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**ARMY, POLICE AND SOCIETY IN IRELAND:  
CIVIL, MILITARY AND POLICE RELATIONS IN KING'S  
COUNTY AND COUNTY DONEGAL c1870-1902**

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## Abstract

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This thesis makes a detailed contribution to the study of social relations between tenantry, landowners, police and the military, and reveals continuities and complexities often missing from more generalised accounts. It begins by arguing that the prevailing framework of traditionalism versus revisionism in Irish history is too restricting, and agrees with those who want it opened up to wider approaches for a better understanding. By comparing two selected counties, this work uses local studies to examine Irish history in general - which is a well-established method for the period 1916-1923, but less so for the late nineteenth century.

Evidence of continuous disturbances throughout the period, albeit of varying intensity, supports the theory of a 'Long Land War'. It is important, however, to notice that there were other causes of friction apart from the pressures of nationalism and agrarian reform. In this conflict, the evidence suggests that widespread intimidation was both commonplace and effective on an often reluctant population, and questions how far nationalism was a really popular ideal. It is argued here that nationalism *did* slowly become stronger, and was fostered during the South African War.

Agrarian reform made more tangible progress, partly through the actions of the various leagues, but also through a collapse of government and landlord resolve. The position of the Catholic clergy as leaders of agitation is well established and supported here – but less discussed in the secondary literature is the role played by the women of tenant families. This study argues that ordinary women played a vital part in all agitation and resistance, and that this role deserves much wider recognition..

It is well documented that sport and culture were used by the nationalists to nurture support, but this study will argue that the authorities did the same thing. Army reforms also helped to identify military units with specific areas, and economic considerations about the buying power of the army played a moderating role in limiting opposition. The militia, whilst certainly ill-disciplined at times, have too often been dismissed as ineffectual, but it is argued here that they served a useful social function, and that their importance was as imperial reinforcements, not as a gendarmerie for dealing with discontent at home. It is also argued that excessive violence was sometimes used by the authorities, but it will be shown that Catholics in both the RIC and the army performed their duties with very few exceptions, and so recruiting Catholics was not a cause of weakness for the authorities. The RIC in particular, however, were vilified for the work they carried out and the way that they sometimes performed it.

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## Declaration

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I declare that this thesis comprises my own work, except where source material is acknowledged, and that it has not been submitted for examination in any other form.

Signed .....

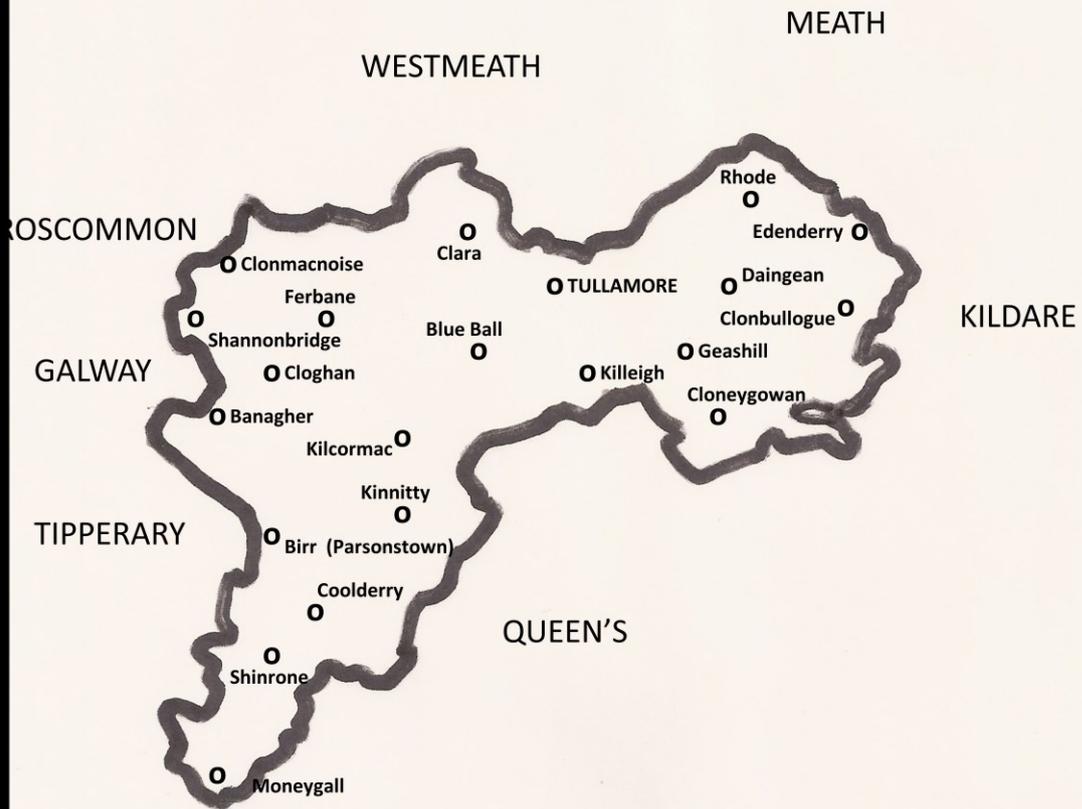
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MAP 1 – IRISH PROVINCES AND COUNTIES



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MAP 2 – KING'S COUNTY



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**MAP 3 – COUNTY DONEGAL**



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## Introduction

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### 1. Aims and objectives.

The main aim of this study is to compare and contrast relations between the army, the police and the civilian population in two rather different Irish counties, in the period between the failure of the Fenian uprising of 1867 and the end of the South African War in 1902. This was the period of the Land War (c1879-82) and the Plan of Campaign (c1886-91), which saw both relative rural peace and also great unrest and protest, and the emergence of a close connection between land and nationalism. The rise and fall of Charles Stewart Parnell, the debate on Home Rule and the development of cultural nationalism, are all features of this period. The motivation for this study was to try to understand relations between soldiers, police and civilians, to see how they could have co-existed for some periods, but have been in conflict at others.

This thesis begins with an historiographical survey, and a general outline of events and developments in Ireland from c1870 to 1902, in order to put the material of the study into context. A survey of the administration of law and order in Ireland during this same period is followed by a more detailed look at the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) and the British army in Ireland, including an explanation of their composition and roles. A summary of the condition of both King's County and County Donegal then follows.

It is suggested here that Irish history is still predominantly seen from either the 'traditional'/'counter-revisionist' or 'revisionist' point of view, and that modern developments in social and political history are considered less important. This work will include other approaches to the subject and, although largely supporting revisionist views on landlords and evictions, does not neatly fit into either of the two main camps. It serves to question

whether the prevailing 'traditional' versus 'revisionist' debate can reasonably be maintained. It will put the material of this study into context, but will also serve to illustrate how any conflict within Ireland could be considered essentially as a civil war. Ireland was an unequal partner in the United Kingdom and in many ways was treated as a colony, and it will be shown how Britain effectively applied the principle of 'divide and rule' there as much as elsewhere in the empire.<sup>1</sup> To view Irish history in terms of Irish 'victims' and British 'imperialists' is an outdated approach, for Ireland can be seen as both 'imperial' and 'colonial', and this thesis reinforces the modern trend towards accepting the diversity of Irish historical experience.<sup>2</sup>

In looking at two selected counties, which have received less attention from historians than many others, the main text of this work contributes to the growing body of local studies which help to build a more nuanced view of Irish history. This has been a fruitful approach for the period of the 'Irish revolution', but there are very few such works for the Land Wars, and certainly not for the whole period from c1870 to 1902. There are none concentrating on civil, military and police relations, and so this is an important contribution which will analyse how far individual areas agree with or differ from the picture nationwide. An important contribution made by this thesis is in the use of local newspapers both as evidence and contemporary influences in their own right. A wide range of official and unofficial sources have been consulted to supplement the press, but the local press alone provided a long-term coverage of a wide range of topics. This extensive use of the provincial Irish press has not been made in other studies.

The thesis reveals a number of significant features that have not generally been acknowledged in other works, and which lead us to revise our understanding of the topic and

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<sup>1</sup> S. Howe, *Ireland and Empire* (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 2000), p231.

<sup>2</sup> K. Jeffery (ed), 'Introduction', in *'An Irish Empire'?* (Manchester: University of Manchester, 1996), p1.

to challenge widely accepted views. The first is to note that there was no complete cessation of agitation at any time during the years under examination. Although there were lulls in the severity of the violence, it is misleading to see this period as one of clearly defined moments of conflict interspersed with times of complete peace. This has led to the suggestion that the whole of the period from 1879 to 1909 should be regarded as a “long” land war.<sup>3</sup> Agrarian conflict was the main cause of strife, and the catalyst for worsening relations between the civilian population and the authorities, but it was not the only one, and the final phase of a Long Land War is beyond the scope of this study. For these reasons this thesis continues to use the more conventional headings.<sup>4</sup>

The second, it will be argued, was that there was often a high level of violence used by both sides when conflict took place. Intimidation by a sizeable minority, either through violence or threats, was commonplace and was clearly effective in persuading an often reluctant population to follow a particular course of action. There was genuine nationalist feeling on occasions, but how widespread it was is open to question.<sup>5</sup> Intimidation was sometimes just a cover for criminal activity. It is also true, however, that the violence used by the authorities – especially the RIC – was sometimes excessive. State coercion and violence were all part of colonialism – if Ireland’s past is to be considered at least partly colonial.<sup>6</sup>

Thirdly, and following on from the previous point, there is the issue of discipline within both the police and the army, which was not of a standard that would be acceptable today. In the case of the RIC, this was one cause of them being hated by many more than the army, and they were not a generally respected part of rural communities at this time, as is sometimes claimed. Lack of discipline in the regular army was more related to drink and boredom, and

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<sup>3</sup> F. Campbell, “‘Killing time’ in rural Ireland, c1881-2013’, in *Irish Studies Review* (21), Aug 2013, p274.

<sup>4</sup> I.e: Land War, Plan of Campaign and South African War rather than First Land War/Phase One, Second Land War/Phase Two, and some origins of the Third Land War/Phase Three.

<sup>5</sup> T. H. O’Brien, ‘Lord Milner’s Irish Journal 1886’, in *History Today* (14) Jan 1964, p48.

<sup>6</sup> S. Howe, *Ireland and Empire*, p230. See Section 2(b).

attempts were made to tackle these. Despite this, soldiers maintained a good record of discipline when on duty. One organisation renowned for its ill-discipline was the Irish militia, yet it is suggested here that this deserves closer examination. Although very rarely used in its primary role of home defence, or acting in support of the civil authorities, it remained an essential source of recruits for the regular army, and so was maintained in large numbers.

Fourthly, it will be argued that civil, military and police relations were most likely to be disturbed by the various leagues which encouraged agitation on the land. Although most Irish were willing to support Home Rule, extreme nationalism eventually became stronger during this period, and this work supports the argument that this was fostered during the South African War of 1899 to 1902. Unionists consequently reacted to this, but it is interesting to see how both sides could exist together in close proximity. Fifthly, although the role of Catholic priests in leading agrarian agitation is well known, it is argued here that the contemporary British view of them as fanatics needs to be modified. The sixth point, and highlighted here as deserving more coverage, is the less well recorded role of ordinary women in almost every aspect of agitation. This is a weakness of current Irish women's history which this study goes some way to rectify.

Finally, there is a series of points to explain how the RIC and the army maintained their influence. Sport and culture were used by the nationalists to nurture support, and it will be shown here that the authorities did the same thing - which has not been done in any detail for this period or these counties before.<sup>7</sup> This was achieved by playing sports fixtures against civilian teams and opening concerts and band performances to the public. The army further fostered connections with local communities through its territorial and recruiting reforms, which proved very successful in the long term. Catholics in both the RIC and the army often seemed indifferent to people that they clashed with or evicted, or at least they

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<sup>7</sup> A. Bairner, 'Ireland, sport and empire', in K. Jeffery (ed), *'An Irish Empire'? Aspects of Ireland and the British Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp57-76.

carried out their duty without emotion. Although much of this work was recognised as unpleasant, it is maintained here that a range of factors from unit loyalty to plain callousness prevented any significant breakdown in the system. Economic considerations also played a pragmatic part in moderating potential opposition to the military, as garrisons were appreciated as sources of money for local businesses.

The main body of the thesis is a detailed examination of each county from c1870 to 1902, divided into key periods, with a close examination of civil, military & police relations. At certain stages in the narrative, a close examination is made of a specific military or police unit in a particular situation, to highlight relations with the local population. Particular aspects examined overall are: the police and army as parts of the community; the influence of agrarian and political organisations; the details of agrarian 'outrages'; the roles of the army and the constabulary in evictions and civil disorder; the attitude of the civilian population as a result of those roles; how soldiers and policemen felt about such duties; and the significance of having Irishmen, especially Catholics, in the constabulary and the army in Ireland. Attention is paid not only to the role of the police and military in times of conflict, but also to their general roles within the community and relations with local populations. In conclusion, King's County and County Donegal are compared, and then fitted into the context of Ireland in general c1870-1902, to see how they relate to the overall picture.

The research questions to be answered are:

- Has this period of Irish history been examined through too narrow a context, and could other approaches be usefully applied?
- How far was the conflict during this period a civil war, and how far was it a colonial struggle?
- How useful are provincial newspapers, both as primary sources and influential agents in history themselves?

- How can local studies contribute to the study of Irish history in general?
- What were the causes of conflict between the army, the police and the civilian population, and were they continuous or intermittent?
- How violent, and how successful, were the methods used by agitators, evictees and the authorities?
- Have the roles of certain players in these historical events been underestimated – for example the militia, Catholic priests and ordinary women?
- How did Catholics behave as members of the RIC or the army, and how did the general population react to them?
- How do the two chosen counties compare with regard to the above questions?

The main emphasis of the thesis is on individual soldiers, policemen and civilians who either confronted or mixed with each other, rather than on generals and politicians. It is based on the experiences of the military and the constabulary rather than the contextual details of tenancies and politics. It is intended to highlight the detailed personal implications of events during this period, to examine how the army and the constabulary related to the general population, and to see how these findings compare between King's County and County Donegal. Whatever conclusions are drawn from this, they are then compared with Ireland as a whole from c1870 to 1902, to see if they fit general accounts of the period, including subsequent historical interpretations of both traditional and revisionist historians. Historical interpretation in Ireland can still be linked to politics – as Sean O'Faolain wrote: "For it is our great strength to remember: as it is also, sometimes, our weakness. But it is our weakness only when we remember indiscriminately, as Irishmen too often do – less to foster wisdom than to kindle bitterness."<sup>8</sup> Ultimately, it is hoped that this study will contribute to the historical debate and growing awareness of the diversity of the Irish experience in the past.

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<sup>8</sup> S. O'Faolain, *The Story of Ireland* (London: William Collins, 1943), p25.

## 2. Methodology and historiography

### (a) Primary sources.

Secondary sources have been used not only to provide essential context, but also to show what approaches have been used by historians, and how they have interpreted this period in the past, against which the findings of this study can be balanced. These will be looked at in the next section, but here we are concerned with primary material. Some primary sources are available in Bristol, for example: microfilm official Irish documents at UWE, microfiche Parliamentary Papers at the University of Bristol and Victorian newspapers at the Central Library. The need to consult official papers - civil, police and military - has required visits to several archives including the National Archives at Kew, the National Army Museum and the National Archives of Ireland. For material on the Royal Irish Constabulary, there are records at the National Archives and the National Archives of Ireland. For military records there are the National Archives and the National Army Museum again, but also a host of regimental museums throughout the country. Newspapers are a vital source of material, and here the British Library Newspapers establishment at Colindale (now closed) was an essential resource. County archive collections, in the UK and Ireland, have also helped with material such as military papers, estate papers and local records. It is this sort of local detail that was central to this study. Primary sources are also available digitised on the internet, such as *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers*, *Irish Parliamentary Papers*, and the *Times Digital Archive*. Sometimes abstracts are given where whole documents are not reproduced, and many libraries and archives now have their catalogues online. Primary material is also available on CDs - Trinity College Dublin being one useful source of these.

The key to this thesis was the critical use of a wide range of primary material that was consulted. This enabled a more rounded picture to be constructed using official, unofficial, national, local, military, police and civilian material. Historical works of reference, of course, can provide invaluable primary data material. *The Irish Census* (1871, 1881, 1891, 1901)

contains a wealth of information, while works like *Thom's Irish Almanac and Official Directory* (1884) deal with similar material on a more manageable scale. J. Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (1883) and B. Burke, *History of the Landed Gentry of Ireland* (1899) give comprehensive coverage of landowners and landownership, which helped especially in constructing a picture of the situation in the two counties studied.

Some primary sources cover a broad sweep of history, and they supplied information on the historical context of the times as well as a wealth of specific examples. During the nineteenth century, the debates in both the Commons and the Lords were recorded by *Hansard* (the official report of the Houses of Parliament), and documents published by government departments, but not presented to parliament, were produced as *Non-Parliamentary Papers*. Reports which were presented to parliament were released each session, from 1801 onwards, as *Parliamentary Papers* ('Sessional Papers [Printed]' or 'Blue Books'). Parliamentary Papers were intended for consumption by contemporaries, and so may be treated by historians as more reliable than publications intended for posterity. On the other hand, they contained what was considered suitable for public consumption, and those contributing information may have been wary about what they wanted released.<sup>9</sup> Two useful sources online are *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers* and *Enhanced British Parliamentary Papers on Ireland, 1801-1922*. A whole range of mainly unprinted government papers is also available in Cabinet Papers, Confidential Print, Irish Office Records etc at the National Archives. In Ireland there are the papers from Dublin Castle: Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers, Irish Official Papers, and Register of Newspapers. The origin and possible confidentiality of these papers has to be borne in mind when using them as evidence.

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<sup>9</sup> J. Tosh, *The Pursuit of History* (London: Longman, 1991) p39.

There is also abundant unofficial primary material for this period, which provided opinions from both sides of any dispute. The Irish Land League Papers and National League Papers (in the National Archives of Ireland) give the view from one side, as do the Harrington Papers (the National Library of Ireland). Other private papers like the Wolseley Papers, various estate papers and reports like the Property Defence Association, Ireland, *Report of the Committee for the Thirteen Months Ended 31st December 1883* (1884) give the opposite view. Some contemporary observers wrote about the two counties being studied here, for example: J. Tuke, *Irish Distress and its Remedies – The Land Question: A Visit to Donegal* (1880) and *The Condition of Donegal* (1889). Other sources of information are local guides such as *The King's County Directory* (1890), estate papers and other local records.

National newspapers provided coverage and analysis of events not always favourable to the government, both in Britain and Ireland, for example the *Times* (available digitally), *Illustrated London News*, the *Graphic* and *Irish Times* (also available digitally). Other journals like *Young Ireland*, *The Nation*, *Flag of Ireland*, and *United Ireland* were all strongly nationalistic. The contemporary *Newspaper Press Directory* (published annually) gives details on every journal and paper, including their affiliation. For King's County there was *The Leinster Reporter*, *The King's County Chronicle* and *The Midland Tribune*. For Donegal there was *The Ballyshannon Herald*, *The Donegal Independent* and *The Donegal Vindicator*. Other Irish and British papers have been used for comparison. The provincial press was essential to this thesis, and has been more closely examined here than in most other local studies.

It has been pointed out, of course, that "as a research source newspapers are not entirely unproblematic". Since papers select what to report, possibly with a specific purpose, there is

always the danger of “merely reconstructing a representation of a representation”.<sup>10</sup> The wealth of material they contain on local matters, however, makes them vital to area studies.<sup>11</sup> Faced with the possibilities of bias, subjectivity and prejudice, “the researcher builds on probabilities with corroboration”.<sup>12</sup> Where this has not been possible, the plausibility of material has had to be weighed against the likelihood of inaccuracy – for example, if a paper praised somebody they might normally be expected to criticise, then that might make it more credible.

There was a pamphlet war between supporters of government policies and opponents, hence *Parnellism and Crime* (1887) versus *The Vandeleur Estate* (1888) and *The Midnight Burnings at Clongorey* (1889). Some, such as the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, *Resistance to Evictions* (c1886) were definitely subversive. Others such as “O.K.”, *Abuses of the System of Land Tenure in Ireland* (1876) and F. Hill, *Land Question: Principles Which Should Regulate the Ownership and Occupation of Land* (1869) were constructively critical. A whole army of observers wrote books about the situation in Ireland, invariably from a particular point of view, and more often than not sympathetic towards the ordinary people. A. Reid, *Ireland: A Book of Light on the Irish Problem* (1886); D. Crilly, *Irish Evictions* (1887); S. Laing, *A visit to Bodyke, or, The real meaning of Irish evictions* (1887) and P. Mahony, *The Truth about Glenbeigh* (1887), were all critical of government policies. B. Becker, *Disturbed Ireland* (1881) proclaimed his impartiality however. Even foreigners got in on the act with P. Grousset, *Ireland's Disease - The English in Ireland* (1889); Madame de Bovet, *Three Months in Ireland* (1891); Anon, *Ireland's Woes From a Foreigner's Point of View* (1892) and W. Hurlbert, *Ireland Under Coercion: The Diary of an American* (1888). H. James, *The Work of the Irish Leagues* (1890), on the other hand, attacked the work of the

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<sup>10</sup> L. Ryan, ‘The Press, Police and Prosecution: Perspectives on Infanticide in the 1920s’, in A. Hayes and D. Urquhart (eds), *Irish Women's History* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2004), p139.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p138 and I. Jackson, *The Provincial Press and the Community* (Manchester: University of Manchester, 1971), p272.

<sup>12</sup> R. Shafer, *A Guide to Historical Method* (Homewood: The Dorsey Press, 1980), pp54-56 and 178-184.

leagues. There were also many autobiographies written from different perspectives, from T. Harrington, *A Diary of Coercion* (1889), to the memoirs of the 'Ascendancy' in Lady V Hicks Beach, *Life of Sir Michael Hicks Beach* (1932).

Official papers like *Parliamentary Papers*, the Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers, and *Hansard* mentioned above, were often concerned with police matters. Primary material on law enforcement can also be found in the Police & Resident Magistrate Letter Books in Ireland, together with *The Mitchelstown Inquest* (1887), Crime Special Branch Files and Notes, Fenian Police Reports and Files, Irish Crimes Records and Police Reports. In Britain, *Acts of Parliament*, RIC Records, and the Balfour Papers are all available. In the National Archives, the Colonial Office Papers (CO 904 series) were particularly useful in revealing details about police work through RIC reports. Both national and local newspapers and journals carried articles on the police on a fairly regular basis, and there was also *The Constabulary Gazette*. Some magistrates wrote about their own experiences, as in 'An Irish Magistrate', *The Irish Magistracy* (1885) and C. Lloyd, *Ireland Under the Land League: A Narrative of Personal Experiences* (1892).

There are several police memoirs including T. Fennell (R. Fennell, ed), *The Royal Irish Constabulary* (2003) from a Catholic nationalist point of view and S. Walters (S. Ball, ed), *A Policeman's Ireland* (1999) from a Protestant unionist. M. Murphy, 'The Royal Irish Constabulary' in *Catholic World* (1886) is violently anti-RIC, supposedly by a former member; but H. Blake, 'The Irish Police' in *Nineteenth-Century* (1881) is much more favourable, as is M. Brophy, *Sketches of the Royal Irish Constabulary* (1886). There is also unpublished material such as D. Harrel, *Recollections and Reflections* (unpublished typescript, 1926). Memoirs from former unrepentant policemen were often very defensive because of the hostility of other works on the RIC.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> E. Malcolm, *The Irish Policeman 1822-1922: a life* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), p29.

There is a wealth of primary material on the late Victorian army in general. Official papers, such as, *Parliamentary Papers*, the Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers, and *Hansard* mentioned above, were often concerned with military matters. Some of the more generally useful military items, which are also relevant for Ireland, are in the War Office Papers at the National Archives. A vital official publication from this time was *General Orders for the Guidance of the Troops in Affording Aid to the Civil Power in Ireland*, which was produced in 1865, 1870 and 1882 – with amendments reflecting the changing situation on the ground. Both national and local newspapers and journals carried articles on the army on a fairly regular basis. Army life is covered in W. Cairnes, *Social Life in the British Army* (1900) and 'The State of the British Army' in *The Edinburgh Review* (1885).

There are many official and semi-official publications helping to identify individuals and units, including *The Monthly Army List* and annual publications like *Hart's Army List* and *The Irish Military Guide*, as well as *Stations of the Army in Ireland*. Journals like *The Naval and Military Gazette*, *The Army and Navy Gazette*, *The Navy and Army Illustrated* and *The Broad Arrow* introduced articles and news on military matters as well. Personal reminiscences about this period can be found both in private papers and autobiographies. The Buller Papers, Wolseley Papers and Roberts Papers are all available at the National Archives in London. Non-military collections like the Harrington Papers at the National Library of Ireland can also sometimes contain interesting items. Several autobiographies and collections of letters included references to Ireland, such as Sir G. Arthur (ed), *The Letters of Lord and Lady Wolseley, 1870-1911* (1922), Lieutenant General Sir W. Butler, *An Autobiography* (1911) and General Sir R. Harrison, *Recollections of a Life in the British Army During the Latter Half of the 19th Century* (1908).

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Finally, individual regimental records can provide much information, either in printed form such as regimental journals, or manuscript records such as diaries, letters & reports. There were few contemporary regimental journals, such as the 50<sup>th</sup> Regiment's *Queen's Own Gazette*, which makes them all the more useful - but even those from decades later can include old soldiers' reminiscences, as in the Gloucestershire Regiment's *Back Badge*. The Diary of Colonel J. Backhouse, The Buffs, gives an insight into daily routine life in the army in Ireland. The Mends Papers, on the other hand, give a fascinating detailed account of the role of the King's Royal Rifle Corps during the Plan of Campaign. Miscellaneous paperwork like Inspection Reports can provide useful insights, Regimental Record Books provide details of movements, and the Leinster Regiment Association has a useful plan of Birr barracks. Such records have been another major source for this thesis, where other works have concentrated on larger military collections, but unfortunately, the survival of such material is unpredictable, and varies from regiment to regiment.

Some particular problems were encountered in this work, in part due to the Irish context. Firstly, the presence of bias at all levels, in both primary and secondary material had to be assessed – although it was usually fairly obvious. Secondly, the uneven availability of sources meant that the same lines of investigation could not always be followed through for the whole period, or across both counties – with some source material expertly presented, and some not; and large gaps existing in certain areas. Local newspapers provided the main chronological thread, as they were the only sources to cover the whole period in any detail. Thirdly, there was a lack of original material from ordinary people, which was partially overcome by the use of memoirs written after the events and a reliance on local newspapers. It is recognised that “personal memory ... is a remarkably slippery medium for preserving facts”, but such sources are still useful.<sup>14</sup> Overall there was a wealth of material and where there was a particular problem, this is explained in the text. Having studied the

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<sup>14</sup> E. Hobsbawm, ‘History From Below – Some Reflections’, in F. Krantz (ed), *History From Below* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p18.

secondary sources and researched the primary material, the task was to analyse the findings in order to answer the research questions. This mainly concerned evaluations of motivation and deed, cause and consequence, comparison and contrast, continuity and change.

**(b) Secondary sources.**

Many secondary sources are available locally at the University of the West of England, University of Bristol or Bristol Central Library, and others (such as unpublished theses) were acquired through the inter-library loans scheme. Some specialist libraries have had to be used, such as the National Army Museum for military sources, the Bodleian Library in Oxford and the National Library of Ireland for rare volumes. Secondary material is also available on the internet, bearing in mind that the reliability of each website has to be carefully assessed. This is true of all sources, of course, but more so in the case of websites, and especially where the subject matter still overlaps with modern-day politics and prejudices, as is the case with Ireland. There are many useful gateways into the internet, such as INTUTE, which can help to find reliable sources. As expected there were wide differences of interpretation in the secondary works consulted. It will be explained below that, even though the period has been generally well covered, there is a limited amount on King's County and County Donegal, the army in Ireland at that time, and key aspects of the work of the The Royal Irish Constabulary. Overall then, there was nothing that went into enough detail on the elements, or the areas, to be examined in this thesis.

The historiography of this period is beset with problems common to much Irish history, namely widely differing interpretations not only between contemporaries, but also between nationalist historians and modern revisionists. These issues are discussed in C. Brady (ed), *Interpreting Irish History* (1995) and D. Boyce and A. O'Day (eds), *The Making of Modern Irish History* (1996). They explain how revisionism started with the work of T. Moody and R. Edwards in the 1930s challenging Irish historical 'myths' through objective academic

methodology, but only reaching fruition in the 1970s with the work of F. S. L. Lyons and R. F. Foster. Counter-revisionism was led by B. Bradshaw, who attacked the new approach for “denying the possibility that the positive dynamic of a developing national consciousness could be invoked as a useful concept of historical interpretation” – which was the nationalist creed.<sup>15</sup> The work of the ‘new historians’ led to some changes, but not an entirely new consensus, so the debate continues.<sup>16</sup> This study is largely in agreement with the revisionists, but with some reservations, which will be explained later.

General histories, with particular reference to the nineteenth century, show how historians have interpreted this period in the past, against which the findings of this work can be compared. None of them, however, go into any detail about issues like evictions. The early leader of Irish historical ‘revisionism’ was T. W. Moody, and in T. Moody and F. Martin (eds), *The Course of Irish History* (1994) there is a summary of his approach. Possibly the most important general history of Ireland in the last thirty years is by one of his students – R. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (1988). Three other historians have been associated with the same approach: F. Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* (1973); O. MacDonagh, *States of Mind: A Study of Anglo-Irish Conflict, 1780-1980* (1983) and P. O’Farrell, *England and Ireland Since 1800* (1975) – indeed, they have acknowledged their debt to each other’s work. These four and revisionism in general, have been criticized in the last couple of decades as nationalism has returned to centre stage, chiefly for their reliance on official documents. This thesis agrees that over-reliance on official documents could be misleading, and so wide terms of reference have been used. Irish histories may no longer be “nationalistic, patriotic, political, sentimental ... preoccupied with the national ego and a delusion of its self-sufficiency”<sup>17</sup>, but contradicting accepted perceptions can still be like walking through a minefield. All of the above works have been useful for studying the

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<sup>15</sup> C. Brady, ‘Constructive and Instrumental’, pp3-14.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p23.

<sup>17</sup> S. O’Faolain, *The Irish* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987 – Originally published 1947), pp9-10.

general context of this period, but Foster more than most, with a very readable account of the late nineteenth century. Even he, however, dedicates only five pages to violence and evictions during the Land War of 1879-1882<sup>18</sup>. By their brevity general history books reduce the impact of such happenings on the reader, so for that reason, this work looks in detail at what 'agrarian outrages' and evictions actually involved.

The issue of differing views is particularly evident in the histories of the land question and agrarian reform. J. Pomfret, *The Struggle for Land in Ireland* (1930) gives the traditional nationalist view of predatory landlords, whilst the modern revisionist W. Vaughan disagrees in *Landlords & Tenants in Mid-Victorian Ireland* (1994) and *Landlords & Tenants in Ireland 1848-1904* (1994). Vaughan persuasively argues that, although there were bad landlords, they were not all absentees and rackrenters, and they were facing serious problems of their own. Vaughan does rely heavily on official documents, but the case he makes is convincing. T. H. O'Brien gives some insight into contemporary views on landlords in 'Lord Milner's Irish Journal 1886' (*History Today*, 1964). With regard to the Land War itself, there have been several studies of its causes and consequences, such as S. Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish Land War* (1979). This was particularly useful in examining the trends leading up to 1879. There are many articles on the subject, all of which add depth to the general picture, but one other book is particularly important. This is L. P. Curtis, *The Depiction of Eviction in Ireland 1845-1910* (2011), which gives a detailed examination of that central aspect of the struggle. This book finally gives details of events at evictions absent from the vast majority of other works, although it neither goes into as much detail about military and police involvement, nor about the individual counties studied here, as is done in this thesis – until dealing with County Donegal after 1886. He does not, however, use either the Mends or the McFadden papers in dealing with Gweedore during this period.

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<sup>18</sup> R. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1989), pp 406-410.

Home Rule and the political aspects of the period are dealt with extensively in L. P. Curtis, *Coercion and Conciliation in Ireland 1880-1892* (1963) and C. O'Brien, *Parnell and His Party* (1968), and they were most useful in making a thorough examination of the period. The best work on all aspects of Irish government is still R. McDowell, *The Irish Administration, 1801-1914* (1964), whilst reaction against such authority is examined in W. Feingold, *The Revolt of the Tenantry: The Transformation of Local Government in Ireland 1872-1886* (1984). Feingold, however, does not cover the whole period being studied here. T. Garvin, *The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics* (2005) has nationalism as the central theme, whilst the other side of the coin is examined in P. Gibbon, *The Origins of Ulster Unionism* (1975). C. Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland* (1984) is another very readable and useful book, but still short on details about outrages and evictions in the counties which this study has examined.

It may be generally accepted that 'total history' is an impossibility, but most historical works show elements of different approaches, and this thesis is no exception.<sup>19</sup> Historians have tended to approach Irish history from either the traditional/counter-revisionist<sup>20</sup> or revisionist standpoint which has overshadowed advances in social and cultural aspects, and Marxist historians such as T. Jackson, *Ireland Her Own* (1947, reprinted 1976), have tended to be marginalised. This insularity may not have been the work of an identifiable historical establishment, but nevertheless a "dominant school of historiography" has reduced the impact of developments seen elsewhere, for example in applying the techniques of economics, sociology and anthropology to history.<sup>21</sup> This work does not fit neatly into either of the two main camps, and seeks to emphasise the importance of certain methods and approaches, which will be examined next. These are 'history from below', military and police

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<sup>19</sup> R. Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp22-23 & 117.

<sup>20</sup> Mostly nationalist, but also some unionist.

<sup>21</sup> C. Brady, ' 'Constructive and Instrumental': The Dilemma of Ireland's First 'New Historians' ', in C. Brady (ed), *Interpreting Irish History* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994), pp 3-16.

history, imperial history, local history, women's history and using provincial newspapers as evidence.

Clearly, two main elements of this thesis are social and political history. Social history originated as the study of the lower classes and the variety of human activities, and was often combined with economic history. Since the 1950s, however, it has developed with the "historisation of the social sciences".<sup>22</sup> The meaning of social history has expanded so much that "today there is nothing that does not fit somehow into the historical sciences"<sup>23</sup>. The aspect of social history that is adopted in this work is 'history from below'. For this, F. Krantz (ed), *History From Below* (1988) provides a series of useful articles. In pursuing this line, but without the Marxist overtones, this thesis also makes a significant contribution, by emphasising the human element in the story usually missing from other works. This approach looks at "the lives and notions of the the common people ... the very stuff of history"<sup>24</sup> and is the "history of the common people"<sup>25</sup>. A generally recognised problem with 'history from below' is the shortage of source material, and this was the case with this study as well, although largely overcome by the use of memoirs and newspapers.<sup>26</sup>

The elements of political history with which this thesis is mainly concerned are military and police history. Despite the claim that "military history is the oldest form of historical scholarship", it has tended to be ignored by academic historians, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>27</sup> There had been a narrative tradition in military history, and it had been felt that it was only useful to student officers, even though there were many different aspects to it such as generalship, institutional studies and details of battles. In recent decades,

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<sup>22</sup> E. Hobsbawm, *On History* (London: Abacus, 1999), pp94-97.

<sup>23</sup> R. Koselleck, *The Practices of Conceptual History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), p116.

<sup>24</sup> F. Krantz, 'George Rude and 'History From Below' ', in F. Krantz (ed), *History From Below* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p3.

<sup>25</sup> E. Hobsbawm, 'History From Below', p13.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p16.

<sup>27</sup> C. Bellamy, *The Evolution of Modern Land Warfare* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp2-3.

however, the emergence of 'new military history', with an emphasis on war and society has brought it more to the fore.<sup>28</sup>

There are many books on the late Victorian army in general, but there are few references specifically to Ireland. The most useful general work is E. Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army, 1868-1902* (1992), which has sections on aid to the civil power and Ireland and is very readable. Colonel G. Hay, *Epitomized History of the Militia: The Constitutional Force* (1987) includes the auxiliary forces in Ireland. For books on the Irish in the British Army there is A. Brendin, *History of the Irish Soldier* (1987), and T. Dooley, *Irishmen or English Soldiers* (1995) which is mainly concerned with a later period, but has some useful material on the Victorian era. Aspects of this element are looked at by T. Bartlett and K. Jeffery, 'An Irish military tradition?'; D. Fitzpatrick, 'Militarism in Ireland, 1900-1922'; V. Crossman, 'The army and law and order in the nineteenth century' and E. Spiers, 'Army organisation and society in the nineteenth century' – all in T. Bartlett and K. Jeffery (eds), *A Military History of Ireland* (1997). This is the most useful general work on Irish military history, but even this does not deal with the specific topics of this thesis in any detail. Articles on Irish soldiers include P. Karsten, 'Irish Soldiers in the British Army, 1792-1922: Suborned or Subordinate?' in *Journal of Social History* (1983) and T. Denman, 'Ethnic Soldiers Pure and Simple? The Irish in the Late Victorian British Army' in *War in History* (1996). They add a lot to our understanding of Irish soldiers and contemporary attitudes towards them, but are not related to specific counties.

D. Haire, *The Victorian Army in Ireland, 1868-1890*, is an unpublished MLitt dissertation from 1973. It is the most thorough work on this subject, but only one chapter has been published as 'In Aid of the Civil Power' in F. Lyons and R. Hawkins (eds), *Ireland Under the Union* (1980). The only generally published works are E. Muenger, *The British Military Dilemma in*

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<sup>28</sup> J. Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (London: Pimlico, 2004), pp24, 27 & 62-73.

*Ireland: Occupation Politics, 1886-1914* (1991) and J. Johnston, 'The Irish Land War 1879-1882: Lessons for Counter-Insurgency' in *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal* (1989), but they only cover parts of the relevant period. Regimental histories also provide some details of unit and individual involvement, although they do not tend to spend much time on Ireland, especially in times of peace. Lt-Colonel F. Whitton, *The History of the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment* (1924) was an exception, and was very useful in relation to King's County. This thesis, therefore, makes an important contribution in its detailed study of the military in two specific counties over the given period, which is not available elsewhere.

Police history also suffered from neglect by academic historians until the 1980s.<sup>29</sup> Since then the orthodox interpretation of police development has been challenged by a revisionist, often Marxist, view. The traditional view is that police forces have developed as the most appropriate and effective response to the problems of society, whereas the revisionists argue that this has just been the bourgeoisie extending their control over the 'dangerous' classes.<sup>30</sup> Both standpoints actually have their merits and faults, but this thesis agrees primarily with the former. In Ireland, it has taken a long time for prejudice against the RIC to subside and allow for objective study.<sup>31</sup> A thorough examination of the law and those involved in enforcing it is given by S. Ball, *Policing the Land War* (PhD Thesis 1999), and also M. O'Callaghan, *British High Politics and a Nationalist Ireland: Criminality, Land and the Law Under Forster and Balfour* (1994). All of these were useful, but the contribution of this thesis in studying the RIC is again, the detailed study of in two specific counties from c1870 to 1902 not covered elsewhere.

