxford, 1989a), pp. 81–110.
- Lyons, F.S.L., ‘The watershed, 1903–07’, in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi: *Ireland under the Union, 1870–1921* (1989b), pp. 111–22.
- McNamara, Conor, ‘Politics and Society in East Galway, 1914–21’ (PhD thesis, St Patrick’s College, Drumcondra, 2008), pp. 81–90.
- McNamara, Conor, ‘A Tenants’ League or a shopkeepers’ league? Urban protest and the Town Tenants Association in the west of Ireland, 1909–1918’, *Studia Hibernica* 36 (2009–10), pp. 135–60.
- Mulvagh, Conor, *The Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster* (Manchester, 2016).
- O’Riordan, Ann, *East Galway agrarian agitation and the burning of Ballydugan house, 1922* (Dublin, 2015).
- Travers, Pauric, *Settlements and divisions, Ireland 1870–1922* (Dublin, 1988).



Conclusion

You are one of those unfortunate men who had not been brought up to do anything for a living. You might have been in happier circumstances if you had been called upon to discharge the sufficiently onerous and responsible duties of a landlord. But owing to the state of the country in which you lived, you were deprived of even that occupation.¹

This was the withering yet perceptive assessment of the judge who sentenced the fifth Earl of Clancarty for signing fraudulent cheques. His financial embarrassments were brought about by his opulence, inability to effectively manage his finances and disinheritance from the unsettled estates.² The lack of sufficient responsibilities in managing a landed estate was a significant problem for the once all-powerful landed class in Ireland.

The fourth Earl of Clancarty disapproved of his son's marriage to the actress and dancer Belle Bilton. Following her marriage to Lord Dunlo, the fourth Earl went as far as to perjure himself in a futile effort to have the marriage annulled. Bilton was accused of being immoral, having had a child already, possessing a voracious sexual appetite and marrying Dunlo after he allegedly won a coin toss for her affections! Because of her antecedents, Bilton was not seen to be an appropriate choice for the wife of the heir of a landed estate. Nevertheless, she was very popular with the tenantry and her death was greeted with a genuine sense of mourning in the town, and was noted in newspapers in New York and Hobart, Tasmania.³

The fifth Earl had financial headaches prior to his marriage and these intensified upon the death of his father, his disinheritance from the

unsettled estates, the declining rental income and his inability to continue with the various charges and mortgages on the estate. Even after the sale of the estate, the fifth Earl's financial problems were not resolved, but he still desired to sustain the lifestyle of a wealthy aristocrat. Even when the allowance he was receiving from the trustees was stopped, Clancarty continued to sign cheques in the knowledge that they were unlikely to be honoured and this resulted in him receiving a three-month prison term. While the Wyndham Land Act enabled many landlords to escape the financial quagmire they were in, some, like the fifth Earl, were too heavily indebted, thus bringing a rather ignominious end to the presence of the family in Ballinasloe, where they had resided since the Cromwellian period.⁴

The centrality of the Clancarty family to life on the estate came to an end by the early 1900s. The new elites that emerged in Ballinasloe were disinterested in the welfare of poorer tenants on the former Clancarty estate, which deeply accentuated their condition, and urban residents did not receive any support from the mainstream nationalist movement. Conor McNamara has suggested that this was because of 'the antipathy of the upper echelons of nationalist politics to the prospect of a serious urban protest'.⁵ Government policy during the Land War and Plan of Campaign targeted reforms at key socio-economic groups, which increased the marginalisation of the least influential groups in society.⁶ The marginalisation of these vulnerable socio-economic groups continued into the early twentieth century and beyond.

The period between 1850 and 1870 was seen to be a golden age before the depression of 1873.⁷ 'The transition from traditional local politics to modern national politics took place where individuals and groups shifted from indifference to participation because they perceived that they were involved in the nation'.⁸ Walter Walsh has stated that the Home Government Association, founded by Isaac Butt, eventually evolved into a nationalist and Catholic middle-class opposition movement to landlords.⁹ From the 1870s there was a shift in the make-up of Irish political institutions, as small farmers became involved in a 'more sensitive relationship with the body of popular political activity', and increased reliance on the cash economy forged links between town and countryside that would later prove to be of crucial political importance.¹⁰ Tenant farmers were now beginning to have a voice and were representing their interests at a local level as landlord influence on local political bodies, such as the board of guardians and town commissions, began to decline. Fenianism began to

play an important role as a social outlet for many young men by the mid-1860s and it entered the mainstream of the life of the provincial lower classes. Many members received political instruction and developed organisational skills which they could then transfer to other spheres, and this was witnessed in the nascent Land League.¹¹

The Land War was critical in removing popular support for landlords, though there was still implicit loyalty to paternalistic landlords, such as Lord Clancarty, who remained paternalistic and maintained a series of private relief works. The cause of labourers and urban tenants began receiving more attention at this time. However, there was a systematic failure to unite farmers and labourers into a common cause, even though they had similar grievances. Despite this, increased nationalist presence in board of guardians and town commission elections saw the previously harmonious relations between landlord and tenant disintegrate, thus highlighting the innate fragility of social relations within the deferential dialectic framework.

Terence Dooley said: 'better education became the nemesis of deference'¹² and tenants became more confident and better organised in challenging what had heretofore been acceptable. The success of farmers in challenging the hegemony of landlords was due in part to the leadership of their various organisations. Philip Bull contended that 'agrarian grievances were the fabric out of which skilled political operators crafted an entity in which diversity of interest was consolidated into a strong institutional form'.¹³ Such resolute organisation resulted in the creation of an alternative rule of law. However, such unity was only superficial and divisions emerged between the various social classes in provincial Ireland, supporting David Fitzpatrick's argument that there were no unified demands in a nation's demand for freedom, even as all groups were submissive to collective discipline to drive forward their aims.¹⁴

Niall Ó Ciosáin has shown that the nineteenth century saw the rapid growth of large-scale investigations of society by parliament as they published the information that they had gathered: 'for the modern observer, the existence of these documents means the analysis of the society and the economy in the past is possible on a very large scale'. It is also possible to assess economy and society at a local scale. While the state had a long-standing tradition of surveillance and investigative activity, it became more wide-ranging during the nineteenth century. The records produced by the state—commissions of inquiry, police reports and correspondence to and from the Chief Secretary's office—all show the modes of investigation and representation that the state used, and Ó Ciosáin states that they have had

‘a profound influence on our understanding of nineteenth century society in Ireland and elsewhere’.¹⁵

The sources used throughout this book captured large swaths of provincial working-class life. However, it is important to stress that ‘they do not give a glorious technicolour view of working class life; they give glimpses of reality with some parts obscured in the shadows’.¹⁶ Despite such challenges, they can be used to give a textured assessment of life for all classes in provincial Ireland. One significant limitation that needs to be highlighted is the limited voice of women, because at this time, poor women were less likely to achieve the same accomplishments as men in the workplace, the arts and the church, which provided motivation for men, though it is important to stress that they still articulated themselves at meetings on occasion.¹⁷

The great chronicler of social change for the poor in England, Keith Snell, has observed that one way to understand the experience of the labouring poor is to see how they assessed the social and economic changes that affected them, in particular paying attention to the quality of the social relations amongst the lower classes. He made the point that the discontent of the poor was not to be relieved simply by giving them higher wages.¹⁸ In Ireland, the belief that peasant proprietorship was the panacea for all woes was a dangerously ill-conceived one, remarked upon by observers but ignored in the name of political expediency. Snell’s observations embrace the essence of E.P. Thompson’s call to rescue the poor from the ‘condescension of posterity’.¹⁹ The ability to examine their experiences in their own right is limited, owing to the nature of available sources. But these sources exist and, while fragmented, if used imaginatively, as in this book, they can give a sense of how they experienced their lives. An English observer once commented about the poor: ‘when you accept him, if he is not insolent—which he seldom is—he is timid and shrinking’, but is suspicious when questioned.²⁰ Observers were not personally acquainted with the poor, failed to understand their lot and did not appreciate the structural causes of poverty, with many displaying a severe level of social insensitivity. This was not restricted to observers from the landed gentry or those travelling through Ireland. The Catholic middle class emerged as important local elites with the declining influence of landlords and they could be particularly harsh in their commentary on the poor, with notions of the deserving and undeserving poor remaining quite pronounced.

Eric Richards argued that the anger directed towards rural transformation is a common theme in some of the best-known historical controversies,

‘which have been focused precisely on the politics and social consequences of rural upheavals when the people were disengaged from the land’.²¹ The Wyndham Land Act was an important piece of legislation for effecting change in the structures of class relations in rural Ireland. Yet it exacerbated land hunger, as evidenced during the Ranch War, and this was not satiated during the revolutionary period, with further legislation being brought in with the Free State in an effort to allay anxieties around access to land, though these measures were not necessarily fully effective either.

Prior to the 1870s, there was a lack of solidarity, with farmers acting independently from each other, and a disinterest in politics and deference towards landlords remained firm. Changing fortunes afforded by the Long Depression, coupled with an explosion in the number of provincial newspapers, as well as a reimagined nationalism that appealed to previously excluded groups in the countryside, helped to effect the development and exponential growth of a supra-nationalist movement in the guise of the Land League and the Irish National League. The failure of armed insurrection and the remnants of a Chartist legacy influenced western Fenians who were witnessing the acute social deprivation in Mayo and Galway. They realised that the small farmers and labourers in these counties were effectively voiceless and, while they often had no vote, they could play a role in swaying public opinion through participation in mass meetings that excited the countryside and caused angst for landlords and government. Improved transportation and the increasing importance of towns in the economic and social life of the countryside added a sense of conviviality to these meetings. In his provocative *The making of the crofting community*, James Hunter stated that the lower classes were sentimental in trying to keep their holdings, even if it went against their self-interest.²² There was also a great attachment to land in Ireland. It was believed that this was because of the failure of the Industrial Revolution to take hold on most of the island, leaving an overwhelmingly agrarian economy until the mid-twentieth century. Land became the basis of the nation and farmers were seen as the ‘nation-forming class’. The 1923 Land Act legislated for the remaining tenanted land. What was still in the hands of landlords was to be compulsorily acquired to relieve congestion and for the distribution of untenanted land amongst farmers. George O’Brien stated that ‘there was never likely to be a conflict in the Free State between members of the farming class and the nation for both were *prima facie* identical—farmers and their dependents made up the great majority of the population’. Towns and cities were seen to be transient, and rural communities had a

sense of permanence. Therefore the redistribution of land was seen to be appropriate for righting historical wrongs.²³

In *Common Sense*, Thomas Paine rallied against the 'tyranny of hereditary government'.²⁴ Landlords were seen to be representative of this tyranny in Ireland, being subject to great odium amongst nationalists and isolating themselves from formerly ardent supporters in the Conservative Party after the Plan of Campaign. Yet their self-styled plutocratic tendencies seemed to have survived amongst elements of the Catholic middle classes that dominated local politics and government in Ireland from the 1890s. The 1870s had presented a time for a radical, socialistic-republican element to dominate political discourse through the prism of the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association and the nascent Land League. Neo-Fenians succeeded in politicising the structural poverty in the West of Ireland and, in many ways, created an articulate and coherent voice for the poor that was lacking up to that point, though the entire West of Ireland community was not politicised, as the poorest classes could not afford that luxury.

There is a risk of being pessimistic about what happened during the period examined in this book, which is natural considering the levels of poverty and inequality that existed in urban and rural provincial Ireland. Despite this, there were reasons to be positive and hopeful. Increased literacy, the diffusion of print, newspapers, increased interest in leisure pursuits and improved infrastructural developments all gave rise to a greater awareness amongst sections of the lower classes. The importance of the press in this period cannot be overstated. Raymond Gillespie has argued that reading was not a neutral process: 'changes in the various spheres of human existence happened at differential rates. Some areas of expertise, such as belief or social attitudes, shifted only slowly while other aspects, such as economic status or institutional change, responded more quickly to external stimuli', with regional variations too.²⁵ Furthermore, the evidence presented throughout this book shows that sections of the farming and urban lower classes were more articulate and cosmopolitan in their world view than previously thought. They did not see the world as rigid but as a place in a state of flux, much to the horrors of the landed elite—people who thought they would eternally remain at the top of the social ladder. The ability of the lower classes to utilise resistance in a coherent and focused fashion allowed them to assert themselves with greater confidence.

