

## Home Rule – Rome Rule

Fenianism had predictable effects: thundering denunciation from the press and in parliament and a great deal of thought among those whose business it was to maintain the health of the body politic. John Stuart Mill (1806–73), the social reformer and philosopher who ‘humanised’ Bentham’s utilitarianism (at its extreme point as savagely inhuman as *laissez faire*), stated in 1868 that the recurring question was not so much England’s Irish problem as Ireland’s English problem. In *England and Ireland* he opined to his English readers that there was ‘no other nation of the civilised world, which, if the task of governing Ireland had happened to devolve upon it, would not have shown itself more capable of that work than England has hitherto done.’ There was the usual uproar that greets any criticism of England: one Irish landlord said that Mill should be sent to gaol as a Fenian but Gladstone, who became Liberal prime minister for the first time in 1868, was moved to make Ireland the main business of the rest of his long parliamentary career.

His first move was to disestablish the Church of Ireland (on very generous terms) and incidentally initiate tenant

ownership, in that the bill provided for the purchase of glebe lands. The ‘pacification’ of Ireland, Gladstone’s stated intention, was going to imply more than just land reform. He began to consider what Ireland’s new constitutional leader, Isaac Butt (1813–79), had tentatively named ‘Home Rule’. Butt was a son of a Church of Ireland rector from Stranorlar, County Donegal who became professor of political economy at Trinity but left the academic life for the richer pickings of the bar in 1841. (The son of a widow from an early age, his finances were precarious for his whole life.) He became as famous a pleader as O’Connell, with whom he engaged in public debate as the voice of Protestant ascendancy. The Famine, especially the emotional scenes that he witnessed at ports of departure, had a profound effect on him, as had the demeanour of the nationalists he defended in the courts, notably Smith O’Brien and Meagher in 1848 and many Fenians in the 1860s. He sat as a Conservative MP for Youghal from 1852–65 but, having founded the Home Government Association in 1870, stood as a federal candidate for Limerick in 1871. By 1874 he was head of the Home Rule party, with fifty MPs at his control.

His gradualism and ‘gentlemanly’ constitutionalism were regarded as too radical for his Protestant friends and they exasperated Catholics. His lieutenant, the Protestant IRB Belfast MP, Joseph Gillis Biggar (1828–90), who represented Cavan 1874–90, was by House standards far from gentlemanly in that he used every procedural trick to bring it to a standstill. Butt was continually embarrassed by this obstructionism and by Biggar’s abrasive manner both in and out of

the House. Biggar even named the Prince of Wales as a 'stranger' and forced him to leave the House. When Butt was effectively dismissed in 1879 by the rising star, Parnell, his disappointment was mitigated by the satisfaction of having initiated the process that would eventually lead to independence and by a reluctance to be associated with an increasingly 'ungentlemanly' campaign.

Charles Stewart Parnell (1846–91) was a Protestant landlord, who inherited the estate of Avondale in County Wicklow on the death of his father when he was thirteen. For a further sixteen years he led a fairly aimless life until his election as a Home Rule candidate for Meath in a by-election in 1875. His family had been anti-Union and pro-Emancipation and his mother, an American, was in opinions if not in action firmly anti-English. (Having an American mother had a liberalising effect on another player in the Irish comedy, Winston Churchill, though Jennie Jerome could not have been said to have affected the views of her husband, the Orange-card-playing Lord Randolph.) Parnell's cold and reserved exterior and laconic, almost monosyllabic, speech concealed a passionate nature. His noted dislike of the English was not unknown among his class and it is generally believed that slights inflicted at Cambridge, which he left without taking a degree, intensified it. His alliance with the Fenians was not one of peers, though a belief that he supported them, commonly held, especially in America, widened his command and brought in many subscriptions for party funds.

His arrest on 13 October 1881, along with the principal

leaders of the Land League, was the equivalent of graduation. From then on he was 'The Chief' and had the convenience of having most of his court with him in Kilmainham Gaol. The increase of rural violence led to a suspension of *habeas corpus*. Gladstone's policy was always to have some offensive coercion measure in place so that he could rescind it as proof of his sincerity. He concluded an agreement with Parnell, the intermediaries significantly being Captain and Mrs O'Shea, that was known as the 'Kilmainham Treaty'. The rent strike was called off and the Land Leaguers released on 2 May 1882. Parnell was now at the height of his power, and in the phrase of his adversarial colleague, Tim Healy (1855–1931), 'the uncrowned king of Ireland'. He was able to continue in spite of the horrific Phoenix Park murders and the government measures that followed, including the creation of a Special Irish Branch at Scotland Yard. (This was the forerunner of the modern Special Branch which deals with all aspects of political security.) He faced down accusations in *The Times* (18 April 1887), based on diaries forged by journalist Richard Pigott, that he not only condoned killings during the Land War but was actually implicated himself. He was finally cleared of all charges on 13 February 1890. The 'Thunderer' paid £5,000 in an out-of-court settlement of Parnell's libel action and lost forever its reputation for infallibility.

The election of 1885 returned eighty-six Irish Party MPs, T. P. O'Connor, who was afterwards for many years 'father of the House', representing the Scotland Division of Liverpool. Their numbers were exactly the difference between

the Liberal 335 and the Conservative 249. On 8 April 1886 the seventy-six-year-old Gladstone announced a Home Rule Bill for Ireland. Its terms were modest, offering the kind of partial devolution that Craig and Carson accepted for 'Ulster' in 1921, powers internal and concerned with taxation, police, civil service and judiciary. It was defeated by thirty votes on its second reading on 8 June but not in time to stop a summer of rioting in Belfast in which thirty-two people were killed and 377 seriously injured. (The real number of dead was put at over fifty; not for the last time the true number of fatalities was concealed). The thought of a priest-ridden Dublin government was enough to set off volatile Belfast, especially when its Protestant population, both working class and bourgeois, had been inflamed by the brilliant demagoguery of the Rev Hugh Hanna who earned his nickname, 'Roaring', in the pulpit of St Enoch's Presbyterian Church. Parnell's response showed the same ignorance of the true nature of the Ulster Protestant resistance that had weakened O'Connell's leadership. In a speech at Plymouth on 26 June he suggested with less than full awareness of the situation that '1,000 men of the Royal Irish Constabulary will be amply sufficient to cope with all the rowdies that the Orangemen of the North can produce.'

Some of the blame for the trouble must be laid at Randolph Churchill's door. He was a clever but erratic politician and like most of the Conservative party convinced that any flaw in the well-wrought urn that was the British Empire would lead to its eventual dissolution. He also felt an obligation not to leave loyal Britishers to the mercies of

a nationalist regime. Most of all he wanted to put the Conservatives back in power. In a letter to Lord Justice Fitzgibbon on 16 February 1886 he wrote:

I decided some time ago that if the GOM ['grand old man'= Gladstone] went for Home Rule, the Orange card would be the one to play. Please God it may turn out to be the ace of trumps and not the two.

Churchill landed from the steamer at Larne on 26 February after an unusually rough crossing and declared: 'Ulster at the proper moment will resort to its supreme arbitrament of force. Ulster will fight, and Ulster will be right.' His immediate purpose was attained: a Conservative government under Lord Salisbury was returned on 25 July. The Orange card had not been necessary after all; Joseph Chamberlain had split from the Liberals to form the 'Unionist' party. Churchill knew Ireland well enough to state with a certain prophetic accuracy, 'Personal jealousies, government influences, Davitt, Fenian intrigue will all be at work, and the bishops who in their heart of hearts hate Parnell and don't care a scrap for home rule will complete the rout.'

Parnell was bitterly disappointed but knew that any measure of the sort would require an administration that could put the upper house in its place. He continued to lead his party and work for the improvement of his nationalist followers, though he tended to view with the gravest suspicion the reforms introduced by the Conservative

administration of the kind that were later to be called 'killing Home Rule with kindness'. The land war rumbled on but Parnell was able to dissociate himself from Tim Harrington's Plan of Campaign, which signalled a new assault on landlordism. In February 1886 he had imposed the not very suitable candidate Captain O'Shea on the Galway bye-election. Healy and Biggar were outraged and it was clear that most people knew what Biggar spoke aloud: 'The candidate's wife is Parnell's mistress and there's nothing more to be said.' It was true and had been the case for six years. Katharine O'Shea (the correct pronunciation of the name may be found in Healy's rasping jibe: 'O'Shea who must be obeyed') had borne Parnell three children between 1882 and 1884, clearly with the complaisance of the husband. O'Shea was known as a fairly feckless character and indeed his parliamentary career was, to say the least, disappointing. He did not sit with the other Irish Party members and voted against Home Rule!

Matters came to a head in 1889 when O'Shea filed for divorce on Christmas Eve, naming Parnell as co-respondent. The undefended suit was heard on 17 November 1890 and O'Shea was awarded custody of the children. Gladstone was not prepared to risk collaboration any longer with a party led by such a public sinner and the Catholic Church acted precisely as Churchill said they would. The party was split and would stay so until 1900. Moral indignation was not the main cause of the schism. Parnell was the 'uncrowned king' but his closest colleagues found him wilful, absent and arrogant. They were appalled at the risks he took and, at the

protracted meeting held between 1 and 6 December in Committee Room 15 of the House, should have shown an able politician what he had to do. Cecil Rhodes, the Empire-builder with whom he had a quixotic friendship, had sent the prescription in a cable from Salisbury: 'Resign - marry - return.' Parnell had the embarrassment of seeing Justin McCarthy lead out forty-four now 'anti-Parnellite' MPs. He chose not to resign but to fight on with great courage. He and Katharine (neither of them used the name 'Kitty') were married at a registry office in Steynings, Surrey on 25 June 1891. Four months later he was dead. Once during the Home Rule campaign of 1866 rumours of his death had caused him to ask, 'What did I die of?' The cause on 6 October was almost certainly a coronary.