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<sup>29</sup> C. Emsley and B. Weinberger, 'Introduction', in C. Emsley and B. Weinberger (eds), *Policing Western Europe: Politics, Professionalism and Public Order, 1850-1940* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), pp vii-xiii and E. Malcolm, *The Irish Policeman 1822-1922: a life* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), pp27 and 33-34.

<sup>30</sup> D. Taylor, *The New Police in Nineteenth Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp2-3.

<sup>31</sup> E. Malcolm, *The Irish Policeman*, pp25-35.

The Police have been well covered recently by J. Herlihy, *The Royal Irish Constabulary* (1999); D. O'Sullivan, *The Irish Constabularies* (1999), and E. Malcolm, *The Irish Policeman: A Life* (2006). These cover social aspects as well as police duties, but tend to concentrate on the social theme more. O'Sullivan, for example, gives outlines of outrages and agitation, but few details. Malcolm concentrates on routine and social aspects of policing in Ireland and barely mentions evictions, and then not in this period.<sup>32</sup> She writes about maintaining public order, but chiefly about the early nineteenth century, with little on the Land Wars apart from the use of rifles.<sup>33</sup> W. Lowe and E. Malcolm, 'The Domestication of the RIC 1836-1922' in *Irish Economic & Social History* (1992); W Lowe, 'The Constabulary Agitation of 1882' in *Irish Historical Studies* (1998) and E. Malcolm, 'Irish Policeman Abroad' in O. Walsh, *Ireland Abroad* (2003) continue with social conditions and internal police problems rather than their external relations. S. Spencer looks at the RIC's influence on imperial police forces in 'The 'British-Imperial' Model of Administration: Assembling the South African Constabulary, 1900-1902' (*Scientia Militaria*, 2013). The undercover war is examined in C. Campbell, *Fenian Fire* (2003), and this theme is also taken up by several articles: A. Sharp, 'From Dublin Castle to Scotland Yard: Robert Anderson and the Secret Irish Department' (*The Journal of the Whitechapel Society*, 2006); O. McGee, 'Dublin Castle and the First Home Rule Bill: The Jenkinson-Spencer Correspondence' and 'Keeping the Lid on an Irish Revolution: The Gosselin-Balfour Correspondence' both in *History Ireland* (2007). These all underline the seamier side of the conflict between secret societies and the police, particularly detectives.

Also relating to politics, is Ireland's position in the empire, which is part of an historical controversy as well. T. McDonagh (ed), *Was Ireland a Colony?* (2005) cites R. Munck, *The Irish Economy* (1993) as stating that the Act of Union of 1800 put Ireland into the position of a classic colony, "subordinated as a provider of cheap labour and raw materials to the dominant power", and noting also that the Dublin Castle administration bore a colonial

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, pp104-105 and 201.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, pp112-115.

character.<sup>34</sup> V. Crossman also claimed that the local government structure of Ireland was similar to that of many overseas colonies.<sup>35</sup> As K. Kenny (ed), *Ireland and the British Empire* (2004) phrased it, it was a case of Ireland's "ostensible constitutional equality masking the reality of its colonial status"<sup>36</sup>. Arguments against Ireland being considered as a colony according to S. Howe and others are summarised by S. Ryder, 'Defining Colony and Empire in Early Nineteenth Century Irish Nationalism', in McDonagh's book (mentioned above): Ireland was not referred to as a colony by contemporaries, many Irish contributed to the empire, and economic statistics show that Ireland was not comparable with overseas colonies.<sup>37</sup> A third view is that Ireland was a "mixed colony", in that "the Irish were both subjects and agents of imperialism".<sup>38</sup> This thesis supports the last analysis, with an emphasis more on Ireland being a colony, as evident through its forms of government and the 'divide and rule' policies of recruiting Irishmen into both the army and the police. Stephen Howe points out that many Irish participated in the empire – even those who wanted a freer Ireland – and that the empire relied on collaboration in Ireland as much as anywhere else.<sup>39</sup>

Local history is also an important part of this thesis, but as has already been mentioned, secondary works have dealt with the later period of the 'Irish revolution', rather than the Land Wars. For detailed studies of single counties there are J. Donnelly, *The Land and the People of Nineteenth Century Cork* (1975) and D. Jordan, *Land and Popular Politics in*

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<sup>34</sup> T. McDonagh, 'Introduction', in T. McDonagh (ed), *Was Ireland a Colony? Economics, Politics and Culture in Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2005), ppvii-xii.

<sup>35</sup> V. Crossman, 'Local Government in Nineteenth Century Ireland', in T. McDonagh (ed), *Was Ireland a Colony?*, p102.

<sup>36</sup> K. Kenny, 'Introduction', in K. Kenny (ed), *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p1.

<sup>37</sup> S. Ryder, 'Defining Colony and Empire in Early Nineteenth Century Irish Nationalism', in T. McDonagh (ed), *Was Ireland a Colony?*, pp165-166.

<sup>38</sup> P Clayton, 'Two Kinds of Colony: 'Rebel Ireland' and the 'Imperial Province' ', in McDonagh (ed), *Was Ireland a Colony?*, p235; K. Kenny, 'The Irish in the Empire', in K. Kenny (ed), *Ireland and the British Empire*, p93.

<sup>39</sup> S. Howe, *Ireland and Empire*, p231.

*Ireland: County Mayo from the Plantation to the Land War* (1994).<sup>40</sup> These were helpful in providing ideas about what topics to look for locally, but not for any detailed examination. There are a reasonable number of books on the two counties in question, but none so detailed specifically on this particular period. For King's County (now County Offaly) there are M. Byrne, *Sources of Offaly History* (1978), and W. Nolan and T. O'Neill (eds), *Offaly: History and Society* (1998). For County Donegal there are W. Nolan, L. Ronayne and M. Dunlevy (eds) *Donegal, History and Society* (1995), and P. O Gallchobhair, *The History of Landlordism in Donegal* (1975) – much more of a traditionalist work. Local studies have made a major contribution to the historiography of Ireland, but they always need to be put into the wider context, comparing local details with national, or even international, events.<sup>41</sup> This work makes a notable contribution by studying two localities that have not received as much attention as others in modern studies.

Irish women's history has its roots in the feminism of the 1970s. It was clear that women were often absent from the historical record, but that was now to change. Some works went on to look at famous or extraordinary individuals, and others at women as contributors to male organisations, but many more considered women in their own right.<sup>42</sup> Books such as A. Hayes and D. Urqhart (eds), *The Irish Women's History Reader* (2001) and M. Luddy and C. Murphy (eds), *Women Surviving: Studies in Irish Women's History in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (1990) explain this process. These collections of articles are joined by many others books such as R. C. Owens, *Smashing Times: a History of the Irish Women's*

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<sup>40</sup> Those works covering wider local areas include: F. Campbell, *Land and Revolution: Nationalist Politics in the West of Ireland 1891-1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), R. Kirkpatrick, 'Landed Estates in Mid-Ulster and the Irish Land War 1879-1885' (unpublished PhD thesis), and G. Moran, 'James Daly and the Rise and Fall of the Land League in the West of Ireland, 1879-82', in *Irish Historical Studies*, (29) 1994-95 – but there is consequently less on any one county, and they also cover limited periods of time.

<sup>41</sup> F. Campbell, *Land and Revolution: Nationalist Politics in the West of Ireland 1891-1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p3; D. E. Jordan, *Land and Popular Politics in Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p312.

<sup>42</sup> A. Hayes and D. Urqhart, 'Introduction', in A. Hayes and D. Urqhart (eds), *The Irish Women's History Reader* (London: Routledge, 2001), p3; M. Luddy and C. Murphy, '“Cherchez la Femme” – The Elusive Woman in Irish History', in M. Luddy and C. Murphy (eds), *Women Surviving: Studies in Irish Women's History in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Swords: Poolbeg Press, 1990), pp1-2.

*Suffrage Movement 1889-1922* (1984); M.Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries* (1983); M. Kelleher and J. Murphy (eds), *Gender Perspectives in Nineteenth Century Ireland* (1997); L. Ryan and M. Ward (eds), *Irish Women and Nationalism* (2004); and C. Innes, *Woman and Nation in Irish Literature and Society 1880-1935* (1993). These examine the achievements of Irish women in the Ladies Land League, the suffrage movement, paid work and social work, as well as in their more 'traditional' work at home.

Yet, although mention is made of ordinary women's involvement in earlier agitation and later violence<sup>43</sup>, there is a noticeable gap in that none of these works deal with the direct involvement of women from tenant farming families in agitation and evictions during the period studied here. This is also true of M. Roberts and T. Mizuta (eds), *The Rebels: Irish Feminists* (1995) – the volume on Ireland in a series of books about feminism. In M. Luddy, *Women in Ireland 1800-1918: A Documentary History* (2006), there are only three documents fitting into this category.<sup>44</sup> This omission is also evident in non-feminist works dealing specifically with the violence of this period, such as S. Clark and J. Donnelly (eds), *Irish Peasants: Violence and Political Unrest 1780-1914* (1986) and C. Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland* (1984). L. P. Curtis mentions several incidents in *The Depiction of Eviction in Ireland 1845-1910* (2011), but he does not look for any significance in female militancy, and he does not cover the two counties of this study until County Donegal during the Plan of Campaign. Among more general works, it is hard to find more than a paragraph on women's achievements in general outside of the Ladies Land League.<sup>45</sup> H. Laird, *Subversive Law in Ireland 1879-1920* (2005) gives a good survey of the many elements of evictions, sheriffs' sales and anti-hunting agitation – but refers to "men, women and children"

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<sup>43</sup> J. Cannavan, 'Romantic Revolutionary Irishwomen: Women, Young Ireland and 1848', in M. Kelleher and J. Murphy (eds), *Gender Perspectives in Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Dublin: Irish academic Press, 1997); M. Luddy, 'Women and Politics in Nineteenth Century Ireland', in A. Hayes and D. Urqhart (eds), *The Irish Women's History Reader*, pp30-31; L.Ryan, 'In the Line of Fire', in L.Ryan and M. Ward (eds), *Irish Women and Nationalism* (Dublin: Irish academic Press, 2004), pp45-61.

<sup>44</sup> M. Luddy, *Women in Ireland 1800-1918: A Documentary History* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2006), pp245 and 250.

<sup>45</sup> R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1989), p412.

twice without explaining their individual significance.<sup>46</sup> J. TeBrake, 'Irish Peasant Women in Revolt: The Land League Years', in *Irish Historical Studies* (1992) gives the fullest account of women's active involvement, but even her article only covers a limited period – including nothing before 1879 or after 1882. Perhaps the most important contribution of this thesis is to bring this whole issue to centre stage and, by giving clear examples, open up the whole historical debate.

Finally, since Irish provincial newspapers form such an important part of the primary sources for this work, it would be useful to look at the historiography of their use. Books on this subject tend to deal with the history of the press and its significance rather than the use of the information contained in the newspapers. One of the earliest works on the provincial press in general was I. Jackson, *The Provincial Press and the Community* (1971), which emphasised the importance of local links as the growing market created a bigger interest in local papers. H. Oram, *The Newspaper Book: A History of Newspapers in Ireland, 1649-1983* (1983) looked specifically at Ireland, and explained how the expansion of newspaper readership saw the majority of papers become nationalist instead of Protestant. M. Legg criticised Oram's book for being too anecdotal, and for omitting proper citations<sup>47</sup>, and she produced a book focused on a much shorter period in *Newspapers and Nationalism: The Irish Provincial Press 1850-1892* (1999). Legg sees provincial newspapers as an essential part of local studies, emphasises their political and cultural influence and the government's fear of that.<sup>48</sup> S. J. Potter, in an edited volume, then put Irish papers into the imperial context with *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain* (2004), pointing out that since Ireland could be seen as both 'imperial' and 'colonial' – as previously discussed - Irish papers

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<sup>46</sup> H. Laird, ' 'Ride rough-shod': evictions, sheriffs' sales and the anti-hunting agitation', in H. Laird, *Subversive Law in Ireland 1879-1920* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp69 and 87.

<sup>47</sup> M. Legg, *Newspapers and Nationalism: The Irish Provincial Press 1850-1892* (Dublin: Four Court Press, 1999), p17.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, pp11-20, 119, 121 & 141.

produced propaganda for both sides.<sup>49</sup> This thesis makes another contribution to the study of this period by extensive use of provincial newspapers, which has not been done before in such a concentrated form. J. TeBrake, for example, makes very limited use of newspapers, whereas this work makes wide use of them, both chronologically and geographically.

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<sup>49</sup> S. J. Potter, 'Introduction', in S. J. Potter (ed), *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), pp14-18.

## **Chapter 1 – Ireland, Law and Order, c1870-1902.**

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Chapter 1 explains the political and social context of this period in Irish history, highlighting key developments and themes that will be referred to in later chapters. The central issues of Home Rule and agrarian reform are explained, and the unsuccessful attempts of successive British governments to deal with them are summarised. Conciliation and coercion were both used, to keep Ireland under control whilst trying to bring about change, and eventually even Home Rule bills were attempted – but no policy could satisfy both Irish protesters and British politicians.

The chapter then outlines the Irish administrative and judicial systems, before examining the forces of law and order. The composition of the Royal Irish Constabulary is explained, together with the work that they undertook, and the problems they faced. The British army in Ireland is similarly examined, particularly the position of Irishmen in it. These sections on the RIC and the army are important to help understand how they acted in the circumstances in which they found themselves during this period. The section on the two counties being studied gives background information which will also help to put events into context, as well as starting to show the differences between them.

### **1. The condition of Ireland.**

#### **(a) Co-existence and conflict.**

In one sense at least, the Great Famine of 1845-49 and its aftermath left Ireland stronger. With a drastically reduced population there was less pressure on the land, tenant farmers could now rent sizeable acreages and non-agrarian crime was on a par with the rest of the United Kingdom. Yet these were things sometimes best appreciated by the authorities in Ireland and the government in Britain - among ordinary Irish people discontent continued.

Throughout the nineteenth century there was continued conflict over the ownership of land and conditions in the countryside. The struggle for Home Rule also gained ground, but those seeking more extreme settlements remained in the minority.<sup>50</sup> Few had rallied to the Young Ireland rising of 1848, but Catholics and Protestants co-operated in the Tenant Right League of 1850. From the mid-century onwards, however, most Protestants (especially northern Presbyterians) became alienated from the Catholic majority, although there were notable exceptions. As S. Howe has pointed out, nationalism became identified with Catholicism, while the Protestant tenants of north-east Ulster – for whom the land movement initially held some appeal – were deterred by a combination of nationalist tactics and unionist propaganda.<sup>51</sup>

The British Army in the Crimea (1854-56) still had a large percentage of Irishmen in its ranks, and stories of its later infiltration by the Irish Republican Brotherhood were undoubtedly exaggerated.<sup>52</sup> The Fenian Rising of 1867 had been easily dealt with, but it did at least persuade William Gladstone, in his first ministry of 1868-1874, that something had to be done to “pacify Ireland”<sup>53</sup>. This was further brought home by Fenian activity in Britain, including the shooting of a policeman during an attempt to rescue prisoners in Manchester. The three men who were subsequently hanged for this, became known as the ‘Manchester Martyrs’.<sup>54</sup> The Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869 – freeing the largely Catholic population from the burden of tithes to be paid to the Anglican church - and the First Land Act of 1870 – which compensated tenants for any improvements they had made, and if they were evicted for any reason other than non-payment of rent - showed Gladstone’s willingness to reform where necessary. He also, however, had to use coercion to maintain

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<sup>50</sup> Home Rule meant the restoration of an Irish parliament, whilst remaining within the United Kingdom. R. English, *Irish Freedom: The History of Nationalism In Ireland* (London: Pan Books, 2007), pp207-212.

<sup>51</sup> S. Howe, *Ireland and Empire*, p39.

<sup>52</sup> The IRB was a revolutionary movement seeking an independent Irish republic. They were often referred to by the term Fenian, first adopted by Irish American nationalists. R. Kee, *The Green Flag: A History of Irish Nationalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2000), pp301, 309 & 358.

<sup>53</sup> P. Magnus, *Gladstone* (London: John Murray, 1963), p193.

<sup>54</sup> D. Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2005), pp158-160.

order as conciliation seemed to encourage pressure for more change. Under the Peace Preservation Act of 1870, for example, houses could be searched and firearms forbidden in any district 'proclaimed' by the Lord Lieutenant. The Protection of Life and Property Act of 1871 (commonly known as the Westmeath Act) allowed the suspension of Habeas Corpus for two years in proclaimed districts.<sup>55</sup>

Liberal policy never gave enough to the Irish, and was often seen as vacillating by the British people. Isaac Butt (MP for Youghal and then Limerick) founded the Home Government Association in 1870, which became the Home Rule League in 1873, and he and fifty-nine of his followers were elected as members of parliament at Westminster in 1873 – thus bringing the struggle to the heart of Britain. Yet if some Irishmen had gained from the Encumbered Estates legislation from 1849 – and these new landlords were sometimes worse than the old ones – many more continued to toil in the face of very mixed fortunes.<sup>56</sup> If some stability was reached in the 1860s, it was ruined by the depression of the 1870s – the harvest of 1879 being the worst since the Famine. Even before 1879 there were frequent signs of discontent, whether bullying a tenant on an evicted estate to give up his land, holding a Fenian procession, or cutting through the hose of a fire engine.<sup>57</sup> The names of old secret societies such as Ribbonism and Whiteboyism reappeared to haunt the landowners and the authorities. How far the landowners were to blame for their own problems, and those of the country as a whole, is a matter of debate between traditional and revisionist historians. Many contemporaries, such as Alfred Milner and Major-General Sir Redvers Buller VC, certainly had a low opinion of their attitudes and abilities.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> J. Hammond, *Gladstone and the Irish Nation* (London: Frank Cass and Co, 1964), pp83-131. Under Coercion Acts, a 'proclaimed' district was a disturbed one where that particular law would be enforced.

<sup>56</sup> The legislation aimed to help financially embarrassed landlords sell their estates, and to bring in new landlords to make a success of the land system. D. Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland*, p132.

<sup>57</sup> National Library of Ireland, Kilmainham Papers III, MS 1113, Military Secretary Dublin to Commanding Officer at Kells, 24 Apr 1870 and to Lieut Urquhart 72<sup>nd</sup> Highlanders, 27 May 1870; MS 1114, Acting Mil Sec Dublin to Officer Commanding at Portumna, 27 Oct 1873.

<sup>58</sup> T. H. O'Brien, 'Lord Milner's Irish Journal 1886', in *History Today* (14) Jan 1964, pp45-48. Milner (later Lord Milner) went on a fact-finding holiday to Ireland in 1886, and Buller was appointed 'special commissioner' for Counties Kerry and Clare in the same year.

In 1879 the main social and economic problems were widespread agricultural depression and the hardships caused by the landlord system. The Irish National Land League was formed under the presidency of Charles Stewart Parnell (MP for County Meath) to champion the cause of the Irish tenant farmers, following a mass meeting at Irishtown, County Mayo in April.<sup>59</sup> Parnell's main political demand was for Home Rule for Ireland, but there was little sympathy for his cause in Britain. Benjamin Disraeli was not interested in Ireland, and Gladstone was determined to restore order to the country, but was not converted to the need for Home Rule until several years later. The Land League was ostensibly peaceable, but widespread agitation followed, involving much violence, and the government felt itself facing a possible revolution. Those acts of intimidation or violence which the police decided were associated with this conflict were labelled 'agrarian outrages'. By 1880, when Gladstone became prime minister for the second time, Ireland was in the midst of the Land War (1879-82). The Irish Parliamentary Party under Parnell adopted obstructionist tactics in parliament ('filibustering'), and he encouraged the Irish people to cut off all opponents of the Land League from society ('boycotting') – but still the violence continued. As mentioned in the Introduction, the level of violence involved has often been underplayed, but it is clearly explained by C. Townshend and graphically illustrated by L. P. Curtis.<sup>60</sup> It is now agreed that this phase of the Land War ended in 1882, although that was by no means the end of the agitation.

Parnell had combined with Michael Davitt and John Devoy to bring together the agrarian and political causes through the 'New Departure', thereby attracting wide support, but he was

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<sup>59</sup> A National Land League of Mayo was formed in August 1879, but the Irish National Land League superseded this from October. S. Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish Land War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1879), pp246-247.

<sup>60</sup> C. Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) pp105-180 and L. P. Curtis, *The Depiction of Eviction in Ireland 1845-1910* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2011), pp 81-129.

imprisoned in 1881 and the Land League suppressed. Gladstone continued his policies with a Second Land Act in 1881, which met tenant claims for 'the three Fs' (free sale, fair rent and fixity of tenure).<sup>61</sup> He also sought to reach agreement with Parnell through the so-called 'Kilmainham Treaty' – but any hope of this was destroyed by suggestions that Parnell had been involved in the Phoenix Park Murders of 1882, although he was eventually proved to be innocent.<sup>62</sup> So both sides returned to their old ways, until Gladstone came to accept the need for Home Rule as a solution to the Irish problem, and unsuccessfully tried to introduce it in 1886. Gladstone made a second attempt to introduce a Home Rule Bill in 1893, but the late nineteenth century was dominated by the Conservatives under Lord Salisbury.

Parnell had founded the Irish National League in 1882 to pursue both his agrarian and political aims, and the Irish MPs came to hold the balance of power in Westminster. Crop failures and renewed evictions in 1885-86, however, turned the focus of events back to Ireland, and the 'Plan of Campaign' (1886-91) was an organised attempt to achieve fairer rents. The idea of the Plan was for tenants on each estate to join together in resisting high rents by paying their rents into a National League fund, which would be used for their benefit and not paid to the landlord. Particular estates were targeted by the League.<sup>63</sup> Tenants often took Griffith's valuation as a fair rent, although it was never meant for this purpose, and was made at a time of low prices.<sup>64</sup> The Plan of Campaign achieved some success, although Parnell himself was less than enthusiastic.

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<sup>61</sup> This therefore extended the so-called 'Ulster Custom' of selling 'interest' in a rented property to an incoming tenant. The 'Ulster Custom' had never actually been exclusive to, nor universal in, that province. R. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1989), pp380-381.

<sup>62</sup> On 6 May 1882, new Chief Secretary Lord Frederick Cavendish and Under-Secretary T. H. Burke were murdered in Dublin by a group of extremists called 'The Invincibles'. D. Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland*, p185.

<sup>63</sup> *United Ireland*, 23 Oct 1886.

<sup>64</sup> Richard Griffith carried out survey work for maps in Ireland, and then also land valuation, 1853-1865. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p380.

Although initially ambivalent, the Tories became allied to the unionists and opposed Home Rule once that became Gladstone's policy. Salisbury's nephew, Arthur Balfour, served as Chief Secretary for Ireland, 1887-1891 - earning the soubriquet 'Bloody Balfour' from nationalists, although the Conservatives saw this policy as "killing Home Rule with kindness"<sup>65</sup>. He did indeed make further advances in resolving the land issue, but also continued the established policy of conciliation and coercion, essentially begun by the Liberals. With the end of the 'Plan of Campaign', Parnell's fall from grace over the O'Shea divorce case and his death soon afterwards, the cause of Irish nationalism was divided and weakened by the end of the century. Nevertheless, there were still disturbances in the countryside during what is sometimes referred to as the Third Land War (1900-1910), when the United Irish League attempted to break the virtual monopoly of ranchland by cattle dealers.<sup>66</sup>

The period from c1870 to 1902 can be seen as one of conflict between British state and Irish agitation, but it was also, conversely, a time of co-existence and co-operation. The fact that violence and agitation never completely stopped has led to the suggestion, explained in the Introduction, of a 'Long Land War' – but there were, of course, times of relative peace between the outbreaks of violence and hostility. Although the Irish diaspora is often used to present the Irish as victims, and eventual partial independence as the inevitable will of the people, this is an over-simplification. Irish of all classes continued to work in Britain, emigration was not always permanent, and they were builders of the British Empire too. How far Ireland was a colony, as previously mentioned, is still a matter of debate between historians, in which K. Jeffery and S. Howe feature. Irish recruitment into the British Army continued to be disproportionately high for the size of the population, and the South African War of 1899-1902 mainly reflected continued acceptance of the empire. By 1914, either

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<sup>65</sup> M. Brown, *The Politics of Irish Literature* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), p311.

<sup>66</sup> L. P. Curtis, *The Depiction of Eviction in Ireland 1845-1910* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2011), pp294-295; P. Bew, *Conflict and Conciliation in Ireland, 1890-1910* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp7-13.

Home Rule or unionism was still supported by most of the Irish, and separatism was the doctrine of an extreme nationalist minority – the split often being on a class basis. After the Plan of Campaign, Fenianism was officially regarded as a spent force, and the so-called Army of Irish Independence was not an army at all, and was regarded with disdain – although they were still kept under observation.<sup>67</sup> There were in fact many divisions within Irish society, including religious, social, political and geographical.

Within Ireland itself, the policies of successive British governments eventually resulted in a solution to the land problem at the expense of the old landlords, just as the religious issue had been resolved a generation earlier at the expense of the Anglican Church. In the ranks of the RIC, for example, could be found “the sons and heirs of the embarrassed or utterly ruined landed gentry”.<sup>68</sup> That is not to say that such changes were always made willingly by Britain – indeed, the reverse was more often true – but it did create a context of change against which other social factors can be considered. The passage of Home Rule, eventually approved in 1914, was postponed due to the outbreak of World War One – a delay which proved fateful. From a modern perspective, the idea of devolution does not seem so extreme, but at the time things were complicated by the strength of opposition to it both inside and outside Ireland. At least Irishmen had the vote, on a par with men in Britain, which is more than any women of any class did anywhere in the United Kingdom. Whilst some would always be loyal to Britain and others always hostile, there was in between a range of opinion that might change according to circumstances, including those who were just trying to live their lives peaceably. Given all the divisions within Ireland, it was almost inevitable that any conflict would have the aspect of a civil war.

#### **(b) Law and order.**

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<sup>67</sup> National Archives of Ireland, Crime Branch Special Papers, 5393/S Annual Crime Special Report 1891 & 5921/S Report on the Central Branch Meeting of the INL, cited in the *Independent*, 16 Nov 1892.

<sup>68</sup> M. Brophy, *Sketches of the Royal Irish Constabulary* (London: Burns and Oates, 1886), p3.

Ireland lost its own parliament when it became part of the United Kingdom under the Act of Union of 1800, but in many ways it was governed like a colony, as previously discussed. There was a Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, or Viceroy, although his importance declined during the nineteenth century as that of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, his subordinate, increased. The British government at Westminster, where Irish members of parliament now also sat, worked through the Irish Office in London, and thence to Dublin Castle – the base of British power in Ireland itself. Irish law had been replaced by English law in the time of the Tudors, but Ireland was also subject to specific laws from time to time which did not apply to the rest of the United Kingdom. This situation made it clear that Ireland was not regarded as an equal partner. “John Bull’s Other Island”<sup>69</sup> was a troublesome neighbour to many Britons, and the key to maintaining order there was through the institutions of the law. It should be remembered that whilst some Irish regarded Britain as an occupying force, others took an active role in supporting her.

Ireland had a system of assize courts and petty sessions courts similar to Britain, and judges, magistrates and juries also came from the same landed or upper middle classes. In Ireland, however, this had the added dimension of a mainly Catholic population being controlled by a largely Protestant minority. The Anglo-Irish had been referred to as ‘The Protestant Ascendancy’ because they were the main landowners, and they controlled Dublin Castle and the judiciary. They were regarded by many Celtic Irish as being more English than Irish anyway, but there were Catholic landowners as well who served in similar positions, and who saw their future as being tied in with Britain – the often overlooked minority of Catholic unionists. From 1882, Ireland also had special resident magistrates, which were not used in the rest of the United Kingdom. These were appointed to deal with the increased workload in Ireland, mainly resulting from the agrarian situation, and to decentralise the administration. It is no coincidence that many RMs were British, and ex-

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<sup>69</sup> The title of a play by George Bernard Shaw, first performed in 1904.

army officers. The country was also divided into five divisions, each under an experienced individual in charge of all things to do with the law and criminality, working directly under the government in Dublin. They had to liaise with the police, and the work of enforcing the law fell to the constabularies, supported by the army when necessary.<sup>70</sup>

## **2. The forces of law and order in Ireland.**

### **(a) The Royal Irish Constabulary.**

The Royal Irish Constabulary had its origins in the county constabularies of Ireland formed in 1822 under the influence of Sir Robert Peel (and several years before the formation of the London Metropolitan Police). It became a unified force in 1836 and absorbed the roles of other forces during the 1850s and '60s. The title 'Royal' was granted for their loyalty during the Fenian Rising of 1867. The period of the Land War was a time of drastically increased agitation, with which the RIC had to cope before it could establish itself in a more conventional police role. The RIC was unlike any other police force in the United Kingdom: it was armed<sup>71</sup>, dressed in rifle green uniforms, country-wide and centrally controlled from Dublin Castle. The Dublin Metropolitan Police was a much smaller separate force, organised along the lines of the unarmed British police forces.

By the 1870s the RIC was recruiting fewer labourers and many more farmers' sons – ironically from the class, and even the localities, with which they were now most in conflict. Men joined because in large families there was only work for so many on the land, for a secure career, and to give their children a better chance of advancement. Over 70% of the RIC were Roman Catholic, reflecting the percentage of Catholics in the Irish population as a

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<sup>70</sup> D. O'Sullivan, *The Irish Constabularies 1822-1922* (Dingle: Brandon, 1999), p167.

<sup>71</sup> Weapons were similar to those used by their army equivalents – see next sub-section. Batons were also issued.

whole, and therefore the majority of those also involved in land agitation.<sup>72</sup> Among the constables, Catholics had a clear majority, but in the officer class the position was reversed. Most officers were Protestant, over 20% being British, and the Inspector General was nearly always a senior British army officer – see Appendix D, page 319. Only 20% of all officers came up through the ranks.<sup>73</sup> The domination of the RIC hierarchy by Protestants, made it in the eyes of many an instrument of British domination.<sup>74</sup> Good relations between the different denominations could be achieved, however, as demonstrated by Sir David Harrel, a former policeman and resident magistrate, who was Under-Secretary for Ireland 1893-1902.

The RIC underwent military training in addition to any specific police training and their discipline regime was harsh. The force had started as more of a gendarmerie to keep the peace, although by the 1870s they no longer carried firearms on routine duties, and their tasks had become very diverse.<sup>75</sup> The Dublin Depot was recognised as an efficient training centre, and played a part in shaping many colonial police forces.<sup>76</sup> Constables who did not keep up the high standards could be fined, reduced in rank or dismissed. RIC pay was poor, and the cause of much discontent. Despite this, the RIC soldiered on through the Land War until increases were eventually introduced in 1883. At least they had pensions, which were also improved in 1883.<sup>77</sup> Before that date, the retirement age was fixed at sixty years, the total amount paid out in pensions apparently mirroring the number receiving them in each rank. In fact, a closer examination reveals that there was a huge gap between the pensions of ordinary policemen and senior officers – another cause of discontent.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> W. Lowe and E. Malcolm, 'The Domestication of the Royal Irish Constabulary, 1836-1922', in *Irish Economic and Social History* (XIX) 1992, pp34-36.

<sup>73</sup> J. Herlihy, *The Royal Irish Constabulary* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), p84.

<sup>74</sup> M. Murphy, 'The Royal Irish Constabulary', in *Catholic World* (43) 1886, p321.

<sup>75</sup> W. Lowe and E. Malcolm, 'Domestication of the Royal Irish Constabulary', p30; C. Townsend, *Political Violence in Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p78.

<sup>76</sup> S. Spencer, 'The 'British-Imperial' Model of Administration: Assembling the South African Constabulary, 1900-1902', in *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies* (41) 2013, p95.

<sup>77</sup> W. Lowe and E. Malcolm, 'Domestication of the Royal Irish Constabulary', pp42-45.

<sup>78</sup> *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers*, 1880 (59) RIC Return, 'Law, Crime, Police, Prisons', pp517-525.

Constables usually served in small groups in barracks (police stations), sometimes in very remote districts. They could only marry after seven years service, and could not serve in their own county, or that of their wives. There were no recognised off-duty hours or periods of leave. In their private lives, they were not allowed to vote or to join religious or political organisations. At one time, they were not permitted to enter public houses in civilian clothes or take in lodgers. Improvements in pay and conditions during the 1860s and '70s, and then in 1883, did a lot to stem the flow of resignations<sup>79</sup>, but at the time of the Land War, the harsh conditions were still a cause of discontent. Resignations to join police forces in England for better conditions had led to a Royal Commission in 1872, and eventually to police protests in 1882 – although these had been avoided during the Land War itself.<sup>80</sup>

Service in the RIC, as in the British army, was sometimes a matter of desperation, but on the whole it seems to have been a positive move. The RIC did indeed offer men a steady job in an unsettled age. Many served for twenty or thirty years, well into their fifties. There were, consequently, many older constables in the force, but only a few men were allowed to serve beyond sixty. After long service, but if not yet at retirement age, it became the accepted custom for men to get a medical board to declare them unfit for further service, and so their retirement was declared due to 'ill health', thus qualifying them for a pension. Promotion was slow, and many men would spend their whole careers as the lowest constables. In 1881 77% of all policemen were sub-constables, and only 2% of the total force were officers.<sup>81</sup> Amidst this other cause of disquiet, it is not surprising to see that statistically, Catholics stood even less chance of promotion than Protestants. Although there were many advantages to serving in the RIC, there were also many disadvantages, and to many the latter outweighed the former. This is reflected in the fact that the RIC was under-recruited for many years, often by twenty to fifty men per county. As early as 1875 it was agreed that

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<sup>79</sup> W. Lowe and E. Malcolm, 'Domestication of the Royal Irish Constabulary', p41.

<sup>80</sup> W. Lowe, 'The Constabulary Agitation of 1882', in *Irish Historical Studies* (XXXI) 1998-99, pp37-59.

<sup>81</sup> *HCPP*, 1880 (256) Constabulary (Ireland), p1.

special constables could be recruited from soldiers serving in Ireland as a temporary measure.<sup>82</sup>

There were various roles for policemen, like the mounted section or the developing detective branch, but the majority were employed in the routine tasks centred on the barracks - approximately 11,000 men in 1,600 stations.<sup>83</sup> It was claimed that the paramilitary nature of the RIC was not to blame for the non-detection of crimes, and that their detective work was in fact better than in England.<sup>84</sup> Local duties were often added to by extra work such as attending courts, hunting for illicit stills, searching for arms or acting as census enumerators. The policeman's lot had become increasingly burdensome throughout the century, but barracks could never be left unmanned.<sup>85</sup> Policemen's work involved a lot more than dealing with agrarian unrest, but sometimes they were overwhelmed by it.<sup>86</sup>

The RIC were heavily involved in dealing with agrarian disturbances, and protecting landlords or their agents at evictions. This made them unpopular, and they did not like such work themselves, but they were held together by their *esprit* and morale – although there was obviously much discontent with the situation. At least one constable was dismissed for refusing to obey orders at an eviction<sup>87</sup>, but there was never a threat of any general movement by the RIC against their involvement in evictions.<sup>88</sup> Traditionally, the increase in agrarian outrages has been linked to the increase in exploitation and evictions – in 1880

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<sup>82</sup> **Crime Branch Special, CCS 1875/97.**

<sup>83</sup> **J. Herlihy, *Royal Irish Constabulary*, p60.**

<sup>84</sup> **M. Brophy, *Sketches of RIC*, p26.**

<sup>85</sup> **W. Lowe and E. Malcolm, 'Domestication of the Royal Irish Constabulary', p29.**

<sup>86</sup> **J. McEldowney, 'Policing and the Administration of Justice in Nineteenth Century Ireland', in C. Emsley and B. Weinberger, *Policing Western Europe: Politics, Professionalism and Public Order, 1850-1940* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), p18.**

<sup>87</sup> **Sub-Constable H. Coyle in 1881. See Lowe, 'The Constabulary Agitation', p40.**

<sup>88</sup> **T. Fennell (a member of the RIC 1875-1905) claimed that this was mainly because the RIC were too dispersed in small bodies, and the men could have been easily replaced. R. Fennell (ed), *The Royal Irish Constabulary: A History and Personal Memoir* (Dublin: University College Dublin, 2004), pp105-106.**

alone there were over 10,400 people evicted and over 2,500 outrages.<sup>89</sup> It is now thought, however, that the situation was more complicated than that – the landlords themselves facing rising debts, and tenants trying to hold on to gains they had made in previous years.<sup>90</sup> The extent to which history has been influenced by the Land League's propaganda, and how unpopular the RIC were, are still matters of debate.<sup>91</sup> This is one aspect which E. Malcolm, for example, does not adequately examine for the period of the Land Wars, but which will be returned to in this thesis.<sup>92</sup> There was certainly a darker side to RIC work: gathering intelligence to be co-ordinated by Dublin Castle, paying police informers and infiltrating secret societies.<sup>93</sup>

Agrarian issues were not the only major problems – Belfast was a rapidly expanding industrial city hit by occasional serious riots, and with an undercurrent of sectarian hostility.<sup>94</sup> Duties to cover historical anniversaries were predominantly in the northern province of Ulster. These are still familiar events today, and the cause of possible sectarian conflict. There were other problems, but Ulster was largely free of agrarian outrages at first, due in part to a short-lived period of co-operation between Catholics and Protestants.<sup>95</sup> During the Land War the number of agrarian outrages dramatically increased in the countryside however. Not only did violence increase, but it was aimed more clearly at landlords.<sup>96</sup> Ireland was fairly well covered by the different types of extra duty call-outs, which might

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<sup>89</sup> R. Ensor, *England 1870-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p72; S. Breathnach, *The Irish Police* (Dublin: Anvil Books, 1974), p50.

<sup>90</sup> M. Winstanley, *Ireland and the Land Question 1800-1922* (London: Methuen, 1984), p30.

<sup>91</sup> T. Fennell thought that people understood that the RIC were often carrying out work that they found distasteful. R. Fennell (ed), *Royal Irish Constabulary*, p104.

<sup>92</sup> E. Malcolm, *The Irish Policeman 1822-1922: a life* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006).

<sup>93</sup> J. McEldowney, 'Justice in Nineteenth Century Ireland', pp22-28.

<sup>94</sup> A. Hepburn, 'Work, Class and Religion in Belfast 1871-1911', in *Irish Economic and Social History* (X) 1983, pp33-50.

<sup>95</sup> R. Kirkpatrick, 'Landed Estates in Mid-Ulster and the Irish Land War 1879-1885', PhD thesis abstract, in *Irish Economic & Social History* (V) 1978, pp73-75; P. Bew and F. Wright, 'The Agrarian Opposition in Ulster Politics, 1848-1887', in S. Clark and J. Donnelly, *Irish Peasants: Violence and Political Unrest, 1780-1914* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1983), p194.