There has been disagreement amongst historians about how much working people were seduced into acceptance of bourgeois values—did 'land for the people' and notions of respectability dominate obligations to

neighbours and challenge the notion of community? The word 'community' is a loaded term—it can be inaccurate, simplistic and assume homogeneous viewpoints. This book has argued that it was much more complicated than this—groups that appeared, on the surface, to be ideologically homogenous were actually quite divided. Communities have widely varying views and the sources used here present the story of a class of people that was both unified and diverse at the same time. The lower classes were not voiceless agents in their lived experiences during this formative period. Their achievements and their willingness to challenge deference and engage in the democratic process saw solid foundations being laid for nationalists who participated in the revolutionary period. Despite the rhetoric of the Land War that 'land for the people' would be a panacea, this was not the case. Matt Harris' comments about farmers being very selfish men, referred to in the introduction, certainly capture his perceptiveness regarding the direction the national movement would eventually take as the desires of the lower classes were relegated to a secondary position. Those with the greatest desire for respectability dominated nationalist discourse into the second decade of the twentieth century, into the revolutionary period, as poverty remained systemically rooted in independent Ireland. Historians of modern Ireland have accepted 'poverty's ubiquitous shadow after independence'.²⁶ Judgemental language regarding the deserving and undeserving poor continued with the new nationalist leadership, with the poor having to prove themselves as deserving.²⁷

Opportunism trumped ideology during the period examined here, and while social change was significant and long-lasting, it was inherently conservative and allowed perniciousness play through the prism of nationalism and patriotism. Stability is at the heart of deference and it has the habit of stressing the superiority and legitimacy of social hierarchy as elites were concerned at stabilising this hierarchy and preserving their own traditions. While they can offer a legitimisation of power, deference and paternalism are not fixed and they evolve over time. In relation to the Italian peasantry, Edward Banfield argued that they were deferential because they needed the assistance of the wealthy to survive. Yet Paul Ginsborg argued that elites struggled to assert their hegemony and peasants failed to work together for the common good. Such relationships were not those of equals and there appeared to have been no urgency to change this.²⁸

Deferential interaction does not operate in a social vacuum as it is embedded in a particular system of social stratification. Tensions in the deferential dialectic can be controlled by elite groups in order to assert

their hegemony by employing a variety of techniques, with philanthropy being the most obvious. This could be described as calculative, as some would not wish to be described as deferential. Its presence also shows the failure of trade unions and the Catholic clergy to challenge structural inequality in provincial towns. Mary Daly argued that the Ireland of the 1920s was not the Ireland of the 1950s. Yet Ireland's manifest destiny was viewed as an agrarian and rural society and was enshrined in the 1937 constitution. Encyclicals by Popes Leo XIII (1891) and Pius XI (1931) on the dignity of work affirmed the Catholic Church's belief that rural societies brought about stability. However, the stagnant economy of the 1930s forced a reappraisal of this outlook, with greater industrialisation and migration to towns occurring by 1960. Associational culture was important for enhancing the status of rural lives by emphasising positive values and expanding the horizons of its members.²⁹

Not until the opening of Dubarry in 1937 did a substantial factory that employed the urban working classes on a significant scale emerge for the benefit of Ballinasloe and its hinterland. The brainchild of Jim Cullen and the Ballinasloe Chamber of Commerce, and managed by Jim Scott, who came from England, it became an important part of the local community and was the beginning of a new class dynamic in the town and its hinterland, which was also reflected in other provincial towns.³⁰ Rural life saw its greatest upheaval after World War Two, with rural European communities being forced to adapt to survive. While the ideal Ireland was seen to be agrarian with its people rooted in rural communities, external factors were forcing changes in the provinces. Shopkeepers and artisans were seen to have the most secure employment at the end of the period under examination in this book. The lack of opportunities on farms and the limited growth of factory work by the end of the 1950s saw this kind of work become desirable owing to the guarantee of a regular, fixed income.

Arensberg and Kimball's *Family and community* offered a rich ethnographic insight into the daily lives of rural dwellers in the 1930s as Ireland evolved from a traditional community to a modern society. Rapid change following World War Two saw increased urbanisation. Liam Ryan and Patrick McNabb explored Shannon, County Clare and rural Limerick in the 1960s and this research offers important assessments of some of these changes which were happening rapidly in Sean Lemass' and T.K. Whitaker's Ireland, while also showing some of the same anxieties and challenges that remained. Ryan quotes residents of Shannon, County Clare, who stated that there was a lack of common ground between many residents because

they were all ‘outsiders’, resulting in only a few activists emerging. Shannon was a ‘new town’, constructed in the 1950s and lacking a sense of community. From the late 1940s, new challenges were presented to the sense of community and deference in provincial Ireland. Patrick McNabb argued that this posed the risk of isolation for older residents of communities as migration patterns evolved, and this poses the question: how real or imagined was this sense of community?³¹

How the poor understood poverty, responsibility and entitlement is important in trying to understand how they perceived their moral and social implications: ‘words help the powerless hold the powerful to account’.³² Public presentation and dignity were both key to achieving respectability. Respectability was determinant upon the personalities of individuals and families, irrespective of background.³³ It did not necessarily mean embracing paternalistic endeavours in the fields of philanthropy or politics. It was primarily about individual dignity, which even the poor understood. Nevertheless, local political economy implied that paternalism and compassionate inequality were superior as they became meshed with ideas about Christian morality and personal entitlements.³⁴ Middle-class elites were slow to embrace the paternalistic endeavours of their aristocratic predecessors in spheres of influence, but desired the status they once held. Their response to inequality in Irish life was generally ineffectual and remains so.

NOTES

1. Quoted in Mark Bence-Jones, *Twilight of the ascendancy* (London, 1987), p. 197.
2. For more information on the bankruptcy of the Clancarty estate, see: Divorce court file: 3538, Appellant: William Frederick le Poer Trench, Lord Dunlo, respondent Isabel Maud Penrice le Poer Trench, Lady Dunlo, Co-respondent: Isidor A Wertheimer. Husband’s petition for divorce. J77/444/3538/5–6; Court of Bankruptcy and successors: Proceedings under the Bankruptcy Acts, Trench, the Right Honourable William Frederick Le Poer, earl of Clancarty, B 9/847 in The National Archives. Copy of conveyance of life estate to trustees: Earl of Clancarty, first part, Rt. Hon Adeliza Hervey, countess of Clancarty, second part; Lord Francis Hervey and Thomas Francis Crozier, third part, I.25.9; Conveyance: Winifred Conway of Glenville, Loughrea to Clancarty, Lord Francis Hervey and Francis Rowden Maria Crozier, I.25.18; Coorheen, I.25.11; Order of the High Courts of Justice in Ireland, King’s bench division in

- bankruptcy: in the matter of a petition for arrangement by the Rt. Hon. William Frederick le Poer Trench, earl of Clancarty, I.25.8; The earl of Clancarty and others to the Most Reverend Thomas O'Dea and others. Copy conveyance of property called 'Coorheen in the County of Galway, I.25.22 in Clonfert Diocesan Archive.
3. Brian Casey, 'The decline and fall of the Clancarty estate, 1891–1923', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 67 (2015), pp. 171–83.
 4. Casey, 'The decline and fall of the Clancarty estate', pp. 171–83.
 5. Conor McNamara, 'A Tenants' League or a shopkeepers' league? Urban protest and the Town Tenants Association in the west of Ireland, 1909–1918', *Studia Hibernica* 36 (2009–10).
 6. Stephen Ball, 'Policing the Irish Land War: Official responses to political protest and agrarian crime in Ireland, 1879–91 (PhD thesis, University of London, 2000), pp. 360–1.
 7. D.G. Wright, *Popular radicalism: The working class experience, 1780–1880* (London, 1988), p. 150.
 8. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The modernisation of rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, 1976), p. 242.
 9. Walter Walsh, *Kilkenny: The struggle for the land, 1850–82* (Kilkenny, 2009), p. 421.
 10. Liam Kennedy, 'Farmers, traders and agricultural politics in pre-independence Ireland', in Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly, Jr. (eds.), *Irish peasants: Violence and political unrest 1780–1914* (Manchester, 1983), pp. 343, 345.
 11. Paul Bew, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland, 1890–1910, Parnellites and radical agrarians* (Oxford, 1987), p. 1; see also R.V. Comerford, 'Patriotism as pastime, the appeal of Fenianism in the mid-1860s', *Irish Historical Studies* xxii (1981), pp. 239–50.
 12. Terence Dooley, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland: A study of Irish landed families 1860–1960* (Dublin, 2001), p. 276.
 13. Philip Bull, *Land, politics and nationalism: A study of the Irish land question* (Dublin, 1996), p. 142.
 14. David Fitzpatrick, 'The geography of Irish nationalism', *Past and Present*, no. 78 (Feb. 1978), pp. 113–14.
 15. Niall Ó Ciosáin, *Ireland in official print culture, 1800–1850: A new reading of the poor inquiry* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 7, 9.
 16. Emma Griffin, *Liberty's dawn: A people's history of the Industrial Revolution* (Yale, 2014), p. 9.
 17. Griffin, *Liberty's dawn*, p. 7.
 18. K.D.M. Snell, *Annals of the labouring poor: Social change and agrarian England, 1660–1900* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 4.

19. E.P. Thomspon, *The making of the English working class* (London, 1963), p. 13.
20. Snell, *Annals of the labouring poor*, p. 6.
21. Eric Richards, *The Highland clearances: People, land and rural turmoil* (Edinburgh, 2013), p. 399.
22. James Hunter, *The making of the Crofting community* (Edinburgh, 2015), pp. 280–2.
23. Terence Dooley, ‘The land for the people’: *The land question in independent Ireland* (Dublin, 2004), pp. 1–3.
24. Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776).
25. Raymond Gillespie, *Reading Ireland: Print, reading and social change in early modern Ireland* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 3–5.
26. Lindsey Earner-Byrne *Letters of the Catholic poor: Poverty in Independent Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017), p. 8.
27. Byrne, *Letters of the Catholic poor*, p. 253.
28. Edward C Banfield, *The moral basis of a backward economy* (Glencoe, IL, 1958); Paul Ginsborg, *A history of contemporary Italy, 1943–80* (London, 1990).
29. Mary E. Daly, *The slow failure: Population decline and independent Ireland, 1920–1973* (Madison, 2005), pp. 21–31.
30. My thanks to Seán Óg and Nancy Hurley for providing me with the information regarding Dubarry.
31. Conrad M. Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball, *Family and community in Ireland* (Harvard, 1940); Patrick McNabb, *Limerick rural survey: First interim report: Migration* (Tipperary, 1960); Liam Ryan, *Shannon: Ireland’s new town: A social survey, 1968* (Cork, 1969).
32. Byrne, *Letters of the Catholic poor*, p. 256.
33. Marilyn Silverman, *An Irish working class: Explorations in political economy and hegemony* (Toronto, 2001), p. 295.
34. Silverman, *An Irish working class*, p. 421.

REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CLONFERT DIOCESAN ARCHIVES, COORHEEN, LOUGHREA, COUNTY GALWAY

Coorheen, I.25.11.

Conveyance: Winifred Conway of Glenville, Loughrea to Clancarty, Lord Francis Hervey and Francis Rowden Maria Crozier, I.25.18.

