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RICHARD NED LEBOW

WHITE BRITAIN AND BLACK IRELAND:

THE ANGLO-IRISH COLONIAL RELATIONSHIP

by

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CHAPTER I

The phenomenon of colonialism has been carefully investigated in the decades following the Second World War. Most studies have approached it as a key stage in the development of non-western areas. Scholars have asked: What can we learn about the emerging nations by studying the impact of colonialism upon them? Recent research on Asian and African states has analyzed their new elites in terms of the educational and economic innovations of the Western powers, their ideology and goals as a response to colonial rule, and their political forms as creations evolved in the struggle for independence. The colonial experience is envisaged as the crucible in which these new societies were molded. If colonialism has been decisive for the maturation of a new East, its failure and collapse have been equally instrumental in the growth of a new West. Yet scholars have generally neglected to ask: What can we learn about Europe by studying colonialism from the European perspective?

This has not always been the case. An earlier generation of scholars, alive to the possibilities offered by such study, sought to derive a clearer understanding of their own society by investigating European colonial expansion. Hobson and Lenin ventured to lay bare the structure of European capital-

ism by examining the financial relationships between the metropolitan powers and their colonies. Joseph Schumpeter sought to illuminate the impact of social classes on European politics by means of a sociological analysis of imperial ambitions. William Langer undertook an historical investigation of the diplomacy of imperialism with the hope of providing insight into the nature of European political rivalries. These pioneering studies, and the later scholarship generated by them, have unquestionably added a new dimension to our understanding of nineteenth-century Europe.¹

While these studies of colonialism differ greatly in method and conclusion, all share a common focus in their attempt to analyze the roots of colonial expansion. When this research was first undertaken, colonialism appeared to be approaching its zenith. The last decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the extension of European power to all corners of the globe. Predicated upon a dynamism and a degree of military, economic, and administrative superiority never before achieved by one culture over another, the new systems of colonial empire appeared to most contemporary observers as a novel but lasting feature of the international system. Even the Marxists, who predicted the collapse of colonial empire, assumed that a progressive but

nevertheless paternalistic form of leadership would continue to be exercised over colonial peoples until they reached a higher stage of development. Accordingly, scholars desired to understand what appeared to be one of the most significant developments of recent times.

Today the era of colonial empire is over, and with it the age of European ascendancy has come to an end. Most colonies are now independent states and assert their equality before their former masters. From the vantage point of the mid-twentieth century we cannot help but have an altered perspective of colonial empire. The most important feature of colonialism in light of contemporary political realities is no longer its origin and development but rather its failure and decline. Such a change dictates a corresponding shift in scholarly focus. The investigation of the underlying reasons for the collapse of colonial empire should prove as fruitful to our understanding of Europe as the analysis of its origins did to a former generation of scholars. It is to this aspect of the colonial period that we now direct this study.

* * *

All societies develop moral codes to regulate the behavior of the members of that society towards each other. These codes

are usually justified in the name of some supernatural being or in reference to a set of sacrosanct principles. The members of the society are socialized into accepting the validity of these codes and are taught to conform to the behavioral norms established by them. To the extent that this code becomes internalized by the individual, it is difficult for him to violate it without suffering guilt or tension. Should the disparity between these norms and actual behavior represent a violation of an important element of the individual's moral code, the tension arising from subsequent guilt feelings can reach an intolerable level. In such cases, psychologists argue, the resulting tension must be reduced if the individual is to continue to function effectively.

There can be little doubt that the treatment usually meted out to the native population of a colony flagrantly violated the behavioral norms of the metropolitan society. This can be seen by examining the structure of colonial relationships.

Many students of colonialism have defined the colonial situation in reference to two conditions which, they believe, differentiated it from other forms of political relationships: (1) the loss of autonomy on the part of the colony; and (2) the exploitation of the colony in the interests of the metropolitan

power. According to these rules, a colonial situation was developed when a political system achieved domination over another society by virtue of its military, economic, and administrative superiority and used that power to exploit the wealth, human resources, and geographical position of the colony. Political power was usually exercised by a minority of settlers, soldiers, and administrators who represented the colonial power and were placed as trustees over the fate and fortunes of the majority of the inhabitants. Their function consisted in maintaining the presence and power of the metropolitan society while pursuing policies designed to increase the power and wealth of that society.

The enrichment of the mother country at the expense of the native inhabitants may then be considered to have been the goal of colonial empire. In order to facilitate this goal, the native population was deprived of autonomy and denied a major share of the wealth of their own land. The inhabitants were often treated as superfluous beings impeding the designs of the colonizer, or as additional capital to be exploited along with the other resources of the territory.

The English colonization of North America is an example of the first case. The settlers desired to clear the land and farm the soil but found the native Indians to be a barrier pre-

venting this enterprise. As the colonists extended the pale of settlement, the Indians were repeatedly pushed further and further into the hinterlands of the continent. Eventually a large majority of them were wiped out by disease or exterminated by the settlers.

The Spanish padrones in the New World pursued an opposite policy. The Indians were valued because of the useful labor they could be made to perform on the plantations established by the colonists. They were transformed into serfs or slaves, and their tribal organization was destroyed. Solicitude for the existence and well-being of the colonial population was demonstrated in either case, only so far as it was functional to the attainment of the colonizer's goals.

The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized was, therefore, fundamentally an antagonistic one, as a result of the superfluous or subservient role to which the colonial population was relegated. To the extent that the native inhabitants demanded political rights or opportunities for economic and social mobility, conflict was bound to arise between the two societies. Force and violence were not only the means by which conquest was achieved, but also the means through which rule was maintained and opposition suppressed.

If such methods were, in fact, flagrant violations of the behavioral norms of the metropolitan society, we should expect to see some accompanying form of behavior designed to reduce the tension that arose by virtue of this contradiction. To a great extent, this supposition is substantiated when we examine the ideological arguments employed by colonial powers to "justify" their colonial empires. It becomes apparent that the very behavior psychologists find to be effective in reducing dissonance among individuals was widely employed on a group basis in many colonial situations.

One means frequently adopted by individuals is an attempt by individuals to interpret their behavior in such a way as to minimize the guilt that would normally result from it. This is often accomplished by justifying the behavior in terms of the ends it produces. The rationalization that underlies the concept of the "white lie" is an example of this process. Most of us consider lying to be reprehensible behavior. If, however, the lie is told for some altruistic motive, such as saving a friend from unnecessary embarrassment, we can reduce any remorse we feel over our action by emphasizing instead the commendable end we hope it will achieve.

The same process can be seen to operate in most colonial situations. No colonial power in modern times has been willing

to admit openly that exploitation was the goal of empire. Metropolitan societies, while not denying the advantages that accrued to them from possession of colonies, sought to justify empire in terms of some higher good which, they argued, would result from their policy. By virtue of this commendable end, policies that would be envisaged as reprehensible, if self-serving, were permissible because of the altruistic end they would eventually produce.

The Spanish colonial empire is a case in point. It would be difficult to find a colonial situation in which the lust and greed of the colonizers were given a freer rein or one in which greater barbarities were perpetrated against the native population of the colony. There can be little doubt that the dream of quick material profit was the motivation prompting many conquistadores to carry the power of Spain to the New World. Conquistador and king alike, however, proclaimed the real goal of empire to be the conversion of the heathen Indians to Christianity.

The moral veneer thus imparted to the Spanish empire was certainly politically efficacious because it enabled Spain, and later Portugal, to marshal the support of the Papacy behind their colonial ambitions. Yet, it also served to assuage the guilt which arose over the barbaric manner in which the Indians were treated by the conquistadores and colonists. There is

historical evidence to suggest that many Spaniards--King Ferdinand included--were able to condone this behavior only by virtue of the higher good they believed would result from colonial expansion.⁴ The conversion of the heathen was seen as such a glorious and noble achievement that, in the minds of many Spaniards, it more than compensated for the slaughter, rapine, and other cruelties that accompanied it.

The same method was employed several hundred years later to justify European colonization of Africa. The "white man's burden" was just another version of the missionary crusade proclaimed by Spain. The choice of the justification merely reflects the secularization of Europe that occurred during the centuries spanning the two great epochs of European colonial expansion. The higher good that was now to result from colonial occupation consisted in the diffusion of the benefits of Western civilization among non-European peoples. Thus, the argument ran, the seemingly undemocratic conditions that prevailed in the colonies and the oppressive measures through which colonial authority was established and maintained were justifiable because they were really in the best interests of the native inhabitants.

The argument was, of course, politically advantageous in

that it could be employed to counter the arguments put forward by those who criticized the methods of administration in the colonies and the manner in which the native inhabitants were treated. It can also be seen how it served to reduce tension among those who supported or participated in colonial adventures but were troubled by the inhumane or undemocratic aspects of colonial rule.

5

A second method often employed in reducing tension that arises from a conflict between values and behavior is the attempt to define the situation in such a way that it becomes a special case in which the moral code is held to be inapplicable. In individual behavior, this is frequently accomplished by differentiating the individual towards whom such action is directed by some set of criteria that place him outside the realm in which the moral code is thought to apply.

An example of this technique is the rationalization employed by a businessman who thinks it unethical to cheat his steady customers, but regularly overcharges foreign tourists. This merchant might reduce tension by differentiating these tourists from his regular clientele. The tourists are thought of as foreign, not one of "us," not really part of our society --and therefore outside of its moral code. Perhaps he also considers the tourists so rich that he believes they really will

not be affected by overpaying. In either case, some argument is employed to differentiate them from the businessman's compatriots.

This differentiation process is usually an important element in colonial situations. It is most frequently manifested in an attempt to de-humanize the indigenous population of the colonized territory. If the population can thus be differentiated from oneself, it is not difficult to argue further that a different code of behavior is applicable towards them than would be accepted in relations with members of the colonizing society. The most obvious example of this is once again found in the Spanish colonial empire.

Throughout the sixteenth century, a great debate was waged in Spain over the question of whether or not the Indians were human beings. A majority of the conquistadores and plantation owners argued that the Indians resembled human beings in form, but were really animals. It followed from this premise that there was nothing wrong in treating them like beasts of burden-- a fair description of their position in the colonies. The opponents of this view were drawn largely from the clergy, many of whom were shocked by the treatment the Indians received from the Spanish and fought to protect them against the worst abuses. These priests argued that the Indians possessed souls and were therefore human. If they did not possess souls, the priests

asked, how could Spain embark upon a mission to Christianize them? This was the telling argument; it resulted in a Papal Bull declaring that the Indians were human beings after all.

The utility of believing that the Indians were non-human is obvious. This categorization served to reduce guilt and thus legitimize behavior towards the Indians--behavior that would otherwise have been incompatible with the moral norms of Catholic Spain. It is difficult to believe that there could have been a more "innocent" explanation. The Spaniards recognized that the Indians possessed human form, spoke a complex language, and lived in organized communities. Many of them quickly picked up Spanish and thus were able to converse with the conquistadores. Had a Spaniard ever before been able to carry on an intelligent conversation with a domesticated animal? Probably never, but this paradox did not seem to disrupt their faith in the rectitude of their conclusions about the Indians. Nor can the fact that the Indians were of a different color be taken as a crucial consideration, because the Spaniards recognized Asians and Africans as human beings.

A similar debate took place two hundred years later among the English settlers in North America. From the days of the first settlement, colonists were divided in their attitudes towards the Indians. Many colonists and, later, frontiersmen, argued that the Indians were inhuman savages. The Indian tribes claimed

prior rights to the territory these colonists wished to use for farming or grazing. Should the Indians be recognized as human beings, it would be immoral to expel them from their land, let alone exterminate them outright. If, on the other hand, they were animals, the settlers could treat them like any other animal pests which interfered with human enterprise and deprived them of their land, and even their existence, without feeling guilty.

A case can be made that the later stereotyped images of African and Asian colonial peoples were only another example of this same process. By the nineteenth century, it was no longer tenable to posit these populations as non-human. Instead, metropolitan societies resorted to the next best alternative. They characterized colonial peoples in such a way as to differentiate them from Europeans. By virtue of these differences, they could justify the divergent moral codes that were applied to members of the different societies.

* * *

The Anglo-Irish colonial relationship during the nineteenth century is a particularly thought-provoking case in which to search for the existence of tension-reduction processes and analyze their effect on the development of colonial policy. The discrepancy between the values of English society on the one hand,

and the means employed to preserve colonial domination over Ireland on the other, steadily grew more apparent at that time. It can therefore be expected that an unusually high degree of tension developed, which had to be reduced if the English were to continue to govern Ireland as a colony. The Anglo-Irish case is also ideal because the very history and characteristics of the Irish people should have made it especially difficult for the English to find rationalizations that could satisfactorily reduce such tension.

Historians of Victorian England have pointed to the changing intellectual and moral climate of nineteenth-century England as a major force in promoting the democratization of the English political system.⁶ This transformation of the basic value-structure of English society, which first became manifest in the years after the Napoleonic Wars, exerted its influence only gradually in the political sphere. Its progress can be charted by observing the changing political and social concerns of the English public which resulted in the waves of reform that broke over Victorian England.

Values clustered around the concepts of political participation, political liberty, anti-oppression, and humaneness motivated the social and political programs of such diverse groups as

the Benthamites and the Evangelicals. As English opinion became increasingly aroused by these concepts, reformers were successful in building a consensus for legislation which reflected the application of these values inherent in them to social affairs. General acceptance as to the areas in which these values should be applied came about very gradually and possibly produced a full-blown legislative system only with the achievement of the welfare state in the twentieth century. The first half of the nineteenth century, however, witnessed significant legislative enactments which were a harbinger of the emerging consensus.

The growing acceptance of political participation by others besides the aristocracy and the squirearchy was reflected in the extension of the franchise and the reform of the House of Commons effected by the First Reform Act. The goal of political liberty motivated many of the supporters of Catholic Emancipation, the Jewish Disabilities Bill, and legislation regulating the relations between church and state. The importance of attitudes reflecting a commitment to humanness and an antipathy to oppression bore fruit in prison reform, the restriction of capital punishment, and the reform and extension of the Poor Law. The success of the anti-slavery movement demonstrates the strength of these attitudes all the more forcefully because their struggle to achieve anti-slavery legislation involved a

protracted struggle with important vested interests.

Political ideas, formerly the preserve of radical intellectuals, gradually extended their influence to the point where they became commonly accepted by the English public. As the century unfolded, the belief that government should be conducted in the interests of all the people, commitment to the idea of a broader base of political participation, and the recognition that the state had a responsibility for the social and economic well-being of the people were becoming transformed into generally accepted dogma. Both the supporters and opponents of specific proposals justified their respective support or opposition by reference to these values, which were accepted as legitimate by an increasing percentage of the society.

Although the values of English society were gradually becoming liberalized, the basic geographic and political realities of European politics remained unchanged. More than ever, Englishmen were aware of the strategic necessity of having a friendly government in control of Ireland.

In every period of history during which England became involved in a life and death struggle with a continental power, Ireland had proved to be her weakest defense link. In the sixteenth century, when England stood alone against Spain, Spanish troops had supported Irish rebels against England. In the

seventeenth century, when England resisted the imperial ambitions of Louis XIV, the French, in an attempt to outflank their adversary, sent a fleet and an army to assist Irish insurgents. Had the rebellion been successful, English power would have been effectively neutralized, and France would have emerged triumphant. In the eighteenth century, during the Napoleonic Wars, France resorted to the same tactic and, once again, supported an Irish rebellion that threatened the survival of English power.

Thus, the geographic position of Ireland, coupled with the animosity her inhabitants bore towards England, made her a ready ally to assist in the designs of Britain's enemies. To most Englishmen this reality dictated only one conclusion--continued domination over Ireland.

Six hundred years of English exploitation and misrule had taken their toll of Ireland. The vast majority of Irishmen were unalterably opposed to the continuation of English rule and were willing, if necessary, to resort to arms, when the opportunity arose, to give effect to this belief. To such Irishmen, "England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity," Accordingly, England was compelled to resort to oppressive and coercive measures in order to preserve her authority.

This struggle can be viewed as an escalatory spiral. The

more willing to rebel Ireland became, the more coercive became the measures adopted by the English to preserve their rule. The more coercive these measures became, the greater was the willingness of most Irishmen to rebel. Thus, while England was becoming increasingly democratic, English rule in Ireland continued to rely on force and coercion and actually grew increasingly undemocratic in relation to the emerging value structure of English society. While the gulf between Britain's actions in Ireland and her social beliefs grew increasingly wider, it also became more apparent to the English public because of the incessant barrage of information concerning conditions in Ireland to which they were exposed. Geographic proximity and a long and intimate connection had brought about an unusually high degree of mobility of persons, ideas, and information between the two countries. In this sense, the Anglo-Irish relationship is probably unique in the annals of colonialism. From travel descriptions and political pamphlets to economic treatises, Parliamentary reports, and newspaper articles, literate Englishmen were inescapably confronted with information about and interpretations of developments in Ireland.

The most significant feature of this stream of information was that a growing percentage of it presented British policy in

an unfavorable light. Many travelers and political economists vigorously attacked the injustices they believed England to be perpetuating with regard to Ireland. Most of this material, which we would regard today as "muckraking," was designed to arouse English indignation over conditions in Ireland.

Of overriding importance in this connection was the unusual forum presented to Ireland by the Act of Union of 1801, which awarded her representation in both Houses of Parliament as a quid pro quo for the dissolution of the Irish Parliament in Dublin. After 1829, Irish Catholics (having gained the right to sit in Parliament) succeeded in capturing many of these seats from the representatives of the Anglo-Irish Protestant Ascendancy. Irish politicians and their allies among the English Radicals now had an unequalled opportunity to disseminate their views throughout the Kingdom. Every major newspaper and magazine carried detailed reports of parliamentary debates and proceedings which, at that time, were the major source of political intelligence. As a result, an Englishman reading his morning paper at breakfast could not escape a presentation of Irish grievances even in the serene atmosphere of his home.

Therefore, we have in the Anglo-Irish colonial relationship a particularly sharp and increasingly evident disparity

between values and behavior. In such circumstances we should expect a great need for the development of rationalizations capable of reducing the tension which this gap created. The Anglo-Irish relationship is also an ideal case because of the existence of several control variables which throw into sharper focus the motivations behind the tension-reduction process.

In an earlier section of this chapter we alluded to the types of tension-reduction rationalizations that were manifest in colonial situations. The most common rationalization, the dehumanization of the native, sought to remove the indigenous population from the sphere in which the behavioral codes of the colonizer's society were operative. The differentiation between the two populations was usually built on more or less obvious differences that could be exploited to assuage the guilt of the colonizer.

The Irish present a striking contrast to other colonial populations in that none of the obvious differences that were frequently the basis of differentiation were present. In the first place, the Irish were white. This should have vitiated the most obvious possibility, that of racial differentiation. Ireland was, in fact, the only modern colonial society in which the population was not only the same color as the colonizer but was also ethnically identical with much of its population. The Irish were

principally Celts, as were Welshmen and Cornishmen. Although the qualities of the Welsh were still somewhat suspect, Cornishmen were well integrated into English society and characterized as industrious and intelligent--two characteristics that would have been fatal to the functional utility of a colonial stereotype.

An additional control was the fact that, unlike most other colonial populations, the Irish were Christian before they were colonized. Even though the struggles of the Reformation had created bad blood between Protestant and Catholic, these antipathies were beginning to wane in the nineteenth century. Englishmen--or at least a large majority of them--no longer feared that a Jesuit coup would put an end to their liberties. In proportion to the decline of this fear, English Catholics were becoming more acceptable in English society and, after 1829, saw most of the barriers to their political ambitions and social acceptance removed.

Another important characteristic of the Irish was the fact that they were European and had been part of European culture at least as long as the majority of European peoples who claimed to be "civilized." This brings us to the second
-reduction
tension/rationalization found in many colonial relationships.

And that is the concept of "mission," which enabled colonial powers to justify seemingly barbaric or undemocratic behavior by virtue of the beneficial end they believed it would serve for the colonial population.

In this connection, it should be remembered that/^{it} was the Irish who had christianized England. By the seventh and eighth centuries, the Irish had developed a flourishing civilization and had sent their missionaries to convert the heathen and barbaric English, who cowered in the forests in abject fear of Viking invaders. Thus the idea of a christianizing mission with regard to Ireland was patently absurd.

The idea of a civilizing mission was no less ridiculous. Irish civilization was one of the few bright lights that penetrated the cultural darkness of early medieval Europe. The Irish produced lasting works of art and artisanship, the most noted of which were illuminated manuscripts, sculpture, and jewelry. They staffed the academies and monasteries of Carolingian Gaul and were the leaders of its brief intellectual renaissance. Throughout Europe, the Irish were responsible for founding monastic orders and improving the scholarly level of European Catholicism. They were known as the scholares et doctores of medieval Europe.

Unfortunately, this great period of creativity and learning

was abruptly brought to an end by the Viking conquest, and Ireland never again played a central role in European affairs. Nevertheless, the Irish people had amply demonstrated their capabilities in the artifacts and books which they created--works which would endure long beyond their great epoch of cultural ascendancy.

It is, no doubt, true that other colonial peoples had perhaps achieved an even higher level of cultural development. Yet, in some cases--the East Indians, for example--most of their cultural accomplishments were alien to the cultural heritage of Europeans and were, accordingly, more easily dismissed by colonizers. Macaulay, for one, argued that the total knowledge of the East was worth less than one shelf of a good English library!

No such insular complacency could dismiss Irish cultural achievements, which, while certainly less impressive than the wonders of India, were easily recognizable as being in the mainstream of European culture. Macaulay might denigrate the Koran and the esoteric art of the East, but could he do the same to the Book of Kells and the Lindisfarne Gospels, or the writings of Edmund Burke and Jonathan Swift? Could Englishmen forget that an Irish general had won the Battle of Waterloo or that an admiral, whose father had been an Irish rebel, secured the liberties of Englishmen by his heroic action at Trafalgar?

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER I

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6. See, for example, Élie Halévy, A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century, trans. E. I. Watkin (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1961); Llewellyn Woodward, The Age of Reform (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

CHAPTER TWO

Decision-making theory has focused on defining the values of a political system in order to predict its response to certain kinds of information. Game theorists, for example, have argued that if both the value preferences of a decision-making unit and the alternative courses of behavior open to it are known, a hierarchical ranking of these alternatives can be made which will correspond to the behavior of the system in question.¹ Such a model assumes that human decision-making is a highly rational process. Critics have argued that individual human beings and social organizations frequently behave in a non-rational manner. They suggest that even in situations where systems possess near-perfect information about the environment and are aware of all possible policy alternatives, decisions are often made in favor of alternatives which are dysfunctional in light of the system's goals.² The validity of this criticism should be apparent to any student of history and politics.

As a result, recent studies have concentrated on analyzing the non-rational or dysfunctional components of decision-making. Scholars, such as Kenneth Boulding, Karl Deutsch,

Anatol Rapoport, Thomas Schelling, and John Stoessinger, have all stressed the subjective and perceptual element of the decision-making process.³ Decisions, they suggest, are made in reference to a subjective perception of reality, which both determines the aspects of the environment that actors find relevant to decisions, and limits, a priori, the policy alternatives they believe to be feasible.

A number of social scientists have attempted to structure the concept of subjective reality. Kenneth Boulding, for example, suggests that our perception of the world is organized into "images."⁴ Cognitions only acquire meaning when filtered through these images, which organize and relate such information to the needs of the individual. Images can be seen as a form of mental shorthand that allows us to reduce the inchoate mass of data received from our senses into compartmentalized and meaningful pictures of reality. Such images, Boulding believes, suggest which cognitions are relevant to our behavior and what courses of action are required to attain specified goals.

Karl Deutsch employs the language of communications theory to describe a similar process.⁵ Deutsch believes that individuals and social units are "self-steering mechanisms"

that are goal oriented. Their memories contain information about the goals of the system and past performance of the system in attaining these goals. This information is organized as a series of internally labelled decisions concerning the anticipated results of the system operating in its environment. New information about the system and its environment is given meaning by feeding back a stream of data, recalled from the memory, upon the stream of incoming information. Criteria for relevance are thus brought to bear upon new information and the system's behavior and goals continually reassessed.

In contradistinction to earlier decision-making theorists, Boulding and Deutsch stress the important intermediary function of the "image" or "decision-making net." Both suggest that this cognitive screen--through which individuals or systems filter incoming information, give it meaning, and structure alternative courses of behavior--occupies a central place in the decision-making process. They argue that it is imperative to map the structure of this screen and fill in its content if we wish to understand the framework within which decisions are made. To analyze decisions, therefore, it is fundamental to understand the environment as it is perceived by the decision-making unit. Only then can apparently non-rational behavior be understood by rational means.

What can be said about the structure and content of images? * In the first place, images are subjective. Their structure is determined by the selective interests of the knower. A college student in search of a date will apply a different organizing principle to information he receives about co-eds than will a college administrator who receives similar information but is intent on evaluating the academic performance of the girls rather than their social assets. The content of their images of co-eds is equally likely to differ because each will find different information relevant to his objective. The college administrator might not be concerned with the girls' prowess on the ski slope; the student might find such information crucial. Finally, the values assigned to the content of the image will differ--again as a function of their respective goals. The administrator, for example, is likely to depreciate the information that girls in a certain dormitory place greater emphasis on social life than on grades, while the student might well evaluate this information differently.

The second important characteristic of images is that they are potentially dynamic. Their structure and content

*

For the sake of terminological brevity and methodological simplicity, the concept of "image," derived from Boulding, will be employed in this study, in preference to Deutsch's concept of "the decision-making net."

can change in response to both new information and knowledge as to the results of past behavior. Because individuals and social systems are goal-oriented, such a process of "reality testing" is highly functional. By redefining the image of self or that of the environment in light of new information, individuals and systems bring their images into greater congruity with the environment in which they must act. They are thus enabled to pursue their goals more effectively. Our college student, for example, may alter his image of co-eds after every date. He can "learn" from his dating experience which characteristics of co-eds are likely to make them more enjoyable dates. As a result, he can become more perceptive in identifying such girls and presumably will have a more profitable social life.

Reality-testing is usually an active as well as a passive process. Individuals not only receive information about the validity of their images as a result of the feedback from actions structured in terms of such images, but they also initiate actions with the express purpose of testing images. The college student might well break his established dating pattern just to see if perhaps he has been too self-limiting.

Perhaps the most sophisticated process of reality-testing

is science. Historians of science suggest that, on a macro level, scientists describe the physical world in a series of images.⁶ These images are suggestive of hypotheses and propositions which are tested by experimentation and observation and validated in terms of rigorous predetermined rules. The utility of an image in describing an aspect of the environment is constantly being tested and the image refined. The changing models of atomic structure that have been hypothesized, tested, redefined, and discarded in the last fifty years are an example of this process. Each succeeding image or model has been more accurate in explaining atomic behavior than its predecessor and has enabled scientists to manipulate atomic phenomena more successfully.

Human beings and social organizations test images by much less rigorous means. They adhere to a set of operating rules, but these rules are less formally structured and more frequently violated. Most individuals and social units have, in fact, a propensity for projecting images on their environment that are congruent with their personalities or conducive to the attainment of their goals. This tendency to see ourselves or the world through rose-colored glasses, as it were, is to some extent indulged in by almost everybody. Men often convince themselves that they are more successful in business

than a more realistic appraisal of their careers might warrant; women frequently see themselves as more attractive and appealing than others perceive them to be; government leaders publicly equate (and often privately believe) their foreign policy with harmony and well-being for mankind, an assertion that non-partisan observers might challenge.

The human need to structure images in accord with one's personality is often in conflict with the need to see the world realistically. Most human beings and social organizations strike a balance between the two. Those individuals who consistently refuse to alter images conducive to hedonic gain, but nevertheless in contradiction to information received from the environment, are often unable to act effectively. When an image conducive to psychological satisfaction resists reformulation or redefinition suggested by the process of reality-testing, the image can be said to be stereotyped. A stereotyped image is recognizable by the fact that its structure and content resist change in light of contradictory information. Thus, an individual who insists that all black people are intellectually inferior to whites, despite all the evidence to the contrary, holds a stereotyped image of Blacks. He probably derives sufficient hedonic gain from such an image to be unwilling or even unable to give it up.

Before we proceed to analyze the properties of stereotyped images, it is necessary to devote further attention to the concept of the stereotype, a concept that has found many --but confusing--uses among social scientists.

The word "stereotype" was first employed, in a psychological context, by Walter Lippmann in 1922. He defined a stereotype as a form of perception which "imposes a certain character on the data of our senses before the data reach intelligence."⁷ This definition implies the existence of some refractory medium through which information must pass before it takes on meaning. Clark and Campbell suggest that his definition has been employed in two different ways by social psychologists. One group of researchers, they assert, have employed it in a cognitive sense. They see a human need to simplify and categorize data received from the senses in order to derive a meaningful picture of reality. In this sense, all our images are stereotyped because they are never an accurate description of reality but rather are a representation that extracts and emphasizes what appear to us to be the salient characteristics of the environment. Such images⁸ are to reality what a painting is to a photograph.

The second general application of the concept of the stereotype has been motivational. Social scientists using

the concept in this sense emphasize the hedonic gain derived from perceptual images which persist in the light of contradictory data. Rosemary Gordon writes that "Stereotyped constructs...have above all a psycho-economic function. They are developed in order to relieve and reduce some of the tension which threatens to tear the personality structure asunder by providing channels through which emotions can find release and satisfaction." ⁹ Release is frequently found in aggression directed against groups of individuals that can be differentiated on an ethnic, national, religious, or racial basis. In summing up the results of research on prejudice, Howard Ehrlich states:

To the social psychologist, stereotypes, as the language of prejudice, are thought to provide a vocabulary of motives both for individuals and the concerted action of prejudiced persons. They signal the socially approved and accessible targets for the release of hostility and aggression, and they provide the rationalizations for prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behavior.¹⁰

Ehrlich believes that, in providing a common language for the discourse of prejudiced persons, such stereotypes function as a special language which reinforces the beliefs of its users and furnishes the basis for the development and maintenance of solidarity among the prejudiced.

If stereotypes can be employed to allow the expression of hostility and aggression, they can also be employed to

minimize anxiety and tension. This theme is developed by Leon
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Festinger in A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance.

The basic premise of Festinger's study is that "consonance," or consistency, is valued over "dissonance," or inconsistency. Dissonance, Festinger argued, makes individuals uncomfortable and produces psychic tensions which they will attempt to reduce. Confirmed cigarette smokers, for example, suffer dissonance when they read reports that smoking is harmful to their health. Those who are unable to unwilling to "kick" the habit and cannot escape from hearing frequently about its adverse effects are likely to suffer tension which they will seek to reduce. Festinger and others have investi-
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gated the means through which this can be accomplished.

One means commonly adopted to reduce tension is to bring the dissonant elements into harmony. Thus, the cigarette smoker reduces dissonance by rationalizing away information that indicates smoking is harmful. If he can convince himself that smoking is not prejudicial to health, he can continue to enjoy tobacco without suffering from psychic tension.

Another example, in reference to ethnic groups, is posited by Harold Isaacs in his Images of Asia. Isaacs suggests that the stereotype of the "faceless" Chinese, inured to suffering and unmindful of poverty, was developed by

Westerners as a response to the horrible poverty they observed in China. This stereotype, which incorporated as a major element the belief that the Chinese did not really object to their deprivation, helped Westerners overcome the guilt feelings they felt by reason of the disparity between their affluence and China's poverty. ¹³ In Festinger's language, such a stereotype reduced dissonance.

It is in this latter motivational sense that the concept of the stereotype will be employed in this study. We shall seek to ascertain whether the British perception of Irish affairs was characterized by a stereotyped image of the Irish which was functional in reducing tension or dissonance that developed by reason of the contradiction between the values of British society and the effects of British policy in Ireland.

Before commencing with the study, it will be necessary to touch upon other qualities of stereotyped images which will be of heuristic importance to our analysis of the Anglo-Irish colonial relationship.

While any image can be stereotyped, human beings have a greater propensity for stereotyped images whose content concerns human relations than for images that describe the physical environment. Stereotyped images concerning social

behavior are usually more productive of hedonic gain, while, at the same time, they are easier to maintain in light of discrepant data. This latter property of social stereotypes is most important.

The fact that science employs a formally articulated set of rules to validate images concerning the physical environment makes it difficult to maintain an image judged invalid by these rules and yet still claim to be scientific. Unless the tests used to validate images can be shown to be inadequate (a not uncommon occurrence), little can be done to uphold the image, short of character-assassination of the investigators and rejection of their findings out of hand. Even more important is the fact that the physical environment functions independently of what human beings believe to be its reality. The earth, for example, continued to revolve around the sun regardless of the fact that the Papacy coerced Galileo into recanting his belief to that effect.

Reality in social relations has no such independent causation. The outcome of social relations depends very much on the prior expectations that actors have of others' behavior.

If warships of two nations with a history of strained relations approach each other at sea, the probability of

hostilities depends very much on how each captain perceives the other's motives. Assume that both captains have been instructed by their respective governments to keep the peace, but at the same time have been warned to be prepared for possible aggressive behavior on the part of the other nation. It would be a rational decision for each captain to clear the decks of his ship and prepare battle stations, just in case his opposite number commenced hostilities. Perhaps the captains conclude that if they are prepared for battle, the chances of hostilities developing are reduced because each will be less tempted to take advantage of the other's unprepared state. It is also true, however, that when both captains see each other preparing for battle, their mutual fear of hostilities is likely to be increased. If the military situation is structured in such a way that a tremendous advantage accrues to whoever strikes the first blow, it will require tremendous restraint to refrain from commencing hostilities. It is not inconceivable that a battle can begin, although both captains would have preferred to preserve the peace.

Social behavior can, therefore, be self-fulfilling. Behavior undertaken to avert suspicions can have the effect of justifying those suspicions. George Kennan has written:

It is an undeniable privilege of every man to prove himself in the right in the thesis that the world is his enemy, for if he reiterates it frequently enough and makes it the background of his conduct, he is bound eventually to be right.¹⁵

The naval captains' dilemma and their hypothetical behavior is an example of the "inherent bad faith" model of human behavior. Its effects are in evidence in more realistic and every-day situations than the melodramatic scenario just described. A particularly telling example concerns the self-fulfilling properties of ethnic stereotypes.

In a recent experiment conducted among Mexican-American school children in California, the students were given a battery of tests to determine their aptitude and were then divided into two test groups. Each group consisted of matched pairs of students and was thus undifferentiated on the basis of aptitude scores. The teachers, all of whom were of white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant backgrounds, were told that one group consisted of bright pupils, while the second was composed of students who were below average in intelligence. Several years later the two groups were tested again. The sample which the teachers had been conditioned to accept as the brighter group scored significantly higher on the aptitude tests than had the other group. This group had also performed

better in achievement, as measured by their school grades. The most interesting finding was that those students, in both groups, whom the investigators discerned to most closely resemble white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants in skin color and facial physiognomy, performed considerably better on both the aptitude and achievement tests than did the other students.

When we move from the realm of interpersonal relations to relations between social organizations or nations, the facility with which stereotyped imagery persists is even more pronounced. Large corporations and governments must, by necessity, make decisions with highly polarized alternatives. Business executives must decide whether or not a particular investment is profitable; university officials must decide whether a given student is worthy of being admitted to their school; statesmen must decide whether another nation has peaceful or aggressive designs. The problem is complicated by the fact that the available data relevant to such decisions are usually not "hard," like scientific data, but more often than not consist of impressions of events and of individuals seen through the eyes of a number of observers. Yet, criteria for selection must be established, and the credibility of relevant information weighed. Considering the variety of contradictory and conflicting data that can usually be mustered to support or challenge any interpretation of that information, the

ultimate decision can often depend on the personal psychological preferences and needs of the decision-makers involved. In such situations there is great latitude for decision-makers to project any desired image upon the information in question and interpret that information in light of the image.

One would expect the international system to be particularly prone to such images. Kenneth Boulding suggests that the images of international affairs are built upon exceptionally "soft" information, collected in such a haphazard manner that it is amazing that statesmen do not have a more inaccurate perception of international affairs than, in fact, they do. Boulding writes that images of world politics are derived from a

...melange of narrative history, memories of past events, stories and conversations, etc., plus an enormous amount of usually ill-digested and carelessly collected information. When we add to this the fact that the system produces strong hates, loves and loyalties, disloyalties, and so on, it would be surprising if any images were formed that even remotely resembled the most loosely defined realities of the case.¹⁷

Boulding perhaps overstates his case, but he is manifestly correct in suggesting that images of political affairs congruent with the emotional or inner psychological needs of decision-makers can easily proliferate. Once such images

become operationalized by the participants involved, there is an excellent chance that they can become self-justifying --as in the case of the naval captains--and thus exercise an even stronger hold over those already committed to them. They are also likely to influence those who might originally have been reluctant to accept the applicability of the image.

Over many years, such images can exert tremendous influence on a society, with each successive generation becoming socialized into accepting the validity of the image and passing it on largely intact to the next generation. Subsequent challenges of the image can be dismissed with increasing ease once it has become self-justifying and widely accepted. The "revisionist" historians of the Cold War argue that this is, in fact, what happened to our image of the Soviet Union as
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an aggressive state.

The danger to an individual, social unit, or political system in adhering to an image productive of hedonic gain, despite a steady stream of data to the contrary, is the prospect of loss of effectiveness. By reason of a distorted perception of reality, the individual or system will not be able either to select information relevant to decisions that must be made, nor be able to perceive the alternative courses of

behavior open to it, and perhaps will not realize that certain decisions must, in fact, be made. Karl Deutsch states this problem quite succinctly in The Nerves of Government. He writes:

If there are strong tendencies towards eventual failure inherent in all autonomous organizations, and particularly governments--as many pessimistic theories of politics allege--then such difficulties of governments can perhaps be traced to their propensity to prefer self-referrent symbols to new information from the outside world.¹⁹

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 2

1. See, for example, Morton A. Kaplan, System and Process in International Relations (New York: John Wiley, 1957); Anatol Rapoport, Fights, Games and Debates (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960); and Richard Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin, Foreign Policy Decision-Making: An Approach to the Study of International Politics (New York: Free Press, 1962).
2. See, for example, Karl W. Deutsch, The Nerves of Government (New York: Free Press, 1963); Anatol Rapoport, Strategy and Conscience (New York: Harper and Row, 1964); and Thomas Schelling, The Strategy of Conflict (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963) and Arms and Influence (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).
3. Kenneth Boulding, The Image (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1955); Deutsch, op. cit.; Rapoport, op. cit.; Schelling, op. cit. (both references); John G. Stoessinger, "China and America: The Burden of Past Misperceptions," Journal of International Affairs (New York), Vol. 21, No. 1 (1967), pp. 72-92.
4. Boulding, op. cit.
5. Deutsch, op. cit.
6. Theodore S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).
7. Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion. (Rev. ed.; New York: Macmillan, 1960), p. 98.
8. Robert B. Clarke and Donald T. Bampbell, "A Demonstration of Bias in Estimates of Negro Ability," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, Vol. 51 (1955), pp. 585-88.
9. Rosemary Gordon, Stereotypy of Imagery and Belief (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 20.
10. Howard J. Ehrlich, "Stereotyping and Negro-Jewish Stereotypes," Social Forces, Vol. 41, No. 2, p. 20.
11. Festinger, op. cit.

12. Ibid., p. 36.
13. Harold R. Isaacs, Images of Asia: American Views of China and India (New York: Capricorn Books, 1962), p. 99.
14. Scientific images that have become stereotyped have usually been those which have had teleological significance to man. Historical examples can be found in the reluctance of many people to admit that the earth revolved around the sun or that man was descended from the lower orders of life. In both cases, it was the social significance of the image that was important and productive of hedonic gain.
15. George F. Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," Foreign Affairs, XXV (1947), 561.
16. The Times, August 12, 1968, p. 1.
17. Boulding, op. cit., p. 9.
18. See, for example, Gar Alperovitz, Atomic Diplomacy ("Vintage Books"; New York: Random House, 1965).
19. Karl Deutsch, op. cit., p. 215.

CHAPTER THREE

We shall search the volumes of the most accredited travellers in Russia, Turkey, or India, and find no description of a people that is not enviable, in comparison with the state of millions of our fellow subjects in Ireland.

Richard Cobden

Poverty was the most striking feature of nineteenth-century Ireland. The Duke of Wellington, a resident of County Meath, declared that "there never was a country in which poverty existed to the extent it does in Ireland." ¹ Travelers to that unfortunate land testified to the validity of the Iron Duke's judgment. Henry Inglis, who visited Ireland in 1834, concluded it to be an undeniable truth that the poor of Ireland were immeasurably worse off than West Indian slaves. ² Gustave de Beaumont, Tocqueville's traveling companion, reached the same conclusion. The misery of the Irish, Beaumont declared, was "worse than the Negro in chains." ³ Thackeray, who toured Ireland in 1843, found the conditions of life there so oppressive that he felt compelled to warn other tourists to keep away from that unhappy country. He wrote:

The traveler is haunted by the face of popular starvation. It is not the exception, it is the condition of the people. In this fairest and richest of countries, men are suffering and starving by the millions....The epicurean, and traveler for pleasure, had better travel anywhere than here; where

there are miseries that one does not dare think of; where one is always feeling how helpless pity is, and how helpless relief, and is perpetually ashamed of being happy.⁴

Travelers, economists, and parliamentary investigators presented a striking portrait, monotonous in its uniformity, of the sufferings of the Irish people.

In terms of natural blessings Ireland was not, as Thackeray asserted, the "fairest and richest of countries." Nevertheless, her soil was productive, her pastures verdant, and her woods and streams teeming with life. Her poverty cannot be ascribed to a cruel visitation of fate, but must be attributed to the failure of her inhabitants to effectively utilize these natural resources in order to achieve a higher level of prosperity. The explanation for this apparent paradox--the co-existence of human poverty alongside natural bounty--must be sought in the social condition of Ireland.

Ireland had been invaded in 1169, periodically reconquered, rarely subdued, and never assimilated. Conflict was continuous, but conquest incomplete. The British attempted to reduce Ireland to the status of a colony in order to exploit her economic wealth, geographic position, and human resources. British domination in Ireland, however, never remained unchallenged. Throughout the centuries, the germ of Irish freedom was kept alive and periodically asserted in violent attempts on the part of the

Irish to free themselves from the shackles of alien rule. Therefore, British authority remained tenuous, and the social system, based on the prerogatives of that authority, was never accepted as legitimate by the majority of the population. As a result, British domination was guaranteed only by force and coercion. Conquest was, accordingly, not only the basis of English rule, but also the means through which it was maintained. The result of hundreds of years of policy aimed at exploiting the potential of Ireland and also of ensuring British domination was disastrous to the island's economic development.

Any examination of Irish life must begin with an analysis of agricultural conditions. Englishman and Irishman alike recognized the poverty of the countryside to be the root of the "Irish Problem." Two-thirds of the population derived their existence from the produce of the land. This in itself was not unusual for a country largely untouched by industrialization. The striking feature of the Irish rural economy was, rather, that this population was concentrated in the most infertile areas of the countryside, where they farmed units so pitifully meager in size that they were very unproductive. The Census of 1841 revealed that almost half of the farm units in Ireland were less than five acres.⁵ Out of a total of 685,309 farms, 135,134 were actually smaller than an acre.⁶ Demographers estimated that one quarter of the rural population of Ireland derived a living from

units under one acre. Such miniscule holdings were hardly able to support Irish families, which were usually large.

Geographically and economically, the great division in Ireland was between east and west. The plains and rolling countryside of the east were highly fertile and relatively near to English markets. The west was barren and mountainous and the terrain covered by peat bogs or rocky hillside. The remaining bit of arable land was relatively infertile and financially unrewarding because of the difficulty and expense of bringing produce to market. It was here in the west, however, where the land was poorest, that the population was concentrated and the average holdings the smallest in all of Ireland.

The province of Connaught, which included most of the western counties, possessed 43 percent of the six million acres of uncultivated land in Ireland.⁷ A disproportionately large share of the total population of the country was concentrated on the remaining acreage. While the average population density for all of Ireland was 217 people to each square mile of arable land,⁸ the figure rose to 386 people in Connaught.⁹ County Mayo, one of the most barren parts of Connaught, was so densely settled that an average of almost 500 people lived on each square mile of arable land. By way of contrast, the two least populated counties, Kildare and Meath, with respective densities of 187 and

201 people were both in the richer eastern provinces.

The subdivision of land was also most marked in Connaught as a result of the population pressure. In that county, 64 percent of the holdings over one acre were under five acres in size, while in Leinster only 37 percent of the units fell into this category. Most telling of all was the high percentage of farms consisting of one acre or less. Such minute and uneconomical units accounted for a great percentage of farms in the counties of Mayo, Sligo, and Galway.

Ulster, the fourth province of Ireland, presented a sharp contrast to the rest of the country. Ulster actually had a higher population density per square mile of arable land than Connaught. However, this was a sign of wealth, rather than an indication of poverty. In fact, Armagh, the most densely settled county in Ireland, was one of the richest. Subdivision occurred much less frequently in Ulster than elsewhere. Rich farm land, whose productivity was unhampered by the existence of small uneconomic units, was the basis for agricultural prosperity that supported secondary industry and trade. The growing population found employment in such non-agricultural pursuits and, as a result, the standard of living was considerably higher there than in the other parts of the island.

Given such uneconomic conditions for agriculture in most of Ireland, it was only to be expected that productivity was

relatively low in comparison to countries where farming was conducted in a more rational manner. In England, the average farmer produced twice as much as his Irish counterpart.¹² A French economist calculated that the gross yield per hectare was the same in France and Ireland, but in Ireland, 100 people depended on the produce of each hectare, while in France, only 60 did so.¹³

From the turn of the century, economists recognized the inefficiency of small-scale farming as the cause of the Irish agricultural problem. Many argued that Ireland could be saved only if these small uneconomical units were replaced by larger farms. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, however, the trend towards smaller and smaller units continued unabated. As a result, the productivity of the land and the standard of living suffered a grievous decline.

The explanation for the unproductive and irrational state of Irish agriculture must be sought in the peculiar characteristics of the landowning class of Ireland. Prior to the wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the land of Ireland had been owned in common, under the system known as "rundale,"¹⁴ or had belonged to the native Irish-Catholic nobility. During Elizabethan and Cromwellian times, wholesale expropriation of Irish estates was carried out by the English Government,

and most of the arable land passed into the hands of English and Scottish Protestants. By 1700, most of the arable land was held by these Protestants, few of whom could, in any sense of the word, be called Irish. The motivation behind the confiscation was two-fold. First of all, land was an excellent currency in which to pay the English soldiers and civil servants who protected and administered British power in Ireland. It cost the much-depleted Treasury nothing, because the vanquished were made to pay by loss of their land. Secondly, the policy was envisaged as a wise political move. Time and again, the Irish people had demonstrated their hostility to British domination. By expropriating Irish estates and placing them in the hands of loyal settlers, the Government decreased the wealth and political power of the Irish opposition while it simultaneously created a phalanx of landowners loyal to the Crown. Thus, the new landed elite was given the dual function of exploiting the wealth of Ireland and acting as the guardian of British rule.

Forcing an alien and conqueror-proprietary class on a defeated people was viewed by most Irishmen as the underlying cause of Ireland's agricultural problem. John Stuart Mill expressed the consensus of most Victorian economists when he called it "the very foundation of the economic evils of Ireland."¹⁵ The attitudes expressed by these proprietors towards both land

and the people differed greatly from those of their English cousins toward their land and peasantry. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, English and Scottish landlords were coming to view their property as an investment which, handled properly, would bring them an increasingly large dividend over the years. For the sake of this dividend, they were most often willing to forego policies that might have brought higher short-term gain but might prove injurious to the long-range prospects of their estates. In addition, English landlords were usually willing to invest a substantial part of their yearly return in improvements. Here again, the rationale behind such action was predicated upon the hope of recovering the investment plus a handsome profit at some future date.

In Ireland, an opposite philosophy prevailed. Most Irish proprietors considered their land to be only a sinecure which provided them with a yearly revenue. Many of them lived in London, Bath, or Tunbridge Wells and had never even set foot on their own land. Having no inclination to improve the productivity of their estates, and little capital to devote towards such an end, they demanded only that it return the highest rents each year.

Such an attitude had been a feature of Anglo-Irish landholding since the days of the first confiscations. As far back

as 1596, it was cited by Edmund Spenser as one of the principal evils of Ireland. ¹⁶ Latter-day commentators on Irish affairs also castigated Irish landlords for the irresponsible manner in which they managed the land and pointed to the self-destructive effect of such cupidity.

By 1800, many Irish estates had changed hands several times. Many of those who had acquired deeds to Irish lands by inheritance or through financial speculation were Englishmen who had never even visited Ireland. The number of such absentees was swelled by those landowners who longed to partake of London social life and, accordingly, established their residence away from Ireland. Many were enabled to do so by reason of the great profits they accumulated during the Napoleonic War boom. One publicist, typical of many who condemned absenteeism, declared:

It is **THE EXHAUSTER**, par excellence, which like a huge vampyre, sucks the blood by day and by night, from the veins of unhappy Erin, leaving her a half-dead, half-living spectre floating on the Western wave.¹⁷

Ireland, he lamented, had the "lancets of 1,000 absentees in her ¹⁸ veins."

In reality, the large majority of landowners, whether resident or absentee, helped by their greed to bring Ireland to the brink of economic disaster. The absentees were worse only in degree. Both absentee and resident landowners were responsible

for a severe drain of capital from Ireland. By the end of the seventeenth century, economists estimate, the total drain of capital from Ireland was about 1.5 million pounds a year. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, moreover, absentee rents alone accounted for an annual drain of over two million pounds. This figure represented almost a quarter of the total rent of Ireland.²⁰ In 1842, absentee rents were estimated at over 6 million pounds. Ireland was thus deprived of a large amount of capital that might otherwise have been used to increase her agricultural yield and to reclaim waste land that needed drainage before it could be made arable. This economic drain also hindered the growth of industry, commerce, and services that might have prospered, had such money been spent or invested within Ireland.

For all that it may have been justified, the invective spent on negligent absentees obscured the fact that the majority of the resident proprietors were responsible for a drain on Irish capital that was probably equal to, if not, larger than, that caused by the absentees. The Protestant landowners who resided in Ireland were largely descendants of Cromwellian soldiers who had received title to the land as payment for their military services. Most of them possessed little capital, and their estates were not very large. They managed their estates in a manner indistinguishable from that of the absentees. Both

were basically disinclined to improve their holdings and were only interested in realizing as large an immediate profit as was possible.

The Irish proprietor was a parvenu in the world of landed gentry and, like many others in a similar situation, he tried to emulate the splendor of the great landed magnates of England. The improvement of estates was often sacrificed by a landlord for the luxuries which enabled proprietors to lead a life of elegance and ease. Such gentry, known to the English as "swells," were accused of spending more on their race horses than upon their land. The lion's share of such luxurious goods had to be imported from England and the Continent and accounted for an additional drain on Irish capital. Expenditures on finished goods and other consumer products may well have accounted for a greater drain on capital than absentee rents.

The proof that such a description of the Irish proprietary class was not a colorful exaggeration on the part of English writers is found in the bankruptcy statistics for Ireland in the nineteenth century. It is difficult to be precise about such statistics before 1835, because no central records of such proceedings are easily available. However, an Act of 1835 stipulated that bankrupt estates would pass into the hands of the Court of Equity, where they were to be administered by the State

until the debt could be paid off. The following decade saw a great increase in such bankruptcies. In 1850, the Dublin University Magazine estimated that if the system had continued, unchecked by the effects of the famine, a full half of the property of Ireland would have been managed by the court's receivers.
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Bankruptcy had a serious effect on the management of Irish estates. In England, indebted landowners could sell their estates or have them auctioned in an attempt to raise the funds necessary to pay off their debts. In such cases, the estates would often be bought for good prices by other landlords interested in improving the land and managing it at a profit. This was not the case in Ireland. Most Irish law had not undergone the Benthamite scrutiny and revision that cut out the unwieldy and intricate procedures caused by the accumulation of common-law precedents over the centuries. More often than not the law acted as a hindrance rather than a help. The Act of 1835 went some way towards modernizing property laws, but they were still unduly complex. Speculators were discouraged from purchasing Irish estates because of the difficulty in procuring title to the land and the uncertainty of the deed once this was accomplished. In addition, the procedure governing the sale of en-

cumbered estates was extremely costly because it frequently involved many years of legal action before the estate could be bought.

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Much of Irish property was, therefore, not managed by the direct owner but rather by receivers, in the case of encumbered estates, and agents and middlemen, in the case of absentees. These overseers could have only one object in mind with regard to the property--the maximization of immediate profits to fund the debt. Under such circumstances, the court would not allow them to re-invest any part of the profits in the land. Receivers were under constant pressure to realize an increasing margin of profit, but were denied the liberty to pursue policies that might have enabled them to do so. As a result, they were frequently unable to raise sufficient money to meet the large debts of bankrupt landowners. In such cases, the land continued under the management of the court for many years, and the productivity of the soil declined.

The agents, who managed land for absentees, were in a similar position. Owners rarely permitted them to re-invest money in the land, even if they had desired to do so. Devoid of any feeling of responsibility for the soil or those who farmed it, most absentees concerned themselves only with securing the annual income derived from the property. Many landlords' agents eventu-

ally went into business for themselves. They acted as middlemen and leased land directly from an absentee or resident proprietor whose estates they administered, then sublet the same land to a large number of tenants, from whom they extracted a higher total rent than they themselves paid. The "middleman" system produced great misery because it artificially inflated the price of land. Such profiteers were denounced by all as "bloodsuckers," "tyrants," and "spoilers of the land." ²³ Thus, the most characteristic feature of the proprietary class in Ireland was this tendency to view the land only as a source of revenue, from which annual cash profits could be extracted, rather than as an investment that would increase its value over time. The effect of this attitude upon agricultural conditions was made ever more catastrophic because the Irish landlord, unlike his English counterpart, was not subject to restrictions governing the use of the land.

The English landholding system had evolved from a feudal relationship. For many centuries, a complex system of mutual rights and responsibilities had ordered the relationship between lord and peasant. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the English landlord had, in theory, an absolute right to do what he wanted with his land, but, in practice, his freedom was circumscribed by the dictates of public opinion, which successfully enforced a code of responsible behavior that was a carry-over from feudal times. The rights of the tenants also received

guarantees by reason of the economic realities governing English agriculture. The backbone of the agricultural class in England was the free tenant who leased land on which to labor and invest his capital for profit. This tenant was most often a free agent who could choose where and when he would invest his capital. Because the landlord had a direct interest in ensuring the highest development of the land, he accordingly had to make conditions sufficiently remunerative to attract the best tenantry. It was customary to stipulate the obligations of both tenant and landlord in a lease. Both parties viewed this as being to their mutual advantage.

The prevailing relationship between landlord and tenant in Ireland was very different. The Irish landlord was an alien conqueror who had received title to the land from the process of confiscations that had occurred in Elizabethan and Cromwellian times. There was no tradition of rights and responsibilities governing relationships between landlord and tenant. For centuries these proprietors had treated Irish peasants with the contempt of an illiberal prejudice and had made them bear the consequences of their insatiable greed. There was little dialogue, and certainly no empathy, between the two cultures.

In England, the tenant was permitted a great deal of discretion in the management of his land. In Ireland, it was a misnomer to use the word "tenant" to describe the majority of Irish agri-

cultural workers. The relationship between landlord and peasant more closely resembled that between lord and serf or master and slave. The tenant, of course, had a legal right to leave the land and seek employment elsewhere, but in practice this was meaningless, since there was no other form of employment to be found. The Irish peasant, lacking the capital to finance emigration, and unable to find employment in commercial or industrial enterprises, was rooted to the land. The majority, therefore, had no choice but to accept the conditions on which the land was offered by the landlord or his agent. His only alternative was starvation.