<sup>96</sup> C. Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), ppix, 151 and 152; T. Downing, *The Troubles* (London: Thames / Macdonald, 1980), p49.

indicate widespread discontent, although not all extra duties met with violence of course.<sup>97</sup> Agitation certainly did spread across Ireland, and there were noticeable local variations.<sup>98</sup> There were several counties with no employment of extra forces, which might indicate that they were peaceful, or just that any discontent could be dealt with by the regular establishment of police. It may also be that the army was stronger in certain areas, therefore requiring fewer police – there were 20-30,000 troops in Ireland, in up to 600 garrisons.<sup>99</sup> Both County Kildare and County Wicklow, for example, were in the more prosperous province of Leinster in the east – but it is also significant that the major army base at the Curragh was in Kildare, and that Wicklow was partly covered by the Dublin Metropolitan Police (a separate force of 1,500 men). Areas affected by incidents specifically related to the land problem were chiefly in the poorer counties of western Ireland, particularly in the province of Connaught (eg: Counties Galway and Mayo). These counties had the worst weather and the worst soil, and lagged behind the rest of Ireland as agriculture generally improved during the century.<sup>100</sup> The Land War started here.<sup>101</sup> All the sources support the picture of the RIC as an organisation in a time of change and under great pressure.

By 1884, the RIC believed that League related crime was decreasing, but when the Crimes Act was allowed to lapse in 1885, there was a resurgence. The Plan of Campaign of 1886-1891 saw the RIC once more thrown into the thick of the struggle against rent strikes, and even more violent confrontations. The riots in Belfast in 1886 resulted from different grievances as mentioned above<sup>102</sup>, but the evidence about Belfast showed that the RIC had

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<sup>97</sup> W. Lowe, 'Constabulary Agitation', pp38-39.

<sup>98</sup> C. Townshend, *Political Violence*, pp110-111.

<sup>99</sup> E. Muenger, *The British Military Dilemma in Ireland* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1991), p209; G. Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), p202.

<sup>100</sup> S. Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish Land War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1879), pp148-149; M. Turner, 'Rural Economies in Post-Famine Ireland, c1850-1914', in B. Graham and L. Proudfoot (eds), *An Historical Geography of Ireland* (London: Academic Press, 1993), p302; M. Winstanley, *Ireland & Land*, p16.

<sup>101</sup> G. Moran, 'James Daly and the Rise and Fall of the Land League in the West of Ireland, 1879-82', in *Irish Historical Studies*, (29) 1994-95, pp189-207.

<sup>102</sup> D. O'Sullivan, *Irish Constabularies*, pp167, 184 and 192.

many weaknesses, as did the events of the Mitchelstown 'Massacre' of 1887.<sup>103</sup> The 1890s saw the RIC returning to a more peaceful era of routine work, marking the 1897 Jubilee celebrations, becoming involved in sports and athletics and protecting the queen on her visit to Ireland in 1900, including the use of the Crime Special Department of detectives. Fennell portrayed the RIC as a force demoralised by its involvement in the land struggle, but his belief that individuals did not know what they were getting into is probably coloured by hindsight. Policemen certainly felt let down by the government over pay, which had not been reviewed since 1882. There was an inquiry in 1900-1901, but in the end there were only small modifications to pay and allowances and the rank and file of the RIC were bitterly disappointed.<sup>104</sup> Fennell claimed that the discontent in the police ranks was reflected in the fact that, when appealed to for volunteers to go to South Africa, only about a dozen came forward.<sup>105</sup>

#### **(b) The British Army.**

The British army began this period in the midst of a series of reforms introduced by the Liberal Secretary of State for War, Edward Cardwell, from the late 1860s. The Cardwell Reforms affected the whole army from the War Office downwards, and were to have a long-term influence on its efficiency. Some of the main changes at unit level were the introduction of shorter service, the abolition of the purchase of commissions, and the localisation and linked-battalion scheme. The Army Enlistment Act of 1870 reduced service in the army to twelve years – six years in the regular army and six in the reserve, although this could be varied. In this way Cardwell hoped to make the army more attractive to recruits, and also to build up a reserve to enable rapid expansion in the event of a major war. The purchase of

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<sup>103</sup> E. Malcolm, *The Irish Policeman*, pp113-114; S Ball (ed), *A Policeman's Ireland* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999), p85. The 'Mitchelstown Massacre' was the name given to the event in Co Cork, on 9 September 1887, when the police fired into a rioting crowd during a disturbance at a National League meeting. Three men died and twenty were seriously wounded – see J. Donnelly, *The Land and People of Nineteenth Century Cork* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp344-345.

<sup>104</sup> D. O'Sullivan, *Irish Constabularies*, pp199, 205 & 207-216.

<sup>105</sup> R. Fennell (ed), *Royal Irish Constabulary*, p154.

commissions by cavalry and infantry officers was abolished as part of the Regulation of the Forces Act, 1871. Combined with more efficient training, this attempted to increase professionalism and ensure promotion on merit. The localisation and linked-battalion scheme of 1872 combined single-battalion infantry regiments into pairs<sup>106</sup>, with one serving abroad and the other intended to stay at home, and identified them with territorial districts in order to encourage recruitment. Cardwell's scheme combined old numbered infantry regiments, and gave them fixed depots and recruiting areas from 1873. Hugh Childers, a later Liberal Secretary of State for War, took this to its logical conclusion and abolished the numbers in 1881, fully amalgamating the old units into single regiments with territorial titles – see Appendix C, page 315 - and drawing in the auxiliary forces as well. This was also intended to encourage recruiting, and the new regiments did slowly become identified with their home districts.<sup>107</sup>

Critics of these reforms were vociferous in their opposition.<sup>108</sup> Short-service NCOs were considered too inexperienced, and short-service soldiers were thought to need constant drill and instruction. Youths were sometimes considered less able to deal with conditions in Ireland, and Sir John Michel, C-in-C Ireland, thought them “entirely unsuited for detachments more particularly in this country”.<sup>109</sup> Despite a growing temperance movement, improved leisure facilities and education opportunities, British soldiers in the late Victorian period still had a reputation for being drunken and licentious, so discipline was very important. Dividing units into small detachments, as happened in Ireland, could have a bad effect on morale and discipline, for without the normal regimental or battalion structures extra responsibility was

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<sup>106</sup> This excluded the first twenty-five regiments which already had two battalions, and the two rifle regiments which had more.

<sup>107</sup> C. Barnett, *Britain and Her Army 1509-1970* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1974), pp297-298 and 304-310; E. Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army, 1868-1902* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp2-24.

<sup>108</sup> Kilmainham III, MS 1114, Acting Mil Sec Dublin to CO 23<sup>rd</sup> Foot, 17 May 1873 and Col Fellowes for AMS to OC 68<sup>th</sup> Depot, 7 Jun 1873.

<sup>109</sup> Deputy Quartermaster General cited in D Haire, *The Victorian Army in Ireland, 1868-1890* (Trinity College Dublin: unpublished MLitt dissertation, 1973), p70.

placed upon junior officers and NCOs, and soldiers could become obsessed with their own problems. The example of both leadership and conduct set by those in charge was obviously vital. It was felt that new officers would not have the right qualities, but the need for a private income and a decent education actually meant that they tended to come from the same class anyway, even after the abolition of purchase.<sup>110</sup> It was claimed that losing the old regimental numbers would undermine tradition and loyalty. The demands of empire certainly made it impossible to keep one of each pair of battalions at home, and imperfectly trained units could be sent overseas. The home service battalions were not designed for active service, but only as training units to send drafts overseas, and Ireland was not the best place to achieve their aims.<sup>111</sup> Many officers blamed the final abolition of flogging for a decline in discipline. There was some truth in all of this, but the reforms needed time to succeed, and the real causes of many problems were those inherent in the old system: officers lacking professionalism, self-interested NCOs and time-serving old soldiers.<sup>112</sup> The nature of the army in Ireland changed as the Cardwell-Childers Reforms began to take effect. The increase in the number of young men meant the disappearance of the worst habits of old long-service soldiers, and a strong reserve force was established. The localisation scheme also took hold and encouraged recruiting in Ireland.

The majority of soldiers in Ireland, as in the army as a whole, were infantrymen. British infantry battalions were organised into eight companies of approximately 100 men each, with two more companies at a depot for training. Companies could be used as separate detachments in Ireland. Infantrymen used rifles and bayonets, and their officers carried swords and revolvers. Cavalry regiments were organised into eight troops of approximately seventy men each, with another troop at a training depot. Later, troops were paired into

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<sup>110</sup> C. Barnett, *Britain and Her Army*, pp313-314; A. Clayton, *The British Officer* (Harlow: Pearson Educ Ltd, 2007), p135.

<sup>111</sup> L. Oatts, *Proud Heritage: The Story of the Highland Light Infantry* (Glasgow: House of Grant, 1961) (iii), p8; Clayton, *British Officer*, p126.

<sup>112</sup> Marquess of Anglesey, *A History of the British Cavalry 1816-1919* (iii) (London: Pen and Sword, 1983), p33.

squadrons, with three active squadrons and another for the combined cavalry depot at Canterbury, Kent. Cavalrymen were issued with swords and carbines (shorter versions of the rifle), and some also had lances. Their officers also carried swords and revolvers. The flat of a sword could be used instead of the cutting edge during civil disturbances. Until 1902 the British army at home, including Ireland, wore their colourful scarlet, blue and green uniforms on all occasions, not just for parades.

Most of the British army in Ireland was administered from its headquarters in Dublin Castle, with the Commander-in-Chief and the auxiliary and reserve department at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham – see Appendix B, page 314. The Kilmainham Papers of the commander-in-chief in Ireland show that this military department was often tied up with matters of little significance: questioning the length of time spent on patrol, asking why the assault on a sergeant was not reported, confirming that patrols could move more than four miles from their station, reminding detachments in aid of the civil power that daily reports were needed.<sup>113</sup> In 1870, Ireland was divided into two military administrative districts: Northern and Southern, with both King's County and County Donegal in Northern District. After some reorganisations, King's County joined a new Dublin District, and County Donegal moved to a new Belfast District. From 1873 regimental sub-districts appeared with the localisation scheme. At the start of this period, the regular army numbered nearly 200,000, with those in Ireland standing at nearly 25,000, although this varied from then on depending on the current situation.<sup>114</sup> Although rules about how long regiments could stay in one place in Ireland were not strictly adhered to, in theory they were not permitted to remain in the same barracks for more than one year, which meant many costly moves. This was to avoid too much fraternisation with the local population. Infantry units might spend anything from a few months to over three years in Ireland as a whole, but the cavalry always had longer

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<sup>113</sup> Kilmainham III, MS 1113, Mil Sec to OC 40<sup>th</sup> Foot at Trim, 12 Apr 1870, to OC Tipperary, 16 Apr 1870, to CO at Kells, 24 Apr 1870, to various detachments including Nenagh, 9 & 11 May 1870.

<sup>114</sup> D. Haire, *Victorian Army in Ireland*, pp9, 30-33 and 333-334; E. Spiers, *Late Victorian Army*, p216.

postings of four years or more to take advantage of the ideal terrain, particularly in the Curragh. There were clear financial advantages to any area with an army garrison. It was the custom to scatter troops around the country in detachments, but this “was, from the military point of view, an unwise, wasteful and, at times, risky policy”. It had changed somewhat by the end of the century with the expansion of the railways aiding the rapid movement of troops.<sup>115</sup>

The distribution of the troops was determined by three objectives: to defend Ireland from invasion, to defend the capital and other ports and commercial centres, and to control the interior during times of unrest. The last one is the most important during this period, with about a hundred barracks and forts that could be manned, with the largest ones in Dublin and the Curragh, and the other large ones in the midlands and south. Service in Ireland during the second half of the nineteenth century was unpopular because “it smacked of foreign service, with many of its disadvantages and few of its compensations”.<sup>116</sup> The demands on a unit stationed there “were every bit as exacting as those on one on the Indian service”.<sup>117</sup> Accommodation was often poor, training grounds inadequate, and there was little to do for recreation – so drink remained the main discipline problem.<sup>118</sup> In particular, duties ‘in aid of the civil power’ brought long hours on duty, unpleasant tasks, clashes with locals when off-duty, and restrictions to social life.<sup>119</sup> The work of the army was also subject to civilian control, and there were a host of military and civil laws by which it had to abide. The army had its own ‘General Orders’, but in times of disturbance it became virtually an armed reserve to the RIC, without any of the civil authority. ‘General Orders’ were in any case lacking details on important issues such as handling evictions. Troops had to be

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<sup>115</sup> D. Haire, *Victorian Army in Ireland*, pp51-54 and 59; E. Spiers, *Late Victorian Army*, p216.

<sup>116</sup> D. Haire, *Victorian Army in Ireland*, pp59-64 and 79-80.

<sup>117</sup> L. Oatts, *Highland Light Infantry*, p8.

<sup>118</sup> R Evans, *The 5<sup>th</sup> Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards* (Aldershot: Gale and Polden, 1951), p78; A. Clayton, *British Officer*, p142.

<sup>119</sup> D. Haire, *Victorian Army in Ireland*, p2; R. Evans, *5<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards*, p251; E. Spiers, *Late Victorian Army*, p217.

accompanied by police and directed by magistrates, and could be summoned by local officials like the sheriff.<sup>120</sup> Troops were not, however, to be used for extra ceremonial duties such as complimentary escorts to judges.<sup>121</sup>

Relations between the army and the RIC were normally good. The RIC recruited what was considered to be a better quality man than the army – more intelligent and trustworthy - and their discipline was generally good. They bore the brunt of the agitation, and sometimes needed military backup. The army needed the RIC to give them legal legitimacy, but they were also essential for local knowledge and intelligence reports.<sup>122</sup> Both the army and the RIC relied on “informants”, and sometimes the soldiers were the informants, reporting on seditious words or songs.<sup>123</sup> In 1870 two soldiers were congratulated for getting a civilian convicted for calling a crown witness an “informer” – as if to deny that this was how information was actually gained.<sup>124</sup> Sometimes there was a breakdown in communications, and the army suggested that the RIC could improve its reporting procedure<sup>125</sup>, but then the army was constantly badgering its own officers to submit reports properly.<sup>126</sup>

There are many stereotypes of the Irishman as a fighter, and even nationalist writers might see him as “quick-tempered and yet a brooder on hidden angers”, and consider that “the English as a race allowed themselves the singular honour of being sorted out as the most reliable of enemies”.<sup>127</sup> The truth is, however, that many more Irishmen joined the British army or the constabulary before 1918 than took up arms against them. Although Irish recruitment into the army was declining, there were still 39,000 Irish soldiers in 1878 – nearly

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<sup>120</sup> D. Haire, *Victorian Army in Ireland*, pp97-101.

<sup>121</sup> Kilmainham V, MS 1132, Mil Sec to CO 14<sup>th</sup> King’s Hussars, 24 Feb 1870.

<sup>122</sup> D. Haire, *Victorian Army in Ireland*, pp112 & 119.

<sup>123</sup> Kilmainham III, MS 1113, Mil Sec Dublin to OC Tipperary, 29 Apr 1870, to OC Claremorris, 12 May 1870, to OC Trim, 14 Jun 1870 and to OC Tipperary, 23 Jun 1870.

<sup>124</sup> Kilmainham III, MS 1113, Acting Deputy Mil Sec to CO 30<sup>th</sup> Foot, 1 July 1870.

<sup>125</sup> Kilmainham III, MS 1113, Acting Mil Sec to OC Mullingar, 28 Nov and 13 Dec 1870.

<sup>126</sup> Kilmainham III, MS 1113, Acting Assistant Mil Sec to OC Kinsale, 5 Jul 1871 & Kilmainham V, MS 1132, Acting Assistant Mil Sec to OC Dundalk, 13 Jul 1870.

<sup>127</sup> S. McCann, *The Fighting Irish* (London: Leslie Frewin, 1972), p9.

22% of the total strength and disproportionately high for Ireland's population size. Many of them would be posted back to Ireland for duty, where they served loyally.<sup>128</sup> There was an increase in the early 1880s, but the Land War brought another decline. By 1890 the proportion had dropped to about 14%, but that was still higher than the Irish proportion of the United Kingdom population as a whole. Some Irishmen joined up in Britain, but Ireland itself was better covered for recruiting after the changes of 1873. The majority were Catholics, but chaplains were almost exclusively Protestant.<sup>129</sup> It has been argued that Ireland had no great military tradition of its own, except in the service of foreign armies, and that "by the early 1900s most of its soldiers were merely an adjunct of its near neighbour and coloniser".<sup>130</sup> Undoubtedly, many "had chosen soldiering in an escape from virtual serfdom in their native land", but it is debateable how many would have taken to Fenianism if not posted overseas. It is also questionable whether service in the army "left many of them without friends in the land of their birth". It is, perhaps, ironic that in the South African War, Irish soldiers would be involved in fighting a people whom nationalists would argue were oppressed by the British in the same way that they were. A willingness to destroy Boer farmsteads when ordered to do so is difficult to understand, but this they did. Many more Irishmen fought as part of the British army than did with the Boers, although "so far as is known, Irishmen did not kill or wound Irishmen in the war in South Africa".<sup>131</sup>

The law enforcement organisations were disproportionately larger in Ireland than in Britain, but this included nearly 27,000 Irish militia whose allegiance might be questionable. Their training was suspended during two periods of crisis, 1867-1870 and 1881-1882, although at other times their support was useful – as in the 1872 Belfast riots. With the possibility at

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<sup>128</sup> See E. Spiers, 'Army organisation and Society in the Nineteenth Century' and V. Crossman, 'The Army and Law and Order in the Nineteenth Century', in T. Bartlett and K. Jeffery (eds), *A Military History of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp337 & 360.

<sup>129</sup> D. Haire, *Victorian Army in Ireland*, pp274-292; Kilmainham III, MS 1113, Col I Armstrong for Acting Mil Sec to OC Templemore, 12 Dec 1870 and to OC Newry, 7 Jan 1871.

<sup>130</sup> M. Dungan, *They Shall Not Grow Old: Irish Soldiers and the Great War* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), p15.

<sup>131</sup> T. Kilfeather, *The Connaught Rangers* (Tralee: Anvil Books, 1969), pp55-65 and 70.

least of their non-cooperation during civil unrest, the police and the regular army were overstretched in times of crisis, and since they were recruited on a local basis the militia were possibly more open to Fenian influence.<sup>132</sup> Some militiamen certainly used to act as drill instructors for local Fenians at night time.<sup>133</sup> This danger was highlighted by an RIC report of 1896 on the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the Princess Victoria's (Royal Irish Fusiliers) – the old County Cavan Militia. Out of a total of 476, at least 101 were in the IRB and sixty-six were in the Ancient Order of Hibernians. At one militia camp a serious fight took place entirely between members of these two groups.<sup>134</sup> The militia was partly a social organisation in those days when there were few alternative activities for young men, and in one sense they helped to keep many youths out of trouble, but the real value of the militia was in providing recruits for the regular army. For this reason, the militia had to be kept, especially after 1873 – and the loyalty of many was shown during the South African War. The RIC did not consider that there was any serious threat to the war effort from any secret society, and this was proved to be correct.<sup>135</sup>

### **3. Two Irish counties.**

#### **(a) King's County.**

King's County in the Irish Midlands, renamed County Offaly from 1920, was an area of 773 square miles in the Province of Leinster – see Maps 1 and 2, pages 7 and 8. It was largely flat, apart for the Slieve Bloom Mountains in the south, and it contained much of the Bog of Allen. There were several rivers, with the Shannon forming part of the western boundary, and transport was possible by road, railway and canal.<sup>136</sup> According to the 1871 *Irish*

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<sup>132</sup> D. Haire, *Victorian Army in Ireland*, pp39, 42-43 & 75-78.

<sup>133</sup> J. Mullin, *The Story of a Toiler's Life* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2000), p71.

<sup>134</sup> CBS 12184/S, RIC report, 10 Jul 1896.

<sup>135</sup> CBS 20869/S, RIC report, 8 Jan 1900.

<sup>136</sup> *Thom's Irish Almanac and Official Directory* (Dublin: Alexander Thom, 1884), p1102.

*Census*, the population was 75,781 - but like all populations in Ireland it was declining<sup>137</sup>, and by 1891 it had fallen to 65,563. It was noted that emigration had increased during the 1880s, and that more Catholics had left than Protestants – but the population was still 89% Catholic. Nobody born after 1831 was brought up speaking Irish. Of its 493,999 acres, over 70% was arable, and much of the rest was plantation or turf bog.<sup>138</sup> The main occupation was agriculture.<sup>139</sup> The evidence suggests that most landowners (at least 85%) had their seat either in the county or elsewhere in Ireland, and that nearly 80% did not have estates outside of Ireland, so that if they were absentees it would most likely be somewhere else in Ireland – see Appendix E, page 320. There is a similar picture just for titled landlords, such as the Earl of Rosse. This is significant as the question of landowners has been a matter of debate, as previously explained. J. Bateman shows that large landowners tended to amass estates all over the United Kingdom, and so were bound to be absentees from somewhere.<sup>140</sup>

The county was divided into twelve baronies, and returned two members to parliament – see Appendix A, page 311.<sup>141</sup> The county town was Tullamore, a prosperous town with two breweries, a distillery, several flour mills and other factories.<sup>142</sup> Among the other towns in the county was Birr (or Parsonstown), “a municipal market and post town, one of the most fashionable in Ireland ... it is a commodious modern-built town”<sup>143</sup>. It also had a large army barracks just outside in Crinkhill (or Crinkle) – see Figures 2 and 4, pages 307 and 308. This accommodated a resident infantry battalion, and from 1874 the 67<sup>th</sup> Brigade Depot for the 100<sup>th</sup> (Prince of Wales’s Royal Canadian) and 109<sup>th</sup> (Bombay Infantry) Regiments, plus staff

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<sup>137</sup> *King’s County Chronicle*, 28 June 1871.

<sup>138</sup> *Irish Census 1891*, cited in *Midland Tribune*, 17 Oct & 26 Nov 1891.

<sup>139</sup> *Thom’s 1884*, p1102.

<sup>140</sup> J. Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (London: Harrison, 1883). See Appendix E, p320.

<sup>141</sup> *Thom’s 1884*, p1102.

<sup>142</sup> *Newspaper Press Directory* (London: C Mitchell & Co, 1875), p131.

<sup>143</sup> *NPD 1875*, p130.

of the King's County Royal Rifles Militia.<sup>144</sup> In 1884, there were about 350 policemen in barracks in the county.<sup>145</sup>

The county was well catered for by newspapers. The *King's County Chronicle (KCC)* was established at Birr in 1845, with a circulation area that extended to the neighbouring counties and beyond. In 1875 it was owned by John Wright, and was a Conservative weekly which advocated "the interests of trade, manufacturers and agriculture." It supported political economy and the Church of Ireland. The *Leinster Reporter* was founded at Tullamore in 1859, and had the same proprietor as the Chronicle – many of the articles were exactly the same. Its weekly circulation was more limited to the county, and it was regarded as a more neutral publication.<sup>146</sup> In 1881, the *Midland Tribune* was started in Birr as a weekly nationalist paper which also covered the neighbouring counties. It was "thoroughly National in tone, and is conducted altogether irrespective of political parties", with links to popular feeling throughout the Midlands.<sup>147</sup> It would "assert the right of Ireland to manage her own affairs".<sup>148</sup> The original proprietors were The Midland Tribune Joint Stock Company, but by 1892 it was John Powell, and from 1893 his wife, Mrs Margaret Powell.<sup>149</sup> Powell clashed with the authorities several times over his support for nationalist movements.

### **(b) County Donegal.**

County Donegal, in the Province of Ulster, was a poor county on the north-west edge of Ireland, with its western coastline on the Atlantic Ocean – see Maps 1 and 3, pages 7 and 9. Of its 1,197,154 acres, much was used for agriculture or plantations, but nearly half (577,639 acres) were waste, bog, mountain or under water. There were many inhabited islands

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<sup>144</sup> *KCC*, 11 Aug 1881. The colonial title of the 100<sup>th</sup> Foot was due to the fact that they had originally been formed from Canadian volunteers.

<sup>145</sup> *Thom's 1884*, p1102.

<sup>146</sup> *NPD 1875*, pp130-131.

<sup>147</sup> *NPD 1882*, p135.

<sup>148</sup> *MT*, 15 Sept 1881.

<sup>149</sup> *NPD 1882, 1892 & 1893*.

offshore, and on the mainland the land was mountainous and boggy, and the countryside could be very wild. There were several small lakes and rivers. The population in 1871 was 218,334 and the main occupations were agriculture, linen and weaving – with many also travelling to Scotland and England for seasonal work.<sup>150</sup> The picture of land ownership in County Donegal is similar to that in King's County, with most landlords having their seats and estates mainly in Ireland – see Appendix F, page 321. Many titled landlords remained in Ireland, such as the Earl of Leitrim.<sup>151</sup> These are important points relating to the position of landlords and the historical debate referred to earlier. Some departing tenants in County Donegal had the right under the 'Ulster Custom', or tenant right, to dispose of the saleable interest in their tenancy to the highest bidder (eg: for any improvements they had made). The 1870 Land Act confirmed this in areas where it was customary, some of which were outside Ulster, but it remained a demand of the Land League for the majority of Ireland until granted in the 1881 Land Act.

The county was divided into six baronies and also returned two members to parliament until 1885, when the number was increased to four – see Appendix A, page 311. The county town was Lifford, which was chiefly notable for its large prison – see Figure 6, page 309.<sup>152</sup> Further into the county was Ballyshannon, described as picturesque, with a salmon-leap and a harbour, and with a number of small industries including handkerchief manufacturing, lace and embroidery, kelp burning, pottery, fishing, agriculture and milling.<sup>153</sup> There were no military headquarters in the county, but in 1873 No 64 Sub-District was formed at Omagh (County Tyrone), with the Brigade depot for the 27<sup>th</sup> (Inniskilling) and the 108<sup>th</sup> (Madras Infantry) Regiments, and it came within their recruiting area. In County Donegal itself were

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<sup>150</sup> *Thom's 1884*, p1057.

<sup>151</sup> J. Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (London: Harrison, 1883). See Appendix F, p321.

<sup>152</sup> *Thom's 1884*, p1057.

<sup>153</sup> *NPD 1879*, pp119 and *1890*, p171.

the Prince of Wales' Own Donegal Militia and the Donegal Artillery Militia.<sup>154</sup> In 1884 there were nearly 640 policemen in the county.<sup>155</sup>

The *Ballyshannon Herald* was published in the town of that name. Established in 1831, this weekly paper had a circulation throughout the county and the province, and it claimed to advocate the general interests of society, being strictly conservative in principle but attached to no political party.<sup>156</sup> In fact, under the proprietorship of Andrew Green, it was a hard-line Protestant paper that devoted much of its space to attacking Catholics and their influence in British and Irish society.<sup>157</sup> In 1884 the *Ballyshannon Herald* was “incorporated into”, or more accurately just re-titled, the *Donegal Independent*. This marked a more moderate editorial approach, and under the proprietorships of Samuel Delmege Trimble and later P. A. Mooney, it became more independent and “impartial in reporting”.<sup>158</sup> In fact, the *Independent* became a nationalist newspaper during the course on the Boer War, but for most of the period studied this was definitely not the case. From 1889 there was a nationalist newspaper called the *Donegal Vindicator*, which also appeared weekly, but gave a different point of view until Trimble left the *Independent*. Under its proprietor John McAdam, it advocated “thoroughly a Nationalist policy”, and claimed to be the “only newspaper published in the National interest in the four (sic) counties – Donegal, Fermanagh, Leitrim, Sligo and Tyrone”.<sup>159</sup> It set out to include “a series of racy, well-written stories and sketches ... (and to) deal with the various phases of the present agitation in Ireland”. It included a lot of National League reports, both national and local, and was critical and often mocking of the police and the authorities.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Regimental Historical Records Committee, *The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1688-1914* (London: Constable and Co, 1934), pp337-338.

<sup>155</sup> *Thom's 1884*, p1057.

<sup>156</sup> *NPD 1879*, p119.

<sup>157</sup> *NPD 1879*, p119 and the *Ballyshannon Herald*, 1 Jan 1870.

<sup>158</sup> *NPD 1884*, p142; *1886*, p144.

<sup>159</sup> *NPD 1900*, p287.

<sup>160</sup> *Donegal Vindicator*, 16 Feb 1889.

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This chapter is important to put the rest of the thesis into context. It also starts to put local events into the bigger national picture. An understanding of the administrative and judicial systems helps to explain potential sources of resentment, and introduces the question of how far Ireland should be considered a colony. An appreciation of the religious composition of the RIC helps to explain attitudes towards them, and also why their loyalty might sometimes have been in question. It is also essential to see what pressure they were working under, which might explain some of their actions.

With the army, it is interesting to see how their reforms worked out in the Irish context, and to empathise with their many problems as well. The position of Irishmen, particularly Catholics, within the army raises the same questions as for the RIC. A survey of the conditions of King's County and County Donegal helps to highlight similarities and differences that might prove significant as the story unfolds. In particular, it is important to see the line taken by each newspaper, for the local press are central to this study, as previously explained.

The next chapter will look at King's County up to the end of the Land War, and begin to suggest answers for the many questions raised.

## **Chapter 2 - The Land War in King's County, c1870-1882.**

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Building on the general picture painted in Chapter 1, this chapter begins the task of examining civil, military and police relations stage by stage. The examination starts with King's County by looking at the years leading up to the Land War from c1870 to 1879. Relations were reasonable in this county, and so there were noticeable changes between c1879 and 1880, and this chapter explains which factors brought them about. The agrarian situation is obviously the main focus, leading into the Land War, with an examination of the chief protagonists on both sides of the struggle.

The landlords and tenants are both considered, and the appearance and influence of the Land League is closely examined. This chapter also introduces the influence of Catholic priests, and more importantly, the part played by women from tenant families. An examination of two different infantry regiments, one before the Land War and one during it, clearly illustrate how things had changed. This chapter also looks at the tactics used by both sides, and continues after the end of the Land War itself to see if there was any tailing off of activities. Some comparisons are also made with other parts of Ireland in order to put King's County into context.

### **1. The years of peace c1870-1879.**

#### **(a) Good relations.**

Before 1879 King's County was fairly peaceable, like most of the country, and reasonable relations existed between the army, the constabulary and the local population – or as much

as was possible in Ireland at that time.<sup>161</sup> King's County had not been involved in the Fenian Uprising of 1867, and although a wide range of opinion may have existed on political and economic matters, there was no intimation of any major disturbance over the next ten years. On the land, relatively small numbers of 'ejectments' took place - increasingly for non-payment of rent, but sometimes for other reasons, such as a domestic dispute.<sup>162</sup> 'Agrarian outrages' and weapons offences may have been taking place throughout Ireland, including King's County, but there was no sign of any general uprising, although some, like Lord Cairns, feared the influence of the "Riband conspiracy".<sup>163</sup> In 1869, Patrick Brazil was found guilty of possessing ammunition at Philipstown Quarter Sessions, and an inquest was held later that year into an attack on the house of a Mr O'Connor. There was some violent crime, as in the Philipstown murder of 1870, but drunkenness was far more common, and disorderly behaviour as in the case of the Birr woman who "was a 'terror' to the people of the barracks, on account of the glibness of her tongue". The alleged attack by some civilians on a few soldiers returning to Birr barracks one night in February 1875 was put down to a "few roughs" rather than anything more sinister.<sup>164</sup> The Presentment Books of the county did show that some unpleasant trends were evident before 1879. There were several examples of malicious injuries to cattle, crop burning, destruction of property, and dog poisoning in 1874 to 1877 - all of which led to financial penalties for the rate-payers.<sup>165</sup>

In this atmosphere the Royal Irish Constabulary in King's County was mainly involved with very minor cases and "Local Constabulary Intelligence", giving details of individual police movements, was openly published in the press. The names of process-servers were also

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<sup>161</sup> W. E. Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in Mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p208.

<sup>162</sup> *King's County Chronicle*, 6 Jan 1869, 10 Jan 1872, 21 Oct 1875, 3 Jan 1878.

<sup>163</sup> *Hansard Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords Debate 09 March 1871 vol 204 c1628*. Samuel Clark's reference to widespread Rightboyism in the mid-1870s appears to be an error - S. Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish Land War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p84.

<sup>164</sup> *King's County Chronicle*, 6 Jan and 29 Dec 1869, 4 May 1870, 20 Jan 1869 and 18 Feb 1875.

<sup>165</sup> *King's County - Schedule of Applications at Lent Assizes* (Tullamore: Robert Willis) 1875, p42; 1876, pp23, 29, 33, 36, 43; Abstract 1876 p77; 1877 pp18, 23, 28, 46; 1878 pp22 and 41. These were known as Presentment Books.

freely available<sup>166</sup>, and right on the eve of the Land War, regret could even be expressed (according to the *Chronicle*) at the moving of a resident magistrate, whose decisions had never been appealed against.<sup>167</sup> The RIC and the landowners tended to work together, but sometimes the relationship was strained. In 1868, for example, the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Rosse and some friends were arrested by a drunken constable, and another with a loaded rifle – for which the Constabulary Office at Dublin Castle duly apologised.<sup>168</sup> At the coming of age celebrations for Lord Charleville in 1873, it was reported that on his King’s County estates “there live and thrive as contented a tenantry as any others to be met with in the most favoured ends of the empire” – although this may well be the *Chronicle* exaggerating. In 1875, magistrates were criticised for recommending the continuance of the Peace Preservation Act for, as a Mr Stirling of the Tullamore Town Commission claimed, there had not been a single criminal case in the whole of King’s County, which was “proof of the peaceful state of the county”. He moved a resolution against the magisterial decision because of the “continual peacefulness, good order and morality prevailing in our town and throughout our country”. At that time there was only a single prisoner in the county jail, with fifteen people to look after him. Some discontent was evident, however, as the 1870 Land Act was held responsible for pushing up the price of land, and advertisements could be openly placed for Protestant workmen on estates.<sup>169</sup> In other parts of Ireland the situation was much less settled, of course, and the clouds slowly began to gather as another depression took hold after 1873.

There are clear signs that the regular army fitted in well with at least some elements of society in the county, especially the gentry and the middle class. In 1869, Private Benjamin Fairchild of the 44<sup>th</sup> (East Essex) Regiment expressed his desire to marry Margaret Farrell,

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<sup>166</sup> *KCC*, 14 Jan 1875 and 10 Feb 1869.

<sup>167</sup> J. H. L. Tuner RM – see *KCC*, 31 Jan 1878.

<sup>168</sup> Rosse Papers M/5/3, letter from the Constabulary Office Dublin Castle to the Earl of Rosse, 8 Dec 1868 and M/5/4, unidentified paper cutting.

<sup>169</sup> *KCC*, 5 Jun 1873, 14 and 21 Jan, and 18 Feb 1875.

an inmate of Birr workhouse. Marrying local women was quite common, if not actively encouraged. During Christmas 1871, the 25<sup>th</sup> (King's Own Borderers) Regiment held a soiree for the children of the regiment at Birr barracks, which was followed the next day by the battalion marching through Birr with their band – “the townspeople assembling in crowds to witness the display”. In 1873 the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, the Prince Consort's Own (Rifle Brigade) put on garrison theatricals at Birr for the soldiers and their families, “with a sprinkling of civilians”, and when bad weather prevented their band from playing, “the public were deprived of the pleasure of listening to the band of the Rifles”<sup>170</sup>. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Rifle Brigade had detachments at Nenagh and Roscrea (both in County Tipperary), and Portumna (County Galway), but they had no problems anywhere at this time.<sup>171</sup> News of military events was reported in the *Chronicle*, even if it did not involve civilians, for some people in county society would be interested. The announcements of meetings of the ‘Birr Garrison Beagles’ of the 46<sup>th</sup> (South Devonshire) Regiment for example, or the fact that two of their officers had joined the Ormond and King's County Hunt.<sup>172</sup> Quite detailed information on individual officer and detachment movements would openly appear under the heading of “Local Army Intelligence”<sup>173</sup>. The departure of a regiment was often an excuse to express support for the military hence, according to the *Chronicle* again, the 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion, the Rifle Brigade took the “good wishes of all ranks and classes in the neighbourhood” when they left Birr in 1873.<sup>174</sup>

The presence of troops always presented business opportunities for the locals, either on a regular basis for a garrison, or opportunistically – as when the officers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Rifle Brigade sold their hunting horses before sailing for Ashanti in 1873; or when J. Cassidy made a larger area of Clonoghill bog available for purchase for a bigger army rifle range.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> *Ibid*, 3 Feb 1869, 3 Jan 1872, 6 Feb and 18 Sept 1873.

<sup>171</sup> Sir William Cope, *The History of the Rifle Brigade, Formerly the 95<sup>th</sup>* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1877), p476.

<sup>172</sup> *KCC*, 14 Jan, 5 Mar and 21 Jan 1875.

<sup>173</sup> Eg: 46<sup>th</sup> Regiment - *KCC*, 14 Jan 1875.

<sup>174</sup> *KCC*, 18 Dec 1873.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid*, 16 Oct 1873 and 10 Jun 1875.

The county Presentment Books show expenses being awarded for court clerk's duties relating to the militia, the renting of a militia store and repairs to roads at the military hospital, Crinkle.<sup>176</sup>

It was not just relations with the civilian population that mattered, as those between the RIC and the army were sometimes strained over the involvement of soldiers in criminal activities, although there is remarkably little reference to drunken soldiers being arrested. The Inspector-General of Prisons reported only two out of twenty-seven prisoners as being soldiers in Tullamore county gaol in 1865<sup>177</sup>, and 1874 seems to have been an exception, when twenty-seven out of the forty-two prisoners in the county were reported as being soldiers and sailors<sup>178</sup>. In 1875, Private A Nightingale of the 46<sup>th</sup> Regiment was given three months hard labour for fraudulent enlistment – he was actually a serving seaman from HMS Valiant. Local RIC Inspector Gunning pointed out that there had been about forty-six such incidents in the past year. Later that same year, two soldiers of the 46<sup>th</sup> Regiment with bad conduct records (John White and Edward Blamires) were arrested for stealing from a jewellers, and a third (Thomas Taylor) was also implicated. On the whole, however, it was felt that “the soldiers of the 46<sup>th</sup> have upheld an exemplary character since they came to the garrison”, they seemed to like the area and the regiment tried to ensure that there was no misbehaviour by the men.<sup>179</sup>

Many misdemeanours would have been kept within the regiments, as is shown by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Rifle Brigade Regimental Orders Book for 1873, filled in by the adjutant, Lieutenant R. Thompson. It included many positive aspects such as promotions, good conduct pay, education certificates, church parades and details of training, but it also listed punishments

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<sup>176</sup> *Schedule of Applications 1875*, pp7, 8 and16.

<sup>177</sup> M. Murphy, A. Coughlan and G. Doran, *Grand Jury Rooms to Aras an Chontae: Local Government in Offaly* (Tullamore: Offaly County Council, 2003), p181.

<sup>178</sup> *Schedule of Applications 1875*, p12.