Parnell had taken the nation that O'Connell had lifted from the mud and made it a united force, thoroughly politicised. With Biggar in parliament and Davitt in the field he had presided over the solution of the land question and prescribed the remedy for Ireland's ill-worn colonialism. Unlike the Protestants of the North the Catholics of the rest of the country were far from docile; neither were they instinctively rebellious. Their innate conservatism had to be laid aside as a luxury to be worn again in peace. The greatest achievement of Parnell was that the 1880s became a decade of political unity and action, in contrast to the 1890s and the 1870s. His most serious flaw was his invincible ignorance about the Ulster Protestant temperament and the strange mixture of hubris and inertia that led to his downfall. He was a tragic hero lacking only a Sophocles or an Ibsen to

explicate his true nature. He and O'Connell are the oddly different but still colossal figures that bestride the recuperative century.

In 1893, Gladstone tried to push through another Home Rule Bill, allowing for a more phased introduction of devolution than in 1886, and again it was passed by a margin of thirty-four votes but was thrown out by the Lords in September of that year. Of a total electorate of 460 only forty-one voted aye. On 2 March in the Ulster Hall in Belfast, a kind of lay temple of Protestant protest, William Johnston 'of Ballykilbeg', a noted Unionist and verbal extremist, carried a motion that Home Rule should be resisted passively. Agitation and intermittent rioting continued (the Orange definition of 'passive resistance'). A march of 100,000 loyalists was held on 4 April and Arthur Balfour, a future Conservative prime minister who had been chief secretary in 1887, joined Edward Saunderson, the founder of the Irish Unionist party, on the platform as the concourse passed the Linen Hall in the city centre. By now the Chief had been three years dead and the Irish Party was riven with factions and acrimonious accusations and counter-accusations. Home Rule was not to emerge again as an issue until Redmond had patched the party together and the 1911 Parliament Act had seriously weakened the Lords' veto.

The idea that the Irish Literary Renaissance was generated by a felt need to fill the political vacuum left by the fall of the Chief, and the miserable wrangling that followed, was largely an invention of Yeats, who saw himself as the

equivalent literary chief. The last decade of the old century and the first of the new were remarkable in their cultural denseness. They also saw the foundation of Sinn Féin (originally Cumann na nGaedhael) and the Dungannon Clubs. As the name implied, the first was a separatist movement which even had an abstentionist candidate elected in 1908. Its founder was Arthur Griffith (1871-1922), and his approach was as much cultural as political. The advocacy of things Irish and disapproval of all English influences meant that he had strong fraternal links with the Gaelic League (founded in 1893); it also made his movement very sensitive to what it took to be criticism of any aspect of Irish life. He and his followers had no time for such ribald, earthy dramas as Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen* (1903) and *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907). His literary mentor was Davis and he was able to tolerate any amount of inferior *Nation* poetry if he could advance Davis's recipe for an Irish Ireland. (He wrote a patriotic ballad himself called 'Twenty Men from Dublin Town'.) His goal was a country that could be independent while still having an allegiance to the British monarch. This policy, he believed, had enabled Hungary to break from Austria without leaving the empire. He hoped that the keeping of the personal link with the crown might reassure Ulster Protestants. It showed an awareness of political realities that was unusual among nationalist leaders, but he had forgotten the conditional nature of Ulster's loyalty. He did not fully realise that the northern Protestants felt themselves able, in order to prove their loyalty, to attack, and if necessary declare war on, the government to which

they owed allegiance. Sinn Féin had a feminist element in that one of its ancillary bodies was Inghinidhe na hÉireann (The Daughters of Ireland), the women's movement set up by Maud Gonne (1866–1953) in 1900. The participation of women in national affairs began during the land agitation and they have played a full part in all aspects of them since.

The Dungannon Clubs were founded by Bulmer Hobson (1883–1969) and Dennis McCullough (1883–1968), both members of the IRB. The name was a gracious nod to the scene of the Ulster Volunteers 1782 convention. Hobson was a Quaker and, like Griffith, had worked as a printer. His magazine, the *Republic*, which was written by such brilliant (Protestant) journalists as Robert Lynd and James Wilder Good, was remarkably influential in spite of its short life (six months), and takes its place alongside the *Northern Patriot* and the *Shan Van Vocht* run by Alice Milligan and Ethna Carbery (Anna Johnston) as proof that Dublin did not have a monopoly of literary substitutes for parliamentary politics. Hobson was so little in awe of the guru of Coole and Abbey Street that on the train back to Belfast after a visit to Dublin, when he was humiliatingly refused permission to stage *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, he said to his compartment companion, David Parkhill, 'Damn Yeats, we'll write our own plays,' and the Ulster Literary Theatre was born. It produced at least one significant playwright in Rutherford Mayne (the brother of Helen Waddell, the medieval scholar) and encouraged the work of the Ulster humorist, Leslie A. Montgomery, whose first pen-name was Lynn C. Doyle. Like Griffith, Hobson was against the 1916 Rising, believing in a policy of passive

resistance and justifying the use of an armed force only for defence. He did his best to prevent the 'action of a small junta within the IRB' and was held incommunicado from the Good Friday till Easter Monday. His main writer, Robert Lynd, once the best known essayist of his day, whose father, sometime moderator of the Presbyterian Church, was the incumbent of the May Street church that had been built for Henry Cooke, was equally dismayed. Writing eighteen years after the rising in a tributary essay called 'Arthur Griffith: The Patriot' he insisted, '... what brought the last insurrection to a successful issue was that, unlike all other Irish movements of the kind, it was based on or at least allied to the passive resistance movement of Arthur Griffith.'

The Gaelic League, founded by Douglas Hyde, a Roscommon son of the manse, and Eoin MacNeill, a law clerk from the Antrim Glens, was certainly as significant as the Irish Literary Theatre or the Abbey that was its successor. It did not spring fully grown from the Dagda's forehead but was the latest and most successful of a number of initiatives that had begun with the founding of the Royal Irish Academy in 1785. It had as precursors the Ossianic Society of 1853 and most significantly the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language which was set up by David Comyn, a Protestant from County Clare, in 1876 and which afterwards, with the usual Irish amoebic tendency, split to form the Gaelic Union three years later. Hyde had come to notice with a public lecture delivered on November 1892: 'On the necessity for de-Anglicizing the Irish People'. The League was bound to gain the approval of Griffith, as it was

explicitly separatist. Davis had advocated a revival of Irish and as a rejection of the imposed language of the colonial masters it was a most potent declaration of revolution. (James Joyce, one of the greatest Irish writers of the amazingly rich period, was moved neither by the League nor the Irish renaissance: he joined a League branch when he was at UCD but left when the teacher, Patrick Pearse (1879–1916), found it necessary to denigrate English and adduced one of Joyce's favourite words, 'thunder' as an example of its verbal inadequacy. As the most urban of writers Joyce did not feel much empathy with the Connacht Celtic Twilight.)

The League had twenty years of remarkable success largely because of the high motivation of its original members, its use of the Gaeltacht as a source of the living language and its understanding of the nature of adult education. It was non-sectarian at the start but soon Protestant members were made to feel unwelcome. One notable example was Canon J. O. Hannay, who as George A. Birmingham had written and was to continue to write more than fifty novels and plays, some serious, most hilarious and all acute in their observation of Irish life – *Benedict Kavanagh* (1907) was written in praise of the League; he was expelled in 1906. Hyde himself resigned in 1915 from an organisation which had become dominated by IRB members. The other association that became prominent at the time had no need to expel Protestants since it was sectarian from its beginning. The Gaelic Athletic Association had been founded in 1884 by Michael Cusack and Maurice Davin and was regarded from 1886 onwards by the Special Branch as an IRB

association – with considerable justification. Even its first patron, Archbishop Thomas Croke, broke with the organisation in 1887 when he found a meeting 'packed to the throat with Fenian leaders'.

The period was, then, far from quiescent or politically inert. There had developed a significant Catholic middle class. By the turn of the century most of the dioceses had impressive cathedrals and junior seminaries, so called because they provided the necessary secondary education for future priests and were established by canonical rule. They also provided places for pupils who would form the educated Catholic laity, supplementing the work begun by such pioneers as Edmund Rice (1762–1844), whose order of Irish Christian Brothers (1820) had pioneered education for the sons of the Irish poor, and Catherine MacAuley (1778–1841), who founded the Sisters of Mercy (1831) with a mission that included nursing, social work and the education of girls. Protestants, especially those who lived in the hermetically sealed north, affected to believe that Catholics, especially the 'southerners', were dirty, feckless and unreliable. The only ones they had real experience of were the poor of Belfast, whose livelihood they constantly attacked as a matter of policy. They were notably incurious about the twenty-eight counties where they felt threatened but it is unlikely that if they had been adventurous enough to visit other parts in any numbers they could have failed to notice that the bourgeois Catholics of, say, Limerick or Cork were as prosperous, probably as conservative and certainly as respectable as the lordly ones who dwelt up the Malone



Road. They played tennis with the same vigour, were quite likely to be invited to army banquets, and took holidays in resorts as elegant and as decorously Victorian as Portrush or Bangor. It is still possible to see in places like Kilkee, Bray and Rosslare the archaeological remains of end-of-century 'watering places'. Golf, first played at the Curragh by a Scots regiment, became (and has remained) intensely popular, and the railways opened up the rugged beauties of Connemara, Kerry and Donegal to a growing tourist trade. It is a commonplace of history that the main interest of the Dublin populace on the Bank Holiday Monday of April 1916 was not in the shennanigans in the Post Office or Boland's Mills but in the usual Easter race meeting at Fairyhouse.