Beaumont's description of the Irish peasant as worse off than the Negro slave in his chains was no exaggeration. Most slave-owners cared for their chattel because they viewed them as a form of capital. They were valuable property from whom much useful work could be extracted. In Ireland, on the other hand, the majority of landowners saw the Irish peasant as largely superfluous. He was only important insofar as he paid his rent. James Froude described the attitudes of the landlords quite accurately in an article which appeared in the North American Review. Froude wrote:

In Ireland, the proprietor was an alien, with the fortunes of the residents upon his estates in his hands, and at his mercy. He was divided from them in creed and language; he despised them, as of an inferior race, and he

acknowledged no interest in common with them. Had he been allowed to trample on them and make them his slaves, he would have cared for them, perhaps, as he cared for his horses. But their persons were free, while their farms and houses were his; and thus his only object was to wring out of them the last penny which they could pay, leaving them and their children to a life scarcely raised above the level of their own pigs.²⁴

The most important guarantee for the English tenant was his lease. In Ireland, the majority of landlords refused to grant leases and were supported in this reluctance by the law, which made it extremely difficult for the tenant to obtain one. The occupier was usually a tenant-at-will. The Devon Commission reported that "the greatest portion of the occupiers in Ireland hold land as tenants from year to year."²⁵ The Commission found the ensuing insecurity to be the greatest topic of dissension in Ireland. The English landowners, who comprised the Commission, reported that "The most general, and indeed almost universal topic of complaint brought before us in every part of Ireland, was the 'want of tenure.'²⁶"

The injurious effects of such a practice upon Irish agriculture were manifold. The principal evil was to deter tenants from investing capital on their land. The Devon Commission went so far as to attribute most of Ireland's poverty to this single cause. They argued:

It has been shown that the master evil, poverty, proceeds from the fact of occupiers of land withholding

the investment of labour and capital from the ample field for it that lies within reach on the farms they occupy; that this hesitation is attributable to a reasonable disinclination to invest labour or capital on the property of others, without a security that adequate remuneration shall be derived from the investment.²⁷

Throughout Ireland, with the exception of Ulster (a special case to be dealt with later), it was common practice to grant leases on a yearly basis, if at all. Longer leases--which were uncommon--usually contained no provision for reimbursing the tenant for improvements made on the land. In some parts of the country tenants were granted "terminable leases," so rigged that the occupier of the land derived little advantage--if any--from their possession. Irish tenants had little or no security and were therefore unwilling to improve their farms. Even tenants with reasonably secure leases were reluctant to invest in their land because rapacious landlords usually found some pretext for expelling them without compensation. Such landlords then re-let the land at higher rates and reaped an additional profit. The insecurity of land had such a perverse effect upon agriculture that it became economically advantageous for the tenant to take what he could from the soil without improving or preserving its quality. It was in his best interest to run down the land in hopes of preventing his rental from rapidly rising. With English understatement, Harriet Martineau observed:

A tenant is not very likely to block up his capital in buildings, and sow it in the soil, when he cannot reckon on remaining long enough to recover it....Agricultural science and art are not likely to be very ardently pursued amidst such a state of affairs.²⁹

One of the most frequently used techniques, by which landlords guaranteed their freedom to terminate leases, was the practice known as the "hanging gale," whereby proprietors allowed the tenant to fall into arrears on his rent payments for a specified period--usually a half year. Because the margin of profit taken by tenants from their land was so slight, a bad harvest, or even a less-than-average harvest, meant they would be unable to meet their rents. Most tenants were, therefore, forced to take advantage of the hanging gale. This not only put them in constant bondage to the landowner but meant that their leases might be terminated at any moment and that they could be evicted from the land without any legal recourse. Wakefield, in his Account of Ireland, speaks of the hanging gale as

...one of the great levers of oppression by which the lower classes are kept in a kind of perpetual bondage; for as every family almost holds some portion of land, and owes half-a-year's rent, which a landlord can exact in a moment, this debt hangs over their heads like a load, and keeps them in a continual state of anxiety and terror. If the rent is not paid, the cattle are driven to the pound....³⁰

In England the soil was recognized as a source of wealth whose generative properties deserved great care and attention.

Farmers practiced rotation of crops or let some acreage lie fallow for a season or two. This was hardly possible in Ireland. The Irish farmer also appreciated the value of the soil and often knew the means necessary to preserve its fertility. But the insecure system of land tenure, with the likelihood that he would only be allowed to work the land for two or three harvests, discouraged the tenant from applying this knowledge. Under these conditions, there could be no economic advantage to improving the land, and any self-restraint or improvement would only benefit the proprietor or the next occupier. In such circumstances tenants tried to milk the land mercilessly for any produce it could be made to yield. Crop rotation and other salutary farming practices were operations they could ill afford and, accordingly, the land steadily deteriorated.

This system of land tenure was an instrument that served the landlords well. Through its operation they gave full vent to their greed, making use of any opportunity to take advantage of the land and its people in order to turn a quick profit. In the end, we shall see, they created conditions which destroyed many of them as well.

Traditionally the basis of wealth in the Irish countryside was measured in sheep and cattle. In the eighteenth century, tillage began to replace grazing as the predominant economic

pursuit in rural Ireland. The change was brought about by a fall in the prices of dairy products and wool towards the end of the century and a corresponding rise in the price of grain.³²

During the Napoleonic Wars, French control of the continent prevented England from importing European grain. A premium was thus placed on Irish production and the legislation restricting Irish cereals was removed.³³ In 1800, Ireland had only exported 749 quarters of wheat and flour to Britain; by 1820, she was exporting 403,407 quarters.³⁴ During the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century, the price of wheat on the Dublin market rose 61 percent, and that of oats 59 percent.³⁵

This prosperity was not rationally exploited by Irish landlords. They pursued a strategy which was productive of short-range profits but which, in the long-run, proved disastrous. Because the high price of grain made each acre capable of yielding a higher profit, tenants could farm fewer acres and still make the same profit. Many landlords, therefore, divided their holdings into smaller units and charged a higher rental per acre. This system, known as rack-renting, was not dissimilar from the practice of today's slum landlords who divide apartments into smaller units, for which they charge exorbitant rents. The great economist Ricardo was shocked by the callous and short-sighted actions of such landlords. Writing to a friend, he said:

An English landlord knows that it is not his interest to make his tenant a beggar by exacting the very harshest terms from him if he had the power of dictating the rent, not so the Irish landlords--they not only do not see the benefits which would result to themselves from encouraging a spring of industry and accumulation in their tenants, but appear to consider the people as beings of a different race who are habituated to all species of oppression--they will for the sake of a little present rent, divide and sub-divide their farms till they receive from each tenant the merest trifle of rent, altho' the aggregate is considerable--they consider as nothing the severe means to which they are obliged to collect these rents, nor to the individual suffering which it occasions. Ireland is an oppressed country--not oppressed by England--but by the aristocracy which rules with a rod of fear within it.³⁶

The subdivision, encouraged by war-time prosperity, was ultimately responsible for the extreme poverty of the Irish. The division of the land into smaller and smaller units was highly irresponsible. The cottier could only manage to pay inflated rents for this land because the price he received for his cereals was so extraordinarily high. It did not require any special degree of acuity to foresee that when the wars ended England would once again have access to the closed markets and the price of Irish grain would drop considerably. This, of course, is precisely what happened. The bottom dropped out of the grain market, but not immediately. The years 1815 to 1818 were marked by three bad harvests in a row and temporarily preserved the price of Irish grain exports. In the twenty-one years before October 1820, the price of wheat in Norfolk had averaged

84 shillings a quarter; in June 1821, it stood at 53s. 6d; and by 1822, as a result of good harvests, the price had dropped to 40s. In the years up to 1835, it never reached within 9 shillings of the old average.

Worst hit was the poor Irish cottier who could not meet his rent after marketing his crop. The suffering that ensued among the peasantry was dreadful. Even the gentry suffered. A popular ballad, exulting over the distress of the war profiteers, carried the refrain:

" Our gentry we fed upon turtle and wine
Must now on wet lumpers [potatoes] and salt herrings dine." 39

Landlords now found it difficult to maintain mansions in England and continue to live in the sumptuous manner to which they had become accustomed. Many went into bankruptcy. For this the Irish peasant would be made to pay, as landlords devised new means of realizing higher profits.

The condition of the Province of Ulster--where the landlord's prerogatives were generally limited by recognized rights of the tenantry--provided a sharp contrast to the rest of Ireland. Originally the most backward part of the island, Ulster, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, was the most prosperous. Oddly enough, its prosperity can be attributed to the fact that only in Ulster was the attempt at colonization successful.

The Plantation of Ulster dated back to the sixteenth century, and the original colonists were English speculators who aspired to a quick profit. The native Irish, who at first had been expelled, were gradually invited back when the speculators discovered that greater profits could be made by exploiting them. 41 The Plantation, although a lucrative enterprise, threatened to develop along the same lines as the rest of Ireland. It was spared this fate by a large-scale Scottish immigration to Ulster --the result of the religious and political upheavals in the seventeenth century. Many of these Presbyterians later returned home, but sufficient numbers remained behind to exert a decisive influence on the development of Ulster.

How did it happen that these settlers managed to preserve their rights while the native Irish were being deprived of theirs? The explanation lay in the economic condition of the plantation owners. Throughout the early years of the seventeenth century they had difficulty attracting settlers and, accordingly were willing to grant leases and create conditions appealing to the Scots. While these settlers never gained de jure recognition of their interest in the land, they did gain de facto recognition, usually referred to as "Ulster custom" or tenant right." Throughout the next two centuries they managed to maintain this right and gradually it spread to include other Ulster tenants. Over the protestations of some landowners, both Protestants and

Catholics fought to maintain this tenant right. Many proprietors, however, recognized the value of such guarantees and supported the efforts made by the tenants to have the custom become general practice.

Tenant right guaranteed the tenant compensation for any improvements he made upon his estate. At the expiration of the lease, the incoming tenant paid the former occupant a fixed sum determined by the value of the improvements made upon the property. Witnesses before the Devon Commission testified that the payment usually equalled ten or fifteen years' rent, or from £6 to £15 per acre.⁴² In some cases, the sum was as much as £25 per acre.⁴³ With such a guarantee of security, tenants were willing to invest capital and labor in the land because they realized that, at the very least, they would get back their investment. In addition, leases in Ulster tended to be for a longer term. Thus, the tenant in Ulster, who possessed both tenant right and a long lease, was able to reap a respectable profit from his activity.

In Ulster, therefore, we see increased productivity of the land and an improved standard of living, whereas in the rest of Ireland both declined. The Ulster proprietors viewed their land as an investment; elsewhere rack-renting landlords, despite immediate profits, drove land values into a serious decline.

* * *

Ireland might well have avoided sinking into the very depths of poverty (a poverty which made her the horror of nineteenth century Europe) had it not been for the astonishing population explosion that doubled the number of her inhabitants in less than one hundred years. While demographers are uncertain as to the actual rate of population growth, recent conservative estimates suggest that the population doubled between 1778 and 1847,⁴⁴ and that by 1841 had reached 8,175,124.⁴⁵ When we consider the condition of the country, it is difficult to find an explanation for such a population explosion.

Arthur Young attributed the fertility of the Irish people to the potato, which provided a cheap and steady source of food. Astounded by the effect he believed this root to have on Ireland, Young could only exclaim, "Vive la pomme de terre!" K. H. Connell, whose population estimate we have quoted, argues that the potato was a contributing factor in the population explosion, but this seems hardly a satisfactory explanation. He is at a loss to find the conditions that might have promoted such a dramatic increase in population.⁴⁶

In Ireland, as elsewhere in Western Europe, the years between 1780 and 1850 witnessed a drop in the death rate. Why, we don't know. In Ireland, certainly, there was no improvement in medical conditions, nor, as we have seen, did the standard of living improve. It is likely that between 1780 and 1845 both

actually deteriorated. Throughout the rest of Europe, however, the reasons are equally obscure. In England, for example, economic historians argue that because the standard of living declined between 1780 and 1820, the population growth can only be explained by an improvement in medical conditions. Medical historians contradict this theory. Health conditions, they say, deteriorated during this period because hospitals spread more disease than they cured, while overcrowded urban areas outstripped inadequate health facilities and proved excellent breeding grounds for epidemics. They insist that economic improvements must account for the increase!⁴⁷

Whatever the reason for the drop in the death rate, it was followed several generations later by a drop in the birth rate. Thus, after a period of sustained population growth, the population began to stabilize itself or maintain a smaller rate of increase. The decline of the birth rate can be attributed to a number of causes, the most important of which was a rise in the standard of living. The hope of a higher standard of living seems to have encouraged people to avoid having large families so that they could have surplus funds for the kinds of non-essential goods and services associated with affluence, rather than having to put those funds into feeding large numbers of hungry mouths. For this reason, many couples--especially in the growing middle-classes--were willing to forego large families.

In Ireland, however, there could be little expectation of a better life for the mass of the people. If anything, Irishmen envisaged a further decline in their standard of living. The conditions that tended to promote smaller families in Britain and Western Europe were not operative in Ireland. Observers remarked, in fact, that families appeared to be growing larger. In Ireland, a large family was the only source of "wealth" from which a man might derive satisfaction. Large families also served as an insurance policy. If at the end of a couple's life they had no savings--a probable outcome--they might receive support from their children and thus escape the dread of starvation or--even worse--the poor house. The end result was that fewer people actually starved, but many more lived on the edge of starvation.

This population pattern was unique to Western Europe, but it is not dissimilar from demographic conditions existing today in Latin America and many parts of Asia. There has been a substantial drop in the death rate in those areas, brought about by improved medical conditions as well as modernized administrative and communication facilities--the latter enabling states to make more efficient use of their food supplies. At the same time, there has been no decline in the birth rate, because the actual living conditions of the mass of people have not improved.

It is only in nations like Japan, where expectations ~~have~~ for an improved standard of living exist, and to some extent have been met, that the birth rate has declined.

In Ireland, a vicious circle of poverty and population growth was in operation. Poverty stemmed mainly from rack-renting and neglect of the land. Poverty stimulated population growth and put a premium on the available arable land which, in turn, encouraged further rack-renting by greedy landlords. The end result, of course, was great poverty and suffering and an enlarged population. The entire cycle depended on the potato. This root, as we shall see, was a remarkably nutritious food, which required little effort to grow and enabled extremely small farming units to sustain life.

Emigration was one means by which some of the "excess" population was drained from Ireland. In the early years of the 19th century, most of the exodus consisted of Irishmen seeking a better life in Britain. Before 1798 emigration was negligible. After the Union, the trickle turned into a stream as Irish laborers, drawn largely from Leinster, Munster and Connaught, poured into Scotland, England and Wales in search of jobs. By 1841, the census revealed that 289,404 native-born Irish resided in England and Wales, and 126,321 in Scotland. They formed, respectively, 1.8 percent and 4.8 percent of the total population

of those countries. In Scotland, the Irish were concentrated in the wynchs and closes of Glasgow and worked as laborers in burgeoning Scottish industries. In England, they were concentrated in Liverpool, Manchester, and London. They filled the lowest positions in the labor hierarchy. Those who landed jobs in factories were considered lucky. Most Irishmen had to settle for such employment as stevedores, bricklayers' assistants, sewer cleaners, and hand-loom weavers. Like later immigrants to America, the Irish tended to settle together in areas that became known as "Little Irelands." In London, the courts of Marylebone, Holborn, and Westminster were crowded with such immigrants. Their growing numbers and proximity to the native English caused many social problems which, as we shall see, exercised much influence on English policy towards Ireland in later years.

The crest of the first wave of immigration to England was reached in 1861. By that time Liverpool was estimated to be one-quarter Irish, although the total Irish population in Britain formed only three percent of the population of England and Wales and seven percent of Scotland. The major focus of immigration had by then become America.

While this exodus somewhat decreased the pressure on Irish

landholdings, it was also a grievous blow to the Irish economy. In the years before the famine, the majority of emigrants were drawn from among the more prosperous tenantry rather than from the poor land-hungry Irish peasantry. These emigrants were Ireland's "kulak class" and they took with them the skills and the capital which might otherwise have benefitted Ireland. They also vacated relatively large farms, which landlords then subdivided, thereby lowering the productivity of Irish agriculture even more.

Although the population continued to increase at a steady rate, it would not have caused such a squeeze on the available arable land if there had been a corresponding growth of commerce and industry. This was the pattern in Britain, where a growing population usually found employment in both agriculture and industry. Irish industry could provide no similar outlet for a growing population. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Ireland actually experienced a severe decline in commercial and industrial activity. Once again, the explanation can be traced to British policy towards Ireland.

* * *

It would be hard to prove that centuries of British rule prevented Ireland from reaching the "take-off" stage of industrial

development in the decades preceding the famine. Nevertheless, it is hard to refute the assertion that British policy consciously discouraged whatever opportunities arose there for industrial and commercial development.

The British had always viewed Ireland as a fertile field for economic exploitation. Her policy hewed closely to the maxim that Britain must become rich at Ireland's expense. The Crown, and later the two political parties, were rarely willing to assume any expense calculated to prove advantageous to Ireland, while they never shunned making Ireland bear any expense that would be advantageous to Britain. Ireland was a colony to be exploited. She provided the raw materials for English manufactures, land to use as payment to British subjects, and, in the nineteenth century, a source of cheap labor and a market for British goods.

This opportunistic approach to Ireland and her people was characteristic of British policy from the earliest years of colonial settlement to the end of the nineteenth century. In the sixteenth century, it was manifested in the greed of the speculators who backed the Plantation of Ireland and charged exorbitant rents to Irishmen recently evicted from their own land. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it showed up in British mercantilist policy, which was brutally applied

to Ireland. In the nineteenth century, it was characterized by the economic imperialism which governed the relations between the two countries. It was also manifest in centuries of British policy that undermined Ireland's chances for developing the store of capital and skills necessary for commercial and industrial development.

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The relative prosperity destroyed by the Cromwellian occupations only returned towards the end of the eighteenth century. The Repeal of the Cattle Prohibition Acts and the Penal Laws, Foster's Corn Law, and, above all, the unusual demands created in Britain by the Napoleonic Wars, acted as a catalyst for Irish economic development. By 1800, the expanding woolen, cotton, linen, and provision trades had brought new wealth into the country and boded well for Ireland's future. Once again, however, Irish industry, patiently nurtured from infancy to moderate levels of production, was destroyed by English jealousy and competition. This time, the lever of destruction proved to be the Act of Union of 1801. The Union, which many hoped would prove a boon to Irish economic development, sounded the death knell of that development. The industries which had showed such promise at the beginning of the century were stagnant three decades later.

From the days of the Restoration, the importation of Irish goods into Great Britain had been prohibited outright or were subjected to such high duties that importation was economically impossible. British manufacturers, on the other hand, met no such protective tariffs governing importation of their goods into Ireland. Export was, in fact, encouraged by the British Parliament. The grant of free trade to Ireland in 1780 affected only her relations with third countries and did not correct this basic inequity, which governed cross-channel traffic. William Pitt, the engineer of the Union, had at that time sponsored commercial legislation that would have made the duties between the two countries uniform and would thus have corrected this imbalance. His proposals were vetoed by British manufacturing interests, who feared that their markets would be flooded by cheap Irish goods.

By 1800, when the Union was proposed, the British manufacturers had reversed their demands, because the commercial situation was no longer in their favor. It was now the Irish who feared that their markets would be flooded. They protested, in vain. The economic and commercial clauses of the Act of Union called for the eventual abolition of all protective tariffs. Consequently, British industrialists used this opportunity to dump their goods on the Irish market and undersell native

manufactures.

The cotton industry was the first major industry to suffer. The first water-driven cotton mill had been built in 1784 near Belfast. At the time of the Union, Castlereagh estimated that the industry employed between thirty and forty-thousand laborers. 54

By 1811, fifty-thousand workers were employed in the Belfast area alone, and the industry flourished in southern Ireland as well. 55 Raw cotton was imported from America, finished in Irish factories, and consumed almost entirely by the home market. During the War of 1812, British manufacturers, unable to export finished goods to America because of the hostilities, dumped their products on the Irish market and undersold the native trade.

By 1822, economists estimate, only 3,000 to 5,000 workers were still employed by the cotton industry. On top of this, the Manchester manufacturers, not yet content with their share of the Irish market, obtained a premature repeal of the remaining protective duties on cotton. The destruction of the Irish cotton industry was almost complete by 1830. In 1838, there were only five spinning mills left in Belfast, employing 1,435 workers out of the total of 4,622 still engaged in the industry. 56

The woolen industry suffered a similar decline. Its destruction is the most famous example of English oppression of

Irish manufacture. During the eighteenth century, the industry was hard hit by restrictive English legislation that prohibited the importation of Irish wool into Britain. By the time of the Union, therefore, it was widespread as a home industry, but Irish wool was processed and turned into finished goods only in a few factories. The entire industry was preserved only by protective tariffs, which were removed in 1825 in response to the economic depression in Britain. Once again, British dumping of its products on Irish markets took its toll. In 1822, the homespun trade had been valued at £200,000. By 1840, the yearly valuation was estimated at £20,000.

Corduroy manufacture, the Wicklow flannel trade, and Irish muslin and linen manufacture also suffered a grievous decline. Irish weavers, for example, earned about twelve shillings a week in 1825. Fifteen years later, after the dry goods industries had been destroyed by British competition, the 1,900 weavers who were still left in Drogheda could earn only four shillings a week, and even then found work only sporadically. Of this, a distressed contemporary remarked that the weavers had "fallen from a most respectable to a very distressed and humble class."

Skilled Irish laborers were forced to emigrate to Britain or America in search of employment or to supplement their infre-

quent industrial employment in Ireland by raising pigs and growing potatoes. Irish economic development had proved a forlorn hope indeed. Thackeray hinted at the irony of this tragedy in his description of the Dublin Linen Hall in 1842. He described the hall, long since fallen into decay, as that "huge, useless, lonely, decayed place, in the vast solitude of which stands the simpering statue of George IV, pointing to some bales of shirting, over which he is to extend his august protection."

60

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The pressure on the land steadily increased in the decades after the Napoleonic Wars. To the demand for land created by the growing population was added the demand created by the decline of Irish industry, which forced thousands of industrial workers to revert to agriculture in order to feed their families. At the same time, other influences were at work to decrease the total acreage available for farming.

During the Napoleonic Wars, landlords had encouraged the scramble for land by subdividing their estates, in the hope of extracting a higher total rent. The system was, of course, dependent on the high price that grain fetched on the English market. Peace, as we have seen, brought a steady decline in cereal prices, which plummeted to one-third of what they had

or the local constabulary arrived and tore down the miserable hovels in which tenants had found shelter, and they were turned off the land. The evicted peasants walked through the countryside in search of food, clothing, and shelter, and, above all, land. The Repeal Association described the fate of the ejected tenantry as follows:

The natural and necessary consequences of the system of clearance have been that large numbers of ejected peasantry have been driven into miserable dwellings along the dykes, and in the ditches adjacent to the public roads; or to the filthy lanes of small neighboring towns; so that the multitudes have perished and are daily perishing, from sheer want of the common necessities of life; and the clearance system being the natural and necessary propagator of disease and death.⁶²

A witness before the Devon Commission asserted that
63
"eviction orders were, in truth, mass executions."

The Report of the Land Commission of 1830 warned Parliamentarians:

...the situation of the ejected tenantry, or of those who are obliged to give up their small holdings, in order to promote the consolidation of farms, is necessarily the most deplorable. It would be impossible to express the state of distress to which the ejected tenantry have been reduced. They have increased the stock of labour, and, what is perhaps more painful than all, a vast number of them have perished from want.⁶⁴

The fate of the ejected tenant was made all the more uncertain by the fact that it was next to impossible to find employ-

averaged between 1790 and 1815. Cereal production no longer proved profitable, because most tenants who farmed small units were no longer able to pay their rents after withholding that portion of their crop required for mere subsistence. Many landlords reacted to these circumstances by reverting to grazing, which had become more profitable because of the improved transportation facilities in Ireland and the greater demand for dairy and meat products in England. In order to effect such a transformation, the land had to be cleared of its inhabitants. Without leases, tenants had no security of tenure, and could be callously and summarily expelled from their holdings.

The political interests of many landlords also dictated a policy of eviction. The Act of Emancipation in 1829 disenfranchised the forty-shilling freeholder upon whom Protestant landlords had depended for electoral support. With the new franchise set at ten pounds, the landlords no longer had a political interest in keeping such tenants, and they were evicted by the thousands. One authority estimated that there had been 191,000 freeholds in 1828. In 1830, the year after the Act received Royal assent, there were only 14,200 left.

The amount of suffering engendered by such evictions is difficult to believe. Extremely short notice--if any--was given to the tenant. At the appointed hour, the proprietor's laborers

ment in non-agricultural pursuits in Ireland and there was no effective Poor Law, as in England, upon which they could have relied. The dispossessed peasant had to fall back upon private charity, which, considering the state of Ireland, was remarkably munificent, but unable to sustain all who required succor. Together with the unemployed, the ejected tenantry swelled the population of the cities and stalked through the countryside like silent ghosts in search of charity and land. Thackeray was not just giving vent to a squeamish stomach when he urged fellow-travelers to keep clear of Ireland.

Nassau Senior, a Government economist, compared the fantastic struggle of the peasantry to obtain a plot of earth, upon which to grow their potatoes, with the struggle to buy bread in a besieged town.⁶⁵ Landlords who had not cleared their land knew how to exploit this need for land. They subdivided their estates into even smaller units than ever and charged higher rentals. By 1841, 45 percent of the farming units of Ireland were less than five acres in size.⁶⁶

The decades following the Napoleonic Wars were a true Thirty Years War for the Irish people. In the words of one contemporary historian:

It was a war between their vital needs and the interests of the landlords and their moneylenders; a war which wasted more lives than the costliest campaign, and which drove evergrowing numbers of the conquered out of their natural country, while it made the position of the victors even more precarious than ever.⁶⁷

Rents rose to levels previously unheard of. Unlike England, where the rent was determined by a direct agreement between landlord and tenant, in Ireland it was settled by a method that more closely resembled an auction. A witness told the Devon Commission that the peasants bid and out-bid each other for a plot of land on which they might be fortunate enough to raise sufficient food for themselves and their families after the
68
exorbitant rent was paid. Henry Inglis, an English visitor to Ireland in 1834, reported that the tenants were so desperate that they were willing to pay rents which precluded any chance of their making a profit. He noted: -

And if the question be put to them, why they take land at a rent which they know it will not bear,--the reply is always the same: how were they to live? What could they do? From which ~~the~~ answer we at once arrived at the truth,--that competition for land in Ireland is but the outbidding of desperate circumstances.⁶⁹

Witnesses before Parliamentary Commissions testified that rents were screwed up so high that tenants paid more than the valuation of the land. In County Mayo, one of the most densely settled counties of the west, residents complained that rents were 50 to 100 percent higher than the Poor Law valuation of
70
the land. In some cases the disparity was even higher. In one section of Mayo, land valued at 1s. 6d. an acre was reported
71
to fetch 18s. 6d. an acre. In addition to rent, tenants were

responsible for a host of other burdens and taxes. Reverend Bernard Duncan, a parish priest of County Mayo, testified:

The other burdens, such as county cess, tithe rent-charge, poor rate, quit rent, may be fairly estimated at 8s. per acre. The county cess, which is collected twice a year, pressed with particular severity in summer; so much so that people are often obliged, in order to meet that demand, to sell the potatoes they require for their own use, and in consequence to purchase meal at a usurious rate of interest, so high as fifty per-cent.⁷²

The poverty of Ireland bred an even-greater poverty. Peasants, forced to sell their crops when provisions were cheap, in order to meet rent or county cess payments, were forced to borrow money or buy food later when prices were dear. The interest rates charged by usurers often ran to 80 or 90 percent
73
per annum. The merchants were equally predatory. Known to the peasantry as "gombeen men," they fixed food prices among themselves and charged four to five times the market price for
74
cereals and other produce.

The ultimate expression of the struggle for land was the pernicious system of renting known as "conacre." James Major, a barrister from County Monaghan, described it as follows:

I consider conacre to be a mere occupancy of the land, and not to constitute the relation of landlord and tenant in the proper acceptation of the term. It is a

mode of cultivation; a license to sow the ground;
a contract between the lessee and the conacre tenant,
that, as the latter sows, he shall reap.⁷⁵

Under conacre, the tenant leased a small plot of land,
usually a half-acre to five acres, for the duration of one harvest.
The owner prepared and manured the soil and the lessee planted
potatoes. At the end of the harvest, the tenant sold his po-
tatoes in order to pay his rent. Conacre rent was so high that
the margin of profit was very slight indeed. Good land usually
rented at anywhere from ten to fourteen pounds an acre, while
poor land fetched about six pounds. If there was a middleman
involved, the prices were even higher.⁷⁶ When the harvest was
poor, the total profit from the sale of potatoes was invariably
insufficient to pay for the rental of the land. In such cases,
the peasant starved.

Conacre was thus a gamble on the part of the peasant that
the crop would be an extraordinary one. If he won, he survived
another season. If he lost, he starved. The Devon Commission
concluded that the conacre tenant "is in the position of a
gambler who plays for a stake that he cannot afford to pay if
he loses, and he frequently does lose from the uncertainty
of the potato crop."⁷⁷

Conacre farming and, indeed, the entire system of rack-
renting, subdivision, and uncertain tenure rested upon the base

of potato culture. The tuber was a unique crop. Agronomists calculated that the nutritional value of potatoes was higher per acre than any cereal grown in Europe. The Victorian scientist, Sir Robert Kane, estimated that one acre of potatoes could support as much human life as five acres of wheat!

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The Irish thus became more dependent upon the potato as they were forced to settle on smaller and smaller plots of land. It was the only crop that made survival possible.

Englishmen consistently derided potato farming but, contrary to their assertions, the root was ideally suited to Ireland's geographic and economic conditions. Potatoes thrived in Ireland's humid climate and prospered in soil so unproductive that most other crops would have failed. In addition, potato culture required little capital outlay and not much labor. By 1841, it was estimated that nine-tenths of the Irish people derived their daily sustenance from the potato. Occasionally their diet was supplemented by turnips or buttermilk, but this happened only in the best of times--and sometimes not even then.

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Thus, while the potato guaranteed food for a population which might otherwise have starved, it also placed the mass of the Irish people in great danger because it was a very unreliable root. The Census of 1841, which included a report on the dangers

of depending upon the potato to feed the nation, unearthed the following facts about it:

It appears that the potato dies in the ground by what is termed "Dry Rot", without ever vegetating...that it suffers from extremes of wet at all periods of development after vegetation has commenced...at a later period it is liable to sour and rot, both before being dug and also when in the pits....that it is subject to partial blight by arrest of growth at the most critical periods of its progress, from the slight frosts which sometimes occur in the spring and early harvest; and to complete destruction of the tuber itself by the direct influence of those very severe and premature frosts which have occasionally occurred so early as October and November....⁸⁰

Partial potato failures were common occurrences in Ireland.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, before the great famine of 1845, there were partial failures in 1800, 1807, 1809, 1811, 1816, 1821, 1825, 1829, 1830, 1832-36, 1839, 1840, 1841, and 1844. Most of these failures had been localized, and the devastation they wrought was not so great that it was not offset by the yield of other crops. Yet, some of the more severe failures had shown how great Irish dependence upon the potato had become. Although economists and agronomists recognized the precarious state of life in Ireland, parliamentarians and proprietors, unable or unwilling to take into account the welfare of the Irish people, scoffed at the repeated warnings and denied the possibility of a general failure of the potato in Ireland.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 3

1. Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, Vol. XLIII (1838), Col. 20. (Referred to hereafter as Hansard's.)
2. Henry D. Inglis, A Journey Throughout Ireland During the Spring, Summer, and Autumn of 1834 (London: Whittaker and Co., I (1834), 106.
3. Gustave de Beaumont, Ireland: Social, Political, and Religious, trans. W. C. Taylor (London: R. Bentley, 1838), I, 268.
4. William Makepeace Thackeray, The Irish Sketchbook (New York: J. Winchester, 1844), p. 37. Thackeray published this volume under the pseudonym of M. A. Titmarsh.
5. Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Take the Census of Ireland for the Year 1841. Parliamentary Papers, H. C. 1843 (504), XXIV, pp. 454-55. (Hereafter referred to as Census, 1841.)
6. Ibid., p. 454.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Thom's Irish Almanac and Official Directory for the Year 1845 (Dublin: Alexander Thom and Sons, 1845), p. 163.
13. Léonce de Lavergne, Essai sur l'Économie rurale de l'Angleterre de l'Écosse et de l'Irlande (3rd ed.; Paris, 1858), pp. 380-81.
14. Rundale was a system of agriculture under which the land was held in common. Each member of the community had up to thirty or forty plots of land, scattered among the total holdings, which he farmed, Meadowland was usually held in the same way, while grazing land was common to all. In some communities, the plots were reassigned every few years.

15. John Stuart Mill, Principles of Political Economy With Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy (Boston: C. C. Little and J. Brown, 1848), I, p. 369.
16. Edmund Spenser, A View of the State of Ireland (London: James Ware, 1663). The manuscript was written in 1596, but was not published until the seventeenth century, because it was suppressed by the Government.
17. James Johnson, A Tour in Ireland: With Meditations and Reflections (London: S. Highley, 1844), pp. 274-75.
18. Ibid.
19. See the excellent discussion of British economists and the Irish absentee problem in R. D. Collison Black, Economic Thought and the Irish Question, 1817-1870 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), pp. 72-86.
20. George O'Brien, Economic History of Ireland from the Union to the Famine (London: Longmans, 1921), p. 516.
21. "Incumbered Estates Court," Dublin University Magazine, XXXVI (Sept. 1850), 313.
22. Ibid.
23. See Black, op. cit., pp. 72-86.
24. James A. Froude, "Romanism and the Irish Race," North American Review, Vol. 131 (Jan. 1880), p. 36.
25. In 1835-36, Sharman Crawford, supported by the economist, Poulett Scrope, brought forward a bill designed to give evicted tenants the right to claim compensation for their capital outlay on the land. The bill was attacked as an unprecedented measure and an unjustifiable and monstrous interference in the relations between landlord and tenant. The bill was never passed. Chief Justice Pennefather of Ireland found the legislature's refusal to consider the bill yet another example of the truth that the law of Ireland was landlord's law. He wrote: "The whole code relating to landlord and tenant in this country was possessed with a view to the interests of the landlord, and to enforce the payment of rent by the tenant. The interest of the tenant never entered

- into the contemplation of the legislature." Quoted in O'Brien, op. cit., p. 132: Report From Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry Into the State of the Law and Practice in Ireland, Parliamentary Papers, H.C. 1845 (605) XIX, p. 14. (This report and the evidence taken before the Commissioners, H.C. 1845 (606) XIX, (616) XX, (657) XXI, and the Appendix (672) XXII, and Index, (673) XXII, comprise Parliamentary Papers hereafter referred to as the Devon Commission.)
26. Devon Commission, Report, p. 16.
 27. Ibid., Evidence, Part I, p. 156.
 28. In some parts of Ireland, however, it was customary to grant leases for "three lives or thirty years" or, sometimes, whichever lapsed first.
 29. Harriet Martineau, Letters from Ireland (London: J. Chapman, 1852), p. 38. (These letters were reprinted from articles which appeared in the London Daily News.)
 30. Edward Wakefield, An Account of Ireland, Statistical and Political (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1812), I, 244.
 31. Such a system also tended to depress the labor market. Full-time laborers in Ireland received a very low rate of remuneration throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. O'Brien estimated their average daily wage to be 10d. G. C. Lewis thought that the living conditions of laborers were depressed not only because of low wages but by reason of their inability to find full-time employment. O'Brien, op. cit., pp. 17-19; George Cornwall Lewis, On Local Disturbances in Ireland; and on the Irish Church Question (London: B. Fellowes, 1836), p. 313.
 32. Dairy products and wool, along with other provisions, did, however, rise in price during the Napoleonic Wars. After the wars, the prices quickly declined.
 33. Foster's Corn Law, passed by the Irish Parliament in 1784, provided bounties to farmers to encourage grain production. In 1806, the British Parliament repealed

- legislation prohibiting the importation of Irish grain. These two acts, coupled with the demand created in Britain by the Napoleonic Wars, acted as a great stimulus to Irish grain production.
34. E. R. R. Green, "Agriculture," The Great Famine, ed. R. Dudley Edwards and T. Desmond Williams (New York: New York University Press, 1957), p. 101.
 35. Kenneth H. Connell, The Population of Ireland, 1750-1845 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 113.
 36. Ricardo to Trower, July 24, 1823, in The Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo, ed. Piero Saffra with M. H. Dobb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951-55), IX, 314.
 37. Clapham, John N., An Economic History of Great Britain: The Early Railway Age, 1820-1850 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926), pp. 133-34.
 38. Ibid.
 39. Quoted in E. R. R. Green, op. cit., p. 103.
 40. Report from the Select Committee on the State of the Poor in Ireland, Parliamentary Papers, H. C. (667) VIII, 398.
 41. See James Cambin Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), pp. 25-40.
 42. Devon Commission, op. cit., Report, p. 14, Evidence, Part I, p. 929.
 43. Ibid., Evidence, Part I, p. 938.
 44. Connell, op. cit.
 45. Census, 1841, op. cit.
 46. Connell, op. cit.
 47. See, for example, David V. Glass (ed.), Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography (London: E. Arnold, 1965).
 48. During the eighteenth century, emigration was on a small scale; it is doubtful that the numbers of emigrants ex-

ceeded 5,000 in any given season. Most of these emigrants were Presbyterians from Ulster and were not paupers. The immigrants into Britain after the Napoleonic Wars were Catholic Irishmen and, for the most part, extremely poor. This created a great social and economic problem in the cities where they settled, and had repercussions on British policy towards Ireland during the famine, when many British politicians sponsored relief measures whose major intention was to keep the Irish in Ireland.

49. Census, 1841, op. cit.
50. Ibid.; calculations based on the Census, 1841.
51. See Oliver MacDonagh, "Irish Emigration to the United States of America and the British Colonies During the Famine," in R. Dudley Edwards and T. Desmond Williams, op. cit., pp. 319-91, for an interesting discussion of Irish emigration, with particular emphasis on the famine years.
52. Before 1800, there were few Irish immigrants to the New World, and most of those who made the crossing were Presbyterian farmers from Ulster. After 1800, Irish Catholics began pouring into America. Their passage was facilitated by an unrelated quirk in trans-Atlantic trade. Much of the shipping between Britain and America consisted of timber trade. The shipper's problem was to find some cargo to carry on the trip out. Many times they were reduced to carrying ballast. As a result, they were willing to transport immigrants to America at extremely low fares. The price of passage from Irish ports to Quebec--exclusive of food and other provisions--was often between two and three pounds. Cecil Woodham-Smith, The Great Hunger (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 208.
53. See Eric Strauss, Irish Nationalism and British Democracy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), for a detailed discussion of British economic exploitation of Ireland. Although the author's Marxist and polemical

approach often result in exaggeration and overstatement, it remains the best single treatment of the relationship of Ireland to the growth of British capitalism.

54. Idem., quoted from p. 75.
55. E. R. R. Green, op. cit., p. 31.
56. T. W. Freeman, Pre-Famine Ireland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1957), p. 86.
57. Ibid., p. 88.
58. Ibid., p. 87.
59. E. R. R. Green, op. cit., p. 39.
60. Thackeray, op. cit., p. 346.
61. John E. Pomfret, The Struggle for Land in Ireland, 1800-1923 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1930), p. 15.
62. Report of the Repeal Association, quote in O'Brien, op. cit., p. 57.
63. Devon Commission, op. cit., Appendix; quoted in Woodham-Smith, op. cit., p. 32.
64. Quoted in R. Barry O'Brien, Parliamentary History of the Irish Land Question from 1829 to 1869 (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1880), p. 44.
65. Nassau Senior, Journals, Conversations and Essays Relating to Ireland (London: Longmans, Green, 1868), I, 28.
66. Census, 1841, op. cit., pp. 454-55.
67. Strauss, op. cit., p. 79.
68. Devon Commission, op. cit., Evidence, Part II, p. 454, Evidence of William Bourke of County Mayo.
69. Inglis, op. cit., pp. 29-30.
70. Devon Commission, op. cit., Evidence, Part II, p. 389, Evidence of Reverend Bernard Duncan of County Mayo.

71. Ibid., p. 454, Evidence of William Bourke of County Mayo.
72. Ibid., p. 389, Evidence of Reverend Bernard Duncan of County Mayo.
73. Ibid., Part II, p. 268, Evidence of Reverend John William Evers of County Leitrim.
74. Ibid., Part III, p. 388, Reverend C. B. Stevenson of County Tipperary testified that the price of a barrel of potatoes often rose from 2s.6d. to 4s. or 5s.
75. Ibid., Part I, p. 119, Evidence of James Major, Assistant Barrister in County Monaghan.
76. Ibid., Part II, p. 454, Evidence of William Bourke of County Mayo.
77. Ibid., Report, p. 14.
78. Redcliffe N. Salaman, The Influence of the Potato on the Course of Irish History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1949), p. 546.
79. Census, 1841, op. cit.
80. Ibid., Part V., p. 241.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland came into effect on January 1, 1801. Many partisans of the Union on both sides of the Irish Sea had hoped that the amalgamation of the two countries would be the prelude to a new era of Anglo-Irish relations characterized by a spirit of reconciliation and mutual cooperation. All over Britain, people hailed the Union as a great constructive step in placing the relations between former enemies on a harmonious basis. Many openly acknowledged the injustices of the past but voiced their belief that such injustices now belonged to history. This was a new century, a new era in which both Celt and Anglo-Saxon could and should share the advantages of just government and economic prosperity.

The structure of the Union could encourage such optimism. The eight articles which embodied the political, commercial, legal, and religious basis of the Union were not intrinsically unfair to Ireland. Assuming that, in operation, they would be administered in a spirit of good will and conciliation, there was no reason to suspect that the Union would not prove beneficial to both parties concerned.

The first four articles established the political basis

of the Union. By these articles, Ireland was to be united with Great Britain in one kingdom, to be known as "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland." The Parliament on College Green in Dublin was to cease to function but, in its place, Ireland would receive representation in the British Parliament. In the Upper House she was awarded seats for four spiritual lords, sitting in rotation, and twenty-eight temporal lords, elected for life by the peers of Ireland. In the House of Commons, she was given one hundred members: two for each county; two each for the cities of Dublin and Cork; one each for thirty-one other cities and boroughs; and one seat for the University of Dublin.

The fifth article regulated religious institutions. The Church of England and the Church of Ireland were to be united, and the maintenance of this united church was deemed to be "an essential and fundamental part of the Union."

The sixth article stated that subjects of Ireland and Great Britain should be entitled to the same privileges of trade and commerce and that, accordingly, there should be free trade between the two countries. There were two qualifications to free trade, the more important of which stipulated that for twenty years customs duties were to be maintained between the countries on certain manufactured products. The principal duty was on woolen goods.

The seventh article established independent financial systems for the two countries. Each was to have its own exchequer and national debt. Each was to contribute to the general expenses of the Kingdom in the proportion of two parts for Ireland and fifteen parts for Great Britain. After twenty years this proportion was to be reconsidered and thereafter could be altered at any time by Act of Parliament. This article also provided that, under certain circumstances, the financial structures of the two countries might be combined.

The eighth article stipulated that the laws and judicial regulations in operation in both countries at the time of Union should continue unchanged, subject only to revisions that might be made by the Parliament.

The great inequality that remained between the two countries and threatened to make a sham of the Union was the legislation barring Catholics from holding most political offices, including membership in either house of Parliament. The franchise in Ireland was comparatively liberal--more so than in England--but if Catholics were excluded from office, the Union would be little more than a settlement between Britain and the Protestant minority, which for centuries had held all the reins of authority in Ireland. Castlereagh, one of the architects of the Union, had, however, offered Catholic Emancipation as a

quid pro quo for Irish approval of the Union.

In Britain, support for the Union was motivated by two concerns. The first, already alluded to, was the hope that Anglo-Irish relations could be placed on a peaceful and mutually advantageous footing. This conciliatory approach proved to be an illusory hope. The second concern, more sanguine in its calculation, was motivated by the belief that the amalgamation of the two countries would hold Ireland more firmly than ever under the thumb of Britain. Various economic and political interests hoped, as a result, to be able to exploit Ireland with greater ease.

The first confrontation between these differing conceptions of the Union established the pattern that was to prevail in subsequent relations between the two countries throughout most of the history of the Union. Catholic Emancipation, promised by Pitt and supported by Castlereagh, was not granted by the British Parliament for twenty-eight years. Despite the advocacy of many enlightened Protestants, the material interests of the Irish-Protestant minority and the religious prejudices of the English Protestants won the day. The former feared for their ascendancy if the doors to political mobility were opened to Catholics, and the latter believed that Roman Catholics, by reason of their allegiance to the Pope, could never become good citizens.

The obstinacy and selfishness that marked such attitudes in the fight against Catholic Emancipation were evident in other matters as well. As a result, Ireland, notwithstanding all provisions to the contrary, continued to be governed as a colony. The various clauses regulating relations between the two countries were consistently administered in a manner designed to obtain British advantage at Irish expense.

By far the greatest contradiction between the promise held out by Union and its actual results lay in the economic realm. We have examined in the previous chapter how Ireland was exploited as a market for British goods, as a supply of cheap labor, as a source of inexpensive grain, and as a supplier of capital to help finance British industry. The commercial clauses of the Union, ostensibly a means of providing impetus to Irish economic development, were employed by British manufacturers to crush Irish industry and trade. The cumulative effect of this exploitation, unchecked by any legislation to protect Irish interests, was to depress the condition of Ireland to such an extent that a majority of her inhabitants were reduced to a state of abject poverty. The increasing pauperization of Ireland stood in sharp contrast to English assurances that the Union would result in greater prosperity for the Irish people.

Poverty, in the eyes of the Irish people, was the outcome

of British rule. The peasant viewed the landlord who exploited him, the Anglican minister who grew fat on his meager earnings, and the magistrate who protected them both as the palpable representatives of the Crown. His penury was in itself sufficient cause for him to despise the connection with Britain and to regard it as an evil system designed to extract from him his last penny and, perhaps, his life. Although other injustices rankled Irish tempers, the economic state of the country remained the central grievance. The continuing burden of it, after the glorious hopes of 1801, made a mockery of the Union. This poverty made the other grievances, which were not so great in and of themselves, additional and unbearable cares which made the Union all the more repugnant to a growing number of Irishmen.

The financial clauses of the Union are a case in point. They were manipulated in such a way that Ireland was forced to pay more than her fair share of the general expenses of the two countries without receiving any benefit in return. The great expense of waging war against France brought about a national budget that was larger than any expected by the architects of the Union. Ireland's share of the general expenses of the Kingdom, which in 1800 had been £4.5 million, had risen to £13 million by 1816. While Britain's share of the expenses had also increased, much of it could be met from incoming revenue.

The Irish, however, could not meet their expenses and were forced to raise money in Britain, for which they paid exorbitant interest rates. Such loans drew much capital out of Ireland and, as a result, the national debt rose 250 percent. The British debt during this period rose only about 50 percent.¹ Considering the economic state of Ireland, this proved to be an additional burden, which the Irish could ill afford to assume.

The religious settlement was exploited in a similar manner. The merger of the Church of England and the Church of Ireland insured that the Irish people, of whom the overwhelming majority were Catholic, would continue to pay tithes to an alien church. A large percentage of this revenue was spent outside of Ireland and thus did not benefit Irishmen in any way--regardless of their religious affiliations.

Both Irish Catholics and dissenting Protestants resented the Established Church and denounced it as an infringement of their religious liberties, but most of all, they abhorred it for the additional economic burden it placed on them. The Church took a share of the peasant's meager income, yet did not contribute in the least to his welfare. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, upon which Catholic peasants depended--both for their spiritual needs and, at times, for their material well-being as well--received nothing from the State but some funds for clerical colleges. Catholic charities were, by

necessity, privately sponsored.

The political basis of the Union proved to be equally odious to the majority of the Irish people. Emancipation, regarded as a test of British intentions, was denied at first because of the opposition of powerful economic and religious interests in the United Kingdom. Emancipation was achieved only in 1829, three decades after it was promised. Even then it was not envisaged as a conciliatory gesture made to please the Irish, but rather as a concession extracted only by the threat of revolution.

Irishmen considered the Parliamentary settlement to be particularly unjust. Ireland had been awarded one hundred seats in the House of Commons, that number representing a balancing-out of her population and wealth with that of the rest of the United Kingdom. A majority of these seats were rural constituencies, where the political balance, structured by the Emancipation Act, favored the election of Protestant landlords. Protestant ascendancy was guaranteed because the Emancipation Act, while it had given Irish Catholics the right to sit in Parliament, had at the same time disenfranchised most of the voters upon whom they would depend for election.

In the eighteenth century the great Protestant landowners

of Ireland had managed to obtain the ballot for forty-shilling freeholders. A majority of those thus qualified were Catholic farmers. These tenants were so dependent upon the good will of the landlords for their very existence that they had little choice but to follow their electoral instructions. The alternative was to risk eviction and possible starvation. Thus, the landowners, by extending suffrage, had created a large class of voters who could be manipulated to serve their political interests. The system broke down, however, in the nineteenth century.

Catholic politicians had actively proselytized these small farmers and had succeeded in weaning them away from the landlords. Although still subject to severe recriminations for violating their landlords' voting instructions, an increasing percentage of these tenants cast their votes in direct opposition to the interests of the proprietors. Evictions and other forms of retribution were unable to halt the trend. The Ascendancy was threatened and, as a result, its allies in the House of Lords demanded disenfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders before they would agree to support Emancipation. The qualification for the franchise was accordingly raised to ten pounds.

The Irish therefore viewed Emancipation as a largely

hypocritical measure. While it enabled Irish Catholics to hold political office, at the same time it decreased their chances of winning an election. As a result, twenty years after Emancipation, the Irish Catholics and their allies among the Protestant Radicals controlled many fewer than half of the seats allotted to Ireland, although they represented the views of the vast majority of the Irish population. The other seats remained the sinecures of the Ascendancy. On almost every political question that concerned Ireland, the Ascendancy interests had their way.

Unable to influence the course of policy towards Ireland, the Irish-Catholic party denounced the Parliamentary settlement as unfair and a mockery of justice. They demanded that the inequality in Irish representation be rectified by a juster settlement. They complained that their population represented one quarter of the total population of the Kingdom, but they had received only one tenth of the total representation in Parliament.

The ideal of "one man, one vote," however, was still only the dream of the Radicals who agitated for reform of the House of Commons. The opposite conception of Parliament as representative of interests rather than people was still accepted as valid by many members of both political parties. With respect to the compromise between these differing conceptions of repre-

sentation, the number of seats allotted to Ireland was not unjust. Nor for that matter was the imbalance between rural and urban representation. Such an inequality prevailed in England, Wales, and Scotland as well. It was only with the passage of the Reform Act of 1832 that the British political system began to move towards universal franchise and democratic representation.

In Britain, such inequalities angered Radical reformers, but they were not the barriers to mobility and well-being that they were in Ireland. Working-class representation at Westminster was practically non-existent outside of the few Radicals who spoke in their interest, although Parliament was not totally unresponsive to the demands of the working class. Their extra-parliamentary organization and, above all, their physical presence, insured that working-class interests could not be ignored at Westminster.

Revolution in Europe made the British political elite extremely sensitive to conditions at home. There can be little doubt that politicians over-reacted to events on the Continent and, consequently, overestimated the chance of revolution at home. Nevertheless, this fear made them all the more receptive to the interests of classes that had little Parliamentary representation. A Chartist mob converging on Westminster, a riot at Peterborough, or labor agitation in the Midlands were all

signs to them of ominous discontent that legislators chose not to ignore.

In Ireland, however, extra-Parliamentary channels of political agitation were not so effective. Although Ireland was only a few hours' sea passage away from Britain, it might as well have been as far away as India. Few legislators had ever set foot in Ireland, and most had neither first-hand experience of Irish problems nor any feeling for the people. To them, Ireland was an unreal land populated by people whose suffering aroused little but contempt in English hearts.

Without English sympathy or understanding, a mob converging in Dublin could not possibly have the same effect as a similar mob demonstrating in Central London; starvation in the countryside could not raise the same concern as poverty in Manchester; and Irish agitation was perceived very much differently from Chartist agitation in Britain. In such circumstances, the Irish people were forced to rely only upon the political power of their representatives in Westminster. The intensity and totality of Irish poverty, coupled with the fact that her Parliamentary strength was the only possible means through which this grievance might be redressed, made the question of legislative representation all the more important in Irish eyes.

The ineffectiveness of Irish representatives in obtaining

any legislation aimed at correcting the abuses of British rule in Ireland stood in sharp contrast to the increasing impoverishment of the country, It also stood in sharp contrast to the success of the Chartists and Radicals in Britain in securing some redress for the grievances of the British poor. The Irish people thus demanded the repeal of the Union and the reconstitution of their own Parliament in Dublin.

The Union, which many had hoped would be the prelude to a new era in Anglo-Irish relations, proved to be a repetition of the old patterns of exploitation and indifference under a new guise. The Westminster Review, a leading British Radical publication, found "no relief, no variety in Anglo-Irish history except the variety of alternated force and fraud." The Review warned its readers:

So long as Ireland is cursed and insulted with the pestilent nuisance of the Protestant Church Establishment, and its adjuncts and conditions; so long as an atom of the Protestant Ascendancy subsists, either in legislation of administration; so long as the property-right, divorced from all property duties, means the right of starving Irishmen at will on their own soil; so long as legislation and magistracy are sectarian and partisan...so long as Ireland is mocked with nominal union and insulted with actual inferiority, there will be and there ought to be agitation...we are maintaining a system which is, in itself, a standing casus belli.²

* * *

The preeminent political force in pre-famine Ireland was the Loyal National Repeal Association. Drawing upon the numerical and financial support of an alienated peasantry, the organization and blessings of the Catholic clergy, and spearheaded by the emerging Catholic middle classes, the Association presented a well-organized and powerful challenge to the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland and the central Government at Westminster. The avowed goal of the movement was repeal of the Act of Union of 1801 and restoration of the Irish Parliament on College Green in Dublin. As the "hungry forties" approached their zenith, the Repeal campaign grew in intensity, and Irishmen and Englishmen alike marshalled their forces in preparation for the inevitable showdown.

The strength of Repeal lay in its accurate articulation of the grievances of most Irishmen and its espousal of a program which, its leaders argued, was designed to rectify these evils. This basic appeal, combined with an efficient and charismatic leadership, enabled the Association to extend its sway over a majority of the Irish people. By 1843, the Repeal Association had, in essence, become a rival government--one that had won the support and loyalty of the population but had not yet gained the actual means of power.

The genesis of the Repeal movement can be found in the emergence of a Catholic middle class in Ireland. The growth of this class had been artificially retarded for centuries by discriminatory legislation designed to destroy Irish commercial development in general and Catholic economic advancement in particular. The abolition of the Penal Laws and many other discriminatory Acts did not come until late in the eighteenth century. It coincided, however, with a sustained period of Irish economic growth. As a result, in the later years of that century, growing numbers of Catholic business and professional men swelled the ranks of Ireland's burgeoning middle class.

As the Catholic middle class consolidated its economic position, it aspired to achieve the wealth and position of the Protestant middle class. Its members became increasingly vocal in their demand for abolition of the remaining discriminatory legislation and practices that acted as a barrier to economic and political mobility. Chief among these demands was Catholic Emancipation and abolition of the general discriminatory practices that made Catholics second-class citizens.

The majority of middle-class Catholics realized the impossibility of achieving their goals through violence or revolution. Memories of the abortive insurrection of 1798

were still fresh in their minds. In addition, the Union was not yet perceived to be a total sham and, therefore, they were willing to accept political agitation within the limits of the Constitution as both the less dangerous and, perhaps, the more efficacious path to follow.

The more politically astute leaders of the middle class knew that by themselves they possessed insufficient political or economic influence to make an impact on the British political system. They realized that an alliance with the other classes of Ireland would add both greater moral force to their demands and additional power to their challenge. Catholic politicians like Daniel O'Connell urged the middle-class dissidents to act in conjunction with the liberal Irish Protestants and to champion the cause of rural Ireland as well as that of the urban middle class.

The principal grievance in rural Ireland was, of course, the increasing pauperization and destitution of the Irish peasantry. This poverty created a revolutionary situation in Ireland. Secret societies, dedicated to exacting justice from the landowning class, sprang up throughout the Irish countryside. Contemporary observers reported that by 1840 the system of agrarian outrage had become an endemic feature of rural Ireland.³ These societies, known by a variety of colorful names--the

"Molly Maguires," the "Whitefeet," or the "Blackfeet"--made Ireland an unsafe place for rack-renting landlords.