<sup>179</sup> *KCC*, 28 Jan, 11 and 18 Feb 1875.

meted out. In January, Private Carroll was struck off the strength for desertion, as was Pte Regan a few days later. Pte James Hackett got thirty-five days for being absent without leave, and in February, Ptes R. Laws and W. Shorter got 168 hours hard labour each “for quitting their post when on sentry without being relieved”. For drunkenness, Ptes A. Brown and M. Tracey were referred to a regimental court martial, while I. Todd was locked up for seventy-two hours for “disrespectful language” to the sergeant-major. In March, Tracey was then given forty-eight hours hard labour for refusing to do the extra parades given to him by his company commander for the offence in January. In February, Pte Bailey was given 336 days hard labour, had pay stoppages, forfeited all good conduct pay and pension, and was discharged with ignominy. He had broken into a colour-sergeant’s quarters to steal some money, and was then absent from picket duty. There is only one case of fighting with civilians in this book, when Pte J. Reynolds was given ninety-six hours hard labour in March, but he had been arrested by a military escort not the RIC. When the Rifle Brigade detachment left Roscrea in July, the magistrates said there was not a single case of a soldier before the bench. The pettiness of army routine, which could cause resentment and contribute to misbehaviour, can be seen in the order of April that soldiers were to stop borrowing other men’s greatcoats for guard duty in order to avoid having to roll their own up afterwards.<sup>180</sup>

The part-time militia, the King’s County Royal Rifles – see Figure 1, page 307 - was drawn from the local population, and this could cause problems of its own. Although numerous in Ireland, the militia were not always judged to be entirely reliable. In 1875, the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Charleville, a former regular army officer, was appointed as commanding officer of the King’s County Rifles - reflecting the contemporary trend for the largely Catholic other ranks to be officered by members of what was once called the Protestant ‘Ascendancy’. Despite his death shortly afterwards in July, the regiment earned a good inspection report that same

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<sup>180</sup> Royal Green Jackets Museum 1842, *The 2nd Rifle Brigade Regimental Orders Book, 1873 (WO Book 137)*, Jan-May 1873.

month. This is interesting, considering the headline of “Militia Riots” which appeared in the *Chronicle* in June 1875, which reported on “the usual scene of uproar and confusion attendant on the assembly of our county forces” for annual training, and widespread drunkenness and fighting. This was reported in a light-hearted fashion, and no arrests were mentioned – while in the very next column, a serious report on the militia assembling for twenty-seven days’ training was given without any sense of irony. In 1876, three men of the King’s County Rifles were each given three months hard labour for fraudulent double enlistment in other militias for financial gain – an offence that “seems to be rather on the increase”.<sup>181</sup>

In all of this, of course, the possible bias of the source material has to be borne in mind. The conservative *King’s County Chronicle*, and any police or military source may have tried to paint the situation as more peaceful than others might, yet without any contradictory information it is difficult to dispute the general picture presented. Despite its problems there was no revolution in King’s County, the authorities generally co-operated with one another, and the law was respected by most people – or obeyed at least.

#### **(b) Focus – The 50<sup>th</sup> (The Queen’s Own) Regiment at Birr, 1875-1876.**

A closer examination of a single regiment will help to illustrate most of the various points made above more fully. The 50<sup>th</sup> (The Queen’s Own) Regiment had returned to England from Australia in 1869, and it remained on home service in England, Ireland and Scotland until its amalgamation in July 1881.<sup>182</sup> Although the regimental history by Colonel A. E. Fyler (1895) typically says that “little that is of interest occurred”<sup>183</sup> during this time, he ignores the fact that most of a soldier’s life was made up of routine, and it is the social rather than the martial aspects of his story that we are concerned with here. Fortunately, in addition to the

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<sup>181</sup> *KCC*, 27 May, 1 Jul and 10 Jun 1875, and 18 May 1876.

<sup>182</sup> It became the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Queen’s Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) – Colonel A. E. Fyler, *The History of the 50<sup>th</sup> or (The Queen’s Own) Regiment* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1895), pp 288 & 295.

<sup>183</sup> A. Fyler, *History of the 50<sup>th</sup>*, p288.

sparse surviving regimental records, and the contemporary regimental history, there are also copies of the regimental journal: the *Queen's Own Gazette*. The latter was one of the first regimental journals to be produced in the British Army, appearing monthly from January 1875. It was first published in Dublin by a Corporal Hunt during the regiment's tour of duty in Ireland, 1874-1878, and contains a wealth of social and personal information.<sup>184</sup> Combined with the *King's County Chronicle*, these help to give an unusually full picture of the regiment's time at Birr.

The 50<sup>th</sup> moved to Ireland from Aldershot in 1874 under Lieutenant-Colonel A. C. K. Lock. It was stationed initially in Dublin<sup>185</sup>, but subsequent moves followed official policy of not leaving units in one place for too long, so as to discourage too much familiarity. The 50<sup>th</sup> contained many Irishmen in its ranks, including Corporal John Cummins and Sergeant John Buckley, both long-service veterans of the New Zealand campaign 1863-1866. A certain amount of identification with the local population was therefore almost bound to take place, and others also liked the attitude of the Irish that they met - one result being a number of marriages to local women in Birr and elsewhere. Officers from various Irish militias were attached for training, and some of the 50<sup>th</sup> joined with the King's County Militia for the queen's birthday celebrations in Birr, in May 1876.<sup>186</sup>

The 50<sup>th</sup> replaced the 46<sup>th</sup> Regiment at Birr in 1875, with "non-effectives and families" arriving first, in July.<sup>187</sup> It was not until September that the remainder of the 50<sup>th</sup> arrived in Birr from training in the Curragh<sup>188</sup>, many arriving by train<sup>189</sup>. Two companies (F and G)

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<sup>184</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel H. D. Chaplin, *The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment 1951-1961* (Maidstone: The Queen's Own Museum Committee, 1964), p143.

<sup>185</sup> A. Fyler, *History of the 50<sup>th</sup>*, p374.

<sup>186</sup> *The Queen's Own Gazette*, Jan and Feb 1875, Dec and Mar 1876, May 1875 and Jun 1876.

<sup>187</sup> *KCC*, 29 Jul 1875; Centre for Kentish Archives B1/217-21, *The 50<sup>th</sup> Regiment Historical Records*, p41.

<sup>188</sup> *KCC*, 16 Sept 1875.

<sup>189</sup> *QOG*, Oct 1875.

were detached to Nenagh, in neighbouring County Tipperary<sup>190</sup>. Regiments were often broken up into detachments to cover a wider area, but this was not always good for efficiency or morale. That there was only one outpost this time was in itself an indication of the relative calm that existed then – when the 50<sup>th</sup> had previously been posted to Birr in 1832-1833, during the Tithe War, they had also had to provide fifteen separate detachments.<sup>191</sup> Training, both at Birr and Nenagh, now involved regular route marches<sup>192</sup>, and drafts of new men from the depot in Maidstone arrived intermittently<sup>193</sup>. The *Gazette* later claimed that: “Birr and Nenagh were ... liked much as Irish country quarters, and while stationed there the men of the Regiment, with light work, and fine fresh country air, enjoyed the best of health, and our younger hands benefitting by the rest from garrison duty ... improved immensely both in physique and morale.”<sup>194</sup>

The 50<sup>th</sup> seem to have made a good impression quite quickly, with the *Chronicle* printing a tribute to “The gallant Half-Hundredth” in October 1875, and suggesting that their “fine band” should be booked for events. Public appearances did indeed become an important part of the regiment’s role at Birr. In November 1875, the *Chronicle* described the 50<sup>th</sup> marching with their band, looking “every inch soldiers”, and having temporarily acquired a goat mascot.<sup>195</sup> Entertainments for the troops within barracks were already well established<sup>196</sup>, but by December, the band of the 50<sup>th</sup> had also begun a routine of playing at the barracks on two afternoons every month, available to a wider audience. The regiment’s entertainment evening in March 1876, including turns from amateur dramatics to clog dancing, was open to the local community. It had been intended to use this event to raise money for charity, but

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<sup>190</sup> A. Fyler, *History of the 50<sup>th</sup>*, p374 ; *QOG*, Oct 1875; CKA B1/217-21, p42.

<sup>191</sup> A. Fyler, *History of the 50<sup>th</sup>*, p368.

<sup>192</sup> *QOG*, Dec 1875 and Jan 1876.

<sup>193</sup> CKA B1/217-21, p42.

<sup>194</sup> *QOG*, Dec 1876.

<sup>195</sup> *KCC*, 7 Oct and 25 Nov 1875.

<sup>196</sup> *QOG*, Feb and Nov 1875.

unfortunately it ran at a loss.<sup>197</sup> Nevertheless, the local people “kindly expressed their friendly appreciation of the services of the Bandsmen, and their good feeling towards the Regiment”.<sup>198</sup> A second performance of the 50<sup>th</sup> “Musical and Dramatic Corps” was arranged for May, which attracted a “fashionable audience”<sup>199</sup>.

Football and cricket were played both at Birr and Nenagh – and both within the regiment and against local teams, which helped to encourage good relations. At Nenagh, men of the 50<sup>th</sup> helped to tackle a house fire<sup>200</sup>, and the regiment seems to have been generally well received after a two year gap since the previous troops left<sup>201</sup>. Articles also appeared in the *Chronicle* which showed a general interest in the 50<sup>th</sup>.<sup>202</sup>

Discipline does not seem to have been a major problem. Although the editor of the *Queen's Own Gazette* admitted that “we only chronicle what is to the credit of the Corps”, he nevertheless felt that “there is now – and always has been – a marked absence of serious crime in the Regiment”.<sup>203</sup> Drunkenness was always an issue, but this was helped by the existence of the Regimental Temperance Society, and it was claimed that there was also an “absence of the pernicious attractions of garrison towns”<sup>204</sup> – although this may have been an exaggeration. Indeed, the *Chronicle* claimed that the 50<sup>th</sup> had “earned the unanimous good will of the civil population” due to their “respectable conduct”<sup>205</sup>.

The 50<sup>th</sup> began to move from Birr by companies in May 1876, first to the Curragh for musketry training, and then to Kinsale.<sup>206</sup> The last company left on 9 June<sup>207</sup>, and the

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<sup>197</sup> *KCC*, 9 Dec 1875, 2 and 16 Mar 1876.

<sup>198</sup> *QOG*, Mar 1876.

<sup>199</sup> *KCC*, 11 May 1876 and *QOG*, May 1876.

<sup>200</sup> *QOG*, Dec 1875, Jan, Feb and Jun 1876.

<sup>201</sup> See letter from ‘One Residing in Nenagh’ - *QOG*, May 1876.

<sup>202</sup> *KCC*, 4 and 18 Nov 1875.

<sup>203</sup> *QOG*, bound Volume I (1875-1876), pp v-vi.

<sup>204</sup> *QOG*, Jan 1875 and Dec 1876.

<sup>205</sup> *KCC*, 2 Mar 1876.

<sup>206</sup> *KCC*, 25 May 1876 and CKA B1/217-21, p42.

*Gazette* was later able to report that “the present state of Birr is highly satisfactory ... the people are quiet and contented, and crime of a serious nature is almost unknown”. Rather optimistically (and somewhat ambiguously), the editor hoped that “the dark days of warfare, oppression and misrule, may have vanished forever”<sup>208</sup>. The experiences of the 50<sup>th</sup> seemed to show widespread acceptance, or at least toleration, of the army.

## **2. The Land War 1879-1882.**

### **(a) Slow beginnings.**

The Land War came slowly to King’s County, as elsewhere in the midlands.<sup>209</sup> It began in Mayo and the poorer west of Ireland in 1879, but later came under the influence of “more prosperous men who had come belatedly into the movement”.<sup>210</sup> Whilst reports of outrages in other parts of Ireland appeared in the *Chronicle*, there was no sense of a real crisis at first, and the paper continued in its usual style. There were still only a few evictions to report in 1879, and when Head-Constable Thompson of Tullamore retired, he had, according to the *Chronicle*, the “good wishes of the people”<sup>211</sup>. Yet things were changing. In January 1880 there was a report on the general distress in Ireland, and some evictions for non-payment of rent. Then the unoccupied Cree House was burned down, and it was noted that “the locality and its residents have hitherto borne an untarnished name”. The *Chronicle* was critical of the Land League, and felt that it would disturb “the cordiality characterising the relationship of the various classes” in the county. It felt that the League would not have any success in Birr, but a branch was formed there and later in the year its ‘court’ was investigating land-grabbing and organising boycotting notices against Thomas Mulock JP and others. Branches were also started in other towns in the county such as Banagher. Sides were

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<sup>207</sup> A. Fyler, *History of the 50<sup>th</sup>*, p374.

<sup>208</sup> *QOG*, Jul 1876.

<sup>209</sup> G. Moran, ‘James Daly and the rise and fall of the Land League in the west of Ireland, 1879-1882’, *Irish Historical Studies* (29) 1994-1995, No 114 (Nov 1994), p200.

<sup>210</sup> D. George Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2005), p183.

<sup>211</sup> *KCC*, 5 Jun and 8 May 1879.

clearly forming, and the Earl of Rosse was prominent in the Landlords Association.<sup>212</sup> The *Chronicle* now reflected the importance of the land issue and was dominated by related articles on both national and local events – dwarfing even the important imperial affairs of the day. Despite its opposition, the *Chronicle* always printed reports from Land League meetings at length. The Land War would be decisive in shaping attitudes to both the army and the police.

## **(b) Land struggle in the county.**

### **(i) Leadership – The Land League.**

The Land League was central to the organisation of discontent within the county, and large meetings were well attended. Throughout Ireland many tenants joined the League, arguably not so much because agricultural conditions were getting worse, but more to protect the comparative prosperity that they had enjoyed during the preceding twenty years.<sup>213</sup> There was a Land meeting in Banagher in January 1881, which at least 10,000 people attended, where more reform was demanded – although figures should always be treated with caution. The town was decorated, there were banners and bands, and even a sort of ‘cavalry’ escort. Another meeting followed in Ferbane<sup>214</sup>, and there was one which 7,000 attended at Cloghan.<sup>215</sup> Although clashes were recorded elsewhere, meetings in King’s County were peaceful - for example, the Land meeting in Coolderry, near Rosecrea, in January 1881. According to one account in the *Chronicle*, the leaders complimented the RIC for their conduct and the crowd cheered. Another *Chronicle* account of the same meeting, however, claimed that the leaders were annoyed by the large RIC presence and berated them – thus illustrating the problem of unreliability of sources. A mass demonstration by the League at

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<sup>212</sup> *Ibid*, 8 and 15 Jan, 30 Sept and 9 Dec 1880.

<sup>213</sup> J. Donnelly, *The Land and the People of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Cork* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp251-252.

<sup>214</sup> *KCC*, 6 Jan 1881.

<sup>215</sup> *Times*, 1 Feb 1881.

Moneygall, the southernmost point of King's County, was held towards the end of January 1881, attracting representatives from Tipperary as well. There were many speakers, and rent strikes were threatened unless fair rents were agreed.<sup>216</sup> A "No Surrender" meeting was held at Tullamore in February 1881, and Parnell, "who is probably at this moment the most prominent figure in Europe", visited a monster meeting at Clara on 20 February 1881.<sup>217</sup> At a large Land League meeting in Tullamore on 13 March 1881, Thomas Sexton (MP for Sligo) "was glad to find the people of the King's County there in such numbers and such spirits" and "he saw that no coercive legislation was able to prevent the Irish people from asserting their rights".<sup>218</sup>

Ostensibly, the League tried to keep within the law. At a land meeting at Ballycumber in April 1881, Mr Michael Carton referred to "Coercion Buckshot Forster"<sup>219</sup>, and exhorted the members: "Do nothing that can put you in the power of the peelers, but shun the man that is not true to you, and when the farms are idle the tyrant landlords will be brought to their knees". On a visit to Birr in April 1881, Bernard Molloy (MP for King's County) urged the League to "continue the same peaceful, constitutional, yet determined agitation." An 'indignation' meeting was held at Cooldorragh in April 1881 to protest at the arrest of Bernard Corcoran in King's County (for an offence committed in Westmeath). A hundred to a hundred and fifty RIC were drafted in from other places in the county and Westmeath – but the meeting turned out to be small. There was, however, a "Monster Meeting" at Frankford on 1 May 1881. There was an increased RIC presence, but there was no trouble. In

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<sup>216</sup> *KCC*, 20 and 27 Jan 1881.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid*, 24 Feb 1881; *Birmingham Daily Post*, 21 Feb 1881.

<sup>218</sup> *KCC*, 17 Mar 1881.

<sup>219</sup> It was under W. E. Forster, as Chief Secretary for Ireland, that buckshot (shotgun ammunition) was introduced for the RIC on certain occasions, as a slightly less lethal alternative to ball ammunition with bullets. He was actually implementing a decision by a previous administration. R Kee, *The Green Flag: A History of Irish Nationalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2000), p382n.

October 1881, there was a demonstration in Birr on the release from Kilmainham Jail of the Fr E Sheehy, a politically active priest from Limerick.<sup>220</sup>

As well as inciting the tenantry, the League did undertake more directly practical work, such as erecting huts as temporary shelter for those who had been evicted, or re-admitted to derelict property.<sup>221</sup> In March 1881, the Tullamore branch prepared to organise relief for a member, Patrick Walsh, due to be evicted from property at Kilbride on the lands of John Somers. It was claimed that “the tenant has been for years paying a rackrent”, and they put up a wooden house for Walsh near his former home when he was evicted.<sup>222</sup> The League also put pressure on officials to support them. The Tullamore branch, for example, called for the resignation of Patrick O’Brien (MP for King’s County), for not co-operating with Parnell and the Irish Parliamentary Party, and for not joining the League. They claimed that the Land League “is now the only political organisation possessing the confidence of the Irish people”.<sup>223</sup> They also badgered Bernard Molloy MP to join the Land League.<sup>224</sup>

The Tullamore Land League also hoped to act against “gross acts of landlord tyranny” and “vindictiveness or illegality” by JPs. The vice-president, William Adams, said King’s County had been “merely a haven for old Whigs” but they had “made great strides in the right direction”. The League dissociated itself from some eccentric behaviour, the Birr branch denying any association with Dan Gunn, who was arrested in January 1881 for ringing a bell through the town in support of the League. There was also some help that they were not willing to give. A Mr Purcell, evicted at Cappancur by Lord Digby in 1879, had since been allowed back as caretaker. He would have been allowed back as tenant if he had paid a year’s rent, so he asked the Tullamore Land League for money, but was told that they did

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<sup>220</sup> *KCC*, 7, 21, 28 Apr, 5 May and 6 Oct 1881.

<sup>221</sup> *Times*, 6 Jan 1881.

<sup>222</sup> *KCC*, 31 Mar and 7 Apr 1881.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid*, 6 Jan 1881; *Freeman’s Journal*, 13 Jan 1881.

<sup>224</sup> *KCC*, 13 Jan 1881; *Times*, 9 Mar 1881.

not pay rents. All of these claims by the League were reported in the *Chronicle*, which would suggest that they were accurate.<sup>225</sup> Attempts to become involved in local administration were not always successful – the League was badly defeated at the 1881 Poor Law elections in Clara, for example.<sup>226</sup> Coercion, however, seemed to galvanise opposition to authority, and several Leaguers were elected as Poor Law Guardians in 1882, including one in Tullamore.<sup>227</sup> Every effort to gain support, however, was also an attempt to drive a wedge between the army and the police and the general population.

One wider tactic supported by the League, which led to worsening relations, was boycotting. In March 1881 there were “Exciting Scenes in Parsonstown” caused by the sale of animals confiscated from a non-payer of rent. On Wednesday 23 February, the sub-sheriff seized some cows and pigs from Thomas Hoolihan and put them in the Birr ‘pound’, guarded by two constables. On the Thursday, Land League leaders and groups of men began to gather, aiming to ensure that the sale was boycotted. Five ‘Orangemen’, however, came under RIC escort to look at the animals, and more crowds gathered at the pound, including women.<sup>228</sup> Major Traill RM and Mr William Woods led in troops under Captain Jackson and Lieutenant Wallace, followed by the RIC under Sub-Inspector Fulton escorting the ‘Emergency’ men – all surrounded by a crowd. There were cheers for the Land Leaguers, but “unlimited showers of abuse” for the authorities. The troops formed a line in the street and the RIC cleared the passage to the pound. After the sales were made in the pound, everyone moved out. There was some jostling, but James Browne of the League “used his influence in opposition to any physical violence”. The soldiers and police escorted “the obnoxious visitors” back to their hotel amid jeering and abuse. The crowd dispersed, but the soldiers stayed on guard at Dooly’s Hotel until 5 pm. When the ‘Emergency’ men left to get the train,

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<sup>225</sup> *KCC*, 3 Mar, 6 Jan and 28 Apr 1881.

<sup>226</sup> *Times*, 22 Mar 1881.

<sup>227</sup> W. Feingold, *The Revolt of the Tenantry* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1984), p157.

<sup>228</sup> The role of peasant women in agitation outside of the social norms is examined in detail in J. TeBrake, ‘Irish Peasant Women in Revolt: The Land League Years’, in *Irish Historical Studies* (28) 1992-1993, No 109, (May 1992), pp63-80.

the crowd reappeared, now jeering Major Traill. The troops formed up all round the 'Emergency' men with the RIC in two single files on the flanks. As the train left one 'Emergency' man was hit by a stone – a “cowardly incident”, and events “most painful to reflect on” drew to a close. The Land League’s aim had been to frustrate seizure sales by bidding low, but the Emergency Committee had sent men from Dublin to push up the bids.<sup>229</sup> This was probably the first key event, after which the situation got noticeably worse in the county.

In August 1881, James Flattery, John Loonam and James Tracy were found guilty of boycotting, by scaring a blacksmith at Cloghan out of fixing some wheels for Bryan Reddan. Reddan was boycotted for receiving money after his house was burnt, and the blacksmith, John Feighery, said: “Take these wheels away I dare not do them, I wouldn’t be allowed.”<sup>230</sup> In September a tenant farmer at Cloghan was boycotted for paying his rent – even though it was 40% below the Griffith’s valuation.<sup>231</sup> That such methods were sometimes successful is also suggested by letters written to the *Chronicle*. Patrick Meara, for example, wrote a letter of apology to the *Chronicle* after his brother had used his car to convey police on writ-serving duties. He “would rather leave the country at once than be under the ban of the Land League”. He promised that his car would never be used for such a purpose again. This is a good example of how local newspapers were not only reporting events, but also shaping them. Ironically, in this case, as the *Chronicle* was effectively helping Meara to get back into the League. Sometimes a compromise could be reached. Some tenants at Rhode had paid the agreed rent at 12.5% abatement because, a Mr Hanlon explained, the League had agreed to that, and “I think it was only right to meet the landlord when he was inclined to act fairly”.<sup>232</sup> This had, after all, been one of the original aims of the Land League.

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<sup>229</sup> *KCC*, 3 Mar 1881. ‘Emergency’ men were Protestant volunteers who would undertake work to assist boycotted landowners.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid*, 25 Aug 1881.

<sup>231</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, 12 Sep 1881.

<sup>232</sup> *KCC*, 12 May and 17 Mar 1881.

It is arguable that the Land League was never actually as strong as it liked to pretend, and it was plagued by internal quarrels.<sup>233</sup> In January 1881, attempts to start a League branch in Philipstown were abandoned, largely because there was disagreement about the choice of the coroner William Gowing as speaker.<sup>234</sup> The meetings in the county certainly made a show of strength, and when John Dillon (MP for Tipperary) visited Birr in March, he called on the League branches to continue with their regular meetings in the face of government repression – “there was no cowardice shown in Birr or in King’s County.” Yet by September 1881 – in the picture given by the *Chronicle*, at least - the Land League in Birr was in serious trouble. One member who was expelled believed that “the structure will soon crumble”, and in October there was in-fighting about expelling a member. In any case the Land League was suppressed nationally in October 1881, although just before that there was a rumour of a meeting to be held at Annaharvey. RIC and soldiers went to prevent it, but in the end it did not take place.<sup>235</sup> So the Land League in King’s County faded away, and the Ladies Land League created to supplement it did not last much longer - not least of all due to Irish male nationalist opposition.<sup>236</sup> By November the Clara branch had difficulty meeting regularly because of strong opposition from the authorities.<sup>237</sup>

## (ii) Leadership – Priests.

The Catholic Church was divided about involvement in politics, but some priests certainly provided strong leadership for the land movement, both inside and outside of the League.<sup>238</sup> Far from being the fanatics portrayed by British writers, priests were often the voice of

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<sup>233</sup> D. E. Jordan, *Land and Popular Politics in Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp269 and 277-278.

<sup>234</sup> *KCC*, 6 Jan 1881; *Times*, 3 Jan 1881.

<sup>235</sup> *KCC*, 24 Mar, 1 Sept, 13 and 27 Oct 1881.

<sup>236</sup> C. Innes, *Woman and Nation in Irish Literature and Society 1880-1935* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), pp111-118.

<sup>237</sup> *KCC*, 10 Mar and 24 Nov 1881.

<sup>238</sup> E. Larkin, *The Roman Catholic Church and the Creation of the Modern Irish State 1878-1886* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1975), pp24-25.

reasoned argument in letters to the press. In January 1881, for example, Dr Michael Bugler, Vicar-General, defended the “peaceable character of Birr”. He denied a report that had appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* claiming that the streets were patrolled nightly by four officers and a hundred soldiers, that several farmers were being boycotted and that twenty-seven people had been summoned for intimidating local land agents. He suggested that there was a malignant agitator, although the *Chronicle* denied that it was any of their staff. He also felt that the law sometimes made a mountain out of a molehill, as with Dan Gunn’s piece of “tomfoolery” (referred to earlier). He claimed that Mr Mitchell, the Crown Prosecutor, regarded Birr as a “model town”, unsurpassed for “peace and good order”. Bugler supported the legitimate claims of the tenants, for: “The tenant farmers are not, as a body, dishonest”. Bugler also sent a letter to the *Chronicle* in April, saying that the Hoolihan stock sale incident (described above) had been exaggerated by the authorities - “What need was there for this tremendous parade of justice?” He also claimed that the election of Poor Law Guardians was dominated by the propertied voters - “Lord Rosse has got the strength of a giant and he uses it like a giant” – although the editor of the *Chronicle* disputed Bugler’s interpretation of Rosse’s attitude.<sup>239</sup> This is another good example of the press being part of events, not merely reporting them.

Priests’ voices could also be heard further afield, as when Bernard Molloy MP read a letter in parliament from the priests of Birr deanery in May 1881, claiming that reports of outrages (in their area at least) were either false or exaggerated, and that the proclamation of the county was unjust.<sup>240</sup> Priests were often in the thick of the conflict as leaders, speakers and activists, and their solidarity with the tenants gave the struggle the aspect of a class war. There was frequently a close bond between priests and tenants, and this heightened antagonism towards those who opposed them. In May 1881 Fr L. Ryan actively encouraged

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<sup>239</sup> *KCC*, 6 Jan and 7 Apr 1881.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid*, 26 May 1881.

boycotting in Frankford.<sup>241</sup> Although Fr Maher, and others, failed to start a League branch in Philipstown in January 1881, Fr Michael Wall later became the president of Edenderry Land League. A priest was among the leaders of the peaceful land meeting in Coolderry, in January 1881, and priests were among the speakers at the mass League meeting at Moneygall later in the same month.<sup>242</sup> Sometimes priests would use their pulpits for political purposes, and this was the cause of one particular incident in Birr in March 1881, which will be looked at closely later on.

They could also be moderating influences, as when Dr Bugler excluded any non-tenants from a meeting in March 1881 and suggested accepting Lord Rosse's offer of terms. He advised "conducting their agitation in a peaceful, respectful manner", although Fr R. Little and others called for a rent strike. On another occasion, however, Fr Little proposed accepting the apologies of a boycott victim, the auctioneer Connolly, after the seized animal sale at Birr in February. Although priests might sometimes be landowners themselves, like Fr Bennett of Ballywilliam near Birr, they were more likely to be tenants. Nevertheless, as landowners they could also help their parishioners, as when Fr Dean West allowed the Land League to build a wooden house for the evicted Kellys on his nearby land. As tenants they faced the same dangers as anyone else, and in February 1881, Fr Patrick Hurley was evicted at Kilcoleman near Birr. He calmed the situation by telling the ordinary people not to interfere, and having resolved his differences with the landowner, he was soon back in possession.<sup>243</sup> It should be noted that many priests did not back the League or support agitation. The recently appointed Fr Monahan in Cloghan, for example, advised tenants to pay fair rents, and he received two threatening letters in November as a result.<sup>244</sup>

### (iii) Tenants.

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<sup>241</sup> *Times*, 7 May 1881.

<sup>242</sup> *KCC*, 6 Jan, 17 Mar, 20 and 27 Jan 1881.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid*, 10 and 3 Mar, 12 May and 24 Feb 1881.

<sup>244</sup> *Times*, 18 Nov 1881; *Liverpool Mercury*, 17 Nov 1881.

The key element in the Land War was rent, and whatever the leadership of the tenants was like, success or failure ultimately depended on the strength of their resolve. Suffering heightened hostility, which the League were able to deflect away from themselves and towards the authorities. There may have been optimism to start with, for in January 1881 the tenants of William O'Connor Morris QC – County Court Judge of Kerry, and linked with the 1870 Land Act – supposedly cheered when he spoke in favour of their new rights at a dinner for them at his ancestral home at Gortnamona. In the same month, however, Lord Digby's tenants refused to pay rent and he refused to reduce it. This led to a move to form a Land League branch at Geashill. A meeting was proposed for 6 February, but it was proclaimed and did not take place, although police reinforcements were sent just in case. Later in the same month, agents for some of the main landowners in southern King's County held their semi-annual rent audits. J. Walker JP, agent for the Earl of Huntingdon, found that the tenants of Derrykeele in Kinnetty would not pay any rents unless all were at Griffith's valuation or less. They strictly followed the Land League line and refused to bargain.<sup>245</sup>

In March 1881, two tenants wrote to the *Chronicle* to thank J. Cassidy JP for accepting Griffith's valuation on the Killyon portion of his estates, and Lord Huntingdon's tenants accepted a rent abatement of 20%, but these were very much the exception. The Edenderry Land League looked at the case of two tenants of the Marquis of Edenderry threatened with eviction, despite regularly paying the highest rents. Rumours of some tenants paying rents underhand were untrue – they could not, as many owed eighteen months rent. There was a rent strike on the estate of Mr Richard Warburton at Garryhinch, near Portarlington. On 11 March 1881 Mr Miller, deputy sub-sheriff, led a force to seize stock from non-payers of rent. This body comprised Captain Collingwood and thirty-two men of the 20<sup>th</sup> (East Devonshire) Regiment from Maryborough in neighbouring Queen's County, and Sub-inspector Knox with fifty RIC. According to the *Chronicle*, although this may seem unlikely, “the behaviour of the

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<sup>245</sup> *KCC*, 6 Jan, 10 and 24 Feb 1881.

people was characterised by the utmost good humour. A good deal of fun was poked at the bailiffs. A dog of dissipated appearance which found its way among the crowd was immediately christened 'Boycott' ". When the cattle reached Maryborough, the crowd yelled at the RIC and there was a threat of rioting. The tenants of Mr Bernard Daly JP refused to accept 10% abatement and struck for rent in May 1881.<sup>246</sup>

On 3 March 1881 a deputation of about forty tenants, with their chief spokesman Gerald Foley of Newtown, met Lord Rosse at Birr Castle to ask for a 20% rent abatement. Rosse was "not unmindful of the difficulties farmers had to contend with", and offered a 15% abatement on the November gale for yearly tenants. He thought his farms were already "very moderately let", and he had also created works which benefitted local tradesmen and labourers. He hoped nothing would "disturb the friendly relations which had existed between his family and the tenantry on the estate". Foley had previously said that Griffith's valuation was too high for some and too low for others. The tenants held a general meeting on the Sunday and Dr Bugler suggested accepting Rosse's offer: "Lord Rosse was not what could be called a bad landlord, in fact, by comparison, he should be regarded as a good landlord". Bugler advised "conducting their agitation in a peaceful, respectful manner". There was much discussion, and some felt that Rosse would listen to individual extreme cases. A Mr Horan pointed out that Lord Rosse "was a resident among them and spent his money here". Fr R. Little and James Browne spoke against the proposal, and in the end all agreed to offer to pay rent with a 20% abatement, or pay nothing. Rosse's Rent Office, however, refused to accept rents on this basis, so some tenants paid with the 15% abatement as asked. At Birr Land League, Little and others called for a rent strike.<sup>247</sup>

While some of Lord Rosse's tenants continued on rent strike, others returned to pay at 15%. A meeting of Lord Rosse's tenants scheduled for 20 March 1881 never actually took place,

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<sup>246</sup> *KCC*, 3, 10 and 17 Mar, and 12 May 1881.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid*, 10 Mar 1881.

but a statement was nevertheless issued by the League demanding 20% abatement and calling on tenants to “resist such tyranny”. Many tenants followed Dr Bugler’s advice and paid up anyway.<sup>248</sup> This was risky as intimidation and even attempted murder could follow such a breach in the ranks.<sup>249</sup> In April 1881, more tenants of Lord Rosse refused to pay at 15%, and none weakened this time. There was a rumour about threatening letters to those who paid, but that may not have been true. Most of Rosse’s tenants had paid their rents at 15% by the start of May 1881.<sup>250</sup> In October 1881, 200 tenants in the county paid their rents, “notwithstanding the Land League prohibition”<sup>251</sup>, although in December the tenants of O’Connor Morris were still vainly demanding 20% abatement.<sup>252</sup>

The extent to which the solidarity of the tenants was encouraged, or enforced, by the League is difficult to say. They could sometimes show solidarity against the League – Gerald Folen of the Land League was ejected from a tenants’ meeting about payment of rents - but at other times pressure seems to have been applied. In April 1881, an outhouse and rick on the estate of P Hamlet Thompson were burnt – possibly because the tenant, Mr Temple, had paid his rent. The *Chronicle* referred to the “suicidal attitude of tenants”, where some near Frankford had still not paid their rents by August, despite a full offer from the landlord, but they were also capable of positive action to help themselves. John O’Rorke, a very old man, tried to forcibly repossess a farm from which he had been evicted, and Patrick Morris did the same with houses and land from which he had previously been evicted at Boolinarrig. In April 1881, William Doorley of Cloghan was arrested under the Coercion Act, and many of his neighbours later went to do all his tilling and sowing for him.<sup>253</sup> Nearly 1,000 men did the same for John Corcorran in May, and 3,000 carts were made available to cut turf for an

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<sup>248</sup> *Ibid*, 17 and 24 Mar 1881.

<sup>249</sup> *Times*, 5 May 1881.

<sup>250</sup> *KCC*, 7 Apr and 5 May 1881.

<sup>251</sup> *Times*, 21 Oct 1881.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid* 1 Dec 1881.

<sup>253</sup> *KCC*, 28 and 7 Apr, 18 Aug, 14 Jul and 6 Oct 1881.

imprisoned suspect in August. Bernard Molloy MP suggested that such examples showed genuine support and could not have been achieved by force.<sup>254</sup>

The anti-hunt campaign of this period is recognised as being popular-based, with little or no help from the league, and it was intended to undermine the authority of the landed classes. In December 1881, the hunt near Tullamore was stopped by tenants refusing access to their land. Later that same month at Birr, one of the largest crowds of the Land War – approximately 10,000 – carried out a ‘people’s hunt’ on land that they had previously barred to the official hunt. In fact the official Birr hunt was later forced to disband.<sup>255</sup> Relations with the army and the police obviously suffered as the Land War got under way, and attitudes were hardened by the actions which they in turn took against the tenants in resisting pressure for land reform.

### **(c) Resistance to land reform in the county.**

#### **(i) The authorities – judiciary, magistrates, RIC and army.**

Although the authorities each had their own role in resisting the movement for land reform, they clearly acted in conjunction to maintain law and order. The courts made decisions and the magistrates carried them out, with the support of the RIC and sometimes the army. They could act ruthlessly in evicting anybody, even priests, and could also confiscate crops and livestock for sale. They tried to control public meetings, and could be intimidating in large numbers, though they risked being ineffective if there were too few. At the Land meeting in Coolderry, near Rosecrea, in January 1881, the RIC kept control, but whether they were there in excessive numbers or not depends on which account is to be believed. In March 1881, however, James Connolly was boycotted and jeered when he came to auction the effects of the late Fr K. Egan. This was not seen as a proper sheriff’s sale, and the crowd

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<sup>254</sup> *Newcastle Courant*, 20 May 1881; *Times*, 30 Aug 1881.

<sup>255</sup> H. Laird, *Subversive Law in Ireland 1879-1920* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp78, 93-4 and 99.

exhibited “the spirit of lawlessness – or as some of our friends term it independence”. The RIC, probably due to their lack of numbers, were merely “spectators of the scene”.<sup>256</sup> At other meetings the RIC presence seemed to be an unnecessary waste of time and money, for no trouble took place<sup>257</sup>, although that may be because it was a successful deterrent.

The Hoolihan livestock sale (described earlier) took place in Birr in February 1881, and culminated in an ‘Emergency’ man being hit by a stone. “Acting under instructions from Government”, Sub-inspector Fulton later issued over twenty summonses for riot to residents of Birr and the neighbourhood. An extra resident magistrate was to come and an effort made to identify who threw the stone at the train. Seventeen were tried for boycotting, nineteen for riot and two - William Doorley and Patrick Colgan - for distinct assault in the “hitherto model little town” of Birr. The ‘Emergency’ men who came were surrounded by soldiers under Capt Simmons of the 109<sup>th</sup> (Bombay Infantry) Regiment, and flanked by RIC with reinforcements. In the end, assault was not proved, the rioters were released on their own recognisance and the boycott charges were not pursued. Dr Bugler sent a letter to the *Chronicle* in April, claiming that this incident had been exaggerated by the authorities, and that they had over-reacted.<sup>258</sup> Weak judicial results like this played their own part in encouraging some to test the law even further.

There were renewed seizures around Shinrone towards the end of April 1881. Sub-Sheriff Robert Whelan, his bailiffs and twenty police proceeded to Clonlisk, with a small RIC detachment left to protect their rear at night. With more police under Sub-Inspector Greene, they moved to Daniel Ormond’s farm in Ballywilliam to seize livestock. This all seemed to have been hidden however, until the local curate, perceiving the authorities’ seriousness, arranged for five cows to be produced. Despite angry crowds including “a fair sprinkling of

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<sup>256</sup> *KCC*, 24 Feb, 20 Jan and 3 Mar 1881.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid*, 28 Apr and 5 May 1881.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid*, 24 and 31 Mar, and 7 Apr 1881.

the voluble sex”, the animals were brought safely back to the police barracks in Shinrone. Women played a central role in all the agitation and resistance in this period, which is often overlooked by later writers. Whelan then telegraphed Sub-Inspector Fulton in Birr (his ultimate destination) for reinforcements. Eventually, police and soldiers, with some local carriages, were able to escort the whole force to Birr. Whelan next confiscated some pigs and other stock in Eglishe, but had to return them due to a legal error. There was then an auction in Birr, with scenes similar to the previous occasion. Police under Mr Fulton, and a company of the 28<sup>th</sup> (North Gloucestershire) Regiment under Major Emerson escorted and protected a Dublin auctioneer and some ‘Emergency’ men, all under Major Traill. A hostile crowd eventually had to be forced back by the soldiers with fixed bayonets, who also had to escort the Dublin men back to the railway station afterwards. In the event, the outsiders were just outbid by Fr John Tuohy and the crowd were addressed by James Browne, a prominent local Land Leaguer.<sup>259</sup>

In January 1881 King’s County MP, Bernard Molloy, voiced the opinion of his Grand Jury that there was no justification for introducing more coercive measures in the county<sup>260</sup>. In April it was claimed that, for the first time in twenty years, there was not a single criminal case before the quarter sessions of the county.<sup>261</sup> However, William Doorley of Cloghan became the first to be arrested under the Coercion Act for an offence committed in King’s County itself. The policemen involved in his arrest and move to Ferbane, and then to Kilmainham, were openly named in the *Chronicle*: Acting-Constable Masterson, Constable Cooke, and Sub-Constables Lunney and Gorman. Doorley was cheered by a crowd as he left Cloghan, and many later went to do all his tilling and sowing for him.<sup>262</sup> The second arrest in King’s County under the Coercion Act was that of Laurence Slevin, a shoemaker of Cloghan, on suspicion of having burnt a house. The arrest was boycotted by cab drivers, so

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<sup>259</sup> *Ibid*, 28 Apr 1881.