Copy of conveyance of life estate to trustees: Earl of Clancarty, first part, Rt. Hon Adeliza Hervey, countess of Clancarty, second part; Lord Francis Hervey and Thomas Francis Crozier, third part, I.25.9.

Order of the High Courts of Justice in Ireland, King's bench division in bankruptcy: in the matter of a petition for arrangement by the Rt. Hon. William Frederick le Poer Trench, earl of Clancarty, I.25.8.

The earl of Clancarty and others to the Most Reverend Thomas O'Dea and others. Copy conveyance of property called 'Coorheen in the County of Galway, I.25.22.

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES: KEW, LONDON

Divorce court file: 3538, Appellant: William Frederick le Poer Trench, Lord Dunlo, respondent Isabel Maud Penrice le Poer Trench, Lady Dunlo, Co-respondent: Isidor A Wertheimer. Husband's petition for divorce. J77/444/3538/5-6.

Court of Bankruptcy and successors: Proceedings under the Bankruptcy Acts, Trench, the Right Honourable William Frederick Le Poer, earl of Clancarty, B 9/847.

CONTEMPORARY PUBLICATIONS

Paine, Thomas, *Common Sense* (1776).

SECONDARY SOURCES

Arensberg, Conrad M. and Solon T. Kimball, *Family and community in Ireland* (Harvard, 1940).

Ball, Stephen, 'Policing the Irish Land War: Official responses to political protest and agrarian crime in Ireland, 1879-91 (PhD thesis, University of London, 2000).

Banfield, Edward C., *The moral basis of a backward economy* (Glencoe, IL, 1958).

Bence-Jones, Mark, *Twilight of the ascendancy* (London, 1987).

Bew, Paul, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland, 1890-1910, Parnellites and radical agrarians* (Oxford, 1987).

Bull, Philip, *Land, politics and nationalism: A study of the Irish land question* (Dublin, 1996).

Casey, Brian, 'The decline and fall of the Clancarty estate, 1891-1923', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 67 (2015), pp. 171-83.

Comerford, R.V., 'Patriotism as pastime, the appeal of Fenianism in the mid-1860s', *Irish Historical Studies* xxii (1981), pp. 239-50.

Daly, Mary E., *The slow failure: Population decline and independent Ireland, 1920-1973* (Madison, 2005).

Dooley, Terence, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland: A study of Irish landed families 1860-1960* (Dublin, 2001).

- Dooley, Terence, *'The land for the people': The land question in independent Ireland* (Dublin, 2004).
- Earnar-Byrne, Lindsey, *Letters of the Catholic poor: Poverty in Independent Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017).
- Fitzpatrick, David, 'The geography of Irish nationalism', *Past and Present*, no. 78 (Feb. 1978), pp. 113–44.
- Gillespie, Raymond, *Reading Ireland: Print, reading and social change in early modern Ireland* (Manchester, 2005).
- Ginsborg, Paul, *A history of contemporary Italy, 1943–80* (London, 1990).
- Griffin, Emma, *Liberty's dawn: A people's history of the Industrial Revolution* (Yale, 2014).
- Hunter, James, *The making of the Crofting community* (Edinburgh, 2015).
- Kennedy, Liam, 'Farmers, traders and agricultural politics in pre-independence Ireland', in Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly, Jr. (eds.), *Irish peasants: Violence and political unrest 1780–1914* (Manchester, 1983), pp. 339–73.
- McNamara, Conor, 'A Tenants' League or a shopkeepers' league? Urban protest and the Town Tenants Association in the west of Ireland, 1909–1918', *Studia Hibernica* 36 (2009–10), pp. 135–60.
- Ó Ciosáin, Niall, *Ireland in official print culture, 1800–1850: A new reading of the poor inquiry* (Oxford, 2014).
- Richards, Eric, *The Highland clearances, People, land and rural turmoil* (Edinburgh, 2013).
- Silverman, Marilyn, *An Irish working class: Explorations in political economy and hegemony* (Toronto, 2001).
- Snell, K.D.M., *Annals of the labouring poor: Social change and agrarian England, 1660–1900* (Cambridge, 1987).
- Thompson, E.P., *The making of the English working class* (London, 1963).
- Walsh, Walter, *Kilkenny: The struggle for the land, 1850–82* (Kilkenny, 2009).
- Weber, Eugene, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The modernisation of rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, 1976).
- Wright, D.G., *Popular radicalism: The working class experience, 1780–1880* (London, 1988).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CLONFERT DIOCESAN ARCHIVES, COORHEEN, LOUGHREA, COUNTY GALWAY

Coorheen, I.25.11.

Conveyance: Winifred Conway of Glenville, Loughrea to Clancarty, Lord Francis Hervey and Francis Rowden Maria Crozier, I.25.18.

Copy of conveyance of life estate to trustees: Earl of Clancarty, first part, Rt. Hon Adeliza Hervey, countess of Clancarty, second part; Lord Francis Hervey and Thomas Francis Crozier, third part, I.25.9.

Order of the High Courts of Justice in Ireland, King's bench division in bankruptcy: In the matter of a petition for arrangement by the Rt. Hon. William Frederick le Poer Trench, Earl of Clancarty, I.25.8.

The Earl of Clancarty and others to the Most Reverend Thomas O'Dea and others. Copy conveyance of property called 'Coorheen in the County of Galway, I.25.22.

DUBLIN DIOCESAN ARCHIVE

Cardinal Cullen papers.

Cardinal McCabe papers.

JACKIE CLARKE MUSEUM, BALLINA, COUNTY MAYO

Francis Tully papers.

JAMES HARDIMAN LIBRARY, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Egan/Mac Fhinn papers.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF IRELAND

Divisional Commissioners and County Inspectors monthly confidential reports.
Irish Land League and Irish National League, Reports of speeches A-L,
1879–1888.

Protection of Persons and Property Act, Box 1 and Box 2.

Registered Papers of the Chief Secretary's Office.

NATIONAL FOLKLORE COLLECTION

Schools manuscript collection (microfilm held in Galway County Archive).

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND

Bellew of Mountbellew papers.

Clonbrock papers.

Mahon of Castlegar papers.

Mayo papers.

Sweetman papers.

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, KEW

County Inspector's monthly report, east Galway, CO 904/72.

Court of Bankruptcy and successors: Proceedings under the Bankruptcy Acts,
Trench, the Right Honourable William Frederick Le Poer, Earl of Clancarty, B
9/847.

Divorce court file: 3538, Appellant: William Frederick le Poer Trench, Lord
Dunlo, respondent Isabel Maud Penrice le Poer Trench, Lady Dunlo,
Co-respondent: Isidor A Wertheimer. Husband's petition for divorce.
J77/444/3538/5–6.

NEWSPAPER SOURCES

Connaught People.

Connaught Telegraph.

Connacht Tribune.

Daily News.

East Galway Democrat.
Express.
Flag of Ireland.
Freeman's Journal.
Galway Express.
Galway Packet.
Galway Vindicator.
Irish Farmers' Gazette.
Limerick Chronicle.
Mayo Examiner.
Morning Post.
Times.
Tuam Herald.
Tuam News.
Warden of Galway.
Western News.
Western Star.

OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

17 and 18 Vic., c. 102 sec 5.

Census of Ireland, part one. Area, houses and population: Also the ages, civil condition, occupations, birthplaces, religion and education of the people. viv. Province of Connaught, Table xxxi.

Copy of the minutes of evidence taken at the trial of the Galway county election petition, with an appendix, Report 1872 (241) (241–I).

Market Tolls (Ireland), return to an order of the Honourable The House of Commons, dated 3 Mar. 1884 for return of the values of the market tolls, of the rates, and of the other sources of local revenue in each of the towns of Galway, Ballinasloe, Loughrea, Portumna and Gort in the county of Galway.

Report from Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the state of the law and practice in respect to the occupation of land in Ireland, [605] [606] HC 1845.

Report from her majesty's commissioners of inquiry into the state of law and practice in respect of the occupation of land in Ireland minutes of evidence pt. ii, [616], HC 1845.

Report of the royal commission on the Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 and the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1885, [C4969] HC 1887, 1; *minutes of evidence and appendices,* [C496], HC 1887.

Returns of advances made under the Irish Land Acts, 1903–1909, during the year ended 31st December, 1912–31st December 1919, 1914–21 [Cd. 1142, 1247, 1298, 1357, 6507, 6648, 7223, 7664, 7665, 7761, 7762, 7864, 7925, 8007, 8064, 8093, 8159, 8164, 8118, 8888, 8562, 8646, 8753], [Cmd. 623].

- Returns of advances made under the Irish Land Purchase Acts, during the months of July, 1915, January, February and March, 1917* 1917-19 [Cmd. 57, 68, 370, 1526, 8562, 8646, 8753].
- Report from the Select Committee on the Irish Land Act, 1870, together with the Proceedings of the Committee*, HC 1878 (249), xv, I.
- Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the working of the Landlord and Tenant (Ireland), 1870, and the acts amending the same*, HC 1881, xviii (2779-iii).
- Reports of her majesty's commissioners into the depressed condition of agricultural interests, preliminary report*, HC 1881 [2778-i].
- Return of the names of one hundred of the largest ratepayers in each county in Ireland, distinguishing whether in the Commission of the Peace, 1884-85*, HC Papers; accounts and papers. Paper number [219] lxvii.477.
- Report of the royal commission on the Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 and the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1885 minutes of evidence and appendices*, [496], HC 1887 xxvi.
- Tenth report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into and report upon the operation of the acts dealing with congestion in Ireland: Evidence and documents*, [Cd, 4007], HC 1908, Vol. XLII.
- The Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls. Precis of the minutes of evidence taken from the Royal Commissioners and the assistant commissioners in the United Kingdom*, xii [6268-v].

OTHER OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

Special Commission on Parnellism and Crime.
Hansard.

The Primary Valuation of Ireland (Griffith's Valuation).

CONTEMPORARY PUBLICATIONS, TRADE DIRECTORIES AND TRAVELLER ACCOUNTS

- Baldwin, Thomas, *Public opinion on the application of the prize system to the improvement of the agricultural practices of the small farmers of Ireland with the introductory remarks* (Dublin, 1879).
- Barry, K.M., *Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy* (Dublin, 1894).
- Bermingham, Thomas, *Social state of Great Britain and Ireland* (1835).
- Brett, Thomas, *Life of the most Reverend Dr Patrick Duggan, Bishop of Clonfert* (Dublin, 1921).
- The Earl of Clancarty, *Ireland, its present condition and what it might be* (Dublin, 1864).

- Clapperton, James, *Instructions for the small farmers for the cropping and culture of their farms* (Dublin, 1847).
- Davitt, Michael, *The fall of feudalism in Ireland, or the story of the Land League revolution* (London, 1904).
- Harris, Matthew, *Land Reform, a letter to the council of the Irish National Land League* (Dublin, 1881).
- Irish Builder*.
- Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* xxiii (1893).
- le Poer Trench, Richard, *Memoir of the le Poer Trench family* (1874).
- Lewis, Samuel, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland* (London, 1837).
- Mill, John Stuart, *The principles of political economy* (1848).
- Mill, John Stuart, *On Liberty*, reproduced in *On Liberty and other essays* edited with an introduction and notes by John Gray.
- O'Connor, T.P., *The Parnell movement* (1887).
- Paine, Thomas, *Common Sense* (1776).
- Pigot's directory* (Dublin, 1824).
- Ryan, Mark (edited by T.F. O'Sullivan), *Fenian memories* (1945).
- 'The priesthood in Irish politics', *Dublin Review* (July 1872).
- The Seventh Annual Report of the Irish Missionary School, Ballinasloe for the year ending 31 December 1853* (Dublin, 1854).

INTERVIEWS

- Interview with Patrick O'Connor, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, 7 June 2009.

WEBSITES

- Landed Estates Database, the Moore Institute, NUI Galway, <http://landedestates.nuigalway.ie>; <http://places.galwaylibrary.ie/history/chapter34.html>

WORKS OF REFERENCE

- Maguire, James (ed.), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009).
- Oxford National Biography.
- Walker, B.M., *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801–1922* (Dublin, 1978).