Travelers and magistrates reported that such societies exercised a high degree of selectivity in the choice of their victims. The outrages they perpetrated were not, as might be expected, the acts of a peasantry blindly striking out against the entire social order. They were invariably directed against landlords, either Catholic or Protestant, who were responsible for rack-renting or evicting tenantry. They were also directed against other peasants who took advantage of the distress of their fellows.⁴ Sharman Crawford, one of the most responsible Protestant landlords, testified to this effect in the House of Commons. He told his fellow Parliamentarians:

It was the system of oppression by Irish landlords which caused the disposition among the people to agrarian outrage. They could get no justice from the law, and they were compelled to make a law for themselves; and they said, we must protect ourselves or starve. The way to remedy the existing evils was by improving the condition of the people.⁵

Crawford was correct in insisting that the legal system provided no moderating influence in Ireland, for it was formulated and administered by representatives of the landowning class and was tailor-made to suit their interests. The Chief Justice of Ireland went so far as to testify before the Devon Commission

that the law in Ireland was "landlord's law" that took no cog-
nizance of the tenant's right to derive a living from the land he
6
farmed.

Violence and intimidation were thus the only means left
to the peasantry in their struggle for survival. Sir Llewellyn
Woodward defended this view in his authoritative study of this
period. He argues that

The Irish peasants had one remedy against a legal
system which seemed to be weighted against their
interests and to threaten thousands with starva-
tion. They tried to enforce their own code by vio-
lence and intimidation. Herein lies the main reason
for the lawlessness of a peasantry which, in other
respects, was not criminal.⁷

Dissatisfaction among the Catholic community found its
counterpart in Protestant Ireland. Many Protestants, although
divided from Catholics by religious differences, found them-
selves drawn closer to the native Irish by their common politi-
cal and economic interests.

The Protestant Ascendancy, who held the real reins of power
in Ireland, really represented only a minority of the Protest-
ant population of the country. The Ascendancy was largely syn-
onymous with the class of large landed proprietors, who were
able to exploit the land and people only by reason of the back-
ing they received from the British Government. Representatives

of the Ascendancy staffed the Irish administration and controlled the legal and military establishment in Ireland. Their major complaint was that the British Government had gone too far in its concessions to Irish Catholics.

Outside this class of landowners and the bureaucrats who served their interests, there was widespread discontent. Many other Protestant landowners, for example, perceived the colonial structure of Ireland to be detrimental to their interests. The revolutionary situation created by the oppressive policies of their callous neighbors not only placed their lives in danger but was injurious to their economic interests. Despite the improvements they had made on their estates, the real value of the land had declined because of the prevailing insecurity of life and property. The incidence of violence also had the effect of raising interest rates on loans required for further improvement.⁸ Such landlords despised the irresponsible proprietors for placing them in such circumstances. Lord Montague and Viscount Clements, both representative of this better class of proprietor, worked hard in their own way to bring justice and good government to Ireland. Yet what little good such men had done seemed, as often as not, to get undone by the negligence--or outright cruelty--of the others.

The greatest Protestant opposition of all to the religious, political, and economic policies of the Ascendancy was centered

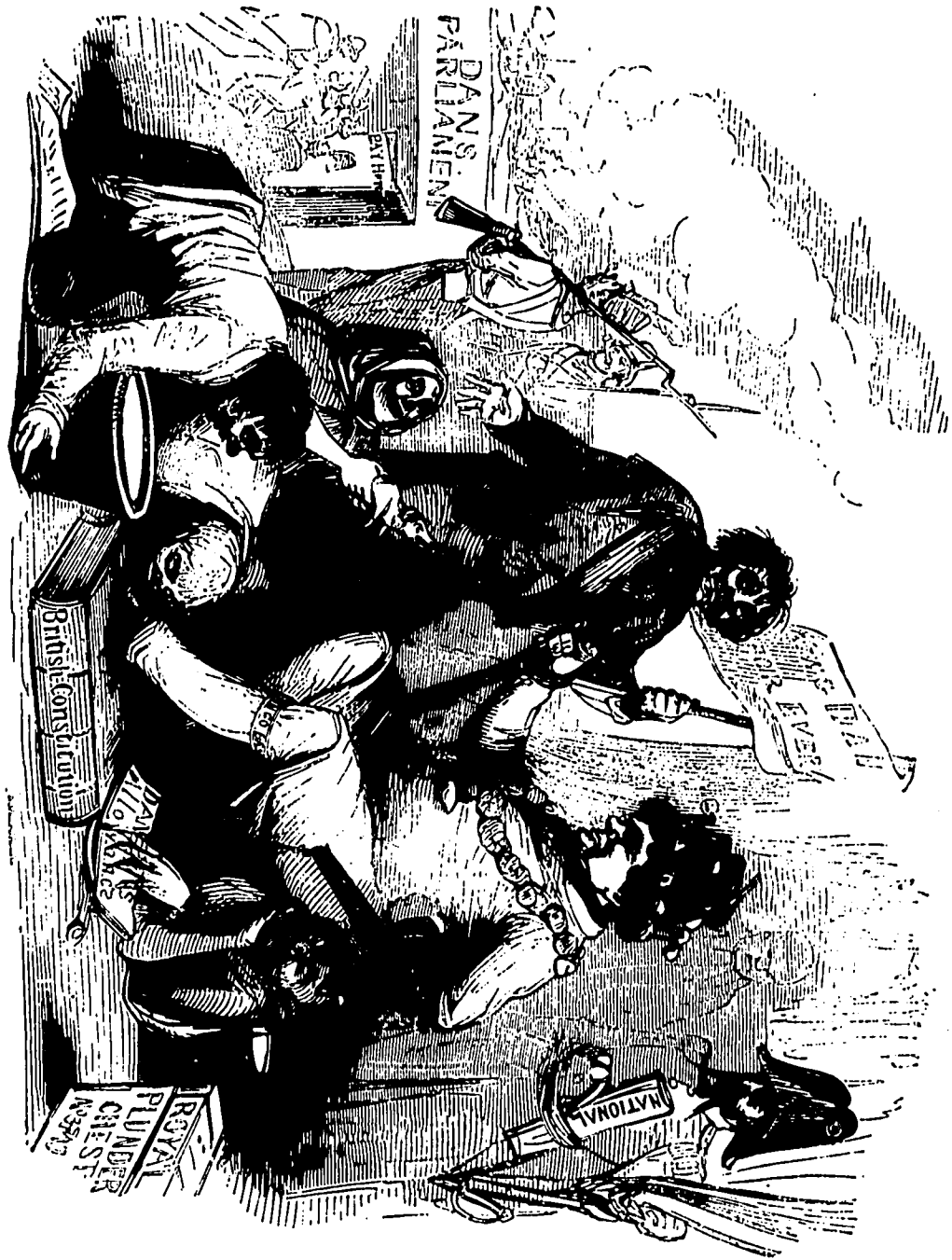
in Ulster. Eight percent of Irish Protestants were Dissenters, but of those, fifty percent resided in the counties of Antrim and Down in the Province of Ulster. The conflict between the Dissenters and the Established Church went back to the early days of the Scotch-Irish settlement and had been periodically marked by violence and bloodshed that was equal to the struggle between the native Irish and the British conquerors. In the eighteenth century, Protestant secret societies had perpetrated outrages against the Established Church and fought to prevent its collection of the tithe. In the decades after the Union, the Government gave legal recognition to the status of the Dissenting sects in order to secure their loyalty to the Crown, but a degree of suspicion and resentment still remained.

More important than religious discontent was economic dissatisfaction. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Ulster bore the brunt of the British mercantilist-oriented colonial policy. In the nineteenth century, British destruction of Irish trade and commerce hit Ulstermen the hardest because they were the leaders of Irish industrial development. Ulster's Protestants were thus embittered by British disregard for their economic interests and believed that they were discriminated against in favor of economic interests in Britain.

In the political sphere, Ulstermen complained of being under-represented in Parliament. They felt ineffectual in combatting the inequities of discriminatory economic policies, unjust taxation, and religious discrimination, which retarded their political and economic mobility. Although most Protestants still feared Irish Catholics more than they despised Great Britain, a minority perceived their interests to lie with those of the Catholic majority. Every Irish rebellion found its share of Protestants fighting side by side with Catholic insurgents. In the struggle for Irish freedom, the names of Henry Grattan, William Smith O'Brien, Thomas Davis, and Charles Parnell--all of them Protestants--stand out as representatives of this tradition.

The Repeal Association attempted to wield an alliance of all the dissident classes of Ireland. Irish political leaders hoped that a united front with the common purpose of ending British injustice towards Ireland would generate sufficient moral force and possess sufficient political power to force concessions from the Government at Westminster. The extent to which the difficulties in the way of such a program were overcome and a powerful organization created was primarily the result of the political genius of Daniel O'Connell.

KING O'CONNELL AT TARA.



O'Connell was born in County Kerry, the scion of Catholic gentry. His family had secretly preserved their holdings during the centuries of harshest oppression and had emerged as wealthy landowners when this legislation was finally repealed. O'Connell inherited the family estate but was only incidentally a landowner. The major part of his life was spent at the bar and in Parliament.

O'Connell achieved a degree of renown and national popularity during the first two decades of the nineteenth century by reason of his excellence as a barrister. Dedicated to the cause of the common people, he successfully defended small farmers, peasants, and businessmen against the Ascendancy. His astounding record of success, his accessibility to even the poorest plaintiff, and his magnetic personality and charm earned him the affectionate title of "The Counsellor." The intimate knowledge of Irish problems O'Connell gained during these years of legal practice and the wide range of acquaintances he cultivated served him well when he entered politics.

It was perhaps inevitable that he would enter politics. O'Connell was an undisguisedly ambitious man and had soon reached the limits of a country legal practice. Although he later practiced in Dublin and Cork and became a wealthy man, by contempo-

rary standards, his aspirations within the law were, by necessity, limited. Catholics could not become judges or rise to high positions in the civil service or political administration. Even in areas where the law did not openly forbid the employment of Catholics, British discrimination had erected a de facto barrier to their mobility. As a result, O'Connell, and other men like him, were drawn into politics as a profession in which they could satisfy their personal ambition for power and status and simultaneously derive satisfaction from working to achieve better conditions for their fellow Catholics.

O'Connell was a liberal and a Catholic--an unusual combination in the early years of the nineteenth century. He remained a devout Catholic throughout his life and never failed to support the Church in attaining what he believed to be its rightful prerogatives. At the same time, however, O'Connell believed that there was no incompatibility between adherence to the Catholic faith and loyalty to a national state that was overwhelmingly Protestant. The distinction between temporal and secular concerns, he argued, was sufficiently clear cut to ensure that no conflict would arise so long as the state guaranteed religious freedom for all faiths and equality for all citizens.⁹ Catholics, O'Connell told Protestants, demanded civil and religious equality and would prove their loyalty to the national state in return.¹⁰

In economic and political matters, O'Connell was a radical. He was a staunch advocate of the Manchester School, supported the litany of the free trade gospel--in opposition to many of his fellow Repealers--and delivered some of his most impressive speeches in favor of repeal of the corn laws. His oration in Parliament and lobbying in its corridors won him the grudging respect of many Radicals. ¹¹ The Northern Star, spokesman for working-class radicalism, hailed him as a kindred spirit.

O'Connell favored the widest possible extension of the franchise, the reform of Parliament to insure democratic representation, abolition of discriminatory legislation against Jews and other minorities, and a host of other reforms advanced by liberal and radical agitation. His wide range of concerns and his effective advocacy of them made O'Connell a national figure. His primary concern, however, was always with the affairs of his native land.

O'Connell's ingrained liberalism was probably responsible for the optimistic view he held about Anglo-Irish reconciliation. With other liberals, he saw the victory of economic and political liberalism as inevitable. O'Connell believed that as such beliefs became ascendant, the contradiction between them and British policy in Ireland would force the Government to bring its policy in tune with the spirit of the age. ¹² Such optimism

was not unwarranted at the beginning of the century. The Penal Laws--by far the worst abuse propagated against the Irish--had already been abolished. Few Englishmen now regarded them as anything but inhumane and tyrannical. Catholic Emancipation, although still in the future, was promised by Pitt and Castlereagh, and supported by liberal opinion in Britain. Reform of Parliament was also in the air.

The political realities of the Anglo-Irish relationship also dictated that Irishmen follow a peaceful parliamentary path in seeking redress of their grievances. O'Connell and other Irish leaders had seen the rebellion of 1798 crushed by superior British power. They retained vivid memories of the rebels hanging from trees and the brutal suppression which followed the abortive revolution. In France, as a schoolboy, O'Connell had witnessed the Revolution and watched both fascinated and repelled, he later wrote, as the rebels assaulted the churches and monasteries and murdered monks and priests. The fear of revolution and the knowledge that it must fail remained a basic element of his political belief throughout O'Connell's life. Although willing to employ the threat of revolution as a political stratagem, O'Connell consistently shunned revolutionary action and violence and tried to restrain his younger, more violently inclined supporters from embarking upon such a path.

While O'Connell believed that the liberalizing influences at work in British society would eventually undermine her oppressive policy towards Ireland, he was neither so naive as to believe that this would come about by itself, nor was he so philosophical as to be willing to await the future enlightenment of the British public and the liberalization of British politics. The Irish, O'Connell believed, could hasten the process by utilizing a judicious combination of moral appeal and political pressure.

It is hardly likely that the analogy of the Irish problem to the slave trade issue was lost to O'Connell. The slave trade, like Irish oppression, was perpetrated by a minority of interests who derived great profit from its operation. Like the class who profited from Irish exploitation, they formed a powerful vested interest in the British political system. Yet the liberalization of the political climate in Britain, when played upon by the agitation of reformers, aroused public indignation against the interests which profited at the expense and liberty of other people. In 1820, eight years before O'Connell achieved Emancipation, Parliament outlawed the slave trade in response to public pressures.

O'Connell believed that the Irish people should pursue a similar strategy. The Irish must inescapably confront the

British people and Government with the inequality of their treatment and the justice of their demands. At the same time, they must develop a political organization capable of applying pressure on those politicians still reluctant to support their demands.

O'Connell and his lieutenants worked hard to create a mass following and, following Emancipation, a parliamentary party. Both were essential to a strategy of moral persuasion. Only with the unqualified support of the masses of Ireland behind them could the Irish party claim to speak for the majority of the Irish people, assert that their agitation was an accurate reflection of Irish grievances, and their program the solution supported by the Irish nation. In this connection, it was equally important to obtain the support of as many Protestants as possible in order to prove that O'Connell and his followers were national representatives and not lobbyists for particular religious or economic interests.

A mass following also imparted greater influence to Irishmen in Parliament. Two dozen representatives, the extent of O'Connell's following in Parliament, could normally only claim to speak for their constituents, a small percentage of the total population. Representatives backed by a movement which had enlisted the support of millions of Irishmen could rightfully claim to speak for the Irish nation. O'Connell hoped

that such an organization, fervent in its support of him and responsive to his will, would increase his influence among the public at large as well as his power within the walls of Parliament.

A more sanguine calculation was involved here as well. Agrarian outrage, as we have seen, was endemic to the Irish countryside. In the twenties, thirties, and forties, the English Government, overestimating the violent inclinations of the peasantry, believed Ireland to be ripe for revolution.¹⁵ O'Connell and other Irish leaders realized the additional leverage the Catholic middle class could exercise by exploiting this fear. By winning over the peasantry to their program and convincing them that its success was inextricably connected with their well-being, these politicians would confront the British Government with an unpleasant choice: to accede to their demands or risk revolution in Ireland--a revolution, O'Connell asserted, that neither he nor other leaders would be able to prevent or control.¹⁶ This was, of course, a policy of blackmail. Such a threat, judiciously used, O'Connell believed, would be immensely effective in translating Irish political potential into real bargaining power.

By 1830, the combined tactic of moral appeal and coercive blackmail had brought success. The Catholic Association,

founded in 1823 by O'Connell and Richard Lalor Shiel, and pledged to achieve Emancipation for Catholics, had extended its influence into every corner of the country. By 1828, it had fifteen thousand registered members and three million associate members, almost one-third of the entire population of Ireland.¹⁷ The Association was the prototype for later mass movements,¹⁸ many of which, like the Chartists, consciously emulated it. Rather than relying upon the contributions of a few wealthy supporters, the Association required small but regular contributions from all its members. O'Connell called such contributions "Catholic Rent," and asked for one penny a month from all associate members. Regular members were assessed more. By 1825, the rent¹⁹ brought in about £1,000 per week.

With headquarters at the Corn Exchange in Dublin, O'Connell directed an operation whose tentacles spread into almost every village in Ireland. In the countryside, reading rooms were established where peasants gathered to hear newspapers and speeches read to them. Run by local associations which were financed by central funds, and supported by the local clergy, they brought a degree of political education to the peasantry.

The Association met with its greatest success, however, in the larger towns and cities, where it was supported by many members of the Protestant middle class, but above all by representatives of the Catholic middle class, to whom the idea of

emancipation was particularly appealing. Catholic businessmen, professionals, and students flocked to the banners of the Association and gave their time, money, and organization to make the Association into an effective political force.

Towering above everything else was the figure of O'Connell. His magnetic appeal, colorful personality, and sonorous oratory provided the movement with its greatest impetus. One Irish historian has commented:

His ultimate strength lay in his ability to put forward vigorously the ill-defined demand of the Irish people for justice and good representative government. Coming from a Gaelic-speaking, Catholic background, he knew the country people and understood the grievances and passions which could move them.²⁰

Having practiced as a barrister and come into close contact with the business and professional men of Ireland, he understood them equally well and was successful in enlisting their fervor for his campaign.

The organization was also successful on the electoral front. Irish-Catholic politicians successfully challenged Ascendancy candidates to local office. The final showdown between the Association and the Government came in 1828, when O'Connell stood for election to Parliament from County Clare. O'Connell won but could not legally take his seat in the House of Commons.

The Government, embarrassed by his victory and conscious

that the Association would pursue its electoral quest throughout Ireland in the forthcoming election, capitulated. Alarmed by the great demonstrations held in honor of O'Connell's victory, many of which had a semi-military character, Peel and Wellington pushed Emancipation through the Parliament.

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Irish Catholics saw Emancipation as a forward step, but only a partial palliative to the evils that racked Irish society. Emancipation granted Catholics the right to hold office but at the same time disenfranchised forty-shilling freeholders, making the ballot largely ineffective. More importantly, the Act effected no change in the conditions which caused the increased impoverishment of the countryside. Parliament, in their eyes, still remained unresponsive to the needs of the Irish people.

O'Connell therefore returned to his original demand of Repeal of the Union and the re-establishment of the Irish Parliament in Dublin. Believing that an Irish Parliament would never prove as unresponsive to the Irish people as the British Parliament had shown itself to be, O'Connell and other Irishmen pushed ahead with the campaign for Repeal. His activities in the early 1830's culminated in a motion before Commons in 1834 demanding a full-dress debate on Repeal of the Union. Debate on the motion demonstrated the reluctance of the majority of

British legislators even to consider Repeal as a possible solution to the Irish problem. At the same time, O'Connell realized that the mood in Ireland was not conducive to further agitation.

The Catholic middle class, the direct recipients of the fruits of Emancipation, had satisfied a primary goal. This achievement partially deflated the sails of protest. More important, however, was their growing fear of the Irish lower classes. Agrarian agitation and outrage succeeded in frightening the middle classes of Ireland as much as they frightened the British Government. The tenuous alliance between the middle class and the peasantry was now broken because the bourgeoisie feared agitation might promote a revolution, thereby destroying its accomplishments.

The same attitude prevailed among the Church hierarchy. While the Church still resented its inferior status, it feared that further involvement in politics would endanger the position it had achieved. The hierarchy, accordingly, discouraged the lower clergy from participating too actively in the politics of the country. And, finally, the Protestant middle class, which had, in general, supported Emancipation, was totally unwilling to support Repeal because it equated Repeal with Catholic Ascendancy.

O'Connell therefore abandoned his former tactics in favor of cooperation with the Whigs. In the years between 1835 and 1840, when the Whigs were in power, O'Connell and his followers supported their reforms, as well as their other policies, in hopes of receiving concessions to Ireland in return.

O'Connell's volte face--his sudden abandonment of Repeal in favor of cooperation with the Whigs--while confusing to many of his followers at the time, is quite illustrative of his basic attitude toward Anglo-Irish affairs. Kevin Nowlan, in his illuminating essay on Repeal, rightly points out that his position was never inconsistent. Repeal, Nowlan concludes, was never regarded by O'Connell as an end in and of itself. It was merely a means to achieve justice and good government for Ireland. If this end could have been achieved within the frame-²²work of the Union, O'Connell would have been equally pleased. To some extent, Nowlan argued, O'Connell pursued Repeal more in the hope of convincing Englishmen they had to prove responsive to Ireland or face demands for separation than in the hope of actually achieving it. This was, of course, heresy in the eyes of later nationalists, but then O'Connell had nothing but scorn for their romantic notions of Irish nationalism, which he de-²³rided as emotional and impractical.

A careful scrutiny of O'Connell's statements on this issue support Nowlan's contention. In 1833, for example, he told the members of the House of Commons that Repeal was only envisaged by him as the solution to Irish problems if all else failed.

O'Connell told the legislators:

I myself publicly avowed, that the question would be postponed till we gained an equality of civil rights in Ireland. Instead of its being brought up to meet the Reform Bill, it was, in point of fact, suspended by the Reform Bill; and I have little doubt that it would have been totally given up when the Irish Reform Bill was brought in had that Bill been equal to the English Reform Bill--had its provisions been framed in a spirit of fairness and equality.²⁴

In 1835, he used the same argument to justify the Litchfield Compact, by which he agreed to forego Repeal agitation in favor of support for the Whig Government. O'Connell told an audience in Edinburgh: "It has been said that England and Scotland are opposed to a repeal of the Union. Why so am I, if justice is done to Ireland."²⁵ O'Connell spoke of the Union as "the great experiment we are making to ascertain whether or not Ireland can be well and justly governed by an imperial legislature or whether we shall be driven to look for restoration of our own Parliament."²⁶

By 1840, he had found the answer to his question. A much

disillusioned O'Connell was forced to realize that cooperation with the Whigs had been unproductive. The few concessions he had received from the Melbourne Ministry had satisfied some of the minor demands of the Catholic Church and middle classes but had left the crying evils of the countryside untouched. Poverty in the countryside had actually become worse. Eviction continued unchecked, rents rose to astronomical heights, and the living standard of the peasantry declined. The legislative measures passed by the Melbourne Government--the Poor Law in particular--were mere sops to ward off accusations of having done nothing to alleviate conditions in Ireland.

The failure of the alliance was manifest in the upsurge of outrage in the countryside and the corresponding decline in the financial support O'Connell received from the peasantry. The coffers of the Irish Party were rapidly becoming depleted.

The final factor promoting O'Connell's return to Repeal was the evident failure of the Whig Ministry in Commons and the knowledge that it would soon be replaced by a Tory Government headed by Robert Peel. The Tories, and Peel in particular, were anathema to Catholic Ireland. O'Connell knew little satisfaction could be gained by continuing his policy of cooperation. He therefore embarked upon his final and greatest effort to bring about Repeal of the Union. In January 1841,

he told the newly formed Repeal Association:

I shall, for my part, vote for the Whigs on all party questions in order to keep them in; but I tell them honestly that they have lost altogether the hearts of the Irish people, and nothing but the loud cry for repeal shall henceforth be heard among us....I did not resume repeal agitation till I saw how utterly unable the Whigs were to effect anything.²⁷

O'Connell returned to the Corn Exchange and began to rebuild his organization, proselytize converts, and drum up financial support for his political efforts. In Ireland, Repealers held meetings and mass demonstrations and marched through the streets in support of separation from Britain. The Repeal Association pursued the same dual strategy which had proved so successful twenty years before. In Ireland, they aroused the peasantry and created the fear of revolution in the minds of British political leaders. In Britain, in the Parliament, they mercilessly attacked both parties for their failure to deal with Irish problems. The Liberator hurled challenge upon challenge at the Tory Government and all Ireland was thrown into turmoil in expectation of Repeal.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 4

1. Beckett, op. cit., p. 289.
2. Westminster Review, Vol. 40 (Aug.-Dec. 1843), pp. 51, 70.
3. See discussion in Lewis, op. cit., chaps. 1-3.
4. Lord Mulgrave testified to the fact that outrages were rarely caused by religious differences. In November 1837, he addressed the House of Lords: "I have the authority of many who attended the assizes for stating that, according to their belief, no such thing takes place in Ireland as the murder of a man on account of his religion. A man happens to be murdered as a part of that dreadful system of combination which exists in Ireland with regard to the tenure of the land. It is merely a coincidence that he happens to be a Protestant." The Annual Register (1838), p. 97.
5. Hansard's, op. cit., LXIX (1843), cols. 1010-11.
6. Devon Commission, op. cit., Evidence, Part II, p. 386.
7. Llewellyn Woodward, The Age of Reform (2d ed., rev.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 318.
8. See John Pitt Kennedy, Instruct; Employ; Don't Hang Them; or, Ireland Tranquilized Without Soldiers, and Enriched Without English Capital (London: T. & W. Boone, 1835).
9. Kevin B. Nowlan, "The Meaning of Repeal in Irish History," reprinted from Historical Studies, IV (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1963), 9-10. This brilliant essay is the single best treatment of the Repeal movement and its relationship to other Irish protest movements. See also Kevin B. Nowlan, The Politics of Repeal: A Study in the Relations Between Great Britain and Ireland, 1841-50 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), for the political relations between the Repeal movement and the British Government; Angus Macintyre, The Liberator: Daniel O'Connell and the Irish Party, 1830-1847 (New York: Macmillan, 1965), is particularly good on O'Connell's early years in politics.

10. Nowlan, op. cit., The Meaning of Repeal, pp. 9-10.
11. Although O'Connell supported the programs of the Radicals, like other British politicians they manifested a prejudice against O'Connell and the Repeal party. Richard Cobden, for example, justified his refusal to speak in Parliament on Irish questions on the grounds of "a complete antagonism and repulsion" towards O'Connell, who "always treated me with friendly attention, but I never shook hands with him or faced his smile without a feeling of insecurity; and as for trusting him on any public question where his vanity or passions might interpose, I should have as soon thought of an alliance with an Ashantee Chief." Quoted in Macintyre, op. cit., p. 266. John Bright, on the other hand, was more favorably disposed and, after repeal of the corn laws, became actively involved in Irish politics and was a supporter of disestablishment.
12. Nowlan, op. cit., The Meaning of Repeal, pp. 9-11; Macintyre, op. cit., p. 3.
13. Macintyre, op. cit., p. 3; Woodward, op. cit., p. 340.
14. See Nowlan, op. cit., The Politics of Repeal; and, Denis Gwynn, Young Ireland and 1848 (Cork: Cork University Press, 1949), for O'Connell's struggle with the Young Ireland faction on the question of peaceful versus violent means of obtaining justice for Ireland.
15. This emerges very clearly in both Parliamentary debates and correspondence among leading British political figures. The Duke of Wellington was particularly anxious about the state of Ireland in the early 1840's. The Peel MSS contain many memorandums written by the Duke discussing the necessary preparations to avert or control violence in Ireland.
16. This theme is treated in Nowlan, op. cit., The Politics of Repeal.
17. Norman Gash, Mr. Secretary Peel (London: Longmans, 1961), p. 385; Macintyre, op. cit., p. 7.
18. The two movements were closely connected in terms of organization and style. Perhaps this is traceable to

the fact that so many Chartist leaders were Irishmen and, therefore, intimately familiar with O'Connell's campaign to achieve Catholic Emancipation in the 1820's.

19. Woodward, op. cit., p. 343.
20. Nowlan, op. cit., The Meaning of Repeal, p. 6.
21. Woodward, op. cit., pp. 343-44.
22. Nowlan, op. cit., The Meaning of Repeal, pp. 4-5.
23. Ibid., pp. 8-12; Macintyre, op. cit., and Gwynn, op. cit., both concur.
24. Hansard's, op. cit., XVI (1833), cols. 244-45.
25. Nowlan, op. cit., The Meaning of Repeal, p. 5.
26. W.J. Fitzpatrick (ed.), Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell, The Liberator (London: J. Murray, 1888), II, 149-50.
27. Eversley, George John Shaw, Peel and O'Connell: A Review of the Irish Policy of Parliament from the Act of Union to the Death of Sir Robert Peel (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1887), p. 206.

CHAPTER FIVE

"The moment the very name of Ireland is mentioned, the English seem to bid adieu to common feeling, common prudence, and common sense...." Sidney Smith

By making the British conscious of the contradiction between the avowed goals of the Union and its actual affect upon Ireland, Repealers sought to force the British government to re-orient its Irish policy. Repeal agitation and the support it received from a vocal minority of informed men in Great Britain insured that the general public and their political leadership were inescapably confronted with this disparity. Unable to ignore the crescendo of Irish agitation, the British people were faced with the choice of either remaking Irish policy in accord with their expressed values and goals or of somehow denying the validity of the Irish appeal.

The British public and the Government--unable or unwilling to bring Irish policy into harmony with their self-confessed goals, and confronted with the discrepancy between their beliefs and their behavior--found an increasing need to employ rationalizations to counter the challenge posed by Repeal. These rationalizations emerged in the distorted image of Irish affairs articulated by the political elite and the major organs of public opinion.

The British perception of Irish people and their problems was, in general, so inaccurate that many Irishmen and well-informed Englishmen could only attribute it to a total lack of knowledge of the affairs of that country. This assessment was not unique-

ly a nineteenth-century conception, but was as readily accepted by earlier students of the Anglo-Irish relationship.

An eighteenth-century proponent of this view was Jonathan Swift. "As to Ireland," he wrote, "they [the English] know little more than they do of Mexico; further than that it is a country subject to the King of England, full of Boggs, inhabited by wild Irish Papists; who are kept in awe by mercenary troops sent from thence; And their general opinion is that it were better for England if this whole island were sunk into the Sea." Swift's criticism was echoed by travelers who came to see for themselves the condition of the inhabitants of that country and returned home with a rather different image of Ireland than the one they had expected.

Thomas Campbell, whose impressions of Ireland were published in 1778, justified his treatise as an attempt to correct the abysmal English ignorance of Ireland. In his advertisement, Campbell wrote: "There is, perhaps, no country dependent on the British Crown, which Englishmen know less of than Ireland; and yet it may safely be affirmed, there is none which has a fairer and stronger claim to their attention." At the turn of the century, still another traveler lamented that "the island of Hibernia remains unvisited and unknown. And why? Because from want of books and living information, we have been led to suppose its country rude, its inhabitants savage, its paths dangerous." Thus, it appears that ignorance reinforced ignorance and that down to the time of the Union, Englishmen remained ill-informed about the character of their sister isle.

The closer connection brought about by the Union does not seem to have effected much of a change. In the middle of the nineteenth century, observers were still voicing the same complaint. The historian Samuel Smiles complained that, "It were, indeed, full time that the English people made themselves acquainted with the condition of Ireland. It is in no small degree to their apathy and indifference as to her fate, that her present sufferings are to be attributed."⁴ "When the English people and English government know Ireland," Smiles believed, "they will give up attempting⁵ to govern them by the sword...and betake themselves to justice."

Other prominent Victorians agreed heartily with him. One of them, Lord Normanby, an influential Whig politician and close associate of the Queen, informed his colleagues in the House of Lords that "there exists and prevails in England the greatest possible ignorance as to the state and wants of Ireland."⁶ Nassau Senior, the famed laissez-faire economist, was equally shocked at parliamentary ignorance about Ireland. He believed that "the great majority of the members of each House--that is to say, of the two Assemblies which govern Ireland--know less of that country than they know of Belgium or of Switzerland."⁷

The renowned diarist Greville, also appalled by the contemporary state of knowledge with regard to Ireland, sought to correct ill-founded notions by writing a study of Irish problems. In the preface, Greville complained: "There is no nation in the world

more ill-informed, and more under the influence of false and erroneous impressions than the English, in respect to the internal transactions of England and Ireland." ⁸ Next to the Irish, of course, the English Radicals were perhaps most vociferous in their condemnation of British ignorance. Richard Cobden, one of the foremost Radicals declared that "The strongest ground of grievance that we have ever heard alleged against us by intelligent Irishmen...is the total neglect and ignorance of their country that prevails amongst the people of England....It is almost incredible how little is known of this, one of the largest both in area and population of the four divisions of the Kingdom." ⁹

Yet paucity of information, which many believed to lie at the root of this ignorance, is an insufficient explanation for the inaccuracy of British perceptions of Irish affairs. In fact, the British had at their disposal more, not less, information about Ireland than most other European nations possessed concerning their most distant provinces or colonies.

First, the Act of Union brought increased communication between the two nations. There was a growing interchange of persons, ideas, and information between the two countries. By 1841, there were 289,404 native-born Irish residing in England and Wales, and 126,321 living in Scotland. To this figures must be added the thousands of Irish who yearly crossed the Irish Sea into Britain in search of seasonal employment. ¹⁰

Second, the British public was also presented with the Irish in the abstract, so to speak. The press of both countries was closely interrelated. Almost every British newspaper extracted reports and dispatches from the growing Irish press and provided its readers with increasing coverage of Irish affairs. The Times and other major newspapers even sent their own "commissioners" or reporters to Ireland and published their lengthy reports in full. 11

The Irish population in Britain, the agitation for Repeal in Ireland, the speeches of Irish representatives in Parliament, and the publication of books on Irish affairs, all had the effect of making the British public more aware of the "Irish Problem." The demand for information about Ireland became greater, and, as a result, an increasing supply of information and analysis became available. The total number of travel descriptions, histories, broadsides, treatises, and geographies of Ireland published between 1800 and 1845 was greater than the total number published in all previous years.

As opposed to earlier works, much of this documentation was the work of serious observers who were intent on portraying conditions in Ireland in totally unbiased terms. Perhaps the best information of all was made available in the numerous studies conducted under the auspices of the British Government itself. Between 1801 and 1846, Parliament established 114 commissions and 61 special committees to report on conditions in Ireland. The subject of these investigations ranged from the study of fisheries in Western

Ireland to problems of land tenure and causes for agrarian disorder. Although staffed by landlords and government bureaucrats, the commissions and committees submitted surprisingly accurate appraisals of conditions in Ireland. Present-day historians find, in fact, that these reports are the most accurate source of information to be found on nineteenth-century Ireland.

The most impressive of these studies was undertaken by the Devon Commission, which was established by Parliament to investigate the laws governing land tenure in Ireland. Their report, submitted in 1845, supported most of the contentions of the English Radicals and the Repeal party. The Commission urged remedial legislation to minimize the opportunities for Irish landowners to oppress and exploit the peasantry. Their findings were based on hundreds of interviews conducted among all classes of Ireland. This testimony was included in several thousand pages of an appendix added to the main report. With such a plethora of data and carefully presented analyses at their fingertips, parliamentarians no longer had ignorance as an excuse for their peculiar view of Irish affairs.

English "ignorance" of Ireland seemed to exist in spite of the wealth of information which was easily accessible to anyone. The explanation cannot lie in an absence of information, but rather in the Englishman's preference for information which confirmed what he already believed. This distorted view of Ireland pervaded not only the press, but most other sources of information as well. It dominated the English perception of Irish affairs to such an extent that the growing body of more accurate documentation proved inef-

fective in altering the preconceived notions of Irish affairs about which so many commentators complained.

Evidence to document the existence of such a pervasive and stereotyped image can be drawn, in the first place, from contemporary observers, many of whom diagnosed British attitudes toward Ireland as the result of a perceptual blindness. Some contemporaries even called attention to the functional qualities inherent in the image British people employed to analyze Irish affairs.

By 1845, the Irish--aware of British attitudes towards their country and frustrated in their attempts to alter them--had become convinced that the British people had a closed mind with regard to Ireland. Repealers, who had hoped to overcome British misrule by making Englishmen aware of the disastrous effects of their country's Irish policy, had made little headway. Many Repealers came to believe that British attitudes towards Ireland were built on such a pervasive anti-Irish prejudice that they could never be overcome by rational argument. The Nation, spokesman for Irish nationalist opinion, declared: "There is an anti-Irish spirit in the English people, few will not believe. How often has it pervaded the expression of opinion among the middle classes--how often, in reigns less auspicious to Ireland than the present, has it been fulminated against us from the throne?" English hatred for the Irish, according to The Nation, was moderated only by her contempt. "She believes us fickle, shallow, incapable of union, ready dupes, handy traitors, quick fugitives....She thinks we are, and ever were gay leaping savages, to be coaxed when she is very busy, and flogged when she has full leisure, and left to moan and bear

in common times."

The Irish were most exasperated by the verbal solicitude Britain evidenced towards Ireland while simultaneously demonstrating what seemed, in their opinion, a total inability to come to grips with Irish grievances. This paradox was so incomprehensible to them that they believed that only sheer hypocrisy, motivated by an illiberal prejudice, could be the explanation. In a mocking editorial, The Nation confessed its failure to fathom

that inability under which the English mind seems to labor, of admitting the idea of what it is that Ireland really stands in need of. What are your "grievances" they say--and what can we do for you? Only let us inquire and investigate and examine your wounds--manipulate (though it be a disgusting task) your filthy sores--apply the stethoscope to your wasted body politic, and we shall exhibit anodyne or plaister, or patch, or crutch, as we may find you need them. Alas! the inquiries are misdirected; the symptoms are misunderstood; the diagnosis is all wrong; the system of therapeutics only irritates the patient and aggravates the disease. When will our physicians see that they are our "grievance"?--that it is precisely of foreign quackery we are so deadly sick; that it is one of the saddest mockeries for our ancient enemy, while he lies like a leaden nightmare upon Ireland's breast, to affect all this tender solicitude in his inquiries into the precise seat of our ailments.¹⁵

Some Englishmen, more removed from the immediate conflict and perhaps more sober in their analysis of British attitudes, were also struck by the apparently monolithic and inaccurate conception of Ire-

land and her people which most Englishmen seemed to possess.

The Westminster Review, a quarterly of Radical persuasion, supported the Irish contention that British people viewed Irish problems through self-imposed blinders which absolved them from any guilt or responsibility for the depressed state of affairs in that country. At the root of the problem, her editors believed, was the contention held by most Englishmen that the Irish were childlike and irresponsible and not to be taken seriously. The Review tried to purge its readers of this notion. "We pray all Englishmen to lay this to heart--that the Irish people have now attained majority. The old traditional English notion that Irishmen are a sort of grown children, to be coaxed or whipped at pleasure, or at best to be indulged with a goodnatured, contemptuous tolerance--we cannot too soon get this clear and clean out of our heads." 16

John Stuart Mill, one of the most thoughtful and perceptive Victorians, was equally disturbed by what he believed to be a fatal blindness manifested toward Ireland. In the preface to a volume on Anglo-Irish relations, Mill argued that this blindness, and not the character of the Irish people, was responsible for the turbulent state of that country. The effect of British myopia, Mill believed, was to so blind the British as to reality in Ireland that they were incapable of responding rationally to Irish problems. Their policies, therefore, aggravated rather than alleviated the causes of distress and turbulence in Ireland.

Mill's argument was therefore essentially the same as The Nation's, although couched in somewhat less abrasive language. Mill wrote: "What harm to Ireland does England intend or knowingly inflict? What good, that she knows how to give her, would she not willingly bestow? Unhappily, her offence is precisely that she does not know, and is so well contented with not knowing, that Irishmen who are not hostile to her are coming to believe that she will not and cannot learn."¹⁷

The most interesting analysis of British attitudes towards Ireland was offered by Daniel Dewar in Observations of the Character, Customs, and Superstitions of the Irish (published in 1812). Dewar advanced the argument that the perceptual blindness of Englishmen towards Ireland was not unique, but a common phenomenon of colonial relationships. At the root of the colonial problem, Dewar found a fallacious description of the colonized propagated by the colonizer in order to justify his barbaric treatment of these people. Dewar compared the colonial settlement of Ireland to the colonial experiment then under way in Africa. "This dreadful experiment," he wrote, "has been tried on the coast both of Africa and Ireland, and it has been found to awaken the worst passions of the human breast, and to debase the character beneath the ordinary standard of savage life. And it is not a little singular that the oppressors of both countries should have attempted to justify their hateful tyranny by the same arguments. Those of Ireland, like their brethren of more modern times, maintained that the natives of that country

were a race inferior to themselves, that they were incapable of improvement or of subordination; and that, therefore, they ought not to enjoy liberty or protection of fellow creatures, and of fellow subjects. Acting on this principle, they often murdered the natives with impunity or, at any rate, were only punished by a trifling fine. The darkest atrocities were committed under the pretext of
18
necessity."

Dewar maintained that this erroneous but functional description of the colonial natives became so ingrained in the mind of the colonizer that in later, more democratic^s times it prevented them from forming an accurate impression of the affairs of the colony and of the character of its inhabitants. Of the Anglo-Hibernian, Dewar wrote: "Though he is proud of being an Irishman, he is full of prejudice against the aborigines of his country; he heartily hates their language, their customs and their superstitions....Possessed of this violent antipathy he is little qualified to receive accurate information, or to entertain a just opinion respecting them; and, accordingly, while he thinks he perfectly understands their character, he is really more ignorant...than
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the intelligent...and the unbiased traveler."

Dewar believed that the view propagated by the Anglo-Hibernian colonists eventually spread across the Irish Sea to Britain and came to dominate British opinion about Ireland as well. Like Greville after him, Dewar hoped his examination of Ireland would overcome the centuries of prejudice which, he was convinced, prevented Britain from governing Ireland with justice.

Dewar, Mill, the Westminster Review, The Nation, and a variety of other sources all seemed to suggest that British perception of Irish affairs was organized in terms of a stereotyped image that was resistant to change and very much out of tune with the social, economic, and political realities of Ireland. To what extent were their views justified?

A stereotype is a curiously elusive concept. It requires the content analysis of a wide range of relevant data to separate out the lasting and important elements which shape the content of such an image. Even so, the researcher is faced with a number of difficult questions: What sources can be considered to accurately reflect public opinion? How universal and pervasive is the stereotype? To what extent does it dominate perception? How resistant is it to contradictory information that might force its destruction or reformulation?

Behavioral techniques, like computerized content analysis and public opinion surveys, can help to answer these questions. In historical studies, however, the applicability of these techniques is limited. Bearing such difficulties and limitations in mind, it is still possible to test empirically for the existence of such a stereotype and to examine its influence on British policy. A detailed analysis of the sources of information on which the British based their interpretation of Irish affairs, and of the means by which their attitudes were expressed, should

enable us to determine the existence of a stereotyped image, its content, and the extent to which it dominated British perception.

Contemporary documents provide ample evidence of Englishmen's distorted view of Irish affairs and Irishmen. Travel descriptions of Ireland, British histories of Britain and Ireland, newspapers and journals, novels, poems, and short stories, broadsides and pamphlets, political and economic treatises, and parliamentary debates and speeches are living testimony to their perceptual deficiencies on that tender subject. Some of these sources--travel descriptions, histories, and, to a lesser extent, political pamphlets--are not so numerous that a researcher could not study and analyze all or most of the documents in each category. In the case of other sources--parliamentary debates, newspapers, and speeches--the overwhelming number of these documents precludes a survey of every source and forces the reader to be more selective. In such instances, this researcher has attempted to draw upon a sample which is representative of the diverse political factions, economic interests, religious persuasions, and regional variations among the British people.

In this study, the sources of British opinion have been analyzed from the inception of the Union in 1801 to 1846, which marks the commencement of the great famine in Ireland. The famine period is a great watershed in Irish history and marks a natural
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boundary for this study. The pre-famine years are representative of the period during which the Irish people, led by Daniel O'Connell and the Repeal party, sought to attain full political and economic

equality within the British Empire. British failure to redress Irish grievances during these years and British inability to respond to the needs of the Irish people during the great famine convinced many Irishmen that integration was hopeless. As a result, the Irish people turned more and more to nationalist movements like Young Ireland and the Fenians. Their goal was national independence, to be attained by whatever means might be necessary--even if those means were physical force and revolution. The pre-famine years, and especially the early years of the forties, were probably Britain's last chance to secure the good will and loyalty of the Irish people. Her unresponsiveness to Irish needs and aspirations lost her that chance forever.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 5

1. Jonathan Swift, "The Drapier's Letters," In The Irish Writings of Jonathan Swift, ed. Oliver Watkins Ferguson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1954), p. 128.
2. Thomas Campbell, A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland, in a Series of Letters to John Watkinson, M.P. (Dublin: printed for W. Whitestone, 1778), Advertisement.
3. Richard Colt Hoare, Journal of a Tour in Ireland (London: W. Miller, 1807), Preface.
4. Samuel Smiles, History of Ireland and the Irish People Under the Government of England (London: W. Strange, 1844), p. x.
5. Ibid.
6. Hansard's, op. cit., LXXII (1844), col. 633; also quoted in Smiles, op. cit., p. iv.
7. Senior, op. cit., I, 123.
8. Charles Greville, Past and Present Policy of England Towards Ireland (London: Edward Moxon, 1845), p. ix. Lord Clare wrote in the preface to this work: "It is a great misfortune of this country, that the people of England know less of it than they know, perhaps, of any nation in Europe."
9. Richard Cobden, England, Ireland and America (London: P. Brown, 1836), p. 13.
10. Census, 1841, op. cit. By 1841, there were over 400,000 people of Irish birth resident in Great Britain.
11. The Times also published the Commissioner's reports in a separate volume, which appeared in 1846.
12. See Chapter 3, footnote no. 25.
13. Nation, Feb. 14, 1845.

14. Ibid., May 10, 1845.
15. Ibid., Sept. 27, 1845.
16. Westminster Review, XL (Aug.-Dec. 1843), 74.
17. John Stuart Mill, England and Ireland (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1868), p. 7.
18. Daniel Dewar, Observations on the Character, Customs, and Superstitions of the Irish; and on Some of the Causes Which Have Retarded the Moral and Political Improvement of Ireland (London: Gole and Curtis, 1812), p. 121.
19. Ibid., pp. 21-22.
20. Beckett, op. cit., p. 336, calls the famine of 1845-59 the "major dividing-line in the history of modern Ireland." Edmund Curtis, A History of Ireland (London: Methuen and Co., 1950), p. 370, writes: "Seldom has a nation experienced so definite an ending-point and a starting-point in its history as Ireland has in the Great Famine. The Repeal movement, the insurrectionary and even constitutional agitation spirit all suddenly collapsed. The country lay prostrate, and in a course of a few years the population declined by some two millions."

CHAPTER SIX

Industry is most against the grain of the people...they are partly Spanish and partly Tartars and indolent, by virtue of both descents.

Bishop Berkeley

British travelers to Ireland brought back with them a description of the "strange" inhabitants of that island. Over the centuries, these visitors painted a fairly uniform picture of the Irish people and the conditions in which they lived.

Early descriptions of Erin invariably emphasized at least two aspects of it: the violent nature of its inhabitants and their apparent preference for bloodshed as the path to wealth rather than honest labor. J. Goord, an Oxford-educated priest, who later became a schoolmaster in Limerick, published his description of Ireland in 1566. He wrote:

"Robberies here are not looked on as infamous, but are committed with great barbarity in all parts of the country. When they are upon such a design, they pray to God to bring booty in their way, and look upon a prize as the effect of his bounty to them. They are all of the opinion that neither violence, robbery nor murder is displeasing to God. If it were, they say, God would not tempt them with the opportunity." ¹

The poet, Edmund Spenser, concurred in this opinion. Spenser spent a number of years in Ireland, first as a government administrator and later as a landowner in Munster. His impressions of Ireland and its people were distilled into a volume entitled, A View of the State of Ireland. This treatise, written in 1596, was a proposal for the pacification of Ireland, complete with a

statement of the military and political strategies Britain would
2
have to follow to attain the desired end.

In this book Spenser also expressed his extremely low opinion of the Irish. The thing which struck him most forcibly was their viciousness and lack of the moral fiber which delighted him in Englishmen.

The sword was never out of their hands, but when they are weary of Wars and brought down to extream wretchedness, then they creep a little perhaps and sue for grace, till they have gotten new breath and recovered their strength again. 3

He concluded that the native customs of the Irish must be eradicated and the people themselves brought "from their delight in licentiousness and barbarism unto love of goodness and civility." 4

The first published work exclusively devoted to the Irish character appeared in 1610. The author, Barnabe Rich, an Englishman who had spent forty years in Ireland, depicted the Irish as "idle," "vicious," "ignorant," "warlike," "bloudie," and "superstitious." They were "rude, uncleanlie, and uncivill, so they are very cruell, bloudie minded, apt and ready to commit any kind of mischief." 5 While Spenser had blamed the evil influence of the Irish bards for this reprehensible state of affairs, Rich saw the priesthood as the perpetrator of mischief and moral degradation. Of Irish barbarism, Rich wrote:

I do not impute this so much to their natural inclination, as I do to their education, they are trained in Treason, in Rebellion, in Theft, in Robbery, in Superstition, in Idolatry, and nuzled from their very cradles in the very puddle of Popery. 6

Like Spenser before him, Rich was also appalled at the indolence of the native Irish. "There is not a greater plague-sore to Ireland," he wrote, "than the idleness thereof." It was up to England, Rich concluded, to raise these people to the level of civilized human beings.

Seventeenth-century observers were equally impressed by the sloth and sluggishness which they believed to prevail universally among the native Irish. William Lithgow, whose description of Ireland was written in 1619, considered the Irish to be the least industrious and most complacent people under the sun. Ireland, he lamented, was a fertile and plentiful land, "the soyle, more than answerable to mine expectation, the defect only remayning...in the people, and from them in the bosome of two graceless sisters, ignorance and sluggishness."

James Dingley, another seventeenth-century traveler, concurred in Lithgow's analysis. On his tour of Ireland in 1681, Dingley was dismayed at the seeming unwillingness of the inhabitants to work to improve their lot. He wrote:

They have certain concomitants, nastyness and laziness, wherefore having enough before hand to furnish them with potatoes milk and tobacco, which they toss from one to another in a short pipe with this word, shaugh, sitting upon their hams, like greyhounds in the sun, neer ther cabins, they'l work not one jolt, but steall. which is such an inseparable vice to them.⁹

A hundred years later, visitors to Ireland reported little change in the conditions or characteristics of Erin's people.

One such visitor, Thomas Campbell, a supporter of a policy of tolerance towards Irish Catholics, nevertheless heaped scorn upon their way of life. In rather colorful language, he portrayed his overall impression of that country. "My picture of Ireland," Campbell wrote, "should be a...woman exquisitely beautiful, with her head and neck richly attired, her bosom full, but meanly dressed, her lower parts lean and emaciated, half covered with tattered weeds, her legs and feet bare with burned shins, and all the squalor of indigent sloth."¹⁰

Phillip Luckombe, a contemporary of Campbell's, was equally struck by the indolence of the population. The squalor of Dublin left him with the impression that the Irish must be racially distinct from other men to be able to tolerate their penurious condition with good humor. Luckombe wrote:

In general the outskirts of Dublin consist chiefly of huts, or cabins, constructed of mud dried, and mostly without either chimney or window; and in these miserable kind of dwellings, far the greater part of the inhabitants of Ireland linger out a wretched existence. A small piece of ground is generally annexed to each, whose chief produce is potatoes; and on these roots and milk the common Irish subsist all the year round....What little the men can earn by their labour, or the women by their spinning, is generally consumed in whiskey....Shoes and stockings are seldom worn by these beings who seem to form a different race from the rest of mankind; their poverty is far greater than that of the Spaniards, Portuguese, or even the Scotch peasants; notwithstanding which, they wear the appearance of content. The indulgence of the 11 middle class of people is visible even in Dublin.

Dublin was described by another contemporary, Edward Clarke,

as a city in which "the streets are filled with wretchedness and grandeur, idleness and extravagance, Beggars and prostitutes swarm in every street, and fill the air with their importunate cries."

"Extravagance," Clarke believed, "is the leading trait in their character....They will pawn their last rag for the pleasure of

12
gameing." There never was a country," he concluded, that "be-
trayed such a mixture of lousiness and laziness, misery and mag-
13
nificence."

These accounts are representative of the general opinions expressed by travelers to Ireland and other Englishmen who commented on Irish affairs. The majority were struck by the extreme poverty of the country and the concomitant self-indulgence of her people. Observers also deprecated the Irish propensity for argument and violence, as well as other traits such as superstition, complacency, love of display, extravagance, and ignorance, which they believed to characterize the Irish people.

The portrait of the Irish was, however, in no sense unique. Up until the nineteenth century, the British image of the Scots and Welsh contained many of the same features attributed to the Irish. The popular image of the English poor also bore considerable resemblance to the characterization of the indigent Irish. Descriptions of working-class quarters in the industrial centers of the Midlands, the Clyde Bank, or in London itself, frequently heaped the same derisive scorn on the inhabitants, whose poverty, it was argued, resulted from their own indigence and self-indulg-

ence. The portrayal of the impoverished Irish, excepting the emphasis placed on their unfortunate proclivity for violence, differed only in degree.

Beginning in the late eighteenth century, but only gathering real momentum in the early nineteenth century, British public opinion underwent a significant transformation. The image of the Scots, for example, changed from one of hairy, barbaric, half-civilized savages to that of hard-working, thrifty--to a fault--and pious citizens. Interest in Scotland grew with Queen Victoria's decision to make Balmoral her summer residence. The English upper classes followed her into the Highlands and emulated her interest in Scotland and the Scots. A comparison of the differing images of Scotsmen in popular literature of the eighteenth century and that of the nineteenth provides ample manifestation of this change. Scottish military figures, formerly represented as the leaders of barbaric clans, were romanticized in English novels and poetry and transported from the mean state of despised barbarians to the pedestal belonging to national folk heroes.¹⁴

British attitudes toward the English working classes and lower agricultural orders also underwent a radical transformation. The small independent farmer was glorified as a representative of the "yeomanry" and popularly described as the backbone of the English nation; and in the crowded urban centers of Britain, observers began to take a more sympathetic look at the

working classes.

Social historians have made us aware of the extent to which the Victorians revelled in the glory of the self-made man. The Mark Tapleys and Silas Marners, whose rise from rags to riches were the ideals of the society, were the models which young men were taught to emulate. This ethos, according to G.D.H. Cole,

...bred an attitude of self-righteous assurance which was in most of the protagonists totally inaccessible to argument. The effect was to exalt self-reliance, which is undoubtedly a virtue, into contemptuous sweeping aside of 'failure,' which emphatically it is not. ¹⁶

Some historians have argued that this spirit spread downwards through the social structure, affecting every grade of society from the manager to the minor clerk. They insist that the image of the hardworking, thrifty Englishman became a matter of national pride; ¹⁷ that success was seen as the result of purely personal qualities like "initiative," "abstinence," "driving force," "frugality," and self-control; that social and economic conditions as a determinant of wealth were minimized or even disregarded. If personal moral qualities were responsible for success, they say, the natural corollary was that the lack of these qualities was responsible for failure.

While this view of success and failure was, no doubt, characteristic of the attitudes held by many Englishmen, it was not as dominant as many historians suggest. By the 1830's, many Englishmen, possessing more information about working class conditions, were beginning to take a more sociological approach to

the problem of poverty. Distinctions were more frequently drawn between those who had descended into poverty by reason of personal moral failings and those who were prisoners of circumstance. An increasing number of Englishmen even argued that the State had some responsibility toward this latter class of the poor.

The distinction between classes of the poor, the sympathy shown toward the so-called "honest poor," and agitation for effective action to alleviate their suffering was not limited to Radical opinion. By the 1840's, such concern was shared by many of the popular Victorian novelists (Dickens, for one) and found sympathy in the leading organs of public opinion. The Times, the Edinburgh Review, Punch, and Blackwood's Magazine all agitated for reform.