<sup>260</sup> Hansard, *HC Deb 15 February 1881 vol 258 c1756*.

<sup>261</sup> *Times*, 13 Apr 1881.

<sup>262</sup> *KCC*, 28 Apr 1881; *Times*, 25 Apr 1881.

the arresting party had to walk two miles to Naas Jail, in County Kildare.<sup>263</sup> The first arrests in Birr under the Coercion Act were James Brown and James Conway (both publicans), and farmer Thomas Neale in October. In May 1881, King's County was proclaimed under the Coercion Act, to enable the arrest of agitators on suspicion. These measures can be seen as the authorities exercising control, but they might also be seen as an indication that events were getting out of control. Sometimes they gained the sentences they wanted for boycotters, but at other times they did not, as in the Hoolihan livestock sale.<sup>264</sup> The system still had to operate within the law, and when a defence counsel pleaded the great poverty of the tenants in April 1881, the judge allowed a stay of one month in twenty-five cases.

The many roles of the RIC brought them hatred from the ordinary people. They were involved in protection duties, so Rodolphus Crawley sowed a field of corn with a police guard in April 1881, on part of the land from which Fr Hurley had been evicted. A police hut was put up at Ballinacurragh in September, for use by the RIC protecting a boycotted farmer, and 'Emergency' labourers were also used in King's County. Fines could be imposed for damages caused by agrarian outrages. Compensation was imposed for burning the house and property of William Bulfin, Poor Law Guardian, at Galross in the barony of Eglisli in April 1881. The agreed amount was £140 – half to be levied from the neighbouring barony of Garrycastle, as: "Incendiarism was rife in that barony", despite objections from M. Horan, another Poor Law Guardian. Unfortunately for them, the RIC lost more and more credibility and was subjected to more abuse than the army. Patrick Egan and James Burke were both fined 2s 6d for obstructing Sub-Constables Murray and Brennan, who were trying to take a confiscated pig to the pound at Moneygall. In August 1881, several men were charged at Rhode with "boycotting and intimidation" by jeering at the police or setting a dog on them. One was accused of asking soldiers if they had any room in their car for pigs – which was taken as alluding to the police. Two men were acquitted for throwing stones at the RIC in

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<sup>263</sup> *KCC*, 2 Jun 1881; *Times*, 28 May 1881.

<sup>264</sup> *KCC*, 27 Oct, 12 May, 13 Oct and 3 Mar 1881.

October.<sup>265</sup> Other reasons for the unpopularity of the police included their shadowing of suspects and the use of informants, about which regular reports were kept.<sup>266</sup> It was an informant who belatedly accused William Harvey and James Glinn of Clara of burning a house at Rahan in October 1881.<sup>267</sup>

As the situation appeared to get more out of control, so the army was called in more to support the police. In June 1881 a sheriff's sale of Moneygall farms held at Tullamore, had to be run by the sub-sheriff because auctioneers would no longer get involved. Fifty RIC and a detachment of the 47<sup>th</sup> (Lancashire) Regiment protected the 'Emergency' men. There was no trouble, except when the group moved into the Court House due to rain. Someone shouted: "Are you afraid?" and the police seized baker Larry Connor, who became "a temporary martyr". He was released soon afterwards. Towards the end of July 1881, a company of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the King's Royal Rifle Corps was drafted in from Athlone to cover a sale of twenty farms at Tullamore. The *Chronicle* questioned why this was necessary, when several sales had already taken place without any incident. A company of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Gloucestershire Regiment under Lieutenant Pilkington was transported from Birr on mules, and Commissariat and Transport Corps wagons, to join the RIC under Sub-Inspectors Reeves (from Nenagh) and Greene (from Shinrone) at Moneygall. Here they covered the trial of fourteen men for assaulting a bailiff and his RIC escort.<sup>268</sup>

Military discipline sometimes slipped, as in the cases of Sgt Harper and Privates Scott and Barry of the Commissariat and Transport Corps who were court-martialled for drunkenness and insubordination while aiding the RIC to transport prisoners. Outside of drink related incidents there seems to have been little hostility shown to soldiers. An anonymous letter to

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<sup>265</sup> *Ibid*, 14 Apr, 8 Sept, 25 Aug, 12 May, 18 and 25 Aug, and 27 Oct 1881.

<sup>266</sup> L. P. Curtis Jnr, *Coercion & Conciliation in Ireland 1880-1892* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp438-439.

<sup>267</sup> Colonial Office Record 904/10/349, RIC Monthly Report on the Subdistrict of Clara, Apr 1883.

<sup>268</sup> *KCC*, 23 Jun, 21 Jul and 6 Oct 1881.

the Chronicle in May 1881 even asked for military bands to play publicly in Birr again, as they had not done so for about a year.<sup>269</sup> In a struggle between the probably drunk Robert Feehan (sheriff's bailiff) and Pte William Middlemass (1<sup>st</sup> Glosters), Feehan shot a hole in the soldier's cap, but Middlemass got the pistol off him.<sup>270</sup> A Peter Hinsey was fined for assaulting Pte Michael Grady of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment while on sentry duty. Yet there were signs of public sympathy for individual soldiers, as when several civilians attended the funeral of Private William O'Shea of the Commissariat and Transport Corps.<sup>271</sup> O'Shea died accidentally, falling from a wagon when carrying the RIC on protection duty.<sup>272</sup> Yet even in September 1881, under the headline: "On the 'War-Path' in the King's County", the Chronicle could claim that: "The tide of war against rent paying and landlordism rolls on ... without ... even the shadow of cessation."<sup>273</sup>

## (ii) Landlords.

In January 1881, the *King's County Chronicle* reported on the favourable reception given to William O'Connor Morris QC, when he gave a dinner for his tenants - an event in "contrast to the disagreeable relations" elsewhere.<sup>274</sup> Yet the *Midland Tribune*, which first appeared in 1881, claimed that this event never happened, and that he was in fact hard on non-payers of rent.<sup>275</sup> Whatever the truth behind this particular story, some landlords were certainly more lenient than others, and some were still regarded as tyrants.<sup>276</sup> Capt G. N. Atkinson made offers to reduce his rents before serving writs, but the *Tribune* considered them half-hearted: "This gallant captain, no doubt, thinks that his tenants ought to starve, and pay to enable him

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<sup>269</sup> *Ibid*, 27 Oct and 26 May 1881.

<sup>270</sup> *KCC*, 8 Dec 1881; Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum folder on the nineteenth century, p62, Major R. J. Gray, 'Recollections', the *Back Badge*, Jun 1947.

<sup>271</sup> *KCC*, 27 Oct and 15 Sept 1881.

<sup>272</sup> *Midland Tribune*, 15 Sept 1881.

<sup>273</sup> *KCC*, 29 Sept 1881.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid*, 6 Jan 1881.

<sup>275</sup> *MT*, 12 Oct 1882.

<sup>276</sup> *KCC*, 3 Mar and 7 Apr 1881.

to enjoy army society.” It was claimed to be bad land anyway, which “would be rackrented even at Griffith’s valuation”.<sup>277</sup> A letter from Adam Mitchell & Son, agents for Mr King, to the *Chronicle* said that the paper should be more guarded lest it “affect the kindly feeling which has hitherto always existed between Mr King and his tenants”. Of his evictees, many were two, to two and a half years in arrears, and twenty had subsequently paid up.<sup>278</sup> Mr Hamlet Thompson, who had faced arson and other outrages, left for England and broke up his Irish estates.<sup>279</sup> This meant “a loss on the district as he was always a humane resident landlord”. When his belongings were auctioned off there was an RIC guard, “some of them armed to the teeth” – but they were not needed. Large numbers of evictions now took place, but landowners faced financial problems as well and an association was formed for the relief of landladies in distress due to non-payment of rents.<sup>280</sup> It was the troubled landlords who dragged the police and the army further into the land struggle which shaped their relations with the general population.

One example of a major landowner in King’s County was the Earl of Rosse. A reportedly shy man, Rosse may have been generally regarded as a reasonable landlord (as suggested earlier), but some disagreed.<sup>281</sup> He too would only compromise so far on rents, so his tenants slowly fell into line. He was on the committee to start a new Protestant boarding school as well as trying to improve the standard of education among his tenants.<sup>282</sup> He was thought to be carrying on his family’s efforts in “advancing the interests and prosperity of their tenants”, and sought compensation for his tenants who were disturbed by a new rifle range.<sup>283</sup> On the other hand he helped to form the local Defence Organisation, and the

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<sup>277</sup> *MT*, 15 Sept 1881.

<sup>278</sup> *KCC*, 7 Apr 1881.

<sup>279</sup> *Times*, 7 Apr 1881.

<sup>280</sup> *KCC*, 5 May and 3 Nov 1881.

<sup>281</sup> *Observatory*(401), Oct 1908; *KCC*, 7 Apr 1881.

<sup>282</sup> Rosse M/5/16, printed circular, Apr 1884 and M/5/11, letter from Rosse to local priest, 21 Jan 1876.

<sup>283</sup> Rosse M/5/8, congratulations from the commissioners of Parsonstown to Rosse on his marriage, Oct 1870 and M12, letter from Senior Commissariat Officer, Dublin District, to Estates Offices, Birr, 24 Aug 1885.

Property Defence Association which provided help to the boycotted.<sup>284</sup> The Rosse family were helped by astute marriages and amassing estates in Yorkshire, but the earl came top of the list for local subscriptions to the new landlord defence organisations.<sup>285</sup> He also managed the subscriptions from other landowners in the county.<sup>286</sup> Clearly, it is not true that Rosse never had any disagreement with his tenants, as was later claimed, but he was certainly never “afraid to move freely and without police protection about his estates”.<sup>287</sup> His estates ledger clearly shows how arrears on his lands across Ireland rose from £6,384 in 1878 to £9,856 in 1881.<sup>288</sup>

#### **(d) Tactics**

##### **(i) Resistance, boycotting, intimidation and outrages.**

The strategy of the Land War has been outlined above, but what about the tactics of the conflict? There was resistance to evictions, which will be examined later, and boycotting, which has been covered above, but it is useful to see here what the implications of these types of actions could be, serving to worsen relations with the authorities. John, Lucy and Catherine Gunning of Clondelara on Lord Ashtown’s estate, were arrested and put in Birr Bridewell charged with assault on bailiff Henry Boyd. They had previously been in trouble with the law, and on this occasion supposedly made Boyd swear that he would not serve a document on them, before stealing a writ.<sup>289</sup> A process server was attacked at Cornalour, and women were again to the fore. The process server, Mr Gilmor, was jeered by women, pelted with mud and assaulted by a man and his family. Six women were each imprisoned for a month for this attack. The magistrate, L’Estrange, claimed that “the cowardly

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<sup>284</sup> *KCC*, 3 and 24 Nov 1881.

<sup>285</sup> Rosse M/5/15-1, list of subscriptions to Parsonstown Defence Association, pre-Dec 1882.

<sup>286</sup> Rosse M/5/15-2 to M/5/15-5, papers relating to payments to the PDA from other landowners in the county, 1882.

<sup>287</sup> *World*, 14 Sep 1898.

<sup>288</sup> Rosse Q132, Estates Rental and Account Ledger, 1879 and Q134, Estates Rental and Account Ledger, 1881.

<sup>289</sup> *KCC*, 24 Mar 1881; *Times*, 18 Mar 1881.

originators have a great habit of putting the women to the front”, thinking that they would get away with more. An aunt of Mr Hamilton, the landlord, had previously served a writ herself to another tenant, and had been shot within nine days. In October 1881 there were two cases at County Court – one for assault and actual bodily harm, one for assault on a peace officer in the execution of his duty. The county now had “a record of crime and outrage – outrages of the basest character”.<sup>290</sup> Eventually, process servers in King’s County refused to serve eviction notices at all as it was considered too dangerous.

When the auctioneer Connolly was boycotted at Cloghan after the animal sale at Birr in February there was some disturbance. The magistrates feared that King’s County would be proclaimed – “an event which would be extremely unpleasant for them all.” In fact, King’s County was proclaimed the following month anyway, but boycotting continued, exhibiting considerable pettiness. In June 1881, there was a boycott of the sale in Birr of a horse seized for a shop debt. Someone shouted: “Let no man bid!”, so the bailiff bought the horse himself to avoid total failure. When John Dunne stopped John Kennedy selling cabbages belonging to William Marshall JP in Birr market square, he got one month’s hard labour. Adam Mitchell, prosecutor, said Birr “from being one of the best had come to be one of the worst conducted towns in Ireland”. In October 1881, a man from Doon was shot for carrying oats for a boycotted farmer. In November, John Farrington was beaten up for playing cricket for a boycotted club. The RIC made two arrests but were hindered by a crowd.<sup>291</sup> In all this it was becoming clear that ordinary people were the main victims of the Land War, not the landlords or the authorities.

There were also countless examples of intimidation and ‘agrarian outrages’ in King’s County, until the *Chronicle* was forced to remark that “the condition of the King’s County is such as no peace loving, not to say loyal, man could desire”. It is impossible to judge exactly how

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<sup>290</sup> *KCC*, 2 and 9 Jun, and 13 Oct 1881.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid*, 7 Apr, 23 Jun, 13 Oct and 3 Nov 1881.

important these outrages were, and what part the League may have played in them, but the sheer number suggests that they were a significant part of the Land War, and not everyone challenged the authorities willingly. They played an important part in worsening relations with the authorities, especially the RIC. Most intimidation took the form of threatening letters or posters, but this would have been unpleasant enough. In April 1881, an anonymous letter to the *Chronicle* said that three threatening letters had been sent to poor labourers in Coolderry. They were told to stop working for their landlord, or 'Rory of the Hills' would call, and pictures of coffins were included. The landlord, Major Palmer, was in Austria and the paper ironically noted that he "is well repaid for his kindness now". More letters and threatening notes continued to appear throughout the year. There was also "malicious bill posting" and many no-rent notices and threatening notices were put up around the county.<sup>292</sup>

Animals were all too often abused to intimidate their owners, an old tactic in rural Ireland.<sup>293</sup> In an important sheep-producing area like King's County, mutilating these animals had an economic edge to it<sup>294</sup>, but attacking pets made matters more personal. A dog of Major Traill RM was poisoned at Birr by "irresponsible cowards", and the town was charged £10 for this as a presentment. "Malicious injuries at Frankford" in May 1881, included dog shooting, window smashing, house burning, dog poisoning and sending threatening letters. The *Chronicle* commented that this was evidence of "a species of ruffianism that unfortunately the inhabitants of the district in which it occurred are becoming too well familiarised with."<sup>295</sup> Sometimes 'Captain Moonlight' would need to acquire weapons, although T. P. O'Connor (nationalist MP for Galway) claimed that there was only one case of using a firearm in King's County in recent records – and only ten in the whole of Leinster, as compared with thirty-two

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<sup>292</sup> *Ibid*, 13 Oct, 7 Apr, 7 Jul, 17 Nov and 3 Nov 1881.

<sup>293</sup> S. J. Connolly (Ed), 'Agrarian Protest', in *The Oxford Companion to Irish History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p5.

<sup>294</sup> S. Clark, *Irish Land War*, p111.

<sup>295</sup> *KCC*, 12 May and 23 Jun 1881.

in Connaught and thirty-seven in Munster.<sup>296</sup> There was, however, “alleged Whiteboyism in King’s County” on the night of 7 January 1881. William Carroll, Denis Kennedy, Patrick Kennedy and John Bergin were later accused in absentia at Rosecrea petty sessions (County Tipperary) of being “armed with firearms and having their faces disguised”, and that they did “rise and assemble to the terror of Her Majesty’s subjects” at several places in the county between Kinnetty and Rosecrea, attacking houses and stealing weapons. Three of the accused had already fled the country, but Bergin was beaten up by unknown parties, and he later died from his injuries.<sup>297</sup> Martin Murphy, the son of a farmer was later charged with Bergin’s murder, but acquitted.<sup>298</sup> The other three raiders were later arrested in Manchester and brought back to Birr. In land agitation the “district of Birr was exceptionally quiet”, avoiding excesses, but with the suppression of the Land League in October 1881, other parts of the county were deprived of moderating influences, and this did lead to outrages.<sup>299</sup>

Landlords’ property also came under attack. In April 1881, Cornamona House, the property of P. Hamlet Thompson was burned down, as were an outhouse and rick also on his estate. In the same month, several houses and buildings were set alight - William Marshall on the estate of J. G. King was targeted for “the great modern crime of having paid his rent”. In early May 1881 there was a sale of confiscated cattle at Clonlisk. A crowd of a couple of hundred went to Clonlisk House, residence of the landlord H. J. Maunsell, who had been ill for several years. Here, “to their discredit”, they smashed thirty panes of glass. There were “very strong feelings of disgust even among supporters of the present agitation”, and they knew that such things got them a bad reputation. The shrubbery of William O’Connor Morris (County Court Judge for Kerry) was burnt at Gortnamona, and incendiarism resumed in the Cloghan area in June 1881.<sup>300</sup> The *Times* observed that King’s County had “obtained

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<sup>296</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 01 March 1881 vol 258 c2000.*

<sup>297</sup> *KCC, 24 Feb and 3 Mar 1881.*

<sup>298</sup> *KCC, 24 Mar 1881; Hampshire Advertiser, 19 Mar 1881.*

<sup>299</sup> *MT, 31 Mar 1881 and 17 Aug 1882.*

<sup>300</sup> *KCC, 7 and 28 Apr, 5 and 12 May, and 2 Jun 1881.*

special notoriety for the burning of farmhouses”, and claimed that this was still on the increase in October.<sup>301</sup> The home of William Robinson, on the Rosse estate at Ballywilliam, was pelted with stones and glass broken. This was either because he had not joined the League, or because he was the brother-in-law of a man who had previously issued an apology to Moneygall Land League.<sup>302</sup> Burnings continued throughout the year<sup>303</sup>, although the houses were not always inhabited.<sup>304</sup>

Personal threats and attacks were even more intimidating. Following a complaint by bailiff J. Gleeson, Michael and Timothy Flaherty were summoned for “threatening to blow out his brains” for serving writs. Seventeen men were indicted for “having riotously and unlawfully assembled” at Clara railway station to intimidate Mr Charles S. Dudgeon, who had previously been fired at in Longford. He had to walk to Tullamore guarded by RIC. Most pleaded guilty and they were let out on their own £10 recognisances. In June 1881, a labourer called Lanigan was met in a field near Emill by two men with blackened faces, who warned him not to work any more for a certain person under a League ban. He ignored them, but got an RIC escort from then on. Ten constables were reported as doing the same “painful duty” in that area. James Dempsey had been working on land that had been “given up some time ago” when a crowd of women told him to stop. He went to Clara to seek RIC help, but was followed by a mob which cornered him in a house, broke in and assaulted him. Sub-Constable King was on his own, but telegraphed Tullamore for help. RIC and soldiers later arrived and Capt L’Estrange “had to threaten to have them (the crowd) dispersed with the bayonet”. L’Estrange thought that Dempsey had been over-acting, but Maurice Murray and Kate Kerrans both got one month’s hard labour. The magistrate called it a “most scandalous outrage”, and claimed that the women “had degraded themselves.”<sup>305</sup> A lady

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<sup>301</sup> *Times*, 27 Jun and 6 Oct 1881.

<sup>302</sup> *KCC*, 7 Jul 1881.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid*, 7 Jul, 11 Aug, 10 Nov, and 8 Dec 1881.

<sup>304</sup> *KCC*, 13 Oct 1881.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid*, 17 Mar, 23 Jun and 6 Oct 1881.

from the barony of Clonlisk wrote that “we are quite defenceless here”. Her husband was ill in bed, and over the previous few months there had been shots fired into her house, and windows broken there and in those of her workers. Nobody would mend the windows, and blacksmith work could only be done “by intrigue”.<sup>306</sup>

Eventually, in October 1881, somebody died in an outrage. Young farmer Patrick Leary, from near Rathmore, was warned by a group of forty disguised men not to pay rent, but he was shot and killed. Even then the outrages did not stop. There was firing into the house of Henry Maunsell, Clonlisk, and also of his caretaker, and the attempted murder of W. F. Digby JP, land agent over Charleville property – who was shot and wounded.<sup>307</sup> Police returns recorded a total of two cases of firing into houses in King’s County during 1880, and the same again in 1881, plus two cases of shooting at an individual.<sup>308</sup> The RIC strangely claimed that there were no fatalities in King’s County during 1881, but in any case things were worse across the rest of Ireland where there were twenty-two cases of homicide.<sup>309</sup> Police reports reveal that efforts were always being made to track down those with illegal weapons. In 1881, for example, one Feighery fled to America after a box of arms heading for him was seized by the RIC.<sup>310</sup>

## **(ii) Evictions.**

The main weapon in the armoury of the authorities was eviction, or ejection – from which nobody was safe. It was also the main cause of hatred towards the authorities. Only four families were evicted in King’s County during the first quarter of 1881<sup>311</sup>, but at the Easter sessions of 1881, fifty-one evictions were approved within the county, although this was

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<sup>306</sup> Rosse M/6, copy of a letter from a lady from Clonlisk to a Mr Walker, 27 Oct 1881.

<sup>307</sup> KCC, 13 and 27 Oct, and 24 Nov 1881.

<sup>308</sup> CO 904/10/190, RIC Return of Outrages, Eastern Division, 10 Oct 1882.

<sup>309</sup> *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers 1882 (8), Agrarian Offences(Counties)(Ireland)*, p2. This seems to ignore the case of Patrick Leary.

<sup>310</sup> CO 904/10/47, report by Sgt James Dolan RIC, 9 Aug 1884.

<sup>311</sup> *HCPP 1881 (285), Evictions (Ireland)*.

small compared with elsewhere in Ireland – See Table 1.1, page 99.<sup>312</sup> As was often the case, however, fewer evictions were actually carried out than were authorised – a point often made by revisionist historians. The RIC return for the second quarter recorded only ten families evicted in the county, two of whom were re-admitted as caretakers.<sup>313</sup> On 23 February 1881, Fr Patrick Hurley was evicted at Kilcoleman near Birr. Trouble had been expected, so Major Traill RM was accompanied by Sub-Inspector Fulton and nearly eighty constables, as well as by Major Emerson and nearly a hundred men of the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment. In the event there was no disturbance, as the priest had told the people not to interfere, and having resolved his differences with the landowner, he was soon back in possession. Hurley wrote to the *Chronicle*: “When such acts of unwisdom are being enacted at our door, all I pray for is, may God defend the poor”. Adam Mitchell & Son (representing the landlord) refuted Fr Hurley’s arguments about his eviction, but the priest wrote to the *Chronicle* again, explaining that he could not afford to pay for any defence against his writ. He saw his eviction as a way of subduing the ordinary people: “It was a great stroke of genius at the present time to evict a priest”. One hundred soldiers and officers of the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment and sixty RIC had been there “to awe them (his congregation) into submission in the most peaceable and law abiding district in the World”. He claimed: “It is well known that the soldiers and the constabulary were ashamed to have taken part in the brutal act of this eviction”.<sup>314</sup> This is a good example of the press being used to try to influence attitudes.

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<sup>312</sup> *HCPP 1881 (238), Landlord and Tenant (Ireland)*. In Leinster, Longford had the most with 185, but most counties in Munster and all in Ulster and Connaught exceeded King’s County. Donegal had the most with 289. (See Table 1.1, p99).

<sup>313</sup> *HCPP 1881 (320), Evictions (Ireland)*. The largest number of actual evictions was 126 in County Tyrone.

<sup>314</sup> *KCC*, 24 Feb, 3 and 10 Mar 1881.

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**TABLE 1.1 - Total number of ejectment decrees across Ireland granted at Easter Sessions 1881**

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Province	County	Total
<b>Leinster</b>		<b>510</b>
	Carlow	34
	Dublin	24
	Kildare	11
	Kilkenny	38
	King's County	51
	Longford	185
	Louth	14
	Meath	29
	Queen's County	30
	Westmeath	30
	Wexford	37
	Wicklow	21
<b>Munster</b>		<b>471</b>
	Kerry (largest number)	100
<b>Ulster</b>		<b>1287</b>
	Donegal (largest number)	289
<b>Connaught</b>		<b>735</b>
	Galway (largest number)	226

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*Source: HCPP 1881 (238) Landlord & Tenant (Ireland)*

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Reported at the same time was the “legal eviction of old Mrs King, blind and aged 80 years”. At the end of May 1881 a company of the 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment from Tullamore, and eighty RIC from various stations in the county, marched to Rahan. Trouble was expected at the eviction of Margaret Byrne, an old woman who owed two years’ rent worth £8. A crowd of about 300 men and women surrounded the house, but dispersed after Captain L’Estrange RM read the Riot Act. The woman turned down the offer of becoming caretaker, and the paper noted that “Mr Sherlock is acknowledged to be a really indulgent landlord”. J. Lynam, the President of

the Rahan League, was present. He had been given summonses for two alleged intimidations on previous attempts to collect Byrne's rent.<sup>315</sup>

In September 1881, "an uncommonly large body" of RIC gathered in Birr for an eviction raid, but their target was kept secret to avoid a clash. They set off in army wagons followed by Sub-Sheriff Whelan and his bailiffs Feehan, Pyke and Carroll. The RIC were under Sub-Inspectors Fulton and Greene, and joined a wing from Tipperary under SI Knox as they headed for Moneygall. Here landlord E. Blakett had been unable to reach an agreement with some of his tenants, and so these evictions followed. Some stock was taken, there were a couple of brief arrests, and the evictees included a widow. Part of the force then split off and was joined by a company of the 1<sup>st</sup> Glosters under Lieut-Colonel Emerson and Capt Lloyd, and all under Mr McSheehy RM they set off for more evictions at Ballinlough. Mr Carleton Palmer acted as agent for his brother Sandford Palmer, who lived abroad, and after recent events he was protected by two policemen and carried a Winchester rifle. The evictions included old men, women and children, but Palmer was also facing hardships in the current climate. The bailiffs used their crowbars and emptied out furniture without any show of emotion. It was a tragic scene – "an army of soldiers, police and military train with flying cavalry, led by five officers of rank, laying siege to three thatched cabins, some of which had not even a lock on the door". Palmer, however, weakened a little and offered all three tenants a chance to return as caretakers for a penny a week. One accepted, but the others said they would return anyway. The *Tribune* claimed that these evictions had been carried out "at the point of the bayonet". In the same issue they reported on a hundred RIC and a crow-bar brigade being employed to evict a widow of about 80 at Moneygall.<sup>316</sup>

As the year passed, larger numbers of evictions took place. In March 1881 nearly seventy civil bills were served for rent on the estate of Mr John Gilbert around Ferbane, and thirty to

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<sup>315</sup> *Ibid*, 10 Mar and 2 Jun 1881.

<sup>316</sup> *MT*, 15 Sept 1881.

forty on the adjoining estate of Mr Hamlet Thompson. In April 1881, King’s County Quarter Sessions noted that the number of civil bills was “unusually large”. There were over 260, mainly undefended, and over thirty ejectments.<sup>317</sup> The official RIC record of thirty-eight evictions in the county during the whole of 1881 (with six families re-admitted as caretakers, and two as tenants) seems low, but this would not include any mention of cases where the process of ejectment had begun but was never completed due to the tenant paying at the last moment, or some other settlement being reached. Also, Leinster was the province with the least number of evictions that year – see Table 1.2 below.<sup>318</sup>

**TABLE 1.2 - Total number of evictions & re-admittances across Ireland 1881**

Province	Families evicted	Re-admitted as tenants	Re-admitted as caretakers
Ulster	1219	61	747
Leinster	692	37	251
Connaught	784	17	380
Munster	720	79	308
Total	3415	194	1686
(King’s County	38	2	6)

Source: *HCPP 1882 (9) Evictions (Ireland)*

On 24 September, nearly 150 soldiers & RIC were engaged for seventeen out of twenty-four hours around Clonmacnoise on the land of Mr Williams, an Englishman living in London. There were seventy-five RIC under SIs Allan (Tullamore) & Lilley (Ferbane), and fifty soldiers of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Prince of Wales’s (North Staffordshire Regiment) from Athlone, under Capt Currie & Lieut Watkins. There was also a surgeon-major and Geneva Cross Staff with military wagons and private cars. This force, all under J. McSheehy RM was there to protect Robert Feehan, sheriff’s officer, in serving twenty writs. RIC ‘baton men’ cleared the way through the crowd who hurled “abuse on the heads not of the soldiers but of the

<sup>317</sup> *KCC, 31 Mar and 7 Apr 1881.*

<sup>318</sup> *HCPP 1882 (9), Evictions (Ireland), pp2-5.* Across Ireland there were a total of 3,415 evictions, with 1,686 families re-admitted as caretakers and 194 as tenants. (See Table 1.2 above).

policemen”<sup>319</sup>. This was a significant comment, since the more direct involvement of the police in evictions made them much more hated than the soldiers.

Sometimes the victims received help from the League and neighbours. In May 1881, James Kelly was evicted from a twenty acre farm at Kilmucklin for owing two and a half years’ rent. The landlord, P. M. Fisher, lived in England and the agent was unable to reach an agreement with the tenant, who also claimed that the rent was too high because of recent flood damage. The eviction was carried out by the sub-sheriff and fifty police under Captain L’Estrange and Sub-Inspector H. A. Allen, who arrived without warning to avoid any demonstration. Mrs Kelly “appeared as if her mind was unsettled” and their belongings were damaged when put out in the rain. The League, however, was able to build a wooden house for the Kellys on the nearby land of the Rev Dean West, and there was a large torchlight procession in support of the victims. On other occasions, the authorities showed some compassion. In August 1881, Sub-Sheriff Robert Whelan moved to evict Thomas Ennis and his family, but found a sick child in the house. Whelan was unwilling to continue, and offered to pay some money to help settle the rent as Mr Tyrell (the son of the landlady) was unwilling to reduce the debt. In the event, some friends helped Ennis pay, but the Sheriff was thanked for his consideration.<sup>320</sup>

Although resistance to evictions in King’s County never seems to have been as violent as it was in some other places<sup>321</sup>, there were certain tactics which were employed to hinder the authorities. In August 1881, Sub-Sheriff Whelan “and an unusually large force of military and police” under Captain L’Estrange RM moved to Rockville, near Edenderry, to effect seizures and evictions. Crops were confiscated on six farms, although stock had been moved away before they got there, but when they left to evict Thomas Coulon, their way was

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<sup>319</sup> *KCC*, 29 Sept 1881.

<sup>320</sup> *KCC*, 12 May and 18 Aug 1881.

<sup>321</sup> L. P. Curtis, *The Depiction of Eviction in Ireland 1845-1910* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2011), pp112-121.

blocked by felled trees. The force had to abandon their cars and march to the house, where a crowd of about 250 had gathered. The people were cleared away without incident, however, and after some of his furniture had been removed, Coulon agreed to accept an offer to settle for half the rent plus costs – about £33. On 24 September, RIC and soldiers protected Robert Feehan (sheriff's bailiff) delivering writs. Roads were littered with felled trees and stones, bells were rung as an alarm and crowds jeered.<sup>322</sup> Eviction work may never have been popular with the police or the army, but it is interesting to note that very few indeed refused to take part when ordered to do so.

**(e) Focus – The 28<sup>th</sup> (North Gloucestershire) Regiment / 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Gloucestershire Regiment in Birr, 1880-1882.**

The study of this single battalion during the Land War helps to reveal how strained the relations with the civilian population could become. The 28<sup>th</sup> (North Gloucestershire) Regiment returned to Britain from Singapore in 1879, and were in Ireland from May of that year, in Fermoy (Co Cork) and the Curragh, with detachments out as well.<sup>323</sup> They were in Birr between 1880 and 1882 and during this time the Childers reforms took place, so that the 28<sup>th</sup> became the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Gloucestershire Regiment.<sup>324</sup> Battalion strength was affected by volunteers being taken by other regiments for the Zulu War. Drafts of men did come in from the depot, but short service also had its effect, and the battalion had to supply a draft of 208 men to their paired unit, the 61<sup>st</sup> (South Gloucestershire) Regiment.<sup>325</sup> When they moved to Birr in November 1880, detachments had to be sent out to Portumna, Gort and Tuam as well (all in County Galway). The impending amalgamation with the 61<sup>st</sup> was also unpopular and some officers decided to retire.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> *KCC*, 18 Aug and 3 Nov 1881.

<sup>323</sup> Lieut-Col F. Brodigan (ed), *Historical Records of the 28<sup>th</sup> North Gloucestershire Regiment* (London: Blackfriars, 1884), pp212-214.

<sup>324</sup> D. S. Daniell, *Cap of Honour* (London: White Lion Publishers, 1975), pp191-192.

<sup>325</sup> F. Brodigan, *Records of the 28<sup>th</sup>*, pp212-215.

<sup>326</sup> F. Brodigan, *Records of the 28<sup>th</sup>*, p217; SOG folder, p62, Gray, 'Recollections'.

The Historical Records of the regiment record that aid to the civil power “is always a most disagreeable duty to the soldier”. This was what they now became involved in (referred to above), and it put the regiment under great pressure. Few of the officers were able to avail themselves of the ‘long leave’ season, “as every detachment must have two officers with it.”<sup>327</sup> Discipline was also at risk. During the period 1882-1884, from the latter part of their time in Birr through to new a posting in England, the new 1<sup>st</sup> Glosters logged the following man-day confinements: Guard Room, 492; Military Prison, 1,710; Civilian Prison, seven.<sup>328</sup>

There are two reminiscences of the period in Birr which provide some interesting insights into regimental life and work. Drummer (much later a major) R. J. Gray went to join the 28<sup>th</sup>, in which his brother and three half-brothers were already serving, in May 1881. The Land War was then underway, and when it became known that he had come to enlist, no car driver would take him. He noted that with Ireland “very unsettled”, “duty at evictions was frequent and many NCOs and men were away on protection duty”. He was sent on patrol on the night that turned out to be the one before the Phoenix Park Murders in Dublin, and the seriousness of the situation was reinforced when Col Wallace of the Scots Greys and a sentry on protection duty with him near Tuam, were both shot on that same day.<sup>329</sup>

Lieut J. M. Stewart joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Glosters at Birr in December 1881 and, to his disappointment, there were lots of guard duties but very little tactical training. With numbers reduced by the need to man outlying detachments, the size of sub-units on parade was sometimes very small and on one occasion his company consisted of a single soldier, who still had to be inspected by six staff. Drink was a big problem, which could lead to demotion, and many soldiers could neither read nor write. Games were not played much. The monotony of drill was relieved by eviction work, although “of course we hated these

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<sup>327</sup> F. Brodigan, *Records of the 28<sup>th</sup>*, pp214-217.

<sup>328</sup> The National Archive WO16/1617, Pay Lists of the 1<sup>st</sup> Glosters, 1882-1884, p9.

<sup>329</sup> SOG folder, pp62-63, Gray, ‘Recollections’.

evictions". Sometimes the soldiers would be carried on special cars carrying twenty men. Stewart felt that the victims did not bear the army any ill-will, recognising that they were only doing their jobs. He claims that crowds were generally good tempered, and only occasionally turned nasty – especially the old ladies. He could understand the bad feeling directed at the landlords "to some extent", but not the mutilation of animals. Overall Stewart felt that the peasants were nice to them, the gentry were very kind, and they "were sorry to leave our Irish quarters".<sup>330</sup>

This section so far reveals that the army had many weaknesses at this time, but that although eviction work might be unpopular, it was carried out efficiently and did not unduly affect relations with the local population. Two particular incidents in 1881 of a different nature, however, marked the regiment's stay in Birr. Both seem comparatively minor now, but at the time they led to questions being raised in parliament – and they also illustrate the problem of the reliability of sources in Irish history. In 1881 the Land War was at its height, and the army was also stretched by commitments to the empire, suffering several setbacks, and undergoing major reforms. The army was, therefore, under a lot of pressure, which may have motivated some to exploit these two incidents. The *Naval and Military Gazette* explained the first incident in April 1881. On 27 March, troops were led out "in perfect order" from a Catholic service when the priest's sermon was felt to have become too political. There was confusion in the congregation and a disturbance. An angry crowd followed the soldiers out, but was calmed by influential members of the congregation and the priest. The commanding officer of the 28<sup>th</sup>, Colonel Brodigan said that Lieut Keating, the officer involved, had been justified in his actions.<sup>331</sup> The *Army and Navy Gazette* gave the bare bones of the story, adding what had been discussed in the House of Commons. In parliament, Hugh Childers, the Secretary for War, explained that the officers of the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment had been told by their commanding officer, Colonel Brodigan, that if a priest's sermon got political they

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<sup>330</sup> *Ibid*, pp64-66, J. M. Stewart, 'Reminiscences:1881' (nd), probably from the *Back Badge*.

<sup>331</sup> *Naval and Military Gazette*, 6 Apr 1881.

should withdraw from the church. The Rev P. Brennan, curate to the Vicar-General, preached a sermon with much political content, so the officer in charge marched the men out. The officer, and sixty-five NCOs and men were all Roman Catholic.<sup>332</sup>

The two contemporary soldiers' accounts add something to the picture, even though both joined later in 1881, and their stories were not printed until much later. R. Gray, the boy soldier in the Glosters, claimed that "there was a lot of excitement in the town over this event" – indicating that there were some repercussions.<sup>333</sup> J. Stewart, the junior officer in the Glosters, noted that the regiment had a large number of Irishmen in it, and that church parades for Roman Catholics "sometimes caused trouble" – suggesting that this was not an isolated problem. There was often a Protestant officer in charge, but in this case Lieut Keating was an Irish Catholic. Stewart claimed that "no great resentment was shown", although this contradicts what Gray said.<sup>334</sup>

The *Army and Navy Gazette* had referred to the questions raised in parliament. They came between a question on a riot in Ireland, and two others on the Irish situation. In fact three MPs asked questions, showing shades of opinion and more concern over the incident as well as questioning army discipline. Childers had carried out his own inquiry – which others might regard as suspect – and he answered specific questions from Thomas Sexton (MP for Sligo), raising some new points. The CO was also an Irish Catholic, and had told the officer to withdraw if necessary. The priest in question, Rev Brennan, admitted himself that the sermon had been political. Dr Bugler (the Vicar-General) said that no woman had been struck, but one was accidentally pushed down. Bugler & Brennan agreed to tone down their sermons if troops were present. Lieut Keating had only been with the regulars for five months, but he had been in the militia for several years beforehand, and sixty-five men was

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<sup>332</sup> *Army and Navy Gazette*, 9 Apr 1881.