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Arensberg, Conrad M. and Solon T. Kimball, *Family and community in Ireland* (Harvard, 1940).
- Ball, Stephen, 'Policing the Irish Land War: Official responses to political protest and agrarian crime in Ireland, 1879–91' (PhD thesis, University of London, 2000).

- Banfield, Edward C., *The moral basis of a backward economy* (Glencoe, IL, 1958).
- Barr, Colin, *The European culture wars in Ireland: The Callan schools affair, 1868–81* (Dublin, 2010).
- Beckett, J.C., *The making of modern Ireland, 1603–1923* (London, 1966).
- Beckert, Sven, *Empire of Cotton: A new history of global capitalism* (London, 2015).
- Bell, Jonathan and Mervyn Watson, *Irish farming implements and techniques, 1750–1900* (Edinburgh, 1986).
- Bell, Jonathan and Mervyn Watson, *Irish farming: History and heritage* (Dublin, 2009).
- Bell, Jonathan and Mervyn Watson, *Rooted in the soil: A history of cottage farming and allotments in Ireland since 1750* (Dublin, 2012).
- Bence-Jones, Mark, *Twilight of the ascendancy* (London, 1987).
- Bew, Paul, *Land and the national question in Ireland, 1858–82* (London, 1980a).
- Bew, Paul, *C. S. Parnell* (Dublin, 1980b).
- Bew, Paul, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland, 1890–1910* (Oxford, 1987).
- Biagini, Eugenio F., *Liberty, retrenchment and reform. Popular liberalism in the age of Gladstone, 1860–1880* (Cambridge, 1992).
- Biagini, Eugenio F., *Gladstone* (New York, 2000).
- Biagini, Eugenio F., *British democracy and Irish nationalism, 1876–1906* (Cambridge, 2007).
- Biagini, Eugenio F. (ed.), *Citizenship and community. Liberals, radicals and collective identities in the British Isles, 1865–1931* (Cambridge, 1996).
- Bowen, Desmond, *Souperism, myth or reality: A study in souperism* (Cork, 1970).
- Bowen, Desmond, *The Protestant crusade in Ireland, 1800–1870: A study of Protestant–Catholic relations between the act of Union and disestablishment* (Dublin, 1978).
- Boyle, John W., ‘A marginal figure: The Irish rural labourer’, in Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly Jr. (eds.), *Irish peasants: Violence and political unrest, 1780–1914* (Dublin, 1983), pp. 311–38.
- Breathnach, Ciara, *The congested districts boards of Ireland, 1891–1923* (Dublin, 2005).
- Brody, Hugh, *Iniskillane: Change and decline in the west of Ireland* (London, 1973, 1982).
- Buckley, K., ‘The fixing of rents by agreement in Co. Galway, 1881–5’, *Irish Historical Studies* vii, no. 27 (1951), pp. 149–79.
- Bull, Philip, ‘Land and politics, 1879–1903’, in D.G. Boyce (ed.), *The revolution in Ireland, 1879–1923* (Dublin, 1988).
- Bull, Philip, ‘The significance of the nationalist response to the Irish land act of 1903’, *Irish Historical Studies* 28, no. 111 (May 1993), pp. 283–98.
- Bull, Philip, *Land, politics and nationalism: A study of the Irish land question* (Dublin, 1996).

- Burchardt, Jeremy, *The allotment movement in England, 1793–1873* (London, 2002).
- Burchardt, Jeremy, 'Agricultural history, rural history, or countryside history?', *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 2 (June 2007), pp. 465–81.
- Campbell, Fergus, *Land and revolution: Nationalist politics in the west of Ireland, 1891–1921* (Oxford, 2005).
- Campbell, Fergus, *The Irish Establishment, 1879–1914* (Oxford, 2009).
- Cameron, Ewen A., *Land for the people? The British government and the Scottish Highlands, c.1880–1925* (East Linton, 1996).
- Cameron, Ewen A., 'Embracing the past: The Highlands in nineteenth century Scotland', in D.E. Broun, R.J. Finlay, and M. Lynch (eds.), *Image and identity: The making and re-making of Scotland through the ages* (Edinburgh, 1998), pp. 195–219.
- Cannadine, David, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy* (London, 1990).
- Canning, Bernard, *Bishops of Ireland, 1870–1987* (Paisley, 1987).
- Casey, Brian, 'The battle of Saunders' Fort', *South East Galway Archaeological and Historical Society Newsletter* (Spring 2013a).
- Casey, Brian, 'Matt Harris and the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association', in idem, *Defying the law of the land: Agrarian radicals in Irish history* (Dublin, 2013b), pp. 90–9.
- Casey, Brian, 'Matt Harris and the Irish land question, 1876–1882', *Rural History* 25, no. 2 (Oct. 2014), pp. 183–201.
- Casey, Brian, 'The decline and fall of the Clancarty estate, 1891–1923', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 67 (2015), pp. 171–83.
- Clark, Samuel, 'The social composition of the Land League', *Irish Historical Studies* xvii, no. 68 (1971), pp. 447–69.
- Clark, Samuel, *Social origins of the Irish Land War* (Princeton, 1979).
- Collins, J., 'The beginning of county administration', located at http://www.ipa.ie/upload/documents/The_beginnings_of_county_administration_Collins.pdf [date accessed, 21 Apr. 2011].
- Comerford, R.V., 'Patriotism as pastime, the appeal of Fenianism in the mid-1860s', *Irish Historical Studies* xxii (1981), pp. 239–50.
- Comerford, R.V., *The Fenians in context: Irish politics and society, 1848–82* (Dublin, 1998).
- Comerford, R.V., 'Isaac Butt and the Home Rule Party, 1870–77', in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi: *Ireland under the Union, 1870–1921* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 1–25.
- Comerford, R.V., 'The land war and the politics of distress, 1877–82', in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi: *Ireland under the Union, 1870–1921* (Oxford, 1996a), pp. 26–52.
- Comerford, R.V., 'The Parnell era, 1883–91', in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi: *Ireland under the Union, 1870–1921* (Oxford, 1996b), pp. 53–80.

- Conroy, Jane, 'Ballinasloe, 1826: Catholic emancipation, political tourism and the French liberal agenda', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 54 (2002), pp. 103–20.
- Conwell, John Joseph, *A Galway landlord during the Great Famine: Ulick John de Burgh, first Marquis of Clanricarde* (Dublin, 2003).
- Corish, P.J., 'Irish College Rome: Kirby papers', *Archivium Hibernicum* xxx (1972), pp. 29–116.
- Cosgrove, Patrick John, 'The Wyndham Land Act, 1903: The final solution to the Irish Land Question?' (PhD thesis, Maynooth University, 2009).
- Cosgrove, Patrick, *The Ranch War in Riverstown, Co. Sligo, 1908* (Dublin, 2012).
- Crew, David F., 'Alltagsgeschichte: A new history from below', *Central European History* 22, no. 3/4 (1989), pp. 393–407.
- Cronin, Maura, *Country, class or craft? The politicisation of the skilled artisan in nineteenth-century Cork* (Cork, 1994).
- Crossman, Virginia, *The poor law in Ireland* (Dundalk, 2006a).
- Crossman, Virginia, *Politics, pauperism and power in the late nineteenth century* (Manchester, 2006b).
- Crossman, Virginia, 'Middle class attitudes to poverty and welfare in post-Famine Ireland', in Fintan Lane (ed.), *Politics and the middle class in Modern Ireland* (London, 2010), pp. 130–47.
- Cullen, Frank, *Cleansing rural Dublin: Public health and housing initiatives in the South Dublin Poor Law Union, 1880–1920* (Dublin, 2001).
- Cullen, L.M., *Life in Ireland* (London, 1968).
- Cunningham, John, *Labour in the west of Ireland, working life and struggle, 1890–1914* (Belfast, 1995).
- Curtis, L.P. Jr., *Coercion and conciliation in Ireland, 1880–1892* (Princeton, 1963).
- Curtis, L.P. Jr., 'On class and class conflict in the Land War', *Irish Economic and Social History* viii (1981), pp. 86–94.
- Curtis, L.P. Jr., 'Landlord responses to the Irish Land War, 1879–87', *Eire-Ireland: Journal of Irish Studies* (Fall–Winter 2003), pp. 134–88.
- Curtis, L.P. Jr., *The depiction of eviction in Ireland, 1845–1910* (Dublin, 2011).
- Cusack, Danny, 'Can't pay, won't pay: Applications for rent abatements on the Gormanston estate in 1874', in Brian Casey (ed.), *Lords, land and labourers: The Big Houses and landed estates of Royal Meath* (Dublin, 2016), pp. 155–70.
- Daly, Mary E., *Dublin, the deposed capital: A social and economic history, 1860–1914* (Cork, 1984).
- Daly, Mary E., *The slow failure: Population decline and independent Ireland, 1920–1973* (Madison, 2005).
- Dickson, David, *Dublin: The making of a capital* (Dublin, 2014).
- Donnelly, James S. Jr., 'Cork market: Its role in the nineteenth century butter trade', *Studia Hibernica*, no. 11 (1971), pp. 130–53.

- Donnelly, James S. Jr., 'The journals of Sir John Benn-Walsh relating to the management of his Irish estates, 1823–64', *Journal of the Cork Archaeological and Historical Society* (July–Dec. 1974), pp. 86–123.
- Donnelly, James S. Jr., 'The Irish agricultural depression of 1859–64', *Irish Economic and Social History* iii (1976), pp. 33–54.
- Donnelly, James S. Jr., *The land and the people of nineteenth-century Cork: The rural economy and the Irish land question* (London and Boston, 1975).
- Donnelly, James S. Jr., 'The Land question in nationalist politics', in T.E. Hachey and L.J. McCaffrey (eds.), *Perspectives on Irish nationalism* (Kentucky, 1989), pp. 79–98.
- Dooley, Terence, 'Landlords and the land question, 1879–1909', in Carla King (ed.), *Famine, land and culture in Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 116–39.
- Dooley, Terence, *The decline of the Big House in Ireland. A study of Irish landed families 1860–1960* (Dublin, 2001).
- Dooley, Terence, *'The land for the people': The land question in independent Ireland* (Dublin, 2004).
- Dooley, Terence, *The decline and fall of the Dukes of Leinster, 1872–1948: Love, war, debt and madness* (Dublin, 2014).
- Duffy, Eamon, 'The age of Pio Nono: The age of Paul Cullen', in Dáire Keogh and Albert McDonnell (eds.), *Cardinal Paul Cullen*, pp. 47–61.
- Dunbabin, J.P.D., 'The incidence and organisation of agricultural trade unions in the 1870s', *Agricultural History Review* xvi, no. 2 (1968), pp. 114–41.
- Earnar-Byrne, Lindsey, *Letters of the Catholic poor: Poverty in Independent Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017).
- Egan, P.K., *The parish of Ballinasloe, its history from the earliest time to the present century* (Dublin, 1960; Galway, 1994).
- Feeney, Thomas, 'The Woodford evictions' (MEd thesis, NUI Galway, 1976).
- Feingold, W.L., 'The tenant's movement to capture the Irish poor law boards, 1877–1886', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 7, no. 3 (1975), pp. 216–31.
- Feingold, W.L., *The revolt of the tenantry: The transformation of local government in Ireland, 1872–1886* (Boston, 1984).
- Finnegan, Pat, *Loughrea, that den of infamy: The Land War in County Galway, 1879–82* (Dublin, 2014).
- Finnegan, Anne, 'The land war in south-east Galway, 1879–1890' (MA thesis, NUI Galway, 1974).
- Fitzpatrick, David, 'The geography of Irish nationalism', *Past and Present*, no. 78 (Feb. 1978), pp. 113–44.
- Fitzpatrick, David, 'The disappearance of the Irish agricultural labourer, 1841–1912', *Irish Economic and Social History* vii (1980), pp. 66–92.
- Fitzpatrick, David, 'Class, family and rural unrest in nineteenth century Ireland', in P.J. Drudy (ed.), *Ireland, land, politics and people* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 37–75.