Blackwood's Magazine, the representative of conservative, Anglican, middle-class opinion, advanced the argument that "Pauperism included in its legions the most virtuous, the most vicious, the most industrious, and the most idle" and refers to "decent, honest poverty as well as squalid destitution." The editors favored outdoor relief on the assumption that the majority of the poor were victims of market fluctuations and not of indolence. By extending the relief system, the magazine reasoned, the Government would

...raise one class from the state of pauperism--to confront distress which the complexity of civilized society and the extension of the manufacturing systems, have occasioned, boldly, firmly, humanely,--to distinguish between honest industrious poor, and the lazy vagabond--to give one a fair chance of obtaining employment,

and to remove the inducements from the other
to prowl about and live upon the public. 20

The more liberal journal Punch advocated the cause of the poor in the "Pauper's Corner," a regular feature of the publication in its early years. In a poem entitled "Vices of the Poor," Punch lampooned upper-class complacency with biting satire:

These poor are all a shocking set,
and given to every vice,
In spite of our societies
to make them good and wise.
There's Lady Censurelove and I
do nothing, I am sure,
From morn till night, but talk about
the vices of the poor.... 21

Punch lit into Robert Peel's administration when, in the journal's eyes, it failed to respond adequately to the distress created by the skyrocketing price of grain. The Duke of Wellington, Minister without Portfolio in Peel's cabinet, was the particular target of their abuse. Punch recalled how the Iron Duke was visibly moved when he crossed the death-strewn field at Waterloo after the great allied victory. In contrast to this, stood his seeming indifference to suffering in Britain. Punch asked:

How many more than fifty-thousand Englishmen are, at this moment dying the slow and torturing death of want? Paisley and Bolton [two industrial towns in Lancashire] can outnumber the horrors of Waterloo, and yet, it is evident that his Grace (the Duke) could "very deliberately walk his horse" through the grass-grown streets of the manufacturing town, and "touch his hat" to the groans of its famine-stricken denizens. 22

Punch was a vigorous campaigner for state action to reduce the suffering of the poor. The editors were angered by the seeming

paradox of bounty coexisting with poverty in Great Britain. Britain was the richest country in the world. She had amassed unheard-of wealth, but at the same time, the editors lamented, she possessed hordes of starving citizens. This was a travesty of justice which must be corrected. One particularly moving appeal appeared in the "Pauper's Corner" in 1842:

The rich must die and moulder with the poor
The grave is universal and yet man
Doth grind his fellow, seemingly secure
That life to him was not a finite span.
'Tis hard this wringing misery to endure,
When this good world is teeming with joy;
But man upon its bounties shuts the door,
And says to Hunger, "Go thou forth--destroy!" 23

Similar attitudes to the problem of poverty and similar appeals for a public response are to be found in a majority of the organs of public opinion analyzed in this study. The Morning Chronicle, a ministerialist Whig organ of free trade and moderate constitutionalism, and the Illustrated London News, independent, but also Whig in sympathy, were both outspoken supporters of a reformed Poor Law and sympathetic in their attitudes towards the poor. The Leeds Northern Star, spokesman for Radical working class opinion, went even further in its demand for action.

On the more conservative side, Peelite papers, such as the (London) Herald, the Standard, and the Morning Post, while less radical in their demands for state action, expressed sympathy for the plight of the honest poor, whom they distinguished from the idle poor. Among the major journals, the Westminster Review,

the Quarterly Review, the Edinburgh Review, and Fraser's Magazine, differed only in degree and intensity from the opinions articulated in Blackwood's Magazine and Punch.

The most influential organ of public opinion was The Times. The Times aspired to be the spokesman for the British nation and, considering the extent to which foreign observers, British politicians, and informed opinion in general carefully marked its every opinion, it came near to achieving its goal. Although The Times claimed to lead British opinion, during the early years of Victoria's reign it pursued such a cautious policy that more often than not it reflected rather than guided public opinion. The Edinburgh Review exclaimed: "It takes up no failing cause, fights no uphill battle, advocates no great principle, holds out a helping hand to no oppressed or obscure individual--it is ever strong upon the stronger side." ²⁴ Such partisan invective is, of course, somewhat biased, but it does strike at an elemental truth about The Times, the very thing that makes it such an ideal source from which to gauge public feeling on this issue.

The Times was sympathetic to the plight of the unemployed farm laborer and workingman. Her leader-writers subscribed to the view that English workingmen were basically hardworking and honest, but impoverished by reason of unemployment. They attacked the unreformed Poor Law as unjust and debilitating and supported legislation which, they believed, would generate employment or make charity

more efficient for those out of work. The newspaper revelled in the sterling qualities of the English peasant and workingman:

He knows it is work which he wants--not laws, nor doles, nor money, nor (much less) punishment but work--work and fair wages!...No, give him but work, and he is content; take it away and he is open to the seducing corruption of those that would persuade him that the destruction of machinery [or rick burning] is likely to give it to him, and that destruction may lawfully be effected by force. ²⁵

The Times attacked the view that poverty was entirely the result of personal moral failings. More often than not, her editors declared, it was the result of impersonal economic forces. In 1844, the newspaper commented:

Poverty is tortured disciplined [in England]...upon the express assumption that it is not that stern, overpowering necessity which, do what we will, we cannot altogether root our or overcome!--no--but that it is in every case self-caused, and may therefore safely be treated as a condition from which the sufferer has the power, if he had only the will, to escape. ²⁶

One argument often used to sustain this "moral deficiency" view was the fact that poor people committed numerous thefts and acts of violence. Was this not proof of their deficient moral state? The Times thought not, and her editors lamented the fact that the public often confused crime arising from starvation or great distress with the crime caused by greed and vice. This latter type of crime, they were convinced, was equally prevalent among all classes of society and not confined to the poor. ²⁷

Another popular notion challenged by The Times was the fatalistic notion, held by many Englishmen--even those sympathetic

to the plight of the poor--that little could be done to alleviate their suffering. The Times reasoned

that these misfortunes are the lot of human natureBut is this a reason why charity is to cease, or suffering to want its consolation, or disease its cure, or death, if it may be, its prevention or alleviation? Rather is it not the reason, is it not precisely the reason, why charity shall never fail but endure as unendingly as the want and suffering which call her into existence?²⁸

The Times, therefore, contributed to a large number of charitable organizations and gave editorial support to associations which tried
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to provide employment for the poor. Realizing that this, of itself, was an insufficient remedy, the newspaper urged the adoption of the proposed New Poor Law.

Increasing sympathy for the plight of the poor and the general transformation of attitudes towards the problem of combating poverty were only two manifestations of the changing value structure of British society. A growing concern for the values of humaneness, anti-oppression, political liberty, and political participation for the disfranchised motivated research into the conditions of the urban poor and led to a re-evaluation of the causes of poverty in England, Scotland, and Wales. Private individuals and parliamentary commissions also investigated the condition of the Irish poor and examined the underlying causes for the depressed state of that country. We might expect, therefore, a change in English attitudes toward the question of poverty in Ireland.

This was not the case.

This study has gone to some length to portray the changing British attitudes toward the British lower classes, in order that they might be contrasted to British attitudes toward the indigent Irish. It becomes apparent that, although the British became more sympathetic towards their own poor, they nevertheless maintained their old antipathy towards the paupers of Ireland. The various arguments advanced--to the effect that poverty was the result of conditions and impersonal economic forces and not the result of personal moral deficiencies--were not held to be applicable to Ireland. A growing but still insignificant number of journalists, parliamentarians, and economists did, in fact, begin to portray the Irish people in a more favorable light and urged greater compassion for their sufferings, but the majority of the British people remained convinced that these sufferings were of Ireland's own making. Most of the newspapers and journals which were becoming increasingly sympathetic to the plight of the English lower classes continued to drone on in their abuse of Irishmen in similar circumstances.

The extent to which the image of the British worker and peasant became transformed, while that of the Irish remained the same, can be seen in the constant comparisons that were made between Saxon and Celt in the leading sources of public information.

Blackwood's Magazine, a strong advocate of the reformed Poor Law in England, belittled the extent of suffering in Ireland.

The Irish--unlike the English--were poor, said Blackwood's editors, because they were self-indulgent and (worse still) complacent.

Poverty and deprivation were the "national tastes" of Ireland. ³⁰

Fraser's Magazine, another journal which was popular with the English middle class, basked in its knowledge of the superiority of the English over the Irish. In a paean of self-glorification, the magazine reported that

The English people are naturally industrious-- they prefer a life of honest labour to one of idleness. They are a persevering as well as energetic race, who for the most part comprehend their own interests perfectly, and seduously pursue them. Now of all the Celtic tribes, famous for their indolence and fickleness as the Celts everywhere are, the Irish are admitted to be the most idle and most fickle. They will not work if they can exist without it. Even here in London, though ignorant declaimers assert the reverse, the Irish labourers are the least satisfactory people in the world to deal with.

They will talk prettily, Fraser's claimed, but try to deceive you ³¹
"to your cost."

Punch, though externally sympathetic to the plight of the English poor, spurned the cause of the Irish poor in strong language that left no doubt about its editors' views. Punch believed Irishmen to be, by their very nature, the laziest and dirtiest people in all of Europe, if not the entire world. "Irishmen," the journal informed its readers, were "the sons and daughters of generations of beggars. You can trace the descent in their blighted, ³²
stunted forms--in their brassy, cunning, brutalized features."

"Mr. Punch" described their houses and huts as "monuments to national
33
idleness."

An equally derogatory image of the Irish emerged from the pages of The Times. "What is an Englishman made for," the newspaper asked, "but for work? What is an Irishman made for but to sit at his cabin-door, read O'Connell's speeches and abuse the
34
English?" Unlike the English people, who were willing to labor long hours for the chance of profit, The Times believed that "The Irish can work and do work well, if they see the prospect of immediate advantage before them, but if the advantage be remote or doubtful, or, it be only the probability of increased comfort, then
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they appear to want energy...."

Readers of The Times were fed a steady diet of "evidence" supporting these views by the various Times correspondents in Ireland. They depicted the Irish peasant as ignorant, indolent, scheming, and totally irrational. A dispatch from Ireland in October 1845 informed readers that

A more strange mixture than your genuine Irishman it is difficult to conceive. No man will haggle more for 6d., will part with money when he has it with less facility or be more backward to lay out any sum for any useful or profitable object whatever. He is great at a hard bargain, still greater at a job when he supposes he has effectually "done" you. He will take as much pains and resort to as many devices to win 5'
[shillings] by a job as would win him 50'
[pounds] by straight forward enterprise. Yet, with all this hardfistedness, he will blindly agree to pay cent. per cent. for the loan of money, which if he pays
36
will bring him to ruin.

The Times "Commissioner" in Ireland was only slightly more understanding. "I have never concealed the virtues of the Celtic race," he wrote. "Their capacity of long endurance, their easy tractability of disposition, and their contentment with almost any loss, are virtues which the English people have not. The Englishman is patient, forbearing; but he is well used, and I never yet met with a contented Englishman." The reason for this, the Commissioner argued, was that English people were ambitious and hence never content. The Irishman, on the other hand, "endures oppression, and he has therefore been oppressed and hardly used." ³⁷ The character of the Celt, the Commissioner lamented, was really so full of paradoxes as to be almost unfathomable. Readers of The Times must have concluded that, in Charles Dickens' Podsnap's immortal words, "They do, I am afraid to say, as they do."

In the decades following the Union, the image of Irishmen remained static and stood in sharp contrast to the picture drawn of his English cousin. Why was the British image of the Irish people so resistant to change?

Britain, we have seen, was unable or unwilling to govern Ireland according to those principles of justice and equality, which had been proclaimed as the avowed goal of the Union. This failure was made apparent in and out of Parliament by the agita-

tion of the Irish Repealers and their allies among the British Radicals. The British defense against their accusers was a set of rationalizations which tried to explain away the contradiction between their goals and the actual effect of their policies. Their stereotyped view of "Paddy" both salved their consciences and relieved them of further responsibility for Irish woes.

The image of the Irishman was particularly important in accounting for the depressed state of Ireland. The British employed it to demonstrate to their satisfaction that the disparity in wealth between the two countries was not the result of British oppression but rather the fault of the Irish themselves. The British insisted that the Irish had only themselves to blame for the fact that the economic prosperity promised by the Union had failed to materialize.

For their part, Repealers cried out that "In a climate soft as a mother's smile, on a soil fruitful as GOD's love, the Irish peasant mourns." ³⁸ The explanation, they were convinced, lay in centuries of British oppression and exploitation. The Union, instead of mitigating the excesses of British greed and limiting the abuses of arbitrary power, had, they claimed, given freer reign to these evil forces, while covering them with a hypocritical moral veneer. The Union, in the words of an English Radical,

was so contrived and forced upon the Irish people, as to remind them constantly of their galling subjection to English domination. It was the consummation of the Conquest--not a measure of equal law and equal justice. Hence, instead of love and confidence, the Union was productive only of increased fear and distrust of British power and authority. It

was born amid hate, and strife, and bloodshed, and at the time and in the manner in which it was carried, it proved an act of separation rather than an Act of Union. ³⁹

Englishmen responded that Ireland was impoverished and un-
ruly not because, but in spite of, all that Britain had sought to
do for her. Drawing out the logic of the differentiation between
the character of the Irish and British people, Englishmen argued
that the fault lay in the nature of the Irish people, and not in
the nature of British policy.

Their basic argument (which did not apply, of course, to
the British workingman) was that the Irish--in the words of one
indignant Englishman--"consider poverty as a misfortune, whereas,
in nine cases out of ten, adversity is the natural punishment of
culpable negligence or heedless extravagance." ⁴⁰ "The real diffi-
culty" of Ireland, exclaimed Lord Clarendon, Lord Lieutenant of
Ireland, "lies with the people themselves. They are always in the
mud; and when they have screamed out to Hercules, they have no
doubt about having done everything necessary for extricating
themselves. Their idleness and helplessness can hardly be be-
⁴¹lieved." Charles Greville, another influential Whig, considered
the Irish "with rare exception, besotted with obstinacy and indo-
lence, reckless and savage--all from high to low intent on doing as
little and getting as much as they can, unwilling to rouse and ex-
ert themselves, looking to this country for succour, and smarting

at the succour which they get...." The explanation for their poverty, Greville remained convinced, stemmed from the Irish incapacity to help themselves.

The Times voiced a similar opinion. Drawing the logical conclusion from his assessment of the Irish character, The Times Commissioner reasoned: "It is because the people of Ireland generally do not labour either physically or mentally, in anything like the proportion that the people of England do, that they are not generally near so wealthy...." ⁴³ The Times itself declared, in a leader on May 15, 1844, that "The truth is, that Ireland and the Irish have, in great measure themselves to thank for their poverty and want of capital....It is by industry, toil, perserverance, economy, prudence, by self-denial, and self-dependence, that a state becomes mighty and its people happy." If England and Scotland could achieve this, The Times self-righteously asserted, why not the Irish?

The Irish failure to manifest any fixity of purpose bothered The Times even more than the proverbial Irish indolence. Her editors exclaimed:

We have believed, and our belief has been confirmed by the repeated declarations of Irishmen themselves, that if there was one single quality in which they were more deficient than another, it was fixedness of purpose and steadiness of action; that if there was one great radical fault in their moral constitutions it was the volatility which prevented them from attempting or carrying out any work which required severity of application and intensity of purpose. ⁴⁵

The Times could not understand, for example, why Irish peasants, agitated over the shortage of farmland in Ireland, did not de-

velop the acres of virgin land to be found throughout Ireland. Economists had, of course, argued that such activity was discouraged or even made impossible by reason of high rents and the ensuing lack of capital, as well as by the Irish landlords' practice of evicting tenants as soon as the value of their land increased. Economists had also pointed to the complicated law of entail, which made it difficult to acquire title to such land. The Times, unable or unwilling to recognize the complexity of the problem, cut through such involved arguments with the simple assertion that the fault lay with the Irish. "Neither landlords or peasants," the newspaper informed its readers, "are willing to put forward the effort and small expenses involved."⁴⁶

The Times also brusquely swept aside Repealers' well-reasoned arguments concerning the disastrous effect British commercial policy had upon the growth of Irish trade and commerce. The commercial clauses of the Union had enabled British manufacturers to flood the Irish market with their goods. The dumping reached a peak during the depression following the Napoleonic Wars. As a result, infant Irish industry received a blow from which it never recovered. The Times, once more unwilling to accept the validity of explanations advanced by many economists, offered a simpler, more appealing explanation to the British public. In contemptuous condemnation of the agitators, The Times asserted that "the trade and commerce of a nation depend less upon legislative indifference

and Government supervision, than the indomitable energy of the mass of people." ⁴⁷ This was a quality, the newspaper reiterated, in which the Irish were most lacking. For The Times, the Irish had a social problem, not an economic one.

Chronic self-indulgence, indolence, and laxity of purpose were features of the British image of Ireland which proved very useful in explaining the existence of Irish poverty. Other characteristics, such as the proverbial Irish drunkenness, their abysmal ignorance and superstition, and their complacency, were also used to shift the blame for Irish troubles from English shoulders. With regard to the Irish and drink, one observer exclaimed: "The effects of spirit drinking must be everywhere similar to those in Dublin, and this one gigantic vice is strong enough to drag Ireland down to misery were she prosperous; and now, with its iron heel upon her neck, declares that she will never rise from her abject and hopeless degradation." ⁴⁸

The variety of adverse characteristics popularly attributed to the Irish were sufficiently varied for anyone who wished to criticize Ireland--for any reason--to select those traits he most deplored and employ them to explain the depressed state of the country. It rarely occurred to Englishmen that many of these traits might be the result and not the cause of Irish poverty.

Belief in the Irishman's moral deficiencies served both to

explain the existence of Irish poverty and to absolve the British from any responsibility for creating those conditions in Ireland. They also lessened any discomfort an Englishman might feel about the sufferings of the Irish poor.

The actual extent of Irish suffering was frequently minimized by British observers. The outcry of starving peasants and the agitation of Irish politicians were dismissed as typical Irish exaggeration. The Times, for example, called every scarcity in Ireland an "alleged scarcity." In Ireland, it exclaimed, "anything will make a stir, especially if it can be turned to account to extract money from the pockets of the Saxon...." ⁴⁹ The Irishman could not be trusted to be accurate; he exaggerated in order to avoid the responsibility of providing for himself. This belief was so ingrained among the general public and the political elite that when famine struck Ireland in 1845, reports from that country concerning the serious effects of the potato blight were greeted with incredulity in Britain. The Government itself, aware of the magnitude of the disaster, was hindered in its response by recalcitrant public opinion, which remained convinced that the reports of famine were exaggerated.

Another rationalization, equally important in reducing whatever uneasiness the British people felt about Irish poverty, was the belief that the Irish, unlike their English cousins, did not mind their penury. This argument, based on the assumption

that the Irish more closely resembled insensitive animals than human beings, had a long history.

As far back as the early years of the seventeenth century, travelers to Ireland had commented on the apparent ability of the Irish to live contentedly amid filth and poverty. William Lithgow compared the Irish to other peoples who manifested a similar aptitude, saying:

True it is, to make a fit comparison, the Barbarian moore, the moorish Spaniard, the Turke, and the Irish-man, are the least industrious, and most sluggish livers under the sunne, for the vulgar Irish I protest, live more miserably in their brutish fashion than the undaunted or untamed Arabian, the develish-idolatrous Turcuman, or the moon-worshiping Caramans: shewing thereby a greater necessity they have to live, than any 50 pleasure they have or can have in their living.

Tourist Richard Twiss, in 1775, quoted Lithgow's description in support of his own impressions. Twiss concluded that "their poverty is much greater than that of the Spanish, Portuguese, or even Scotch peasants, not withstanding which they appear to exist
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contentedly."

Nineteenth-century observers, amazed like Lithgow and Twiss at the Irish ability to accept their degrading poverty, cheerfully interpreted this to mean that the Irish did not mind such poverty. A Liverpool physician, upon finishing a study of Irish conditions, remarked that "The Irish seem to be as contented amidst dirt and filth and close confined air, as in clear and airy situations.

While other people would consider comforts, they appear to have no desire for them; they merely seem to care for that which will support animal existence." ⁵²

The Reverend John Page, who toured Ireland in 1836, reached the same conclusion. In his book he wrote:

The poor Irish work merely for their support; for what can, at the lowest calculation, sustain life. That obtained, they sit down contentedly in their cabins, in the midst of filth and wretchedness almost exceeding what the greatest stretch of an Englishman's imagination can conceive: For subsistence they will work, and that with cheerfulness. Beyond this their degraded condition does not permit them to pass. To hold out to such people a prospect of support...might prove injurious in the highest degree.

Another contemporary commented:

In an intercourse with the common people, a day, an hour, cannot pass without being struck by some mark of talent, some display of an imagination at once glowing and enthusiastic, or some touch of tender and delicate feeling. How strange it is, that such a people should be content to dwell in smoky hovels, when, if they chose to exert themselves and employ their energies which I think they possess, their conditions might be improved! But they are generally happy; therefore why wish to alter their state? ⁵⁴

This argument gained widespread acceptance in leading British journals and newspapers. Fraser's Magazine lamented the fact that Irishmen remained content to live amidst poverty even after they had been exposed to the better things in life by the mass Irish emigration to Britain. It commented:

Born in a cabin and reared to look with complacency on the bundle of rags which covers his person, and the mess of potatoes which fills his

belly, the young Irish peasant never acquired a taste for higher things, and cannot therefore understand even here in England--where, by the way, his associations continue to be Irish still --that his interests and those of his employer are identical.⁵⁵

What was worse, Fraser's reported, Irishmen, content amid the poverty and deprivation, persecuted anyone else who attempted to be industrious and improve his fortune. It was England's duty, the magazine concluded, to effect a "moral revolution" in Ireland.

Blackwood's Magazine heartily concurred. Her editors argued that "The people are fond of coarse food, which we think unfit for men, but they prefer it...the Irish consider the use of 'bread and meat,' as an infliction." Therefore, the magazine reasoned, "There is, in reality, neither that distress nor that scarcity which we are taught to believe exist there." Blind to Ireland's real agony, Blackwood's brazenly asserted that "The truth is...that though there is more squalid filth and raggedness in Ireland (for those are national tastes) there is much less real misery or distress in that country than exists in England."⁵⁶

The Times voiced a similar opinion. Irish poverty, it informed its readers, must be understood within an Irish context. Was it Britain's fault, they asked, if the Irish preferred potatoes to bread and preferred to live in conditions that even their pigs would not tolerate? The editors concluded that "The uncivilized habits of the Irish have made them callous to so much of their poverty as does not press upon them in the shape of actual hunger,

and have therefore tended to perpetuate that poverty through successive generations." ⁵⁷ Britain's mission, The Times and Blackwood's, agreed, was not so much to alleviate Irish distress as to civilize the Irish and teach them to behave like human beings.

Poverty, therefore, had a relative rather than an absolute meaning. The English poor and unemployed were to be pitied because they were prisoners of circumstance. They suffered under their deprivation and aspired to improve their lot. The Irish, on the other hand, enjoyed their degradation--or at least did not object to it--and so were impoverished and would continue to remain so. With this thought in mind, many Englishmen reasoned that the Government and private charities ought to be more concerned with alleviating distress in Britain than in Ireland.

* * *

At this point it should be made clear that the British perception of Ireland made a distinct differentiation between "native Irish" and "Anglo-Irish." The former group was Catholic and Celtic; the latter was Protestant and of English or Scottish extraction. It was the Catholic Irish Celt who was the object of the British stereotype. The Anglo-Irishman was perceived to be an altogether different creature who was party to all the sterling qualities of the British nation. The well-known fact that the majority of Anglo-Irish were concentrated in Ulster, the most prosperous province of Ireland, was additional proof to most

Englishmen of the validity of their contention that the national characters of the two peoples were entirely different.

This argument, clear-cut and, perhaps, persuasive in its very simplicity, was very obviously incorrect. In an earlier chapter we examined the real reasons for the disparity in economic conditions between Ulster and the rest of Ireland. In southern Ireland, agricultural units consisted of estates which were poorly managed, rackrented, and minutely subdivided. The peasant had no lease and his fortunes rested entirely in the hands of generally capricious and greedy landlords. In Ulster the majority of the farmers either owned the land they tilled or else were guaranteed security of tenure by reason of a lease which was binding on the landlord. In addition, any investment they made to improve the productivity of the land was protected by the custom of tenant-right. The Devon Commission had, in fact, concluded that the Catholic residents of Ulster, protected by these safeguards, were as prosperous as their Protestant neighbors. One recommendation of the Commission was, therefore, that the custom of tenant-right and the practice of leases be extended to the rest of Ireland.

Thus, the real distinction was not between Catholic and Protestant or Irish and English, but between those Irishmen protected by law and custom and those exposed to the arbitrary power of greedy landlords. Arthur Young, the famous economist, pithily summed up the difference when he stated: "Give a man the secure

possession of a bleak rock, and he will turn it into a garden; give him a nine year's lease of a garden and he will convert it into a desert." ⁵⁸ The Irish-Catholic peasant of the south did not even have the dubious advantage of a nine-year lease!

Nevertheless, the differences between the condition of Ulster and the rest of Ireland suggested only one conclusion to most Englishmen. The visitor to Ireland would observe, an Anglo-Irish traveler remarked,

that in the Protestant districts six days each week are dedicated to labour, and the sabbath dedicated to the offices of religion; whilst in other districts half the week is passed in idleness or dissipation of holidays, and the sabbath neglected. It is true that in the breasts of the Irish Catholics he will find a strong sense of religion, agreeable to their mode of faith and ceremony; but he will also find that these modes of faith and ceremony are subversive to the spirit of industry.... ⁵⁹

Nassau Senior, a Government economist, also subscribed to this thesis. Senior described the "two Irelands" which co-existed side by side:

One is chiefly Protestant, the other is chiefly Roman Catholic....The population of one is laborious but prodigal; no fatigue repels them--no amusement diverts them from the business of providing the means of subsistence and of enjoyment...that of ⁶⁰ the other is indolent and idle but parsimonious.

This painstaking comparison of lazy Celt and diligent Saxon seemed very neat, at first glance. There was only one nagging problem: how to discuss the cruel landlords of Ireland--most of them Protestant and of English or Scottish descent--and their devastat-

ing effect on their tenants without destroying that comforting image?

The Irish proprietary class had long been the subject of acrimonious attack in England. Since the days of Spenser and the Elizabethan settlement of Ireland, they had been taken to task for their greed and inhumane policies regarding their tenants. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century visitors to Ireland were shocked by the oppressive practices of many landowners and described them as haughty, tyrannical, bloodsucking, greedy, and callous. In the words of one commentator, they were "absolute sovereigns" whose "imperious and oppressive measures...have almost depopulated the province of Ireland."⁶¹

Following the lead of David Ricardo, nineteenth-century economists studied the land problem in Ireland in great detail. Although divided in their analysis of the proper course for the economic development of Ireland, they almost unanimously condemned the heartless (and frequently uneconomical) policies of the landlords.⁶² Tales spread by returning travelers, reports in British newspapers, and debates in Parliament exposed the British public to the horrors committed by many members of the landowning gentry. By the 1830's, the scandal had become a cause célèbre among British liberals.

Some people even went so far in their indignant zeal as to forget momentarily what they had been saying about improvident

Paddy's being totally to blame for his sorry state of affairs. Liberal and Radical publications, which rightly condemned the worst abuses of the landowning class, still were capable of assigning all the problems of Ireland to the machinations of absentees and capricious landlords in the very same issues which rained dire warnings and contempt upon the Irish lower classes.

For example, Fraser's Magazine, which regularly delighted in attributing the poverty of Ireland to the deficient moral nature of the Celt, found nothing inconsistent in also attributing poverty to the oppressive policies of the landlords. Why should the Irishman be lazy and lacking in forethought, the journal asked.

Because the Irish labourer has never been encouraged, nor felt that it was his interest, to be industrious. A resident gentry, with estates mortgaged to the waterline, create of necessity, a pauperized tenantry, who, in their turn, neglect and oppress the labourer--giving him, in lieu of wages, a miserable potato garden, and training him in that school to habits of practical deceit as well as theoretical lying. How can it be otherwise then that a people so circumstanced should be indolent, cunning, savage, and chronically poor?⁶³

The only major British newspaper which maintained a consistent position with regard to the condition of Ireland was the Morning Chronicle, normally pro-Whig in orientation. Relying upon John Stuart Mill's thorough and insightful analysis, the Morning Chronicle publicized only the evils of the landholding system in Ireland and urged Irish landlords to accept their responsibilities. The newspaper asserted that "no man of common sense can doubt

that the depressed condition of the mass of the Irish people and the various social evils arising from it, are chargeable to the neglect and misconduct of that powerful class." ⁶⁴ The Chronicle warned that if Irish property did not reform itself, the Government must take measures to guarantee that the Irish peasant would not be exploited.

In Parliament, both in Lords and Commons, the Irish proprietors came under attack. From conservative English gentry to Radical free-trader, the suffering and deprivation caused by rack-renting and evictions became the subject of violent recriminations. Lord Brougham, an influential Tory, castigated Irish landlords for their extravagance. Although their estates were mortgaged, Brougham informed his fellow Lords, "yet they contrived to command all the luxuries of life, such as men in the same rank in England could not command--they could have their servants, their carriages, their French wines." ⁶⁵

Tories, reluctant to tamper with what they considered to be the divine rights of property, demanded a moral reform of the Irish proprietary class. Radicals and most Repealers, less in awe of property rights, urged a tax on absentees and legislation to curb the powers of the landlords. Parliament, however, was unwilling to go further than the creation of special commissions established to investigate the causes of rural distress in Ireland. The impressively documented reports of these commissions, combined with the continuing parliamentary agitation of Repealers

and Radicals created a strong case for action which became increasingly difficult to ignore.

Even The Times, a bulwark of defense for property rights, attacked the Irish landlords for abusing their privileges. In 1843, the newspaper declared that "Ireland needed real charity and understanding on the part of the landlords towards the poor and al-
66
most impoverished tenant." The Times compared the landlord's status to that of an irresponsible and fickle despot, reaping all the advantages of his power without embracing any of the corresponding responsibilities. By 1845, The Times, albeit cautiously, had come out in favor of some legislation to regulate landholding in Ireland. Like Fraser's and Blackwood's, The Times now depicted the self-indulgence, extravagance, heartlessness and cupidity of the landlords as a major cause of economic stultification in Ireland. The contrast between the solicitude shown by English landlords towards their tenants and the callous disregard manifested by Irish landlords toward peasantry, the newspaper concluded, stemmed from their respective national characters. Thus, The Times concluded, Ireland's evils were entirely the fault of Irishmen, both landlord and peasant, who lacked that moral fibre which had made Britain great.

In October 1845, The Times declared:

The closer we examine [Ireland's] wants, the more do we become convinced that the misgovernment of which she complains is the misgovernment of her own sons. The landlords, for the most part, so misgovern their estates, that their tenantry

are disheartened; and the tenantry almost universally so misgovern their farms, that they do not produce one-third of the produce which they are capable; while all unite in so misgoverning the natural capabilities of the country, that instead of being, as she might be, and as she ought to be, the richest and most prosperous, she is about the poorest and most neglected country in Europe.⁶⁷

During the famine, the Irish proprietor was really to become the financial scapegoat for Ireland's ills. The landowning class was made to pay--almost to the point of their destruction--for the relief of Ireland. The image of the evil proprietor, upon whom the burden of relief could be placed, functioned to relieve the British government and people from shouldering the burden of Irish relief.

One Irish parliamentarian commented during the height of the famine that "Formerly it was the custom to throw the blame of everything concerned with Ireland upon the poor--every evil was ascribed to their indolence, their improvidence, and the Celtic nature of their character...now it was thought right to impute all to an indolent class of unwilling landlords."⁶⁸

All was not, in fact, imputed to the landowning class. Both before and during the famine, the arguments of lazy Paddy and avaricious landlord were used concurrently, evidence of the inconsistent and illogical nature of the British perception of Irish affairs.

We have seen how The Times, Fraser's, Blackwood's, and Punch ascribed the poverty of Ireland to the moral deficiencies of the Irish people. This was, after all, the major thrust of the British defense against the Repealers'

and Radicals' assertions that Irish poverty resulted from centuries of exploitation and oppression, and not from Irish vices. However, when it became impossible to ignore the disastrous effects which the policies of the landlords had had upon Irish economic development, these same journals and newspapers also began to argue that the poverty of Ireland and, indeed, the uncivilized characteristics of the Irish people arose from the oppressive policies of the landlords. The two arguments were, of course, contradictory but were equally functional in absolving the British government from blame. The two sides could only be made compatible, however, by means of a flagrant violation of reality.

As we have seen, the British image of Ireland clearly distinguished between the "native Irish" and the "Anglo-Irish." This differentiation was crucial to the British argument that the real cause of Irish poverty was the deformed character of the "native Irish." In Ireland itself, the difference between the condition of Ulster and that of the other provinces was additional proof of this argument.

Yet, in order to explain the behavior of the Irish landlords--who were, after all, "Anglo-Irish"--it became necessary to attribute to them all those traits ascribed to the "native Irish." The British journals and press reasoned that it was the greed, indolence, and lack of self-sufficiency of the landlords which prompted them to act as they did. This characterization of the Irish landlord, similar in all respects to that of the

peasant, therefore violated the first premise of the stereotype-- it contradicted the ironclad distinction drawn between Saxon and Celt.

Many journals and newspapers caught in this logical dilemma simply ignored it. Others solved the paradox by totally disregarding the reasonably well-known fact that most of the Irish landlords were Anglo-Irish. Reference after reference, several of which have already been quoted, depicted the Irish landlord as "native Irish" and explained his behavior in terms of his ethnic background.

Most Irish proprietors were, in fact, either descendants of Cromwellian adventurers or English capitalists who had invested in Irish property. They were neither Irish in culture, religion, or political association. The minority of landlords who were "native Irish" were, in fact, often regarded as among the better proprietors of Ireland. The absentee landlords--worst offenders of all--were almost entirely British. The greater number of them had never once set foot in Ireland. Yet, British observers also explained their irresponsible behavior by reason of their Irish character. One political commentator, for example, wrote: "There can be no doubt that this trait in national character--improvidence, allied with a love of ostentation has greatly swelled the list of absentees."⁶⁹

The seeming British ability to ignore obvious facts in order to maintain their image of Ireland inviolate must be con-

sidered the manifestation of some deep psychological need on the part of those who employed such a perceptual sleight of hand. The need arose when British policy in Ireland was challenged by the rise of the Repeal movement.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 6

1. J. Goord, quoted in John Derricke, The Image of Ireland, With a Discoverie of Woodkarne (Edinburgh: A. and C. Black, 1883), p. ix. Derricke's description was written in 1581.

2. Spenser was Secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, the Lord Deputy of Ireland, from 1580-82. From 1581-88, he served as the Clerk of the Faculties of the Court of Chancery. In 1589, as a reward for his services, Spenser was given 3,028 acres of land adjoining his estate in the Province of Munster.

A View of the State of Ireland (in The Works of the Famous English Poet, Mr. Edmund Spenser), (London: published by Henry Hills for Jonathan Edwin, 1879), proposed the creation of protected hamlets in the Irish countryside where pacified Celts were to reside and be given land to farm. From the information procured from such pacified natives, the British soldiers were to be sent to seek out and destroy the remaining woodkarnes [Irish guerilla fighters]. The patrols were to be undertaken in the wintertime when, according to Spenser, nature would have defoliated Ireland, making it more difficult for the woodkarnes to evade detection.

It has been suggested that Spenser's anti-Irish views were related to the fact that in 1598, during O'Neil's Rebellion, his castle was overrun and several members of his family slaughtered. Spenser's attitudes towards the Irish were, however, relatively moderate for his day. Although he depicted the native Irish as barbaric, he also attacked the British Government for allowing the settlers to slaughter them like animals. Spenser believed it was the mission of the English people to bring civilization to the native Irish, and such a mission was hardly fulfilled by exterminating them. These views failed to find favor with the authorities and, as a result, his treatise was suppressed.

3. Ibid., p. 205.

4. Ibid., p. 232.

5. Barnabe Rich, A New Description of Ireland; Wherein Is Described the Disposition of the Irish Whereunto They Are Inclined (London: Thomas Adams, 1610), p. 15.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p. 9.
8. William Lithgow, Description of Ireland and the Irish, A.D. 1619, quoted in Richard Twiss, A Tour in Ireland in 1775 (London: J. Robson, printer, 1776), p. 152, was not published in its entirety until 1813, when it was included in the second volume of James Hall, Tour Through Ireland (London: P. P. Moore, 1813).
9. James Dingley, "Observations in a Voyage Through the Kingdom of Ireland ... in the Year 1681" (Dublin: The Journal of the Kilkenny and South East of Ireland Archaeological Society, 1870), pp. 17-18.
10. Thomas Campbell, A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland, in a Series of Letters to John Watkinson, M.P. (Dublin: printed for M. Whitestone and Others, 1778), p. 138.
11. Phillip Luckombe, A Tour Through Ireland: Wherein the Present State of That Kingdom Is Considered; and the Most Noted Cities, Towns, Seats, Buildings, Loughs, Etc. Are Described (London: T. Lowndes and Son, 1783), p. 19.
12. Edward Daniel Clarke, A Tour Through the South of England, Wales, and Part of Ireland, Made During the Summer of 1791 (London: printed at the Minerva Press, 1793), pp. 326-27.
13. Ibid., p. 305.
14. Although Queen Victoria frequented Scotland with regularity, she visited Ireland only four times during her long reign. In 1849, 1853, 1861, and 1900, she made brief trips to Ireland and, in each case, undertook the journey only for reasons of state.
15. See the novels of Sir Walter Scott, for example.
16. G. D. H. Cole, Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians (London: Sylvan Press, 1949), pp. 373-74. This book consists of the transcriptions of a series of radio talks

presented over the British Broadcasting Corporation.

17. See, for example, Élie Halévy, A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century, trans. E. I. Watkin (6 vols.; New York: Barnes and Noble, 1961).
18. Blackwood's Magazine, LXI (Mar. 1847), 285.
19. Outdoor relief referred to relief administered to people other than residents of the poorhouse. The administration of outdoor relief greatly increased the numbers of those who were able to obtain relief from the Government.
20. Blackwood's Magazine, loc. cit.
21. Punch, II (1842), 195.
22. Ibid., p. 88.
23. Ibid.
24. Edinburgh Review, XXXVII (May 1823), p. 364.
25. The Times, Jan. 1, 1844, p. 4.
26. Ibid., Jan. 17, 1844, p. 4.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., Jan. 11, 1844, p. 4. The Times applauded the establishment of the "Association for Promoting Relief of Destitution in the Metropolis" and argued that subscriptions and impersonal relief were insufficient to alleviate the suffering of the poor. It demanded that some of the money of the rich be turned back to help the poor "if we are to elevate [the lower class] to its proper position, and really allow the poor that share in the distribution of the nation's wealth which rightly belongs to them."
30. Blackwood's Magazine, LIX (May 1846), p. 600.

31. Fraser's Magazine, XXXVI (Mar. 1847), p. 373.
32. Ibid., XIV (1849), 54.
33. See Punch, XVII (1851), 26, 231, for derogatory refer-
ences to the Irish laborer.
34. The Times, Jan. 26, 1847, p. 6.
35. Ibid., Sept. 3, 1845, p. 7.
36. Ibid., Oct. 25, 1845, p. 8.
37. Ibid.
38. Nation, May 24, 1845, p. 2.
39. Samuel Smiles, op. cit., p. 471.
40. James Johnson, A Tour in Ireland; With Meditations &
Reflections (London: S. Highley, 1844), p. 165. The
refusals of paupers to enter the poorhouses, Johnson
wrote, were "mere excuses for their preference of a
wild, erratic, and free exercise of their profession--
mendicancy "
41. Life and Letters of George William Frederick Villiers,
the Fourth Earl of Clarendon, ed. Herbert Eustace
Maxwell (London: Edward Arnold, 1913), I, 280.
42. Charles Greville, Greville Memoirs, Part II, A Journal
of the Reign of Queen Victoria from 1837-1852 (London:
Longman's Green and Co., 1885), II:2, p. 434.
43. The Times, Feb. 26, 1846, pp. 5-6.
44. Ibid., May 15, 1844.
45. Ibid., Aug. 4, 1843, p. 4.
46. Ibid., Sept. 4, 1845, p. 6.
47. Ibid., Aug. 4, 1843, p. 4.
48. Baptist Noel, Notes of a Short Tour Through the Mid-
land Counties of Ireland in the Summer of 1836, With

- Observations on the Condition of the Peasantry (London: J. Nisbet, 1837), p. 16.
49. The Times, Nov. 8, 1845, p. 6.
50. Twiss, op. cit., p. 155.
51. Ibid., p. 30.
52. Dr. Duncan of Liverpool, quoted in an anonymous pamphlet, Observations on the Habits of the Labouring Classes in Ireland Suggested by Mr. G. C. Lewis' Report on the State of the Irish Poor (Dublin: Milliken and Son, 1836), p. 9. The author of this pamphlet challenges the Irish assertion that Irishmen, like Englishmen, would have a higher standard of living if they were better paid. Irishmen, he asserts, would waste any additional salary on drink, and it is therefore wise to pay them low salaries.
53. James Page, Ireland: Its Evils Traced to Their Source (London: R. B. Seeley & W. Burnside, 1836), p. 113.
54. Henrietta G. Chatterton, Rambles in the South of Ireland (London: Saunders and Olley, 1839), I, 10.
55. Fraser's Magazine, XXXVI (Mar. 1847), p. 373.
56. Blackwood's Magazine, LIX (May 1846), 600, 602.
57. The Times, Dec. 8, 1843, p. 4.
58. Quoted in William Bridges, Plantation of Ireland. Three Practical Suggestions for the Colonization and Re-Organization of Ireland (London: H. Bacclière, 1849), pp. 12-13.
59. Thomas Walford, The Scientific Tourist Through Ireland ... by an Irish Gentleman (London, 1818), pp. 6-7.
60. Senior, op. cit., I, 212.
61. John Bush, Hibernia Curiosa. A Letter from a Gentleman in Dublin to His Friend at Dover in Kent, Giving a General View of the Manners, Customs, Dispositions, Etc. of the Inhabitants of Ireland (London: W. Flesney, 1768), p. 29.

62. See Black, op. cit., pp. 15-86; Ricardo and his followers, notably G. Poulett Scrope, condemned the inhumane policies of the Irish landlords but argued at the same time that Ireland would profit most from a large-scale capitalist system of agriculture. Black, pp. 22-23, points out that the two views were contradictory because large-scale farming could not be instituted without clearances, which were precisely the inhumane policies condemned by these economists. The way out of the paradox, other economists suggested, was to institute schemes of alternative employment, relief, and subsidized emigration, in order to offset the cruelties of clearances--a far cry from laissez-faire economics.

In the 1840's, an alternative view was propounded by Sharman Crawford, John Stuart Mill, Gustave de Beaumont, and others, which challenged the earlier view. These economists envisaged Ireland as a nation of tenant proprietors, farming medium-sized units, which with an infusion of capital and agricultural knowledge, it was argued, could be made profitable.

63. Fraser's Magazine, XXVI (May 1847), 575.

64. Morning Chronicle, Oct. 4, 1845, p. 7.

65. Hansard's, XCVIII, Feb. 15, 1846, col. 841.

66. The Times, Jan. 31, 1843, p. 4.

67. Ibid., Oct. 4, 1845, p. 5.

68. W. H. Gregory, speaking before the House of Commons, Hansard's, LXXXIX, Feb. 2, 1847.

69. Inglis, op. cit., I, 13.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The very name forces to our recollection images of shillelaghs, and broken heads, and turbulence of every kind.

Henry Inglis

The second salient feature of the Irish problem was the frequent violence and outrage which threatened the security of life and property in the Irish countryside. For the British public, violence, like poverty, had one meaning in England and quite another in Ireland.

Early Victorian England was not the peaceful and consensual society that began to emerge towards the end of the nineteenth century. Violent demonstrations, unruly mobs, and acts of industrial sabotage were a common response to depressions in the job market or sharp increases in the cost of living. The destruction of machinery by the Luddites, rick-burning by dispossessed peasants, the risings of 1816 and 1819, and the Chartist Rising of 1839 were all examples of lower-class responses to economic hardship. These periodic outbursts, reaching a peak in the depression following the Napoleonic Wars, and again in the "hungry forties," were perceived by the propertied classes as a grave threat to the continued existence of the social and political order.

The beginning of the century was marked by a certain callousness and indifference towards the plight of the lower orders.

Phrases like the "swinish multitude" or the "boorish rabble" were commonly employed by the wealthier classes to describe the masses. Those who protested against their condition were denied any sympathy, and their leaders were denounced as evil madmen. Such attitudes, many historians argue, were the inevitable result of the ignorance of the educated and well-to-do of the rigors¹ of life experienced by the more unfortunate multitude.

The rise of the humanitarian movement and the growing emphasis on the principles of tolerance combined with a more sophisticated understanding of poverty, arising from new statistical studies and parliamentary inquiries, to bring about an altered perception of the lower classes. By the 1840's, as we have seen, the British poor were commonly perceived as victims of circumstance, and growing sympathy was shown for their plight. As a natural corollary of this change, the British perception of working-class agitation was altered. While violence and mob action were still denounced, they were no longer invariably perceived as capricious, but usually were considered a reaction to depressed conditions. The journals, newspapers, and parliamentarians who condemned violence and unruly mobs also condemned the conditions which gave rise to such behavior.

The extent to which the British perception of the lower

classes was altered is evident in the arguments of free traders, who agitated for repeal of the corn laws, and Radicals, who were intent on reform of the Poor Law. They sold their programs as alternatives to Chartism, riots, and revolution. This tactic was predicated, of necessity, on their assumption that the British public accepted the connection between economic deprivation and violent outbursts on the part of the masses.

Reformers succeeded in convincing most Englishmen that their only alternatives were reform or revolution. As a result, many historians maintain, the power of vested interests which resisted reform was overcome.² The sliding scale of duties for the importation of corn, the Reform Act of 1832, and repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 were all legislated under the specter of revolution. Legislators, many of whom were opposed to such reforms, acquiesced for fear of the consequences to the society should they demur. They reasoned that violence and revolution could be averted by governmental responsiveness to the economic and political demands of the people.

The relationship between economic distress and violence is so obvious that it hardly appears surprising that the British public recognized the connection and that the British government took action to alleviate the causes of distress. Thus, the contrast of this concession to reality with their failure to admit the existence of a connection between economic distress and violence in Ireland becomes all the more striking.

Agrarian violence in Ireland, like urban disorder in England, was a response to severe economic distress. Like its British counterpart, outrage and agitation peaked during the period of greatest economic deprivation. In Ireland, however, the focus of discontent was in the agricultural and not the industrial sector of the economy. The Irish peasant perceived the landlord and the landholding system--not the industrialist and the factory system--to be the capricious arbiter of his fate and the primary cause of his depressed condition.

Bereft of any legal channel through which to seek redress for their grievances, the Irish peasantry expressed their discontent with the exploitative policies of the landlords in acts of violence against the perpetrators of that oppression. Secret societies meted out vigilante justice to those landowners who evicted peasants from their estates or charged exorbitant rentals for land whose value was steadily deteriorating. Deterrence as well as vengeance was the aim of such organizations. They were so organized that one English jurist considered them to be a vast trades union for the protection of the Irish peasantry.

Irish politicians and journalists attempted to make the British aware of the fact that violence and intimidation were the only means available to the peasantry in their struggle for survival. The Freeman's Journal declared that enmity

existed between landlord and tenant because only cruelty had passed between them. It compared the majority of Irish tenants to "Unpaid, ill-fed, ill-treated 'Servants', robbed by their own masters, with all the cares of independence and all the wants of pauperism." It went on to say, "Such are the men that bad landlords have raised up around them; and as they have trained⁴ them so they have them." Even so, the journal argued, "Crimes of violence in Ireland against the landlords are few, but they are surely the result of want and despair rather than depravity⁵ of the Irish lower class."

In Parliament itself, Irish liberals and moderate nationalists argued this position in their opposition to some of the Draconian measures proposed to restore tranquillity to the Irish countryside. With the support of the English Radicals, they presented a tightly reasoned and well-documented case for what they believed was the real cause of violence in Ireland.

Within Britain, many liberal and Radical economists espoused the Irish cause. Poulette Scrope, John Pitt Kennedy, and John Stuart Mill agitated for legislation that would guarantee the Irish peasant some security of tenure. Such legislation, they argued, was the only type of action that would have a real effect on the incidence of violence in rural Ireland.

In 1834, Scrope published a pamphlet entitled "How Is

"Ireland to Be Governed?" In it he argued that unless the British Government took remedial action very soon, they would be faced with a starving peasantry and the likelihood of revolution in Ireland. He wrote:

It is impossible...to have any doubt as to the real cause of the insurrectionary spirit and agrarian outrages of the Irish peasantry. They are the struggles of an oppressed starving people for existence! They are the rude efforts at obtaining a sort of savage self-established justice....They are the natural and necessary results of a state of the law which allows the landlords of a country at one time to encourage an excessive growth of population on their estates, and at another, when caprice seizes them, to dispossess all this population, and turn them out on the highways without food and shelter. ⁶

John Pitt Kennedy, another well-known and respected economist, presented his views in a pamphlet sardonically entitled "Instruct; Employ; Don't Hang Them." Kennedy traced the origin of Irish outrage to the extraordinary powers which the British Parliament had granted to the landowning class of Ireland. He accused the Government of blindness with regard to Ireland and contrasted their severe reaction to violence and agitation there with the solicitude they demonstrated towards the grievances of other peoples under their dominion. Like Scrope, he feared the consequences for the Union should Britain fail to respond to Irish needs. ⁷

The Morning Chronicle, relying once again on Mill's analysis of Irish affairs, concluded that English observers had

grossly exaggerated the incidence of violence in Ireland. "There is crime in Ireland," the paper admitted, "although there is more crime in England. But with humane management of estates, and fair employment practices, agrarian outrage would be reduced to nothing." ⁸ The Chronicle attributed outrage not only to the barbarous practices of the landlords but also to the "brutalizing" influence of the Penal Laws, from which, it argued, the Irish have never completely recovered.

For the Radicals, the really surprising feature of the Irish scene was the fact that, given such conditions, the people remained as tranquil as they did. The Freeman's Journal wondered if, in similar circumstances, the British peasant would have remained so peaceful. ⁹ One Englishman, shocked by the conditions of life in rural Ireland, declared: "The Irish are patience and gentleness, compared with what under half their privations, we should see the populace of Birmingham or Manchester to be. They are worthy of the deepest pity, and rather than blame their turbulence, we should admire their resignation." ¹⁰ The Morning Chronicle warned, however, that the people were not likely to remain so passive for much longer. Unless the causes of oppression were rooted out and the economic conditions of the country improved, the newspaper argued violence would become more prevalent, and Ireland would finally lapse into a state of total barbarism. The country required legislation to restrict the powers

of the landlords, instead of the legislation of new police powers. "There is no possibility," the Morning Chronicle concluded, "that the Irish people can be tranquilized or imbued with attachment to the government of the United Kingdom, by new laws of coercion." 11

Despite the cogent analysis of British economists and the agitation of the radical press, most Englishmen refused to admit the connection between violence and distress in Ireland. Having already minimized the extent of distress in Ireland, they preferred to explain outrage in terms of the proverbial Irish proclivity for violence.

Violence, of course, was one enduring feature of the British image of Ireland. From the days of Spenser and the Elizabethan settlement of Ireland, the aggressive nature of the Celt had been depicted in travel descriptions, popular fiction and drama, and serious studies of Irish affairs. Shortly after the inception of the Union, one English observer argued that this image had become so ingrained as to blind the English people to reality in Ireland. John Milner, whose description of Ireland was published in 1809, believed that "The generality of our countrymen imagine Ireland is a country in which it is not safe either to travel or to reside and that its Catholic population consists of robbers, assassins, and other wretches, dead to every sentiment of moral honesty and humanity." 12

In 1845, almost fifty years after the Act of Union, there was little evidence that the view had changed. Even in 1809, Milner had been reluctant to attribute the prevalent image to simple ignorance. Instead, he blamed centuries of biased reporting by travelers, historians, and later, by journalists. "The prejudice of the nursery," Milner wrote, "has been aided by the misrepresentations and fabrications of news-writers, and other writers....These men frequently publish downright falsehood
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against the Irish...."

Whether by deliberate falsehood or by unconscious misrepresentation, the prejudice of the nursery continued to be supported by a majority of the reports of travelers, the conclusions of historians, and the tirades of journalists. The majority of sketches drawn of Irishmen continued to stress their violent dispositions, ignorant barbarism, and their preference for force over reasoned argument.

In the early years of the Union, the Irishman's violent disposition was treated in a standard comic characterization in popular fiction, drama, and in amusing stories circulated by word of mouth. One such anecdote, related by John Carr in 1806, concerned the tale of an Irishman, suddenly the recipient of a large fortune, who decided to make the Grand Tour of the continent:

After passing through France and Italy, and part of Spain, with scarcely any emotions of delight, he entered a village in the latter country where he saw a mob fighting very desperately, upon which in a moment he sprang out of his travelling carriage, and without once inquiring into the cause

of the battle, or ascertaining which side he ought in justice to espouse, he laid about him with his shilala, and after having had several of his teeth knocked out, and an eye closed, and the bridge of his nose broken, he returned to his carriage, and exclaimed, "By Jasus! it is the only bit of fun I have had since I left Ireland." ¹⁴

Carr's Irishman was essentially the "stage Irishman" who was an essential ingredient in many English comedies from the time of Shakespeare. For centuries, his antics amused English audiences and helped to propagate the stereotype. In Victorian times, this playful ridicule of PADDY found its epitome in the caricatures of Irishmen that filled the pages of Punch.

However, humor was lacking in the more vicious portrayal of the Irish which grew to dominate English perceptions of Ireland. The image darkened in response to the rising incidence of outrage in Ireland.

English visitors to Ireland portrayed the Irish as the most savage, most desperate, and most uncivilized people ever to inhabit the earth. The Irish, one visitor exclaimed, "would rather gain possessions by their blood than by their labour." ¹⁵ "The murders of this country," another wrote, "would disgrace the most gloomy wilds of the most savage tribes that ever roamed in Asia, Africa, or America...." ¹⁶ The British public read of the Irish that "Their very amusements are polemical: fight-

ing is a pastime which they seldom assemble without enjoying." ¹⁷

"When not driven by necessity," they were informed, "they willingly consume whole days in sloth, or as willingly employ them in riot; strange diversity of nature to love indolence and hate quiet--to be reduced to slavery, but not yet to obedience." ¹⁸

Yet another traveler remarked on their "turbulent spirit" which, he was convinced, was "so averse to order and peace" that no prince to legislator their country ever produced was able to ¹⁹ control them.

The image emerging from these travel descriptions was one of a primitive society, bypassed by the civilizing influences of Christianity, whose population, festering in filth and wallowing in indolence, was easily incited into perpetrating the grossest barbarities known to man without the slightest show of remorse.

British politicians of both parties had a very similar impression. With the exception of a few liberals and Radicals, they subscribed to the view that Irish outrage was more a function of the morally depraved state of the people than a response to the intolerable conditions caused by oppression.

The Tory Party, which included most of the "Protestant Ascendancy," was the most vituperative in language and the most Draconic in policy. Even the Peelite, or left wing, of the party had very few kind words to say for the Irish character.

Robert Peel, nicknamed "Orange Peel" by O'Connell, was shocked by the prevalence of violence in Ireland and the unwillingness of the Irish people to help the Government control it. Peel was especially frustrated in his attempts to find witnesses to testify against murderers and assassins. In 1845, Peel wrote James Graham, his Home Secretary:

There seems a general impression in Ireland that nothing will effect this [supply evidence at trials] but a pecuniary motive, that the people are so radically corrupt and sanguinary that there is a sympathy with the Murderer--and that selfishness and the fear of pecuniary [loss?] must supply the motives to give evidence against an Assassin which the natural and intuitive feelings of mankind supply in more favored Countries.²⁰

James Graham also was convinced that the Irish had "established habits of violence and outrage" which had to be crushed by strong measures on the part of the Government. He lamented the moral depravity in Ireland, which, he believed, was unlike the spirit that moved people in any other European country.²¹

Lord Eliot, who served for a while as Chief Secretary for Ireland in Peel's Second Cabinet, thought the "thirst for arms... a ruling passion among so many of the peasantry."²² The Irish peasantry, according to Lord Eliot, preferred violence to law, even when legal means were equally effective in meeting their goals. In 1843, he informed Parliament that it was the opinion both of the Irish constabulary and of the Irish administration that "There is, I regret to say, an unhappy propensity among the Irish peasantry to effect their ends, whatever those ends



HEIGHT OF IMPUDENCE.

Irishman to John Bull.—"SPARE A THIMBLE, YER HONOUR, FOR A POOR IRISH LAD TO BUY A BIT OF ———
A BLUNDERBUS WITH."

be, by intimidation and violence."

The Whigs, who for political reasons often opposed the strong measures proposed by the Tories to restore order to Ireland, nevertheless held a similar view of Irish affairs. Lord John Russell, leader of the Opposition in the early forties, and later Prime Minister, told an audience at Bristol: "You all know, indeed, it has now become a matter of too frequent occurrence for any one to be ignorant of the fact, that in Ireland there prevail crimes among the peasantry...crimes too often of confederacy and combination." Was the cause to be found in the just grievances of the Irish, Russell asked. No, he replied, it lay in the character of the people. "What do we want in that country? With regard to this moral complaint, this perverted sense of what is right and wrong, we want the means to teach the ²⁴ great principles of religion and morality."