<sup>333</sup> SOG folder, p63, R. Gray, 'Recollections'.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid*, p65, J. Stewart, 'Reminiscences'.

an appropriate number for him to be in charge of. The story also made the national press in the *Times*, repeating the account from *Hansard*.<sup>335</sup>

British sources all took the same point of view on this event and were pro-military, but the local Irish press raised some different issues. The *King's County Chronicle* agreed with the basic details, but included the story of a woman being accidentally knocked down which was not in the military periodicals.<sup>336</sup> The *Leinster Reporter*, published before all the other accounts and only few days after the events, ran a similar story, but with many different elements. They claimed that soldiers from the 100<sup>th</sup> & 109<sup>th</sup> Regiments from the Birr depot were also in the group that left, as well as the 28<sup>th</sup> – so they were mostly Irish as well as Catholic. The soldiers were in a side gallery, with the officer in front, so were more disruptive when they left. Lieut Keating was later harassed by an angry crowd and was escorted back to barracks by a constable.<sup>337</sup> In a postscript to this incident, a crowd of three to four hundred with a band marched to the home of Mr Den-Keating (father of Lieut Keating), and amidst jeering, burned father and son in effigy.<sup>338</sup> These all suggest local knowledge, and information independent of *Hansard*, but although both papers had the same Conservative proprietor, they imply criticism of the army and may be more reliable for that reason.

The second incident reflects similar problems, except that there are fewer sources, but with bigger differences. The *Army and Navy Gazette* again gave the main points. Timothy Healy (MP for Wexford) asked the Secretary of State for War whether there would be an enquiry into the riots at Birr, and whether he intended to move the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Mr Childers explained that seven soldiers had been attacked by a “mob of rougns” who shouted “Down

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<sup>335</sup> *A and NG*, 9 Apr 1881; *Times*, 8 Apr 1881; *Hansard, House of Commons Deb 07 April 1881 vol 260 cc869-871*.

<sup>336</sup> *KCC*, 14 Apr 1881.

<sup>337</sup> *Leinster Reporter*, 31 Mar 1881.

<sup>338</sup> *KCC*, 28 Apr 1881.

with the English bastards” and “We will fight for the Land League and kill the best man of the 28<sup>th</sup>”, and then threw stones. All the soldiers, however, were Irish. Private Patrick Donnelly, who was drunk, threw a stone and injured one of the mob, for which he received two months in prison. Mr Childers would not move the 28<sup>th</sup>, as the “conduct of the regiment, with this exception, was uniformly good”.<sup>339</sup> This event is not mentioned in other British sources except *Hansard*. T Healy MP was an Advanced Liberal and pro-Home Ruler who frequently asked questions in parliament, and he showed his prejudice in referring to “the conduct of the rioters of the 28<sup>th</sup> Regt”. Childers had made his own enquiry again, accepted that Private Donnelly was drunk and threw the stone that hit Patrick Chaffey, but he was not willing to move the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment (making a reference to its Irish soldiers) and was defensive about army discipline.<sup>340</sup> In fact, Lieut-General Glyn (General Officer Commanding Dublin District) gave the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Gloucestershire Regiment their annual inspection at Birr barracks, and “will report favourably on the efficiency of the Regiment”.<sup>341</sup>

The Irish press carried a very different story, but it was exactly the same in both the *King’s County Chronicle* and the *Leinster Reporter*. According to them, Constable Walker prosecuted Pte Donnelly of the 28<sup>th</sup> for assaulting Patrick Chaffey (given here as Claffey) with a stone. After a report of a soldier versus civilian row, Walker found three soldiers and saw Donnelly throw the stone that hit Chaffey. Chaffey claimed that he had been pulled from his own doorway by two soldiers, and another constable saw Donnelly at the scene. After an indifferent character report from his regiment, Donnelly was given two months hard labour. There was no mention here of a crowd or jibes, or that the soldiers were Irish. Based on local sources (possibly from the court case), but clearly attacking army discipline, this may again be more reliable.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> *A and NG*, 13 Aug 1881.

<sup>340</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 11 August 1881 vol 264 c1521*.

<sup>341</sup> *KCC*, 11 Aug 1881.

<sup>342</sup> *KCC and LR*, 11 Aug 1881.

These two incidents illustrate a problem – sometimes there is not enough evidence, but more evidence does not always make matters clearer. Either version of events could be true. The army and establishment could be whitewashing or the Land Leaguers and their sympathisers might be exaggerating – whatever the truth, they serve to illustrate poor relations between army & civilians at this crucial time, with both sides trying to use them as propaganda.

### **3. The end of the Land War in King’s County.**

#### **(a) 1882.**

In September 1881 the *Tribune* could claim that “our old acquaintance, the ejectment, seems at present almost defunct, or at least to be getting much out of fashion”<sup>343</sup>. Yet in December 1881, Dublin Castle appointed Resident Magistrates for special duties in counties with a “prevalence of intimidation and agrarian outrage.” (ie: King’s, Limerick, Clare, Galway, Cork, Kerry, Queen’s, Westmeath, Leitrim, Roscommon, Waterford and Tipperary).<sup>344</sup> King’s County was considered to be amongst those “most disturbed and lawless”.<sup>345</sup> Slowly during 1882, the outrages decreased, although they never entirely ended, and this was helped by better harvests. The 1881 Land Act, the Land Commission and the 1882 Arrears Act took the steam out of the Land War campaign, but it proved to be only a temporary reduction in hostilities. There were more burnings, especially in Garycastle, and arrests under the Coercion Act.<sup>346</sup> As there were more rent settlements, so the threatening letters and intimidation continued.<sup>347</sup> In 1882 Chief Justice Morris recorded 184 serious cases of outrages since the previous summer’s assizes, eighty-three of which were for threatening

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<sup>343</sup> *MT*, 15 Sep 1881.

<sup>344</sup> *KCC*, 5 Jan 1882.

<sup>345</sup> *Times*, 31 Dec 1881.

<sup>346</sup> *KCC*, 5 Jan, 26 Jan and 16 Feb 1882.

<sup>347</sup> *KCC*, 9 Mar 1882.

letters.<sup>348</sup> Four men working for Edmund Adams at Tullamore, were attacked by a gang of fourteen, and Daniel Dunne, Joseph Dunne and John Dulan were tried for threatening James Buckley, lock-keeper, at Ballycowan Bridge. There was cattle maiming, damage to meadows and mowing machines and malicious hay and house burnings. Dynamite was used in an attempt to blow up the house of James Clavin, a rent payer, at Frankford. Although there were more examples of violence elsewhere in Ireland than in King's County, there was an attempt to shoot R. Mooney JP, and there were shootings at houses in Cloghan, including farm houses on the estate of Henry T. Potts from which the previous occupants had been evicted.<sup>349</sup>

Priests were still to the fore, and Fr D. Feehan was prosecuted for speaking to a tenants' meeting and advising them not to pay rent until other suspects were released. The Land League was replaced by the Irish National League in Birr, and their chairman was Dr Bugler, supported by several other priests. Bugler claimed that a priest's duty was to be with the people right or wrong – if right to support them, if wrong to restrain them.<sup>350</sup> The Hon Mrs Dugmore chaired a meeting of the Broughal branch of the Ladies' Land League at the castle there in August, and decided to try to continue despite the Dublin Central Branch dissolving.<sup>351</sup> There is some evidence to suggest that the Irish Republican Brotherhood in Leinster were restrained by their executive after the Phoenix Park Murders in May 1882. In a reported address they claimed that "crime and outrage are as foreign to our organization as is the enemy on our soil" – but the accuracy of this report, and even the existence of many IRB members in King's County is open to question.<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 04 April 1882 vol 268 cc682-683. Statement by John Gorst, Conservative MP for Chatham.*

<sup>349</sup> *KCC, 19 Jan, 3 Aug, 16 Mar, 9 & 16 Nov, 20 Apr, 24 Aug, 12 Jan and 30 Mar 1882.*

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid, 23 Mar and 14 Dec 1882.*

<sup>351</sup> *MT, 31 Aug 1882.*

<sup>352</sup> *CO 904/10/203, reported address to the IRB in Leinster by their Executive, 1882.*

Some of the activities of 'Captain Moonlight' were clearly just a cover for robbery and crime, and Robert Feehan was beaten up by "some corner boys".<sup>353</sup> Even the *Tribune* noted a trend for: "Maliciously boycotting inoffensive individuals". There was a call to boycott the Charleville athletic sports because they were patronised by "land thief" Capt Howard Bury. Whatever the motives, these actions continued to have an effect - Mr O'Connor Morris, for example, acted as his own bailiff and seized some cows when no official would help him.<sup>354</sup> Intimidation played its part in causing some tenants to publish public apologies after paying their rent against the policy of the League. One by Michael Hanlon of Ballymullen was even read out in parliament.<sup>355</sup> The *Tribune* editorial considered that some agrarian 'outrages' were excusable because "freedom curtailed inevitably begets crime". It also questioned the seriousness of some of those 'crimes' included in statistics, giving the example of "policeman versus small boy", where the boy was arrested for whistling 'Harvey Duff'.<sup>356</sup> It was felt that some people might even seek to make a profit out of the situation, hence the suspicions of a court about the amount of compensation requested by a lawyer following a tenant's house being burned because he had paid his rent against the wishes of the League.<sup>357</sup>

The authorities continued to react in the same old manner. The magistracy remained under Protestant control – as the *Tribune* sardonically noted: "No Catholic Need Apply".<sup>358</sup> A caretaker named Barnett was protected by Auxiliary Constables drawn from the army reserve and pension lists. The Property Defence Association moving goods to Edenderry – foodstuffs sold for rent but bought cheaply - had to be protected by hussars, the Rifle Brigade and Royal Engineers. In November 1882, Moonlighters trying to intimidate farmer Philip Rourke at Philipstown, were surprised by Constable McEntee and Sub-Constables

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<sup>353</sup> *KCC*, 5 Jan and 6 Jul 1882.

<sup>354</sup> *MT*, 24 and 3 Aug, and 12 Oct 1882.

<sup>355</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 09 February 1882 vol 266 cc298-299*.

<sup>356</sup> *MT*, 16 Nov 1882. Harvey Duff was the name of a police informer in a popular play called 'The Shaughraun'.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid*, 9 Nov 1882.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid*, 5 Oct 1882.

Byrne, Purcell and Mahony. The police arrested the leader, Thomas Brazil, then chased and captured the other two - Edward Flanagan & Thomas Galvin. The Defence Association in Birr claimed that boycotters were being put off because they knew that the Association would give help to any victims. As late as December 1882 they agreed to continue their work.<sup>359</sup> The *Tribune* satirised their efforts in an article on the fictional “Indigent Landlords Association”<sup>360</sup>.

Evictions actually increased in 1882, reaching a total of 118, but more families were re-admitted as caretakers (fifty-seven) or tenants (eleven). This was true across Ireland, and Leinster was still the province with the least evictions – see Table 1.3 below.<sup>361</sup>

**TABLE 1.3 - Total number of evictions & re-admittances across Ireland 1882**

Province	Families evicted	Re-admitted as tenants	Re-admitted as caretakers
Ulster	1176	46	553
Leinster	1091	82	408
Connaught	1457	27	767
Munster	1477	43	603
Total	5201	198	2331
(King’s County	118	11	57)

Source: *HCPP 1883 (C.3465) Evictions (Ireland)*

On 5 May 1882, the most important ejection to date took place in King’s County. Edward John Odlum of Ballymoney House tenanted 200 acres, and owed half a year’s rent to his landlord, Lord Digby. Trouble was expected and thirty RIC gathered together with thirty of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, the Royal Sussex Regiment under SI Allan and Capt Haines, and were all commanded by Capt L’Estrange RM. The RIC dispersed jeering locals. Odlum’s own men removed his furniture as the sub-sheriff could not guarantee that there would be no damage – which took several hours. A crowd of 300, including women, jeered and a few threw dirty

<sup>359</sup> *KCC*, 30 Mar, 19 Jan, 7 Dec and 9 Nov 1882.

<sup>360</sup> *MT*, 14 Dec 1882.

<sup>361</sup> *HCPP 1883 (C.3465), Evictions (Ireland)*, pp3-7. Across Ireland there were 5,201 evictions, with 2,331 families re-admitted as caretakers and 198 as tenants. (See Table 1.3 above).

water from their houses. Later in May, there were evictions from the land of R. J. E. Mooney for non-payment of rent. Only two out of six were actioned that day, and caretakers put in with a protection party.<sup>362</sup>

In October, five families were evicted in the district of Ballinabackey, on the lands of Major Armil and Mrs Mary Tyrrel. Thirty-one persons were turned out in total.<sup>363</sup> At the Ladies League in Dublin in June, Miss Fanny Parnell drew attention to the death of a child following an eviction. She hoped the papers would cover the inquest & “not entirely bury or hush up proceedings as they sometimes did”. A number of labourers were evicted in the county by a farmer named Kerr, and Lord Spencer forbade the erection of any shelters for evictees. Huts were put up, but the carpenters were arrested and given hard labour. The Kavanagh family then lived in open sheds without a fire - one child died and one became seriously ill. It was questioned whether it had been legal to ban huts.<sup>364</sup> In the end both children died, as it transpired that they had had measles at the time of the eviction, causing questions to be asked in parliament.<sup>365</sup> L’Estrange had moved them on as they first put up a hut too close to Kerr’s home.<sup>366</sup>

Overall though, the picture was one of “King’s County Tenants Returning To Their Senses” and paying their rents, and the *Chronicle* gave more space to the Land Commission and less to outrages. On Lord Digby’s Geashill estate, the seven largest tenants had previously allowed themselves to be evicted for non-payment of rent, and refused the concessions offered to throw in their lot with the main body of tenants. Then in June 1882 they held a meeting at Killeigh, with the Rev Mr Robinson as chairman, and resolved now that they should make the best terms they could. A later meeting of Lord Digby’s other Geashill

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<sup>362</sup> *KCC*, 11 and 25 May 1882.

<sup>363</sup> *MT*, 12 Oct 1882.

<sup>364</sup> *KCC*, 15 Jun 1882.

<sup>365</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 20 June 1882 vol 270 cc1758-60*. Debate between B. Molloy (Home Rule League MP for King’s County), T. Sexton (Nationalist MP for Sligo) and G. Trevelyan (Chief Secretary for Ireland).

<sup>366</sup> *KCC*, 3 Aug 1882.

tenants, 500 to 600 strong, requested concessions, but were refused. The tenants later accepted his terms, paid their rent and all evictees were reinstated. The agent for David Sherlock's Rahan estate announced an abatement of four shillings in the pound, and arrears were to be written off. The tenants appear to have been overjoyed, and paid their rents. A demonstration by the new Labour League at Birr for decent homes and a half acre of land, received only a poor turnout compared with old Land League demonstrations.<sup>367</sup>

Relations between the army and the local population slowly recovered. The supplement to the *Chronicle* – their Almanac for 1882 – openly listed JPs and local officials, as well as the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment, the Glosters and the militia at Birr. There was also a company of 1<sup>st</sup> Loyals at Tullamore. The annual celebrations of the Queen's birthday took place at Birr barracks, with the Glosters and the Leinsters. At the end of September 1882, the Glosters departed and "the crack corps" of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Buffs (The East Kent Regiment) arrived at Birr with detachments expected in Loughrea and Portumna – as heralded by the return of army news to the *Chronicle*.<sup>368</sup> Part of the battalion went straight to the Curragh for training.<sup>369</sup> The Buffs, however, were soon moved to Dublin, to the "general surprise, and ... indignation" of the locals.<sup>370</sup> A petition was sent by some influential inhabitants of Birr to the GOC Ireland to keep the Buffs because "the men are so well behaved and orderly".<sup>371</sup> A letter from the Deputy Quarter-Master General H. Maclean explained why he could not oblige a request, from eighteen Birr residents, for the Buffs to stay – the "popularity of the Battalion, its good conduct, and the cordiality of feeling towards it" notwithstanding.<sup>372</sup> They were replaced by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, the Leinsters, to carry out

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<sup>367</sup> *Ibid*, 9 Feb, 15 and 29 Jun, and 10 Aug 1882.

<sup>368</sup> *KCC*, 2 Feb, 8 Jun and 5 Oct 1882.

<sup>369</sup> C. R. B. Knight, *Historical Records of the Buffs, Part 2:1814-1914* (London: Medici Society, 1935), p550; National Army Museum 2001-03-99, Historical Records of the 1<sup>st</sup> Buffs, 29 Sept 1882.

<sup>370</sup> *MT*, 16 Nov 1882.

<sup>371</sup> NAM 2001-03-99, Records of 1<sup>st</sup> Buffs, Nov 1882.

<sup>372</sup> *MT*, 16 Nov 1882.

the territorial scheme<sup>373</sup>, but the band of the Buffs did play at Oxmantown Hall for one evening a week until they left.<sup>374</sup> Having the local regiment at Birr did not prove to be the ideal solution, even for military-police relations. In December 1882, a picket of 2<sup>nd</sup> Leinsters patrolling Birr, fell or was pushed into a widow's house. She cried for the police and a soldier stabbed her slightly. When the RIC arrived they had to overpower the soldiers, and take them to petty sessions. According to the *Tribune*, the Leinsters clashed with civilians "on more than one occasion".<sup>375</sup>

**(b) Focus – The Royal Irish Constabulary in King's County and the murder of Sub-Constable Brown, 1882.**

As the Land War unfolded, the RIC became the target of particular hatred from local populations across Ireland, who came to regard them as traitors. Less respected and feared than the army, the RIC were subjected to abuse and viewed with contempt. Many people were charged with "interfering with, and annoying the police", which had become very common by April 1882.<sup>376</sup> The police were always used in the unpleasant work of evictions, and often came into direct conflict with the people, as in the Odlum eviction (referred to earlier). As explained above, the RIC were still expected to deal with 'Moonlighters', protect those who had been boycotted, control public meetings and maintain a wide range of routine police duties.<sup>377</sup> There were still four cases of firing at individuals in King's county during 1882<sup>378</sup>, and although there was no evidence, there was a strong belief that "some kind of secret society" existed in the county.<sup>379</sup> Informants were still at work, informing on cases of both assault and shooting in 1882.<sup>380</sup> The 'Emergency' men that the police protected were

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<sup>373</sup> *KCC*, 2 Nov 1882.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid*, 9 Nov 1882; *MT*, 26 Oct 1882.

<sup>375</sup> *MT*, 14 Dec 1882.

<sup>376</sup> *KCC*, 20 Apr 1882.

<sup>377</sup> *MT*, 2 Nov 1882.

<sup>378</sup> CO 904/10/190, RIC Return of Outrages, 10 Oct 1882.

<sup>379</sup> CO 904/10/186, RIC Crime Department Eastern Division, Monthly Report on Secret Societies, 8 Nov 1882.

<sup>380</sup> CO 904/10/352, RIC Monthly Report on the Subdistrict of Clara, Apr 1883 and CO 904/10/700, Confidential Monthly Report on the District of Clara, Mar 1883.

considered a danger if trusted with weapons, according to the *Tribune*. Some people had been killed by them, and one of them accidentally let off a shotgun in a hotel in Birr.<sup>381</sup>

Not surprisingly, there was great discontent among the police, made worse by their pay and conditions of service. The force neared breaking point in the summer of 1882. The Birr force issued a statement, demanding that all promotion should be through the ranks (as in the Dublin Metropolitan Police) and expressing discontent with the recent commission as representing only the officers.<sup>382</sup> In other areas there were police strikes, but they do not appear to have happened in King's County. Eventually they did receive better pay and conditions, but these were extracted reluctantly from the government, and morale was only partially improved during the lull before renewed trouble in the countryside.

In August 1882, the ultimate tragedy happened. Sub-Constable Edward Brown was shot dead whilst on routine patrol in Birr. The killer dropped the murder weapon (an old revolver) and fled, but despite several arrests, nobody was ever convicted. It was discovered that the pistol belonged to a Capt Dugmore, and was presumed to have been stolen by someone who had access to his home. The killing was taken to be agrarian related, as Dugmore had previously had links with the Land League, although they had subsequently been severed. For his help in the murder enquiry, Dugmore was given two policemen for protection.<sup>383</sup> The *Tribune* criticised the *Chronicle* for its apparent support of Dugmore's protection, saying it "does not often treat its readers to an original idea". To them, Dugmore did no more than answer police questions, and did not deserve any special praise. Both papers joined in condemning the policeman's murder – it was a "Terrible Outrage". The *Tribune* also commented that murders "of late years have cast a stigma upon our national escutcheon". It also criticised the police for being slow in dealing with the case, and the other constable who

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<sup>381</sup> *MT*, 2 Nov 1882.

<sup>382</sup> *KCC*, 10 Aug 1882.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid*, 17 Aug and 5 Oct 1882.

had been with Brown for making no attempt to arrest the killer. The trial of the suspects was covered over several issues in 1883.<sup>384</sup>

Relations with the RIC were coloured for some time by the aftermath of the murder of Sub-Constable Brown. The ratepayers of Birr, including League members, met to organise an appeal against a possible extra rates charge. This was to cover the compensation demand of Sgt James Brown, County Mayo RIC, for the murder of his brother. Everyone in Birr felt it had been committed by someone from the country, not the town itself.<sup>385</sup> There was an investigation of accusations of conspiracy over Constable Brown's murder in 1883. When the 'conspirators' were committed for trial, they were cheered by the crowds, whereas witnesses were insulted by them – such was the local discontent with the proceedings. Mr Adam Mitchell appeared for Sgt J. Brown in the compensation investigation and it was alleged that there had been a conspiracy to kill Sub-Constable McCormack, and that Brown had been shot by mistake. Capt Dugmore was implicated, and a Mr Doorley was accused of murder – but he had been arrested at the time of the killing and subsequently released. By the time of this investigation he had gone to America. Head-Constable Edward McCormack stated that Captain Dugmore had held meetings of 2,000 people at Frankford and attended evictions and other League activities.<sup>386</sup> Dugmore, a former officer of the 64<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> Staffordshire) Regiment, had actually been arrested under the Coercion Act in 1881.<sup>387</sup> The *Tribune* revealed that Capt Dugmore's home, Broughal Castle, had been searched and ten rifle barrels discovered. Dugmore complained to the Chief Secretary about his "outrageous treatment", and the "ransacking" of his house by the RIC.<sup>388</sup> Constable F. Dobson claimed

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<sup>384</sup> *MT*, 12 Oct, 17 Aug, 7, 14 and 21 Jun, and 9 Aug 1883.

<sup>385</sup> *KCC*, 18 Jan 1883 and 3 Jul 1884; *MT*, 18 Jan 1883.

<sup>386</sup> *KCC*, 14 and 21 Jun 1883, and 3 Jul 1884.

<sup>387</sup> *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 31 Oct 1881.

<sup>388</sup> *MT*, 31 Aug 1882.

that Doorley was the relative of a woman that Brown had seduced.<sup>389</sup> In the end, nobody was brought to book for the murder.

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This chapter started by suggesting that the impression given by the available evidence is that King's County was comparatively quiet before 1879, and that the regular army fitted in with at least a part of the population. The regulars could encourage good relations with the locals through social functions and sport. The militia were drawn from that population, and their misdemeanours were tolerated within the mores of those times. The RIC, though sometimes clashing with delinquent soldiers, were apparently generally accepted by all. It has to be remembered, however, that there was no nationalist paper in the county until September 1881, and so there would have been those who disagreed, but who did not yet have a medium through which to voice their views.

That all was not well became clear in 1879-1880, with the growth of the Land League in the county. Despite the slow start to the Land War, and the opposition of the *King's County Chronicle*, it is obvious that the League attracted a lot of support. The *Chronicle* always carried lengthy reports from their meetings, however, and given the paper's opposition, it can be assumed that anything favourable towards the League is probably true. What is not so clear is how much League support was voluntary, and how much due to intimidation, for the *Chronicle* was more vociferous in condemning 'agrarian outrages'. Their portrayal of the forthrightness of priests and the lack of conviction of some tenants might also be open to question, although there is corroborating evidence from other papers. The nationalist *Midland Tribune* appeared in 1881, allowing an alternative coverage in the county – but that could be equally unreliable. Comparisons with other Irish counties show that King's was neither the most violent, nor the worst affected by evictions.

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<sup>389</sup> *KCC*, 3 Jul 1884.

There is no doubt that the land agitation was the main cause of bad relations between ordinary people and the authorities. We are introduced here to the important themes of hatred for the police - culminating in the murder of Sub-Constable Brown - and women's involvement in violent agitation. Although J. TeBrake's article on women in the Land War is useful here, it does not cover anything beyond 1882.<sup>390</sup> The regular army carried out their unpleasant work with apparent indifference, and largely escaped the venom reserved for the police because they tended to act in a supporting role. Nevertheless, the experiences of the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment/1<sup>st</sup> Glosters show how comparatively minor events could turn into propaganda for the other side.

Although the Land War ended in 1882, this was not the end of agrarian problems in the county, just as 1879 had not been the start, and the story will be picked up again in Chapter 4. It is now necessary to turn to County Donegal, to examine events there during the same period.

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<sup>390</sup> J. TeBrake, 'Irish Peasant Women in Revolt', pp63-80.

## **Chapter 3 - The Land War in County Donegal, c1870-1882.**

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Chapter 3 extends the examination of civil, military and police relations leading up to the Land War, c1870-1879, begun in the last chapter, but turning now to County Donegal. This enables direct comparisons to be made with King's County, looking at changes in relations, the agrarian background, and the Land War itself. The same structure will be used, and comparisons will also be made with other parts of Ireland in order to put County Donegal into context.

It will be seen that relations between the tenants and the authorities were not good before 1879, and that sectarianism was worse here than in King's County. The murder of the Earl of Leitrim in 1878 marked County Donegal out as extreme, but may have had a subduing effect at the start of the Land War. The Land League was then at the centre of the agitation, and priests and women were even more in evidence than in King's County. Gweedore was an unsettled area in a poorer county, and with its coastline, not only the RIC and the army, but even the Royal Navy are brought to bear on trouble spots.

### **1. The uneasy years c1870-1879.**

#### **(a) Poor relations**

In the wake of the disestablishment of the Irish Church in 1869, and in the more sectarian atmosphere of Ulster, it is perhaps not surprising that the *Ballyshannon Herald* began 1870 with a wealth of anti-Catholic material – an approach used for many years, though representing Church of Ireland rather than Presbyterian readership. There were advertisements for anti-Catholic books and pamphlets, and a picture of William III crossing the Boyne. There was an article on "The Romanizers in the Church", and others on religion and temperance, so that there was hardly any room for political or social news at all.

According to the editor, the country was in a state of anarchy caused by the ministers, or “band of incendiaries”, of “our perjured Anglo-Roman Government”.<sup>391</sup> ‘Rory of the Hills’ was a pseudonym under which much intimidation was carried out, but it really represented “the virulent Irish spirit of disaffection to the Imperial Government” from the Catholic point of view.<sup>392</sup>

Against this background, the *Herald* painted a picture of Donegal as a disturbed county in the years leading up to the Land War, although official figures would appear to contradict this at the start of 1870<sup>393</sup>, even if several baronies in Donegal had been proclaimed under the Peace Preservation (Ireland) Acts since 1865-66<sup>394</sup> - See Table 2.1 below.

**TABLE 2.1 - Total number of agrarian outrages across Ireland, Jan-Feb 1870**

Province	County	Total Jan	Total Feb
<b>Leinster</b>		<b>153</b>	<b>147</b>
	Meath (largest number)	30	Meath & Westmeath (largest number) 38 each
<b>Munster</b>		<b>106</b>	<b>95</b>
	Cork East Riding & Limerick(largest number)	24 each	Limerick(largest number) 18
<b>Ulster</b>		<b>65</b>	<b>80</b>
	Donegal (largest number)	11	Cavan (largest number) 27
<b>Connaught</b>		<b>389</b>	<b>279</b>
	Mayo (largest number)	337	Mayo (largest number) 203

Source: HCPP 1870 (C.60) Return of Outrages

In January 1870, a box of weapons was seized by Head Constable Torney at Ballyshannon station, and there was a fear of violence from “the demagogues and their dupes, who

<sup>391</sup> *Ballyshannon Herald*, 1 Jan 1870.

<sup>392</sup> *John Bull*, 26 Mar 1870.

<sup>393</sup> *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers* 1870 (C.60), Return of Outrages 1869 and Jan-Feb 1870, p30 (see Table 2.1 above).

<sup>394</sup> HCPP 1874 (231), Peace Preservation (Ireland) Acts, p1; *Times*, 8 Apr 1870. The Baronies were Kilmacrenan, Boyleagh, Banagh, Tirhugh & Irishowen.

frequent public houses, and lurk about in the streets". The barracks at the Rock, Ballyshannon, were vacant at the time, and some felt that troops were needed in the area. At the County Donegal Assizes in March, there were fifty unsolved crimes in the RIC report, making it the second worst county in Ulster after Cavan. A group of about twenty men calling themselves the 'Tipperary Boys', some carrying weapons, intimidated twenty-seven tenants on a particular estate, forcing them not to pay their rents. Nobody would identify them for fear of reprisals, and this had taken place in Bundoran, which a judge had called "a rather civilised portion of your county". A John Gorman was arrested by Constable W. Callaghan of Bundoran for assaulting the police and using seditious language in April, for which he got one month's hard labour.<sup>395</sup>

With a perceived increase in crime in Ireland, the County Donegal Grand Jury urged the government to introduce stronger measures, including the suspension of Habeas Corpus, more powers of search, and more police – especially detectives. The situation seems to have improved during the year. Thomas Connolly, one of the MPs for County Donegal, optimistically said that, although the Land Act had limited landlord rights, they were "mostly those which no good landlord would wish to enforce", and concessions to tenants at the landlords' expense, were "mostly such as no good landlord would refuse". By August, the assizes were reporting that the county was then "in a very satisfactory state", with fewer crimes although still some cases of arson and threatening letters. The underlying fear of violence was evident in the publishing of "The Riband Oath" in the same month, but the paper was dominated for the rest of the year by the Franco-Prussian War.<sup>396</sup>

The *Herald* continued with its sectarian articles, and a large regular feature was made of historical references in "The Extermination of Protestants Justified and Encouraged by Papal Bulls, Bishops, Encyclicals, Councils etc etc", accompanied by a picture of Gregory XIII's

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<sup>395</sup> *BH*, 15 Jan and 14 May 1870.

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid*, 19 Mar, 6 and 20 Aug 1870.

medal commemorating the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre of Huguenots in 1572. Much was then made of the activities of the Orange Order, as when three to four thousand Orangemen from Ballintra district marked the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne by marching from Murvagh to Bell's Isle, the residence of their county Grand Master A. H. Foster JP. There were no disturbances, and it was noted that "the good cause is not declining in the county of Donegal". Foster's speeches were widely reported and by October 1872 there was support for the formation of a Protestant Defence League. The Ballyshannon Loyal Orange Lodge went on to hold annual soirees. In July 1878 there was a great demonstration by the Orangemen of Ballintra district to mark the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne.<sup>397</sup> Interestingly, attempts in the early 1870s by farmers of the Lagan to challenge landlord political control failed through being too localised, and also sectarian – being confined to Presbyterians.<sup>398</sup>

The lull in lawlessness did not last long, with murder and outrages evident in the county over the next few years – although not always linked to the agrarian situation. William Harte, for example, a county surveyor from Bunrana, had a bomb thrown into his house, possibly as a result of a dispute between contractors. The RIC found themselves again dealing not only with routine tasks, such as seizing illicit whiskey, but also domestic incidents like protecting the county cess collector from the hostile Tory Islanders. In addition to all of this, the authorities had to contend with malicious agrarian outrages, including burnt houses and crops.<sup>399</sup> Lord Francis Conyngham received a letter threatening him with murder.<sup>400</sup> Animals also continued to suffer – a valuable horse of James Hamilton of Bundoran was thrown into the sea and drowned in a probable revenge attack. "General Rules for Process Servers" with a list of their names, and those of bailiffs, became a regular feature in the

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<sup>397</sup> *BH*, 8 and 15 Jul 1871, 27 Jul and 5 Oct 1872, 2 Feb 1877 and 13 Jul 1878.

<sup>398</sup> D. Murphy, 'The Land War in Donegal 1879-1891', in the *Donegal Annual* 1980, p476.

<sup>399</sup> *BH*, 12 Aug, 29 Jul 1871 and 5 Oct 1871.

<sup>400</sup> *John Bull*, 18 Feb 1871.

*Herald*, as evictions continued to lead to conflict.<sup>401</sup> In 1871, Edward McBride was found guilty of killing bailiff Alexander Stewart – though with a recommendation for mercy. McBride and his family had resisted when Stewart attempted to evict them under a magistrate’s order. Stewart broke in with a spade, and was then attacked by McBride with a hook, and when the fight continued outside McBride threw stones and eventually stabbed Stewart.<sup>402</sup> A more clear cut agrarian case was that of Owen McFadden, over a long disputed tenantry. Two men, Charles and Bernard McCulloch, broke into his house, shooting and stabbing the whole family, and killing his wife.<sup>403</sup> A brother of the two assailants had previously been evicted from the farm which had then been taken over by McFadden.<sup>404</sup>

During this period the authorities not only had to face agrarian outrages, but also increased nationalist pressure for Home Rule. In July 1873, the Londonderry Hibernian Flute Band marched through Ballyshannon with a green flag bearing the harp without a crown – “considered a badge of disloyalty”. Although the *Herald* considered Irish nationalists to be “ignorant, priest-ridden, and vainglorious Celts”, there was obvious support for a Home Rule meeting at Ballyshannon in October 1874, with one Edward Daly giving a field for use, and “an influential merchant” giving material to erect a platform. The *Herald* represented the Protestant viewpoint when it claimed that: “The Priests are the wire pullers, a drunken and brutalised mob the instruments by whom they carry on their dark and treacherous designs”, and that “the Popes ... justify the murder of all who differ with them” The paper was dismissive of claims that a Ballyshannon branch of the Home Rule Association had been set up, referring to it as the Rome Rule Association, and seeing it as made up of “the priests, the publicans, the bakers and the hucksters”. Home Rule was not yet linked with agrarian discontent, but denial of its growing influence was a false hope. In 1878, the release of several Fenian prisoners from the 1860s was openly celebrated in many places including

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<sup>401</sup> *BH*, 13 Jul and 26 Oct 1872, 21 Apr 1877 and 12 Jan 1878.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid*, 29 Jul 1871; *John Bull*, 11 Mar 1871; *Times*, 8 Mar 1871.

<sup>403</sup> *John Bull*, 5 Aug 1871; *HCPP* 1873 (207), Peace Preservation (Ireland) Act, p5.

<sup>404</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 4 Aug 1871.

Cardonagh, where there was a public demonstration.<sup>405</sup> John O'Connor Power (MP for Mayo) spoke of C/Sgt McCarthy from Donegal, and all the other released Fenians as political prisoners.<sup>406</sup>

A letter to the *Herald* in May 1875, highlighted the work of a little known society in London trying to improve the condition of Irish tenants through grants, but as the paper changed its style to include more news it was clear that agrarian discontent had not abated. The Earl of Leitrim had originally been refused permission to evict a Michael Gallagher from his estates, as the process had not been in accordance with the Land Act, but this decision was reversed in July 1875. Other evictions were also granted at these Donegal assizes. There had been a disturbance at Ballyroosky leading to three women and one man from the same family being imprisoned for riot and assault - Mary, Biddy, Jane and John Sheils – as well as several general cases of assault and one of manslaughter. Six men were later indicted for riot and unlawful assembly with guns, and for assault, committed in Listillion during August 1875. In 1876, David Wilson and his family were threatened and shot at by a group of men after gaining a garden on part of the land from which a George McGrenaghan had been evicted. McGrenaghan got six months hard labour, and seven others got between one and three months each. Although evictions continued, the application of the law was not all one-sided. The Earl of Leitrim lost a claim to recover £100 for tenant-right on a farm, as he had not followed the proper procedures, and one James Smith was discharged on bail after being found guilty of carrying arms in a proclaimed district, because of his good character.<sup>407</sup>

In April 1876, the long-standing proclamations of five County Donegal baronies were revoked<sup>408</sup>, and in July the Lifford Assizes noted the low level of serious crime in the

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<sup>405</sup> *BH*, 5 Jul 1873, 16 May and 26 Sept 1874, 9 and 23 Jan 1875, and 12 Jan 1878.

<sup>406</sup> J. Power, *Irish Political Prisoners: Speeches of John O'Connor Power MP* (London: Numerical & General Printing Works, 1878), pp9-10.

<sup>407</sup> *BH*, 22 May and 24 Jul 1875, 18 Mar and 5 Aug 1876.

<sup>408</sup> *HCPP 1877* (167), Peace Preservation Acts (Ireland), p1.

county.<sup>409</sup> In March 1877 the *Herald* felt able to declare that County Donegal was free from “any case of extraordinary violence”, although evictions continued to be a regular feature. Some evictions were the result of local or family conflict, and nothing to do with the large landowners – for example, the unsuccessful attempt by Mary McShee of Rathmore to evict her son-in-law.<sup>410</sup> Some evictions attracted particular attention, such as that of Fr John McGroarty in April 1877.<sup>411</sup> He was evicted by landlords John and James Musgrave of Belfast, for enclosing land which, it was claimed, others were entitled to use. The *Herald* published letters from both sides of the case: Fr McGroarty, having been ejected by a sheriff and the RIC, disputed the common land rights claimed by the Musgraves, whilst they restated their point of view. The editor ranted against “irresponsible lawyers, on whose elastic consciences the terrors of Popery, and the seductive influences of mob popularity would have a powerful, if not irresistible effect”. He then claimed that “Romish priests set themselves up as models of patriotism, piety and disinterestedness”, but “carry on a system of blasphemy, fraud, and superstition, that is degrading to the masses”. On the other hand, letters were included from an ironmonger donating £1 to Fr McGroarty’s cause, calling on others to do the same; and from a committee with £100, raising funds for a new home for him, and expecting the locals to build it. In July, the court found in favour of Fr McGroarty and granted him damages, but because he refused to take down his fences he was not entitled to costs. The *Herald* thought this was just, otherwise it would be a “death-blow to landlords’ rights in Ulster”, and McGroarty was “a dangerous man to have as a tenant”.<sup>412</sup>

More typical was the eviction of a widow named Boyle, and fourteen of her family, from their home in Clogher, also in April 1877. The landlord, Valentine Ryan, apparently turned them out in revenge for losing his law case against them over money that they owed. Another eviction resulted from a quarrel between two brothers-in-law from Mountcharles in July.