By 1900 John Redmond (1856-1918), the Wexford Parnellite, had managed to unite the Irish party and with great patience soothed its tendency to fragment under the maddening evasions of the Liberal administrations. When Asquith's Liberal government, in its anxiety to pass its welfare legislation, took on and defeated the House of Lords in 1910 it had to go to the country twice. The Liberals' overall majority of 1906 had so shrunk as to leave them dependent again on Redmond's restored Parnellites. It was clear that it was only a matter of time before Redmond brought in a Home Rule bill that could only be delayed by the Lords. This sent alarm signals ringing round Belfast. The *Ne Temere* decree of Pius X (1908) had convinced Irish Protestants that their street-cry, 'Home Rule, Rome Rule' was an exact statement of the case. Until then mixed marriages were fairly common, inevitable in the mixed

nature of Ulster demography, especially in the west of the province. It was clearly unfair that the hated Vatican should set the terms for the marriage of partners of different faiths. One notorious case, as ever taken as the norm and not a terrible exception, confirmed what Protestants claimed to see as the proof of their worst dread. When in 1910 a Catholic Belfastman called McCann left his Protestant wife and took his children with him, he had public Church approval. Protestant freedom, religion and laws were threatened and, as Churchill had enunciated, Ulster would fight.

The cause of Irish Unionism was taken up by Bonar Law, who had replaced Arthur Balfour as head of what was now officially known as the Conservative and Unionist party. He had two very powerful Irish allies in James Craig (1871-1940) and the Dublin barrister Edward Carson (1854-1935) who felt, each with a slightly different attitude, that Dublin should not rule Belfast. Carson was a true supporter of the Act of Union and was conscious of no dissonance in being Irish and British. Craig, the son of a rich Ulster distiller, was not so idealistic, and had already begun to formulate the idea of a separate Ulster state that was to prove at least temporarily acceptable to everybody except the northern Catholics. They knew that they would be used as a kind of ballast and subject to much more subtle penal practices than those of Queen Anne's reign. As ever obedient and seamless in their solidarity, the Protestants began the necessary preparations that would lead to 'the arbitrament of force'. As at other times when the terrors of Home Rule were expressed, drilling and



manoeuvres began. Orange, Black and Apprentice Boys lodges were quickly turned into a recruiting network for the Ulster Volunteer Force which was to be effectively armed with 35,000 German rifles landed 'illegally' (but with police connivance) at Larne, Bangor and Donaghadee in April 1914.

The Third Home Rule bill was introduced on 11 April 1912, proposing much the same terms as Gladstone's 1886 bill. The reaction in Ulster was much stronger. 28 September 1912 was designated Ulster Day and 218,000 men pledged themselves in solemn league and covenant 'to use all means to defeat the present conspiracy . . .' The bill was passed by the Commons on 16 January 1913 and thrown out with the usual vigour by the Lords, passed again in July and again dismissed. By the terms of the 1911 Parliament Act the Lords could now only delay the bill. Redmond seemed about to achieve what his uncrowned hero had failed to effect. The bill was finally carried on 25 May 1914. Already the army had signalled its non-cooperation in the Curragh Incident of 20 March, when General Gough persuaded fifty-seven out of seventy officers to resign their commissions rather than enforce Home Rule in Ulster. Carson and Craig were clearly kept informed of all developments by members of the High Command. Already the Liberal War Office, it seemed, was in danger of losing control of the armed forces. A bitter civil war seemed certain, with the prospect of 23,000 armed and exultant men ready to face down 1,000 soldiers and a now demoralised police force. With typical attention to detail, plans for the evacuation of civilians and a design for

an Ulster currency had been approved. The means of permitting individual counties to opt out was included in Asquith's bill and the Lords successfully amended it to permit nine counties, not specified, to disregard it. Partition had been given respectability, but a conference called by George V, assumed to be on the side of the 'disloyalists', and which was held at Buckingham Palace in July 1914, failed to determine the nature of the separate state.

The situation was defused by the German invasion of Belgium on 4 August and Britain's immediate declaration of war. Redmond and Carson vied in their enthusiasm for recruitment and a band of Irish Volunteers matched the UVF. The Protestants, compliant to charismatic leadership, joined up in their thousands. They were granted the honour of belonging to a specially named Ulster Division and of marching to their deaths at the Ancre, a tributary of the Somme, in July 1916. In the first two days of the slaughter five and a half thousand were killed. Their Catholic brothers, who had joined in even greater numbers, had been, on the whole, motivated by bread and butter concerns. Wives and children would be much better fed by army pay than by unemployment benefit. Of 200,000 Irishmen who joined, 60,000 never returned. Protestants and Catholics are represented almost equally in both these statistics.

Though by common consent the implementation of the Home Rule bill had been shelved 'until the end of hostilities', the fate of Ulster had already been decided by Lloyd George. Counties Derry, Antrim, Down and Armagh were certain to be part of a region which would not be governed by

Dublin. What was still to be decided was the fate of Derry City, Tyrone, Fermanagh and bits of Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan – the Lords' amendment had catered for a nine county opt-out. Carson resigned from the war administration in January 1918 when he realised that Lloyd George intended to implement Asquith's bill; and the peace was to show that, in Winston Churchill's words, after the world deluge the falling waters would reveal 'the dreary steeples of Fermanagh and Tyrone emerging once again'. Partition was to be the logical answer to the faulted nature of the island of Ireland.

## 13

### Fights for Freedom

The Ireland of the early twentieth century had a middle class externally indistinguishable from that in Britain but she also had in her cities some of the worst slums in Europe. Dublin, especially, was notorious and even contemporaries knew how bad conditions were. More than 100,000 people lived in one-room tenements, often in the degraded Georgian dwellings of the city's golden age of architecture, without water, light or sanitation. Unemployment was high, wages low and tuberculosis rife. Children were undernourished and hunger was general. The infant mortality rate of 2.76 per cent was the highest of all Western cities. The corporation had been in nationalist hands for at least ten years but there were no plans for urban renewal. Indeed it was discovered that sixteen Irish party councillors were slum landlords. With all attention fixed on British perfidy there was no policy either among politicians or the Church of social improvement. (Individual clergy and many religious orders did great work of charity but the hierarchy were and would continue to be suspicious of secular or state welfare schemes.)

The founding of the Irish Transport and General Workers

when the captain scuttled her on arrest by a British naval patrol in Tralee Bay on 21 April, and Casement, landing at Banna Strand, near Fenit in County Kerry, with instructions to cancel the rising, was arrested. MacNeill, after many misgivings, first approved then vetoed the venture, and cancelled all the planned synchronous sympathetic local outbreaks. In the end about 1,600 men, including 300 members of the ICA, occupied various buildings in Dublin, famously the General Post Office. Pearse read a proclamation entitled *The Proclamation of the Government of the Irish Republic to the People of Ireland* from the steps of the GPO. They held out until the Saturday when Pearse surrendered to General Lowe. (The commandant in Boland's Mills, Éamon de Valera (1882–1975), the mathematics lecturer who was to survive the executions, was the last to surrender.)

The authorities' reaction of execution of the leaders was unwise but perhaps inevitable given the emotional heightening caused by the war in Europe. Even more ominous was the imposition of martial law by General Maxwell. More people were arrested than had taken part in the rising. The country, unusually prosperous because of the war economy, was shaken out of the state of political torpor that had been caused by the postponement of Home Rule. When the rebels had been marched away they had to run a gauntlet of jeering Dubliners who had spent Easter week looting from the damaged stores. (Connolly had been wrong in his copybook Marxist maxim that the British navy would never destroy 'capitalist' property.) Yet by the first weeks of May, when fifteen of the leaders had been shot in what seemed

like a sequence deliberately paced for maximum effect, and Casement, awaiting trial in Pentonville, was having the details of his homosexual diaries revealed by the attorney-general, F. E. Smith, the mood of city and country had in Yeats's phrase 'changed utterly'; a terrible beauty – or something – had been born. Yeats's declaration of proprietary interest took the form of a number of poems specifically about the rising, notably the famous 'Easter 1916' quoted above, and many references thereafter, especially the lines about *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* in 'Man and the Echo' written in the year of his death:

I lie awake night after night  
And never get the answers right.  
Did that play of mine send out  
Certain men the English shot?

The events of the week and the complications of the months before have been the object of intense research and have, or until recently had, passed out of history into hagiography. The idea of a blood sacrifice as necessary irrigation for Ireland's dehydrated cause (with an unstated implication that death forgives killing), formulated then, has been used since to excuse atrocity. 1916 was a copybook Fenian rising with the phoenix already soaring from her own ashes. (Fire and light had always been part of the IRB's liturgy. It was a significant indication of the trend in the Gaelic League that its first newspaper, founded in 1898, was called *Fáinne an Lae* ('Dawn') and that it became *An Claidheamh Soluis*

('The Sword of Light') on 4 August 1900. Coincidentally, a contemporary version of Ingram's 'The Memory of the Dead', written anonymously by a nun, began:

Who fears to speak of Easter Week?  
 Who does its fate deplore?  
 The red-gold flame of Ireland's name  
 Confronts the world once more.