Other prominent Whigs agreed with Russell. Greville, Charles Trevelyan, the Earl of Clarendon, and Charles Wood all spoke and wrote of the need for moral revolution in Ireland. Clarendon even referred to the Irish as the "most ferocious ²⁵ people on earth."

The most striking contrast between British attitudes towards violence in Britain and outrage in Ireland was provided by Thomas Babington Macaulay, the Whig politician and historian. In 1832, Macaulay had been one of the major supporters of the

Reform Act. In a famous address to Parliament, which James Mill helped him to prepare, he urged legislators to pass the Reform Bill. It was Macaulay who most forcefully argued that Britain was faced with the choice between reform or revolution. The Government must meet the legitimate political and economic demands of the unenfranchised classes or be faced with increasing violence and revolution that would destroy the social order. Legislation to curb violence, Macaulay reasoned, would only be effective if laws were passed simultaneously to help alleviate the causes for those grievances which prompted people to protest by extra-legal means. Yet, when it came to violence in Ireland and the demands of the Irish people, Macaulay executed a volte
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face.

Irish outrage, according to Macaulay, was largely unrelated to any real grievances on the part of the Irish people. In his History of England from the Accession of James II--perhaps the most widely read history in Victorian England--Macaulay dismissed the thesis that Irish revolutions of the past had been prompted by British oppression. In discussing the Rebellion of 1689, he denied that the insurrection was primarily motivated by political, economic, or religious concerns. The real cause, Macaulay argued, was the Celtic love of violence and anarchy. "The habits of the Celtic peasant were such," he wrote, "that he

made no sacrifice in quitting his potato ground for the camp. He loved excitement and adventure. He feared work more than danger." "Far more seductive bait than his miserable stipend," the famed historian concluded, "was the promise of boundless licence."²⁷ The same analysis, Macaulay argued, applied to the causes for Repeal agitation in Ireland and the prevalence of outrage in the countryside.²⁸

The extent to which the belief in the perverse and violent nature of the Celt became popular dogma in/Britain of the forties is also reflected in the multitude of references to this trait in the leading organs of public opinion. Among the major British newspapers and journals analyzed in this study, only the Morning Chronicle, the Westminster Review, and the Northern Star--spokesmen for Radical opinion--rejected this stereotypic caricature of the Irish peasant. Fraser's Magazine, Blackwood's Magazine, and Punch, The Times, the Illustrated London News, and the several Peelite papers, representatives of a wide range of opinion, all subscribed to the argument that the Celt had a refractory disposition which led him to take up arms against life and property in Ireland.

The Illustrated London News described the Irish as a "wild and enthusiastic people" and deplored their proclivity for violence. The paper admitted, however, that the Government bore partial responsibility for arousing this passion in the

breasts of the Irish. In January 1844, the newspaper declared:

We have prayed at the hands of Governments and agitators alike, a silencing of the quick, varying uncertain trait of the national soul--that wild social turbulence--that undefined impetuosity of action and of thought, which have alternately heated and lacerated Ireland's bosom, until speculation flies from them in terror, and commends gaze upon them with alarm.²⁹

The readers of The Times were fed a far more vicious description of Irishmen. In the thirties, such brutal characterizations often came from the pen of young Benjamin Disraeli, writing under the name of "Runnymede." In 1836, Disraeli exclaimed that the Irish "hate our free and fertile isle. They hate our order, our civilisation, our enterprising industry, our sustained courage, our decorous liberty, our pure religion. This wild, reckless, indolent, uncertain, and superstitious race have no sympathy with the English character."³⁰

The Irish, Disraeli wrote, stood for the very opposite of all the character traits so admired in England. "Their fair ideal of human felicity," he wrote, "is an alternation of damnish broils and coarse idolatry. Their history described an unbroken circle of bigotry and blood....My Lords," he asked in closing, "shall the delegates of these tribes, under the direction of the Roman priesthood, ride roughshod over our country--over England--haughty and still imperial England?" This tirade was a bit strong even for Barnes, the publisher of The Times.

Energetically pressured by Irish politicians and journalists, he felt compelled to urge Disraeli to tone down the tenor of his
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column.

Although Disraeli muffled his scorn of the Irish, other Times writers did not. In the forties, Times leaders continued to assault the Celtic character and voiced the opinion that this was the cause of outrage in that country. In December 1845, the newspaper declared:

The Irish have no feeling for law and order. If someone is killed or injured their sympathies are for the perpetrator of the deed and not the one who suffers. And if the deed should be proved and punished, they howl as if an innocent man had been convicted....

This vicious tendency and the sympathy for murderers and assassins, the Times was convinced, lay deeply rooted in the almost unfathomable nature of the Irish Celt. The Times' editors, while invariably shocked by outrages and barbarities committed by other peoples, could usually discern a method to their madness. In the case of Ireland, however, they concluded that such outbursts were far too frequent and too obviously uninspired by any real grievance to warrant a rational explanation. The Times declared:

An Irishman commits a murder as a Malay runs a-muck. In certain circumstances it is expected of him, and he would be thought a mean and spiritless wretch if he demurred at it. It is only un-

fortunate that these circumstances are so indefinite. The conditions under which a Malay draws his kris for the last rush, like those which dictate self-immolation in Japan, are pretty well known by all persons conversant with the native character, and precautions can sometimes be taken against the catastrophe.³³

"Even in MADRID and VENICE," The Times declared, "the insults to be washed out only by blood were defined with some precision. But it is impossible to catalogue the offenses which amongst Irishmen entail sudden murder or secret assassination."³⁴

"Mr. Punch" was also shocked by the "howls of indignant and disruptive Irishmen." He considered those who raised their voices--or shillelaghs--in protest to be uncouth, as no Englishman would be, and as only Irishmen could be (although the Americans ran a close second). Irish violence, according to Punch, was not a reflection of the real grievances of Irishmen but merely a reflection of their character. Their "chief delight," Mr. Punch observed, "seems to consist in getting into all manner of scrapes, for the mere purpose of displaying their ingenuity by getting out of them again."³⁵ This, Punch claimed, could be observed in every aspect of their behavior. Irish political factions, for example, were simply "natives of Ireland, who are always quarrelling with each other, and everyone else."³⁶ Moral

Force, O'Connell's appeal to English hearts, consisted of 'Brick-bats, fruit in an advanced stage of decomposition, blazing tar-barrels, and shillelaghs," and Irish tribunals were composed of "accuser and accused--placed twelve paces apart to prevent accidents--a couple of judges and a surgeon." 37

Although playful in its satiric treatment of the fiery-tempered Celt, Punch vented its horror and condemnation of those Irishmen who were responsible for perpetrating agrarian outrage. In the middle forties, in response to the growing incidence of agrarian violence in Ireland, the magazine took the familiar stereotype and scraped it bare of its more endearing features. What emerged was the image of the Irish villain, whose tempestuous nature was no longer treated as a mildly amusing characteristic. 38 The picture grew so vivid that before the end of the decade, many readers of Punch must have learned that "exaggeration," "lunacy," and "violence"--a vicious, virulent kind of violence unlike the easy friendly brawls of earlier years--were synonymous with "Irish." The image grew increasingly menacing with each outbreak of Irish protest and inspired renewed conviction in Punch readers from the memories of past outrages. "High respectability" in Ireland, the journal concluded, "consists in being above the law, and out of sight of good morals." 39 As a result, Punch supported legislation aimed at crushing those responsible for outrage in Ireland.

It is interesting to note, however, that while Punch be-

came more virulent in its invective against barbaric peasants, disruptive agitators, and violent Irishmen, in general, the lurking suspicion remained that perhaps martial law and similar measures were not the most effective means of forcing a moral revolution in Ireland. In early 1846, Punch wondered whether concession might be more successful than force in attaining the pacification of Ireland. The suggestion appeared in a satirical poem entitled The Nation We Cannot Subdue.

We beat HYDER ALI, we conquer'd TIPOO,
We vanquished NAPOLEON at famed Waterloo;
We defeated the Burmans, the Afghans we quell'd,
And JOHN CHINAMAN into submission compell'd.

....

All opponents beside to Britannia have knelt,
But we cannot control the refractory Celt.
Still by turbulent Ireland our power is defied--
Oh that spoke in our wheel--oh that thorn in our side!

If to tame her we've failed, it has certainly not
Been for want of bayonet, or powder or shot.
May it not then be likely our course has been wrong,
In not 'drawing it mild' stead of 'coming it strong'?⁴⁰

Mr. Punch wondered whether persuasion might not have been a more effective course than force, kindness more productive than anger, and food more conducive to peace than bayonets. All other courses have failed, the journal reasoned, why not give it a try?

Then hurrah! for the Sassenach, with PUNCH for their chief--
Charge Potatoes and buttermilk! Charge bread and beef!
And charge absentee landlords--a thumping good tax,
And soon we shall have 'Bellum' converted to 'Pax'.

And then PADDY'S shillelagh shall fall from his hand,
And contentment and quiet shall reign in the land;
And that shameful reproach shall no more be true--
'There's one obstinate nation we cannot subdue.'⁴¹

Mr. Punch's second thoughts led him to take a very ambivalent attitude towards Ireland. While he wavered between 'drawing it mild' and 'coming down strong,' a majority of his English brothers perceived coercion to be the only viable alternative for the British Government to follow.

Blackwood's Magazine, for example, refused to admit to any legitimate reason for agitation in Ireland. It considered the Irish peasants "dupes" who were deluded by ruffians and agitators who prospered on Irish soil more heartily than potatoes. The journal urged the "necessity of adopting coercive measures towards Ireland, in mercy of the peasantry themselves."⁴² In May 1846,

Blackwood's Magazine exclaimed:

There is a remedy for the ills of Ireland, and a simple and efficacious remedy it will be found to be, if adopted. Enforce obedience to the laws, establish security of life and property, no matter at what sacrifice or by what means. The more severe and uncompromising the measure by which those objects shall be sought to be effected, the more prompt will be the success, and the more merciful the operation.⁴³

The Times, Fraser's Magazine, many parliamentarians, and

most of the British public were in full accord with this idea. In England, outrage had been met principally by legislation designed to alleviate the causes of distress. In Ireland, the British public clamoured for measures to repress the symptom, which they mistook for the cause.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 7

1. Woodward, op. cit., pp. 19-21.
2. Ibid., passim; see also Halévy, op. cit., passim.
3. Lewis, op. cit., p. 99.
4. Freeman's Journal, Dec. 6, 1845.
5. Ibid.
6. George Poulett Scrope, How Is Ireland to Be Governed? (London: Ridgway and Son, 1834), pp. 20-21.
7. Kennedy, op. cit., pp. 20-21. Scrope wrote: "It is impossible ... to have any doubt as to the real cause of the insurrectionary spirit and agrarian outrages of the Irish peasantry. They are the struggle of an oppressed and starving people for existence! They are the rude efforts at obtaining a sort of savage self-established justice They are the natural and necessary results of a state of the law which allowed the landowners of a country at one time to encourage an excessive growth of population on their estates, and at another, when the caprice seizes them, to dispossess all this population, and turn them out on the highways, without food and shelter."
8. Morning Chronicle, Dec. 12, 1845, p. 5.
9. Freeman's Journal, Jan. 17, 1846, p. 3: "In all history there is no instance of a population so tranquil amid sufferings so constant and intense. Practice the same persecution on the peasantry of England, and who for a single day would pledge himself for the order of its most exemplary district?"
10. Noel, op. cit., p. 356.

11. Morning Chronicle, Oct. 1, 1845, p. 17.
12. Milner, op. cit., pp. 73-74.
13. Ibid., p. 74.
14. John Carr, The Stranger in Ireland: Or, A Tour in the Southern and Western Parts of That Country in the Year 1805 (Philadelphia: T. & G. Palmer, 1806), p. 151.
15. John Barrow, A Tour Round Ireland (London: John Murray, 1836), p. 35.
16. Johnson, op. cit., p. 144.
17. Croker, op. cit., pp. 33-34.
18. Ibid.
19. Walford, op. cit., p. 44.
20. Robert Peel to James Graham, Dec. 3, 1845, Peel MSS, 40452.
21. Hansard's, LXIX (1843), cols. 1175-86.
22. Ibid., col. 1001.
23. Ibid.
24. Quoted in J. C. Colquhoun, Ireland; Popery and Priestcraft the Cause of Her Misery and Crime (Glasgow: William Collins, 1836), p. 4.
25. Maxwell (ed.), op. cit., I, 283.
26. See Thomas Babington Macaulay, The History of England from the Accession of James II (5 vols.; Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., n.d.), passim; and his speeches before Parliament, which were widely quoted by adherents of the Union. Several were reprinted. See, for example, Repeal of the Union with Ireland: A Speech Delivered in the House of Commons (Dublin: Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, 1836).

27. Macaulay, The History of England, op. cit., III, 146.
28. Ibid., p. 147.
29. Illustrated London News, Jan. 13, 1844, p. 17.
30. Benjamin Disraeli in The Times, Letter XVI, Apr. 18, 1836.
31. Ibid.; Robert Blake, Disraeli (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1966), p. 132.
32. The Times, Dec. 2, 1845, p. 4.
33. Ibid., Oct. 13, 1846, p. 4.
34. Ibid.
35. Punch, I (1841), 153.
36. Ibid., XIV (1849), 214.
37. Ibid., XIV (1849), 214; II (1842), 83.
38. Ibid., I-XIII (1841-47), passim.
39. Ibid., XIV (1849), 54.
40. Ibid., X (1846), 174.
41. Ibid.
42. Blackwood's Magazine, LIX (May 1846), 527.
43. Ibid., p. 603.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Daniel O'Connell 'd no mischief to brew
So he started Repeal just for something to do.
And the watch-word like mad through Hibernia ran;
"Och! the rent is a mighty fine income," says Dan.

Punch

"The Liberator" was unquestionably the most controversial political figure of his day. His every word and deed had opposite meanings on the two shores of the Irish Sea. If Irish Catholics hailed him as their saviour, the British public denounced him as the Anti-Christ. While Irish mothers implored Dan to kiss or bless their children, British mothers told theirs to finish their porridge lest "Dan the ogre" snatch them away while they slept. His very name became a household word (with predictable associations) in both Ireland and England.

British organs of public opinion, the broadside and pamphlet literature, and the statements of leading political figures abounded in virulent invective against O'Connell. The fury of these attacks rose in pitch in proportion to the success of the Repeal movement in Ireland. In the middle forties, when O'Connell waged an all-out campaign for Repeal, and Robert Peel, the Prime Minister, struggled to preserve the Union, the fury of charge and counter-charge, of attack and counter-attack, rose to a feverish pitch. Contemporary wags quipped that the format of the British press would soon have to be expanded if

any other news was to be reported.

To many educated Englishmen O'Connell represented, in the words of one frightened Unionist, "the heartless despotism of a mob."¹ The most extreme view pictured him as a "criminal with a brain of fire, and a heart boiling like a cauldron, with angry and unhallowed passions."² He was considered the "arch-agitator" and the "arch-enemy" of the British nation.

Blackwood's Magazine, the spokesman for this segment of opinion, declared:

He is indeed a reign of terror--or moral terror, if you will--but of terror quite as effectual, and more powerful than that of the guillotine; a terror which pervades all classes of society, which is "exercised by persons unseen, and for causes unknown"...

O'Connell was "brutal" and "barbaric," "unscrupulous and self-seeking," "demoniacal and heartless," and dedicated to a revolution which, if successful, would destroy the liberties of Ireland as well as those of England. He was, according to Blackwood's, the agent of dark forces toiling in phalanx with the forces of evil working for the destruction of the very civilization of which Britain was the foremost representative.⁴

A more common image of O'Connell was subscribed to by those who did not see the devil lurking behind every politician with



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whom they disagreed. Like Blackwood's, they considered him self-seeking and unscrupulous, but far from a madman. Rather, they felt that he was a coldly calculating and rational individual, intent on increasing his own power and wealth at the expense of both the Irish people and the British Government. The laissez-faire economist, Nassau Senior, like many of his contemporaries, adhered to this view. Senior did not believe that O'Connell was sincerely interested in achieving Repeal. "We do not reckon Mr. O'Connell among the sincere Repealers," he wrote. "He knows too much to believe that Repeal can be obtained by force; and he has too much to lose to desire a sanguinary contest...." But though he could not be a sincere Repealer, Senior lamented, "unfortunately for himself and his country, all his angry and all his selfish passions appear to drive him to manifest the same feelings."⁵

If, as Senior and others believed, O'Connell was too smart to consider Repeal a practical goal, and too knowledgeable to believe revolution feasible, his goal, they concluded, must be to manipulate the movement in support of his personal ambitions. As a result, proponents of this view argued that the Government would gain nothing by meeting most of the demands voiced by Repealers because they would simply invent new ones in order to continue their agitation. The Reverend James

Page thus warned British politicians: "Grant these men what they ask from time to time, and still they will find some new grievances, so long as they can derive a much better income from agitation than they could possibly earn in an honest way."⁶

The tempestuous buffoonery of Irish politics, the oratory and display associated with Repeal, and the particularly colorful but enigmatic personality of O'Connell provided the ammunition for a third image of the Liberator: that of the clown and mountebank, clever but not astute, powerful but ludicrous, and more dedicated to extravagance, display, and nuisance than to the aggrandizement of power. Punch, as might be expected, was a leading proponent of this view. The Liberator and his coterie of followers were subjected to incessant scathing satire in its columns.

In 1843, Punch unveiled the "O'Connell Statue," a monumental work of art to be erected in Dublin by his faithful supporters. In a sketch of the statue, O'Connell was depicted astride three men dressed in the tattered remnants of clothes. One held a harp while another was blindfolded by a rag upon which the word "Repeal" was inscribed. The dedication read: "...To Daniel O'Connell, who has identified the interests of his countrymen with his own, by endeavouring to make his own whatever belongs to them."⁷ Mr. Punch was also convinced that Repeal was merely O'Connell's means of milking the poor of Ireland and lining his pockets at their expense.

On another occasion Punch reported that an American citizen of Irish descent had bequeathed O'Connell five hundred dollars. The journal asked: "Is there no way to make him forego repeal, bound as he is to it by five hundred dollars? Yes; one way there is. Offer him SIX!"⁸ However, Mr. Punch did agree with the Irish that O'Connell was a fair representative of Hibernia. "For seeing the great Liberator," the journal quipped,⁹ "the imagination immediately conjures up a lyre."

Punch reserved its most merciless ridicule for O'Connell's oratory. His speeches, the journal insisted, were nothing more than stories invented to aid him in his attempt to fleece the Irish peasantry. Punch saw little difference between the colorful and imaginative tales for which Erin's inhabitants were noted and the oratory of Repealers. Both consisted of pure blarney. In 1847, the magazine reported that a cargo of pigs was announced last week at Liverpool. "We are positive they emigrated," Punch informed its readers. "We do not wonder at it; it is enough to make every Irish pig blush for his country when it hears such rabid nonsense applauded as eloquence." Perhaps, Punch reasoned, "the pigs emigrated from a feeling of envy, as they found it hopeless to compete with Young Ireland in the prodigious amount of gammon."¹⁰

The Irish press was another butt of Mr. Punch's wit. The organs of Repeal, he insisted, were "barrel organs"; an insane asylum would make a good home for such newspapers. For example,

the United Irishmen (the most rabidly nationalist paper of the Irish left) was dismissed as a libellous rag managed by lunatics. "Each number of the paper," Punch suggested, "might have stamped on it: 'Entered at the Asylum for Idiots' as a voucher for its correctness. We have no doubt that all the articles
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would be perfectly to the mark."

Like Punch, The Times dismissed Repeal as the handiwork of greedy self-serving agitators. A leader of March 1843 declared that O'Connell's patriotism was altogether false and only "shows the miserable deceit of his pretended love and zeal for the people of Ireland....His glorious zeal for Ireland has not induced Mr. O'Connell to give up one tittle of his own
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selfish visionary political agitation." Each success of Repeal was analyzed in terms of how it enriched O'Connell because, the newspaper reasoned, the hoax of Repeal was so obvious that Repealers must either be very deluded people or self-serving devils.

John Walter II, the owner of The Times, loathed O'Connell,
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his program, and his religion. His paper became the courier of the most vindictive and acrimonious denunciations of the Liberator. He was represented as "scum condensed of Irish bog," a man "whose principles we hold in abhorrence, as those of the worst being in human form that ever disgraced the floor of an
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English Senate." The Times hounded O'Connell until the day

of his death. There can be little doubt, one historian has concluded, that its opposition to him helped sap the strength of the Whigs in the 1830's and robbed O'Connell of any sympathy he might have had from informed English opinion.

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O'Connell was hated by the governing classes in Britain in proportion to his sway over millions of Catholic Irishmen. His policies and popular backing confirmed their prejudices, offended their imperial instincts, and slighted their amour propre. They affected shock over his violent language and bitter invective (although they were willing to overlook it in Brougham, Stanley, and Lyndhurst) and, in short, deplored everything about him, from his morals to his manners. Perhaps his most unforgivable sin in their eyes was his dependence upon the mass of the Irish people for political funds. Reared in an age when politics was still the preserve of the rich and leisured classes, the Tory squires and Whig notables resented the intrusion of this raucous outsider who played "their game" so effectively. They denounced him as a mendicant agitator, referred to him among themselves as "The Big Beggerman," and refused to have anything to do with him outside of Parliament.

This ostracism of O'Connell was nearly universal in the haut monde of London, where--almost alone among major political figures--he was consistently blackballed. Twice, leading Whigs and Tories tried to obtain O'Connell's expulsion

from Brook's, a club which the political elite favored. On both occasions the club's managers refused to admit the doctrine that they were responsible for the private or political opinions of its members. Their second refusal cost them the membership of Stanley, Graham, and Sir Francis Burdett.¹⁶

The Duke of Wellington's coterie of friends was equally outraged with O'Connell. They were shocked at his unusual presence at Lansdowne House in 1835. Lady Salisbury later commented that it was "the first time I have heard of him in a gentleman's house," whereupon Melbourne remarked, "Why, you know, after one has had O'Connell, one may have anybody!"¹⁷

Within Parliament, the Tories attacked Repeal as a movement designed to make O'Connell rich at the expense of the poor peasantry. In 1838, one Tory declared, amid cheers from the benches:

He would refer the House to one who had made money in Ireland not as the inculcation of Christian truth, but as the minister of sedition. He could refer them to one whose exertions in that character had done more to feed the gibbet and to fill the convict ship than all the other causes that were active in that unhappy country. Nor were such exertions gratuitous; for the penury of the poor, who had been dupes of his delusions, was taxed to remunerate his services, and the tribute, as it was called, had been in many cases extorted under the threat of ecclesiastical anathemas in Ireland.¹⁸

Robert Peel, the Duke of Wellington, James Graham, and Lord Heytesbury, and most other Tory leaders despised the Liberator. They were infuriated over the thought that Repeal

lined O'Connell's pockets, but they were even more enraged by their belief that O'Connell could put an end to agrarian outrage in Ireland if he wanted to, but manipulated it instead to increase his fortune. They were appalled at the willingness of the Whigs to ally themselves with such a man. After the Litchfield Compact between O'Connell and the Whigs, old Lord Wellesley wrote Peel that the Irish Government will now consist of "Folly and Vanity mutually offering incense to each other, & kneeling together in joint adoration at the bloody shrine of
19
O'Connell."

Robert Peel bore a special animosity towards O'Connell, dating back to the early years of the century, when he served as Undersecretary for Ireland. By the 1830's, the feud between the two men had reached such proportions that they agreed to settle it by a duel. The affair was prevented at the last minute, after word had leaked out, and the Government forbade Peel
20
to endanger his life. The conflict between the British Government and Repealers found a microcosmic representation in the conflict between these two strong-willed men.

The Peelite wing of the party in fact represented the more liberal and progressive faction. The other wing, composed of narrow-minded, reactionary Tory squires, was even more angered by O'Connell. A major part of this faction consisted of Irish landlords, who were still embittered over the grant of Emancipation in 1829 and feared the economic and political challenge posed by Repeal. They were convinced that any concessions

to O'Connell would prove catastrophic to the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland, of which they were the foremost representatives. As a result, they were prepared to go to any extreme to prevent the realization of O'Connell's alleged goal.

The views of this group were accurately represented by the young Benjamin Disraeli, who curried their favor in the occasional articles he penned for The Times. In Letter VIII of the "Runnymede Letters," Disraeli described O'Connell as "a systematic liar and a beggarly cheat, a swindler and a poltroon.... His public life and private life are equally profligate; he has committed every crime that does not require ²¹ courage." The Tory squires were delighted. O'Connell, on the other hand, resented the libel and made up his mind to commit a crime that did require courage. He challenged Disraeli to a duel.

Unlike both Tory factions, the Whigs had, at first, viewed O'Connell with a more open mind. They supported Catholic Emancipation in 1828-29 and entered into an alliance with O'Connell ²² from 1835 to 1840. However, when O'Connell refused to be satisfied with the meager reform advanced by the Whigs, they, too, came to believe that he was a political mercenary who agitated only to advance his own personal fortune. In 1837, Charles Greville described O'Connell as "all moderation." His power, Greville wrote, was cautiously applied in the hope of realizing reform. However, in 1840, O'Connell, dissatisfied with the Whig Alliance, returned to Repeal, and then Greville sang a different tune. He described the Liberator as a "moral deformity,"

although he remained convinced he had no wish to provoke revo-
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lution in Ireland.

Lord Clarendon evidenced a similar change of attitude. In, the forties, he wrote a friend: "If he [O'Connell] had ceased agitating when emancipation was carried, he would have been as great a man in his way as Washington; but he continued it for purposes most mischievous as regards the people and most selfish as regards himself. His whole object was money and power; the latter in order to make it subservient to the former." 24

Leading Whigs were so convinced that O'Connell was a political mercenary that no disclaimers by the Liberator could convince them of the contrary. In December 1839, after the Whigs (with O'Connell's help) came to power, the new administration tried to settle with him. The Marquess of Anglesey, an influential Whig, was sent to London to speak to him. Anglesey was to offer the Mastership of the Irish Rolls to O'Connell and was authorized to offer him a Chief Justiceship in Calcutta, if O'Connell refused the other offer. O'Connell indignantly refused both and told Anglesey, in no uncertain terms, that he could not be bought. Anglesey refused to believe that this was his true motive and concluded only that he was holding out for a higher offer. He wrote Melbourne, the Prime Minister, that O'Connell "is not to be had. He is flying at higher game than a judgeship, and he is secure of a better

income from the deluded people than any Government can venture
to give any Person whatever." 25

It is not surprising, therefore, that the British people would not accept at face value O'Connell's claim that Repeal was a legitimate political force aspiring to obtain justice and good government for the Irish people. The English saw Repeal as a delusion, a hoax foisted on the Irish people in order to enrich mendicant agitators. They agreed with Nassau Senior when he exclaimed that Repeal was "the most mischievous delusion that ever infected the Irish nation!... It agitates for the sake of agitation; and selects for its avowed object an unattainable end, because it is unattainable--because its mischief cannot be tested by experience, or its stimulus
26
deadened by possession."

The only real grievance Repeal articulated, The Times claimed, was O'Connell's frustration at the continuing existence of the British nation. Its only real effect was to alienate unsuspecting and ignorant Irishmen from the British fold. "We really expect soon to be told," asserted The Times, "that it is a grievance and an insult to Ireland even to look at an Irishman, or to talk of him, or to walk with him, or to do him a service. These gentlemen are like the querulous old man in
27
the fable--do what you will you can't please them."

Edward Plunkett, a Protestant landowner, also spoke for a majority of the British people when he exclaimed that

"People see that Repeal is entirely an invention of Mr. O'Connell, the mere creature of his breath. Brought into existence by his will in 1830, it was quietly interred for his convenience in 1835, and revived by his fiat in 1840. It is not founded on any real grievance...." There were no real grievances in Ireland caused by British misrule, Plunkett concluded, and, therefore, "the Irish people ought to feel not only content, but grateful for the situation they were placed in...."²⁸

The majority of the British people were content to see Repeal motivated by the pecuniary greed of its leaders. A vociferous minority saw in it something far more threatening. Those who tended to compare O'Connell to the devil saw the long arm of Rome behind his fiendish machinations. This belief was predominant among Irish Tories and, to a lesser extent, among lower middle class English Protestants. Proponents of this view claimed that "Repeal is just a discreet word for Romish ascendancy, and Protestant extermination." One Orangeman exclaimed that "So far from their being a cessation of Romish aggression, or desire or supremacy, it is more marked, decided, and uncompromising than at any former period in the history of the country."²⁹

Repeal was far from being a Catholic plot, even though it was supported by a majority of the Catholic clergy. In fact, the hierarchy, with few exceptions, feared Repeal more

than they feared the Protestant Ascendancy. The Bishops opposed its democratic structure and suspected O'Connell of harboring revolutionary designs. They perceived Repeal both as a threat to the social order and to the precarious position of the church.

The Papacy was equally opposed to Repeal. At the height of the Repeal agitation, Rome negotiated with Robert Peel and appeared willing to condemn the Repeal movement in return for some concessions to the Church by the Government! Nevertheless, Repeal was an outgrowth of the Catholic Association and relied heavily upon Catholic support. In addition, Repealers were in favor of disestablishing the Church of Ireland-- an emotionally charged issue which Tory landlords, who were more afraid of the political and economic thrust of Repeal, could play upon to mobilize popular support in Britain for their position.

The Marquess of Westmeath, a bulwark of the Ascendancy, characterized Irish priests as "restless and intriguing... men whose conduct at all times proved they were inimical to civil liberty." "The history of all times in which popery existed," he told his fellow Lords, "fully bore him out in attributing to them those qualities." The Earl of Winchelsea concurred. "The whole mass of the Roman Catholic population of Ireland, and nearly the whole hierarchy of that country,"

he contended, "united with the avowed object of the destruction
of the Church...." ³³ The Earl of Roden, the greatest personifica-
tion of the Ascendancy, was also the most vociferous in his con-
demnation of Repeal and the Catholic clergy. He said that
"It had been openly and distinctly stated, that the destruc-
tion of the Protestant religion was one of the objects of Re-
pealers." ³⁴ The Earl urged the people of England to pressure
the Government to take effective action to crush Repeal and
save the Protestant religion.

Most Englishmen placed greater credence in the view that
Repeal was merely O'Connell's personal plot, supported by the
lesser clergy, but as inimical to the interests of the Church
as it was to the interests of the Irish people. Blackwood's
Magazine was the only major British journal to subscribe to
the argument advanced by the Irish Tories. Although in the
minority, Blackwood's more than compensated for this by the
vehemence with which it essayed to expose the Papist plot.

"The Irish people," Blackwood's claimed, "have been so
trained by the agitators in the art of deception, that it is
almost impossible for those who have not an accurate and perfect
knowledge of their objects, and their practices, to fathom their
intentions, or to detect their impositions." ³⁵ The author of
this article, however, had "perfect knowledge" of Irish affairs

and saw with ease behind the facade erected by the Repealers. Repeal was a Papist plot; it was "Rampant mendicancy...its mouth full of grievances, and its bag full of priest pence." The magazine warned its readers that "Ireland and Rome are as powerful objects of anxiety as in the days of Pius and Elizabeth and Protestantism is forced to be as vigilant as in the days when...the Long Parliament drove the bishops out of the Pale of the Constitution." ³⁶ Living proof of this, the magazine claimed in 1847, was to be found in the behavior of the Repealers in Parliament. "Thirty-seven Irish members are completely in the hands of the priests, and this is a political power which Lord John Russell's cabinet has not the courage or strength to defy." ³⁷ Their dark and evil mission would be fulfilled, Blackwood's warned, unless the Repeal movement was destroyed, and the prerogatives of the Protestant Church zealously guarded as in the days of old.

If poverty, violence, and the generally depressed state of Ireland were, as the British argued, caused by moral deficiencies in the Irish character and not by British misrule, the Government and people could hardly admit to the legitimacy of the Repeal Movement. The goal of Repeal was dismissed as impractical, the means through which it was advanced were denounced as self-defeating, and the arguments of its proponents were derided as sheer casuistry. Yet, the stubborn fact re-

mained that the Repeal movement prospered and gathered additional strength every year. The masses of Ireland advanced the cause with their voices, their money and--the British feared--their shillelaghs. If Repeal was really the plot of O'Connell or of Rome, why did the Irish people enthusiastically hale it as their greatest hope of salvation? If the grievances Repeal articulated were, in fact, imaginary, and the proposed solution absurd, why did the masses flock to Repeal meetings, contribute funds they could ill afford, and deliver their votes to Repeal candidates at the polls?

The explanation advanced to explain this phenomenon made liberal use of the panoply of characteristics contained in the stereotypic image of Irishmen. The Irish peasant, the British asserted, was duped by Repealers into supporting a movement detrimental to his own interests or, failing that, he was coerced by them into supporting it against his own better judgment.

Irish Tories worked hard to create this impression among the British people. Like plantation owners in the American South, who claimed they understood the Black man's needs, Irish landlords argued that they alone were interested in the peasant's welfare and capable of acting on his behalf. The Irish peasantry, they claimed, must be protected from the vicious agitators who sought to use them for selfish ends. One Irish Tory told the House of Commons:

He believed the mass of the Irish people who clamoured for repeal know not what they asked for. The Russian mob once clamoured for the Constitution, and when asked what it meant, said the Constitution was the wife of Constantine. The Russian peasants were philosophers to the Irish....³⁸

The Marquess of Westmeath concurred. The Irish landlord, he argued, was the natural protector of the peasant. He alone understood his needs, his frustrations, and his ambitions. Parliament, he said, had to continue to uphold the proprietor's position, so that the Repealers could be prevented from corrupting the peasantry.³⁹

Frederick Shaw, an Irish Whig, advanced the same argument. "As to Repeal of the union," he told the House, "it was a mere delusion. In Ireland no one was duped by it, except the unfortunate beings who were collected by masses in its name." It was only a pretext for gathering a potentially violent mob together. If Repeal should ever come to pass, Shaw insisted, the Irish would "be released from all the obligations of civilised society."⁴⁰ The Times, it is interesting to note, quoted parts of Shaw's speech in support of its own similar position on Repeal.⁴¹

The Irish love of display and extravagance were employed to explain the charismatic appeal of O'Connell and the success of his "monster meetings." O'Connell, it was argued, played upon their love of fiery oratory and appealed to their romantic

natures and national vanity. A pamphleteer wrote: "The cry for Repeal of the Union became the compendious expression of the collective grievances and wants of the people, and one could hardly have been selected more catching to Irish ears. It first of all flattered the national vanity and fed that taste for romance and mystification which every one knows is inherent in the Irish peasantry...."⁴² It was this appeal, more than anything else, Irish Protestants argued, that seduced the peasants, who cared more for display and passionate expression than for reasoned argument. Repeal, a Scottish Reverend wrote, was merely an amusement.

Yes, as great a boon as emancipation was, and no sooner granted than a new puppet is up for the amusement and deception of the spectators, and the no small advantage to the showmen. The fact is, that the Irish people care as little about these matters, as we can conceive. I know that they may be congregated at an anti-tithe meeting, to denounce that "incubus", the established church, the greater part of them, not knowing wherefore they are called together....Irish people! poor creatures, knowing them as I do, it is quite amusing to hear them thus dignified by being supposed to take an interest in the stormy discussions in the House of Commons.⁴³

The Irish peasant, the Marquess of Westmeath contended, had taken no interest in political matters until he was exposed to them by Repealers. Even now, the Lord asserted, he was really happy in his condition and did not realize that his welfare was endangered by his agitation for Repeal.

PUNCH'S PENCILINGS.—N^o. LXI.



THE "REPEAL FARCE;"
OR, MOTHER GOOSE AND THE GOLDEN EGGS.

PUNCH 1843

In 1846, the Marquess told the House of Lords:

As to the assertions...of extreme discontent of the Irish with the Imperial Government, he denies its existence. The people of Ireland had in their hearts no such feeling. The Repeal agitation and other agitation which had been going on for a length of time, had done all that industry and perseverance and talent could do to alienate the feelings of the Irish people from this country.⁴⁴

As an Irish representative peer, the Marquess felt that it was his duty to assert that the Irish people were not so discontented at heart. There was a press manufactured in that country, he insisted, for the purpose of sedition. "It was maintained by large sums of money, and circulated gratis, and it lost no opportunity of exasperating the people against the Saxon; but the heart of the Irish people," he was convinced,⁴⁵ "was sound...."

The English press swallowed most of the Anglo-Irish argument. While the leading journals and newspapers still continued to rebuke the policies of the landlords, they agreed that the success of Repeal stemmed from that ignorance and inexperience which made the peasantry susceptible to the rantings of the agitators. Blackwood's Magazine, for example, declared in an editorial in 1843:

The rural population of Ireland...has been manoeuvred and exhibited merely as a threatening show to England; but assuredly, on that same day when the Irish peasants, either from their own sagacity, or from newspapers, discover that they have been used as a property by Mr. O'Connell for purposes in which their own interest is hard to be deciphered, in-

difference and torpor will succeed.

Blackwood's claimed that the Irish people, thanks to the munificence of Great Britain, were already receiving more and better education and were beginning to "brood" about Repeal. Soon, the magazine insisted, they would desert the cause en masse.

Punch also believed that the strength of Repeal rested upon the ignorance and naivete of the native Irish. In the editor's opinion, O'Connell's ability to deceive the peasantry and take advantage of his innocence was the basis of his dominion. "Mr. O'Connell knows too well," Punch claimed, "it is only by keeping an Irishman's head in ignorance of what his hand and heart are led to do, that, when he sends round the hat, he can make sure of his shilling."

Punch lamented the fact that the Liberator duped innocent children as well as adults. The perverse logic in which he had succeeded in training the Irish people was well illustrated in an apocryphal story the journal related about a six-year-old lad and his contribution to Repeal. Upon offering his Repeal rent, young Tim Doolan was overheard to say to the Repeal Warden: "Here's sixpence an English gentleman gav'd me for holding his horse in Phaynix [Phoenix Park, Dublin]. Say it's from an inimy of the Saxon." Ignorant of his true benefactor, Punch reasoned, young Tim Doolan and other Irish-

men as well, were biting the hand that fed them. Such tales brought forth an expression of pity from Punch for the "good natured simple Paddies, who roar at all your [O'Connell's] jokes, hurray at all your lies, come leagues upon leagues to attend your show, and have paid their money so often."⁵⁰

Even Englishmen who opposed British policy in Ireland were often unable to see Repeal as a legitimate response to Irish grievances. The young Gladstone admitted that he was prejudiced against O'Connell and Repeal, and many liberals and Radicals were also more opposed to Repeal than they were⁵¹ to the continued rule of the Ascendancy.

Henry Inglis, for example, whose ringing condemnations of Irish landlords have already been quoted, could not believe that Repeal would serve Irish interests. He, too, found its success in the ignorance of the Irish people. "I am not at all surprised," he wrote, "that a people suffering all the extremities of human privation should catch at straws; and that Mr. O'Connell should find it an easy matter to raise a cry in favor of anything which he asserts to be for the benefit of the people."⁵² The Irish, Inglis concluded, should therefore be pitied, not despised. "So that on no ground are the aristocracy justified in visiting upon the people the errors which⁵³ have originated in ignorance,--or delusion."

The Times, most representative of middle-class English

opinion, was in the forefront of the anti-Repeal clamor. Repeal, it claimed, was contradictory to the interests of both the English and the Irish people. O'Connell was only able to promote it by reason of the childlike nature of the Irish people and his clever manipulation of that nature to serve his own ends. In 1843 the newspaper declared:

A people of acute sensibilities and lively passions, more quick in feeling wrongs than rational in explaining or temperate in addressing them--as easily roused into outrage by supposed oppression as subdued into docility by felicitous kindness--equally susceptible of gratitude for hypocritical sympathy as of indignation at unintentional or imaginary injury--no less impetuous in repaying the one than ardent in avenging the other--such is the people whose virtues and whose vices...O'Connell has so fiendishly exploited. ⁵⁴

Repeal was like grasping at straws, The Times affirmed. Yet, the Irish people fell for O'Connell's lies and gave their support to his ambition. All that was to be heard in Ireland, The Times informed its readers in June 1843, is a "vague indefinite notion of a wide-spread, loud-tongued, but not very accountable discontent....All is inconsistency, contradiction, passion, and exaggeration." ⁵⁵ The only hope for Ireland, it concluded, was that the wiser men of Ireland might not be swayed by agitators or duped like the simple, ignorant peasants into "a suicidal divorce" with England. ⁵⁶

The British people were informed that those Irishmen who were not duped by Repeal were coerced into line by threat

of assassination. Irish elections in which Repeal candidates ran for office, for example, were not really elections but shows of force. The Times argued that the ballot box was not a true sign of the feelings of the people because they were denied a free choice. Coerced by Repealers and frightened by priests, it said, the poor peasantry was forced to vote for Repeal candidates. The newspaper described such an election in Athlone in 1843:

All the arts of intimidation peculiar to Irish elections are in full force; the mobs are harangued by lay and clerical agitators, who have taken advantage of the Sunday for the purpose of drilling and organizing their forces by Monday morning, when the polling will commence.⁵⁷

Such an army, The Times asserted, was used to round up the local peasantry and bring them to the polls. It was also employed to retaliate against those who cast their ballots for the opposition.

Punch found parodies of Irish elections to be a perennial favorite among its subscribers. The satires it published of Irish electoral contests conveyed the impression that dueling pistols, rotten eggs, and money with which to make bribes were the only qualifications required by Irish candidates. The election, Punch declared, was decided by bullets rather than ballots.⁵⁸

A feature which seemed far more sinister to the British than the violence of Irish candidates was the machinations of the Papist clergy in their favor. Many Englishmen believed

that the strength of Repeal candidates really derived from the power of the priests.

The clergy, according to this view, was composed of ignorant, hate-filled, country-reared peasants who manipulated the pious peasantry in support of their political ambitions.

Reverend Page informed the devout people of Scotland that "the priests are much more intent on instructing them [the peasantry] in political affairs, and in proving that they are badly governed and oppressed and in urging them to rise up against the people know not what, than in teaching them the will of God...."⁵⁹

The Times took an equally dim view of the priesthood. In 1844, it printed a letter from an Irish Protestant whose views they accorded complete sympathy. The Irish people, according to this aroused Protestant, were not naturally vicious but were prevented from being "quiet, peaceful and grateful" by the seditious of Popery and, therefore, unwittingly became the "tools of its domineering priesthood."⁶⁰

The priests, according to Punch, The Times, Blackwood's, and Fraser's Magazine, used their hold over the peasantry to secure the election of Repealers. The superstitious Celt believed that the clergy held the keys to Heaven and Hell and, fearing an afterlife of roasting in eternal fire and brimstone, he followed the voting instructions of the priests.

Punch and The Times took an exceptionally enlightened view of English Catholics but heaped abuse on the Irish priesthood. Punch even compared Irish Catholicism to the superstitious cults espoused by witch doctors in Africa and lamented this similarity in its "Ode on the Irish Elections."

How's the nose by which you're led,
Like a stupid quadruped?

Six-foot PADDY, are you bigger--
You, whom cozening friars dish--
Mentally, than poorest nigger
Groveling before fetish?

You to Sambo I compare
Under superstition's rule
Prostrate like an abject fool.

Simpleton! to think his "rivrance"
Holds the keys as he pretends
And believe that your deliverance
On his wicked will depends
When, with curses at your throat
He exclaims "Your Soul--or vote."⁶¹

The most pernicious doctrine of all, they believed, was confession. Irish Protestant agitators, and a minority of English politicians, argued that the priesthood condoned, indeed urged, the peasantry to commit acts of violence and then forgave them their indiscretions in the confessional. In alliance with Repealers, the priests sent their flock to murder landlords and candidates of the opposition. One anonymous Protestant bigot expressed the fears of Irish Protestants in the following rhyme:

How dreary Britain's prospect from the hour
When such deluded men advanced to power!
No wonder of incendiaries we read!
Twelve Shillings will atone for such a deed!!!
For ten and sixpence every Priest may do
What Protestants are taught with scorn to view.
For four pounds odd the Papist may apply
The murderer's knife!!! a father to destroy!!! 62

Another anti-Catholic, James Johnson, whose description of Ireland was published in 1844, described the priesthood as the drill sergeant of the Repeal movement. They had no sense of religion, he wrote, but were only concerned with raising an army for Repealers to challenge the rule of Britannia.

But, above all, have the ministers of religion thrown overboard the concerns of another world, as a matter of popular superstition, in order to fan the flame of discord between the two countries....Are we once more to have pulpit "drum ecclesiastic" beating up for insurgent volunteers to swell the torrent of victims that will inevitably be immolated at the shrine of rebellion?...A political parson is bad enough... but when a militant hierarchy commands a sacerdotal legion to brandish the fiery cross, the prospect becomes dark and fearful! 63

Over all Ireland, another British Protestant warned, "there exists in the hands of the priests a power, unlimited in one direction, and wielded over every one who lives in... the province of Ireland,—a power so great, that the priest's orders are absolute, and he that disobeys them is marked and crushed." 64 Such anti-Catholic literature painted a frightening picture of priests at the altar, inciting their congregations

to commit all kinds of bestial crimes against Protestants who barred their rise to political power. One pamphleteer provided this description:

They stand at the altar, these dark ministers of a dark faith, arrayed in the mysterious power which their imagined authority over the next world gives them, and with the substantial power which they derive from their influence in this. When they speak, every voice is still; where they point the finger, the eyes of all follow it; and from the altar, inflamed by bigotry and delighting in blood, rush out the savage populace, to seize upon the victim, and to consign to destruction his property, his family, his home, and his life. Blood is the order--Blood is the cry--Blood is the doom! 65

Most of this virulent anti-Catholicism was confined to a small minority of extremists who attempted to play upon traditional English fears of Papism. Blackwood's Magazine alone among the major journals gave credence to such a defamatory description of the Irish clergy. 66 In Parliament, the propagation of such views was limited to a hard core of reactionary Irish landlords, whose views the Government hardly considered reliable. Magazines like Punch, Fraser's, and the Spectator, and newspapers like The Times, the Illustrated London News, and the Peelite press, held more moderate views. Nevertheless, these organs of opinion, while more circumspect in their accusations, believed the Catholic clergy to have a pernicious effect on the Irish people. In alliance with Repealers, it was claimed, they strove to alienate the peasantry from the British

Government so that they could be exploited to serve the narrow and selfish interests of priests and agitators.

They largely succeeded because of the ignorance, superstition and gullibility of the Irish, which made him easy prey to those who would exploit him for their own purposes.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 8

1. H. Montgomery, Letter from the Rev. H. Montgomery to Daniel O'Connell, Esq., M.P. (Dublin: W. Underwood, 1831), p. 3.
2. Ibid., p. 8.
3. Blackwood's Magazine, LIX (May 1846), 573.
4. Ibid.,; see also LIV (Aug. 1843), p. 266.
5. Senior, op. cit., I, 70-72.
6. Page, op. cit., p. 6.
7. Punch, V (1843), 134.
8. Ibid., II (1842), 50.
9. Ibid., p. 136.
10. Ibid., XII, 197.
11. Ibid., XIV (1849), 111.
12. The Times, Mar. 8, 1843, p. 5.
13. Stanley Morison (ed.), History of The Times (London: The Times, 1939), II, 8; Blake, op. cit., p. 132.
14. The Times, June 16, 1836, p. 4.
15. Macintyre, op. cit., pp. 155-57.
16. Ibid., p. 156; Greville, Journal, op. cit., III, 327.
17. Macintyre, op. cit., p. 157, quoting material in the Salisbury MSS.
18. Quoted in Macintyre, op. cit., p. 47.
19. The Duke of Wellington to Robert Peel, Feb. 20, 1837, Peel Papers, Add. MSS, 40423, pp. 46-48.

20. Nowlan, The Politics of Repeal, p. 14. O'Connell's wife let word out of the proposed duel in order to prevent it.
21. Quoted in Macintyre, op. cit., p. 239n.
22. The alliance was known as the Litchfield House Compact.
23. Greville, Journal, I:2, pp. 27, 279-80.
24. Maxwell (ed.), op. cit., I, 278.
25. Anglesey to Melbourne, Dec. 31, 1830, Plas Newydd Papers, quoted in Macintyre, op. cit., p. 21.
26. Senior, op. cit., I, 213, 225.
27. The Times, Nov. 12, 1844, p. 4.
28. Edward Plunkett, Address to the Landowners of Ireland Upon the Present Agitation for a Repeal of the Union (London: J. Ridgway, 1843), pp. 17-18.
29. Henry Cooke, Authentic Report of the Speech of ... at the Great Protestant Meeting, Hillsborough (Belfast: Stuart and Gregg, 1834), p. 9.
30. See Macintyre, op. cit., passim.
31. Nowlan, Politics of Repeal, pp. 65-66.
32. Hansard's, LIII (1840), cols. 87-88.
33. Ibid., LXXI (1843), col. 698.
34. Ibid., col. 367.
35. Blackwood's Magazine, LIX (May 1846), 576.
36. Ibid., LI (Apr. 1842), 509; LXII (July-Dec. 1847), 725.
37. Ibid., LXIII (Jan.-June 1848), 122.
38. Hansard's, LXXI (1843), col. 430.
39. Ibid., LXXIV (1846), cols. 1413-14.

40. Frederick Shaw, quoted in The Times, June 1, 1843, p. 5.
41. Ibid.
42. Anon., Thoughts on Ireland (London: J. Ridgway, 1847), p. 6.
43. Page, op. cit., p. 117.
44. Hansard's, LXXXIV (1846), cols. 1413-14.
45. Ibid., col. 1414.
46. Blackwood's Magazine, LIV (Aug. 1843), 266.
47. Ibid.
48. Punch, IX (1845), 45.
49. Ibid., p. 218.
50. Ibid., p. 215.
51. Macintyre, op. cit., p. 157.
52. Inglis, op. cit., I, 102.
53. Ibid.
54. The Times, Jan. 24, 1843, p. 6.
55. Ibid., June 5, 1843, p. 4.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., Apr. 5, 1843, p. 6.
58. Punch, I (1841), 21.
59. Page, op. cit., 117.
60. The Times, Jan. 25, 1844, p. 7.
61. Punch, XXIII (1848), 82.

62. Richard M. Hassard, Popery As It Is, and Will Be, Until Destroyed (Dublin: Grant and Bolton, 1839), Frontispiece.
63. Johnson, op. cit., pp. 133-34.
64. Colquhoun, op. cit., p. 19.
65. Ibid.
66. Supporting evidence has already been quoted in the text.

CHAPTER NINE

Ye English, a rush for your conciliation!
Alike your persuasion and force we defy;
We detest, we abominate you as a nation,
We hate you the worse the more kindness you try.

Punch

The British people dismissed Repeal as the work of agitators and, to a lesser extent, politically minded priests. They refused to believe that O'Connell and the leaders of the Repeal movement were sincerely interested in the well-being of the Irish people and were equally convinced that under no circumstances would any Government grant Repeal. As one Englishman succinctly put it:

Do repealers seriously believe that they can persuade the English nation to grant repeal by mere argument? We may sometimes succeed in persuading an idiot, an enthusiast, or a madman, to commit suicide; but we need not promise ourselves such success with a whole nation.¹

The leadership of both political parties refused even to consider the idea of Repeal. Although O'Connell had succeeded in forcing Parliament to debate the question of Repeal in 1834, only a few Radicals and Repealers thought there was a possibility it might come to pass. Robert Peel expressed

the opinion of the Government--as well as the nation--when he told Parliament:

It is the duty of the Government, even in the dreadful extremity of civil war, to prevent a dismemberment of the empire. If the union with Ireland is to be dissolved, why may not Scotland and Wales demand the same? Why should not the empire be broken up altogether? It is to me perfectly clear, that the safety and well-being of the empire cannot be preserved but by maintenance of the union; and to maintain the union the Government would...be justified in resorting to force.²

Englishmen, although accepting of the Government's commitment to preserve the Union at any cost, could not believe that O'Connell expected to achieve Repeal by parliamentary means. Neither could they accept the thesis that the real goal of Repeal agitation was to achieve reform in Ireland. Repeal agitation--especially when filtered through the medium of the British press--only succeeded in antagonizing the English people. They argued that it was counter-productive to the development of that feeling of good will and conciliation towards Ireland which, Repealers claimed, the British people lacked. In turn, the British people and press despised the "Repeal rabble" and refused to consider them legitimate representatives of the Irish people. The British Parliament showed an equal distaste and refused to be "blackmailed" by Irish threats of separation. Charles Greville commented on this feeling in a letter to Peel's Home Secretary, Sir James Graham:

"The English abhor the Irish and their proceedings, and will never endure that the House of Commons shall be dictated to by Irish Repealers and agitators." For the purpose of obtaining reform in Ireland, Punch commented: "A ship-full of Irish well-fed, well-conducted porkers would have been far more valuable than all the present brawlers of the Hall of Conciliation."⁴

If Repeal was inconceivable and conciliation unlikely, the only alternative left to Repealers was revolution. Both realistic Englishmen and Irishmen judged the chances for a successful insurrection to be nil. England had crushed Ireland in 1798, even though most of her forces had been committed in the struggle with France. At mid-century, she was at peace. In addition, her power vis à vis Ireland had increased both relatively and absolutely in the years since Union. No reasonable man could expect Ireland to emerge victorious in a struggle against a united British nation.

With these assumptions in mind, the British found it hard to believe that any intelligent being--and nobody doubted that O'Connell was anything but shrewd and intelligent--could seriously expect the Repeal clamor to obtain any real advantages for the Irish people. As a result, they looked for more sinister motives that might lead O'Connell to stake his repu-

tation on Repeal. Could the answer be that Repeal had been organized by insincere leaders intent on aggrandizing wealth and power at the expense of the Irish people?

What disturbed Englishmen even more than O'Connell's goal was the means for its achievement. To Victorians, a mass movement, whether it be Chartism or Repeal, was suspect. Led by fiery orators who stirred the passions of the masses, it was perceived as a grave threat to the stability of the society. When such a movement was placed in the context of Ireland, bringing to mind the association of that country with violence, outrage, and insurrection, the fear became maniacal. In such circumstances, O'Connell's appeal to moral force was denounced as a ruse and never even given a fair chance. Those Englishmen who believed O'Connell a madman envisaged moral force as a prelude to revolution, while more sober observers declared it tactical camouflage for threats of intimidation. In either case, the British people were convinced that it exacerbated the tense condition of Ireland and might lead to a violence O'Connell himself would be unable to control.

Punch, of course, had denounced moral force as brick-bats, fruit in an advanced stage of decomposition, blazing tar-barrels, and shillelaghs.⁶ Other Englishmen found it far less amusing. One pamphleteer exclaimed:



"A GENTLEMAN IN DIFFICULTIES;" OR, DAN AND HIS "FORCES."

And what is this peaceful or "moral agitation" in Ireland? It is the water boiling in the great political cauldron, generating and condensing steam for the grand insurrectionary explosion. The chief engineers may hope to control this fearful and expansive element; but when once the steam has attained a certain force it will burst the boilers, blow the engineers into the air and spread destruction in every direction.⁷

Another pamphleteer, equally suspicious, ignored O'Connell's protestations. "History is full of examples," he wrote, "of agitators and demagogues, proclaiming their intention of arriving at some great change or revolution through moral influence, when secretly the means they invoked for such an end had been physical power."⁸

Englishmen, because they had little faith in O'Connell's sanity, were convinced that he really was planning a revolution. Irish Protestants also tended towards this view. Speaking in Parliament, an Ascendancy spokesman stated: "The whole country is being organized in passive resistance to the laws; but repeal is only the pretext for collecting the masses together...."⁹ Repeal Wardens were denounced as drill sergeants, Repeal meetings described as para-military training exercises, and Repeal leaders charged with planning a coup.

Even though their avowed purpose was peaceful and their conduct invariably orderly, one of the most frightening aspects of Repeal, to the English, were the mass meetings, called "monster meetings," at which thousands of Irishmen

gathered to hear O'Connell preach against the Union. Contemporary Irish observers described the atmosphere of such gatherings as festive and closer to Sunday picnics than revolutionary meetings. Nevertheless, the English press exaggerated both the size of the rallies and the violent nature of the oratory.