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<sup>409</sup> *Times*, 31 Jul 1876.

<sup>410</sup> *BH*, 17 Mar 1877.

<sup>411</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 23 Apr 1877.

<sup>412</sup> *BH*, 26 Apr, 12 and 19 May, and 14 Jul 1877.

Patrick Dorian was evicted from land lent by Edward Kelly against a loan, but he was allowed until November to gather his crops. Where there was no defence, for whatever reason, bids for evictions were almost certain to be successful. Right up until the time of his murder, the Earl of Leitrim was still pursuing eviction notices on some of his tenants. In March 1878, the judge at Lifford Crown Court agreed that Leitrim was right to serve a writ on the son of Margaret Callaghan, rather than on the 92 year old mother herself, and the eviction was granted. The process to evict a Neal Sheals, however, had not been correctly followed, and was denied.<sup>413</sup>

Many minor offences continued to come before the Petty Sessions at Ballyshannon, including the sale of alcohol out of hours, lack of gun licences, neglect of family, allowing cattle to wander, and drunkenness. The reprinting of the “Ribbonman’s Oath” revealed an underlying fear of insurrection, but violence was often the result of something more mundane. Among the serious offences before Lifford Assizes in July were grievous assault, forgery and the shooting of Constable Patrick Doherty – but the shooting, by Joseph McLaughlin, was put down to him being “of weak intellect”. The death of Owen Slevin, a former member of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, in September was probably the result of a drunken brawl between friends. There was a party political clash in 1878 which led to many people being indicted for riot. Initially the ringleaders were charged – James and Daniel McLaughlin, James and William Deeney, Henry Gill, George Kerr and Daniel Brown all pleaded guilty, but over twenty more were indicted in batches. There was also evidence of sectarian conflict, as when a Bible seller’s stall was kicked over. The Protestant Rev McKee claimed that “a long black list of rowdyism is laid to Bundoran’s charge”, with Catholic priests as “(so-called) spiritual advisers”. The Protestant Rev Gray was stoned, and a Catholic

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<sup>413</sup> *Ibid*, 28 Jul 1877 and 23 Mar 1878.

priest was reported as having consecrated ground where a 'heretic' had stood. There were also attacks reported on Protestant Sunday School children.<sup>414</sup>

The RIC had a difficult role in maintaining their routine duties alongside continual agrarian disturbance. Sometimes they were praised, as when a John Craig was stabbed outside Donegal town. Constable Chadwick and others from the RIC pursued the suspect, James Halferty, eight miles through snow until they caught up with him, blood-stained and still carrying the knife. They were not, however, without fault. A former RIC constable by the name of Walsh accused the medical inspector for the RIC, named Leclerc, of maliciously withholding a medical certificate that would have entitled him to a superannuation pension. Leclerc considered Walsh to be a malingerer, and the grand jury agreed.<sup>415</sup> There were opportunities to make money from the RIC, as there were from the army, which some locals took advantage of, such as John Kennedy, a Letterkenny farmer, who rented out a constabulary barracks.<sup>416</sup> If relations between the general population of County Donegal and the police during this period were rather rocky, the situation was brought to a head with the murder of the Earl of Leitrim in 1878.

#### **(b) Focus – The Donegal RIC and the murder of the Earl of Leitrim, 1878.**

On 2 April 1878, the Earl of Leitrim, his clerk and a servant were murdered at Milford in County Donegal. The three victims and the horse pulling their open car were all shot dead when they were ambushed by a group of six men. The dead men were all shot in the head, and the Earl was also badly beaten after putting up a fight. The killers, thought originally to be possibly tenants from Connaught, fled in a boat, leaving their weapons and other items nearby.<sup>417</sup> Leitrim was widely unpopular, especially for his policy towards tenants in County Donegal, so even the *Herald* was guarded in its praise when it claimed that "the greatest

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<sup>414</sup> *Ibid*, 26 May, 2 Jun, 28 Jul and 8 Sept 1877, 23 Mar and 31 Aug 1878.

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid*, 28 Dec 1878 and 24 Jul 1875.

<sup>416</sup> National Archives of Ireland, Crime Branch Special Papers, CCS, 1875/132.

<sup>417</sup> *BH*, 6 Apr 1878; *Belfast News-Letter*, 3 Apr 1878; *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Apr 1878; *Times*, 3 Apr 1878.

sorrow is expressed here, where the Earl was well known, alike for dispensing a noble charity and a stern resolve in evicting those who thwarted his purpose”<sup>418</sup>. The barony of Kilmacrenan was now proclaimed under the Peace Preservation Acts.<sup>419</sup> It was reported that the Earl was normally resident on his Donegal estate, and that although he could be charitable, he was also responsible for frequent evictions. After the Land Acts, tenants refused to pay for seaweed anymore, so he proved his right at the Court of Chancery and then evicted them. Nevertheless, it was claimed that he “spent more than the rent he received in permanent improvements for the civilization (sic) and benefit of the occupiers”, and built roads and houses, established schools, and improved his cattle and sheep. Letters were published from tenants giving good reports of the Earl, including one from Donegal, but it was also suggested that the confiscatory provisions of the Land act had made things worse.<sup>420</sup>

Contrary opinions on the Earl were quick to follow. The *Derry Standard*, for example, accused him of immorality – evicting those who refused to send their daughters to him, and of abusing his servants - claims which the *Herald* naturally refuted.<sup>421</sup> The *Standard* stuck by their accusations, except to make it clear that they were not talking about sexual favours, although there was no evidence and these were just things ‘known’ to be true by the locals.<sup>422</sup> The nationalist MP for Dungarvan in Co Waterford, Frank O’Donnell, claimed that Leitrim had many enemies in both Ireland and the USA who might have wanted to kill him.<sup>423</sup> The disturbances at the Earl’s funeral, or “brutal conduct of the priest taught mob” as the *Herald* put it, probably reflected general public opinion of him.<sup>424</sup> A later anonymous writer

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<sup>418</sup> *BH*, 6 Apr 1878.

<sup>419</sup> I. Leadam, *Coercive Measures in Ireland 1830-1880* (London: The National Press Agency, 1880), p30.

<sup>420</sup> *BH*, 6 Apr 1878.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid*, 27 Apr 1878.

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid*, 4 May 1878. Compare this with the colourful interpretation of P. O Gallchobhair in ‘Death Comes to Lord Leitrim’, in the *Donegal Annual*, 1958, p69.

<sup>423</sup> *BH*, 27 Apr 1878.

<sup>424</sup> *Ibid*, 11 May 1878; *Hansard Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords Debate 12 April 1878 vol 239 cc1197-1198*.

claimed “Lord Leitrim was not popular either with the gentry or the tenantry. He was not a rackrenter, but very arbitrary in his dealings, and could brook no opposition”.<sup>425</sup>

The RIC quickly made five arrests – Anthony, Bernard and Thomas McGrenahan, Charles McTaggart and Manus Friel – and they were put in Lifford gaol. It was immediately suggested that the inhabitants of Milford would have to pay extra tax as a result for the extra police and legal proceedings.<sup>426</sup> Further arrests followed, but despite the offer of large rewards<sup>427</sup>, nobody was actually brought to trial for the murder. One of the suspects, Michael Heraghty, died in Lifford Gaol. Thousands turned up at his funeral in national colours, called to attend by the priests O’Boyle and O’Flaherty. The *Herald* called the crowd “a Priest ridden people – a Priest deluded people – a people kept dark, and in a semi-savage state of ignorance for the purpose of the Priests”. At the procession, “everyone was surprised – indignantly surprised – to find members of the Constabulary force having recourse to such silly subterfuges as to be found prying about in plain clothes, when their object and designs are to the community clear as noon day”. The last two prisoners were released on bail in March 1879, and the first of many cases was heard of evictees retaking possession of land on the late earl’s estates.<sup>428</sup> Donegal became notorious for the murder of Lord Leitrim, and this may have been a restraining influence at the start of the Land War.<sup>429</sup>

## **2. The Land War, 1879-1882.**

### **(a) Slow beginnings**

In early 1879, Petty Sessions were dealing with the usual minor cases – driving recklessly, assault and selling alcohol without a licence. At Lifford Crown Court there were cases of

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<sup>425</sup> *Donegal Independent*, 6 May 1892.

<sup>426</sup> *BH*, 6 Apr 1878.

<sup>427</sup> *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 19 Apr 1878.

<sup>428</sup> *BH*, 19 Oct and 1 Mar 1879.

<sup>429</sup> D. Murphy, ‘Land War in Donegal’, p476.

indecent assault, horse stealing, grievous wounding and manslaughter.<sup>430</sup> Across the county during the whole of 1879 there were many examples of arson, intimidation, damage to property and other serious offences, but the majority were classified by the police as non-agrarian.<sup>431</sup> The Marquess of Hamilton even asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether the extra police stationed in Fannet following the murder of Lord Leitrim might now be removed, but without success.<sup>432</sup> Sectarianism was still very much in evidence. The *Herald* criticised a lottery and bazaar for £4,000 to be held in Ballyshannon for a “magnificent residence for nuns, while the poor are perishing”. It claimed that the Bishop of Raphoe supported “their gambling scheme, as a holy work”. It warned that Protestants should not be stupid and support “the emissaries of the Scarlet Whore”. Even the royal family were criticised for attending the Catholic funeral of the Prince Imperial - “When the Mother of Harlots shall have made all nations to drink of the cup of her abominations, then shall the end come”.<sup>433</sup>

During the summer the agrarian question was raised in parliament, with Frank O'Donnell MP emphasising the seriousness of the situation, and the anti-rent agitation – although religious articles still took up more space in the *Herald*. At Lifford Court, several cases were heard, including assault, but there were also evictions and writs. In August, the *Herald* predicted: “There is every sign in the religious horizon of our country, that we are approaching very fast to testing times”.<sup>434</sup> It has long been agreed that, in the late 1870s, American competition and bad harvests created a situation where “rents which had been forced upward in happier years were not and could not be paid”<sup>435</sup>, and evictions became widespread<sup>436</sup>. In September, crop failures in County Donegal suggested “the approach of still harder times for

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<sup>430</sup> *BH*, 1 Feb and 22 Mar 1879.

<sup>431</sup> *HCPP* 1880 (6), *Agrarian & other crimes (Ireland)*, p130.

<sup>432</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 17 June 1879 vol 247 c24. Marquess of Hamilton to J Lowther.*

<sup>433</sup> *BH*, 4 Jan and 26 Jul 1879.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid*, 28 Jun, 26 Jul and 30 Aug 1879.

<sup>435</sup> S. Brandenburg, ‘Progress of Land Transfers in the Irish Free State’, in the *Journal of Land & Public Utility Economics* (8), Aug 1932, p276.

<sup>436</sup> L. Cain, ‘Land Tenure in Ireland in the Modern Period’, in *Agricultural History* (27), Apr 1953, p64.

the farmer”<sup>437</sup>. Much relief work was done, but the continuing distress was one factor that contributed to the outbreak of the Land War.<sup>438</sup> Yet this was also part of a long-term problem, for Donegal was one of those areas in Ireland “where pre-Famine agricultural conditions persisted”, and “dense populations still crowded onto small, unproductive holdings”.<sup>439</sup> It was the traditional kinship system which led to the sub-division of holdings and local feuds<sup>440</sup>, and the tenant farmers were more like “Irish labourers with English allotments”<sup>441</sup>. Donegal and other western counties in a similar position were hardest hit by the agricultural crisis of the late 1870s, but in fact the Land War did not really take hold until 1880.<sup>442</sup> Even at the height of the Land War, the *Herald* devoted one out of four pages to national and local Irish problems, but never allowed them to infringe upon page one advertisements, page two editorial and advertisements, or page three religious articles – exerting its influence to maintain Protestant morale.

## **(b) Land struggle in the county**

### **(i) Leadership – The Land League**

The increasing tension between landlords and tenants facilitated the expansion of the Land League in 1880, but there was no immediate increase in agrarian outrages – only eighteen were recorded in the county between January and October. There was a wave of agitation in Donegal under League direction from August 1880, but it did not last until Christmas. It did something, however, to shake the tenantry out of their apathy.<sup>443</sup> The authorities certainly considered that there was a direct link between League meetings and “Agrarian

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<sup>437</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 3 Sep 1879.

<sup>438</sup> *Times*, 12 Feb 1880.

<sup>439</sup> W. Feingold, *The Revolt of the Tenantry* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1984), p59.

<sup>440</sup> S. Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish Land War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp45-46 & 76-77.

<sup>441</sup> *Times*, 12 Apr 1889.

<sup>442</sup> J. Donnelly, *The Land and the People of Nineteenth-Century Cork* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp258-259.

<sup>443</sup> D. Murphy, ‘Land War in Donegal’, p478.

Crimes”, claiming there had been fifteen meetings in the county throughout 1880, and seventy-two crimes.<sup>444</sup> The Land League provided the organisation through which discontent should have been more effectively expressed, but it did not always succeed. A “monster demonstration” at the end of September 1880 was a failure. Parnell and others did not turn up, and priests were also absent. Nevertheless, the *Herald* began to take more notice, with small articles such as “Land Leaguism in Donegal” in November. According to the *Derry Journal*, an organ of the Land League, crowds from Fermanagh, Donegal and Leitrim – including many Protestants - attended a large League meeting at Ballymeehan in Co Leitrim in November 1880. Green and Orange favours bore the slogan “Justice to Ireland”. They demanded the abolition of landlordism, and pledged not to take evicted farms, or to buy seized cattle or crops. They also demanded peasant ownership of land, protested against the government’s prosecution of Parnell and asked for a reduction in rents – Griffith’s valuations being considered too high. There was a large meeting in the Land League committee rooms in Ballyshannon, with Hugh Tuthill PLG (Poor Law Guardian) as president. They agreed to collect funds for the Parnell Defence Fund, for “those who are defending the poor farmers of Ireland against their grinding and systematic oppressors.”<sup>445</sup>

The truth was that support for the League throughout the county varied widely.<sup>446</sup> The *Derry Journal* reported a League meeting in Ballyshannon in December 1880, with Hugh Tuthill PLG as President, and George Moore PLG as Vice-President, illustrating the links which the League encouraged with aspects of local government and administration. At a meeting at Bundoran there were decorated arches, a procession and bands. At a meeting at Castlefin, there was a speech against Dr Alexander, the Bishop of Derry, as a landlord. James O’Kelly (MP for Roscommon) said there was nothing sectarian in the movement. The south and

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<sup>444</sup> H. Arnold-Foster (“One Who Knows”), *The Truth About the Land League* (London: The National Press Agency, 1882), P49.

<sup>445</sup> *BH*, 2 Oct, 20 and 27 Nov 1880.

<sup>446</sup> D. Murphy, ‘Land War in Donegal’, p480.

west had done the work so far, but now Ulster was joining in.<sup>447</sup> The Ballyshannon Land League now held fortnightly meetings, and thanked some English MPs for their support, which indicated wider backing.<sup>448</sup> This was not always the case, however. A Land League meeting with the Rev John Kinnear (MP for Donegal) was adjourned because he did not turn up. Kinnear was an Ulster Liberal, not a Leaguer, who had voted for coercion, and he held a separate meeting that evening with tenant farmers.<sup>449</sup>

The Inishowen League was led by Patrick Crampsey, Denis Diver and Patrick Coyle, and with their arrest in February 1881, the local organisation fell apart.<sup>450</sup> Some social groups that supported the League elsewhere in Ireland failed to do so in north and east Donegal. Shopkeepers for example were neutral or hostile as they tried to keep Protestant trade. Some nationalists in north Donegal rallied support by bitterly criticising the local Liberal MPs. The Land League attracted wider support, and was more successful in west Donegal, where many landlords granted rent abatements.<sup>451</sup> Here, also small businessmen played an important role within the agricultural community as they “had less competition from the few large grazing farmers”.<sup>452</sup>

## (ii) Leadership – Priests

The role of priests was evident from the beginning. The *St James’s Chronicle* claimed that: “The priests are everywhere busy; their kingdom is, indeed, of this world”. *The Church Record*, more precisely: “the Romish priests are the real instigators, agitators and conspirators against the payment of rents.” The *Herald* called for the condemnation of any Protestants who had sided with the land agitation, and therefore Popery. It claimed that Catholic priests were to blame for the condition of the poor, but the Board of Public works

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<sup>447</sup> *BH*, 25 Dec 1880.

<sup>448</sup> *Derry Journal*, cited in *BH*, 26 Feb 1881.

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid*, 30 Apr 1881.

<sup>450</sup> D. Murphy, ‘Land War in Donegal’, pp478-479.

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid*, p479.

<sup>452</sup> D Jordan, *Land and Popular Politics in Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p166.

now offered money for projects at low interest. The priests apparently encouraging strife was what the *New York Observer* called “The Religion of Famine”.<sup>453</sup> In the west, the priests – Fr James McFadden of Gweedore and Fr Bernard Walker of Arranmore - may have taken the lead because they were “alarmed by the dangers of a leaderless peasantry” following the arrest of several nationalist leaders.<sup>454</sup> The Land War brought about “a popular democracy whose centre of authority was the Catholic clergy”, but the priests’ power in Donegal “was exceptional – even by the standards of the 1880s”.<sup>455</sup>

Fr Doherty led the November 1879 Land League meeting in Donegal to ask for lower rents. Even as late as the monster meeting of the Ballyshannon Land League in September 1881, however, the *Freeman’s Journal* claimed that “Presbyterians, Protestants and Catholics shook hands over their old religious feuds”. Parnell was due to speak at this meeting but was arrested in England. The meeting went ahead anyway.<sup>456</sup>

### (iii) Tenants

In November 1879, there was a meeting in Donegal town to petition landlords for rent reductions.<sup>457</sup> There was great distress in Donegal, but it was unevenly spread, with areas such as Ardara and Arranmore suffering most.<sup>458</sup> The Special Commissioner of the *Daily Telegraph*, reporting in January 1880, said that he had originally felt that distress was not bad in Donegal, but that he had discovered differently. Workhouse numbers were not high in Stranorlar, but they were mainly tenant farmers, who would not recover. The town of Donegal was in a satisfactory condition, but there were tales of suffering in the countryside, which it would be easy to miss if only passing through. Around Ballyshannon there were many deserted dwellings in the villages, and in the heart of the town as well. “There is

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<sup>453</sup> *BH*, 1 Feb, 6 Sept & 1 Nov 1879, 17 Jan and 21 Feb 1880.

<sup>454</sup> D. Murphy, ‘Land War in Donegal’, p479.

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid*, p476.

<sup>456</sup> *BH*, 29 Nov 1879, 3 Sept and 29 Oct 1881.

<sup>457</sup> *BH*, 29 Nov 1879.

<sup>458</sup> D. Murphy, ‘Land War in Donegal’, p477.

nothing for the labouring classes to do, and over all hangs a dense cloud of depression.” Fr Spence told of places along the coast in “absolute destitution”. Around Donegal Bay the people were half fishermen and half farmers on “little patches of land” of two to four acres. Conditions had been bad for both professions over several years, but the previous year had been a catastrophe. People lived in squalid conditions, but tenants made no foolish complaints and said the landlord was decent enough. He concluded that people were “on the brink of perishing”, and needed public works or charity.<sup>459</sup> The distress in Donegal became a frequent subject for newspaper articles during 1880<sup>460</sup> and also discussions in parliament.<sup>461</sup> In September Hugh Childers, the Liberal Secretary of State for War, combined a holiday with a fact finding mission in the county.<sup>462</sup> The distress was still evident at the end of 1882.<sup>463</sup>

The Donegal Central Relief Fund committee set up local sub-committees to make their own collections, but also to ask the central committee if they needed help. A list of subscribers to the Ballyshannon Relief Fund was published, but there were some disagreements between the different committees. Perhaps for this reason, Ballyshannon was unable to get water works under the public funds scheme due to unexplained opposition. When tenants tried to take matters into their own hands, they had little success. In Inishowen, in November 1880, about 150 tenants of George M. Harvey of Malin hall assembled at a crossroads to consult on what action to take. They resolved to demand a one third rent reduction, but the landlord did not accept.<sup>464</sup> In 1881-1882 the landlords in Inishowen were not deterred by large crowds incited by the priests, but the tenants became demoralised in the face of strong

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<sup>459</sup> *BH*, 10 Jan 1880.

<sup>460</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 3 and 9 Jan, 20 Feb, 29 May, 3 Jun 1880; *Belfast News-Letter*, 9 and 17 Jan, 23 Feb, 28 May 1880.

<sup>461</sup> *Hansard, HL Deb 01 March 1880 vol 251 cc2-20, HC Deb 11 March 1880 vol 251 cc870-97.*

<sup>462</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 15, 17, 22, 23 and 30 Sep 1880.

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid*, 26 and 29 December 1882.

<sup>464</sup> *BH*, 17 Jan, 14 Feb, 7 Feb, 21 Aug and 27 Nov 1880.

landlords and many paid up secretly.<sup>465</sup> Hundreds of tenants came to see the new Earl of Leitrim in 1881, as he had invited them, but there were too many for him to see. A few had some rent reduction, but most were disappointed.<sup>466</sup> If they appeared less radical than elsewhere, it might have been because there was no strong Ribbon or Fenian tradition among small farmers in Donegal.<sup>467</sup> Nevertheless, strong anti-landlord sentiments persisted, even among those who were now able to purchase their holdings.<sup>468</sup>

### **(c) Resistance to land reform in the county**

#### **(i) The authorities – judiciary, magistrates, RIC and army**

The view of Irish nationalists towards the army's setbacks in South Africa and Afghanistan was perhaps predictable. "We are not surprised at the Ghoulish shriek of exultation with which the so-called Irish National papers have received the news of the disaster in Zululand", was one comment on this situation, and it was felt that "Sher Ali was the idol of the Irish Nationalists."<sup>469</sup> Nevertheless, others acknowledged the financial benefits to be got from the army in Ireland. Tenders, for example, were sought to supply the Militia in the Belfast District, which included the Donegal artillery at Letterkenny and the Donegal infantry at Lifford. Recruitment for the army was encouraged where possible - there was a small advertisement in the *Herald* saying that a statement about the advantages of serving in the army was available from post offices.<sup>470</sup> In 1881 the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers were formed from the 27<sup>th</sup> and 108<sup>th</sup> Regiments based in Omagh, Co Tyrone. They became the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> regular battalions, recruiting partly in Donegal, and the Donegal Militia became the 5<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>465</sup> D. Murphy, 'Land War in Donegal', p479.

<sup>466</sup> *Derry Journal*, cited in *BH*, 26 Feb 1881.

<sup>467</sup> D. Murphy, 'Land War in Donegal', p478.

<sup>468</sup> Sir J. Knowles, 'Peasant Proprietors at Home', in *The Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review*, Aug 1880, p184.

<sup>469</sup> *Evening Standard* cited in *BH*, 22 Feb 1879.

<sup>470</sup> *BH*, 21 Feb 1880 and 3 Sept 1881.

Battalion in 1884 – see Figure 6, page 39 - helping to strengthen the territorial system.<sup>471</sup> In 1855, four of the Donegal Militia companies had been converted to artillery with a headquarters in Lifford, and in 1881 this became the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade North Irish Division Royal Artillery – being re-titled the Donegal Artillery (Prince of Wales's Own), Southern Division Royal Artillery in 1889.<sup>472</sup>

In 1881, the Gweedore RM, Peel, tried vainly to persuade the landlord Hill to be more conciliatory.<sup>473</sup> The failure of Peel's local policy of conciliation and coercion led to the army trying to withdraw from Gweedore, which the police wanted to avoid.<sup>474</sup> The RIC was also often criticised by nationalists, and a letter from H. G. Dunn, said that “unless true service is rewarded and recognised, this admirable force will have just reason to complain”. In November 1881, a group of RIC had defaced a ‘No Rent’ placard at the Catholic chapel of Aughacloy. A crowd gathered booing, shouting and jostling the constables. A sub-inspector drew his revolver and one Michael McGennis was arrested.<sup>475</sup> The period from Autumn 1881 to Autumn 1882 was “relatively tranquil” in the county<sup>476</sup>, but in April 1881 Donegal was still one of several counties to be proclaimed. As in the rest of Ireland, the Donegal RIC were also involved in ‘shadowing’ suspects and using informants to seek out secret societies which were felt to be a real threat by those in authority.<sup>477</sup>

It was not just the Land War which led to the police became increasingly alienated from the population, for Ulster had its own problems in addition to the Land League. A parliamentary report of 1880 on outrages arising from processions showed that the cost over the previous eight years in Ulster was over £58,241. The whole of the rest of Ireland had cost only £311.

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<sup>471</sup> Regimental Historical Records Committee, *The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers 1688 to 1914* (London: Constable, 1928), p338.

<sup>472</sup> The National Archives, War Office Records 68/28, Records of the Donegal Artillery.

<sup>473</sup> D. Murphy, ‘Land War in Donegal’, p479.

<sup>474</sup> *Ibid*, ‘Land War in Donegal’, p480.

<sup>475</sup> *BH*, 25 Feb 1881 and 5 Mar 1882.

<sup>476</sup> D. Murphy, ‘Land War in Donegal’, p480.

<sup>477</sup> *Times*, 7 Apr 1881 and 18 Jul 1881.

It seemed that the Ulster Orangemen would have to pay for that.<sup>478</sup> Meanwhile the Land War was underway, resulting in extra police charges and bills for outrages. Inishowen Protestants appealed for the League to be proclaimed in their area, and despite warnings that this would alienate Catholic sympathies, this was introduced.<sup>479</sup>

## (ii) Landlords

On the Murray Stewart Donegal estate, there was £657 rent owed in arrears in 1876, but by 1880 this had risen to £3,908.<sup>480</sup> Despite such examples, it has been claimed that “the landlords through the Abercorn and Connolly families comfortably dominated local politics”.<sup>481</sup> Yet before the Land War it was observed that “it has now become not uncommon for Irish landlords to meet their tenants, and discuss with them any grievances which may be alleged in the management of their estates.” There were pros and cons to this, but Lord Anglesey did it and so did the new Earl of Leitrim.<sup>482</sup> Others were motivated by fear, however, and one landlord summed up his reason for being an absentee: “I do not desire to be a target for every cowardly assassin”. In 1881, an “Emergency Committee” was formed by the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, to defend and aid those attacked by the Land League.<sup>483</sup>

Some “landlords tried to exploit the distress in order to effect long-term improvements to their properties, eg., railway development, and displayed only marginal interest in relief which was what the tenants wanted”.<sup>484</sup> The social differences were also perceived as reflecting religious ones. The Marquis of Hamilton, Conservative MP for County Donegal since 1860, was surprisingly defeated at the elections of 1880 by an “unholy alliance”. At

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<sup>478</sup> *BH*, 6 Nov 1880.

<sup>479</sup> D. Murphy, ‘Land War in Donegal’, p478.

<sup>480</sup> County Donegal Archives P/2/2/8 & P/2/2/12, Murray Stewart Estate Rent Books 1876 and 1880.

<sup>481</sup> D. Murphy, ‘Land War in Donegal’, p476.

<sup>482</sup> *Evening Mail* cited in *BH*, 30 Aug 1879; *Freeman’s Journal*, 27 Aug 1879.

<sup>483</sup> *BH*, 4 Oct 1879 and 8 Jan 1881.

<sup>484</sup> D. Murphy, ‘Land War in Donegal’, p477.

this time there was widespread fear of the growth of Ultramontaniam in the Catholic Church, following the First Vatican Council of 1870. There were many who saw Catholicism as “the old and primal cause of human misery in Ireland – POPERY! ... The Land League, Fenianism and Ribbonism are only minor outcomes of this huge conspiracy”.<sup>485</sup>

#### **(d) Tactics**

##### **(i) Resistance, boycotting, intimidation and outrages**

In July 1879 there was an explosion at the house of Robert Moore, a bailiff on the Leslie estate.<sup>486</sup> In August 1880, Ireland was reported to be on “the eve of a revolutionary movement”. Yet even in October 1880, the *Herald* was reporting outrages around Ireland, but little on local events. At Carrigart in April 1880, Alexander and John Russell threatened John Smith McCay with pistols whilst he was carrying out his duties as sub-sheriff of County Donegal. Another bailiff was beaten in Clonmany, delivering rent notices for the Hon Capt Cochrane, where rents were three to five years in arrears. He was surrounded by a crowd of about five hundred, beaten up, and had to be rescued by the police. The whole barony of West Inishowen consisted of no-renters. Elsewhere, a shopkeeper and a baker were boycotted on orders of the League. At Buncrana Petty Sessions in November 1880, several people were charged with riotous assembly after assaulting a bailiff - “The land agitation ... is spreading throughout Ulster.” According to the *Derry Journal*, boycotting and intimidation were widespread throughout Leitrim, Fermanagh and Donegal by November 1880. Non-League members were boycotted at the Ballyshannon pig and cattle fair. “A reign of terror is in fact inaugurated that if common sense does not soon regain its sway, must speedily end in a disastrous and bloody revolution”, commented the *Herald*.<sup>487</sup>

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<sup>485</sup> *BH*, 10 Apr and 15 May 1880, and 23 Apr 1881.

<sup>486</sup> *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 25 Jul 1879.

<sup>487</sup> *BH*, 21 Aug, 16 Oct, 24 Jul, 20 and 27 Nov, and 4 Dec 1880.

The Hill estate in Gweedore resisted tenant demands doggedly in 1880 and 1881, leading to an increase in violence.<sup>488</sup> In March 1881, an old man, James Lanagan of Cahermacrory, was returning from a fair in a group when he was attacked by another group near Culdaff. He was beaten and robbed, and people nearby were reluctant to help because they thought he was getting 'justice' from the League. Owen, Charles and Cornelius McGrenaghan, and John McCloskey were arrested. The attack may have been personal or due to some litigation over cattle.<sup>489</sup> Robert McDermott, a National School teacher from Ramelton, was charged with issuing threatening notices against anyone selling to George B. White JP. The notices included: "Remember Lord Leitrim's doom". The police served summonses on officers and the committee of the Churchill Land League in June 1881, to appear as witnesses in the case of SI Dunsterville versus Henry Park, a Leaguer accused of intimidating William Wilkin, John Anderson, and Hugh M'Clafferty into handing over money earned from giving lifts to the police.<sup>490</sup>

## (ii) Evictions and coercion

The authorities used several different tactics against League actions. Some RIC attended tenant meetings.<sup>491</sup> SI Nunan ordered decorated arches attached to public houses to be removed as a breach of the Licensing Act.<sup>492</sup> A more extreme example was when HMS Bellisle sailed for Rathmullen Roads on the coast of Donegal, and reported the landing of arms and ammunition from the USA. The Royal Navy and Royal Marines were due to be used more off the coast of Ireland. Most importantly, advertisements for process-servers in County Donegal continued to appear, as eviction remained the primary weapon.<sup>493</sup>

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<sup>488</sup> D. Murphy, 'Land War in Donegal', p479.

<sup>489</sup> *Londonderry Sentinel* cited in *BH*, 5 Mar 1881.

<sup>490</sup> *BH*, 12 Mar and 11 Jun 1881.

<sup>491</sup> *Ibid*, 27 Nov 1880.

<sup>492</sup> *Derry Journal* cited in *BH*, 25 Dec 1880.

<sup>493</sup> *BH*, 22 Jan and 26 Feb 1881.

Because of its layout and religious stance, the *Herald* had nothing to say about evictions, but other sources nationally filled the gap. In parliament, Lord George Hamilton in the discussion of the Ejectment Bill in 1880, claimed that the number of evictions in Donegal had been exaggerated. He said there had been only sixteen in 1878, not eighty-four, and only seventeen in 1879 not the 122 in government returns. In the first half of 1880 there had been eighteen, not 156, and the Lord Lieutenant of Donegal had checked these figures carefully because he was so surprised by the large numbers claimed.<sup>494</sup> In fact, the final figures given for these years listed in the 1881 summary were different again, but clearly showed an increase during the Land War years: 98 in 1880 alone.<sup>495</sup> In 1880, evictions in Ulster overall exceeded those in Leinster and Connaught<sup>496</sup> - see Table 2.2 below.

**TABLE 2.2 - Total number of evictions across Ireland 1880**

Province	County	Total families
<b>Ulster</b>		<b>497</b>
	Antrim	13
	Armagh	21
	Cavan (largest number)	149
	Donegal	98
	Down	27
	Fermanagh	43
	Londonderry	19
	Monaghan	44
	Tyrone	83
<b>Leinster</b>		<b>484</b>
	Meath (largest number)	80
<b>Munster</b>		<b>742</b>
	Kerry (largest number)	191
<b>Connaught</b>		<b>387</b>
	Mayo (largest number)	106

Source: HCPC 1881 (185) *Evictions (Ireland)*

Which figures were more reliable is open to debate, but evictions certainly still continued.

The Ballyshannon branch of the Ladies' Land League recorded one such at Ardfarney where

<sup>494</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Jul 1880.

<sup>495</sup> HCPC 1881 (185), *Evictions (Ireland)*, pp22-23. (See Table 2.2 above).

<sup>496</sup> L. P. Curtis, *The Depiction of Eviction in Ireland 1845-1910* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2011), p83.

John Johnston's family of five were evicted by Messrs Teevan of Enniskillen, and not re-admitted.<sup>497</sup> "The period from 1880 to 1884 saw the eviction campaign at its height in Gweedore" as landlords raised already excessive rents.<sup>498</sup> There was a sharp increase in evictions in the county overall during the spring and summer of 1881. In Inishowen this was particularly true of the Young and McNeill estates until the summer of 1882. Nationalist protests led by the Catholic priests marked the early examples, but these faded out.<sup>499</sup> Official figures show that there were actually 289 evictions in Co Donegal during 1881, although they reduced dramatically in the last quarter. It is important to note, however, that 252 of these families were then re-admitted, although mainly as caretakers. By 1882 Ulster was no longer the province with the most evictions – see Tables 1.2 and 1.3, pages 101 and 112.<sup>500</sup>

In 1882, John Redmond (MP for New Ross) claimed that evictions in Donegal "were now more numerous than ever"<sup>501</sup>, and Frank O'Donnell (MP for Dungarvan) raised questions in parliament about the proposed eviction of 300-600 families in the county, and how the 3,000 people turned out would be cared for.<sup>502</sup> These evictions were due in the districts of Clonmany, Binnon, Garryduff, Adderville and Carndonagh and Frank O'Donnell accused the Chief Secretary of prohibiting the tenants from holding meetings to protest and invite public sympathy. Over 300 evictions had actually taken place between January and mid-March 1882, and the 'special correspondent' of the *Freeman's Journal* reported that at Carrowmenagh "a village has been exterminated" where nineteen families had been evicted from the estate of Hector McNeill. Soldiers, police and Emergency men were all employed in this business, and afterwards some evictees were given shelter in huts provided by the

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<sup>497</sup> *FJ*, 26 Aug 1881.

<sup>498</sup> P. O Gallchobhair, *The History of Landlordism in Donegal* (Ballyshannon: Donegal Democrat, 1975), p52.

<sup>499</sup> D. Murphy, 'Land War in Donegal', p479.

<sup>500</sup> *HCPP* 1882 (9), Evictions (Ireland), pp2-5. (See Tables 1.2 & 1.3, pp101 and 112).

<sup>501</sup> *The Standard*, 11 Feb 1882.

<sup>502</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, 28 Feb 1882; *Morning Post*, 28 Feb 1882; *Hansard, HC Deb* 27 February 1882 vol 266 c1707.

Ladies' Land League, while the younger victims planned to go to America.<sup>503</sup> In mid-1882 Ulster had a greater number of evictions than any other province again.<sup>504</sup> The number of troops and extra police employed undoubtedly caused bitterness, for they were taken as "an indication of the vindictiveness of the landlord". On the estate of Mr Young at Carndonagh, troops were brought in from Belfast, although there was no resistance. Troops usually formed a cordon while the police and officials carried out the actual evictions, and if there was no threat they could amuse themselves singing and joking in a relaxed manner.<sup>505</sup>

**(e) Focus – The Donegal RIC & the Royal Navy in Gweedore, May 1881.**

Events in Gweedore during May 1881 demonstrated how the situation had got out of control in the wake of a series of evictions. According to the *Londonderry Sentinel*, the small police force in Gweedore was "confined to narrow limits by the natives" in May 1881. Anyone who sold to them or aided them was boycotted. A process server and the police were set upon, and the whole district turned out the following day, but the authorities decided to wait until they had more forces available. Travellers were hassled, and supplies meant for the Gweedore police – "whom the people have besieged and are determined to starve out" - were thrown onto the road. Forty RIC under SI Young of Raphoe arrived to help restore order in the district, but they still could not get any supplies, as several shopkeepers and publicans were intimidated into closing. These included John Irwin and Daniel O'Donnell of Derrybeg, and Daniel Keown of Bunbeg. The following week, four cars with rations were driven from Letterkenny to Gweedore by the police with a strong escort. It was claimed that "an absolute reign of terror exists at Gweedore at present". A gunboat was sent to Bunbeg with more supplies for the police. Keown gave the police breakfast, but was then boycotted.<sup>506</sup>

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<sup>503</sup> *FJ*, 14 and 18 Mar 1882.

<sup>504</sup> *Times*, 7 Jul 1882.

<sup>505</sup> *FJ*, 22 Mar, 3 and 5 Apr 1882.

<sup>506</sup> *BH*, 28 May 1881.

All car drivers and hostlers then left the Gweedore Hotel, and all opponents of the League were boycotted. There was then a conference between the Hon Capt Ward (for the landlord, Capt Hill), and the Rev James McFadden and the tenants from Hill estate, but it did not achieve any result. On Arranmore Island, tenants gathered and knocked down a wall of the landlord Mr Charley's preserve, and let their own cattle graze on it. Police were sent over in boats, but the people stopped them landing and smashed the boats. The police only escaped with difficulty. A gunboat was then sent to land the police, but this also failed, although it was then able to get supplies to Gweedore.<sup>507</sup>

On 19 May 1881, a crowd attacked policemen protecting a process server in Gweedore, and over a hundred of them, mostly women, were later brought to trial for causing a riot and assaulting the police.<sup>508</sup> About thirty RIC had been protecting Robert Bankhead serving writs, and Constable John Wilson and six others had been hit by stones. After the attack, writs were not served in person, but the Court of Common Pleas agreed that they should be posted. At Bunbeg Petty Sessions, SI Davies charged Hannah Boyle, plus about 120 women and five men with riot, and twenty-two of them with common assault on the police during 19 May 1881. Twenty-three of the accused were summarily convicted. SIs Alcock, Young and Davies plus about 120 RIC were present, and the gunboat 'Goshawk' was at anchor, so Fr McFadden and two other priests cautioned a crowd of 500 that had gathered not to break the law.<sup>509</sup>

It is important to note that seventeen of those convicted were women, who got up to one month's hard labour in Londonderry Gaol. SI Davies wrote to Fr McFadden to assure him that there was no warrant for his arrest. This annoyed the editor of the *Herald*, who thought that men like McFadden should "know their place and understand their duty". Nine men

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<sup>507</sup> *Londonderry Sentinel* cited in *BH*, 4 June 1881.