Many, while understanding the motivation for the rising, were disappointed by it. Reaction among the many Irishmen serving in no-man's-land was deeply divided. 1916 might have had the same effect as Smith O'Brien's skirmish in Widow McCormack's garden or the Fenians' capture of Ballyhurst fort in 1867, but unbelievable bungling by Asquith's government and an obduracy unusual even in the British army produced the effect that Pearse and the others prayed for. The same blimpishness had been displayed by the army from 1915 on at the Western Front when battle fatigue and shellshock were treated with impatience or disdain, and too many soldiers were shot for 'cowardice'. The attitude was epitomised by General Maxwell's vain boast to Lord Wimborne, the lord lieutenant, 'I am going to ensure that there will be no treason whispered for a hundred years.'

Eventually Asquith listened to the resigned chief-secretary's 'birrelling' – a word invented at the time to describe his inimitable gentle and allusive style of speaking words of sound good sense. None of the remaining seventy-four insurgents who had been condemned to death at the

courts martial was executed and most of the 1,800 who were interned had been released by the end of 1917. Thomas Ashe (1885–1917) who had successfully staged an ambush on the RIC at Ashbourne in Easter Week, died of pneumonia which followed on bungled force feeding during his hunger-strike in Mountjoy gaol on 25 September 1917. His funeral five days later was the occasion of a huge nationalist demonstration. Michael Collins (1890–1922), who had been a civil servant in London and had served in the GPO, had become the leader of the internees in Frongoch, the detention centre in Wales. He very quickly sensed the altered mood of the country, even if he paid little attention to the noises emanating from the north-east. He set up a superb system of intelligence and prepared for the guerrilla war that he saw as inevitable and necessary.

His more constitutionally inclined partner was Eamon de Valera (1882–1975), the most reluctant leader in Easter Week. His escape from Lincoln gaol on 3 February 1919 had been masterminded by Collins but they were in many senses rivals. It was largely due to de Valera that the Irish Volunteers were subsumed under the borrowed, if not hijacked, cover title, Sinn Féin. This would later take under its wing the reorganised IRB, though with no great enthusiasm by de Valera, who felt that the time for secret societies was past and was opposed to Collins's plans for another insurrection, however effective. Significantly, in Sean O'Casey's 1916 play *The Plough and the Stars* (O'Casey was the historian of Connolly's ICA but like many members was unaware of the plans for the rising) Corporal Stoddart refers to all Dubliners

as 'Shinners'. It was technically anachronistic but effectively true by the time of the postwar general election when the composite grouping Sinn Féin (much changed from Griffith's original blueprint and far from having his total approval) won seventy-three of the 105 Irish seats. The old Irish party was left with only six members, though Joe Devlin (1871-1934), the Belfast head of the resurrected Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), defeated de Valera in the Falls. De Valera was, however, returned unopposed in Clare.

In Ulster Lloyd George's Government of Ireland Bill (passed 20 December 1920), the granting of devolved parliaments in Belfast and Dublin made partition a reality. The original Lords' amendment had permitted up to nine counties to opt out of Redmond's bill and the historical Ulster would have seemed to be a workable statelet. The Unionists were determined on a 'Protestant parliament for a Protestant people' *aut nihil*. They had unshakable majorities in the four north-eastern counties and they tossed in Derry City and Tyrone and Fermanagh to make 'Northern Ireland' a reasonable social and economic entity. They feared the declining Protestant populations in Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan and excluded them, thereby 'betraying' kith and kin, especially in Donegal. Joe Devlin and other Catholic leaders accepted moral exile for their people rather than risk a bloody and protracted civil war.

As always at the induced birth of a new state the labour pains are pathologically severe and there is no joy after travail. Besides, heightened political activity of any kind had meant, from as early as 1829, sectarian strife on Ulster

streets and nocturnal arson in the country. Derry was strongly Sinn Féin and at one with the general mood of the 'Twenty-Six Counties'. In April 1920, the movement of republican prisoners to the city gaol in Bishop Street, between the Catholic Bogside and the Protestant Fountain, sparked riots which lasted until August. The IRA (the Fenian coinage which the new IRB and the Volunteers had adopted) were outgunned by the RIC, now heavily infiltrated by a revived UVF. Fifty people died in the 'Riots', as the prolonged confrontation was called, and when it was ended by army threats of extreme measures visited on both sides it began a period of virtually unbroken quiet in Derry. (This lasted until the famous trouble with the RUC on 5 September 1968 which effectively began the Civil Rights agitation.) The local IRA quickly lost support, and anti-partitionism passed into the watchful hands of the Catholic clergy.

The UVF was given formal recognition with the formation on 1 November 1920 of special constabularies, the most dangerous of which were the 'B'-specials, which remained a virulently anti-Catholic force and were implicated in murder charges as late as August 1969. Sporadic violence continued in Lisburn, Banbridge and Dromore but Belfast, as ever, witnessed the most serious attacks on Catholic property. There was some Catholic retaliation but it was weak, since Catholics were greatly outnumbered and seriously underarmed. 232 people died in 1922 and three million pounds' worth of mainly Catholic working-class property was destroyed. In one notorious case, Owen McMahon, a nationalist politician, and four of his family were killed on

29 March 1922 by men in uniform confidently believed to be 'B'-specials. Eventually peace of a sort was imposed in a kind of quasi-martial law by Dawson Bates, the doctrinaire anti-Catholic Minister of Home Affairs.

In Dublin the results of the 1918 general election led to the setting up of the independent parliament, Dáil Éireann, on 21 January 1919. Since most of the elected members, including de Valera, were still in prison, the impact was muted at first but it was the kind of alternative assembly the dread of which had persuaded Wellington and Peel to grant emancipation at all costs in 1829. The remaining prisoners were released during the first week of March. The tactic proposed by de Valera was to make the force of postwar world opinion grant freedom to the 'small nation' nearest to Britain. He sent Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh as accredited envoy to the Paris peace conference which was called after the Great War. The British delegation's insistence (with the conference's acquiescence) that Ireland was a domestic issue was a blow to de Valera's hopes and increased the intensity of Collins's preparations for war. The divergence between the essentially constitutional Dáil and the IRA widened. In June, de Valera went to America to raise funds and try to persuade the US government to bring moral pressure on Britain. He stayed eighteen months, leaving the field clear for Collins to refine the operation of his intelligence teams and to set up his 'Squad', a crack undercover killing team. The pistol that had been cocked in 1916 was now about to have its trigger pulled. All was ready for a guerrilla war, with the RIC and the British army as the main targets. As in the much more

bloody and bitter civil war that followed, a lot of the action was spasmodic, organised by local leaders and with only minimal central control.

By September 1919 a state of insurrection existed, the IRA using localised 'flying columns' as their main means of attack. The government, now led by Lloyd George, responded with flinty heavy-handedness. In 1920 RIC numbers were increased by the notorious 'Black and Tans' (their pied uniforms an indication of the urgency of their deployment). They were mainly ex-servicemen, often officers, and they seemed to overbid the IRA's actions, matching ambushes and burned barracks with reprisals on innocent people and their property. The setting up in July 1920 of the 'Auxies' – the Auxiliary Division of the RIC – identifiable by their glengarry caps and golden harp badges made things much worse. Their behaviour was such that world opinion turned quickly against Britain. There were many individual incidents in the year and a half of the fighting that were to be remembered as part of a noble 'war of independence' and each county later rehearsed 'its fighting story'. Sean Treacy, who is credited with the first action at Soloheadbeg, County Tipperary in January 1919, was killed after a battle with soldiers and G-men (the intelligence arm of the DMP) in Talbot Street, Dublin on 14 October 1920. Thomas MacCurtain, the IRA lord mayor of Cork, was shot in his bed on 19 March 1920, a deed the city coroner found was 'organised and carried out by the Royal Constabulary'. His mayoral place was taken by Terence MacSwiney, who died in Brixton Gaol after a hunger-strike of seventy-four days on 24

October. On the Saturday night of 21 November twelve British officers who had been engaged in intelligence work were eliminated by the 'Squad' in Dublin. The following day at the All-Ireland final Auxies and 'Tans turned their guns on the crowd, killing twelve and injuring sixty. A week later Tom Barry's Cork flying column killed seventeen Auxies at Kilmichael near Macroom. And so it continued, the ferocity of the reprisals increasing with each IRA attack.

Eventually after months of killings, reprisals, burnings and a countrywide climate of fear, Lloyd George gave in to international pressure and general moral affront at home. He wrote to de Valera asking him to attend a peace conference with the new Unionist leader, Sir James Craig. De Valera obtained the approval of Collins and the other leaders of an exhausted IRA and a truce came into effect on 11 July 1921. After three months of preliminary negotiation, a delegation led by Griffith and Collins travelled to London for the Treaty negotiations. De Valera stayed behind, for reasons which are still the subject of debate and conflict.

Of the many nightmares of Irish history, of the kind that Stephen Dedalus was trying to wake from, the 'Treaty' proved the most deadly in the short term and the most vexatious in its persistence in Irish life and politics. The 'Welsh Wizard' was characteristically minatory, threatening on 5 December, 'If I send this letter it will mean war, and war within three days,' and promising that the Twenty-Six Counties would be run as a Crown colony under martial law. He was also duplicitous in that he reassured Craig that the border would stay and that the proposed Boundary Commission

would recommend no significant change. Yet the Irish delegates did very well. They obtained significant controls over policing, tariffs and defence but had to accept a partitioned Ireland and a Free State 'faithful to HM King George V'. The draft was signed at 3 o'clock on the morning of 6 December 1921, the remaining plenipotentiaries writing their names below that of Griffith, who had signed before Lloyd George's threat. To Collins it was 'freedom to achieve freedom' and to Griffith, it had 'no more finality than that we are the final generation on the face of the earth'. It did not please the IRA, whose sense of betrayal was deep, and it left de Valera in a situation of extreme difficulty. He felt he had to repudiate it because he knew that he would lose whatever control of the militants he still possessed and because he more than any of the delegates knew the importance of the Unionist victory. The cosy and general assumption that the Six Counties could not survive and would eventually sue for unification showed a dire lack of real political acumen. It reckoned nothing on the temperament of the Protestants, who were in permanent exaltation on the metaphorical Walls of Derry, or on the successive British governments that would pay and keep on paying subventions to bolster up the mutilated province rather than admit that it had made yet another mistake about its oldest 'question'. The real miracle was the survival of what by the terms of the Treaty could now officially be called Saorstát Éireann.