The Times declared that at one monster meeting over a million people listened to the seditious and inflammatory appeals of
10
O'Connell!

Lord Brougham, an Irish peer, claimed that "these meetings are part of a vast system of intimidation, for the purpose of showing the power of the leaders of the Irish people over them and of overawing the Government." Brougham regretted
11
this miscalculation on the part of Repealers, and in August 1843 addressed the House of Lords:

Profoundly ignorant are they of the Government with which they have to deal. They show themselves profoundly ignorant of my noble friend (the Duke of Wellington) opposite. He is as little likely to be overawed by any of their machinations, their addresses, or their meetings, as those agitators themselves are likely, with their devoted and desperate followers, to be overawed or made to swerve from their course by any conscientious scruples or patriotic motives.
12

Sir James Graham, acting as spokesman for the Government, concurred with Brougham and lamented the violent nature of these meetings and their effect upon the state of Ireland. The Secretary told the House:

Large bodies of men marched in array, subdivided, and headed in regular order, with bands of music, playing martial airs, and with all the pomp and circumstance of martial order. The multitudes thus assembled are addressed in the most exciting language, upon topics which inflame to madness, whether addressed by the priesthood or the people.¹³

Such addresses, Graham reasoned, could only incite violence on the part of the peasantry and still further aggravate the agrarian disorder prevailing in Ireland.

Punch considered the commotion of the monster meetings to be the preparatory warwhoops of a ferocious and sanguinary people.¹⁴ The journal admitted that the appeals of the orators were appeals to peaceful action, but insisted that they were couched in such a manner as to inflame the minds of the Irish and sow the seeds of revolt, graphically illustrating its point in a satirical representation of Repeal oratory entitled, "An Oration by the Irish Demosthenes." Demosthenes, of course, was none other than the Liberator, haranguing the multitudes gathered at Tara Hill.

Oh! be calm--let me ask you to be calm. I see the lightning of indignation flashing from your eyes. I hear the thunder of your ire. It shakes heaven and earth; and all the buttermilk turns sour. I tremble at what I have said. I fear I have gone too far. I would not go too far. I would not go too far for all the world. Suppose, only suppose, you were to rush to Dublin, storm the castle, and put the slaves and despots in it to the sword--what should I do? Oh! shout, and say you will not do this if you can help it. That shout satisfies me. If your endeavours to obtain justice should longer be frustrated; if we do not get Repeal by constitutional means; you might be driven

to act as I have said. Mind, I only say, IF--mark that IF. IF you were so to act, posterity would not blame you. Posterity would say you vindicated your just rights. But I should blame you. I am obliged to say I should blame you, although I should agree with posterity that you had vindicated your rights.¹⁵

Blackwood's Magazine declared non-violence so contradictory to the/Irish people that it was impossible to conceive.

"The cautionary order issued for total abstinence of violence," the journal argued, "had been looked upon, of course, as a momentary or interim restraint. But if it were understood that this order was absolute, or of indefinite application, the chill to the national confidence would be that of death."¹⁶

The Times agreed. "We are glad to hear that we are not to have a civil war. But we doubt the premises from which this conclusion is deduced. It is too Irish for our tastes. Irish wit, Irish eloquence, Irish humor and Irish whisky, if you please; but as little of Irish reasoning as you can give us."¹⁷

Ireland, The Times reasoned, was really on the verge of rebellion. "Is not the 'thirst for arms' which pervades the Irish people a now acknowledged fact? Is the organization of Roman Catholic Ireland less confessed?"¹⁸ O'Connell, The Times warned, has control over an army of peasants who hang on his every word, but it feared that he would not be able to keep them on a non-violent course and would prove powerless

to mitigate the catastrophe of a rebellion, should one break out.

Repeal agitation was therefore perceived as a cause for disorder, a threat, and, perhaps, the prelude to revolution--an illusory means to correct imaginary grievances. Irish peasants, Englishmen argued, were not driven to Repeal agitation by distress but by their innocence, naïveté, and moral deficiencies. Repeal, they were convinced--contrary to O'Connell's claims--did not work to alleviate Irish distress but, rather, was instrumental in causing it. One indignant pamphleteer proclaimed:

They have not, then, been driven to this excess of riot by distress--far from it. This excuse is something pleaded for them by the agitators of the land, and received by the uninformed people in this country; but it is far from being the true cause of their discontent and wicked practices...distress cannot be pleaded as any excuse for the distracted state of those provinces. If we said that the distress of the agitators is the cause, we should be much nearer the truth. These men, being discontented, (because their fortunes are desperate) fasten upon some grievances and make many more, and, by these, influence the minds of the people, and prolong the unhappy state in which the country is.¹⁹

Irish Protestants agreed. The Earl of Wicklow, speaking for a majority of his countrymen, lamented the effect of the agitation upon the economic development of the country. He found it hard to believe that the Irish people failed to see the disaster created by continuing agitation. Speaking in the House of

Lords he said:

The people of that country were a shrewd and discerning people, and he hoped they would open their eyes, and see the degradation and poverty which were caused by those who engaged them in agitation, under the pretence of guiding them to better destinies.²⁰

Leading British journals and newspapers were equally convinced that, regardless of any grievances the Irish people might bear against Britain, the Repeal movement functioned to exacerbate the depressed condition of Ireland rather than to alleviate it. The Times, the Illustrated London News, the Herald, the Standard, and the Morning Post, among the newspapers, and the Quarterly and Edinburgh Reviews, Fraser's and Blackwood's Magazines, and Punch, among the magazines and journals, looked askance at Repeal agitation and presented arguments demonstrating how, in their opinion, the agitation further increased the poverty of the Irish people. Even the Morning Chronicle, long a supporter of Irish demands for reform, and sympathetic to the sufferings of the Irish which had led them to espouse Repeal, feared the agitation would prove injurious to Irish interests. Only the Westminster Review and the Northern Star, the most radical of the publications studied, supported the Irish agitation without hesitation.

British organs of public opinion and politicians from both parties advanced a variety of arguments to support their view that Repeal agitation worked to further impoverish the Irish. The most widely held contention pointed to the astronomical sums

the penurious Irish contributed to O'Connell's coffers. By the summer of 1843, such Repeal Rent amounted to well over £2,000 a week. ²¹ Such contributions to O'Connell, the British press was convinced, were a total waste of money--scarce capital that the peasant or merchant might better have spent improving his farm or his business, and serving no end other than O'Connell's personal enrichment. The drain on Irish capital, they argued, amounted to thousands of pounds each year and rivalled the sum squandered by absentee landlords. In neither case did the poor Irish peasant benefit from the expenditure.

Repeal agitation was also seen as a great distraction from legitimate labor. Politics, most Englishmen felt, had become the national pastime of Ireland and, as a result, Paddy spent more time parading in defiance of Britain than he did providing for the well-being of his family. Irishmen, they argued, were easily seduced into leaving work to attend political meetings and agitate, and counted on obtaining greater remuneration through politics than through honest work. Blackwood's Magazine declared: "The time which should be devoted to business, is by all classes consumed in pleasure of politics; and the consequences are to be seen in the embarrassments of the gentry, ²² the bankruptcy of the tradesmen, and the poverty of the people." The agitators had helped to corrupt the people who, it was argued, were now more content to complain about their difficulties



"RINT" v. POTATOES.—THE IRISH JEREMY DIDDLEE.

"You haven't got such a thing as Twelve-pence about you!—A Farthing a week—a Penny a month—
a Shilling a year!"

than to work to overcome them. Lord Clarendon commented on the pernicious influence of the Repealers. "The real difficulty," he wrote, "lies with the people themselves. They are always in the mud; and when they have screamed out to Hercules, they have no doubt about having done everything necessary for extricating themselves. Their idleness and helplessness can hardly be believed!"²³

Many Englishmen argued that yet another cause of poverty attributable to Repeal agitation was the great Irish expenditure on arms. Throughout the 1840's, English newspapers and journals held the conviction that the Irish, incited by agitators, were spending a large share of their meager incomes on guns and ammunition for use against the landlords or in preparation for a future rebellion. The Tipperary Constitution, an Asendancy spokesman, denounced such expenditure as sheer idiocy. The newspaper commented:

The earnest desire which the peasants evince to furnish themselves with weapons of destruction, the avidity with which they expend large sums of money in purchasing them, is a matter of astonishment to all. It is an anomaly which could happen in no other country in the world save Ireland.²⁴

A good portion of the English press echoed these sentiments, accepting without question these various accusations. While Punch lampooned such idiocy in cartoons and satires, the conservative press expressed its shock and horror, convinced that only a people so misled by vicious agitators could partake of such

lunacy. The Times was particularly outraged and went to great pains to warn the peasantry of the dire consequences of their actions. In 1846, they printed a letter from "A Saxon" which accurately reflected the views of the editors as well. This infuriated Englishman asked:

Allow an English reader to inquire if the Irish people eat guns? In this country when a man is starving, and obtains money and work, he purchases food forthwith. Not so the Irish. A month's wages²⁵ are hoarded for the privilege of shooting a landlord.

Englishmen consequently perceived a direct connection between agitation, the hoarding of weapons, and the use of those weapons, with Repeal, providing an additional explanation for the incidence of outrage in the Irish countryside. Protestations of English jurists and parliamentary commissions to the contrary, many Englishmen believed that Repealers incited the Irish to buy and use weapons. Irish-Protestant witness after witness testified to this connection before press and parliament.

Irish Tories screamed in unison that "seditious acts are caused by demagogic appeal."²⁶ One witness, a Colonel in the British Army, informed Parliamentarians that "One of the great evils of Ireland was, that interested demagogues by exciting and inflammatory speeches induced people to keep arms, which led to the resistance of the law and the commission of serious crimes."²⁷

Robert Peel, Sir James Graham, and the Duke of Wellington, as well as other Tory leaders, were convinced that Repeal agitation had "established habits of violence and outrage" among the Irish peasantry, and they argued that it encouraged their already existing proclivity to seek any goal through violent means. The Tories made the connection between Repeal agitation and violence a major justification of their campaign to crush the Repealers.

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The Whigs, attempting to make political capital out of the evident failure of the Tories to restore order to Ireland, would not openly admit any such connection. In Parliament, they attacked the Government for resorting to extra-constitutional means to control the country, but in private, Lord John Russell, Charles Wood, and Clarendon found Peel's assumptions correct and his policies justified.

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It followed, therefore, that Englishmen perceived the Repeal movement as instrumental in promoting outrage as well as being a contributing factor in the distressed state of Ireland. In order to come full circle, it is only necessary to comment on the effect the high incidence of outrage had upon poverty.

Repealers complained that landlords and Protestant merchants refused to invest their profits in Ireland. More im-

portantly, British capitalists failed to invest in Ireland. Bankers and industrialists went as far afield as Africa and Asia to find profitable markets for their capital but were hardly willing to sink a farthing into Ireland. As a result, Irish railroads and communications facilities, industry and commerce, and banking and finance were underdeveloped and failed to provide new job opportunities for a growing population. Why did Britain, the world's largest exporter of capital, neglect the development of a country for which she was responsible?

Repealers and die-hard Tories alike found the primary explanation in the British belief that life and property were insecure in Ireland. Outrages and agrarian disturbances and the possibility of revolution--all vastly exaggerated by the British press, according to Repealers--frightened away would-be British investors and discouraged absentee landlords from investing in their own estates. At this juncture Irish and English arguments diverged.

Repealers and Radicals found oppressive policies of the landlords to be at the root of this problem, the suffering and deprivation caused by their greed sufficient to provoke a violent response. The British people subscribed to an argument that was exactly the reverse. British investors, according to The Times, Blackwood's, and Fraser's Magazines, among others, were reluctant to send their capital to Ireland

for fear it would be wasted on idle workers, their factories blasted by incendiaries, or their estate managers assassinated by Irish ruffians. Lord Brougham was the most articulate spokesman for this view. The Irish people, he told the peers of the realm

are made miserable, poor, kept idle, starving, and without wages, by that want of capital, that want of employment, which they owe entirely to their agitation, and which if they left off agitation and took to peaceable courses, and left their agitators in vain to call these meetings, would fall again into those channels of Irish industry which would once again make the country happy and improving.³⁰

Ireland, in the words of one Parliamentarian, was doomed to poverty and distress until the agitation ceased, the Irish peasant renounced violence, and the Irish people returned to work. He went on to say:

It is impossible to devise any measure which would have the effect of tranquillizing Ireland, and of producing all the beneficial results which peace and good order would ensure, so long as political agitation was suffered to prevail to the extent to which it now prevails.³¹

Some Englishmen even went so far as to explain the apparently oppressive policies of the landlords and absentees in terms of the depraved Irish character. This argument contended that the policies of the landlords were the result, and not the

cause of agrarian disorder. The London Standard observed:

We find that neither the speculating capitalist nor the improving landlord is safe in the land and we only wonder that as many of them are resident in a country where the murderer is screened from justice by the sympathy of a people who look without horror on deeds of violence....³²

"They have ruined themselves (by violence to those who help them)," the Standard insisted, "...and the people have brought poverty and suffering upon themselves."³³

The Times reprinted this editorial and expressed complete agreement with its line of reasoning. (This was, of course, in complete contradiction to other arguments the newspaper advanced in reference to the landlords.)³⁴ The Times itself commented that the landlords in Ireland tended to be brutal, inhumane, and unimproving because the relationship between landlord and tenant "is doomed to suffer most from a recurring cycle of kindnesses which are received with distrust, and ingratitude which breeds disgust."³⁵ As a result, they in turn had increasingly less sympathy for the plight of the peasant.

The Times, Blackwood's, the Standard, and numerous Tory politicians argued that even the resident landlords feared to invest in their estates lest their investment be ruined by

violent reprisals by the peasantry when they were asked to pay higher rents for improved land. The landlords, it was suggested, were often frustrated would-be benefactors, who nevertheless were forced, against their own will, to view their estates as sources of income rather than as investments, because the violent behavior of the peasantry made this the only safe course to follow.

Speaking for the Tories, Lord Brougham told legislators that Providence had "blessed Ireland with a greater measure of natural advantages than all other parts of the empire." He lamented the fact that these resources would remain latent, and Ireland continue to be depressed and poor unless capital developed her agriculture and her industry. Brougham was also convinced that this would never occur as long as agitation continued and the Irish people were taught to shun work and commit crimes of violence. "In vain were the natural resources of Ireland, and vain all the measures taken to improve them, as long as agitation continues." The Repealers, he concluded, had proved themselves to be the worst enemies of Ireland.

Thus Brougham and the Tories argued that Repeal was a cause of disorder and poverty, a cancerous growth on the body politic, seducing the Irish people from the paths of peace and industry. Reasoning from this premise, they argued that the best remedy for the ills of Ireland was repression of the Repeal

agitation and the application of strong measures designed to stamp out agrarian disorder. Only after tranquillity was restored to Ireland, they argued, could the Government propose measures that would prove effective in bringing a degree of prosperity to that unhappy island. This argument provided the justification for the Government's response to Repeal--the dismissal of Repealers from public office, arrest and trial of Repeal leaders as conspirators, and repression of the Repeal press. It also provided justification for their major legislative response to the Repeal challenge--the Arms Act of 1843.

Peel's measures were tremendously popular among the British people. With the exception of the Whig Morning Chronicle, the Radical Westminster Review and Northern Star, the major organs of public opinion covered in this study joined the clamor in the early forties for coercion first and concession afterwards. The Freeman's Journal, an independent Irish newspaper with Repeal sympathies, proclaimed:

The cry is now for strong measures. Such is the language which is now held by the English journals, which, in their habitual ignorance and presumption, undertake to supply remedies for a social condition, with whose disturbing elements they are utterly unacquainted. They argue from facts of their own creation, and presuppose a state of things to give colour to their absurdities.³⁷

Blackwood's Magazine was, no doubt, one of those journals

which the Freeman's Journal had in mind. The magazine, Tory in its sympathies, completely subscribed to the Government's analysis. Blackwood's reasoned that repressive measures must be carried out "in mercy to the peasantry themselves." In an editorial, the editors declared that such a policy was the wisest and most humane course to follow:

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There is a remedy for the ills of Ireland, and a simple and efficacious remedy it will be found to be, if adopted. Enforce obedience to the laws, and establish security of life and property, no matter at what sacrifice or by what means. The more severe and uncompromising the measure by which those objects shall be sought to be effectuated, the more prompt will be the success, and the more merciful the operation.³⁹

The Times, Fraser's Magazine, Punch, and the Peelite press all favored this course of action. ⁴⁰ The Times declared, in June 1843, that "The moving principle of the assemblies [of Repeal]...is hostility to 'the Saxon'--and indefinite desire for an imaginary independence." ⁴¹ Such a country, in which a majority of the people have had hate of the English inculcated by a man who rejoices in that hate and speculates in bloodshed, the newspaper reasoned, can only be ruled with an iron hand. In September of 1843, The Times decided that England had followed the wrong policy towards Ireland. The Government had made concession after concession [oh?] in the hope of attaining peace when, in fact, it "should coerce first, get Ireland securely in hand, ⁴² then make concessions to her needs."

Fraser's Magazine reasoned that Ireland "must continue

to be the great difficulty of every minister of the British Crown till there shall arise a man possessed of nerve and influence enough to deal with that land of anomalies as it deserves."

The magazine continued:

Ireland is not ripe for the blessings of the free constitution which has been forced upon it before the time, and which its people do not know how to use. We have been striving for these last thirty years and more to conciliate, when we ought all the while to have been governing with the strong hand....⁴³

Infuriated by the British demand for repressive legislation and its popular support, the Irish declared, and with sound reason, that it violated the very premise upon which the Union was based. Repealers asked how Englishmen, who claimed to govern Ireland in the same spirit they governed Britain, could respond differently to a similar problem in both countries. Outrage in England was not met with Arms Acts, suspension of civil liberties, and declarations of martial law. The British people would not stand for it. Why then, they asked, was such a policy pursued towards Ireland? Sharman Crawford, a Protestant landowner and convert to Repeal, declared:

Was it fit that Ireland should be so visited? What should have been said in England if an Arms Bill had been proposed in consequence of the Manchester riots? Ministers would not have dared to introduce it; England would not have submitted to it. Why then was Ireland to be legislated for on different principles? ⁴⁴

This was the circumstance, Crawford informed Commons, that



JUSTICE TO IRELAND.

"She gave them some Broth without any Bread,
Then whipp'd them all Round, and sent them to Bed."

justified the Irish call for Repeal. Not responded the British press and Government. Coercion was justified because the character of the Irish people was so radically different from that of the British that it demanded different legislation. The Times, Blackwood's, Fraser's, and the Peelite press defended the Government. Legislators and journalists declared that constitutional principles were relative, not absolute. The law, they argued, must be molded to the character and moral development of the people to whom it was applied. Explaining the logic of this view, The Times said:

To Englishmen a vigour beyond the Constitution is an odious thing. The powers granted by the Constitution they have always found adequate to meet emergency and danger. /a very obvious exaggeration on the part of The Times/. And it seems unkind and unjust to recommend for Irishmen a policy that would be scouted by ourselves. But we must be ruled by circumstances. If crimes are un-English--if English means for detecting and punishing them fail, why should not an un-English power be exercised in districts where violence and murder stalk unavenged and unchecked? 45

"The great obstacle to tranquillity in Ireland," the newspaper self-righteously exclaimed, "is the national character--the character of the masses, of the middle classes, of the senators of Ireland....Their very virtues in their extravagance become vices too...." As a result, The Times reasoned, the Irish are as yet unfit for the blessings of the British Constitution. She was getting only what she deserved--poverty and distress, and the coercive legislation and repressive administration

by which she was governed. "When Ireland acts according to the principles of civilised man, then she can be ruled by the laws of civilised man."⁴⁶

* * *

By this time it must be clear that the British and the Irish had a mirror image of truth. It can be said that the Irish idea of cause and effect was completely reversed in the British analysis of Irish affairs presented in the preceding chapters.

The Repeal model of the Irish problem took for granted that centuries of British oppression and exploitation were at the very root of all differences. They perceived the Irish landlords to be the major lever of this oppression. The Repealers claimed they were nothing more than a class of foreign oppressors whose greed for wealth and power was satisfied at the expense of the peasantry. Forsaken by Parliament, and powerless to check the encroachments of the landlords, they were mercilessly exploited. Landlords were provided with additional incentives to exploit the peasantry because the population explosion placed a high premium on available arable land. The growing pressure was unrelieved by a corresponding growth of industry and commerce--jealous British competitors had seen to that--and, accordingly, the landlords were able to

subdivide, rackrent, and deprive the peasant of almost all the fruits of his labor.

Unable to derive a living from the land, unsure of his possession of that land, and denied any legal recourse to redress his grievances, the peasantry resorted to violence as the only means available in their brutal struggle for survival. Outrage had the effect of making British capitalists and Irish landlords even more reluctant to invest in Ireland and thereby provide employment for the growing population. As a result, the squeeze on the land became even greater, the policies of the landlords more oppressive, and the reaction of the peasantry more violent. It was a vicious cycle of oppression and reaction threatening the very existence of the Irish people.

The Repeal Movement was envisaged by its leaders as a means of breaking the downward spiral of oppression and distress. Repealers proposed that the British people and Government take cognizance of their past injustices and take action to alleviate the distress it caused. Ireland must be admitted as an equal member of the British nation, her administration reformed and made responsive to the needs of the Irish people, and her legal code made consonant with the interests of her population. Failing that, Repealers demanded separation from Britain, so that the Irish people could be the masters of their own destiny. Correct these basic iniquities, Repealers eloquent-

ly argued, and we will be honest, peaceful, and prosperous. Continue to uphold the power of our oppressors and we will be dishonest, enraged, and, perhaps, rebels.

The British took as their a priori assumption of Irish affairs, a stereotyped image of Irishmen which depicted the Irish people as indolent and self-complacent, violent and unruly, ignorant, superstitious, and ostentatious. All the evils of Ireland, it was argued, stemmed from the morally deficient nature of the Celt.

The Irish people were impoverished because they were too lazy to work to improve their position, and too self-complacent to be bothered by it. They supported the Repeal movement--a perfidious organization designed to benefit the power of the Papacy and the pocketbook of the agitators--because they were too ignorant, too superstitious, and too attracted to display and colorful ceremony to resist its appeal. The Repeal movement, it was argued, gained an ascendancy over the Irish people that no similar movement could ever achieve over the British people. Repealers misled and misinformed the Irish people and turned them against their very benefactors. Repealers exacerbated their already existing proclivities to resort to violence and incited them to commit acts of outrage against the landlords and the government officials.

The feedback of Repeal, the British argued, only aggravated

the already penurious condition of that country. It made landlords and British capitalists feel insecure and thereby worked to prevent capital from flowing into Ireland to develop her agriculture and industry. The growing population was, therefore, less able to find employment and perhaps more likely to place credence in the arguments of the Repealers. As a result, the incidence of outrage became greater and the British willingness to invest in Ireland was diminished. They argued that the Repealers created a vicious cycle of outrage and reaction which worked to impoverish the Irish people.

According to Repealers, the solution of the Irish problem was to break the cycle by ending coercion and promulgating reform. The British argued that the cycle would only be broken by the repression of violence and a reformation of the Irish character. In the words of The Times, "We ask for order and peace, and they tell us of the seeds of disorder;--we ask for a cure, and they discourse learnedly on the origin and nature of the malady." ⁴⁷ Give us equality, the Irish pleaded, and you will have peace. Give us peace, the British responded, and you will have equality.

* * *

The British model of Irish affairs was by no means devoid of contradiction. Contradictions were manifest because the

British never developed their model of Irish affairs in its entirety at any one given time. Rather, it emerged as a response to discrete issues or particular challenges hurled at them by Repealers. It emerged in debates over the Poor Law, in debates concerning the Arms Bills, and in response to the Irish position on a series of measures or problems relating to their country. The degree to which the British arguments were somewhat confused and illogical, and not a fully articulated and consistent model, is evident in the fact that the same journals, newspapers, and parliamentarians often flagrantly contradicted themselves. The several irreconcilable positions of The Times with regard to Irish landlords is a perfect case in point. Despite such contradictions in various British refutations of Repealers, the stereotyped image of the Irishman remained unimpaired. The British "model" of Irish affairs, therefore, appears to have been composed of a series of rationalizations dictated by political convenience, and employed to dismiss the arguments advanced by Repealers.

The stereotype was far from universally accepted. British radicals and some Whigs did not employ it in their analysis of Irish problems. They, of course, had no need because they remained in consistent opposition to British policy in Ireland. For those, however, who supported British policy and believed

British influence to be beneficial to the Irish people, the stereotype provided a series of rationalizations capable of harmonizing the obvious contradictions between the avowed values of British society and the effects of British rule in Ireland. It explained the discrepancy between British wealth and Irish poverty and between British civil liberties and the Irish police state in such a manner that no blame accrued to the British people. It freed the British from any responsibility for Ireland's condition and placed the blame squarely on the infamous and depraved character of the people who resided in that country.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 9

1. Johnson, op. cit., p. 132.
2. Hansard's, LXXIX (1843), cols. 5-6.
3. Greville, Journal, II:3, p. 161.
4. Punch, VIII (1845), 231.
5. O'Connell and the older Irish leaders were well aware of this fact and, as a result, attempted to restrain the more violently oriented members of the Repeal movement. Many of the younger members broke with O'Connell on this point and banded together under the name of Young Ireland.
6. Punch, XIV (1849), 214.
7. Johnson, op. cit., pp. 132-33.
8. William Mornington (Viscount Wellesley), The Irish Question Considered in Its Integrity (Dublin: W. Curry, Jr. & Co., 1844), p. 10.
9. Frederick Shaw in the House of Commons, Hansard's, LXIX (1843), col. 1144.
10. The Times, June 4, 1844, p. 6.
11. Hansard's, LXXI (1843), col. 385.
12. Ibid., cols. 385-86.
13. Ibid., LXX (1843), cols. 45-46.
14. Punch, I (1841), 220.
15. Ibid., V (1843), 181.
16. Blackwood's Magazine, LIV (Aug. 1843), 266.

17. The Times, June 16, 1843, p. 4.
18. Ibid., June 13, 1843, p. 5.
19. Page, op. cit., pp. 5-6.
20. Hansard's, LXIII (1843), cols. 323-24.
21. This was a great increase from the £60 a week the Association was collecting earlier in 1843. Macintyre, op. cit., p. 269.
22. Blackwood's Magazine, LIX (May 1846), 585.
23. Maxwell (ed.), op. cit., I, 280.
24. Tipperary Constitution, quoted in The Times, Jan. 4, 1847, p. 5.
25. The Times, Dec. 18, 1846, p. 5.
26. R. Bateson in the House of Commons, May 29, 1843, Hansard's, LXIX (1843), cols. 1035-38.
27. Ibid., LXX (1843), col. 30.
28. Ibid., LXIX (1843), col. 1178. See also the Government arguments employed during the Arms Bill Debate in 1843.
29. When the Whigs came to power in 1846, they immediately introduced an Arms Bill hardly dissimilar from the legislation proposed by Peel, which they voted against.
30. Hansard's, LXXI (1843), col. 389.
31. Mr. J. C. Colquhoun in the House of Commons, July 11, 1843, Hansard's, LXX (1843), col. 933.
32. Standard, quoted in The Times, Apr. 10, 1843, p. 6.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.

35. Ibid., Apr. 11, 1843, p. 4.
36. See Brougham's speech before the House of Lords, Aug. 8, 1843. Hansard's, LXXI (1843), cols. 381-92.
37. Freeman's Journal, Jan. 30, 1846.
38. Blackwood's Magazine, LIX (May 1846), 527.
39. Ibid., p. 603.
40. Only the Morning Chronicle, the Northern Star, and, of course, the Repeal papers like the Freeman's Journal and the Nation, were opposed.
41. The Times, June 13, 1843, p. 5.
42. Ibid., Sept. 1, 1843.
43. Fraser's Magazine (Oct. 1845), p. 499.
44. Hansard's, LXIX (1843), col. 1014.
45. The Times, Dec. 2, 1845, p. 4.
46. Ibid., Mar. 30, 1846, p. 4.
47. Ibid., Jan. 1, 1843, p. 4.

CHAPTER TEN

If nigger weren't nigger,
Irishman would be nigger.

British Saying

A major criterion for the selection of the Anglo-Irish colonial relationship as the subject of this study was the fact that the Irish, because of their ethnic background, religion, and history, provided a series of control variables not present in other colonial situations. These affinities with the colonizer should have made it all the more difficult for the British to "dehumanize" the Celt/to the point where they could construct an image of him that would be functional in reducing tension. We have seen , however, that these control variables did not prevent the British people and Government from formulating a stereotypic image of Irishmen capable of providing a series of rationalizations to explain away the depressed state of Ireland and to dismiss the challenge of Repeal. How, then, were these affinities overcome, and what rationalizations were employed to prevent them from acting as barriers to the de-humanization of the Irish people in British public opinion?

The most obvious control was that of religion. The Irish were devout Christians long before the English people gave up paganism. The medieval Christian culture, which flourished in Erin in the centuries before the Norse invasions, was re-

nowned throughout contemporary Europe for its scholarship and piety. It was Irish missionaries who introduced Christianity to Britain, and Celtic Christianity was the chief religion there until Roman ecclesiastical forms eventually gained the ascendancy in medieval Britain. Nevertheless, it is clear that the British people were beholden to the Irish for their conversion. This was certainly the reverse of other European colonial experiences, where the colonizers sought to convert the natives to Christianity and employed the religious distinctions between the two cultures as yet another sign of European superiority.

The British did not dispute the fact that Christianity had a long history in Ireland. However, they did dispute the meaning of Christianity in Ireland. British historians, pamphleteers, and politicians argued that Ireland was only nominally Christian, that the Irish people were really heathens masquerading in the guise of Christians. The Irish were described as mere "Papists," as different from English and Scottish Protestants--or even English Catholics--as were the practitioners of voodoo in Africa.

The British argument was, of course, simplified by the Reformation, which had differentiated the religious forms prevalent among the British from those followed by the native Irish. They drew out the distinctions between Papism and Protestantism to the point where they were effectively employed to discredit the Irish claim to Christianity. The virulence with

which this was done has led many people to believe that the Reformation and the religious differences it created were at the very root of the Irish problem.¹ This in itself is not an adequate explanation. The crucial distinction was not between Protestant and Catholic, but between "Saxon" and "Celt." Both distinctions were, of course, important to the stereotype, but the ethnic differences were by far the more important of the two. In the words of Macaulay, "The distractions of Ireland arose not from the differences between Catholics and Protestants but between the Irish and the English."²

Proof of the assertion can be seen in the fact that Englishmen rarely explained the Irish character in terms of the effects of the Catholic religion but rather, vice versa, they explained the Irish refusal to renounce Catholicism at the time of the Reformation in terms of the character of the Celt. John Temple, an eighteenth-century Englishman, whose writings on Ireland were frequently quoted by later generations, made this point very clearly. Lithgow argued that the "perverse dispositions" of the Irish prevented them from seeing the light:

...the malignant impressions of Irreligion and barbarism, transmitted-down, whether by infusion from the ancestors, or natural generation, had irrefragably /sic/ stiffened their necks, and hardened their hearts against all the most powerful endeavors of Reformation: they continued one and the same in all their wicked customs and inclinations, without change in their affections or manners, having their eyes inflamed, their hearts enraged with malice and hatred against

all the English nation, breathing forth nothing but their ruin, destruction, and utter extirpation.³

The historian and philosopher David Hume also subscribed to this view. In volume five of his History of England, Hume explained why the Irish remained Catholic in face of the Reformation in Europe.

As the rudeness and ignorance of the Irish were extreme, they were sunk below the reach of that curiosity and love of novelty by which every other people in Europe had been seized at the beginning of that century and which had engaged them in innovations and religious disputes, with which they were still violently agitated. The ancient superstitions, the practices and observances of their fathers, mingled and polluted with many wild opinions, still maintained an unshaken empire over them; and the example alone of the English was sufficient to render the reformation odious to the prejudices of the discontented Irish. The old opposition of manners, laws, and interests was now inflamed by religious antipathy; and the subduing and civilizing of that country seemed to become every day more difficult and impracticable.⁴

The English stereotype of Irishmen actually dated back to the twelfth century. Irish "paganism," in fact, provided the pretext for the invasion of Ireland by Henry II in 1170.

Twelfth-century Ireland was in a state of political turmoil. Various factions fought to unite Ireland under the rule of one clan. This internecine warfare weakened her in relation to her predatory neighbors and, as a result, the Normans perceived an opportunity to extend their influence. Strongbow (Richard FitzGilbert) landed in Ireland in 1169 with a band of Norman adventurers, captured Cork, and extended his influence throughout

most of Eastern Ireland. Henry, jealous not only of Irish independence but also of Strongbor's power, sought to press his own claim over the country. He turned to the Papacy for support.

The Irish occupied a unique place in Western Christendom. They were recognized as cultural and religious luminaries but were organizationally independent of the Roman Church. The Irish church was organized along somewhat different lines and, most important of all, it alone among the Western European churches paid no tribute to Rome.⁵ The Papal See was as jealous of Irish religious independence as Henry was of Irish political freedom. It did not prove difficult, therefore, to strike up an alliance. The Church agreed to sanction Henry's political ambitions in return for his support of their ecclesiastical designs. All that was needed was a casus belli for Henry to intervene in Irish affairs. This was found in due course.

Henry sent defamatory reports of Irish customs and religious practices to Rome and announced that he would undertake to subdue Ireland in order to bring civilization and Roman Christianity to its people. Henry claimed that the Irish were only nominally Christian and that what passed for religion in that country was heathen and evil. It led the people to degradation and ruin rather than uplifting them spiritually. His invention was successful, and Adrian IV--the only English Pope in history--issued

the so-called Bull Laudabiliter, sanctioning Henry's invasion. In the Bull, Adrian addressed Henry as "a Catholic Prince labouring to extend the borders of the Church and teach the truth of the Christian faith to a rude and unlettered people." The King swore "to enter Ireland in order to subdue the people and make them obedient to the laws, and that he is willing to pay from every house there one penny to St. Peter and to keep and preserve the rights of the churches in that land whole and inviolate."⁶ Thus Henry received his dominion and the Church theirs. The agreement was again sanctified by Pope Alexander III.⁷

Henry's claim to Ireland on the ground that its people were uncivilized and heathen was, no doubt, so contradictory to contemporary impressions of Ireland--which were still influenced by memories of her glorious achievements--that he felt the need to supply supporting evidence. To this end, Henry sent the Welsh monk Giraldus Cambrensis to Ireland with explicit instructions to gather or fabricate evidence in support of his claim. Cambrensis, who finished his History of the Conquest of Ireland in 1188, served his master well. He described the "wild Irish" as eaters of human flesh, and as murderers and thieves who revelled in sodomy and incest. Cambrensis dismissed their pretensions to Christianity as ridiculous. Irish religion was, in his opinion, a superstitious doctrine having no relationship to real Christianity. It consisted of pagan beliefs couched in nominally

Christian form and served only to guarantee the ascendancy of the bards and uncivilized priests over the people. The religion, rather than soothing the soul, incited the people to commit the most wanton cruelties and was largely responsible for the degraded character of the people. Ireland, Cambrensis concluded, was totally devoid of any civilization or moral enlightenment.

No realme, no nation, no state, nor commonwealth throughout all Europa, can yeeld more no so manie profitable lawes, directions, rules, examples and discourses...than doe the histories of this little Isle of Britanne or England. I would to God I might or were able to saiethe like or halfe like of Ireland, a countrie, the more barren of good things, the more replenished with actions of bloud, murther, and louthsome outrages; which to anie good reader are greivous and irksome to be read and considered.⁸

This view of Irish religious practice, originating with Henry II, and codified by Cambrensis, dominated British thinking about Irish religion down to the middle years of the nineteenth century. The Reformation merely added an additional differentiation to the differences already existing between the two peoples. These prior political, economic, and religious differences had proved sufficient in and of themselves to cause the Irish and the English to perceive each other as mortal enemies for centuries before the Reformation. The ecclesiastical distinctions imposed by the Reformation merely added new prejudices which inflamed old hatreds and further widened the gulf between the two peoples.

In Elizabethan times, the same image of the Irish prevailed. They were considered to be immoral in marriage, easily divorced, and ready to pick fights at the slightest provocation. They were accused of committing incest, sodomy, and other forms of cohabitation prohibited by their own church. Elizabethan travelers to Ireland reported that the priests encouraged such activity and thought nothing of breaking the vow of chastity themselves. The priests were described as being totally devoid of that moral nature so necessary in ministers of religion. They were uneducated, barbaric, and more concerned with secular power than with spiritual well-being. Edmund Spenser dismissed their pretensions to learning as perfidious falsifications:

For all Irish Priests, which now enjoy the Church livings, they are in a manner meer Lay-men, saving that they have taken Holy orders....They neither read Scriptures, nor Preach to the people, nor administer the Communion, but Baptism they do....

Spenser, certainly no admirer of Catholicism in general, distinguished Irish Catholicism from its Continental counterpart. The latter, he believed, at least followed a religion that possessed a codified body of dogma and made some pretence of showing concern with spiritual values. The former, taught by ignorant priests, was more a strange barbaric cult than a religion. The Irish, Spenser wrote, "all be Papists by their profession, but in the same so blindly and brutishly uninformed...that not one

amongst a hundred knoweth any ground of Religion, or an Article
of his faith...."¹⁰

Barnabe Rich, an early seventeenth-century visitor to Ireland, was even more vitriolic in his condemnation of Catholicism there. Rich wrote that "it is...pitifull indeed, that a people so many years professing Christianitie, should yet shew themselves
more Heathen like, than those, that never heard of God."¹¹ Like Spenser, Rich argued that no other Catholic country was so degraded and perverted in its practice of religion. "They are more foolish, superstitious in Irelande," he wrote, "than they be in ROME it self."¹² The fault, he clearly discerned, lay not with the people, but with the priests. The priests were "seducers," he maintained, and the professing laymen the "seduced." They were "ignorant, unlearned, abased and misled."¹³ They "have... despised and impugned the devine lawes of the living God" and led the innocent people into degradation. This, Rich argued, was their greatest crime.

I see a number of good...people, that are both capable of obedience and discipline, if they were not misled: but their minds (alas) are still poysoned with Popery, and what is he that is not touched with a kinde of compassion, to see the poore and silly people so seduced and carried away by this iuggline /juggling/ Jesuits?¹⁴

William Lithgow, a contemporary of Rich, was another author frequently quoted by later generations of Englishmen. Like Spenser and Rich, he condemned the practice of the priests as

mere superstition and lamented the effect of their immoral behavior upon the common people. The Irish, according to Lithgow, were "only titular Christians" and were "so ignorant in their superstitious profession of popery, that neither they, nor the greatest part of their priests know, or understand what the mystery of the mass is,..."¹⁵ The explanation for this ignorance, Lithgow believed, lay in the behavior of the priests, whose real interests lay in achieving material wealth and political power. As a result, the Irish people had become totally depraved.

The alehouse is their church, the Irish priests their consorts, their auditors be fill and fetch more, their text Spanish sack wine, their prayers carousing, their singing of psalms the whiffing of tobacco, their last blessing agua vitae, and all their doctrine sound drunkenness.¹⁶

Thus we see that the Elizabethan view of Ireland was characterized by the belief that the Irish were only nominally Christian, that their practices and doctrines bore no relation to real Catholicism--let alone the true faith--and that their priests were religious mercenaries who made money by keeping the people in a terrible state of ignorance and educating them to pernicious doctrines. The worst part of it all, however, was the violent inclination of the people, which, encouraged by the clergy, caused them to rebel. Lithgow wrote that "There are two intolerable

abuses of protection in that Kingdom: the one of thieves and woodkarnes [Irish guerilla fighters], the other of priests and papists." ¹⁷ It was accepted belief among Elizabethans that the woodkarnes only committed their atrocities at the urging of the ¹⁸ Priests. "These villainous robbers," Lithgow declared,

are but the hounds of the hunting priests, against what faction soever their malacious malignity is intended; partly for entertainment, partly for spleen, and lastly, for a general disturbance of that country and the priests' greater security and stay. ¹⁹

By Victorian times, only the Irish Tories and a segment of conservative Protestant opinion in Britain still perceived the Irish clergy to be the prime mover in Ireland's troubles. Led by Blackwood's Magazine, they were far from representative of majority opinion in Great Britain. For most Englishmen, the Repeal agitator had replaced the Priest as the central villain on the Irish scene.

In Britain itself, Catholicism became less suspect as the fear of a Jesuit coup declined. In 1829, most liabilities against Catholics were removed, and, in 1847, the Whig Government re-opened diplomatic relations with the Papal See. Throughout Victoria's reign, Englishmen manifested a growing tolerance towards Catholics, Jews, and other minorities, who were gradually admitted into the political and social life of the nation.

In the 1840's, Catholicism even became popular among an elite of British intellectuals. The writings of Newman, Pusey, Keble, and other members of the Oxford Movement eventually led to a greater reconciliation between the two churches.

If English and Continental Catholicism was becoming more respectable, Irish Catholicism most certainly was not. Even those English journals and newspapers that took a liberal view of Catholicism in general still regarded Irish Catholicism as a largely pernicious doctrine. Although they did not envisage the Repeal movement as a Papist plot, they remained convinced that the Irish clergy retarded the advancement of the Irish people. In the words of The Times, "they stand between civilisation and the Celt." ²¹ From Punch, Fraser's Magazine, the Herald, the Standard, the Morning Post, and the Illustrated London News, nineteenth-century Englishmen, like their Elizabethan forebears, learned to distinguish carefully between Irish Catholicism and Continental or English Catholicism. French, German, and English followers of the Roman Communion gradually received a new dignity by being described in the English journals and press as "Catholics." Irishmen, on the other hand, remained "papists."

The distinction was far from capricious. "Catholicism" referred to a doctrine that might be riddled with superstition

and responsive to the most minute commands of imperious Papal legates, but it was, nevertheless, an ancient Christian religion that had produced a great culture. "Papism," on the other hand, meant everything that was undignified and shameful. It was perverse, hardly Christian, and was responsible for much of the degradation of the Irish people.

Fraser's Magazine, which represented in its articles this distinction made by the British people between Irish and continental Catholicism, exclaimed in 1845 that there was no fear the that/Protestant Church could fail in Britain. Only in Italy and Ireland, Fraser's argued, was the Catholic Church totally secure and immune to Reformation.

Italy and Ireland are the most uncivilised countries in Europe--uncivilised, we mean, in regard to the general intelligence, not of the priests and of the people. The former do not want for learning, but it is all of one class; the latter are sharp enough where their immediate interests, or supposed interests are concerned, but they are absolutely without exception, the mere creatures of impulse, strong in their passions, idle in their habits, superstitious to the last degree, and thoroughly priest ridden.²²

The Irish claim to Christianity was thus dismissed. Their religion was seen as a superstitious cult that, if it was not identical to voodoo, was nevertheless close to the primitive cults prevailing in Africa. Punch and other journals made this comparison explicit and concluded that any people so easily

deluded and deceived by scoundrels masquerading as priests, were hardly worthy of receiving the status of British citizens. One pamphleteer concluded: "Let everything possible be done for the people, and all will be in vain as long as they are left under the influence of popery...."²³

* * *

If Irish religious development was reduced in British eyes to mere superstition, Irish cultural achievements were dismissed as pure exaggeration. Relying upon false and prejudiced accounts of early Ireland, British historians dismissed the Irish claim to have contributed to the intellectual and cultural development of Western Europe out of hand.

The standard model of Irish history, which lasted well into the nineteenth century, was fully developed by the beginning of the seventeenth century. Two arguments were central to this model. The first, and perhaps the more important, stressed the belief that until the Norman invasion, there had never been any recognizable civilization in Ireland. Her inhabitants were described as barbaric cannibals, hardly removed from the primitive condition of Stone Age savages. Historians subscribed to this interpretation with such striking uniformity that a nineteenth-century "revisionist" historian was led to exclaim: "To take a survey of the English authors, who have

wrote of Ireland, such as Spenser , Stainhurst, Campion and others, sometimes one would imagine, that they were treating
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of a nation of cannibals or Hottentots...."

Cambrensis, the first of these early writers, set the tone for later historians. Stainhurst, a fifteenth-century visitor to Ireland, merely echoed his views. Barnabe Rich and Edmund Spenser also denigrated Irish civilization and dismissed their prior cultural achievements as imaginary. Rich, writing in 1617, claimed that before the Norman invasion, the Irish had "lived like Barbarians, in Woods, in Bogges, and in desolate places, without politique Lawe, or civil government, neither embracing Religion, Law, nor mutuelle
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love." Spenser concurred. Even in the sixteenth century, he wrote, they continued to live in the same manner. His description of the Irish is worth quoting.

Marry those be the most barbaric and loathy conditions of any people (I think) under Heaven....they do use all the beastly behaviour that may be, they oppress all men, they spoil as well the subject, as the enemy; they steal, they are cruel and bloody, full of revenge, and delighting in deadly execution, licentious, swearers and blasphemers, common ravishers of women, and murtherers of children.²⁶

Spenser explained their failure to develop any civilization by blaming their nomadic way of life, their customs, dress, and bards, all of which worked, he claimed, to deter the Irish

from settling down and taking up the habits of perseverance and industry which had made their English neighbors so wealthy and powerful. ²⁷ It was England's mission, he declared, to bring the Irish "from their delight of licentiousness and barbarism unto love of goodness and civility." ²⁸

The second primary element of the English interpretation of Irish history concerned the periodic rebellions of the Irish people against British rule. Historians refused to admit that such insurgencies were motivated by English oppression, but rather explained them in terms of the Irish dislike of England's attempt to bring order, tranquillity, and industry to that country. We have already met with this aspect of English historiography in Macaulay, who was merely reiterating an interpretation which had been developed as far back as the sixteenth century. ²⁹ Both Spenser and Rich had explained Irish rebellions in terms of the natural proclivity of the Irish for violence. When these passions were stirred by the inflamed oratory of the bards or priests, they argued, rebellion quickly ensued. Rich commented that "That which is hateful to all the world besides, is only beloved and imbraced by the Irish, ³⁰ I mean civil warres and domesticall discentions."

English historians used the same logic to explain the great revolutions of the seventeenth century. Sir John Temple's

analysis of the rebellion of 1640 is classic. Temple, in his history of that rebellion, argued that the English had treated the Irish people well and accepted them as their friends. When the English were least expecting betrayal, he exclaimed, the perverse Irish rose up and perpetrated "their horrid cruelties, in most barbarously murdering, or otherwise destroying, many thousands of men, women, and children, peaceably settled, and securely intermixed among them, and that without provocation...."³¹

Another English historian, writing of the Rebellion of 1689, could find no legitimate cause for the uprising and was therefore prompted to call it the "Unnatural Rebellion." The author of this history asserted that the Irish people were, when Henry first encountered them,

as uncultivated as their Lands, being generally void of all manner of civility, governed by no settled Laws, but being like beasts of Prey, biting and devouring one another... Murthers, Rapes, and the most notorious Robberies, and other Acts of Inhumanity and Barbarism raging amongst them without controul or means of redress.³²

Nevertheless, this anonymous historian asserted, the English had thought that their moderating and civilizing influence had gone a long way in converting these barbarians into civilized beings. Unfortunately, they were mistaken.

The English thought themselves secure in the friendship of their Irish tenants, Servants...whom they had

endeavoured to oblige by all the Kindnesses of Friendship; so that when the Fire first began to break out, some had their recourse to those they esteemed their friends, for Protection....But, Oh Inhumane and Perfidious! these confiding innocents, were by their Irish friends, either betrayed into the hands of other Rebels, or most inhumanely Butcher'd by their own hands....Irish tenants and Servants made a Sacrifice of their English landlords and Masters.³³

The Irish, he concluded, were "barbarians with a thirst for blood." They must be brought into submission and then be educated in the ways of civilized society by the English soldiers and settlers in Ireland.

This interpretation of Irish history was equally popular in the eighteenth century. The writings of the philosopher and historian David Hume were, in many respects, representative of English scholarship on Ireland in that century. In his multi-volume History of England, Hume accepted the earlier historians at their word. He asserted that "The Irish, from the beginning of time, had been buried in the most profound barbarism and ignorance...."³⁵ The British invasion in the twelfth century was therefore a noble act, because it brought with it the rudiments of Christianity and civilization. Hume lamented the fact that the sustained and generous English effort to raise the level of Celtic society had met with great failure. The Irish remained imperfectly converted to Christianity and continued to be as barbarous as they were in the days of Henry II. As a result,

Hume argued, the English were compelled to resort to force to govern the country and make the Irish behave in an acceptable manner. Britain was forced to carry out a revolution in Ireland to insure that the Irish people would become civilized. "It was previously necessary," Hume wrote, "to abolish the Irish customs which supplied the place of laws, and which were calculated to keep that people forever in a state of barbarism and disorder."³⁶ It was England's duty, Hume reasoned, to substitute good customs and good laws for bad ones, and to raise the Irish people to the level of the other European peoples.

Thus, the views of Cambrensis, Spenser, and Rich were transmitted almost intact to Victorians. Later historians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as Sir John Temple, Maurice Regan, David Hume, and a host of others, never questioned the validity of these early authors but, rather, transformed their observations into dogma, reiterated their interpretations when analyzing new historical situations, and provided the interpretation with additional confirmation.

Such scholarship was motivated by more than mere historical curiosity about Ireland. Most of it was decidedly polemical and was written to serve a particular political purpose. Historians, pamphleteers, parliamentarians, and journalists drew arguments from this body of "historical knowledge"

to support their contention that Ireland should be governed by force, her Church suppressed, and her people denied the liberties that all Englishmen were coming to achieve. This historical model of Ireland provided an interpretation of the Irish character and behavior that gave Victorian Englishmen intent on blocking reform and democratization in Ireland ammunition to refute the arguments of Repealers.

Historians were not slow in acknowledging the importance of such an historical interpretation to Englishmen. Even pro-Irish historians recognized its influence on public opinion. Samuel Smiles, an English historian sympathetic to the Irish cause, urged Irishmen to study their own history. "It is necessary that Irish history should be known and studied," Smiles argued, "for we are persuaded that there only is the true key to the present position to be found--there only are the secret springs of Irish discontent to be traced."³⁷ And there only, Smiles concluded, was the battle against British oppression to be won. Irish historians heeded his plea. Their attempt to combat the English model of Irish history, by refuting the validity of its evidence and challenging the assumptions upon which it was based, placed them in the forefront of a raging controversy which had great political implications.

The "revisionist" thesis of Irish history had actually

been promulgated in the century before. One of the earliest historians to take up the cause was Thomas Comerford. His History of Ireland from the Earliest Accounts of Time to the Invasion of the English under King Henry II was written with the expressed intention of refuting the prevalent English view of medieval Ireland. Comerford declared in the dedication that his history was undertaken to

free the Antient People of Ireland from the vile and scandalous aspersions cast upon them by prejudiced and mercenary writers, who have, and still continue to write with as much ignorance as malice, against both the old and new race of Irish, who, in the worst of time, have still kept up to their antient character, of being a worthy, brave and generous people.³⁸

Comerford found the explanation for the deliberate English attempt to falsify Irish history in their need to explain away and justify the cruelties of the first invaders. Their cruelty and oppression of the Irish were still in evidence, he argued, because the image of the Irish as bloodthirsty and uncivilized still dominated the British mind. Comerford hoped that his history might begin to cause a revision of that image and contribute in its own way to the Irish struggle for justice and equality.

The most influential revisionist historian of the eighteenth century was Edmund Burke. Whether Burke actually wrote the history of Ireland attributed to him (a question of histori-

cal controversy) does not detract from his efforts to combat the monolithic model of Irish history, of which Hume was the greatest proponent. ³⁹

In the first place, Burke was well known for his struggle against the administration of Trinity College, Dublin, which required that all students be examined on their knowledge of the atrocities committed by Irish Catholics against Protestants before they could receive a degree. Burke proved that the mass of this documentation was falsified or biased and could not be accepted as legitimate historical evidence. His research and agitation on the subject resulted in the University's striking the requirement from the curriculum.

Burke was also in close touch with native Irish historians. He corresponded with Charles O'Connor and John Curry. The former was an authority on ancient Ireland and a co-founder of the Catholic Association. The latter, an eminent Catholic physician, was deeply interested in seventeenth-century Irish history. All three worked together to refute the English interpretation of the Irish Rebellion of 1640. They aspired to prove that the Irish Catholics had rebelled against Britain because of the political, economic, and religious oppression to which they were subject, and not, as Hume and others asserted, because they were such savages that they were unable to perceive the beneficence of British rule. They hoped to demonstrate that the slavery of the distinguished race of Irishmen was a grotesque

anomaly. In addition, they especially hoped to invalidate the arguments which had been employed to erect disabilities against Ireland's Catholics.

Burke was especially influential in his role as catalyst. Through his careful and copious notes on Irish history, his support of Irish scholarship, and his advocacy of Irish historians, he provided an impetus to the revisionist school of Irish history which flourished after his death.⁴⁰

By the turn of the century, Irish and British historians were attacking the English model of Irish history with a vengeance. By unearthing new documents, and challenging the validity of formerly accepted interpretations, they began to re-write Irish history in a manner more in harmony with Irish appeals for equality. A major contribution to this cause was the five-volume history of Ireland from the time of the invasion to the Union, written by Francis Plowden and published in 1803.

In the preface to his history, Plowden advanced the argument that few English historians before the Union could be called unbiased and accurate in their representation of Irish history. Plowden wrote:

It has been a pitiful prejudice in too many English writers, to endeavor to throw discredit upon the early part of Irish history. That many fabulous accounts are to be found in the Irish annals, is true! but no less is it, that the English historians superabound with gross and wilful misrepresentations of the Irish annals.⁴¹

Plowden argued that his history was an attempt to separate Irish fact from English fiction and to present a forthright account of Irish history. His major thesis was that the rebellions of the Irish were the direct result of their exploitation and oppression at the hands of the British. He also argued that the pitiful state of contemporary Ireland was not due to the indolent characteristics of the Irish people but rather to the centuries of English policy calculated to crush the economic base of Ireland. ⁴² Plowden's arguments were buttressed by a mass of carefully digested and well-presented evidence.

His thesis was popularized in Ireland in the writing of Matthew Carey. In his Vindiciae Hibernicae, published in 1823, Carey argued that

The history of Ireland is almost one solid mass of falsehood and imposture, erected, particularly during the seventeenth century, on the basis of fraud and perjury so obvious, so stupid, and so flagitious [sic] that, to the most superficial observer it must be a subject of inexpressible astonishment how it ever gained currency....⁴³

These myths, lies, and falsifications, Carey argued, served to maintain the Protestant Ascendancy in power. In a frontal assault on their power, he asserted that

The powerful influence of the oligarchy in Ireland, which triumphantly styles itself the Protestant Ascendancy, has been erected on the basis of frauds of this portion of the history of Ireland [medieval Ireland], whereby they have been enabled to enslave,

oppress, and plunder their fellow-subjects at their pleasure: and...whenever the craft was in danger by any serious efforts to dispell the mists of prejudice, they have spared neither pains nor expense to counteract the Godlike purpose, and to perpetuate the falsehoods, on the basis of which their predominance was originally established.⁴⁴

Between 1800 and 1840, a host of Irish historians took up the cudgels of the Irish cause and proposed an interpretation of Irish history in direct contradiction to that propounded by Hume. Both popular and serious historians attempted by their scholarship to pierce the armor of British prejudice. In Ireland, historical societies flourished, and the torrent of writing they produced was given wide public exposure by the publicity they received from the Repeal press. The Repeal Association even established prizes for Irish historical scholarship and the Nation subsidized both original historical research and publication of historical documents.

In Britain, the revisionist thesis also met with great success. British historians generally recognized that the writings of Cambrensis and Rich, Spenser and Hume, were erroneous in their interpretation and biased in the evidence they chose to support that interpretation. Historical models, however, take time to penetrate and re/shape popular images. The time lag with reference to Irish history was particularly great because of the

strong resistance to change in the Englishman's stereotyped image of the Irishman. While Irish scholarship had influenced the thought of serious British historians, most British intellectuals, let alone ordinary Englishmen, still appeared to subscribe to a model of Irish history based primarily on Hume.