- Frank, Stephen P., 'Popular justice, community and culture amongst the Russian peasantry, 1870–1900', in Ben Elko and Stephen P. Frank (eds.), *The world of the Russian peasant: Post-emancipation culture and society* (London, 1990), pp. 134–6.
- Fraser, Murray, *John Bull's other homes: State housing and British policy in Ireland, 1883–1922* (Liverpool, 1996).
- Gailey, Andrew, 'Unionist rhetoric and Irish local government reform, 1895–9', *Irish Historical Studies*, no. 24 (1984), pp. 52–68.
- Gailey, Andrew, *Ireland and the death of kindness: The experience of constructive unionism 1890–1905* (Cork, 1987).
- Geary, Laurence, *The Plan of Campaign, 1886–1891* (Cork, 1986).
- Gillespie, Raymond, *Reading Ireland: Print, reading and social change in early modern Ireland* (Manchester, 2005).
- Ginsborg, Paul, *A history of contemporary Italy, 1943–80* (London, 1990).
- Graham, Brian and Susan Hood, '"Every creed and party": Town tenant protest in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ireland', *Journal of Historical Geography* xxiv, no. 2 (Apr. 1998), pp. 170–87.
- Gray, Peter, *The making of the Irish Poor Law, 1815–43* (Manchester, 2009).
- Griffin, Emma, *Liberty's dawn: A people's history of the Industrial Revolution* (Yale, 2014).
- Gulliver, P.H. and Marilyn Silverman, *In the valley of the Nore: A social history of Thomastown, county Kilkenny, 1840–1983* (Dublin, 1986).
- Hobsbawm, Eric, *Labouring men: Studies in labouring history* (London, 1964).
- Hobsbawm, Eric, *Industry and Empire* (London, 1969).
- Hobsbawm, Eric, *Nations and nationalism since 1780, programme, myth and reality* (Cambridge, 1990).
- Hobsbawm, Eric, *Uncommon people, resistance, rebellion and jazz* (London, 1998).
- Hood, Susan, 'The landlord-planned nexus at Strokestown, county Roscommon: A case study of an Irish estate town, c. 1660–c. 1925' (PhD thesis, University of Ulster, 1994).
- Hoppen, K.T., *Elections, politics and society in Ireland, 1832–1887* (Oxford, 1984).
- Hoppen, K.T., 'Landlords, society and electoral politics in mid-nineteenth century Ireland', in C.H.E. Philpin (ed.), *Nationalism and popular protest in Ireland* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 284–319.
- Hoppen, K.T., 'Landownership and power in the nineteenth-century Ireland: The decline of an elite', in Ralph Gibson and Martin Blinkhorn (eds.), *Landownership and power in modern Europe* (London, 1991), pp. 164–80.
- Hoppen, K.T., *Ireland since 1800: Conflict and conformity* (Essex, 1999).
- Howell, David W., *The rural poor in eighteenth-century Wales* (Cardiff, 2000).
- Howell, David W., 'The land question in nineteenth-century Wales, Ireland and Scotland: A comparative study', *Agricultural Historical Review* 61, no. 1 (2013), pp. 83–110.

- Howkins, Alun, *Poor labouring men: Rural radicalism in Norfolk, 1870–1923* (London, 1985).
- Huggins, Michael, *Social conflict in pre-Famine Ireland: The case of county Roscommon* (Dublin, 2007).
- Hunter, James, *The making of the Crofting community* (Edinburgh, 1976, 2000, 2010).
- Hynes, Eugene, *Knock: The Virgin's apparition in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Cork, 2009).
- Jenkins, Brian, *Sir William Gregory of Coole: A biography* (Gerrards Cross, 1986).
- Jones, David Seth, *Graziers, land reform and political conflict in Ireland* (Washington, DC, 1995).
- Jones, David Seth, 'The cleavage between graziers and peasants in the land struggle, 1890–1910', in Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly Jr. (eds.), *Irish peasants: Violence and political unrest, 1780–1914* (Dublin, 1983), pp. 374–418.
- Jordan, Donald, 'John O'Connor Power, Charles Stewart Parnell and the centralization of popular politics in Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies* xxv, no. 97 (1986), pp. 46–66.
- Jordan, Donald, *Land and popular politics in Ireland: County Mayo from the Plantation to the Land War* (Cambridge, 1994).
- Jordan, Donald, 'The Irish National League and the "Unwritten Law": Rural protest and nation-building in Ireland, 1882–1890', *Past and Present* 158 (Feb., 1998) pp. 146–71.
- Kelly, Declan, *Ballinasloe from Garbally Park to the fair green* (Dublin, 2007).
- Kelly, James, Scarcity and poor relief in eighteenth-century Ireland: The subsistence crisis of 1782–4', *Irish Historical Studies* 28 (May 1992), pp. 38–62.
- Kelly, M.J., *The Fenian ideal and Irish nationalism, 1882–1916* (Suffolk, 2006).
- Kelley, T.J., "'Come Lord Jesus, quickly come": The writings and thoughts of Edward Nangle, 1826–1862', in Crawford Gribben and A.R. Holmes (eds.), *Protestant millennialism and Irish society, 1790–2005* (London, 2006), pp. 99–118.
- Kennedy, Liam, 'Farmers, traders and agricultural politics in pre-independence Ireland', in Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly Jr. (eds.), *Irish peasants: Violence and political unrest 1780–1914* (Manchester, 1983), pp. 339–73.
- Kennedy, Liam and Peter M. Solar, *Irish agriculture: A price history from the mid eighteenth century to the eve of the First World War* (Dublin, 2007).
- Keyes, Michael, *Funding the nation: Money and nationalist politics in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2011).
- King, Carla, "'Our destructive countrymen on the west coast": Relief and development strategies in the congested districts in the 1880s and 1890s', in Carla King and Conor McNamara (eds.), *The West of Ireland: New perspectives* (Dublin, 2011), pp. 161–84.

- Lane, Fintan, 'Rural labourers, social change and politics in late nineteenth century Ireland', in Fintan Lane and Donal Ó Drisceoil (eds.), *Politics and the Irish working class, 1830–1945* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 113–39.
- Lane, P.G., 'Agricultural labourers and the land question', in Carla King (ed.), *Famine, land and culture in Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 101–16.
- Larkin, Emmet, 'The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850–75', *American Historical Review* 77, no. 3 (June 1972), pp. 625–52.
- Larkin, Emmet, *The Roman Catholic Church and the Home Rule movement in Ireland, 1870–1874* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1990).
- Larkin, Emmet, 'Paul Cullen: The great ultramontane', in Dáire Keogh and Albert McDonnell (eds.), *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his world* (Dublin, 2011), pp. 15–22.
- Lee, J.J., 'Irish agriculture', *Agricultural History Review* xvii, pt. I (1969), pp. 64–76.
- Lee, J.J., *The modernisation of Irish society, 1848–1918* (Dublin, 1973).
- Liffey, Mike, 'The 1872 by-election', in Joseph Forde (ed.), *The district of Loughrea, Vol. 1. History, 1791–1918* (Galway, 2003), pp. 326–48.
- Livingstone, Peadar, *The Monaghan story: A documented history of the county Monaghan from the earliest times to 1976* (Enniskillen, 1980).
- Lucey, D.S., *The Irish National League in Dingle, County Kerry* (Dublin, 2003).
- Lucey, D.S., *Land, popular politics and agrarian violence in Ireland: The case of County Kerry, 1872–86* (Dublin, 2011).
- Lynch, Patricia, *The Liberal party in rural England 1885–1910: Radicalism and community* (Oxford, 2003).
- Lyons, F.S.L., *Ireland since the Famine* (Dublin, 1971).
- Lyons, F.S.L., 'The aftermath of Parnell, 1891–1903', in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland, vi: Ireland under the Union, 1870–1921* (Oxford, 1989a), pp. 81–110.
- Lyons, F.S.L., 'The watershed, 1903–7', in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland, vi: Ireland under the Union, 1870–1921* (Oxford, 1989b), pp. 111–22.
- Lyons, Martyn, *The writing culture of ordinary people in Europe, c. 1860–1920* (Cambridge, 2013).
- McDermott, Micheál, *Gypsum mining and the Shirley estate in south Monaghan, 1800–1936* (Dublin, 2009).
- McDonald, Theresa, *Achill Island* (Tullamore, 1997).
- McGee, Owen, *The IRB, The Irish Republican Brotherhood: From the Land League to Sinn Féin* (Dublin, 2007).
- McNamara, Conor, 'Politics and society in East Galway, 1914–21' (PhD thesis, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, 2008).
- McNamara, Conor, 'A Tenants' League or a shopkeepers' league? Urban protest and the Town Tenants Association in the west of Ireland, 1909–1918', *Studia Hibernica* 36 (2009–10), pp. 135–60.

- McManus, Ruth, *Dublin, 1910–1940: Shaping the city and suburbs* (Dublin, 2001).
- Mac Philib, Seamus, 'The Irish landlord system in folk tradition: Impact and image' (PhD thesis, UCD, 1990).
- Mc Gee, Owen, *The IRB, The Irish Republican Brotherhood: From the Land League to Sinn Féin* (Dublin, 2007).
- Mc Kenna, Kevin, 'Power, resistance, and ritual: Paternalism on the Clonbrock Estates 1826–1908' (PhD thesis, Maynooth University, 2011).
- McWilliams, Rohan, *Popular politics in nineteenth century England* (London, 1998).
- Malcomson, P.W., *Virtues of a wicked earl: The life and legend of William Sydney Clements, third earl of Leitrim 1806–78* (Dublin, 2009).
- Marley, Laurence, *Michael Davitt: Freeland radical and frondeur* (Dublin, 2007).
- Melvin, Patrick, 'The landed gentry of Galway, 1820–1880' (PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1991).
- Moffitt, Miriam, *Soupers and jumpers: The Protestant mission in Connemara, 1848–1937* (Dublin, 2008).
- Moffitt, Miriam, *The society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics, 1849–1950* (Manchester, 2010).
- Moffitt, Miriam, *The Clanricarde planters and land agitation in east Galway* (Dublin, 2011).
- Molloy, Joe (ed.), *The parish of Clontuskert: Glimpses into its past* (Ballinasloe, 2009).
- Moody, T.W., *Davitt and the Irish revolution, 1846–82* (Oxford, 1984).
- Moran, Gerard, *A radical priest in Mayo: Fr Patrick Lavelle: The rise and fall of an Irish nationalist, 1825–86* (Dublin, 1994a).
- Moran, Gerard, 'James Daly and the rise and fall of the Land League in Ireland, 1879–92', *Irish Historical Studies* 29, no. 114 (1994b), pp. 189–207.
- Moran, Gerard, 'The Land War, urban destitution and town tenant protest, 1879–1882', *Saothar* 20 (1995), pp. 17–32.
- Moran, Gerard, '"Near famine": The Roman Catholic Church and the subsistence crisis of 1879–82', *Studia Hibernica*, no. 32 (2004), pp. 155–77.
- Moran, Gerard, 'James Hack Tuke and his schemes for assisted emigration from the west of Ireland', *History Ireland* 21 (May/June).
- Mulryan-Moloney, Maeve, *Nineteenth-century elementary education in the arch-diocese of Tuam* (Dublin, 2001).
- Mulvagh, Conor, *The Irish parliamentary party at Westminster* (Manchester, 2016).
- Newby, Andrew G., *The life and times of Edward McHugh (1853–1915), Land reformer, trade unionist and labour activist* (New York, 2005).