Collins returned in muted triumph to a largely relieved Ireland but as he wrote in a letter on the day of the signing:



Think what I have got for Ireland! Something which she has wanted these past seven hundred years. Will anyone be satisfied with the bargain?...I tell you this – early this morning I signed my death warrant. I thought at the time how odd, how ridiculous – a bullet may just as well have done the job five years ago.

## 14

### Saorstát Éireann

There was no absolute reason why the Treaty should have led to civil war except that there was no central authority to prevent it. When it came, it was truly a brothers' war since old comrades found themselves on opposite sides, and even families were divided. After a decade of frenetic activity, of exaltation and disappointment, the country was in a state akin to fugue. Flights from reality abounded and after a world war in which ten million had died and twice that number were seriously wounded, life was held cheap. One cause of violence was the comparative youth of the fighting men and their leaders; another the presence of lately stood-down forces which it would be an exaggeration to call private armies but which were most likely to obey local charismatic leaders. The fight, too, had been for an independent republic, free from any British connection, however formal. It was as hard to turn members of flying columns into politicians as to expect diehard republicans to swear allegiance to a British sovereign, and the situation was vitiated early on when the new state lost two of its leaders with the deaths of Griffith from cerebral haemorrhage on 12 August 1922 and of

Collins in an ambush in County Cork ten days later.

Dáil Éireann had approved the Treaty by sixty-four votes to fifty-seven on 7 January 1922 and almost immediately de Valera resigned the presidency, to be replaced by Griffith. Collins, as chairman of the provisional government, went ahead with the business of accepting sovereignty, taking formal control of Dublin Castle, disbanding the RIC, observing the evacuation of the British troops and doing what he could to persuade Craig to protect northern Catholics. Recruitment for a new unarmed Civic Guard was begun with Eoin O'Duffy (1892–1944) as its first commander, and a National Army with Richard Mulcahy as its GOC relied on British ex-servicemen to boost its numbers. Most of the IRA and Cumann na mBan repudiated the Treaty and by implication the Free State government. De Valera hoped for a non-violent *rapprochement* between the two sides but he found that his influence over the more hotheaded of the anti-Treatyites was negligible. The most implacable of these were Austin Stack (1880–1929), Cathal Brugha (1874–1922), Liam Mellows (1892–1922), Rory O'Connor (1883–1922) and Liam Lynch (1893–1923), who literally could not understand how their military leader could have compromised and suspected quite wrongly that Collins and the rest had been somehow tricked by the enemy. A general election held on 16 June resulted in fifty-eight Treaty members, thirty-six anti-Treaty, and thirty-four miscellaneous. Two days later, when an IRA convention split on the question of a renewed anti-British offensive, the defeated faction, led by O'Connor and Mellows, occupied the Four Courts on Inns

Quay in Dublin. It was essentially a declaration of war. The National Army responded with British artillery, and the badly damaged buildings were evacuated on 30 June. The Public Records Office with its irreplaceable documents was destroyed by the retreating force. Brugha (like Pearse the son of an English father, his name a gaelicisation of the English Burgess) was shot in a melodramatic attempt at a street fight.

The next ten months saw bloodshed more extensive and more damaging than anything in what had begun to be called the 'Tan' war. Seventy-seven IRA men were shot by National Army firing squads and many others killed 'while trying to escape'. On 8 December, O'Connor, Mellows and two others of the Four Courts garrison who had been in custody since June, were shot in retaliation for the IRA killing of Brigadier Sean Hales of the National Army. By the time Saorstát Éireann came into official existence, however, on 6 December 1922 it was clear that the government forces would prevail. De Valera had been tireless in his efforts in bringing about an end to the killing and publicly disavowed any responsibility, personal or on the part of the other anti-Treaty politicians, for the starting or the pursuance of the war. Liam Lynch, who had become chief-of-staff of the IRA when de Valera resigned in June 1922, was killed on 10 April 1923, and on the twenty-seventh of that month de Valera and Frank Aiken (1898–1983), who had replaced Lynch and was later to be a founder of Fianna Fáil, made a unilateral declaration of the end of hostilities. The government did not respond and indeed two IRA men

were shot on 2 May. It had by now widespread support and began a mass detention of known or suspected IRA men. There were over 11,000 in prisons or camps by October. A mass hunger strike and two resulting deaths led to further animosity between those who held out and those who gave up or refused to join.

The bitterness in the country was intense and the prospect of a recurrence of anarchy could not be ruled out. The 'Tan' war had elements of nobility about it and played for a world audience; this was a fight to see who would run the country. The granitic relentlessness of the National Army and the government, led by William Cosgrave (1880-1965) and his resolute Minister for Justice, Kevin O'Higgins, may partly be explained by the grief and desolation after Collins's death. It was a classical struggle between pragmatists and dreamers. The terrible beauty had been replaced by hearts fed on fantasies, grown brutal with the fare. Terrible things were done, some to settle old scores and some the result of a generalised desensitisation. The country still has not shaken off the trauma of the Civil War, but it has begun to see it as a necessary if terrible rite of passage to mature statehood.

The country, or the larger part of it that had achieved 'dominion' status, settled down to a kind of normality. Cosgrave proved to be an effective leader although he was unable to move Craig in his determination to yield 'not an inch' and eventually accepted the 1921 border after the report of the 1924 Boundary Commission. Northern Catholics could not help feeling abandoned and all repres-

entations to Westminster were shrugged aside as 'a matter for the authorities in Northern Ireland'. Dawson Bates's Offences against the State Act (1924) gave the RUC (founded in 1920) remarkable powers of search, arrest and detention. It was superseded by the even more draconian Special Powers Act in 1932, stated to be the envy of the white supremacist government in South Africa, which was not rescinded until 1972. A few initiatives by individual English ministers and civil servants, seconded to Belfast to establish its bureaucratic systems, to blunt the full confessional nature of the statelet came to nothing. Craig, by now in indifferent health and not much disposed to stand up to his right wing, had insisted that one-third of posts be reserved for Catholics in the civil service as in the RUC. In the police force only a sixth of the assigned places were taken up and here, as in all government services, promotion of Catholics to higher ranks was blocked.

The career prospects for local government employees depended on the political weighting of the council. Newry's and Downpatrick's nationalist majorities meant a reasonable number of jobs for Catholics, while Ballymena and Coleraine showed an appropriately different pattern. One notorious case was Derry City (that nationalists obstinately refused to call Londonderry) where under the proportional representational system guaranteed by Lloyd George's act a Catholic mayor was elected in 1920. Bates's response was to discontinue PR for local elections in 1922 and the city had Unionist mayors until 1968, when the Civil Rights agitation led to the replacement of the city corporation by a development

commission. The large Catholic majority was kept in a minority voting situation by ingenious ward boundary manipulation. The counties west of the Bann, the river that acts as a natural north-south demarcation through Ulster, were not as secure as Down, Armagh and Antrim, and when, after the Second World War, multinational companies sought to set up plant, they were steered east. The Protestants who lived to the west understood the need for this economic starvation and, being preferred for most jobs anyway, accepted the situation.

In the 'State' as Ulster people had already begun to call it, the euphoria was replaced by inevitable deflation. (The jigsaw cut border led to inevitable jokes: nationalist travellers to Donegal were, too often, heard to remark 'I'm going north geographically but south politically.') All 'successful' revolutions, even Irish ones, have certain necessary patterns: an element of terror, a bundling together of disparate elements into a military and political alliance which begins to fragment as soon as its short-term goals are achieved and leads to some kind of civil 'war', and the need to derevolutionise the revolutionaries. Traces of the old oppressive regimes are removed and icons are replaced. Memorials to dead heroes are erected and street names are changed, even if older people find it hard to remember them. Armies are reduced to peacetime levels and guerrilla fighters have to face quotidian cares again.

All these elements faced Cumann na nGaedhael (Association of Irishmen), as the pro-Treaty party under Cosgrave called itself from 1923. It successfully weathered the 'army

mutiny' of 1924 when the rump of Collins's IRA was dismissed as part of a necessary reduction of establishment from 60,000 to 35,000, and suffered the assassination on 10 July 1927 of Kevin O'Higgins, the deputy leader and chief talent of the party. Quixotically it was Cosgrave's rival, de Valera, now the undisputed leader of the constitutional party which had sloughed off the name Sinn Féin and reconstituted itself as Fianna Fáil ('soldiers of destiny') on 16 May 1926, who played the largest part in 'normalisation'. In a nice piece of semantic juggling, forty-four Fianna Fáil members returned at the general election on 9 June 1927, including 'Dev', found themselves able to disregard the oath as 'an empty political formula', utter with whole consciences the necessary form and take their seats.

The party which their economics expert Sean Lemass (1899-1971) was able to describe as 'slightly constitutional' proved more compact, more vigorous and, allowing for innate Irish conservatism, more amenable to change. It was to be in power from 1932 till 1989, usually with an overall majority, except for fairly brief periods in opposition, 1948-51, 1954-7, 1973-7, 1981-2, 1982-7. When necessary, de Valera, who steadily gained international respect as a statesman, especially as president of the council of the League of Nations in the 1930s, could be as adamant as any Treatyite in his handling of the IRA. The organisation was declared illegal in June 1936 and again on 9 September 1939, when many members were arrested. During the war, when there were over a thousand interned or imprisoned, nine were executed, three died on hunger strike and six were

shot in encounters with armed members of the detective force.