British popular historians, of whom Macaulay was the greatest example, still frequently relied on the inaccurate and even malicious accounts of the earlier historians. Like Macaulay, they found support for their anti-Irish, anti-Repeal positions in the supposedly barbaric nature of the Celt, as evidenced in his early tribal customs. The early Irish bards and their poetry, made infamous by Spenser and Rich, were frequently referred to by them. The Scottish Reverend Samuel Burdy, for example, whose history of Ireland appeared in 1817, reported:

Acts of violence, indeed accompanied by horrible instances of treachery and perjury...were too frequent among them, to which they were excited by their national music and songs, that tended, instead of alleviating, to arouse the vindictive passions of the people.⁴⁵

It was not very difficult, Burdy found, to explain later Irish outbreaks of violence and insurrection in terms of the same cause. According to another nineteenth-century British historian, the description of early Ireland as a "field of blood" and "a land of barbarism," whose inhabitants were "mere aborigines,"

remained unchanged in the most widely read histories.

These historical descriptions seemed to reinforce the unfavorable assessment of the Irish people made by many visitors to that country. One such visitor, Thomas Walford, who published his description of Ireland in 1818, concluded:

The effects of those early events may indeed still be traced by the modern tourist; and even the historian of contemporary [sic] transactions is obliged to coincide with the elegant Littleton when he observed, that the songs of the bard had usually more power to incite and inflame, than the music of the harp to soften or mitigate the ferocity of the Chief; so that even this recreation, which seems to indicate something gentle and approaching politeness in the temper of the Irish, contributed to keep up that turbulent spirit, averse to order and peace....⁴⁷

Another Victorian traveler wrote:

It is not much above two hundred years since Ireland and the adjacent Hebrides...were in a state of perfect barbarity. The inhabitants of Ireland...who flourished in the latter part of the sixteenth century, were in the habit of eating flesh raw. In Ireland, no regard was paid to written laws. Very little respect was paid to English magistrates. The Irish respected none but their chiefs and the clergy. The most numerous, fierce, and best allied families, carried fire and sword through the estates of their enemies....The great nerve and neck of this ferocity and barbarism was broken by the arms of Queen Elizabeth; but civilization was first introduced into Ireland by James, her successor.⁴⁸

Magazines, journals, and newspapers still largely functioned in terms of this model of Irish history. The Times, for ex-

ample, asserted that "Henry II found Ireland a nation of savages
tearing one another to pieces." ⁴⁹ The newspaper insisted that it
was only by means of the generous English attempt to bring civil-
ization and prosperity to Ireland that the Irish had progressed
at all from their barbarous state. Gentlemen's Magazine, a
widely read journal that popularized scientific and archeological
research, printed papers and reports delivered at conferences.
Those which referred to Ireland were still structured in terms
of the unrevised historical model--and indeed, they were offered
as proof of its validity. In 1846, for example, the magazine
carried the minutes of a meeting of the British Archeological
Insitute. The topic of the meeting was Celtic art. The lecturer,
in summing up the exhibit, concluded that "The decorations are
of the rudest character, consisting of circular, wave, vandyked,
and hatched lines. No imitations of animal or vegetable forms
occur; indeed, the incapacity of the Celt for any higher kind of
art is shown in their rude imitations...." ⁵⁰ Over and over again,
such items crept into the British press and journals. The public
was still treated to a model of Irish history and culture that
confirmed their stereotypic view of the Irish character. Irish
cultural accomplishments were dismissed, and with the dismissal
went the chance that the stereotyped image could be shown to be
false.

The final control variable was that of race. The Irish were white Europeans, largely of Celtic extraction, as were a significant proportion of the British people. One might expect, therefore, that it would prove very difficult to differentiate ethnically between the colonizer and the colonized. Once again, this point was overlooked. Irish racial affinities with the British were dismissed in the same manner as their religious and cultural similarities.

Although the cartoons and drawings of the illustrated press and journals portrayed the Irish in a manner that bore a striking resemblance to contemporary illustrations of African natives, the racial differentiation of the Irish was not really developed during the period under study.⁵¹ Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, as in previous centuries, Englishmen were divided in their opinions as to whether the characteristics of the Irish peasant were due to racial causes or were really a function of his environment and history. The distinction does not seem to have been important to them, because both views were often expressed in the same source. The Times, for example, gave evidence of this kind of confused thinking. In many of the editorials quoted in this study, the newspaper referred to the habits of the peasantry as arising from the pernicious institutions and customs governing their social, religious, and political behavior. At other times, leader writers attributed these same

characteristics to their Celtic racial background.

It was only in the late 1840's that Englishmen really became concerned with the question of racial versus environmental causation. By that time, the great majority of writers who continued to regard the Irish as an inferior and uncivilized people adopted the racial explanation. In Social Darwinism they found a convenient and evidently respectable theory that could add "scientific" validity to their arguments.

Dr. Robert Knox, Professor of Anatomy at the Edinburgh College of Surgeons, provided an early example of the use to which racial doctrines were put. In his volume, The Races of Man, published in 1850, Knox argued that "Race is everything. Literature, science, art, in a word, civilization depend on it." Knox refused to believe that the "primitive races"--especially the Irish--could ever become civilized. The major thesis of the book was that the survival of civilization depended on the outcome of the racial struggle between Saxon and Celt. The Celt, he argued, was the antagonist. He possessed a "furious fanaticism: a love of war and disorder, a hatred for order and patient industry; no accumulative habits; restless, treacherous, uncertain..." and he strove to destroy the Saxon civilization. Knox believed the two major battlefields of this struggle to be in Britain and the United States. In Britain, the Irish agitators and laborers who caused dissension and disorder were the vanguard of the Celtic hordes.

In America, Knox argued, it was the "Know-Nothings," composed primarily of Irish immigrants, who threatened to destroy Saxon civilization.⁵⁴

Other British authors equated the character of the Irishmen in Britain to that of the Negro in the United States. Edward A. Freeman, a well-known and respected British historian, advanced this view during his tour of America in 1831. While in the United States, he proposed that "the best remedy for whatever is amiss in America would be if every Irishman should kill a negro and be hanged for it."⁵⁵ Freeman later wrote in his memoirs that all over the country people had approved of his suggestion. "Those who dissented," he wrote,

dissented most commonly on the ground that, if there were no Irish and no negroes, they would not be able to get any domestic servants. The most serious objection came from Rhode Island, where they have no capital punishment, and where they had no wish to keep the Irish at the public expense.⁵⁶

Perhaps the most fully developed application of Social Darwinism to the Irish people appeared in a book entitled What Science is Saying About Ireland. The anonymous author of this work, which was published in 1881, attacked the British Radicals for suggesting that the Irish people should be given the same privileges as Englishmen. "John Stuart Mill," the author complained,

has much to answer for in the matter of our ignorant modes of governing savage and barbarous races of men.... he could never understand the doctrine of heredity,

which teaches, amongst other things, the almost impossibility of altering the nature and character of savage and barbarous people, and that animal character is always observed to accompany an animal and strongly prognathous cast of features.

"The aboriginal Irish Celt" was described as "out at elbows, poor, slovenly, and half barbarous" and inferior to many of the Negroes of Africa. Some men of science, the author asserted, considered some of the agricultural Negroes of Africa to be higher on the evolutionary scale than the aboriginal Celt. They looked on these Negroes, he argued, "as representing humanity in a state of childhood, developed only a short way, but still so far rightly developed...whilst they look upon the aboriginal Irish Celt as being wrongly developed...." These tribes were definitely superior to the Irish, he reasoned, "inasmuch as they know it is good for them to be coerced....The only chance for a savage to behave well and improve is by his being ruled well and strongly." 58 59

As a result, the author concluded, it would be lunacy to expect the Irishmen to be governed by the same rules as Englishmen, Scotsmen, and Welshmen. He continued:

If we possessed an island off the coast of England, inhabited by Negroes, would those well-meaning political gentlemen...who are supposed to form an influential part of the present Government, consider that these negroes ought to have the same political institutions as England, and be governed in the same way?⁶⁰

In most respects the British image of the Irish people was much closer to their later image of the black African native than

it was to their image of Englishmen. The British maintained that, like the African, the Irish people had neither culture nor civilization before the enlightening influence of the British Empire made itself felt. Both produced art that was primitive, possessed customs that prevented the development of civilization, and were warlike and ferocious. Both held naive religious beliefs, based on superstition, and were entirely in the power of the witch doctors or the priests. Both were in great need of the moderating influence of paternalistic British rule. Both were the White Man's Burden.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 10

1. See, for example, Woodham-Smith, op. cit., p. 18, who attributed the Anglo-Irish animosities to differences of race abetted by differences of religion.
2. Macaulay, op. cit., I, 28.
3. John Temple, The Irish Rebellion; or, An History of the Attempts of the Irish Papists to Extirpate the Protestants in the Kingdom of Ireland; Together With the Cruelties and ... Massacres Which Ensued Thereupon (London: J. Brindley, 1746), p. 19.
4. David Hume, History of England (London: T. Cadell, 1778), V, 397-98.
5. See Edmund Curtis, A History of Ireland (5th ed.; London: Methuen & Co., 1950), pp. 47-58, for a discussion of the designs of the papacy upon Ireland.
6. Ibid., p. 57.
7. Ibid.
8. Giraldus Cambrensis, "The Irish Historie Composed and Written by Giraldus Cambrensis, and Translated into English ... by John Hooker"Originally written in 1188. In Raphael Holinshed et al, The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles Vol. II (London, 1587), The Epistle Dedicatore.
9. Spenser, op. cit., p. 229.
10. Ibid.
11. Rich, op. cit., p. 12.
12. Ibid., Epistle to the Reader, p. iv.
13. Ibid., p. 87.
14. Ibid., Epistle to the Reader, p. ii.

15. Lithgow, op. cit., p. 313.
16. Ibid., p. 327.
17. Ibid., p. 317.
18. See the works of Spenser et al already quoted; F. F. Covington, Jr., "Elizabeth Notions of Ireland," Texas Review, Vol. 6 (1921), pp. 222-46; Cyril Benjamin Falls, Elizabeth's Irish Wars (London: Methuen & Co., 1950); David Beers Quinn, "Edward Walghe's 'Conjectures' Concerning the State of Ireland /1552/," Irish Historical Studies, Vol. V, No. 2 (Sept. 1947), pp. 303-23.
19. Lithgow, op. cit., pp. 317-18.
20. See Woodward, op. cit., passim.
21. The Times, Oct. 14, 1846.
22. Fraser's Magazine, XXXII (July-Dec. 1845), 250.
23. Page, op. cit., p. 20.
24. T. Comerford, The History of Ireland from the Earliest Account of Time, to the Invasion of the English Under Henry II (Dublin: E. Rider, 1754), p. viii.
25. Rich, op. cit., p. 18.
26. Spenser, op. cit., p. 225.
27. Ibid., pp. 202-25.
28. Ibid., p. 214.
29. Macaulay, op. cit., passim.
30. Rich, op. cit., p. 18.
31. Temple, op. cit., p. 11.
32. Anonymous, An Abstract on the Unnatural Rebellion and Barbarous Massacre of the Protestants, in the Kingdom of Ireland (London: Richard Janeway, 1689), p. 5.

33. Ibid., p. 13.
34. Ibid., p. 19.
35. Hume, op. cit., I, 424.
36. Ibid., VI, 58.
37. Samuel Smiles, op. cit., p. iv.
38. Comerford, op. cit., p. iv, Dedication.
39. See John C. Weston, Jr., "Edmund Burke's Irish History: A Hypothesis," PMLA, LXXVII, No. 4, Part I, pp. 397-403.
40. Ibid. The article contains interesting information on Burke's historical interests and the sources upon which he based his opinions. See also Thomas H. D. Mahoney, Edmund Burke and Ireland (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960); for Irish revisionist history after Burke, see Donald MacCartney, "The Writing of History in Ireland, 1800-30." Irish Historical Studies, Vol. X, No. 40 (Sept. 1957), pp. 347-63. This article is both tantalizing and unsatisfactory, but contains a useful bibliography. To see the similarities in the revision of national history by colonial peoples, these Irish histories should be compared with those of other colonial peoples in Africa and Asia. A brief treatment of their recent historical scholarship is to be found in R. C. Majumdar, "Nationalist Historians," in Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, ed. C. H. Phillips (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 416-28.
41. Francis P. Plowden, An Historical Review of the State of Ireland from the Invasion of that Country under Henry II to Its Union with Great Britain (London: F. C. & J. Rivington, 1803), p. 5.
42. Ibid., p. 5, and passim.
43. Mathew Carey, Vindiciae Hibernicae (Philadelphia: H. C. Carey & Lea, 1823), p. 2.

44. Ibid., p. 21.
45. Samuel Burdy, The History of Ireland, From the Earliest Ages to the Union (Edinburgh: Doig & Sterling, 1817), p. 5.
46. Robert Montgomery Martin, Ireland Before and After the Union with Great Britain (London: W. W. Orr & Co., 1843), p. 1.
47. Walford, op. cit., p. 57.
48. Hall, op. cit., II, 309-10.
49. The Times, Jan. 21, 1847.
50. Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. 180 (July 1846), p. 77.
51. See L. P. Curtis, Jr., The Anglo-Saxons and Celts (Bridgeport, Conn.: The Conference on British Studies, 1968), for a treatment of racism in the 1880's and 90's.
52. Robert Knox, The Races of Man: A Fragment (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1850), p. 7.
53. Ibid., pp. 26-27.
54. Ibid., p. 7.
55. Edward A. Freeman, Lectures to American Audiences (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1882), p. 200.
56. William Richard Wood Stephens, The Life and Letters of Edward A. Freeman (London: Macmillan, 1895), II, 234-42.
57. Anonymous, What Science Is Saying About Ireland (2d ed., rev.; Kingston-Upon-Hull: Leng & Co., 1882), p. 26.
58. Ibid., p. 15.
59. Ibid., p. 22.
60. Ibid., pp. 22-23.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

When we were savage, fierce and wild,
She came as a mother to her child.
She gently raised us from the slime,
And kept our hands from Hellish crime,
And she sent us to Heaven in her own good time.

.....

So Irishmen forget the past,
And think of the day that's coming fast.
When we shall all be civilized,
Neat and clean and well-advised.
Oh! won't Mother England be surprised!

Irish Folksong

In Chapters Six through Nine we examined the operation of the de-humanization syndrome. As manifested in arguments based on the stereotypic image of Irishmen, it provided rationalizations capable of harmonizing the apparent contradictions between the values of British society and the effects of British rule in Ireland. These rationalizations, when codified, formed a model of Irish affairs that was functional in defending British policy from the criticisms of dissident Irishmen and effective in discrediting the movement through which these criticisms were articulated.

The civilizing-mission syndrome, also manifested in arguments based on the stereotypic image of the Irish, and developed in the English interpretation of Irish history, was equally

functional in reducing tension generated by Britain's Irish policy. Each syndrome was, however, addressed to a different dilemma. Dehumanization was primarily defensive. It countered Irish objections to British policy to British satisfaction, but offered no positive interpretation of that policy. It merely neutralized Irish objections. In contrast, the principal function of the civilizing-mission syndrome was not so much to neutralize Irish objections, but rather to legitimize British rule in Ireland in terms of the avowed values of British society.

So far, our discussion of the contents of the British image of Ireland has really only touched on those characteristics of the Irish people that the British found were functional in explaining away the impoverished state of Ireland, the incidence of agrarian outrage, and the phenomenon of Repeal. There were, in reality, a host of other characteristics, some of which were favorable, and others of which carried pejorative connotations that filled out the image.

The unfavorable adjectives used to describe PADDY usually stressed his stubborn and perverse nature. He was frequently described as cunning and rash, willful and self-indulgent, stubborn, undisciplined, and superstitious. Englishmen also characterized him as ignorant, impetuous, unambitious, carefree, dirty, and always inebriated.

There was, however, a more pleasing side to his nature as well. One English traveler to Ireland declared:

Whatever difference of opinion there may be concerning the qualities of the Irish head, I think there is none concerning those of the Irish heart. The feelings of this people are universally allowed to be quick, warm, and generous....They are the most easy to win with kindness, the most susceptible to every kind of guest.¹

Travelers and politicians acknowledged that Irishmen were charming, hospitable, intelligent, brave, and generous to a fault. They were also recognized to be gifted with an innate sense of rhythm and a love for song, which enabled them to while away the hours and be exceptionally pleasing when entertaining guests. Not infrequently, PADDY was also characterized as good-natured and handsome, happy if not content, and imaginative. His chastity and piety were renowned.

The traits ascribed to the Irishman varied, of course, from observer to observer. Some found themselves unable to find any redeeming qualities in his Celtic character. Others found almost as many pleasing aspects in his nature as qualities which they deprecated. However, most Englishmen tended to emphasize one or two traits to the exclusion of the others. Rarely did any observer attempt to present a complete image of the Irish character. Such a picture only emerged from the total-

ity of polemical writings, editorials, speeches, and portrayals of Irishmen in stories and dramas. The image was far from monolithic and was not at all times logically consistent. Nevertheless, the perceptive student is struck by the fact that the general description of the Irish character that emerged remained fairly consistent in its content during the first fifty years of the Union.

This picture of PADDY emphasized both the complimentary and derogatory characteristics already alluded to. The most interesting aspect of the image was the juxtaposition the English made between these two sides of the Irish character. The Times exclaimed:

There never were so many contradictions imagined as are really to be found in the national character of Ireland--generosity and meanness, courage and cowardice, honour and knavery, and the most conspicuous of all, the keenest possible perception of the ludicrous in others, coupled with the greatest possible display of it in their own persons.²

The contradictions of the Celt which left The Times somewhat confused were often remarked upon by other British observers as well. Englishmen generally believed that the Celtic character was all the more exasperating because of the contradiction⁶ and the fact that, in their eyes, the pleasing characteristics of Irishmen were most frequently perverted by being

used to achieve undesirable ends.

Macaulay, for example, admitted that "In natural courage and intelligence [the Irish]...ranked high." But when coupled with their other characteristics, he argued, they only boded ill for the Irish. The result, Macaulay exclaimed, was that "The Irish...were distinguished by qualities which tend to make men interesting rather than prosperous...They are an ardent and impetuous race, easily moved to tears or laughter, to fury or to love..." but never to diligence and thrift. Englishmen argued that the native intelligence of the Irish, which might be employed to achieve wealth or honored status, was only used by PADDY to get something for nothing. His courage was transformed into foolhardiness by reason of its association with his ignorance and naïveté. Similarly, his charm and imagination were linked to guile. Victorians delighted in stories told about Irishmen who plotted and worked all day to cheat someone out of a paltry sum, when, with the same expenditure of energy, they could have trebled the sum by honest labor.

Irish bravery was said to be perverted by Irish rashness. The English never doubted the fearlessness of the Celt, but only lamented that he was brave in brawls with fellow-Irishmen, fierce when resisting British rule, but cowardly in face of the encroachments of Repealers and priests. PADDY fought for all

the wrong reasons and achieved nothing as a result.

Irish piety was also described as perverse. Rather than worshipping God, he obeyed the priests. As a result, piety degenerated into superstition and strengthened the hold of the clergy over the people. PADDY's good nature and generally contented state were equally reprehensible because they made him forget his penury and sapped any initiative necessary to raise his standard of living. PADDY, Englishmen concluded, more closely resembled an obstreperous child than he did a mature adult.

Like an intelligent and charming child, he possessed endearing qualities that might make him successful when grown-up. His charm, his wit, and his imagination, coupled with his good looks and native intelligence, all boded well for the future. But like many children, he lacked self-discipline and had a limited span of attention. Like the spoiled child of a wealthy parent, he was rash and self-indulgent, wanted freedom without responsibility, and rewards without labor. He expected, as if by birthright, to be cared for and coddled without the least exertion on his part. PADDY was a prima donna, to whom all attention must be paid. He needed to be flattered and regaled, but never criticised or punished. His lack of concentration, his stubbornness, and his carefree contentment were reminiscent of a boisterous youngster. In his love of dirt and total disregard for neatness in dress and habits, he reminded Victorians

of an untrained child, revelling in nature, unrepelled by dirt and filth, and manifesting none of the fastidiousness so carefully cultivated by his elders.

PADDY's curiosity was also thought to resemble that of a tot, and his ignorance that of a child untrained by the rigors of formal education. The English saw his credulity, which made him impotent when confronted by crafty priests and Repealers, as the naïveté of an innocent child who questions little of what he is told and holds a simple and unsophisticated picture of God and religion. The Irish passion for color and display, the national love of bombast, buffoonery, and impassioned oratory, were merely a child's love of ceremony and parades. It was form and not content that appealed to PADDY.

Children, of course, differ greatly among themselves. Some are quiet, shy, and demure, well-behaved and affectionate, while others are impish and unruly, uncontrollable, and obstinate, and given to defiance and disobedience. Unfortunately, PADDY seemed to Englishmen to be more like this latter type of child. His rashness and querulous nature were that of an impish and aggressive child. He had no sense of discipline, no sense of proper timing, and no sense of proportion. Like a naughty child, he disobeyed his elders for the sake of defiance, resisted their commands for the sake of resistance,

and engaged in a combat of wills merely to assert his own personality. However, his triumphs were pyrrhic victories, in that they cost time and energy which, if spent in the ways recommended by his elders, would have resulted in greater and more meaningful rewards.

Like the naughty child, PADDY wanted his own way all of the time. Neither consideration for the rights of others, nor more pressing or compelling needs could convince him to alter his stand. PADDY expected to achieve his ends by the labor of others. Like an impish child, he depended on his charm and guile, rather than his own exertions, to work wonders in his favor. He was furious when his requests were not granted and his commands not obeyed. PADDY expected that England would succor his every desire and pamper his every whim. Even when his clamor brought him success, he was not satisfied, but would complain for the sake of complaining and throw temper tantrums to force his point. Give him an inch and he would take a foot. Without any notion of discipline or restraint and totally impervious to the rights of others, he remained intemperate, carefree, and, in general, willing to meet the world only on his own terms.

The metaphor of the naughty child is not a latter-day invention coined to illustrate the British perception of the Irish, but rather was employed for several centuries by the British

themselves to characterize the behavior of the Irish Celt. As far back as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Ireland frequently appeared as a younger brother or sister in English political allegories.⁴ Jonathan Swift, for one, thought that the English perceived Ireland as an "unwanted step-child" and the Irish people as unruly adolescents.⁵ By the middle of the nineteenth century, the metaphor of the child became widely accepted and was frequently employed by Englishmen to explain the nature of the Irish people.

References to the childlike qualities of the Irish Celt abound in pamphlets, speeches, parliamentary debates, and newspaper columns. In political cartoons, some of which have been reproduced in this study, the Irish were almost invariably sketched as short and pudgy, with childlike, half-formed features. Often the Irish were depicted as actual children, dressed in infants' togs, and surrounded by a youngster's playthings.

The English did not fail to make the metaphor completely explicit. For example, James Carr, the author of a popular description of Ireland, wrote:

Pat stands before him, thanks to those who ought long since to have cherished and instructed him, as it were "in mudder's nakedness." His wit and warmth of heart are his own, his errors and their consequences will not be registered against HIM. I speak of him in a quiescent state, and not when suffering and ignorance led him into scenes of tumult, which inflamed his mind and blood to deeds that are foreign to his nature.⁶

Like Carr, many Englishmen distinguished between PADDY in his tranquil state and PADDY run amok. The British press and other sources of opinion on Ireland frequently treated this dichotomy in terms of the child metaphor as well.

Punch, in this case representative of many segments of British opinion, portrayed the Irishman as an "overgrown child." The child was either a "good boy"--submissive towards England and loyal to the Queen and the Union--or a "bad boy" who refused to remain "quiet at home." Both types were characterized by a tendency towards complete idleness and improvidence, a love for argument, and physical violence as a form of exercise, and a prodigious ignorance and stupidity. In essence, all the characteristics of a naughty child. The good Irishman, however, was charming and witty, outspoken, helpless, and gullible, with an Irish flair for doing things in the most illogical and inefficient manner. The bad Irishman had all the unfortunate traits of his handsome and personable brother but was, in addition, ungrateful towards the bounties of Englishmen, pretentious, greedy, cowardly, and opportunistic. It was he, Punch claimed, who corrupted and exploited innocent Irishmen and turned their good will into hatred of the Saxon. Unlike his brother, who was usually clean, if raggedly dressed, and handsome and friendly, the bad

Irishman had an aversion to cleanliness, wore a perpetual scowl, and physically resembled a chimpanzee. In fact, Punch claimed that he represented the missing link between the ape and the Negro.⁷

The bad Irishman, of course, was none other than the agitator. He was an evil, cunning, self-seeking, and obstreperous Irishman who sought to profit at his brother's expense. In earlier times, the bad Irishman was the bard or priest. Whether bard, priest, or Repealer, he led his brothers astray and, by keeping them ignorant and rowdy, prevented them from developing into civilized and mature adults.

Irishmen, Punch and other Englishmen proclaimed, still manifested all the deficiencies of childhood. They were too ignorant and inexperienced to judge most things for themselves--especially political questions--and thus were easily misled. By cunning and display, pomp and false promises, this perverse child, troublemaker, and aggressive bully led the good Irishman away from Union with Britain into increased deprivation and suffering. Punch, which supported factory legislation in Britain because it was opposed to exploitation of children, opposed Repeal in Ireland for exactly the same reason.⁸

Most Englishmen were convinced that the Irish people were — incapable of governing themselves. The leaders of both political

parties declared their opposition to the idea. Peel thought
it contrary to every doctrine of reason and common sense.⁹
Lord John Russell declared it to be inconceivable.¹⁰ Most par-
liamentarians were convinced that Irish autonomy would only
result in increased poverty and disorder and lead eventually
to total anarchy. The Times fairly expressed the feelings of
the nation when it editorialized in June 1843:

Repeal for Ireland means not only separation from
Parliament, but from the Crown as well. It is sure
to produce anarchy, confiscation of property, sub-
version of order and the banishment from the
country of all religion, whether Protestant, Roman
Catholic, or any other whatsoever.¹¹

An English pamphleteer asserted that Repeal would lead to
a "ruinous" republic with a "mob Parliament." After experienc-
ing autonomy, he insisted, the Irish people would only desire
"to re-unite with England and to establish that perfect reli-
gious freedom and social equality which now so completely per-
vades Ireland."¹² "HIBERNIA," another Englishman maintained,
"is not of the constitution to live in blessed singleness dur-
ing the remainder of her life--and verily a new alliance would
be much worse than the original."¹³ Another indignant English-
man warned the Irish that the body of the English people con-
sidered the very idea of separation ludicrous and suicidal

If Ireland was seen to be like a child, incapable of governing herself or, indeed, of making any political decisions, it was only logical for Englishmen to suggest that Britain's role was that of a mother or nursemaid. Such a characterization, in fact, provided a positive accent to British rule in Ireland. Englishmen, convinced that they were governing Ireland in her best interests--in spite of the protests and agitation of Repealers--proudly referred to "Mother Britannia" as a self-effacing, sacrificing, and loving parent. Punch preferred the image of a nursemaid. The magazine compared the behavior of the Irish to an "unweaned baby." "It does nothing," Punch complained, "but kick and squall, and bend its little fists, and look blue in the face; while BRITANNIA--placid unmoved nurse--allows it to roar its little bellyful. When it's tired, 'twill go to sleep." ¹⁷

Whether Englishmen characterized the relationship between Britain and Ireland as that of an older brother to a younger brother, a parent to a stepchild, a nurse to her charge, or a mother to her baby, the analogy was clearly intended to suggest the relationship of an experienced, patient, and caring overseer and a young, obstreperous child. Such paternal, or perhaps more properly maternal, concern provided the basis for the legitimacy of the Union.

Politicians and partisans of the Union proclaimed that Britain's policies towards the Irish were undertaken with only their

for the Irish people. The English, he proclaimed, were

opposed to repeal upon every ground of prudence, nationality and the public good--for the sake of Ireland, who would be the great loser by such a divorce, and in the name of the common interests of both countries, which, naturally blended by mutual dependence, cannot be separated without mutual calamity.¹⁴

Punch thought the idea of Irishmen governing themselves was so absurd that even Irishmen must have chuckled when they thought about it. "We can imagine," the journal declared, "the debates of that Utopian House of Commons would be interrupted every minute by a cry of 'Division.' Every act would be a Riot Act."¹⁵ Punch provided its readers with a sample of the motions that might be introduced by Irish legislators:

The O'Houlaghawn (Ballyporeen): That the gallon of whiskey shall henceforth contain five quarts.

Mr. Brannigan McGuire (Kilmallock): That the privilege of exemption from arrest for debt, awarded to members of this House, hold good for LIFE to every individual elected.

Captain Mac Shame (Blarney): That same privilege be extended to their children and grand-children.¹⁶

Punch was equally convinced that after six months of such independence, Irishmen would come crawling back on their knees to Britain and ask to be readmitted to the empire. The evidence suggests that this belief was common to most Englishmen.

interests in mind. If some of the measures were harsh--such as coercion and arms acts--it was not the result of malice, but of parental concern. If the Government responded differently to the problems of its English subjects, it was not discrimination in the pejorative sense but discretion. Victorians explained such policies in terms of the analogy of parent and child. A good parent could not permit a young child the liberties and privileges granted to adults. Neither could it reason with them in the same manner. Like children, the Irish had to be taught, coddled, punished, or rewarded depending on their behavior. If the parent was forced to punish a child, though it hurt the parent even more than the child, it was necessary to teach the tot a lesson. Such punishment was far from capricious, but rather was calculated to achieve a good and noble end for which the child would later thank the parent.

Looking back on nearly a half-century of Union, most Victorians were convinced that Britannia had been a firm but good parent. Her policies had been inspired by her desire to raise the Irish people from childhood to maturity. If they had not made good progress, it was because the Irish were unwilling to learn. They were defiant and were misled by ruffians who taught them to spurn parental authority. Parliamentarians asserted that

"the Union has produced to Ireland all the advantages that could reasonably have been expected to result from that great and important measure." ¹⁸ Both political parties and the leadership of the various factions within them (save Radicals and Repealers) were convinced that the Union, despite some admitted drawbacks, had proved beneficial to Ireland. Irish assertions to the contrary were received as the rejoinder of an ignorant and ungrateful minority.

The Times was particularly furious at those Irishmen who claimed that Ireland was another Poland, exploited for the benefit of the English at the expense of the Irish. A leader of 1846 declared:

There exists not a country on the face of this earth which complains so much and does so little....It is an opinion that England, powerful, wealthy, imperious, scornful, and apathetic, deliberately and wilfully crushes to dust the Sister Nation...that Ireland is the footstool of England....So far from this supposed indifference, selfishness, and tyranny, England is always talking, feeling, scheming, making positive sacrifices for Ireland. ¹⁹

Englishmen were convinced that the Union (and, indeed, the British Empire) was a civilizing force which, in the words of Lord Brougham, was perhaps the greatest civilizing force the world had ever seen. ²⁰ To disrupt its ascendancy, to curtail its power,

perhaps to destroy its existence, would be a fatal step--a folly whose repercussions would be felt throughout the entire world. "For ought finite mortals can tell," a Tory spokesman self-righteously exclaimed, "the Divine Providence which rules states as well as individuals, has permitted the gradual formation of this vast dominion for some wise purpose conducive to the happiness of mankind." ²¹ The Irish, he lamented, were unable to perceive this and threatened to disrupt God's will.

The British elite were imbued with a sense of mission. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the mission was most clearly manifested towards Ireland. The Irish people, Victorians believed, were indeed fortunate to be the recipients of the wise and forthright statesmanship emanating from the British Parliament and the administration in Ireland. Yet, a large percentage of the Irish were still naughty children. Ireland was spoiled, undisciplined, and in need of a lesson. Her agitators (and her priests) had to be punished; Irishmen had to be taught to work for themselves; the Irish people had to be brought to the level of responsible and sophisticated citizens.

Repeal was, of course, absurd. It was as if a young child had suddenly decided he was old enough to leave the security of home and venture out into the world on his own. Mother Britannia

feared that he would lose his way. Unprepared to resist the temptations of the world, unsteady in purpose, and unskilled in the ways of adult life, Hibernia needed Britannia's support and guidance until it reached maturity. Repeal therefore placed "the wildest theories of Government in opposition to the soundest practical results, which have emanated from a system of rule, acknowledged to be wholesome and wise by the civilized world for the last half-century."

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 11

1. John Milner, An Inquiry Into Certain Vulgar Opinions Concerning the Catholic Inhabitants and the Antiquities of Ireland, in a Series of Letters Addressed from That Island to a Protestant Gentleman in England (2d ed., rev.; London: Keating, Brown & Co., 1809 ?), p. 49.
2. The Times, June 15, 1846.
3. Macaulay, op. cit., I, 69.
4. See Ferguson, op. cit., p. 6.
5. Ibid., passim.
6. John Carr, The Stranger in Ireland (Philadelphia: T. & G. Palmer, 1806), I, 12.
7. See the visual representation of Irishmen in the Punch cartoons reproduced in the text for further confirmation of the low status in which Irishmen were held by the journal.
8. Punch, IX (1845), 215, 218.
9. Hansard's, LXX (1843), col. 1000.
10. Russell, unlike Peel, however, was in favor of liberal reform in Ireland. Russell came to the point of recognizing that something like tenant-right was necessary to resolve Ireland's agricultural difficulties. His scheme for capital investment in Ireland, outlined to Parliament in 1847, was another proof of his willingness to do something for Ireland. The massive opposition he met from Palmerston and Lansdowne and most of the Parliament prevented his carrying through any effective program.
11. The Times, June 6, 1843.
12. Martin, op. cit., pp. xxxi-ii.

13. Johnson, op. cit., p. 132. Johnson exclaimed: "... but who could venture even to imagine the events that might, or indeed would, flow from a repeal of the Union!!"
14. Thomas Bish, A Plea for Ireland in a Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Althorp (London: J. M. Richardson, Cornhill, 1834), p. 4.
15. Punch, XII (1847), 77.
16. Ibid., V (1843), 208.
17. Ibid., XII (1847), 95. The journal declared that John Bull "may occasionally have been a harsh parent, but we are sure the old fellow means well", XV (184), 77.
18. H. Douglas in the House of Commons, July 10, 1843, Hansard's, LXX (1843), col. 842.
19. The Times, Aug. 3, 1846, p. 4.
20. Hansard's, LXIX (1843), cols. 9-10. Lord Brougham declared: "... severance of the legitimate Union meant in reality the disruption of the empire itself, and the entire dissolution of the integrity of that empire; and no man could doubt that to prevent such a catastrophe, which would be the ruin of one of the greatest (if not the greatest) monuments of civilization which human wisdom had ever reared--that to prevent that grievous catastrophe, grievous to England, more grievous, if it were possible, to Ireland, and grievous to the whole human race; the uttermost exertions of the power of this country ... its physical force, would be put forward cheerfully, at the first intimation ... that any such extraordinary exertion was ... deemed necessary"
21. Martin, op. cit., p. xxxiv.
22. Mornington, op. cit., p. 15.

CHAPTER TWELVE

You may call your Constitution what you will; in effect it will consist of three parts--cavalry, infantry, and artillery, and of nothing better.

Edmund Burke

Many Englishmen and Irishmen had hoped that the Union would provide Great Britain with an opportunity for a new approach to Irish affairs, that the Union would prove to be a fresh slate upon which Anglo-Irish amity and mutual understanding would be written. We have seen that although some concessions were made to the Irish people, the British Government continued to sacrifice Irish interests to the interests of a British minority and continued to govern Ireland as an occupied territory.

Economic exploitation and political oppression continued largely unabated. In direct opposition to the recommendations of British economists and parliamentary commissions, the Government upheld the arbitrary and capricious power of the Irish landlords. Parliament declined to pass legislation guaranteeing security of tenure, regulation of rackrenting, or extension of tenant-right. The inequitable legal system of Ireland was neither reformed nor administered in line with the needs of the mass of the Irish peasantry. The established church, anathema to the majority of the Irish people, continued to collect its tithes

from Irish Catholics and Protestant Dissenters.

In the industrial sector, the decades after the Union were not marked by the promised upsurge in Irish economic development but rather were characterized by a steady and severe decline. British industry, abetted by Parliament, crushed Irish competition and forced unemployed Irishmen to seek gainful labor in the already overcrowded agricultural sector. As a result, rents rose, the quality of the soil deteriorated, and the standard of living declined.

In the political sphere, little progress was made. The channels of mobility for the Catholic middle classes remained restricted. Whatever restrictions were removed in the formerly discriminatory hiring practices of the civil service and private business did not compensate for the decline caused by the general economic malaise. The Irish administration itself continued to provide sinecures for retired British politicians and proved largely unresponsive to Ireland's needs. The camarilla in Dublin Castle remained the sign of an alien conqueror to a majority of Ireland's people. The Government and administration of Ireland, still largely representative of the Protestant Ascendancy, relied increasingly upon the suspension of civil liberties and the threat of force to maintain British rule in Ireland.

The Repeal movement proved ineffectual in obtaining good

government and justice for Ireland. Perhaps it had the opposite effect, by reason of the specter of revolution it created in British minds. The very existence of Repeal as a powerful political organization was used to provide justification for the kind of discriminatory and repressive legislation the movement was formed to prevent. The Repeal movement itself was finally crushed by the Government.

It is not true, however, that the British people and Government were unaware of the possibilities of that strategy of reconciliation for which Irish Repealers and British Radicals agitated. Nor can it be said that they failed to perceive the dangers inherent in basing rule largely on their superior military capability. This lesson had forcibly been brought home by the loss of the American colonies twenty-five years before the Act of Union.

The heavy-handed and oppressive mercantilist colonial policy pursued towards the Americans had alienated them and was responsible for their break with the Crown. By the nineteenth century, it was widely recognized that colonies could not be exploited in such a manner and be expected to remain loyal to the Crown.

Evidence for this assertion can be drawn from the Canadian experience. In the early nineteenth century, the English Canadians, like the Americans before them, began to demand a degree

of autonomy from the Colonial Office. The issue was fought on the question of control of the revenue, the classic battleground for British subjects at variance with the sovereign authority. The colonists demanded some form of local government, preferably an elected assembly, to which the executive would be held responsible.

In 1831, the Imperial Government made concessions on the revenue question, but the colonists were no longer satisfied with half-measures. Confirmed in their anxieties by the tactless policies of the Lieutenant-Governor, the Canadians created a series of disturbances in 1837. Led by W. L. Mackenzie in Upper Canada and Louis Papineau in Lower Canada, the rebels were easily put down, but the British Government took them as a serious warning. Unlike their policy in Ireland, where such disturbances were met by harsh repression, the action of the Whig Government, in accordance with the recommendations of Lord Durham and Charles Buller, was to make concessions to the colonists in the hope of securing their loyalty to the Crown. The provinces of Upper and Lower Canada were united in 1840, and a grant of responsible government was not long delayed.

While there are obvious differences between the Canadian and Irish colonial experiences, there is also one striking similarity. In both cases, the Imperial Government was forced to

make a choice between a strategy which ultimately based rule upon coercion or one which aspired to secure the loyalty of the population and base the political connection upon that loyalty.

In Canada, the Government realized that harsh or repressive measures would only further alienate the colonists and would in the end promote rebellion and separation as it had earlier with the Americans. In Ireland, successive governments continued to rely upon force and coercion to rule Ireland and then appeared surprised when the inhabitants did not perceive the British connection to be desirable.

The similarities between the Irish and Canadian situations, which were coeval in time, did not go unnoticed in contemporary England. Repealers made much of the fact that the British Government followed different courses in each case. A few English liberals and Radicals did likewise. Viscount Palmerston, in a speech in opposition to the Arms Bill of 1843, contrasted Britain's relationship with Canada with the Anglo-Irish Union. He pointed out that a majority of legislators had agreed

that it was not worth while that this country should maintain the connection which now existed between Canada and England, if it was to be maintained by the sword and not by the affections and good feelings of the people. Was not a proposition which was true in respect of a colony, situated at the other side of the wide Atlantic, and numbering some hundreds of thousands of inhabitants, equally true in respect of Ireland, whose shores nearly adjoined our own, and whose inhabitants amounted to millions?²

Charles Buller, the architect of Canadian reconciliation and a proponent of a liberal conception of empire, extended the parallel even further. "People ask," Buller told the members of Commons, "why you have not tried in Ireland the experiment that has succeeded in Canada....If you wish to fight successfully against the Repeal cry, you must put it down, not by Arms Bills, but by acting...as Sir Charles Bagot in Canada."³

Although both Whig and Tory administrations publicly justified their policies towards Ireland in terms of reconciliation, and legitimized the Union by reason of the advantages it would bring to the Irish people, they continued to govern the country in the interests of a Protestant minority and based their authority upon their superior coercive capability. Why was one strategy followed for Canada and quite another for Ireland?

The most obvious explanation points to the role played by vested interests in both cases. In Canada, there were few economic and political interests, powerful in the councils of Government, that considered concessions to the Canadians to be detrimental to their interests. In Ireland, of course, the case was different.

In 1800, the various interest groups were all-powerful in formulating Irish policy. British industrialists had with little difficulty managed to dictate the commercial and economic

clauses of the Union. These clauses ensured that at a later date, infant Irish industry would be exposed to the predatory designs of a more developed British capitalism.

In ecclesiastical matters the Church of Ireland reigned supreme. With the support it mustered among High Tories in the House of Lords, it was strong enough to block concessions to Irish Catholics. Proof of this was seen in the inability of Grattan and his allies to obtain Emancipation in the years after the Union. It was only in 1829, with the threat of revolution, that Peel and Wellington were able to coerce the High Tory party into supporting Emancipation. Even then, the Government was forced to disenfranchise most of the Irish Catholic voters as a necessary concession before they would agree to pass the Bill.

The real power with regard to land policy and the general administration of Ireland lay in the hands of the representatives of the Protestant Ascendancy. The Protestant landlords controlled most of Ireland's wealth and her political administration, dispensed much of her patronage, and represented Ireland in both Houses of Parliament. Most of them were of the right-wing Tory party, although some were influential Whigs. In 1800, the "Irish Party," along with the High Tory faction in England, formed the backbone of the Tory party. No Tory administration could afford to alienate their good will. While

the Whigs were not as dependent upon Irish support, they, too, were careful not to antagonize their Irish backers. The result was that any government, Whig or Tory, had little latitude of action with regard to Ireland.

When we consider that all these interests had a great stake, both economic and political, in maintaining the Protestant Ascendancy intact, it was not likely that a government could radically alter the state of Irish affairs--even if it wanted to. Thus, it was very improbable that a strategy of reconciliation could be successfully pursued towards the Irish people.

Vested interests were, therefore, sufficiently powerful in 1800 to block any reform. By 1840, however, this was no longer true. The power structure of Great Britain had been radically altered in the years between the Act of Union and the heyday of Repeal. Those interests still unalterably opposed to reform and democratization in Ireland had been drastically reduced in power.

British industrialists were no longer bothered by Irish competition. Irish industry had been all but destroyed by 1835. Irish economic development no longer posed the type of threat that could concern the leaders of British capitalism. The only advantage they derived from the state of affairs in Ireland was a supply of cheap labor. The Irish migration to Britain, which

reached staggering proportions in the early years of Victoria's reign, inflated the size of the laboring force and, forced down wages. The advantage this brought to British industry, it can be argued, was more than offset by the concomitant disadvantages caused by poverty in Ireland. A peaceful, prosperous Ireland, Manchester economists were beginning to argue, would prove a greater boon to the development of British industry than the old poor and rebellious one, because it would provide a better market for British goods. As a result, representatives from the industrial midlands had an intrinsic economic interest in improving the state of Ireland. A very powerful interest group that had impeded the cause of reform in Ireland in the early years of the century changed course and no longer remained inimical to change. The Radicals, in fact, most of whom were returned to Parliament from industrial districts, were the greatest supporters, next to Repealers, of reform in Ireland.

The High Church party continued to retain its power in both Commons and Lords. However, while their influence guaranteed the preservation of the Church of Ireland in its privileged position, this was not the central issue in the thirties and forties. The Irish resented the power of the Established Church and the fact that they had to support it from their

meager earnings, but it was not the principal cause for Irish grievances. The ecclesiastical arrangement merely aggravated the existing evils, most of which were more directly economic.

And the economic situation in Ireland was the crux of the problem. Repeal was supported by middle class Catholics and by the mass of the peasantry, who were subject to a terrible economic squeeze. The British success in securing the loyalty of the Irish people and obviating the necessity of the Repeal movement depended upon its ability to guarantee the economic well-being of the Irish people and to provide channels of mobility for the aggressive and status-conscious Catholic middle class. Success demanded the radical reformation of the legal system regulating land in Ireland and the opening of the Irish administration to Catholic Irishmen. The Government had to prove itself responsible to the needs of the people and to satisfy their expectations of achieving a better and more affluent life. The one great bloc that for economic and political reasons was intent on preventing any such responsiveness was composed of the Protestant landlords of Ireland--the Protestant Ascendancy.

In 1800, the Ascendancy was eminently powerful in both Houses of Parliament and in the councils of both political parties. By 1840, their influence had waned to

a shadow of its former strength. In the first place, they were divided and no longer presented a united front of resistance to reform in Ireland. In 1800, dissidents among the Protestants had been primarily drawn from the Dissenters in Ulster, of whom Grattan was the leading example. By 1840, a small but growing percentage of highly respectable, eminently powerful, and extremely wealthy Protestant landlords, while they did not wholly endorse Repeal, nevertheless supported many of its aims. Stephen Spring-Rice (Lord Monteagle) was the most prominent spokesman of this group of moderates. In addition, some well-known Irish Protestants, like William Smith O'Brien and Sharman Crawford, even embraced Repeal.

The "Irish Party" ranged, therefore, from the far right, composed of a recalcitrant Protestant gentry, to the Radicals on the left who agitated actively for Repeal. The majority of influential politicians were ranged between these two extremes. Characterized by such men as Palmerston and Lord Clarendon (Lord Lieutenant of Ireland under John Russell), they stood firmly in opposition to Repeal but were not motivated by anti-Catholic bigotry or by purely personal economic considerations.

The prestige of the Irish gentry continued to decline rapidly in the years between the Union and the famine. As more information became available about Ireland, and as repeal

agitation increased, it became a common practice, as we have seen, to blame many of the evils of Ireland on the landed proprietors, as well as on the Irish people themselves. They became a kind of scapegoat that enabled other Englishmen to disclaim any responsibility for the condition of Ireland.

The Irish gentry--especially those who were less affluent and socially well-connected--were said to be notorious spendthrifts and social climbers. Punch periodically satirized these Irish "swells," and The Times regularly heaped abuse on their activities. Within the Parliament, too, they were the subject of recriminations. For the Radicals they were a perennial whipping boy. Led by James Roebuck, the most vociferous Radical opponent of the Irish proprietary class, they traced the responsibility for Ireland's problems to the activities of the landlords. Roebuck described them as "joyous, reckless, hospitable, prodigal" men, possessing no prudence and no economy. Of their rents, he informed Commons,

...no portion came back to the soil, as it did in England, by a due regard being paid to improvement of the estate, enriching the soil, and benefitting general conditions. The first object with landlords, after receiving their rents, was to pay some portion of their debts; the next to satisfy the tax gatherer; and then they had to consider how they might manage to live in their accustomed splendour....⁴

The liberals also had little use for the Irish landed gentry--especially those who were not of the Whig persuasion.

Sir William Molesworth, an Irish Whig, expressed a widespread feeling among members of his party when he argued that "The Irish landlords must be got rid of--they must be treated as bankrupt shopkeepers were treated--their estates must be sold, and the proceeds divided among their creditors; and then their successors might be expected to do their duty as proprietors of the soil."⁵

Even the conservatives, the great defenders of property rights, had little respect for the mass of Irish proprietors. One enraged representative chastised Irish proprietors in language typical of Tory attitudes toward property. He reminded them that "landlords have responsibilities as well as privileges, and you landlords exercise your privileges but none of your responsibilities."⁶ Viciously attacked by the Radicals, scorned by the Liberals, and criticised by even the Tories, the prestige of the Irish gentry appeared to have reached its nadir.

If their status had decreased, so had their actual power. The electoral effects of both the Reform Bill and the political revolution in Ireland combined to make the recalcitrant Irish gentry much less influential within the councils of both political parties and in Parliament as a whole.

Until the effects of the Emancipation Act were felt in Ireland, Irish representation had been entirely Protestant.

A sprinkling of liberal Irishmen had sat in Parliament overshadowed by a majority of Irish representatives adamantly opposed to any concession to reform in Ireland. They formed the overwhelming majority of the one hundred representatives allotted to Ireland in Commons and an even greater majority among the representative peers elected to the House of Lords. After 1829, the success of Catholic politicians, who derived their electoral support first from the cities and later from the countryside, cut heavily into the parliamentary strength of Ascendancy Protestants. In the years between 1830 and 1845, O'Connell and his supporters comprised a parliamentary faction numbering, on the average, about thirty-five representatives. An additional number of Irish representatives, although not Repealers, were more in sympathy with O'Connell than they were with the reactionary gentry. Thus the Repeal party grew at the expense of the Protestant gentry, the greatest barrier to reform and change in Ireland.

If the emergence of Catholic politicians cut into the representation of the Ascendancy in Commons, the Reform Bill and the resulting shift in political representation in England diminished their supporters among English representatives. An increasing percentage of parliamentarians now came from

industrial rather than agricultural districts and manifested concern over a different set of problems than did the aristocracy and the squirearchy. Certainly, they were no admirers of the Irish gentry.

Yet, while they were important, the changes in representation brought about by the Reform Act were not nearly as significant as evolutionary developments within the two major political parties. The Tory party split into two factions, commonly referred to as "Protectionist" and "Peelite." The Protectionists, composed of landed gentry, reactionary in their political thinking and strongly anti-Catholic, were also opposed to Irish reform. The Peelite faction, led, of course, by Sir Robert Peel, was more liberal, and in search of a wider base of support for the Tory party.

Peel was interested in attracting middle-class and mercantile support to the Tories, as well as maintaining the agricultural and traditional base of Tory strength. In the forties, the Peelite faction was the more influential of the two, as confirmed by Peel's success in committing the Tories to repeal of the Corn Laws (although its passage depended as well upon support from the Whigs). While the question of free trade was eventually to split the party, and many Peelites--Gladstone among them--would change their party allegiance and join the Liberals, the Peelite faction dominated Tory politics

in the forties. As a result, currying favor with the Irish Tory landlords (who were overwhelmingly Protectionist) became less important because they had already been alienated from Peel and his cause.

A similar evolution took place among the Whigs. The party also sought to widen its base and was coming to rely heavily upon the support of the industrialists and urban middle class. The influx of Radicals and Liberals, drawn from industrial constituencies, threatened the ascendancy of the aristocratic families who, for generations, had held power in the Whig party, almost as an hereditary sinecure. The balance of power in both parties was thus altered, and the power of those representatives of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland--who were opposed to all reform and all concessions--was diminished. The magnitude of this change was demonstrated during the Famine.

Public opinion in Britain was generally opposed to spending British money in Ireland to relieve the distress during the "Great Famine." This feeling increased as Britain herself suffered an economic setback brought on by the depression of 1847. As a result, although the Whig Government of Lord John Russell felt compelled to take some action to alleviate Irish distress, it was unwilling to have Britain assume any financial responsibility. Irish property holders were made responsible for the major burden of relief under the Poor Law of 1846. The proprietors of Ireland were sacrificed on the altar of British

niggardliness. By 1846, their power vis à vis other British interests had so decreased, and their image had become so tarnished, that they were impotent to prevent implementation of this destructive measure.

The intrinsic power of vested interests opposed to change and reform in Ireland cannot, therefore, be accepted as a reasonable explanation for the British Government's unwillingness to pursue a conciliatory and equitable policy towards the Irish people at this time. In 1800, the interests were all-powerful. By 1840, they had been significantly emasculated to be unable, by themselves, to prevent the Government from pursuing such a policy. We must seek an explanation elsewhere.

At this point it will be informative to look briefly at other reforms characterizing British legislation in the first half of the nineteenth century. The model of reform elucidated in Chapter One suggested that the motivation for reform lay in the changing value structure of British society. Values, clustered around the concepts of anti-oppression, humaneness, political liberty, and political participation, were gradually coming to influence the British electorate very greatly. Reformers, particularly Benthamites and Evangelicals, strove to link these values to political behavior. Demand for reform grew among the electorate as reformers were able to convince

the public that such values were applicable in certain realms of public policy. The ensuing public outcry against injustice and corresponding demands for reform were translated into policy by Governments anxious to obtain the support of the electorate.

Reform of the Penal Code or of the judicial system did not encounter opposition from extremely powerful vested interests. Abolition of slavery in the colonies and factory legislation in Britain did. Planters and industrialists, both organized in powerful lobbies, fought against such legislation, which, they believed, would be detrimental to their interests. Nevertheless, the reformers were successful. Aroused public opinion proved a sufficiently powerful force to overcome the influence of these interests.

Logically, we should expect to see a similar manifestation of demands for reform with regard to Irish policy. It is quite evident that Irish policy violated the very values which motivated reformers to seek alterations of the British penal code, abolition of slavery, or regulation of working conditions. The oppressive land system, the discrimination against Catholics and the Catholic Church, unequal political representation, and the denial of basic civil liberties, so valued in Britain, were all in flagrant violation of the maximization of humaneness, anti-oppression, political liberty,

and political representation.

Neither could Englishmen claim ignorance of the state of affairs in Ireland as an excuse for inaction. Not only had Repealers and Radicals long agitated for reforms in Ireland, but they were supported by respected English economists and intellectuals who derived their evidence from official governmental investigations of Irish conditions. Yet the British public--and, indeed, many of those individuals and groups who were in the forefront of reform in Britain--remained unmoved. The British people never became aroused over oppression in Ireland in the way they did over exploitation of Negro slaves in the Caribbean or of ten-year-old children in Midlands factories or Welsh coal mines. A majority of the electorate failed to see the direct application of these values to Irish politics as a relevant or desirable goal.

Even those individuals and groups in the forefront of reform in Britain, as we have seen, remained immune to the appeals of the Irish. The Edinburgh Review, Punch, The Times, the Standard, Fraser's Magazine, and Blackwood's Magazine--organs of public opinion representative of a wide range of opinion--all supported a variety of reforms in Britain. Yet, when it came to Ireland, they largely remained mute or, even, took up the cudgels of reaction and supported the very measures in Ireland that they opposed in Britain. Only the Morning Chronicle, the Northern Star, and the Westminster Review,

representative of Radical opinion, extended the application of their reformist principles on a wholesale basis to Ireland.

The British public and the leaders of British public opinion failed to become aroused over exploitation and oppression in Ireland. In general, they supported some obvious reforms, like Catholic Emancipation, but remained insensitive or even opposed to the grievances articulated by the Repeal party and its supporters among the English Radicals. Thus, public opinion failed to provide any countervailing force to the minority interests of the Protestant Ascendancy, which, unchecked, continued to exert power and influence in Ireland and to drag the Irish people into increasingly desperate conditions.

Why did public opinion become aroused over a variety of concerns but not over Ireland? Why did oppressive and undemocratic practices in Ireland continue to receive the sanction of successive British Governments without any vocal opposition among the British electorate beyond the agitation of a few Radicals?

One explanation to be considered rests on the strategic importance of Ireland to Great Britain. It is certainly true that Ireland had always proved to be the weakest link in the chain of British defenses against invasion. Spaniards, and later Frenchmen, had sought to instigate revolution in Ireland and had at times supported such uprisings with their own troops and fleet. Ireland was a tinder box which, when touched by any

spark thrown off by a European conflagration, would burst into flame, threatening to destroy British power. No British administration, Whig or Tory, could allow Ireland to become independent of British control. It was, therefore, vitally essential to British interests that a friendly power rule over her neighboring isle.

In the years before the Famine, such concerns were foremost in the minds of most English politicians. Great Britain still regarded France as an unsatisfied power with ambitions to hegemony in Europe. In the forties, the tensions between the two countries were not particularly aggravated, but neither was the possibility of war altogether discounted. In Chapter One, it was suggested that the strategic importance of Ireland and the need to maintain British power in that island were more important to Englishmen than the contradictions between the values of British society and the means through which British power in Ireland was maintained. Historically this had been essentially valid, but it still does not provide an answer to our question.

The maintenance of British power in Ireland, on the one hand, and democratic reform and responsiveness to the needs of the Irish people, on the other, were by no means mutually exclusive. O'Connell and the English Radicals argued, in fact, that the two were not only compatible, but the latter was

necessary in order to guarantee the former. Repealers argued that British security could far better be served by a loyal Irish population, dedicated to defending British power because they believed their own fortunes to be dependent upon it, than by a rigged legal system and an oppressive gentry protected by the garrisons of riflemen and cavalry Britain could spare to occupy Ireland.