- Newby, Andrew G., *Ireland, radicalism and the Scottish Highlands, c.1870–1912* (Edinburgh, 2007).
- Newby, Howard, 'The deferential dialectic', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17, no. 2 (Apr. 1975), pp. 139–64.
- Newby, Howard, *The deferential worker: A study of farm workers in East Anglia* (London, 1977).
- Ní Ghiobúin, M.C., 'Societal change in Achill Island in the nineteenth century' (PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2006).
- Norman, E.R., *The Catholic Church and Ireland in the age of rebellion* (London, 1965).
- O'Brien, Pius, *The Sisters of Mercy of Ennis* (Ennis, 1992).
- O'Brien, Pius, *The Sisters of Mercy of Kilrush and Kilkee* (Dublin, 1997).
- O'Carroll, Ciaran, 'The pastoral vision of Paul Cullen', in Dáire Keogh and Albert McDonnell (eds.), *Cardinal Paul Cullen*, pp. 115–29.
- Ó Ciosáin, Niall, *Ireland in official print culture, 1800–1850: A new reading of the poor inquiry* (Oxford, 2014).
- O'Connor, John, *The workhouses of Ireland: The fate of Ireland's poor* (Dublin, 1995).
- O'Riordan, Ann, *East Galway agrarian agitation and the burning of Ballydugan house, 1922* (Dublin, 2015).
- Pole, Adam, 'Sheriffs' sales during the land war, 1879–82', *Irish Historical Studies* xxxiv, no. 136 (2005), pp. 386–402.
- Prunty, Jacinta, *Dublin slums, 1800–1925: A study in urban geography* (Dublin, 1998).
- Prunty, Jacinta, 'Battleplans and battle grounds: Protestant mission activity in the Dublin slums, 1840s–1880s', in Crawford Gribben and A.R. Holmes (eds.), *Protestant millennialism, evangelicalism and Irish society* (New York, 2006), pp. 119–43.
- Rafferty, Oliver P. 'The ultramontane spirituality of Paul Cullen', in Dáire Keogh and Albert McDonnell (eds.), *Cardinal Paul Cullen*, pp. 62–77.
- Richards, Eric, *The Highland clearances* (Edinburgh, 2015).
- Rouse, Paul, *Ireland's own soil: Government and agriculture in Ireland, 1945 to 1965* (Dublin, 2000).
- Rouse, Paul, *Sport and Ireland: A history* (Oxford, 2015).
- Scott, Pauline, 'Rural radicals or mercenary men? Resistance to evictions on the Glinsk/Creggs estate of Allan Pollok', in Brian Casey (ed.), *Defying the law of the land: Agrarian radicals in Irish history* (Dublin, 2013), pp. 65–79.
- Scott, Pauline, 'Evictions on the Glinsk estate of Allan and Margaret Pollok in the 1850s' (PhD thesis, NUI Galway, 2014).
- Silverman, Marilyn, *An Irish working class: Explorations in political economy and hegemony* (Toronto, 2001).

- Smith, Cathal, 'Apostles of agricultural reform: The Ballinasloe Agricultural Improvement Society in an era of high farming and high famine, 1840–1850', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 64 (2012), pp. 128–45.
- Snell, K.D.M., *Annals of the labouring poor: Social change and agrarian England, 1660–1900* (Cambridge, 1987).
- Snell, K.D.M., *Parish and belonging: Community, identity and welfare in England and Wales, 1700–1950* (Cambridge, 2006).
- Solow, Barbara, *The land question and the Irish economy, 1870–1903* (Cambridge, MA, 1971).
- Stanford, Jane, *That Irishman: The life and times of John O'Connor Power* (Dublin, 2010).
- Stone, Norman, *Europe transformed: 1878–1919* (London, 1983).
- Thompson, Dorothy, *The Chartist* (Hounslow, 1984).
- Thompson, E.P., *The making of the English working class* (London, 1963a).
- Thompson, F.M.L., *English landed society in the nineteenth century* (London, 1963b).
- Thornley, David, *Isaac Butt and home rule* (London, 1964).
- Tolstoy, Leo, *How much land does a man need?* (London, 2015).
- Travers, Pauric, *Settlements and divisions, Ireland 1870–1922* (Dublin, 1988).
- Vardi, Liana, *The land and the loom: Peasants and profit in northern France, 1630–1800* (Durham, NC, 1993).
- Vaughan, W.E., 'Landlord and tenant relations in Ireland between the famine and the Land War, 1850–1875', in L.M. Cullen and Thomas Smout (eds.), *Comparative perspectives of Scottish and Irish economic and social history 1600–1900* (Edinburgh, 1977), pp. 216–26.
- Vaughan, W.E., *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford, 1994).
- Walsh, Walter, *Kilkenny: The struggle for the land, 1850–82* (Kilkenny, 2009).
- Weber, Eugen, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The modernization of rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, 1976).
- Whelan, Irene, 'The Bible gentry: Evangelical religion, aristocracy and the new moral order in the early nineteenth century', in Crawford Gribben and Andrew R. Homes (eds.), *Protestant millennialism, evangelicalism and Irish society* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp. 52–82.
- Whelan, Irene, *The Bible war in Ireland: The "Second Reformation" and the Polarization of Protestant-Catholic Relations, 1800–1840* (Dublin, 2005).
- Whelan, Kevin, 'Towns and village in Ireland: A socio-cultural perspective', *The Irish Review* 5 (1988), pp. 34–43.
- Whelan, Kevin, 'The republic in the village: The dissemination and reception of popular literature in the 1790s', in Gerard Long (ed.), *Books beyond the Pale:*

- Aspects of the provincial book trade in Ireland before 1850* (Dublin, 1996a), pp. 101–40.
- Whelan, Kevin, ‘The republic in the village: The United Irishmen, the Enlightenment and popular culture’, in idem *Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism and the construction of Irish identity, 1760–1830* (Dublin, 1996b), pp. 59–98.
- Whyte, J.H., ‘The influence of the Catholic clergy on elections in nineteenth century Ireland’, *English Historical Review*, no. 75 (1960), pp. 239–59.
- Whyte, J.H., ‘Landlord influence at elections in Ireland’, *English Historical Review* 80 (1965), pp. 740–60.
- Wolf, Nicholas, *An Irish-speaking island: State, religion, community, and the linguistic landscape in Ireland, 1770–1870* (Madison, 2014).
- Wright, D.G., *Popular radicalism: The working class experience, 1780–1880* (London, 1988).

INDEX

A

Abbeygormican, 236
Abbot, John, 71
Abraham, William, 211
Achill, 66, 74
Ahascragh, 165, 239
Anti-clericalism, 14, 100
Arch, Joseph, 135
Arensberg, Conrad M., 262
Artisan Dwelling Act (1875), 33
Ashtown estate, 11, 17, 27, 63, 78,
165, 237
Athlone, 78, 109, 137
Athlone barony, 166

B

Baldwin, Thomas, 34–35
Balfour, Arthur, 17, 208, 210, 215,
229, 233
Ball, Stephen, 185
Ballinasloe
education in, 72

few evictions, 29
proselytism, 66
sectarianism in, 71
state of housing in, 32
Ballinasloe Agricultural Hall,
50, 201
Ballinasloe Agricultural Society,
11, 26, 28, 35, 40–41,
48, 50, 51–52,
144, 246
Ballinasloe and East Galway Trades
Association, 240
Ballinasloe Board of Guardians, 12,
165–166, 172, 205, 208
loyalty to Clancarty, 78
Ballinasloe Chamber of Commerce,
262
Ballinasloe Market House, 201
Ballinasloe October Fair, 43, 44,
46–47
Ballinasloe Poor Law Union, 35
Ballinasloe Rural District Council,
243

Ballinasloe Tenant Defence
 Association, 2, 8, 129, 149, 172,
 206, 260
 class nature, 14, 130, 149–150
 establishment, 15, 131, 133–134,
 135, 138, 151, 174
 Fenian-led, 119, 132
 precursor to Land League, 3
 Ballinasloe Town Commission, 174,
 201
 Ballinasloe Town Tenant League, 243,
 245
 Ballinasloe Town Tenants Association,
 244
 Ballinasloe Urban District Council,
 240, 244
 Ballinasloe Workhouse, 12, 64, 66, 68,
 70, 76, 81, 166
 Ballinasloe Workingmen's Association,
 240
 Ballinlass, 26
 Ballydugan House, 238
 Banagher, 46
 Banfield, Andrew, 72, 261
 Barrett, Patrick, 106, 212
 Bell, Jonathan, 33
 Bellew estate, 31
 Bellew Nolan, Mr, 106
 Bence-Jones, Mark, 182
 Bermingham, Thomas, 33, 35
 Berrane, Mrs, 214
 Bew, Paul, 132, 135, 217, 239
 Biagini, Eugenio, 16, 170
 Bilton, Belle, 231, 255
 Blake, Charles J., 101
 Blake, John, 102
 Blake, Lucinda, 77
 Blake, Thomas Seymour, 207
 Blarney, 43
 Board of Works, 164, 203
 Borough, Randal, 76
 Bourke, Canon Ulick, 112, 114

Bowen, Desmond, 69
 Bowler, George Gleeson, 201, 203,
 205–208, 211–212, 217
 Boyle, 78
 Boyton, Michael, 130
 Brackernagh, 181–182
 Browne, George, 115
 Browne, George, third Marquess of
 Sligo, 112
 Brutin, John, 240, 247
 Bull, Philip, 234, 257
 Burchardt, Jeremy, 33, 165, 171, 176
 Burke, Sir Thomas John, 79, 101–102,
 107
 Burke, Thomas Henry, 165
 Butt, Isaac, 15, 92, 113, 140, 147,
 151, 256
 Byrne, Thomas, 206, 209–211,
 214–215, 239

C

Callanan, John, 138, 168–169, 217
 Cameron, Ewen, 16, 69
 Campbell-Bannerman, Henry, 230
 Cannadine, David, 17, 232, 239
 Carroll, Rev James, 165
 Carroll, Thomas, 175
 Carter, John, 111
 Castlebar, 116–117, 138
 Castlegar, 236
 Castlereagh, 25
 Castlesampson, 33
 Catholic Church
 archives, 4
 and elections, 10, 13–14, 108, 112
 and Fenians, 114
 and proselytism, 69, 79
 social thinking, 12, 262
 ultramontaniam, 12, 64–65, 92, 140
 Catholic Tenant Defence Association,
 109

- Central Tenant Defence Association,
 132, 137, 140, 146–147
 Chance, Patrick Alexander, 210
 Chartism, 15, 93, 118, 132, 142, 143,
 150, 177
 Church Education Society, 73
 Church of Ireland, 70, 72, 74, 79
 Clancarty estate, 17, 27–28, 31, 32,
 103, 105, 236
 decline of, 231
 evictions, 29
 hostile to subdivision, 11
 Clancarty family, 13, 52
 Clanricarde estate, 11, 17, 27,
 215–216, 220
 Clapperton, James, 37
 Clark, Samuel, 11
 Clements, William Sydney, third Earl
 of Leitrim, 27, 51
 Clifden, 35
 Clonbrock, Lord, 98, 101, 161,
 183–184, 220, 235
 Clonbrock estate, 11, 17, 33, 35, 41,
 63, 77–80
 Clonmacnowen barony, 24, 165
 Clontuskert, 74
 Cobbett, William, 129
 Coffey, Francis, 76
 Comerford, R.V., 108, 150, 172, 176,
 187, 211
 Congested Districts Board (CDB), 10,
 231, 233–234, 236–237
 Congress of Vienna, 65
Connacht Tribune, 238–239, 243–245
Connaught People, 171
Connaught Telegraph, 133–135, 138,
 140, 146, 148, 173
 Connemara, 12, 65–66, 70, 73
 Conroy, Laurence, 205, 210
 Conservative Party, 17, 93, 200, 229,
 231, 233, 260
 Coorheen, 212
 Cork, 43
 Costello, Rev Patrick, 212, 235
 Council of Trent, 65
 Cowen, Captain Patrick, 174
 Cowper Commission, 205, 213, 215
 Craughwell, 183
 Creagh, 64, 72, 165, 215, 242
 Creggs, 27
 Crofters Act (1886), 220
 Cronin, Maura, 239
 Crossman, Virginia, 205, 207–208
 Cullen, Jim, 262
 Cullen, Louis, 67
 Cullen, Paul, Archbishop of Dublin,
 12, 64, 67, 91, 94, 140
 Cummer, 140
 Cunningham, John, 247
 Curtis, L.P., 9, 183, 209–210, 213
 Cusack, Danny, 162
- D**
 Dallas, Alexander, 66, 69,
 74–75
 Daly, James, 113, 117, 134, 148,
 173
 Daly, John A., 101
 Daly, Mary, 262
 D'Arcy, John Talbot, 50
 Davitt, Michael, 3, 144, 149, 168,
 233, 242
 De Burgh, Ulick, first Marquess of
 Clanricarde, 13, 26, 68, 97, 102,
 104, 110
 De Burgh-Canning, Hubert, second
 Marquess of Clanricarde, 1, 2, 27,
 97, 98–99, 100, 167–168, 182,
 200, 217
 as MP, 95
 Deerpark, 33, 37
 Deference, 140
 to Catholic clergy, 245