The moral altitude de Valera had achieved by the time of the founding of Fianna Fáil reassured the Catholic Church, which was perceived to have assumed a quasi-executive role in the new state, the bishops' canonical care for faith and morals being interpreted rather broadly. A strict censorship of films was set up in 1923 and the Censorship of Publications Act passed on 16 July 1929 became notorious. As Francis MacManus, one of the few significant contemporary Irish writers not to be proscribed, put it in a radio talk (published in *The Years of the Great Test*) '... the censorship board... could ban with a savagery that seemed pathological.' An Appeals Board, established in 1946, had little effect, and there was little change until the amendment act of 1967 'unbanned' 5,000 titles. The board still exists but the virulent puritanism of its early years has gone. Theatre was not censored but in the prevailing climate of suspicion of the artist it was not necessary. Soon the Catholic laity were engaging in self-censorship and the Church was able truthfully to say that they had put no pressure on.

The Catholic Church, though it never was an established religion, was to have its 'special position' recognised by Article 44 of de Valera's 1937 constitution which set up the independent state of 'Éire'. It also contained the Church-influenced Article 41 which enacted that 'no law shall be enacted providing for the grant of a dissolution of marriage'. As in the Six Counties secondary education was confessional.

(The northern bishops had totally rejected Lord Londonderry's well-intentioned attempt to establish non-denominational schools in 1923. They were joined in their opposition by Protestant church leaders.) Both north and south, Catholic secondary schools were run either by religious orders or as diocesan seminaries. Primary schools were under the control of parish priests and many were noted for the disdainful treatment of their teachers, forgetting that *their* vocation was not an entirely religious one, and the poor quality of the school buildings and amenities. Change of attitude was agonisingly slow and since poverty, especially in the intractable west, was as bad as it had been before the foundation of the state, mass education beyond the three Rs, religion and Irish was not a top priority.

Because of the influence of the Gaelic League all of the concomitant parties in the national struggle were committed to the restoration of Irish as the official state language. British stamps with the head of George V were over stamped Saorstát Éireann and plans for a new coinage were set in motion. De Valera's folksy, patriarchal, Gaelic-speaking Ireland with comely maidens, athletic youths and serene firesides was not achievable. Cosgrave was determined to prove his commitment early. On 1 June 1924 new certificate examinations were set up and it was declared that Irish would be a compulsory subject for the Intermediate from 1928 and for the Leaving from 1934. This regulation was in force till 1973, the similar civil service regulation lapsing in 1974. One result was increased investment in the Gaeltacht areas, partly as reward for their long-preserved linguistic

virginity and partly to dam emigration from the areas where Irish was the first language.

Even in the matter of Irish, a narrow and mean-minded (and largely puritanical) clique nearly wrecked the worthy endeavour by its unctuous elitism. These were excoriated by the polyonymous Flann O'Brien in his hilarious squib *An Béal Bocht* (1941), at a time when such satire was much needed. The campaign to restore the use of Irish as a spoken language cannot be said to have been successful. The 1995 examination results in the subject showed a pretty dismal performance, though the increase in numbers of government-funded Irish-speaking primary schools and the establishment of a few all-Irish secondary schools in the Six Counties are compensatingly cheering. Many reasonable people have, however, come to cherish Irish for its own sake, to recognise its latent illumination of the Irish psyche and to find a working bilingualism a pleasure and often a convenience.

In spite of anticlimax and disappointment, a majority of the population of the Free State were content enough with the situation and, though euphoria is too strong a word, there was a national satisfaction when Tailteann Games (a kind of revenant Celtic Olympics) were held for the first time in 800 years in August 1924. The Eucharistic Congress in June 1932 drew crowds to Dublin in numbers which had not been seen since Terence Bellew McManus's funeral and would not be seen again till the visit of Pope John Paul II in 1979. There were, too, imaginative schemes for making use of Ireland's few natural resources, notably the promotion of sugar beet harvesting, the establishment of the Electricity

Supply Board to manage the great Shannon hydro-electric scheme and the setting up of the Agricultural Credit Corporation. These were exceptional, however. Agricultural improvements were not exactly unknown but in general older patterns persisted. Ironically it was a new government that gained whatever kudos arose from these improvements. Fianna Fáil got its first overall majority (of one) in the general election of 1933. No longer dependent on Labour, de Valera felt himself able to shrug off the IRA well-wishers who had 'protected' his candidates so fiercely during the election. Another band of hustings 'protectors', O'Duffy's Army Comrades Association, had joined with Cumann na nGaedheal to form the Fine Gael (roughly='Irish tribe') party.

One of de Valera's first acts, a fortnight after forming his government, was to remove O'Duffy from his post as commissioner of the Garda Síochána. His association began calling itself the National Guard and assumed Fascist lineaments, becoming 'Blueshirts' in fraternal tribute to Hitler's Brown- and Mussolini's Blackshirts. The next two years were marked by low-level but fundamentally serious clashes between Blueshirts and the IRA. Legislation against the wearing of uniforms (21 March 1934) and the proscribing of the association led to a rapidly changing sequence of names. The wiser members of Fine Gael soon dissociated themselves from all forms of O'Duffyism and reverted like their rivals to parliamentary procedures, but the label 'Blueshirt' lingered for many years. The main plank of their political platform, support of the farmers during the bitter

'economic war' that followed de Valera's refusal to pay Britain land annuities, largely lost its force when the 'coal-cattle' pact of 1935 mitigated the worst severities of the depression that resulted. The 'war' ended with an Irish payment of £10 million (against a British claim of £104 million) and the handing over of the Treaty Ports to Ireland in 1936.

The 1937 Constitution Amendment Bill removed the King and the Governor-General and called the Free State 'Éire', proving rather sadly that Collins's views about the Treaty (partition excepted) were correct. The general election and constitution referendum of July of that year showed a majority of 13 per cent in favour of the change and a rather nerve-wracking tied result in seats. This was rectified in June 1938, when Fianna Fáil's majority was sixteen. The party was to stay in power for a ten year span which included the Second World War. Political coloration was still largely determined by the Treaty but de Valera commanded great support. Even the embattled farmers were stoical during his fiscal battle with Britain, and many were nominal shareholders in his newspaper, the *Irish Press*, which he founded in 1931.

De Valera's finest hour was his tightrope walk of what may be called with a little forcing his covertly pro-British neutrality during the war. German invasion was always a possibility and there was no attempt either at blocking the enlistment of 50,000 Irish nationals in the British forces or at approval of conscription in the north. As in the Great War, many Irish men and women joined up because of the employment opportunities offered and 93,000 risked

conscription by emigrating to England. That was one serious social evil that Fianna Fáil were not able to cure. Infiltration by German spies was considerably less than the heated copywriters of Fleet Street claimed, and captured British servicemen, unlike their enemies, were repatriated. Like most Irishmen, de Valera was aware of the evils of Nazism but the continuing partition of Ireland made a mockery in nationalist eyes of fighting for democratic freedom and a country's right to self-determination. Overt (and instinctive) punctiliousness led him to risk great criticism on 2 May 1945 when he visited the German Embassy to offer condolences on the death of Hitler. His action horrified the small Jewish community in Ireland.

Postwar Ireland was hit by strikes of farm labourers, industrial workers and primary teachers. This last was a protracted and bitter affair and persisted from 20 March to 30 October 1946. The mediator was Archbishop McQuaid, whose thirty-two year incumbency from 1940 was marked by public crozier-wielding and secret care for the poor. He led the opposition to the Mother and Child scheme of the Health minister, Dr Noel Browne, who had all but eradicated tuberculosis, and effectively brought down the Coalition government in 1951. The reaction of later generations to the affair was one of incredulity, and has led to a persistent questioning of what exactly is the teaching of the Church in social matters.

The 1948 general election returns gave Fianna Fáil sixty-eight seats, eleven less than the combined total of the opposition. John A. Costello (1891-1976), a leading barrister



and TD for Dublin South-East, became Taoiseach of a remarkably variegated coalition government. Its Minister for External Affairs was Seán MacBride, the son of Maud Gonne and of John MacBride who was executed after Easter Week. He had founded a left-wing party called Clann na Poblachta ('Children of the Republic') in 1946, and it was mainly at his urging that Costello declared, rather precipitately, on 21 December 1948, that Éire was a republic. It did not do much good to the cause of anti-partition but then nothing did. MacBride refused to let the new republic join NATO because of 'Britain's claim to sovereignty in Northern Ireland'. The coalition collapsed when, unaccountably, MacBride joined the right wing and refused to proceed with Noel Browne's health scheme. After the general election in May 1951, Fianna Fáil were returned with a majority of seventy-four to sixty-nine, but dependent on the votes of the independent candidates.

In an article written in 1949 for the Jesuit magazine, *The Month* Seán O'Faolain described what he had already dubbed the 'Grocers' Republic' as the place where 'a policeman's lot is a supremely happy one. God smiles, the priest beams, and the novelist groans.' He had brightened a period that he called, 'pretty damn dull' by his editorship of *The Bell* from 1941 to 1946. This monthly magazine had been founded by Peadar O'Donnell, republican labour activist and novelist, and was to continue under his editorship until 1954. It showed Ireland its own face and persuaded the country that it had a head as well as a soul. It found writers who became famous and caused the controversy that its editors thought

was the primary role of the artist. O'Faolain took on Dr Michael Browne, the Bishop of Galway, regarded as being Dev's spiritual director, in a famous letter in September 1951, telling him that he could not have the 'abject compliance' that he sought. In his final editorial, written in April 1946 he expressed his weariness at having to abuse 'our bourgeoisie, pietists, Tartuffes, Anglophobes, Celtophiles, et *alli hujus generis*.'