The debate over the disastrous effects of Repeal was somewhat less than tendentious. O'Connell did not perceive Repeal to be a goal in itself until successive British governments demonstrated to him and to the Irish people that they could not hope to receive redress of their grievances from the British people. Up until that point--reached in the forties--Repeal was always considered by O'Connell to be only one possible means through which justice and good government for Ireland could be achieved. Unlike later Irish nationalists, he was perfectly willing to scrap Repeal--as he did during his alliance with the Whigs--if his goal could be achieved by a less drastic settlement.

Even Repeal was not in itself a grave threat to Britain's security. While O'Connell was certainly guilty of never clearly defining the institutional arrangements that would govern relations between the two countries after Repeal, Repeal did not mean total independence. It was by no means necessary to

assume that British strategic interests would have been endangered. The Irish merely demanded domestic competence for their Parliament. Although the very idea of Repeal was denounced as unworkable and impractical by politicians of both parties, history has belied their thesis. Home Rule, along the same lines as envisaged by O'Connell, was granted to the six northern counties of Ireland in 1922 and has worked extremely well in practice.

Thus, democratization of Irish politics and acceptance and treatment of Irishmen as equal members of British society would not have prejudiced British interests. Even the grant of Repeal could have been harmonized with these interests. What is historically important, however, is not the logical compatibility of British interests with justice for the Irish people, but rather their perceptual incompatibility in the minds of contemporary Englishmen.

The thesis of this study is that neither Repeal, nor the policies necessary to implement an effective strategy of reconciliation, were seen as viable alternatives by either political party or by a majority of the British electorate. British perception of Irish affairs was dominated by an "image" of Ireland through which information about Ireland was filtered and analyzed. The body of this work has been devoted to filling in the content of that image and demonstrating its near ubiquity

in Victorian England. That image consisted of a stereotyped description of the Irish character and a corresponding model of Irish history developed in terms of this character. Such an image, stereotyped by reason of its adherents' inability to reformulate it in the light of contradictory evidence, limited a priori the policy alternatives that were considered viable in relation to Ireland. The stereotyped image therefore appeared to act not only as a **tension-reduction** mechanism, but as a perceptual prison as well. It appeared to blind decision-makers and the electorate to the wide range of feasible alternatives which were, in fact, open to them with regard to Ireland.

The stereotype of the Irish character, which formed the basis of the British image of Ireland, was, we have seen, the conscious invention of Henry II, employed to provide a moral justification for his invasion of Ireland and to obtain the support of the papacy. In time, as Ireland became colonized, it began to function as a **tension-reduction** mechanism. It provided the basis for a series of rationalizations that enabled colonists to justify their brutal and exploitative practices towards the indigenous population.

Like many other social stereotypes, the image of the Irish tended to be self-fulfilling. The Irish were characterized as indolent and self-indulgent, ignorant and superstitious, dis-

honest and violent. By the nineteenth century, there can be no doubt that they displayed many of these characteristics to a greater extent than did their English cousins. The explanation is to be found in the centuries of exploitation and oppression that made it functional, and even economic, for them to behave in such a manner. One perceptive English traveler, who toured Ireland in the latter half of the eighteenth century, commented:

We keep the Irish dark and ignorant, and then we wonder how they can be so enthralled by superstition; we make them poor and unhappy, and then we wonder that they are so prone to tumult and disorder; we tie up their hands, so that they have no inducements to industry, and then we wonder they are so lazy and indolent.⁹

"No wonder," our observer concluded, "that it should be part of the Irish character that they are so careless of their lives,¹⁰ when they have so little worth living for.

If the Irish were indolent, it was primarily because the English had made it impossible for them to be otherwise. When an Irishman improved his land, the only likely result was a higher rental or possible expulsion. John Stuart Mill, a strong opponent of the Irish land system, exclaimed:

Almost alone amongst mankind the cottier is in this condition, that he can scarcely be any better or worse off by any act of his own. If he were industrious or prudent, nobody but his landlord would gain; if he is lazy or intemperate, it is at his landlord's expense.¹¹

If the Irishman was superstitious, it was also because England

guaranteed he would be superstitious. For centuries, the English prevented Irish children from becoming educated, outlawed the Catholic Church in Ireland, and persecuted its followers. Under such conditions, the intellectual quality of the clergy declined, but the power of religion over the people increased. It was their one remaining institution, whose very existence was in defiance of British rule. The power it came to wield over the people derived from the persecution it had suffered at the hands of the English. This had done for the Church, Richard Cobden argued, what nothing else could have achieved.

12

The incidence of violence in Ireland was also occasioned by British policy. Outrages against Irish landlords were a result of the absolute and capricious exercise of power by those landlords, confirmed in their prerogatives by the British Parliament. Denied any legal recourse to seek redress of their grievances, the people had no other choice but to resort to violence in their struggle for survival.

Perhaps the most important self-validating aspect of the stereotype was the supposedly characteristic Irish hatred of Britain and their willingness to rebel at the slightest opportunity. British observers and commentators explained this in terms of the perverse nature of the Celt. In reality, British

oppression and exploitation had made the history of the two countries so much the reverse of each other that they became what in modern day parlance we might call a "zero-sum game." What to an Englishman meant glory, victory, and prosperity, to an Irishman spelt misery, degradation, and ruin. One present-day commentator has written:

In Ireland the name of Elizabeth I stands only for the horrors of her Irish conquest; in the defeat of the Armada, Ireland's hopes of independence went down; above all, with the name of William III and the glorious revolution of 1688, the very foundation of British liberties, the Catholic Irishman associates only the final subjection of his country and the degradation and injustice of the penal laws. Freedom for the one meant slavery for the other; victory for the one meant defeat for the other; the good of the one was the evil of the other. Ireland, resentful and hostile, lying only a day's sail, in fine weather, from Britain's coasts, for centuries provided a refuge for enemy agents, a hatching-ground for enemy plots; her motto was "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity," and in every crisis of England's history she seized the moment of weakness to stab her enemy in the back.¹³

In Irish minds, rebellion was a blow struck for freedom. In English eyes, it was perfidious treachery, confirming even more the image of the barbaric, violent, and--worst of all--ungrateful Celt, who abused the advantages to be derived from association with Britain. In the aftermath of such struggles, the British reaction was usually such that it made future revolution ever the more likely.

The stereotypic image of Irishmen was self-perpetuating and self-fulfilling. Centuries of exploitation and oppression had created conditions in which they were forced to adopt a pattern of behavior evidencing many of the characteristic traits that formed the basis of the stereotype. What began as a largely imaginary image in the minds of Henry and his Norman invaders became ever more a social reality. The policies of the colonists in Ireland had, over time, forced the Irish people to behave the way they had always been depicted.

Over the centuries, this image came to dominate the British perception of Irish affairs. The image spread from Ireland to England with commentaries and reports written by colonists. The writings of Spenser and Rich are representative of this flow of information. Englishmen were conditioned, before they ever set foot in Ireland, to expect the Irish to behave in a specified manner. Naturally, when they did come to Ireland as travelers, functionaries, or settlers, they brought their preconceived notions of the Irish people with them and had little difficulty finding confirmation for their beliefs in what they heard and saw. Their subsequent reports, writings, and conversations further reinforced the stereotype and tightened its grip on the British mind. By the nineteenth century, it appears to have become a perceptual prison, a closed image through which information about Ireland was seen, organized, and analyzed,

and in terms of which policy was formulated.

The blindness generated by such a perceptual prison certainly seems evident in the British perception of Repeal. The stereotype led Englishmen to reverse the cause-and-effect association between the Irish character and conditions in Ireland. As a result, they remained immune to the appeals of Irish agitation. If the Irish argued that British rule brought about poverty and violence in Ireland, the English responded that it was the Irish character which had caused such conditions. Shackled to such assumptions, it was impossible for the dissident Irish to bring the British public to a conscious recognition of the contradiction between British values and British policy with regard to Ireland. The existence of such a stereotyped image of the Irish provides an explanation of why reformers, and the public in general, condemned abuses and injustices toward the lower classes in Britain but failed to see their operation in Ireland. Locked in their "prisons," where all information became distorted, they remained deaf to the appeal of Ireland.

In policy, the stereotype found its confirmation. It triggered a response to Irish problems which resulted in a further confirmation of the stereotype. Because the stereotype effectively reversed the causal association between Irish behavior and conditions in Ireland, the British tended to support policies

designed to repress that behavior rather than policies designed to alleviate the underlying conditions that gave rise to the behavior.

For example, arms bills and coercion acts were not mitigated by any major reform. This only increased Irish dissatisfaction with British rule and confirmed their feeling that the only way to seek redress of their grievances was through violent means. The absolute power of the landlords, originally awarded to them to help guarantee British authority in Ireland, made that authority ever more tenuous. It resulted in the increasing economic deprivation of the Irish people and added to the probability of uprisings aimed at severing the connection with Britain. The British failure to invest in Ireland, accounted for by the insecurity of life and property in that country, only brought about greater insecurity and further decreased the incentive to invest. British policy, formulated in terms of the stereotype, generated a vicious circle of a policy based on mistaken assumptions and reconfirmation of those assumptions. The British Government repressed the symptoms of Irish disorder rather than treating the cause. In fact, by treating only the symptoms, they succeeded in aggravating the cause. Irish evils were thus increased and the Irish people ever more alienated from the idea of Union.

When British policy is examined in light of the stereotyped image of Ireland, it becomes clear that the British were not entirely hypocritical. The avowed goal of British policy was to pursue policies towards Ireland that would be in the best interests of the Irish people and, accordingly, to show them the advantages of the continued existence of the Union. The British did not perceive the contradiction between this goal and the effects of their actual policies.

The British image of Ireland was characterized by a paternalistic view of Irishmen. Irishmen were overgrown children, not yet ready to accept the responsibilities of adulthood and, accordingly, not yet ready to receive the privileges that went along with it. The role of Britain was perceived to be that of nursemaid, and Ireland's that of a child. Care had to be taken to insure that Ireland matured into a responsible and trustworthy member of the family. Until that time, the British could not countenance treating the Irish people the same way she treated Englishmen or English Canadians, whom she considered "adults" and capable of looking after their own affairs.

Thus, in British minds, the same goal motivated policies toward Canada and Ireland, but Repealers' assertions that the same policies should therefore be adopted toward the two countries was not accepted as a valid argument. A majority of

the members of both political parties, as well as the leading organs of public opinion, remained convinced that the measures characterizing British policy from the Union to 1840 were the only policies that could secure peace and prosperity for Ireland and alleviate the real grievances of the Irish people.

The British people, therefore, while they cōndemned oppression and exploitation in other parts of the world, remained blind to its existence in their own back yard. The sufferings of Algerian fellahin, Polish peasants, and Russian Jews evoked the sympathy of the British public, but they remained unmoved by the cries of the Irish. The revolutions of Greeks, Poles, Hungarians, and Italians drew their support and sympathy; the rebellion of Irishmen brought forth their incomprehension and ire. John Stuart Mill, a lifelong opponent of British policy towards Ireland, wrote of the British reaction to the Fenian rebellion in the 1860's:

Alas for the self-complacent ignorance of irresponsible rulers, be they monarchs, classes, or nations! If there is anything sadder than the calamity itself it is the unmistakable sincerity and good faith with which numbers of Englishmen confess themselves incapable of comprehending it. They know not that the dissatisfaction, which neither has nor needs any other motive than aversion to the rulers, is the climax of a long growth of dissatisfaction arising from the causes that might have been removed. What seems to them the causelessness of the Irish repugnance to our rule, is the proof that they are ever likely to have of setting it right.¹⁴

The British people had a closed mind with regard to Ireland.

Their image of Ireland was largely static and marked by a preference for past experiences and impressions over contemporary information. Their great reluctance to alter this image in light of contradictory data doomed them to act ineffectively, regardless of their goals. British policy resulted in increased Irish alienation, British repression, and, finally, in revolution.

Between 1800 and 1916, the success of the Union depended upon the outcome of the race between Irish demands and British concessions. The crucial question was not whether Irish demands were met--as eventually they all were--but rather at what point in time this occurred. The major Irish grievances were rectified by Catholic Emancipation in 1828, the Irish Franchise Acts of 1850 and 1884, disestablishment of the Irish Church in 1869, the Land Reform Act of 1870, and, finally, the Home Rule Bill of 1913. Each one, however, came too late to produce Irish reconciliation to the Union.

Catholic Emancipation was granted in 1829--after a twenty-year struggle which robbed it of any significance it might have had as a conciliatory gesture. It was only extracted from Parliament by the threat of revolution and was perceived by the Irish as a victory won by blood, and not as a concession made in the hope of conciliating the Irish people. In addition, it was robbed of much of its value by the corresponding disenfranchisement of most of the Catholic

electorate of Ireland. This grievance was only corrected in 1884, with extension of manhood suffrage to most of Ireland.

Disestablishment and Land Reform had the same fate. The Irish church was only deprived of its special privileges after the bloody uprisings of the Fenians. It was granted more as a necessary compromise than as a concession motivated by a desire to do justice to Ireland. If disestablishment had occurred thirty years before, it might have had an incalculable effect on the mass of the Irish people. In 1869, it appeared to be only a long-overdue rectification of an ancient injustice.

Land reform was similarly late in coming. If land reform had been legislated in the thirties or forties, and the Irish peasants had been transformed into peasant proprietors at that time, a major grievance of the Irish people would have been redressed. Repeal and agrarian outrage would have lost their impetus, and the Irish people would have become much more reconciled to the Union. No doubt, much of the suffering caused by the great potato famine would have been averted, as well as the revolution of 1848.

Land Reform, however, was not enacted in 1840, but in 1870, and like Emancipation it took back with one hand what it gave with the other. The transformations which had occurred in British agriculture and trade threatened the viability of Irish estates, and the fortunes of the Irish landlords were,

accordingly, on the decline. The Land Act enabled these proprietors to leave Ireland the way rats flee a sinking ship. It guaranteed that their land would be sold at a price above what it would fetch on the open market. For this reason, the Land Reform Act hardly impressed the Irish people with Britain's concern for their well-being, coming as it did so late and doing so little for the greater number of them.

Home Rule conformed to the same pattern. If it had been granted in 1840, or even in 1860, revolution would most likely never have occurred in Ireland. It finally received Royal assent in 1913, only to be shelved because of the World War. Once again, Irishmen did not perceive the Act to be a concession motivated by a sincere desire to appease the Irish people, but rather as a delayed rectification of their status, achieved by much blood and suffering. The fact that it was postponed angered them even more and led to the futile Easter Rebellion of 1916.

In this way Great Britain eventually gave to the Irish people most of what they had asked for but never conceded a point until it was too late to have any conciliatory effect. By the time the British Government had awarded Emancipation, Disestablishment, Land Reform, Home Rule, or, indeed, any other measure, its only effect was to rekindle the flames of resentment and alienation.

The pernicious operation of the British stereotype of the

Irish provides an explanation for the time-lag between Irish demands and British concessions, which proved so fatal to the Anglo-Irish relationship. The stereotype so blinded the British public and government to the validity of the Irish demands and the justice of the Irish cause that they were unable to perceive the necessity of taking action until it was too late. Before British opinion came to support Irish reforms, it was necessary to strip away the veil clouding their perceptions of Irish affairs. This was only accomplished very gradually. Over the decades, the discrepancy between the stereotype and reality grew more apparent as the contradiction between the values of British society and the means used to govern Ireland became increasingly great. Continual agitation by a vocal and growing British minority, intent on rectifying past injustices to Ireland, gradually had an effect. Little by little, the hold of the stereotype was weakened, and the British people came to perceive Irish affairs in a more realistic manner. The process took time, however, and the time lag that remained between demands and concessions was sufficiently great to insure that the British attempt to maintain her connection with Ireland was doomed to failure. On a directly political level, it might be said that the stereotype functioned to increase the power of the Orange Party--that faction most opposed to change and reform in Ireland--far beyond its intrinsic political strength. Its hold

over the British public enabled them to mobilize great popular support for their position among those Englishmen who shared their perception. At the same time, it decreased the power of the Repealers (and later the Irish nationalists) by making their demands unacceptable to a majority of the British population. Regardless of the leverage they might otherwise have been able to exercise in Parliament, their real power was thus severely curtailed.

Evidence for this can be seen in the failure of O'Connell's compact with the Whigs in the 1830's. The Irish-Catholic faction was important to the Whig majority, but the party was unable to meet Irish demands without antagonizing a majority of their non-Irish supporters. As a result, O'Connell and the Repeal party gained little from the alliance. The most graphic illustration of this fact was Gladstone's attempt to form an alliance with Parnell. The British electorate was so opposed to the grant of Home Rule that the alliance destroyed the unity of the Liberal Party. The entire right wing defected to the Tories-- now also known as the Unionists--and brought the incumbent Government/^{down} from power. The goals of the Irish party remained outside the British political spectrum and, accordingly, its parliamentary strength was not even as effective as that of some other, weaker factions whose goals were within the accepted spectrum but had half the Irish strength.

The stereotyped image of the Irishman, which in itself appeared to be a concomitant of colonial rule in Ireland, also proved to be a major factor in the undoing of colonial rule. It proved functional in reducing tension, but did so at the expense of an accurate perception of political and social reality in Ireland. It proved sufficiently dysfunctional in the formulation of policy to render Britain unable to pursue policies likely to preserve her influence in Ireland.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 12

1. O'Connell's criticism of the Queen's speech proroguing Parliament on August 24, 1843, and an injudicious notice announcing the final "monster meeting" of the year, provided Peel with the opportunity to take action against him. The speech was denounced as seditious and the meeting described as para-military and, accordingly, the Government prohibited it the very day before it was to take place. Although the Repeal leaders obeyed the order, the Government, encouraged by its easy victory, had them arrested and tried for conspiracy. He was convicted in Dublin by a rigged jury but later freed by the House of Lords. O'Connell's bluff, however, had been called. The Government had refused to be persuaded by moral force and agitation, and O'Connell had refused to lead a revolution. As a result, the strength of his movement decreased and O'Connell died a broken man in 1846.
2. Hansard's, LXX (1843), col. 290. It should be noted that this speech was made in order to embarrass the Tory Government and in no way reflected the real attitudes of Palmerston who, several years later, fully supported the Arms Bill of Lord John Russell. It does, however, demonstrate that the connection between Canada and Ireland was not lost to Parliamentarians, even those who favored a repressive policy in Ireland.
3. Ibid., LXIX (1843), col. 1135.
4. Ibid., LXXIX (1847), cols. 646-47.
5. William Molesworth, quoted in the Annual Register, op. cit. (1847), p. 144.
6. Hansard's, XCVIII (1846), col. 1334; see also, The Times, Sept. 5, 1844, p. 4; Apr. 2, 1846, p. 5, for representative English attitudes towards the Irish landowning class.

7. See Nowlan, The Politics of Repeal, pp. 108-74.
8. Home rule returned a Parliament to the six northern counties of Ulster, which remained an integral part of the United Kingdom. Foreign policy and succession, however, remained prerogatives of the British Parliament.
9. Campbell, op. cit., p. 253.
10. Ibid., p. 254.
11. Mill, England and Ireland, II, 283.
12. Cobden, op. cit., presents an argument which in all its fundamentals is the same as that presented many years later by Max Weber in his Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Cobden argued that the commercial ethos is associated with the Protestant religion. That religion, he asserts, gives rise to a way of life and a set of social values conducive to the development of industry and trade. Catholicism, on the other hand, discourages such development. Cobden draws the most interesting proof for his thesis from a statistical study of the Swiss cantons, which he divides into predominantly Catholic or Protestant, and those which are mixed. In Ireland, he argued, the Government had assured the success of the Catholic Church by persecuting it. As a result, it had discouraged economic development in Ireland as well. Cobden believed that the Government should encourage the Church and, as a result, the Irish people would no longer perceive it to be their ally and sole representative in the struggle against Britain. Its hold over the people would thus be weakened and Ireland would have a better chance for economic development.
13. Woodham-Smith, op. cit., p. 19.
14. Mill, England and Ireland, pp. 6-7.

POSTSCRIPT

The central concern of any metropolitan power seeking to maintain control of a colony must be to minimize the opposition of the indigenous population. The strategies adopted to achieve this end are a function of the goals towards which colonial rule is directed.

In the nineteenth century, all colonial powers, like Britain in Ireland, were presented with two alternative sets of goals to pursue with regard to their colonies. The traditional conception of empire envisaged colonies as territories to be exploited. A newer conception, not fully articulated until after the French Revolution, saw in colonies additional land and people, whose integration into the political unit would strengthen the power of the nation. The former conception relied upon superior military power to keep the population quiescent, the latter, upon responsiveness to make them loyal.

Unlike many political questions of the nineteenth century, a compromise could not be effected between these two conceptions that would partially fulfill the goals of both. The alternative goals and strategies were, by their very nature, mutually exclusive. If colonial powers desired to maintain empires, they were compelled to make a choice between the two

goals. An examination of the strategies required to implement either goal will help to illustrate the increasing dilemma faced by metropolitan powers.

The "Strategy of coercion," already alluded to earlier in the study, was dictated by a goal of exploitation. Such a strategy requires a minimal material commitment, can lead to an immediate "payoff," but is less likely to result in a stable political connection.

The colonizer's authority depends on his ability to enforce obedience to him from the subject population. The colonized must be made to realize that rebellion is doomed to failure or entails intolerable cost to the insurgents. The payoff of such a strategy is both material and psychological. The metropolitan power can exact tribute or forced labor, exploit the material wealth and economic resources of the colony, and utilize its geographic position to military advantage vis à vis other powers. A coercion strategy is also rewarding in the sense that domination gained through force, and control exercised through terror, enables individuals, classes, or societies to give expression to inner frustrations and anxieties.

To the extent that the colony is exploited at the expense of the inhabitants, the colonizer must rely upon his superior power to preserve control over the colony. The drawbacks of

basing authority on coercion are manifold. The colonizer's authority is likely to be accepted only as long as the credibility of his power and his will to use that power remain unchallenged. Should the metropolitan country suffer a relative decline in power by reason of internal disruption or foreign conflict, or should the colonized territory redress the military balance by securing the support of a third power, the danger of rebellion is likely to increase. The Irish, for example, remained poised for rebellion throughout the centuries before the Union. Actual insurgency only occurred, however, when such factors favored the chances of rebellion. In 1640, when Britain was internally divided by civil war, in 1690, when she was threatened by Louis XIV, and again in 1798, when she was locked in a deadly struggle with Napoleon, the Irish capitalized upon her weakness and the opportunity for foreign support and rose in rebellion.

The colonizer's authority is equally likely to be challenged should he grow "soft," his military spirit dampened by the spoils of success, the rigor of former battle, or by reason of changes in the ethics of his society. This was, no doubt, an important calculation of the leaders of the Irish civil war in 1922.

Colonies ruled by such methods can present the specter of constant rebellion. If the power of the colonizer is called

into question for any of the reasons discussed, the cost of preserving domination may become so high as to offset the profit extracted from the colony. In the case of Ireland, this probably occurred some time in the middle of the nineteenth century. While maintenance can develop into a costly burden, withdrawal may be perceived as an even more disastrous outcome because of the precedent it could set in other similar situations--the domino theory--or because it would leave behind a hostile population likely to pose an ever-present threat to the former colonizer. Both of these considerations, we have seen, were paramount in the minds of those Englishmen who opposed Repeal of the Union.

The rather Machiavellian moral to be learned from this dilemma is that rule based on coercion must never be allowed to be questioned to the extent that a serious threat to domination develops. There are two means which can be employed in an attempt to prevent such a situation from arising.

The most commonly adopted course is aimed at preserving the colonizer's credibility. This has been the standard technique resorted to by most conquerors. Genghis Khan, for example, was so effective in terrorizing the Russian princes and people during his brief campaigns in Russia that when the Hordes retired behind the Asian steppes, they considered it unnecessary to leave behind a force of occupation. In the hund-

red years that followed, Russian strength vis à vis the Tatars steadily increased, but the yearly tribute to Astrakhan was nevertheless dutifully delivered for fear of the consequences should it be withheld.

In the modern world, the use of terror and violence as a deterrent has lost much of its efficacy. The maintenance of the colonizer's credibility in the eyes of the native population is, in itself, no longer effective in preventing rebellion. When struggles take on ideological significance, the level of endurance of all the participants is raised. Action is inspired, and suffering endured, that is frequently suicidal in cost. When people rebel in the name of religious freedom, human liberty, or national independence, the extent of their opponent's destructive capacity is no longer the most relevant consideration because the insurgents no longer perceive death as the worst of all possible outcomes. The Russian boyars would have dismissed as absurd the suggestion that they begin a futile rebellion for the sake of national honor. The Irishmen who calmly faced death in the springtime of their lives in the Easter Rebellion of 1916 did so willingly. The insurgency began with a conscious recognition on their part that the revolution was doomed to failure. The cry of "Give me liberty or give me d^eath"--or the more contemporary "Better dead than red"--reflects the transcendent importance ideological

principles occupy in the modern individual's value hierarchy.

Thus, if the politically relevant population of the colony can no longer be effectively controlled by virtue of the preponderant destructive capability of the colonizer, the only recourse likely to be effective in preserving domination is a policy designed to prevent the development of an elite capable of leading a revolution. Perhaps the ultimate application of this logic is to be found in Hitler's projected plans for Eastern Europe.

The Nazis intended to exterminate a large percentage of the native population, including all those who had received an education. German settlers were to repopulate the land, while the remaining inhabitants were to be reduced to hewers of wood and drawers of water, mere slaves who would carry out the necessary but menial agricultural and mechanical labor. Deprived of organizational and military skills, illiterate and uneducated, the population would have been transformed into beasts of burden, human only in their physical form and potential. Such a population--assuming it had not contact with the outside world--would have posed little threat to the German ascendancy.

At the opposite end of the political spectrum from the strategy of coercion is the strategy designed to integrate the

colonial population into the national political community. The aim of this strategy is to secure the loyalty of the colonial subjects by legitimizing the colonial connection in their eyes.

A political system develops legitimacy when it is consistently able to demonstrate its ability to meet the needs and fulfill the expectations of the population over which it wields authority. The more often this is demonstrated over time, the more the population comes to associate their individual success with the success and survival of the system. As support for the system grows, its authority to make decisions affecting the lives and fortunes of the population is less frequently questioned. Compliance gradually develops into a habit.

A political system derives great advantages from having secured the loyalty of the population. It obtains a certain degree of latitude in its actions by reason of the reservoir of support it has built up. This backlog of support is a credit that can be drawn upon during times of crisis and enables the system to survive reverses which otherwise might have proved fatal.

Legitimacy, however, is more difficult to achieve than rule based on coercion, and it entails a higher expenditure of resources. A heavy load is placed on the decision-making apparatus of the metropolitan power. These institutions must develop means to judge the needs of the population and must be

capable of bringing the resources of the state to bear where they are required. This in itself requires a considerable expenditure of time, money, and effort. In addition, these resources must be expended over a long period of time before any payoff becomes apparent. Scholars who have studied the integration process have found that the advantages the community derives from amalgamation must outweigh the burdens. It is only after the politically relevant population perceives that it is likely to attain a higher degree of wealth, status, honor, and security by virtue of integration, and in fact realizes these goals, that it is likely to assume the responsibilities of the relationship as well.²

Perhaps the most difficult commitment is of a psychological nature. The colonizer cannot preserve his exclusiveness and sense of superiority over the colonized if meaningful social contact and communication are to develop between the peoples. Without such communication, it is impossible to develop the mutual understanding, trust, and predictability of behavior that are so essential to responsiveness. No level of administrative capability and material expenditure will compensate by itself for the lack of such empathy because, without proper direction, such resources are useless. Unless a high degree of empathy develops, the metropolitan society will most likely be

extremely reluctant to consent to the high cost of a strategy of integration and to remain willing to grant the opportunities for upward mobility so essential to the success of that strategy.

Herein lies the danger of the strategy of integration. If for any reason the metropolitan power proves unresponsive to the needs of the colonized or fails to create the mobility that the population has been led to expect, the integration will be unsuccessful. The colonial power will have created expectations that have not been fulfilled and probably will alienate the community it sought to integrate. In such a case, agitation for autonomy, or open rebellion, as the Irish case illustrates, is likely to develop.

Ironically, the probability for success of such rebellions is likely to be considerably improved by reason of the former policies of the metropolitan power. Unlike a coercive strategy, which aims to prevent a native elite from developing, a strategy designed to achieve integration encourages mobility and political participation. An unsuccessful attempt at integration will have provided some mobility and some political participation and will have created an elite, without at the same time securing the loyalties of that elite to the larger political unit. Thus, the very cadres necessary to organize and carry out rebellion will have been created. The strategy of integration can therefore be viewed as a gamble played for

high stakes involving equally high risks. If successful, the payoff is highly rewarding; if unsuccessful, the result is likely to be disaster.

* * *

British policy towards Ireland in the centuries before the Union was accurately characterized by the model of the strategy of coercion. Ireland was a colony whose land and people were ruthlessly exploited to serve British interests. British dominion, exercised by a minority of soldiers, settlers, and administrators ruling over an alien and restless people, rested on the threat and actual application of force and terror. Settlers were encouraged to farm land expropriated from the indigenous inhabitants and were given arbitrary and absolute power over the lives and fortunes of the natives in order to facilitate the exercise of their authority.

Although the British relied principally upon their preponderant military power to guarantee their authority in Ireland, after 1640 they employed the additional tactic of policies designed to prevent a native elite from developing. The Penal Laws, legislated after the Cromwellian suppression of the Irish insurgents, forbade Irish Catholics to serve in the army, to enter politics, to own land or practice a profession,

to import or export, to send their children to a Catholic school in Ireland or abroad for an education. Such repressive measures, coupled with a further expropriation of Irish lands (and even a policy of extermination) were consciously designed to reduce the wealth, power, and organizational capabilities of the Irish people. Like Eastern Europe, Ireland was to be reduced to a productive but docile asset. The interests of the native inhabitants were entirely sacrificed to the interests of the metropolitan power.

British policy towards Ireland in the first fifty years after the Union was really a curious amalgam of the two strategies that satisfied the conditions of neither, but rather aggravated the pitfalls of both. The avowed goal of successive British governments was the integration of the Irish people into the British nation. To a certain degree, policies designed to achieve this goal were implemented. Discriminatory restrictions against Irish Catholics and the Catholic religion were largely removed. The Penal Laws had been struck down in the decades before the Union, and Catholic Emancipation was granted several decades afterwards. The Catholic Church was allowed to operate without legal interference and was even given some state support. The Government allocated more funds for Irish education--both parochial and secular--and

actively promoted job mobility within the civil service. The outlay for the development of roads and other transportation facilities, public health, and social services also increased many fold in the first fifty years of Union.

As a result, there was a corresponding increase in literacy and education, an increase in wealth (though not between 1830 and 1850), and a corresponding increase in the store of specialized technical and administrative skills among the Irish people. Although the Ireland of 1850 was still a predominantly agrarian country, with its population concentrated in the countryside, the middle class, which began to emerge at the beginning of the century, had increased its size and solidified its power, and an Irish intelligentsia had emerged that fully participated in the avant-garde political and artistic trends characterizing the activity of the European intellectual elite.

There was, however, another side to the coin. Throughout this period the British continued to exploit Ireland. From the beginning of the century, British industry had rigged the commercial clauses of the Union in such a way that they were easily able to destroy infant Irish industry and guarantee a large market in Ireland for finished British goods. British industrialists also exploited the chronic unemployment of Ireland by paying substandard wages to Irish workers imported from that island. The Protestant Church continued to receive a

substantial part of Irish revenues, although it did little to contribute to the well-being or spiritual welfare of the majority of the Irish people. The Irish administration, although it became progressively more responsive to Irish interests after 1830, was still composed of individuals, many of whom viewed their jobs as mere sinecures or as rewards for past service. The British Parliament continued to legislate differently for Ireland and for England and refused to grant those basic civil liberties all Englishmen believed to be their natural inheritance. And above all, the Irish landed interests, through a notorious abuse of their arbitrary power, mercilessly exploited the Irish peasantry and contributed more than anything else to the economic malaise of the countryside.

Exploitation and responsiveness were mutually exclusive. As a result, the reforms designed to meet the demands of the Irish people were unsuccessful in promoting reconciliation with the British connection because they were unable to redress the core grievances arising from continuing exploitation and oppression. The Irish, for example, were given parliamentary representation, yet it proved ineffectual in guaranteeing the civil liberties of the Irish people. Irishmen were employed by the British administration in Ireland, but policy was still formulated by bureaucrats who were largely unresponsive to Irish needs. The Catholic Church was made legal in Ireland and even subsidized

by the state, but the established church continued to draw heavily on the Irish revenues. Reform, rather than satisfying Irish demands, made the hopelessness of their position even more apparent and thus fanned the flames of their discontent.

The political, religious, and economic reforms, coupled with the increasing British commitment of resources in Ireland, created conditions in which a middle class and native intelligentsia could develop. However, change and reform were not sufficiently far-reaching and failed to fulfill the expectations of these classes for wealth, prestige, honor, and equality. Aware of the possibilities for change, furious with the inequalities still remaining, yet possessing technical and administrative skills and increasing capital, these classes mobilized the masses to support their demands and became the spearhead of the national movement. The Repeal Movement, which had only asked for equality, was eclipsed by national movements like Young Ireland, the Fenians, and Sinn Fein that demanded independence. In the end, it was the nationalist movement which secured the loyalty of the Irish people and successfully challenged British rule.

* * *

The conclusions reached by Rupert Emerson in his impressive study, From Empire to Nation, suggest that the same contra-

dictory dualism which characterized the Anglo-Irish relationship,³ was a general feature of European colonial policy. In this work, Emerson offers a paradigm of colonial history that seeks to explain the developmental sequence of colonial peoples from subject status to independence.

Emerson divides the colonial period into three stages, each representative of distinct attitudes manifested by the native population toward Western rule. The first period was characterized by a xenophobic rejection of colonial rule. The indigenous inhabitants, led by their traditional leaders, rose in rebellion against the alien invader. His values, political forms, and physical presence were violently rejected by the society. The Boxer rebellion, the Indian Mutiny, and the uprising of the Mahdi in the Sudan were all representative of this phase of interaction between the colonizer and the colonized. Such attempts to expel the foreigners and return to the traditional way of life were unsuccessful. The power of the traditional elite was frequently broken by such uprising, and often they retained a negligible influence only by reason of the grace accorded to them by the occupying powers. In such cases they proved useful as an administrative link between the colonial authorities and the native population. Over successive generations, this arrangement frequently proved fruitful to both parties and, accordingly, the colonial power was able to retain the loyalties of this class until independence.

The second period was characterized by a swing from xenophobic rejection to emulation. The change developed gradually, and only after radical alterations in the indigenous patterns of life had been effected by European occupation. A modern market economy developed alongside the pre-colonial subsistence economy. Urban centers, the loci of the European community, grew in size and importance and attracted natives from the hinterland. The cities were the centers of operation for overseas companies and the expanding colonial administration and were increasingly populated by a rising class of native entrepreneurs. As colonial governments and metropolitan commercial enterprises extended their operations, they found it necessary to introduce modern health services, to establish schools, and to train elements of the native population in the skills and techniques of industrial society. This was partly a function of need and partly a response, Emerson argues, to growing pressures at home to improve the lot of the natives. Missionaries and charitable organizations tended the bodies of natives along with their souls.

Thus urbanization and the spread of literacy, the growth of secular education, and the diffusion of technical and administrative skills among the native population proved to be the by-products of European colonial rule. These changes gave rise to

a Europeanized element in the colony, concentrated in the urban centers, and co-existing with the majority of a native population that remained rooted in its traditional ways. A new class of native had thus emerged. Fluent in the language of the ~~new~~ colonizer, skilled in the techniques of the West, and schooled in the ideas and values of European civilization, members of this new elite demanded a degree of power, wealth, and status accorded Europeans with similar qualifications. These evolues, as the French called them--often educated at Oxford, the Sorbonne, or the Hague--rejected their old cultures and openly embraced the new. They considered themselves not so much Ibo, Arab, or Malay, as English, French, or Dutch.

Some members of this first generation of culturally uprooted individuals were able to achieve a high degree of mobility in their adopted societies. This was especially evident in the French colonies, where assimilation was the avowed policy of the government. Two noted examples are Felix Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, who became a Cabinet Minister, and Leopold Senghor, a noted poet (in the French language), who was honored by membership in the prestigious French Academy. Such individuals, however, represented a minority of the emerging native elite and were refused positions/^{for} which they believed their training and experience qualified them. In short, they remained frustrated in their attempt to achieve the benefits of the new order.

Although competent and hard working, and honest in their adoption of European customs, they remained "natives" to the colonialists, who refused to bestow upon them the status freely granted less qualified members of the European community.

The frustrated Europeanized element of the colony, Emerson argued, were not blind to the anomaly between word and deed. Colonial government sought justification in the name of secular enlightenment and frequently articulated their "mission" as the diffusion of the benefits of Western civilization. To the colonial population, this appeared as sheer hypocrisy, as they saw themselves being denied these very benefits.

Bitterness in the face of such discrimination--justified by the colonials on the basis of racial or ethnic differences--was sharpened by the all too obvious contrast between this treatment and the ideas of equality and human dignity the elite had imbibed from its European education. The Declaration of the Rights of Man was a far cry from the realities of life in the colony. At the same time, they could not help but perceive the manner in which their fellow natives were treated, as compared to the growing concern and solicitude shown the masses in Europe. As European were achieving the rights of political participation and were being given the opportunity of deciding their own destinies, the colonial population was being denied these same rights. Two distinct political and administrative

codes had developed, one for the European at home or in the colonies, and another for the native. Governments quick to respond to the needs of their European citizens were blithely unresponsive to the demands of their colonial subjects. The result was that the Europeanized elements of the native population grew to believe that as long as colonial domination continued, they and their fellows would forever remain in a subordinate status.

The reaction to this impasse led to the third and final stage of colonialism. Native attitudes, shaped by the disillusioned evolués, rejected assimilation into Western society in favor of self-assertion of their native culture. Emerson and others argue that colonial nationalism was an attempt by this elite to create a new environment, a new society in which they could achieve the power, wealth, and status denied them by both the traditional and Western societies. At the same time, they were motivated by a concern to obtain justice, good government, and economic well-being for the mass of the colonial population. Colonial nationalism was a synthesis of the two cultures: European rule was rejected, but not the attributes of Western power; the static complacency and rigid hierarchy of traditional society was deprecated, but not its cultural achievements, its language, and its traditions. Nationalist leaders embraced the methods of the West in order to turn them against the colonial powers.

The native intelligentsia drew increasing support from other classes of society to whom nationalism also offered an attractive vehicle through which to satisfy their ambitions. Native professional men and entrepreneurs, civil servants and trade unionists--drawn from the urbanized and culturally uprooted segment of society--swelled the ranks of the national movement. The money and organizational cadres necessary to mobilize the masses were drawn from this class. Frustrated by the contrast of their poverty with the wealth of the Europeans, and indignant over their lack of status in their own country, the masses were easily aroused by a movement that promised to raise their standard of living and confer upon them a new dignity.

If Emerson is correct, then the European colonial powers appeared to have followed the same curious amalgam of the two strategies of colonialism in their African and Asian colonies that Britain pursued with regard to Ireland. On the one hand, the colony was exploited in order to provide raw materials, cheap labor, military conscripts, and wider markets for Western capital and goods. To insure the success of these ventures, the native population was denied any share of real political power in the colony and deprived of much of its wealth. On the other hand, the policies of the colonial administrations gave rise to the conditions necessary for the development of a small

but articulate class of entrepreneurs and intellectuals, skilled in the techniques of the West, familiar with the ideals of European society, and demanding their share of the wealth, power, and prestige.

In this connection, it must be noted that the rise of such a class of individuals was not a necessary function of colonial rule. Certainly, some natives had to be taught to read and be exposed to the techniques of Western society, but those Western powers who professed democratic values at home encouraged such development far beyond the mere requirements of administration in the colony. Education and enlightenment became a goal in itself. Students were sent to the great European universities, where they drank in the currents of egalitarian and revolutionary thought that flourished in such an environment. They returned home with an even greater awareness of the differences between their societies and European societies and with greater expectations as to their mobility, which, we have seen, remained unfulfilled. This proved to be a tremendous impetus to the development of national movements, for it increased the size of the cadres necessary to organize such a movement, while at the same time education and innovation in the colony swelled the number of those who were aware of such aspirations and looked to these men for leadership. The proof of this assertion can be seen in the fact that those colonial

powers, such as Spain and Portugal, which made no pretext of bringing secular enlightenment to their colonies, were faced with the challenge of nationalism at a much later date and in a more controllable form than that encountered by colonizers like Britain and France. In fact, both Spain and Portugal still rule colonial empires!

It was not difficult for colonial powers to admit a few evolues into their ranks. This required no radical restructuring of colonial society. When, however, greater numbers of natives began to demand similar privileges and opportunities, the colonial regimes were presented with a serious challenge. Like Britain in Ireland, they were forced to make a choice between two alternative and mutually exclusive strategies. Like Britain in Ireland, they appeared unable to do so and thus contributed to--if not caused--the rise of an alienated elite that sought to challenge the basis of colonial authority.

It is apparent, therefore, that the same irrational strategy pursued in Ireland was pursued in other colonial relationships as well. Could it be that the same perceptive myopia was the cause in these other cases?

In Ireland, we have seen how a stereotyped image of the native was invented to justify colonial occupation. The stereotype functioned as a tension-reduction mechanism and, eventually, as a perceptual prison that blinded the British government

to the reality of political and economic conditions in Ireland. As a result, the British government initiated policies which were irrational, in the sense that they fulfilled neither the goal of integration nor that of exploitation and continuing control. What evidence is there of the existence of a similar perceptual blindness in other colonial situations?

Sensitive observers have provided us with ample evidence of the existence of stereotyped images of natives in almost all colonial situations. Descriptions of these stereotypes and commentary about their effects abound in both literature and non-fiction studies of colonialism.

The original colonial novel, built on the theme of the Dutch experience in Indonesia, was probably Max Havelaar, published in 1860. The stereotypic qualities attributed to the Indonesian native hardly differed from those which characterized Paddy. With reference to the French colonial empire, the novels of Sartre, and especially Albert Memmi, illuminate the striking parallels between the operation of stereotypes in Ireland and Algeria. Similarly, ample evidence can be found in the English-speaking world. The theme of colonial stereotypes is at the core of George Orwell's Burmese Days, E. M. Forster's Passage to India, and several of the novels of Graham Greene. E. M. Forster provides a particularly insightful analysis in his examination of how such images served to

solidify the colonial community and set the colonizer apart from the native. Forster and Orwell also stressed a perceptual gap created by the operation of such images, making meaningful communication between the two worlds of colonizer and colonized all but impossible.

The stereotype of the Black American is another example of this functional image. Its content and effects have been treated in such widely differing sources as novels, ~~such as~~ *like* those of Mark Twain, Richard Wright, and James Baldwin, and in serious academic investigations, the most impressive of which remains Gunnar Myrdal's An American Dilemma.

The most fascinating aspect of the content of the stereotypes found in such works is that, while they describe such widely differing environments and peoples ^{those of} as/Ireland and Indonesia, Algeria, Black America, Burma, and Nigeria, the characteristics that colonizers attributed to the natives are remarkably uniform from one picture of the native to another. With almost monotonous regularity, colonial natives have been described as indolent and self-complacent, cowardly but brazenly rash, violent, uncivilized, and incapable of hard work. On the more complimentary side, they have been characterized as hospitable, good-natured, possessing a natural talent for song and dance, and frequently as curious but incapable of a prolonged span of attention. In short, the image of simple creatures in need of paternal domination emerged very clearly. Each image, of course, varied slightly from the other, to

include obvious differences in native character or mores, but the panoply of characteristics remained basically the same and effectively differentiated the natives from the White Man.

Some observers have even suggested the function such characteristics fulfilled. Albert Memmi, in The Colonizer and Colonized, commented on the utility of the belief that all natives are lazy. "It seems to receive unanimous approval," he wrote, "of colonizers from Liberia to Laos, via the Maghreb."

It is easy to see to what extent this description is useful. It occupies an important place in the dialectics exalting the colonizer and humbling the colonized. Furthermore, it is economically fruitful. Nothing could better justify the colonizer's privileged position than his industry, and nothing could better justify the colonized's destitution than his indolence. The mythical portrait of the colonized therefore includes an unbelievable laziness, and that of the colonizer, a virtuous taste for action. At the same time the colonizer suggests that employing the colonizer is not very profitable, thereby authorizing his unreasonable wages. ⁸

The same might be, and has, in fact, been said with reference to a series of other characteristics which functioned, as in the case of Ireland, to reduce tension and justify colonial policy.

Jean-Paul Sartre said, in this connection:

How can an elite of usurpers, aware of their mediocrity, establish their privileges? By one means only: debasing the colonized to exalt themselves, denying the title of humanity to the natives, and defining them as simply absences of qualities-- animals, not humans. This does not prove hard to do, for the system deprives them of everything.

Colonialist practice has engraved the colonialist idea into things themselves; it is the movement of things that designates colonizer and colonized alike. This oppression justifies itself through oppression: the oppressors produce and maintain by force the evils that render the oppressed, in their eyes, more and more like what they would have to be like to deserve their fate.

Thus, Sartre concludes, colonial stereotypes become self-fulfilling and self-justifying images.

It is only natural to progress one step beyond this stage and examine the effect such images had upon policy. If the stereotypes were functional in reducing tension in other colonies besides Ireland, and if they dominated perception and became self-fulfilling--which evidence seems to suggest--then it is equally likely that, once again as in the case of Ireland, they became perceptual prisons through which colonial policy was evaluated and formulated. The existence of such stereotyped images, which distorted reality into harmony with the psychological needs of the colonizing society, would explain not only the failure of the colonial powers to perceive the necessity of choice between the two alternative strategies we have discussed, but also their inability to react rationally to the challenge of nationalist movements.

If the stereotype operated as a perceptual prison, then, as in Ireland, the characteristics attributed to the native population suggested the assumptions within which colonial policy was

formulated. The most important of these assumptions were: 1) the belief that the natives were incapable of self-government and 2) its corollary, that the native inhabitants were in need of the strong parental authority of the colonial power; 3) that colonial rule, therefore, was in the best interests of the native, and 4) its corollary, that the natives knew this.

The colonialists, of course, believed that the natives recognized the natural authority of the white man and were accordingly loyal to the colonial regime. These assumptions created the parameters for colonial policy. They limited, a priori, those policy alternatives which were thought to be applicable to colonial administration. They also restricted the range of policy alternatives because policies outside of the parameters set by these assumptions would challenge the validity of these assumptions.

Rigid adherence to either the strategy of coercion or the strategy of integration involved policies which were beyond the parameters set by the image. On the one hand, the natives could not be ruled entirely by force and coercion and be denied all opportunities to partake of the wealth of the colony because this would clearly invalidate the colonialist's claim that his policy was undertaken with the best interests of the native in mind. On the other hand, to pursue policies effective in promoting integration of the natives into the national community was equally unthinkable because they were perceived as being incapable

of self-government and unable to cope with the privileges and responsibilities granted to the domestic population. The image of the native, therefore, dictated a colonial strategy halfway between these two alternatives--in the open space, as it were, between the two stools.

Colonial powers professing to adhere to democratic values accordingly encouraged native education, introduced certain social services, and provided some job mobility for talented colonials. At the same time, their assumptions led them to deny emphatically/the native any real exercise of political power or any real opportunities to achieve economic and social equality with the people of the colonizer's own nation.

As a result, the colonial administration developed little empathy with the natives, could not perceive them as equals, and was unable to accept their demands for equality as reasonable. Thus, the native elite, whose development was stimulated by colonial policies, was also alienated by them. Increasingly it turned to nationalism as the solution to its dilemma.

An examination of the assumptions formulated in terms of the stereotyped image are also useful in providing a rational explanation for the irrational response of the colonial powers to native nationalism or protest. Once the colonial power was confronted with a rising protest movement, it had two viable alternatives to pursue: to accept the challenge and crush the movement,

or to meet the demands of the native politicians in the hope of minimizing the appeal of nationalism and perhaps postponing or preventing the day when they would demand total independence. Once again, our perceptual model provides an explanation for the reason most colonial powers were unable to choose between these alternatives.

Most of them were unable to perceive native political movements as a real threat because they remained convinced not only that independence was impossible, but that the vast majority of native inhabitants were content with their administration and were only being misled by agitators. Such protest movements were accordingly explained away, as in Ireland, in terms of the ambitions of self-seeking, vicious agitators or deluded madmen. At the same time, the colonial powers could not bring themselves to take action which would really have been effective in totally repressing such protest. Certainly leaders were jailed, meetings broken up, and civil liberties partially suspended. The leaders were, however, usually released after short sentences; their supporters were repressed but not exterminated; censorship was imposed, but the nationalist presses were not smashed; and civil liberties were only temporarily suspended. In Ireland, for example, Daniel O'Connell was found guilty of treason by a rigged jury, but the decision was reversed by the House of

Lords. The Young Ireland revolutionaries, captured after the rebellion of 1848, were not hanged but only temporarily deported, and the Irish press, which more than ever was agitating for independence, continued to indict the policies of the British government.

The histories of independence movements in India, Nigeria, Kenya, Algeria, and Indonesia are not dissimilar. The values of the colonial administrators and the pressures exerted by public opinion at home prevented the type of reprisals and garrison-state tactics that characterized the policies of colonial powers like Portugal and Spain. Some pretense of democratic government had to be preserved if these colonial powers were still to claim justification of their policies in terms of the model of colonial government they themselves had propagated.¹⁰

The colonialist response, therefore, usually consisted of a combination of mild repression and minor reform. Colonial administrators continued to believe that the protests of the natives were not really motivated by political concerns. They assumed that the masses neither understood nor wanted independence and the political machinery it entailed, and that their political aspirations were merely the result of passions inflamed by agitators using them to seek power.

Lord Lloyd, High Commissioner of Egypt from 1925 to 1929, whose attitude may be taken to be representative of most colonial

administrators, concluded:

Good administration is their only desire and concern --and it is because we have allowed administration to be obscured by political issues that we have brought such heavy troubles upon the shoulders of all concerned. In these countries the real problem has been administrative, and we have chosen to regard it as political.¹¹

The proper focus of colonial rule, therefore, was perceived to consist in providing peace and quiet from above, so that the common people could pursue their goals. Accordingly, greater attention was paid to administrative than to political matters (although some minor concessions were granted in the economic and political sphere).

The result was to demonstrate to the people of the colony that history was on the side of the nationalists. Their demands were still unmet, but the political agitators were nevertheless allowed to continue operating in such an environment. Their defiance of the colonial government, with relative impunity from reprisal, and their partial success in gaining concessions strengthened their hand and increased their power among the natives of the colony. In the end, the colonial government was presented with a real confrontation. Colonial powers were given the choice of granting independence, as was the case in India, Nigeria, and French Africa, or of throwing overboard all pretext of democracy and attempting to rule colonies as occupied countries, as

was the case in Indo-China, Algeria, or Ireland. By the time the confrontation developed, however, the power of the national movements had increased in strength, and the means necessary to preserve colonial rule had become so contradictory to the values of a democratic society that there was fierce resistance at home to such a policy. These factors, coupled with the fact that the international balance of power favored the independence movements, sealed the fate of widespread colonial empire.

The successful maintenance of colonial rule depended, therefore, on the rigid adherence to either of two strategies. Halfway measures and compromise did not succeed and proved fatal to dominion. A choice had to be made. If the metropolitan power ruled the colonies as territories, to be exploited at the expense of their inhabitants, it could not shrink from adopting coercive measures--inhumane as they may have appeared--if colonial authority was to be preserved. If, on the other hand, authority was to be maintained by reason of securing the loyalty of the native population, the metropolitan power could not exploit the colony at the expense of its inhabitants. The colonizer had to develop empathy and accept the sacrifices required to legitimize the political connection.

Britain and France--the two primary examples of democratic colonial powers--were well aware of the possibilities of

choice, but were unable to commit themselves to either strategy. The majority of the political elites in both nations were unwilling to relinquish the advantages they believed metropolitan powers should derive from governing colonies and were unable to see independence as a viable alternative. At the same time, however, they viewed with increasing repugnance authority that rested entirely upon coercion. The élites were therefore very reluctant to endorse the means required to preserve political power in the colonies. The problem can equally well be stated in reverse. As a result of the changing political climate of the nineteenth century, Britain and France were compelled to legitimize their authority in the eyes of the colonial population but were unable or unwilling to make the sacrifices required by such a course of action.

As the century unfolded, the dilemma grew more oppressive. In certain respects it reflected a basic paradox of the age. The nineteenth century was an era in which liberalism made great gains. The liberal ideology carried with it a commitment to government conducted in the interests of the majority of the people. Great emphasis was placed on the morality of political behavior. As liberalism outgrew its early doctrinaire tenets and incorporated ideas put forward by those concerned with social justice, an increasing emphasis was placed on improving the

condition of the lower classes and extending the rights of political participation and spiritual and material welfare to more and more people.

The nineteenth century was also an age in which political struggles were increasingly viewed in an ideological context. When the nation-state replaced the dynastic political unit, and mass participation became a relevant factor, both the means and ends of political action underwent a significant change. Political differences and rivalries between nations tended to be defined in an ideological context, in order to obtain from the population the sacrifices required to pursue their foreign policy goals. As a result, formerly unacceptable means and sacrifices were justified by reason of the overriding importance of the ultimate goal.

Thus, although colonial government was subject to increasing criticism, the nineteenth century will be remembered as the great age of Western colonial expansion. Colonies were perceived as vitally important sources of political and economic power in the struggle for the mastery of Europe. From 1870 to the end of the century, European penetration into colonial territories increased, as did the total territory effectively controlled by the metropolitan powers.

Many Europeans, especially those of a liberal persuasion, were thus forced to choose between their principles and what was

regarded by them as political necessity. The majority of the liberals were seduced by arguments in favor of imperial expansion and envisaged colonial empire as a prerequisite to national power and even national survival. Somehow, principles and necessity had to be reconciled.

There was an additional dilemma at work as well. Because political rivalries had been structured in an ideological context, those individuals who believed that their nation represented freedom and justice, as opposed to the tyranny of the rival, could not easily espouse political behavior--even if they thought it necessary--that contradicted the very goals for which the struggle was supposedly being waged. Thus, Englishmen who condemned French barbarities and undemocratic practices in Algeria could hardly admit that they pursued a similar policy in Ireland and India. The reverse held true, of course, for the French.

Thus the dilemma created by the conflict between the emerging value consensus of European democratic society and the means of political behavior increased in intensity. There can be little doubt that it produced a great psychological problem for the actors involved. Tension was generated that somehow had to be reduced. The means employed in this connection, this study has argued, was a perceptual sleight of hand, a stereotyped image

of reality, which enabled those suffering from this dilemma to rationalize into harmony the contradiction between moral belief and political necessity. This solution had a profound effect on later policy. For while it proved functional in reducing tension, it did so at the expense of a realistic perception of colonial affairs. In the end, it proved dysfunctional in terms of policy orientation, and contributed to the collapse of colonial empire.

FOOTNOES: POSTSCRIPT

1. Schumpeter, op. cit., passim.
2. Karl Deutsch et al, Political Community and the North Atlantic Area (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 21.
3. Rupert Emerson, From Empire to Nation (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960).
4. Edward Douwes Dekker, Max Havelaar or The Coffee Sales of the Netherlands Trading Company, trans. W. Siebenhaar (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927).
5. See Albert Memmi, Portrait d'un Juif l'Impasse (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), and La Statue de Sel (Paris: Gallimard, 1966).
6. George Orwell, Burmese Days (London: Victor Gollancz, 1935); E. M. Forster, A Passage to India (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1924); see especially, Graham Greene, The Heart of the Matter (London: W. Heinemann, 1948).
7. Richard Wright, Native Son (New York: Harper & Bros., 1940); James Baldwin, Go Tell It on the Mountain (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953) and Notes of a Native Son (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962); Gunnar Myrdal et al, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy (20th anniversary ed.; New York: Harper and Row, 1962).
8. Albert Memmi, The Colonizer and the Colonized (New York: Orion Books, 1965), p. 79.
9. In Memmi, idem., p. xxvi.
10. Idem., passim.
11. Emerson, op. cit., p. 38.

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