Deference (*cont.*)

- challenged, 10, 16, 49–50, 142, 178, 200, 204, 214, 261, 263
- to Clancarty, 81, 168, 200, 203
- decline of, 17
- definition of, 7
- education as nemesis of, 257
- to landlords, 4, 5, 8, 17, 41, 50, 130, 137, 143, 150, 176, 259
- landlords' perception of, 9
- and stability, 261
- Derry, John, Bishop of Clonfert, 73, 75, 203
- Derrymullen, 182, 203, 215
- Devon Commission, 11, 28, 34–35, 37
- Dillon, Rev Garrett, 71, 77
- Dillon, John, 211, 230
- Disraeli, Benjamin, first earl of Beaconsfield, 164
- Donelan, James, 105
- Donnelly, James S., 27, 162, 215
- Donoghue, J., 78, 206, 207
- Dooley, Terence, 220, 235, 257
- Dubarry, 262
- Duchess of Marlborough Committee, 164, 178
- Duffy, Eamon, 65
- Duffy, W.E., (William) 38, 134, 174, 237
- Duggan, Patrick, Bishop of Clonfert, 13, 26, 98, 104, 110, 139, 148, 163, 167–168
- Dunbabin, J.P.D., 135
- Dunsandle, Lord, 98, 101
- Dunsandle estate, 11, 17, 27, 79, 237

E

- East Galway Democrat*, 201, 244
- Education, bible schools, 12, 31, 103
- Egan, Laurence, 35
- Egan, Rev P.K., 12, 28, 31, 66, 81, 82, 178

Elder, J.J., 167

Elections

- Ballinasloe Board of Guardians (1877), 173
- Ballinasloe Board of Guardians (1882), 174
- Ballinasloe Board of Guardians (1886), 205
- Ballinasloe Town Commission (1882), 175
- Galway by-election (1871), 95
- Galway by-election (1872), 10, 13–14, 82, 93, 97, 113, 118, 142, 173
- Galway county election (1857), 79
- Galway county election (1859), 79
- general election (1874), 112, 114
- general election (1885), 177, 229
- Mayo by-election (1874), 10, 13–14, 93, 112, 116, 131, 142–143, 149
- Mayo election (1874), 10, 93, 113, 116
- Meath by-election (1871), 96
- Elizabeth I, 74
- Encumbered Estates Court, 11, 28, 163
- Evicted Tenant Fund, 233
- Evictions, 141, 182, 214
 - Ballinasloe, 28, 29, 141, 181–182, 214, 217
 - cost of, 2
 - Craughwell, 183
 - ethics of, 9
 - during Great Famine, 27
 - intimidation, 185
 - Loughrea, 183
 - and Plan of Campaign, 210
 - Ponsonby, 216
 - Portacarron, 91, 95
 - threat of, 183
 - Urachree, 106
 - Woodford, 1, 217
- Eyrecourt, 29

F

- Fairfield, 29
 Famine, 32
 Farming Society of Ireland, 34
 Farney Tenant Defence Association, 132, 147
 Feingold, W.L., 172
 Fenianism, 98, 114, 118, 147, 172, 256, 259
 agrarian policy, 131
 and the clergy, 139
 Clerkenwell explosion, 131
 and democracy, 13, 117
 divided over Home Rule, 99
 1867 rebellion, 14
 elections, 108
 in Galway, 93
 neo-Fenians, 10, 13, 92–93, 99, 114–115, 117, 132–133, 141, 260
 and politics, 113–116, 119, 149, 173
 social background, 133
 social platform, 135
 Ferguson, Hugh, 46
 Finlay, T.A., 75
 Finnegan, Pat, 184
 Finnerty, Martin, 237
 Folklore Commission, 64
 Fowler, Edward, 30, 43, 48, 50, 141, 174, 181–182, 187, 205–207, 211–216
 Fraser, Murray, 241
 Free Church of Scotland, 69
Freeman's Journal, 96, 99, 100, 104, 138, 233
 French, Charles, 143

G

- Gaelic League, 244
 Gailey, Andrew, 232, 246
 Gairdner, John, 208–209

- Galway Artisans' and Labourers' Housing Association, 241
Galway Express, 67, 97, 99, 108
Galway Packet, 71
Galway Press, 50
 Galway town, 35, 164
Galway Vindicator, 64, 67, 77, 80, 81–82, 204
 Gambetta, Léon, 14
 Garbally, 28, 44, 47, 63, 94, 98–99, 107, 112
 Garbally College, 75
 Gascoyne, Henry Ireland, 204
 Gascoyne-Cecil, Robert, third marquess of Salisbury, 230
 Gerrard, Marcella, 27
 Gill, R.J., 48, 174
 Gillespie, Raymond, 260
 Gillooly, Laurence, 103
 Ginnell, Laurence, 230, 237
 Ginsborg, Paul, 261
 Gladstone, William Ewart, 13, 93, 110, 130, 169, 170, 183, 200, 211, 231
 Glinsk, 27
 Goldenbridge, 78
 Gombeenism, 17
 Goode, James, 167
 Goode, John, 167
 Gormanston estate, 162
 Grand Jury Act (1836), 165
 Gray, Sir John, 95
 Great Famine, 11, 37
 changes to landscape, 28
 and Clancarty, 82
 and collective psyche, 68
 effects on politics, 92
 evictions, 27
 and landlords, 26, 35, 63
 and proselytism, 12, 73
 population decline, 24
 Great Reform Act (1867), 15

Green, Rev Malachy, 42
 Gregory, Sir William, 79, 80, 95, 99,
 219
 Gulliver, P.H., 133, 136, 138
 Gyles, Ellen, 72

H

Hamilton, James, first Duke of
 Abercorn, 30
 Handy, Orme, 208, 209
 Hanging gale, 29, 31
 Harpur, F.A., 167
 Harrington, Timothy, 209
 Harris, Matt, 167, 185, 186, 202
 arrest in 1881, 176
 and Ballinasloe Agricultural Hall,
 201
 and Clancarty, 203
 and clergy, 118
 death of, 217–218
 and deference, 168
 early years, 137
 election as MP, 178
 and elections, 177
 home raided by police, 137
 and INL, 215
 and land question, 1, 3, 10, 133,
 135, 138, 141, 145–146,
 148–149, 170, 179, 261
 as MP, 208, 210
 and politics, 14, 115, 118
 as product of Chartist era, 143
 rhetoric on landlords, 144
 and town tenants and labourers,
 169, 171
 Harrison, Henry, 177
 Hassard, Francis, 71
 Hastings, William, 240–241
 Hayden's Hotel, 50
 Healy, T.M., 114, 230
 Hechter, Michael, 144
 Henry, Mitchell, 95, 148

Hervey, Adeliza, Countess of
 Clancarty, 41–42
 Hervey, Frederick, second Marquess of
 Bristol, 41
 Hervey, Frederick, third Marquess of
 Bristol, 41
 Hickey, William, 34
 Hicks Beach, Michael, 209–210, 214
 Higgin, William, 79
 Highlands, Scottish, 27, 30, 69
 Hobbsawm, Eric, 139, 150, 247
 Home Government Association, 92,
 96, 114, 256
 Home Rule, 15, 96, 103, 111, 114,
 143, 151, 217, 230, 233, 246
 and Captain Nolan, 98
 electoral support for, 112–113, 118,
 138, 229
 and fall of Parnell, 231
 and Fenianism, 98–99
 and Issac Butt, 114
 subordinate to land question,
 134–135, 148
 unionist opposition to, 211
 as vehicle for Catholic power, 211
 Home Rule Bill (1894), 231
 Hood, Susan, 30
 Hoppen, K.T., 41, 94, 164, 220,
 248
 Horne, Junius, 167–168, 174
 Howell, David, 2, 3, 8
 Howkins, Alun, 5, 6, 171, 176
 Huggins, Michael, 4, 134
 Hunter, James, 2, 259
 Hynes, Eugene, 41, 51, 118, 163

I

Irish Church Missions, 66, 69
Irish Farmers' Gazette, 11, 28, 46–47,
 49
 Irish Land Committee, 183, 219
 Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, 219

Irish Missionary College, 74–75
 Irish National Land League, 3
 Irish National League, 2, 8, 139, 170,
 178, 185, 209, 211, 215, 219,
 234, 240, 259
 in Ballinasloe, 170–171, 182, 203,
 212, 214–215
 and evictions, 209
 finances of, 210
 formation of, 184
 and land question, 200
 and local government, 239
 as quasi-government force, 17, 185
 Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP), 112,
 216, 241
 and candidates, 177–178
 holds balance of power, 229–230,
 232
 and labourers, 33
 and Parnell, 147
 Irish Peasantry Society, 48
 Irish Society, 73, 74
Irishman, 114
 Ivers, William, 169, 174–175

J

Jenkins, Brian, 80
 Johnson, P.F., 135
 Johnstone, Stephen, 70–71
 Jones, David Seth, 145, 234
 Jordan, Donald, 112, 133, 137, 148,
 169
 Joyce, Rev Timothy J., 201, 244, 247
 Jumperism, 70, 79

K

Kanturk, 135
 Kellysgrove, 28
 Kempster, Jack, 243
 Kenny, Mrs, 71, 72
 Keogh, William, 13, 108

Kerry Tenant Defence Association,
 138, 146
 Keyes, Michael, 186
 Kilclooney, 182, 215
 Kildare Place Society, 75
 Kilkenny, 2
 Killaan, 165
 Killahornia, 182
 Killeen, Michael, 110
 Kilmartin, James, 41, 138–139, 143,
 146, 169, 177, 185
 Kilmartin, Thomas, 245
 Kilrush, 76
 Kimball, Solon T., 262

L

Labour Party, 6
 Labourers League, 169
 Labourers' (Ireland) Act (1883),
 169
 Lalor, James Fintan, 138
 Lancaster, James, 74
 Land Act (1870), 130, 132,
 140–141
 Land Act (1881), 168, 180, 233
 Land Act (1903), 232, 234–235, 239,
 245, 256, 259
 Land Act (1909), 236, 239
 Land Act (1923), 259
 Land agitation, 2, 135, 178, 229,
 231–232, 234, 238
 Land Commission, 140, 236, 237
 Land Conference, 234
 Land League, 2, 8, 11, 15, 50, 137,
 139–140, 149, 178, 182, 184,
 185, 219, 234, 239, 257,
 259–260
 in Ballinasloe, 165, 175, 187
 banning of, 184
 and boycotting, 179
 and clergy, 116
 end of, 170

Land League (*cont.*)