The next fifty years were to see a revolution in Ireland more fundamental than anything in its history. The nature of Church-state relations was considerably modified, and doubts have continued to be expressed about the Church's right to influence legislation for what many see as a pluralist society. To take two examples, the prohibition on the importation of contraceptives first imposed in 1935 was removed in 1973 and by 1993 they were on unlimited sale. In 1986, a referendum to allow divorce was defeated, but towards the end of 1995, a new proposal to end de Valera's constitutional ban on remarriage was carried by the narrowest of majorities.

The social change was hastened by a small economic miracle wrought by Seán Lemass's postwar economic policies (prescribed by T. K. Whitaker, the head of the civil service), by the renewal in the Church generated by Pope John XXIII, by the coming of a national television network, RTE, in 1961 and by Ireland's joining the EEC (later EU) in 1973. Old certainties were shaken and old pieties reassessed. Ireland was part of the global village and even her rural fastnesses were affected by world trends. She had joined the

United Nations in 1955 and her soldiers were to serve with distinction in Cyprus, Lebanon, the Congo and the Balkans. Her young people were as aware of the Swinging Sixties as any Carnaby Street Quantifier and responded in a tempered way to student protest. The social and psychological high point of the 1960s was the visit by US President John F. Kennedy in the summer before his assassination, his tour studiously avoiding the Six Counties. His shocking death on 22 November 1963 caused him to join for a while, as icon, John XXIII and Patrick Pearse. More cynical observers might opt for the first broadcast of Gay Byrne's *Late Late Show* on 6 July 1962 as the most significant event of the decade, and the fall-out from Lemass's visit to Terence O'Neill (1914–90) on 14 January 1965 has still to be fully assessed.

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### Dreary Spires

It is impossible for any historian to pronounce upon what have been called the 'troubles' in the north of Ireland. Causes are frequently asserted with different degrees of rhetoric; more perverse commentators are likely to find themselves logically back at Baginbun. After partition the province survived, mostly peaceful, propped up by Westminster. There was occasional rioting, sometimes quite vicious; as in July 1935 when, after an Orange parade, there were nine days of violence with nine deaths and 514 Catholics driven from their homes in the York Street area of Belfast.

One principle that Craig (Lord Craigavon since 1927) had insisted upon – and he was a doughty insister – was parity of provision with Britain. All citizens benefited from the Attlee government's welfare state. The NHS, family allowances and, with the 1947 Education Act, free secondary education with the option of appropriate third-level for those who were capable of it, did much to improve the quality of Catholic life. Though still second choices and barred from any significant promotion in the public service, Catholics did not feel the same absolute need to emigrate

as once they had done. Middle class Catholics (businessmen, lawyers, doctors, teachers, with mainly Catholic clients, and imperial civil servants who had managed home postings), especially those who lived in the east, were likely to have some Protestant friends. The impatient Catholic young, now well educated, vowed themselves tired of old quarrels and tended to mock the Nationalist MPs and councillors who had gone to the unimaginable lengths – for a party whose instincts were abstentionist – of becoming Her Majesty's loyal opposition in 1965.

The political stasis of the gerontocracy in Stormont, the ridiculously grand parliament buildings that were opened on 16 November 1932, was broken when Terence O'Neill became prime minister in 1963. O'Neill succeeded the sectarian grandee Lord Brookeborough, whose twenty-year period of office was undistinguished, except by apparent lack of awareness of the existence of Catholics and a tendency to idleness. O'Neill's able Minister of Home Affairs, Brian Faulkner (1921–77), defeated 'Operation Harvester', the IRA's campaign of the years 1956–62, mainly because it had little support from northern Catholics. (His attempt, in 1971, to stop IRA insurgency by the internment that had worked so well before blew up in his face.) The meeting between Lemass and O'Neill in 1965 was low-key and stated to be about closer economic ties. It was followed by others and when Jack Lynch became Taoiseach in 1966, he too made the journey north.

Grassroots Protestant reaction was swift and antique. As so often in the past, the voice of adamant Protestantism was

loud and clear and it was incorporated in the Rev Ian Paisley. He was a brilliant, tireless and immensely strong orator, anti-Catholic and anti-papal. He scented change with the coming of O'Neill and he was also aware of the prime minister's weakness and superficiality. Paisley's appearance on the election platform of James Kilfedder in West Belfast in 1964 was followed by 1930-style riots in Divis Street and he had soon gathered enough of a following to form the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) in 1971. Before that he had set himself up as O'Neill's particular gadfly, finally helping to drive him out of politics. He was at once the vocal manifestation of suspicious Protestantism and its manipulator. He exposed the weakness of the polite moves of reconciliation and his province-wide support was much greater than it appeared.

More ominous than Paisleyism was the spectre of militant Protestantism that was already haunting the scene with the resurgence of the UVF, which claimed responsibility for the deaths of two Catholics in 1966. The foundation of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) in January 1967 seemed in keeping with the spirit of the decade as celebrated outside in the real world. Its membership was mainly Catholic but it had student members who would not be labelled. The most keenly felt injustice was in the allocation of council housing, especially in mixed-population towns. The best known example was Derry, where a significant Nationalist majority had been ruled by a Unionist council since the abolition of PR in 1922. The notorious case of a nineteen-year-old unmarried Protestant typist being given

a house in Caledon, County Tyrone, where married Catholics with families were clearly more deserving, led to the first action in what was to be called the Civil Rights movement. Austin Currie, the young MP, occupied the house until he was removed by the police. The publicity encouraged other actions and on 3 October 1968 when William Craig, Minister of Home Affairs, banned a NICRA march organised by Eamonn McCann and Eamonn Melaugh of the Derry Housing Action Committee, the scene was set for a confrontation which was to have remarkable consequences.

Nationalists were used to bannings and reroutings but the times they were a-changing. Derry people were sore about imposed economic stagnation, about losing the new university which had been sited at safe Protestant Coleraine by the Lockwood Committee even though Derry's Magee College was an obvious nucleus, and about Unionist 'occupation' of their city. NICRA decided to defy the ban and the march began as scheduled on the following Saturday. The resulting police and 'B'-special violence was seen worldwide on television. The riots (and looting) that followed lasted well into the following Sunday morning. They were the first serious civic disturbances in Derry since the early 1920s but they were to be repeated many times. Harold Wilson's Labour government was shaken into action and within the year the main demands of the marchers had been met: the RUC was to be reformed, the 'B'-specials disbanded, Derry's corporation was replaced by a commission pending a thorough revision of local government, housing allocation was to be administered by an independent body and the

'business' local government vote which had led to the street-cry of 'One man: one vote!' was abolished.

These reforms pleased the mass of NICRA supporters who had nothing more revolutionary in mind, but in January 1969 a six-day march from Belfast to Derry by the radical students' movement People's Democracy, which was attacked by Protestant extremists at Burntollet Bridge near Derry and again in the largely Protestant Waterside area of the city, showed that palliation was not enough. The police and 'B'-specials were almost certainly involved; at best they took no action against the attackers of a legal peaceful march. By the end of April Terence O'Neill had resigned as prime minister, his place being taken by James Chichester-Clarke, his political *doppelganger*, and his leaving hastened by the sabotage by the UVF at the Silent Valley Reservoir, at the time blamed on the IRA. The early summer was uneasy with riots (a regular occurrence especially around the 12 July anniversary of the Boyne) and attacks on Catholic homes and flats in Belfast. Much more serious was the violent and protracted ending of the traditional Apprentice Boys march in Derry on 12 August.

John Hume, leader of the Derry Citizens Action Committee, had tried to have the march banned. After three days of police versus citizenry battles he and other nationalist leaders contributed to persuading the Northern Ireland government to ask its Westminster counterpart for the assistance of the British Army. As if by signal there were Protestant attacks on Catholic homes in West Belfast. The Catholics were virtually defenceless except for a few old IRA

guns. Figures published at the end of the month showed that ten people had been killed and, of the 899 injuries reported, 154 had been gunshot wounds. The army took to the streets of Belfast on 16 August and were welcomed as peacemakers. The visit of James Callaghan, then Home Secretary, increased nationalist euphoria which lasted, apart from some routine rioting in Belfast and Derry, until the following June. By this time a regenerated IRA had begun a calculated campaign to finish the business of reunification. The army proved to be a poor police force and the next twenty-four years were to see an armed struggle between the IRA, the more fundamentalist wing calling itself 'provisional' after a conference in 1969, and the security forces which now comprised a slowly changing RUC, the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR – the name was later changed to the Royal Irish Regiment) which many nationalists regarded as renamed 'B'-specials, and the army, which had not been able to leave Belfast or Derry or Northern Ireland in general since its mobilisation. Various Protestant groups: UVF, Ulster Defence Association (UDA), Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) and others, engaged in a specifically anti-Catholic campaign. Internecine struggles were common among both Loyalist and Republican paramilitary groupings.

Recruitment to the IRA was given a great boost by the hamfisted imposition of a selective and inefficient internment of 342 people, all but a few of them Catholics, on 9 August 1971 and by the events of 'Bloody Sunday' (30 January 1972) in Derry when thirteen unarmed Catholics were shot by soldiers of the First Parachute Regiment during an anti-

internment march. Northern Ireland had to get used to murderous riots, destruction by explosives of 'economic' targets, the threat of gun attacks on pubs and even halls of worship. The violence spilled over into the Republic, notably when, during the Ulster Workers' Council (UWC) strike against the 'power-sharing executive' in May 1974, twenty-five people were killed by car-bombs in Dublin, and six in Monaghan. Bombing British cities, though much more dangerous than the 'soft' targets at home, was considered a prime tactic and continued into the 1990s. The hunger strikes of 1980–1 (ostensibly because of the refusal of the authorities to allow prisoners to wear their own clothes) led to the moving and courageous deaths of ten IRA prisoners. By the end of 1990, 2,800 people had been killed and 32,000 seriously injured. The North showed the scars of civil disorder and military occupation (where the queen's writ ran).

The years 1969–1994 saw, on the nationalist side, another kind of struggle between the forces of constitutionalism and paramilitarism, both claiming the same goals, both secure in their moral rectitude. The numbers actively engaged in what opponents and journalists called 'terrorism' was small on both sides, but the great mass of the population believed that their opposite numbers secretly supported the paramilitaries on their side. Nationalists were given reason enough to believe that there were cases of collusion between the security forces and the Protestant gangs. The paramilitaries, because of their psychological set, were subject only to their own logic and morality. Though, with some

horrific exceptions, the situation never reached the intense and savage cruelty of the Middle East or Bosnia, not all the operations nor non-military activities were informed by noble motives. The notion of 'legitimate' targets gave rise to much justifiable criticism, and some accusations of racketeering and gang-warfare are sustainable. The present cessation of violence, which has cheered all Irish citizens, is still felt to be on a knife-edge, partly because of the old problem that faces peacemakers the world over: what to do with a standing army after a war.

In fact, life in Northern Ireland continued more or less 'normally' and people got used to body searches and travel delays. All main roads from the Republic had permanent checkpoints, and minor roads were cratered. There were few who were not touched by the 'troubles' in some way or other and well-rehearsed jokes suggested 'Shop early while shops last' and that the career most likely to lead to permanent employment was glazing.

The main arm of nationalist constitutionalism, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), was founded in 1970 with Gerry Fitt (Lord Fitt of Bell's Hill since 1983) as its head. One of its long-term aims was the securing of a united Ireland by consent and it has held to that aim in spite of criticism from the IRA and the Unionist opposition. Its great achievement was its convincing of Westminster of the need for a Dublin involvement in all considerations of Northern Ireland's future. Its leader since 1979 has been John Hume, and to him must go the credit of holding together a fairly wide spectrum grouping and of being a

significant player in the brokering of the IRA ceasefire. The party showed its ability when it held office during the brief life of the executive set up after the Sunningdale agreement and in its patient continuance after the UWC strike brought down that executive. The Anglo-Irish Agreement, signed by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Garret FitzGerald (then Taoiseach of the 1982-7 coalition) on 15 August 1985, an agreement which set up a permanent British-Irish intergovernmental conference and to which Ulster said, 'No!' was initiated by its efforts. So was the Downing Street agreement of Albert Reynolds and John Major of 15 December 1993, which disclaimed all British interest of a selfish nature and established the 'right of the Irish people alone, by agreement between the two parts . . . to exercise their right to self-determination'.

Hume argued that with the Downing Street Declaration the reasons for continuing a campaign of violence had been removed, and his meetings with Gerry Adams, President of Sinn Féin, begun in 1988, resulted in a cessation of violence on 30 August 1994. The 'peace process' has not been a rapid one, the sticking points being the refusal of the IRA to decommission their arms before all-party talks. The Unionists have refused to attend any talks until decommissioning has taken place and apparently the DUP has refused to attend any talks with members of Sinn Féin. The Northern Ireland Office are felt by many to favour the Unionist point of view. One of the high-visibility brokers is President Clinton, whose personal visit to Belfast in December 1995 contributed to hopes of a breakthrough. The plain people of Northern

Ireland are relishing the sight of the paraphernalia of 'trouble' – watchtowers, permanent checkpoints, ramps – being dismantled. A tropical summer which brought a large number of tourists in 1995 increased the cheer. The more sanguine believe that such happy welcoming of a kind of normality is the best index of continuing peace.

The Republic has learnt during the twenty-five years of violence to take the northern problem seriously, and to understand its nature perhaps for the first time since the seventeenth century. The unfortunate Arms Affair which led to the sacking of Neil Blaney and Charles J. Haughey, the attack on the British Embassy after the Belfast violence in 1969 and its destruction on 2 February 1972 after 'Bloody Sunday', the 'fund-gathering' raids on southern banks, the need to increase the establishment of garda and army in border counties, the resentment at being called a 'safe haven for terrorists' – all these kept the North on the front pages of Irish newspapers and in Dáil reports. Fianna Fáil's instinctive support for northern nationalists left them open to accusations of being soft on the Provos, while Fine Gael's sometimes unctuous reminders of the rights and fears of Unionists were eventually paid more heed. The 'Irish Dimension', incorporated after Sunningdale, was accepted by all subsequent southern governments and rarely was the 'situation' used to make political capital, this in the most highly politicised country in the EU.

Lemass's 'economic miracle' came a little unstuck with the oil crisis of the mid-1970s but the slump was weathered as well, if not better, than in other western countries. The

recession of the 1980s again saw an increase of emigration but it was largely by skilled workers and university graduates from a country with a remarkably high standard of education and small opportunity. The most notable change, accelerated after EEC membership, was an increase in welfare provision and the gradual diminution of the Catholic Church's political and social influence. Ecclesiastical attitudes to censorship, contraception, the right to abortion (or at least information about where it might be obtained), and divorce are not automatically accepted as they had been in the era of de Valera. Recent revelations about erring pastors have made clerical pronouncements less dogmatic. The Church's authority to speak on faith and morals has not been discountenanced but the area covered by those two terms has been redefined. Irish people are still practising Catholics with a regularity and in numbers unique in western Europe and many hope that the Church's present crisis will lead to renewal and greater honesty.

The 'free' part of Ireland is young in age and as aesthetically and culturally self-confident as other members of the EU. The response to the award of a fifth Nobel prize, to the Ulster poet Seamus Heaney, is a demonstration of a strong literary tendency and a pride in the international standing of its writers and dramatists. Its contribution to popular music, film and other literary forms is recognised. On this anniversary of its greatest affliction, the Famine, there is some satisfaction in the changes a hundred and fifty years can make. This artistic reputation may not seem important or desirable to the 'hard cold fire of the Northerner'



but the Republic, with its economic buoyancy, its rapidly improving welfare provision, and the general improvement of its amenities (subvented by generous grants from Brussels) appears a more desirable partner than when de Valera's frugal comfort and a stoic disdain for materialism was all it had to offer. The glamour of its reputation was increased when Mary Robinson became president in 1990. She continued the process of erasing Ireland's old reputation as a place of violence, backwardness and unthinking subservience to the Church.

Both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael have proved to be more centrist than their earlier reputations might have suggested, and Labour has found it possible to work in coalition with each. The parties have always prided themselves on the accessibility of their TDs and though a client system is believed to exist, accusations of corruption are seldom made and harder to prove. Young voters are not susceptible to Treaty rhetoric. Urban crime, often associated with drug abuse, is the seamy side of comparative affluence allied with persistent inequality, but outside the larger towns, crime rates are low by European standards. The state of suspense associated with the bogging down of the peace process is felt more keenly in the North; the South has other business to attend to and it can hope for no short-term advantage from a settlement of whatever kind. Yet it accepts its responsibility of playing its part in bringing light where there was more usually heat and of hoping to find after far too long the answer to the Irish question.

## A CHRONOLOGY OF IRISH HISTORY

30000 bc	Ireland's topography established
7000-6500 bc	Human habitation at Mount Sandel
2500 bc	Building of passage graves, notably Newgrange
1200 bc	Late bronze-age artefacts
680 bc	Circular habitation enclosure at Emain Macha
AD 1-500	Building of crannogs, hill forts and raths
77-84	Agricola, Roman governor of Britain, eventually decides against invasion
200	Conn Céd-cathach establishes high kingship of Tara
300-450	Irish raids on Roman Britain
400	Eoghan and Conall, sons of Niall Noígiallach, establish kingdom of Aileach
432	Traditional date of the coming of St Patrick
563	Colum Cille begins his mission to Iona
575	Convention of Druim Cett
597	Death of Colum Cille
664	Synod of Whitby
795	First Viking raids
841	Foundation of permanent Viking colony in Dublin
964	Rise of Dál Cais and beginning of hegemony of Brian Boru
975-1014	Brian king of Munster and later of Ireland
1014	Battle of Clontarf and death of Brian
1132-1148	Reforming activity of St Malachy
1155	Bull <i>Laudabiliter</i>
1166	Expulsion of Dermot MacMurrough
1170	Landing of Strongbow
1171	Death of Dermot. Henry II lands in Ireland
1175	John de Courcy invades Ulster
1176	Death of Strongbow
1177	Prince John made lord of Ireland; Cork and Limerick granted to Norman vassals
1210	King John's second visit to Ireland; submission of Irish kings
1224	First Irish Dominican and Franciscan foundations
1315	Edward Bruce lands at Larne
1318	Death of Edward Bruce at Faughart
1348	Black Death kills about one-third of the population
1394-5	Richard II's first expedition. Defeat of Art McMurrough and general submission of all but northern chiefs
1460-8	Supremacy of Desmond, ends with his execution by Worcester
1478-1513	Rule of Garret Mór Fitzgerald
1492	Poyning's Law makes Dublin parliament subservient to that in London