- establishment of, 132, 135, 150
- and Fenianism, 117
- and graziers, 217
- and Harris, 1, 176, 217
- and labourers, 163, 186
- rightward shift, 177, 179
- and town tenants, 167, 171, 240
- and violence, 16

Land War, 16, 27, 52, 67, 100,

150–151, 161, 164, 172, 185,
256, 261

- in Ballinasloe, 178, 182
- and Bishop Duggan, 26
- boosts generational change, 8
- and clergy, 111
- in east Galway, 47
- and evictions, 29
- and Fenianism, 118, 137
- and Harris, 144
- and landlords, 9–10, 17, 27, 183,
186, 199, 219, 229, 231, 257
- legitimises Catholic middle class, 7
- origins of, 15
- and town tenants, 242
- and violence, 7

Landlordism

- paternalism of, 31, 63
- religious outlook of landlords, 31
- second landlordism, 63

Larkin, Garrett, 175

Larkin, John, 71, 97

Larkin, Thomas, 2

Lavelle, Rev Patrick, 93–96, 112, 115

Lecky, W.H., 75

Lee, J.J., 134, 231

Leinster estate, 137

Leinster Lease, 130, 145

Lemass, Sean, 262

Leo XIII, 262

Le Poer Trench, Charles, archdeacon
of Ardagh, 31Le Poer Trench, Richard, fourth Earl
of Clancarty, 257

and agricultural improvement, 38,
43, 48–51

assaulted by a mob, 106

death of, 245

and housing, 31, 33

and market house, 202–203

marriage, 41

object of deference, 168

political influence of, 173–176, 206,
212, 219

and politics, 67, 79, 205

and Property Defence Association,
184

and relief works, 165–167, 178

and son's marriage, 255

and tenants, 30, 181–182, 187,
200–201, 212–215

and waterworks, 204

Le Poer Trench, Richard, second Earl
of Clancarty, 31

and agricultural improvement, 51

Le Poer Trench, Robert, 77

Le Poer Trench, William, fifth Earl of
Clancarty, 235, 256

fraud conviction, 255

leaves Ballinasloe, 245

marriage, 231

Le Poer Trench, William, MP, 13, 95

Le Poer Trench, William, rear-admiral,
31Le Poer Trench, William, third Earl of
Clancarty, 24, 97, 204

and agricultural improvement, 28,
30, 35, 38, 40, 42–43, 51

death of, 47, 50, 107

and housing, 31–32

and market house, 203

object of deference, 82

and politics, 99–101, 104, 118

on Poor Law, 68

religious views of, 12, 36, 39,
63–64, 66, 70, 73, 76, 78, 94
and tenants, 28–29, 141
Lewis, Samuel, 26
Liberal Party, 6, 230
Lickmolassy, 26
Lismanny, 49, 165
Lloyd, Clifford, 184–185
Local Government Act (1898), 219,
232, 239
Longford barony, 26, 165
Loughrea, 17, 26, 35, 44, 101–102,
106, 167–168, 182, 212, 242
barony of, 26
evictions in, 29
land agitation in, 162–164, 200,
220, 235
Lynch, Patricia, 16
Lynch, R.C.C., 208
Lyons, F.S.L., 231, 242
Lyons, Martyn, 5

M

McAuley, Catherine, 75
McCabe, Edward, 167
MacEvilly, John, Archbishop of Tuam,
13, 94
Mac Fhinn, Rev Eric, 97
McGiverin, Michael, 167–168, 169
MacHale, John, Archbishop of Tuam,
12, 66, 74, 93–97, 103–104,
110, 112, 115, 139, 140, 148
Mackney, 141
McNabb, Patrick, 262–263
McNamara, Conor, 241, 256
Mac Philib, Séamus, 8, 41
McWilliam, Rohan, 176
Madden, J.J., 205–207, 210
Mahon, Rev Sir William, 165
Mahon, Sir William, 236
Mahon estate, 237, 239

Manning, Andrew, 175, 207
Manning, T.J., 171, 205–206, 213,
242
Mansion House Relief Committee,
164, 178
Martin, John, 96
Mayo, 94, 134, 163
Fenianism in, 92, 137
Meagher, Mr 203
Mill, John Stuart, 132, 134–135
Moffitt, Miriam, 65
Moore, 238
Moore, George Henry, 112
Moran, Gerard, 114, 118, 167–168
Morley, John, 183, 233
Mountbellew, 26
Moycarn barony, 24, 166
Mullagh, 236, 237
Mulvagh, Conor, 230

N

Nangle, Edward, 74
Napoleonic Wars, 26, 35, 63, 65, 67,
69
Nation, 81
Nestor, Patrick, 70–71
Nevin, Peter, 214
Newbridge, 26
Newby, Andrew, 16
Newby, Howard, 7, 130
New Departure, 14, 113, 116, 131,
173
New Inn, 237
New York, 5
Newspapers, 2–5, 67, 107, 129, 134,
237, 259, 260
Ní Ghiobúin, Mealla C., 70
Nolan, John Philip, 13, 95–96, 99,
100, 108, 148
Norfolk, 5, 6, 30
Nugent, Richard Anthony, 178

O

- O'Brien, George, 259
 O'Brien, William, 136, 174, 216, 218, 234
 Ó Ciosáin, Niall, 257
 O'Connor, Patrick, 201–202, 204, 245
 O'Connor, Charles Owen, the O'Connor Don, 30, 143
 O'Donnell, Sir George, 115
 O'Donoghue, The, (Daniel) 138
 O'Donovan Rossa, Jeremiah, 108, 113–114
 O'Flaherty, Bridget, 77
 O'Hara Trench estate, 237
 O'Hea, Alfred, 134
 O'Loughlin, Sir Colman, 111
 O'Riordan, Ann, 238
 O'Rourke, Thomas, 146
 Orr, R.H., 74
 O'Shaughnessy, J.J., 107, 174
 O'Sullivan, Michael Malachy, 14, 134, 137–138, 147
 Oughterard, 13, 35, 106

P

- Paine, Thomas, 132, 260
 Parnell, Charles Stewart, 15, 147, 151, 170, 177, 211, 229, 246
 and boycotting, 179
 and Harris, 178
 and John O'Connor Power, 114–115
 and labourers, 168–169
 and land question, 147–148
 and party whip, 177–178
 and Tenant Defence League, 216
 fall of, 231
 leadership style, 230
 Parnell Commission, 233
 Pinkerton, John, 211

- Pius XI, 262
 Plan of Campaign, 17, 178, 199–200, 209, 216, 219–220, 229, 233, 256, 260
 in Woodford, 1
 Plunkett, Horace, 246
 Pollboy, 213–214
 Pollok, Allan, 27, 49, 63, 163, 165
 Pollok estate, 11, 27
 Ponsonby estate, 216
 Poor Law, 67–68, 164
 Poor Law Act (1838), 68
 Portacarron estate, 13, 91, 95–96
 Portnick, 74
 Portumna, 1, 26, 97, 102, 107, 182
 Castle, 26
 evictions in, 29
 land agitation in, 162, 220, 235
 Potts, J.W., 208–209
 Power, John O'Connor, 94, 114–115, 131
 early years, 114
 election as MP, 13–14, 93, 100, 112, 114–116, 131, 142, 149
 Fenian support of, 115
 involvement in politics, 113
 and land question, 134
 and Parnell, 115, 147–148
 personality of, 115, 117
 Primrose, Archibald, fifth earl of
 Rosebery, 231
 Proletarianisation, 3, 163
 Property Defence Association (PDA), 161, 183, 219
 Proselytism, 6, 11, 12, 31, 63, 65–66, 69, 75, 77, 81, 246
 Protestantism, 36, 67, 69–71, 73, 76, 105
 Prunty, Jacinta, 69
 Public Health Act (1887), 201
 Putrill, William, 201, 203, 210, 215

Q

Quakers, 10

R

Ranch War, 220, 237, 259
 Rea, Lough, 26
 Reddy, William 50, 205, 208, 210
 Reed, Sir Andrew, 200
 Reformation, 69, 74
 Reynolds, John, 38, 71–72, 77
 Ribbonism, 131, 135
 Richards, Eric, 27, 258
 Rigney, John, 211–212
 Robertson, Colonel Thomas, 146, 208
 Roche, John, 238, 242
 Roche, William, 170
 Ronaldson, Robert, 48
 Ross estate, 237
 Rothwell, Edward, 243
 Roughan, George F., 165–166
 Royal Agricultural Society, 33
 Royal Commission on Congestion,
 237, 243
 Royal Commission on Market Rights
 and Tolls, 202
 Royal Dublin Society, 34
 Royal Irish Constabulary, 105, 200,
 238
 Rundale system, 28
 Rushe, Michael, 102
 Russell, George, 17
 Ryan, Liam, 262
 Ryan, Dr Mark, 108, 118, 131

S

Sadlier, Richard, 109
 Saunders Fort, 1, 2
 Saunders, Thomas, 1, 2
 Scotland, 27, 30, 144, 220
 Scott, Jim, 262

Secret Ballot Act (1872), 13, 15, 113,
 132
 Seymour, Major Charles, 48, 74
 Shannon (town), 263
 Shannon, River, 24, 26, 140
 drainage, 30
 Shannonbridge, 139–140, 142
 Shawe-Taylor, John, 234
 Shaw-Lefevre, George, 217
 Shoneenism, 11, 163
 Shopocracy, 173, 232, 244
 Silverman, Marilyn, 133, 136, 138
 Sisters of Mercy, 12, 38, 42, 63–66,
 76–82, 246
 invited to Ballinasloe, 75
 Smith, Adam, 27
 Snell, Keith, 258
 Social and Democratic Federation,
 142, 177
 Solow, Barbara, 27, 42
 Souperism, 12, 66, 70, 79
 Sralea, 41
 Strokestown, 30, 32
 Suck, River, 24, 102, 140
 drainage, 30
 Sullivan, A.M., 95
 Sweeney, Thomas, 242
 Sweetman, John, 146
 Swift MacNeill, J.G., 211
 Synod of Thurles, 64, 91, 94

T

Taughmaconnell, 33, 143
 Tenant Defence Association, 216
 Tenant Defence League, 216
 Third Reform Act (1884), 16
 Thompson, E.P., 2, 9, 129, 137, 139,
 258
 Thompson, F.M.L., 130, 150
 Thornhill, Major Laurence, 50,
 207–209

Tighe, Thomas, 115
 Travers, Pauric, 231
 Trench, Charles, 48
 Trench, Richard, 44
 Tuam, 35, 46, 106, 108, 109, 164
Tuam Herald, 49, 96, 101, 104, 106,
 111
 Tuke, James Hack, 10
 Tully, Francis, 233, 236
 Twomey, Jeremiah, 233, 236

U

Ulster Custom, 36, 43, 130
 Ultramontanism, 65, 81
 United Estates Committee, 237
 United Irish League (UIL), 2, 8, 219,
 234, 235–239, 242, 244
 United Trades' Association, 240
 Urachree, 106

V

Vardi, Liana, 4, 129, 149
 Vaughan, W.E., 43, 182, 199
 Vincent, Matthew, 135

W

Walker, John Cotton, 70, 72, 76–77,
 80–81
 Walsh, Walter, 256
 Ward, J., 42, 136, 211, 243
 Ward, J.F., 169
 Ward, John, 48, 174, 175, 201
 Ward, Mr, 205
Warden of Galway, 77
 Watson, Mervyn, 33
 Weber, Eugen, 2, 4, 186
Western News, 49, 138, 168, 173–176,
 180–182, 187, 202–203, 205,
 207, 211, 214, 216–218
Western Star, 29, 43, 64, 67, 240
 Westport, 15
 Whelan, Irene, 35
 Whelan, Kevin, 92, 151
 Whitaker, T.K., 262
 Woodford, 1, 2, 182, 212, 217, 233
 land agitation in, 220
 Wyndham, George, 234

Y

Young, Arthur, 39