<sup>508</sup> *Times*, 16 Jun 1881.

<sup>509</sup> *BH*, 18 Jun 1881.

were indicted for riot, affray and common assault on 19 May at Lifford County Assizes. All were given two months hard labour, except one who had helped a wounded policeman, who only got one month in gaol.<sup>510</sup>

### **3. The end of the Land War in County Donegal, 1882.**

A letter from Patt Mullally, a labourer, claimed that Parnell had told the tenants to put any reductions in rent into improvements. This they had not done, nor given work to labourers. Labourers were worse off in 1882 than in the previous twenty years. League agitation had hurt the labourers and Parnell knew this, which is why he made this point, but the farmers let him down. Parnell claimed his tenants were standing by the 'No Rent' movement, but in fact they had all paid up and carried on working, wrote Mullally.<sup>511</sup> This was not entirely true, but the list of Donegal estates where tenants were supposed to be on the 'No Rent' roll in April 1882, was unrealistic.<sup>512</sup>

Although the Land War is usually considered to have ended in 1882, there was little sign of reduced disturbance in County Donegal, supporting the idea of a 'long' land war as previously described. The police had become pariahs in their own land, and the army were still frequently engaged in backing them up at evictions. In February 1882, J. S. McCoy, sub-sheriff of Donegal, a hundred soldiers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Princess of Wales's Own (Yorkshire Regiment) under Capt Moneykyrle and a large force of RIC under SI Nunan, all under Mr Thynne RM and Mr C. W. Osborne JP, moved from Mountcharles to Dhrimhorty to evict eight families. They actually arranged that the families were not to be disturbed for a while. The same force later moved on to Ballybolighan to evict a single tenant. When they arrived they found that the tenant had fled, and the house had no doors or windows. The

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<sup>510</sup> *Ibid*, 25 Jun and 23 Jul 1881.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid*, 21 Jan 1882.

<sup>512</sup> *Times*, 6 Apr 1882. The roll listed seven Donegal estates including Murray Stewart's and Marquis Conyngham's.

soldiers filled in the openings in the walls.<sup>513</sup> There was still a need to keep up a military presence, so Maj Athelston and a small number from the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Prince Albert's Light Infantry (Somersetshire Regiment) relieved the detachment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers at Ballyshannon in July 1882. This was later increased to a company under Capt Palmer, which in turn was replaced by F Company under Capt Thurlow between January and May 1883.<sup>514</sup>

There was an illegal Land League hunt in March 1882, where shots were fired into the air and there were shouts of 'Buckshot'. These events were essentially "mass poaching", and were part of the anti-hunt campaign to undermine the position of the landed classes. Those that were arrested were only charged with illegal assembly and were let out on their own recognisance.<sup>515</sup> Robert Murray was indicted for putting up threatening notices in November 1880 at Ramelton, but the jury could not agree and so he was bound over. There was an unlawful assembly at Barnes Gap in March 1882, where one James Brennan was arrested. His sentence was reduced because he had a wife and nine children to support, but he still got three months hard labour. Jeremiah Murray of Blirstown sought compensation for a burned house and property. The Grand Jury had previously rejected this as being not malicious, but the Petty Jury reversed this decision.<sup>516</sup>

In April, the Poor Law Guardians of Ballyshannon met to elect their officers. The Land Leaguers gained vital positions including Vice-Chairman and Deputy Vice-Chairman, and won six out of ten positions on the dispensary committee. The *Herald* blamed Conservative voters for not turning out. Dan MacSweeney was in gaol, but was still elected for the

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<sup>513</sup> *BH*, 25 Feb 1882.

<sup>514</sup> Somerset County Archives DD/SLI/1/1, 1<sup>st</sup> Somersets Digest of Service 1842-1914, 24 Jul 1882 & 1 Jan 1883.

<sup>515</sup> *BH*, 25 Mar 1882; H. Laird, 'Ride rough-shod': evictions, sheriffs' sales and the anti-hunting agitation', in H. Laird, *Subversive Law in Ireland 1879-1920* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), p93.

<sup>516</sup> *BH*, 25 Mar and 22 Jul 1882.

division of Crossroads in Dunfanaghy Union.<sup>517</sup> By the end of 1882 the new Irish National League had replaced the Land League with branches throughout Ireland, including four in County Donegal.<sup>518</sup> The Rev S. G. Cochrane of Ballintra said that Ireland was a “degraded country”, and the solution was to remove the Protestants and then tow it out to sea and sink it.<sup>519</sup>

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This chapter clearly shows that County Donegal suffered from more disturbances than King’s County in the years leading up to the Land War, culminating in the murder of the Earl of Leitrim in 1878. Although there were many more outrages in other parts of Ireland, sectarian differences were also more evident here than in King’s County. All of this was reported by the *Ballyshannon Herald*, and there was no nationalist newspaper in the county to contrast with it until the *Donegal Vindicator* appeared in 1889. Obviously, the strength of the Orange Order in the county, the violence of outrages and the influence of Catholic clergy may well have been exaggerated by the *Herald* for propaganda reasons. It nevertheless also gave differing opinions about the crime rate, published letters giving opposing views on certain events, and revealed the harshness of some evictions – so it cannot be completely dismissed. Overall, however, it has been necessary to balance the reporting of the *Herald* against other primary sources.

The Land War started slowly in County Donegal, as it did in King’s County, but in the former the shock of the murder of the Earl of Leitrim may initially have had a restraining influence. There was more hardship in County Donegal, and the Land League found more willing followers, despite its continued weakness in some places – although there is also evidence of intimidation. Relations here between the RIC and the tenantry were unsatisfactory before

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<sup>517</sup> *Ibid*, 8 Apr 1882.

<sup>518</sup> *Times*, 26 Dec 1882.

<sup>519</sup> *BH*, 22 Jul 1882.

1878, and undoubtedly worse than in King's County. From the murder of the Earl of Leitrim onwards they deteriorated, and were exacerbated by hostilities during the Land War. There was no large military base in County Donegal as there was in King's County, so there does not seem to have been any significant social interaction between the army and the general population. Army reforms were beginning to identify regiments with localities, however, affecting both the regulars and the militia.

Land agitation was again the main cause of bad relations between ordinary people and the authorities. There was greater poverty here than in the midlands, and particular problems caused by itinerant labour. As with King's County, we see here evidence of hatred for the police, politically active priests and women's involvement in violent agitation. The latter element is very important to emphasise, given the lack of coverage in other secondary works. There was more violence in County Donegal than King's County, especially in the area of Gweedore, and the authorities responded with predictable firmness – even exploiting the coastline to employ the Royal Navy in transporting troops and supplies. As elsewhere in Ireland, Donegal landowners responded in a variety of ways to the situation, but there was certainly a high rate of evictions in the county during the Land War.

In neither of the two counties being studied here were the agrarian problems limited to the period 1879-1882, and the next chapter returns to King's County in the aftermath of the Land war.

## **Chapter 4 – The Plan of Campaign in King’s County, c1883-1891.**

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Having examined the similarities and differences between the two counties being studied up to 1882, Chapter 4 returns to King’s County to look at the situation after the Land War had ended. It will show whether there were any noticeable differences in relations between the army, the police and the civilian population at this time, before examining how each party responded to the next major upheaval of the Plan of Campaign. It is important to note that the Land League had been replaced by the Irish National League, also led by Parnell, but with an emphasis on Home Rule. Although still dealing with remaining agrarian problems, the Plan of Campaign adopted a different strategy from that of the Land League during the Land war, and was not initiated by Parnell himself.

It is interesting to note how, following further reforms, the army seemed to become generally more popular, whereas the RIC were to become even more despised. The legality of some actions by the authorities was questioned, although King’s County escaped the worst violence of the Plan of Campaign. The effects of this scenario in King’s County are now examined in detail.

### **1. The intervening years c1883-1886.**

#### **(a) The army and the police.**

From 1881, the permanent military establishment at Birr barracks was the Headquarters of the 100th Regimental District including the Depot Companies of the Prince of Wales’s Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians).<sup>520</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Leinsters themselves were still the regular battalion stationed at Birr, with a detachment at Boyle in County Roscommon in December

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<sup>520</sup> *Midland Tribune*, 31 Dec 1885.

1882.<sup>521</sup> There still seem to have been clashes with the local population, and court cases of brawling between soldiers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Leinsters and civilians were heard at Birr in January 1883, including accusations of throwing stones. At least one soldier, Pte Shea, was a local man himself. Shea was found not guilty, but two civilians were found guilty of assaulting a Pte Smith of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Leinsters.<sup>522</sup>

Some indications of improving civil-military relations could be seen in a cricket match between the 2<sup>nd</sup> Leinsters and the Galway Gentlemen in June 1883, and when the Highland Light Infantry detachment of fifty which had been stationed in Tullamore since November 1882 left in 1883, the fact that no replacements were scheduled might have indicated quieter times.<sup>523</sup> The Cardwell-Childers reforms also began to have some impact in getting the territorial regiments adopted by their localities. County loyalty itself, within the general Irish population, was a nineteenth century development in which the army played a part, as did nationalist organisations like the Gaelic Athletic Association.<sup>524</sup> The King's County Rifles became the 3<sup>rd</sup> (Militia) Battalion of the Leinsters in 1882, and in 1883 changed from green to red tunics to match their regular partners. They had already "given a large number of volunteers to the regulars", and their inspecting officer was "thoroughly satisfied" with them in July 1884.<sup>525</sup>

The relationship between King's County and the Leinsters seemed to improve rapidly, and even the *Tribune* unusually included a long article on the 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion's sports day at Birr in 1883.<sup>526</sup> It was certainly nurtured by the *Chronicle*. In March 1884, a draft of troops left Birr to join the 1<sup>st</sup> Leinsters in India. The "greater proportion" of them were young recruits from

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<sup>521</sup> *King's County Chronicle*, 21 Dec 1882.

<sup>522</sup> *KCC*, 4 and 11 Jan 1883.

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid*, 28 Jun and 19 Apr 1883.

<sup>524</sup> M. Scully, 'BIFFOs, Jackeens and Dagenham Yanks: county identity, "authenticity" and the Irish diaspora', in *Irish Studies Review* (21) 2013, No 2, May 2013, pp145-146.

<sup>525</sup> *KCC*, 19 Apr and 24 Jul 1884.

<sup>526</sup> *MT*, 4 Oct 1883.

King's County, and they were seen off by local crowds as they marched behind the regimental band through the town and its suburbs, and finally departed from Birr railway station. Another draft of the Leinsters left for India in February 1885 and was cheered by the crowds – “the whole was recruited in the King's County”. Articles about regimental and social events continued to indicate a level of local interest. The annual regimental school treat by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Leinsters for soldiers' families at Birr barracks was held in January 1885, including tea served by the officers. The annual training of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters in July 1885 was considered satisfactory, although they had obsolete knapsacks and Snider rifles. They were referred to as “The King's County Regiment”. The *Chronicle* carried a small occasional army recruiting advertisement for Birr, and there was a large article about the 2<sup>nd</sup> Leinsters' departure from Birr in September 1885.<sup>527</sup> Crowds cheered them off to Fermoy, and the *Chronicle* claimed that “inhabitants of every shade of thinking felt sorrow at losing what they regarded as their own regiment.” They were to be replaced by the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Prince Albert's Light Infantry (Somersetshire Regiment) coming from Ulster.<sup>528</sup>

Good relations continued with the 1<sup>st</sup> Somersets, and the Town Commissioners of Birr passed a resolution showing their appreciation of the battalion's good conduct.<sup>529</sup> A few years earlier the 1<sup>st</sup>/13<sup>th</sup>, as they then were, had been at least thirty percent Irish, and there would still be many in the post-1881 battalion.<sup>530</sup> There was a long *Chronicle* article on the presentation of Sudan medals to the Somersets at Birr barracks, that conflict having been covered at length in the paper from February 1885. The military funeral of Bandmaster J. W. Vevers of 1<sup>st</sup> Somersets was attended by a large number of townspeople at Birr. Articles on Birr barracks were presented for general interest, including one about the

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<sup>527</sup> *KCC*, 13 Mar 1884, 26 Feb, 29 Jan and 23 July 1885.

<sup>528</sup> *KCC*, 24 Sept 1885; Somerset County Archive DD/SLI/1/1, 1<sup>st</sup> Somerset L I Digest of Service 1842-1914, 13 Sept 1885; Sir H Everett, *The Somerset Light Infantry, 1685-1914* (London: Methuen, 1934), p295.

<sup>529</sup> H. Everett, *Somerset L I*, p295.

<sup>530</sup> The Rifles Office Taunton, J. Kenworthy, *The 1<sup>st</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Prince Albert's Light Infantry, in South Africa 1874-1879* (Unpublished manuscript), Extended Medal Roll pp1-34.

unusual number of deaths there - seven in two months - reported in March 1886, and another about a general's inspection of the barracks in August. On a lighter note, there were entertainments for the departure of a sgt-major of the Somersets, a military ball, a cricket match between the Somersets and Birr and a long article on army sports at Birr barracks.<sup>531</sup> Even the *Tribune* reported favourably on the open air band concert given by the Somersets in July 1886 which 2,000 people attended.<sup>532</sup>

The police had to deal with both continued agitation and more routine matters during these years, and often relied on informers.<sup>533</sup> With only eleven out of 104 magistrates in the county being Catholic, it was felt by many that the law was not being administered even-handedly.<sup>534</sup> Extra police were ordered for certain districts in King's County during January 1883 - the Killadrown district was regarded as particularly troublesome and proclaimed, with the district being charged for the extra police.<sup>535</sup> Other districts in the county were charged for extra policing in July 1883 and January 1884.<sup>536</sup> Men from Tullamore RIC were sent to Woodfield in County Clare to arrest Michael Hennessy, a suspect in the Phoenix Park Murders case.<sup>537</sup> Head Constable Edward McCormack claimed that there was a secret society at Cloghan intending to shoot landlords. A police hut used for protection duties at Aughamore, Clara, was taken down in April 1883 - but it was felt that it might well be needed elsewhere<sup>538</sup> and the county was proclaimed as needing additional police at the end of 1883.<sup>539</sup>

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<sup>531</sup> *KCC*, 4 Feb 1886, 5 Feb 1885, 11 Feb, 12 Aug, 18 Mar, 27 May, 17 Jun and 5 Aug 1886.

<sup>532</sup> *MT*, 15 July 1886.

<sup>533</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 5 Jan 1883.

<sup>534</sup> *Times*, 21 Feb 1884.

<sup>535</sup> *KCC*, 18 Jan 1883.

<sup>536</sup> *Times*, 21 Jul 1883 and 19 Jan 1884.

<sup>537</sup> *MT*, 8 Mar 1883.

<sup>538</sup> *KCC*, 3 Jul 1884 and 19 Apr 1883.

<sup>539</sup> *John Bull*, 29 Nov 1884.

The RIC had to decide if claims for damages were legitimate or not. There was an alleged case of boycotting reported by Daniel Higgins at Tullamore in May 1884. RIC Sgt McGovern, however, said that this was not so, and that a hayrick burning had not been malicious, as a result of which, Higgins received no compensation.<sup>540</sup> Two farmers, Thomas Coghlan and Patrick Doolan, were sentenced to a month's hard labour each for assaulting a Constable Ryan during a sheriff's sale in Tullamore.<sup>541</sup> Sometimes the RIC had to attend to its own discipline – Const McDonagh of Ferbane was charged with drunkenness by Sgt R. Greer, but he was let off as the sergeant was regarded as being officious.<sup>542</sup> Another constable was summoned by a sergeant for being in licensed premises on Good Friday in 1884.<sup>543</sup> The *Tribune* complained about magistrates letting off Inspector Robertson of Tullamore after he threatened to shoot certain people with buckshot.<sup>544</sup> There seems to have been some general improvement during 1885. When County Inspector S. Stephens left in March, he was seen as “exceedingly popular also with the general public” and extra police were discontinued at Geashill in May, which was now regarded as peaceful.<sup>545</sup>

One area where the police had to concentrate more resources was in monitoring suspected secret society activities. Individual suspects were regularly followed, such as Patrick White, Patrick Ryan, John Dunne and John Stirling – all from King's County.<sup>546</sup> Suspects in Tullamore, for example, were followed to public houses, meetings, court sessions, races, other towns and even to mass.<sup>547</sup> Many of these men were publicans, the ideal profession for holding meetings and spreading ideas in a social context.<sup>548</sup> They were prominent in the

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<sup>540</sup> *KCC*, 22 May 1884.

<sup>541</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Feb 1886.

<sup>542</sup> *MT*, 18 Oct 1883.

<sup>543</sup> *KCC*, 8 May 1884.

<sup>544</sup> *MT*, 22 Jan 1885.

<sup>545</sup> *KCC*, 26 Mar and 7 May 1885.

<sup>546</sup> The National Archive, Colonial Office Records 904/10/16, RIC report by Const W. Growcock, 3 Jun 1884; CO 904/10/39-42, RIC report by Head Const C. Connolly, 2 Sep 1884; CO 904/10/55, RIC report by Supt Reddy, 18 Apr 1884; CO 904/10/107, RIC report by J. Donohoe, 20 Nov 1884.

<sup>547</sup> CO 904/10/314-241, RIC monthly report by Const T. Hopkins, 13 Apr 1883.

<sup>548</sup> CO 904/10/774-779, RIC suspect descriptions, Mar 1883.

Leagues, partly also because they knew that low rents meant more business for them.<sup>549</sup> When Dunne went to Dublin, his 'shadow' had to hand over to a detective from the Dublin Metropolitan Police<sup>550</sup>, which was normal routine for "leading members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood"<sup>551</sup>. Stirling, however, who was regarded as "a leading Fenian" and well known to the police<sup>552</sup>, evaded his followers after such a hand-over.<sup>553</sup> The King's County RIC had earlier refuted a suggestion by the DMP that they were "not properly on the alert".<sup>554</sup> Evidence was often contradictory about whether there was a real threat or not, and it was admitted in May 1884 that none of the suspects followed from Tullamore to Dublin could be positively identified with any position in the Fenian movement.<sup>555</sup>

In 1883, some reports claimed that there was no serious activity except to establish the National League.<sup>556</sup> In Edenderry it was felt that the "outrage gangs" had been broken up, and that they were not actually involved in any secret society. The IRB in King's County was believed to be dormant, and its members under orders not to draw attention to themselves.<sup>557</sup> By 1884, however, secret societies were reported as being active in Tullamore, Ferbane, Clara and Cloghan, and outrages were being planned.<sup>558</sup> Yet any outrages tended to reflect individual local grievances rather than any widespread plan, and the strength of any secret societies always remained open to question. The use of informers was always risky, and the police were themselves sometimes doubtful about their usefulness.<sup>559</sup> Yet their existence did create an air of uncertainty that favoured the authorities, and could be a divisive factor in local communities where accusations of

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<sup>549</sup> T. H. O'Brien, 'Lord Milner's Irish Journal 1886', p46.

<sup>550</sup> CO 904/10/56, RIC report by Supt Reddy, 18 Apr 1884.

<sup>551</sup> CO 904/10/120, RIC report by DI Crime Special W. Jacques, 14 Jun 1884.

<sup>552</sup> CO 904/10/108, RIC report by DI Crime Special W. Jacques, 20 Nov 1884.

<sup>553</sup> CO 904/10/111, RIC report by J. Donohoe, 15 Nov 1884.

<sup>554</sup> CO 904/10/117, RIC report by J. Donohoe, 25 Jun 1884.

<sup>555</sup> CO 904/10/124, RIC report, 25 Jun 1884.

<sup>556</sup> CO 904/10/180-182, RIC Crime Dept Eastern Division report, 19 Feb 1883.

<sup>557</sup> CO 904/10/284-285, RIC Crime Dept Eastern Division monthly report, 20 May 1883.

<sup>558</sup> CO 904/10/282, RIC Crime Dept Eastern Division monthly report, 20 May 1883; CO 904/10/145 & 149, RIC monthly report on secret societies, 7 Mar 1884.

<sup>559</sup> CO 904/10/311-312, RIC report on Tullamore, 9 May 1883.

informing could lead to violence.<sup>560</sup> Even today the informants may only be known by the numbers allocated to them at the time. Informant “Number 6” in King’s County was particularly active in 1883, having to mix with the very men on which he was informing.<sup>561</sup> This side of police work was another reason why they became more hated than the army, although soldiers were also sometimes employed on plain clothes duties.<sup>562</sup>

### **(b) Landlords and Leaguers.**

If relations between soldiers, police and civilians were somewhat mixed, there were some signs of improvement on the land. After the 1881 Land Act, the Tullamore Land Court was just one of many judging fair rents and other measures.<sup>563</sup> Sometimes individuals took action themselves, although overall, examples of real generosity were few to start with.<sup>564</sup> The Rev Sir E. F. Armstrong reduced rents on his estates to be fairer, which was noted as being quicker than through the courts.<sup>565</sup> Samuel Taylor, an absentee landlord whom many thought had died, made sweeping reductions to his rents at Clonoghill, and was praised by the *Tribune* as “a considerate landlord”<sup>566</sup>. A police report on Edenderry in May 1883 claimed that “tenants and landlords are arranging all difficulties amicably”. They thought that the situation had been helped by prominent Leaguers losing their seats in the Poor Law Guardians elections, and there had only been one recent case of boycotting.<sup>567</sup> Yet the struggle between landlords and tenants was clearly not over, and for some it was too late: the Earl of Huntingdon was declared bankrupt in 1885, and died in May of that year.<sup>568</sup>

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<sup>560</sup> CO 904/10/390-392, RIC report by Constables Kenny & Duggan, Apr 1883, on an incident at Killegan races.

<sup>561</sup> CO 904/10/443-453, RIC confidential notes from Clara station, May 1883.

<sup>562</sup> Royal Marines Museum, General H. Blumberg, History of the Royal Marines 1837-1914 (Unpublished manuscript), p216.

<sup>563</sup> KCC, 12 Apr 1883.

<sup>564</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 3 Jan 1883.

<sup>565</sup> KCC, 29 Nov 1883.

<sup>566</sup> *MT*, 9 Aug 1883.

<sup>567</sup> CO 904/10/297-299, RIC report on Edenderry, 9 May 1883.

<sup>568</sup> *Times*, 18 Apr 1885.

The King's County Constitutional Society was formed to oppose the National League, holding its first AGM in January 1885, with Lord Rosse as chairman. They claimed to be trying to bring all interests together, but they actually represented the landlords, and would give assistance to boycottees. There was concern over the new franchise, and whether the labourers would all go over to the League. Some felt sure they would not, and would see the Leaguers as false friends. The second AGM of the King's County Constitutional Association was held at Birr, in February 1886.<sup>569</sup> There was also a strong Orange Order in King's County, which included some key figures such as magistrates.<sup>570</sup> There was an Orange demonstration on a private estate in King's County in 1884 and Edenderry Loyal Orange Lodge held its first entertainment at the end of January 1885, with a large meeting of King's County Grand Orange Lodge in July.<sup>571</sup> In March 1886 the Grand Juries of King's County, Westmeath, Longford and Meath all passed resolutions of loyalty to the queen and opposition to any repeal of the Union.<sup>572</sup> Arthur Moore (MP for Clonmel) claimed that "it was almost impossible to get a Roman Catholic on the Bench"<sup>573</sup>.

The *Chronicle* tried to highlight those it felt were now acting hypocritically. Captain Dugmore was pursued for rent arrears on Broughal Castle, but an article poured scorn on him as a champion of liberty: Under the Crimes Act, he was now prosecuting some men accused of intimidating or assaulting his employees. A coroner, William Gowing of Kill, near Birr, had been noted as a Land Leaguer who held out against paying rent – but now he tried to squeeze higher rents out of his own tenants. Terence O'Brien was a Land Leaguer who turned land agent, and was responsible for evicting two old widows.<sup>574</sup>

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<sup>569</sup> *KCC*, 27 Mar 1884, 29 Jan 1885 and 18 Feb 1886.

<sup>570</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 26 July 1883 vol 282 c531-2*.

<sup>571</sup> *KCC*, 24 Jul 1884, 5 Feb and 23 Jul 1885.

<sup>572</sup> *John Bull*, 6 Mar 1886.

<sup>573</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 21 February 1884 vol 284 c1639*.

<sup>574</sup> *KCC*, 4 Jan, 10 May and 28 Jun 1883, and 22 May 1884.

The landlords and their allies were far from getting everything their own way. There was a large meeting of the Irish National League at Ballinahown in January 1883 which had been declared illegal and had to be suppressed.<sup>575</sup> Individual League officers were also still regarded as dangerous, and could be arrested if found in suspicious circumstances.<sup>576</sup> “That the people of Birr were slow to join the ranks of the Land League is admitted”, but it was then claimed that their branch became one of the most efficient. The *Tribune* claimed that this was now doubtful, but recognised that there were branches of the new National League all over the county.<sup>577</sup> There was an “agitation meeting” in Birr, where Timothy Harrington (MP for Westmeath) spoke, in January 1884. The *Chronicle* commented that there was only a small turnout, and that no interest was shown in agitation<sup>578</sup> - whereas the *Tribune* claimed that there were large crowds with bands and speakers<sup>579</sup>. A large demonstration was held at Tullamore in October 1884, but the *Chronicle* reported that it was disappointing to the organisers “both in point of size and enthusiasm”.<sup>580</sup> According to the *Times*, the National League continued to make “strenuous efforts” to expand all over the country.<sup>581</sup> The Parnellite League held a convention in Tullamore at the end of 1884. They were reported as “a small but energetic faction in Ireland”, and there were “divisions and quarrels in the ranks of that huge fraud”. In discussing wider issues nationalists could also be divided - some Leaguers were against what the *Chronicle* called “the manly Irish sport of hunting”, but the *Freeman’s Journal* – which supported Home Rule - and the labourers were not.<sup>582</sup> The *Tribune* was obviously more positive about League meetings which it said were taking place all over the county.<sup>583</sup>

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<sup>575</sup> *John Bull*, 6 Jan 1883; *Birmingham Daily Post*, 2 Jan 1883.

<sup>576</sup> CO 904/10/645-648, RIC memorandum on Edenderry, 7 Jan 1883.

<sup>577</sup> *MT*, 25 Oct 1883 and 20 Nov 1884.

<sup>578</sup> *KCC*, 31 Jan 1884.

<sup>579</sup> *MT*, 31 Jan 1884.

<sup>580</sup> *KCC*, 16 Oct 1884.

<sup>581</sup> *Times*, 3 Feb 1885.

<sup>582</sup> *KCC*, 8 and 29 Jan 1885; H. Laird, *Subversive Law in Ireland 1879-1920*, p86.

<sup>583</sup> *MT*, 11 Feb, 13 May and 3 Jun 1886.

The League could still wield power at a local level, however, and against individuals. The Parnellites held a majority in the Tullamore Guardians, and allegedly dismissed a matron because she was Protestant. The Tullamore Guardians also fined a landlord £20 for illegally carrying out an eviction. Thomas Cuolahan, a Protestant, had his subscription returned by the League because he had taken over a mill during a period of rent struggle. He apologised and was re-admitted. The King's County League drew up a list of those invited to join who had not yet done so in March 1886, with the intention of putting pressure on them. Capt Fox offered 10% abatement on his rents in 1886, but the League forced the tenants "under a sense of fear" to demand 15%, so they suffered as a result.<sup>584</sup> The *Tribune*, for its part, continued to attack the influence of landlords in local affairs. With the Earl of Rosse chairing the Constitutional Association, "who dare sneeze before his high mightiness?" – although they did regard this organisation as "the forlorn hope of landlordism"<sup>585</sup>. Across the county as a whole the influence of landowners in local affairs, combined with its relative prosperity, made King's County more conservative than radical in 1886.<sup>586</sup>

The reaction of priests to the National League was mixed. The Rev Dr Bugler was apparently not in favour of the National League, although the Fr Little was, and he seemed to think that Pope Leo XIII would agree with him. Both rejected Matthew Harris, a League leader, as a suspicious character<sup>587</sup>, and he was indeed later followed by police as a suspected agitator. The Rev P. Brennan was chairman at the Parnellite League convention in Tullamore at the end of 1884.<sup>588</sup> The Rev Connolly from Edenderry was actually charged with the intimidation of local landowner James Esmonde.<sup>589</sup>

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<sup>584</sup> *KCC*, 19 Feb and 7 May 1885, 21 Jan, 11 Mar and 11 Feb 1886.

<sup>585</sup> *MT*, 25 Oct and 3 May 1883.

<sup>586</sup> W. Feingold, *The Revolt of the Tenantry* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1984), pp201-208.

<sup>587</sup> *Whitehall Review*, cited in *KCC*, 4 Jan 1883.

<sup>588</sup> *KCC*, 11 Jan 1883 and 8 Jan 1885.

<sup>589</sup> *John Bull*, 5 Jun 1886.

### **(c) Outrages and evictions.**

The Land War of 1879-1882 “had not resolved a conflict, but rather had intensified it”<sup>590</sup>. Outrages of one form or another continued to be used as weapons in the struggle on the land, leading to several districts in King’s County being proclaimed in 1883.<sup>591</sup> There were twenty-one outrages officially recorded in Leinster during March 1883, but fourteen of these were threatening letters.<sup>592</sup> Patrick Horan, a farmer from Coolnagrower near Birr, was tried in Dublin accused of threatening a boycottee with a pistol in a dark alley in 1883. He claimed it was self-defence, but in any case he had a special licence for a pistol in King’s County, and so he was let off.<sup>593</sup> A band of men fired six shots into the house of a farmer named Robinson from Edenderry in January 1883.<sup>594</sup> Pat Larkin’s car, which had been used by the police, was damaged at Cloghan. A house was burned in the Fivalee district, and there were several attacks on property and an animal in Garrycastle.<sup>595</sup> Sometimes, however, ‘outrages’ were not what they seemed, and the burning of a mill in Edenderry was thought to have been started by the landlord in order to claim compensation.<sup>596</sup> Paddy Dempsey of Rahan burned his own home to get compensation, but having broken some League rules he was in fear for his life and was put under police protection.<sup>597</sup>

A farmer from Clonsilla named Patrick Egan was viciously attacked by two men named Kinahan and Reynolds in February 1884.<sup>598</sup> In March 1884 more money was paid from the local rates as presentments for “malicious injuries” to animals and property. In May, Honora Dooley was convicted at Frankford of intimidating Joseph Rigney, a police pensioner, on three occasions, and calling him a “land-grabber”. For this she got three months in prison.

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<sup>590</sup> S. Clark, *Social Origins of the Land War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p344.

<sup>591</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 29 May 1883 vol 279 c1101*.

<sup>592</sup> *MT*, 26 Apr 1883.

<sup>593</sup> *KCC*, 4 Jan 1883.

<sup>594</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 8 Jan 1883.

<sup>595</sup> *KCC*, 23 Aug and 15 Nov 1883.

<sup>596</sup> CO 904/10/434-437, RIC confidential note on Edenderry, 9 Aug 1883.

<sup>597</sup> CO 904/10/807, anonymous memorandum (possibly from an informant), 1883 (no date).

<sup>598</sup> *John Bull*, 9 Feb 1884.

In June, boycott notices were “besmeared with filth” to stop the police taking them down. There was an outrage in August 1884, on the estate of James Corcoran at Oakley Park, when “two horses (were) ... visited by Moonlighters and dealt with according to the law of that humane society”. One, which died, was “ripped open and disembowelled, stabbed in several places”, and another, which survived, was “badly stabbed”.<sup>599</sup> This is an example of the extreme violence which particularly marked this period of hostility.

There was malicious rick burning in Garrycastle and disputes over land holdings in 1885.<sup>600</sup> In April the pew of a landowner, Richard Robinson, was smashed in the Catholic chapel at Edenderry, supposedly because he had voted against the nationalists in a Poor Law election.<sup>601</sup> An armed party, some with their faces painted white, forced their way into the house of William Gannon, a farm caretaker. There was a struggle, shots were fired, and the gang then left.<sup>602</sup> Dennis Holloran herded cattle for James Corcoran at Frankford, though he had been warned against it several times. On 29 March 1885, his windows were smashed and a shot grazed his head. Since several men were involved, and people were reticent to give evidence, it would be considered as conspiracy – but might not be classified as ‘agrarian’ because the claim was only from a ‘herd’. A landlord, James McDonnell, was paid £40 compensation under the Crimes Act for this outrage. A man bringing pigs to Birr market was boycotted in August. In September 1885, the *Chronicle* predicted troubles to come, saying “the outlook is a gloomy one”, and reported malicious burnings in Clonmacnois and boycotting in Birr stirred up by the League.<sup>603</sup> In December a bailiff from Ferbane was badly beaten and forced to eat some of the writs he was trying to serve.<sup>604</sup> The *Tribune* cited official figures for boycotting from April 1885 to February 1886, which showed that King’s County only had a maximum of seven partial boycotts at any one time, while others had

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<sup>599</sup> *KCC*, 13 Mar, 22 May, 3 July and 21 Aug 1884.

<sup>600</sup> *Ibid*, 2 and 9 April 1885.

<sup>601</sup> *John Bull*, 4 Apr 1885; *Times*, 1 Apr 1885.

<sup>602</sup> *KCC*, 18 June 1885; *Times*, 13 June 1885.

<sup>603</sup> *KCC*, 2 Jul, 13 and 6 Aug, 10 Sept, 29 Oct and 12 Nov 1885.

<sup>604</sup> *Times*, 12 Dec 1885.

considerably more, with both whole and partial boycotts.<sup>605</sup> In January 1886, there was a demonstration at a sheriff's sale of seized cattle and horses for Capt Maxwell Fox. It was reported as being rather half-hearted in the *Chronicle*<sup>606</sup>, although the *Tribune* claimed that the auctioneer had to be escorted away.<sup>607</sup> Often, the only leads that the police would get on outrages were from informants, yet they were also the source of many wild unsubstantiated rumours, and their overall value was questionable.<sup>608</sup>

According to the *Tribune*, "pure and simple terrorism appears to be the guiding principle of the government of this country at the present day"<sup>609</sup>, and the legality of evictions was sometimes called into question.<sup>610</sup> Court officials were also accused of intimidation.<sup>611</sup> The much abused Capt Dugmore, formerly of the 64<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> Staffordshire) Regiment, wrote a letter to the Chief Secretary complaining about "official intimidation". He considered it was government policy to push people to the edge, for example in making neighbours pay for one tenant's 'crime'. The *Chronicle* would not publish his letter in full, but the *Tribune* did because, although they did not agree with everything he said, they felt that he had the interests of the country at heart.<sup>612</sup> Dugmore was also the subject of police investigation.<sup>613</sup>

The authorities continued to apply their same old tactics in the countryside, but did not always get the results they expected. There was a series of evictions in July 1885, due to the non-payment of rent by a middleman – but all were returned as caretakers. This included an RIC building.<sup>614</sup> In January 1886, two bailiffs with a police escort tried to take possession of a small house in Ferbane for the landlord, John King. They were met by a

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<sup>605</sup> *MT*, 23 Mar 1886.

<sup>606</sup> *KCC*, 14 Jan 1886.

<sup>607</sup> *MT*, 14 Jan 1886.

<sup>608</sup> CO 904/10/697-704, RIC confidential report on Clara by Const J. Dolan, Mar 1883.

<sup>609</sup> *MT*, 11 Jan 1883.

<sup>610</sup> Thomas Sexton MP for Sligo, *Hansard, HC Deb 23 May 1884 vol 288 cc1175*.

<sup>611</sup> Bernard Molloy MP for King's County, *Hansard, HC Deb 10 November 1884 vol 293 cc1360-1362*.

<sup>612</sup> *MT*, 25 Jan 1883.

<sup>613</sup> CO 904/10/690-696, RIC confidential report on Tullamore by Const T. Hopkins, Mar 1883.

<sup>614</sup> *KCC*, 30 Jul 1885.

large crowd, which the RIC could not control, and the plan had to be abandoned.<sup>615</sup> On Lord Ashbrook's estates in April 1886, the RIC had to disperse a large jeering crowd on the way to carrying out evictions, and the people used the delay to set up a series of obstacles further on. The crowd had been summoned by the ringing of church bells, and they were annoyed by the consideration shown by the land agent, Arthur St George, as they seem to have wanted a crisis. In other cases on the land of T. B. Lauder JP, some money was reclaimed but crowds were also faced, in which women were most vocal. Sub-Sheriff Richard Bull and District Inspector McClelland with an RIC escort evicted Bernard Ennis in June 1886. He had been prominent in the Land League agitation, but the expected opposition from supporters did not materialise, although they did move him to a League hut.<sup>616</sup>

An anonymous letter to the editor of the *Chronicle* in January 1886 referred to a report by the League which had been printed by the newspaper. The League claimed that over 200 men had responded to the call of horns at a particular incident during the previous summer, but the letter claimed that there had only been about fifteen "Rowdies or Street Disturbers". The *Chronicle* replied that it had merely quoted figures given by other papers. The *Chronicle* in its turn accused the *Midland Tribune* of exaggerating events about Tullamore no-renters. Misinformation, bad weather, poor harvests, and heated emotions around election time all played a part in changing the atmosphere for the worst in 1885-1886. Around late March and early April 1886, the *Chronicle* felt that there were reminders of the no-rent period in one or two districts of the county, if less extreme. It later condemned "The wicked works of the National League" by "a band of conspirators", claiming that crime decreased while Gladstone's Home Rule Bill was being debated, but lawlessness flared up again when it failed.<sup>617</sup> Events during the years leading up to 1886 showed that the troubles on the land

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<sup>615</sup> *Ibid*, 14 Jan 1886; *MT*, 21 Jan 1886.

<sup>616</sup> *KCC*, 8 Apr and 17 Jun 1886.

<sup>617</sup> *Ibid*, 21 Jan, 11 Feb and 8 Apr 1886, and 17 Feb 1887.

did not disappear, but merely went through peaks and troughs according to economic and social pressures. Clashes with the army and the police also continued accordingly.

## **2. The Plan of Campaign, 1886-1891.**

### **(a) The National League, priests and tenants.**

The Plan of Campaign started nationally in October 1886, following another economic downturn linked to bad weather and falling agricultural prices.<sup>618</sup> The *Tribune* laid out the details of the Plan from *United Ireland*.<sup>619</sup> Tenants would offer what they considered to be fair rents, and if the landlord did not accept they would withhold payment as a body and put the money into a fund to defend those who then faced eviction. In King's County, the Tullamore and Birr Leaguers organised "another winter's campaign" for 1886, and a demonstration was to be held on 31 October. The League tried to introduce the Plan of Campaign into King's County, but the *Chronicle* claimed that there was not much enthusiasm, and advised people to steer clear of agitation.<sup>620</sup> Indeed, the Plan never really gained momentum in the county, although activities like those of the previous decade were revived, and 10,000 tenants pledged themselves to it.<sup>621</sup> There was a large demonstration in January 1888, against the imprisonment of Timothy Sullivan (MP for Dublin College Green), William O'Brien (MP for Cork North East) and J. Mandeville under the Crimes Act. There was also a National League demonstration at Edenderry in January 1889 that included two MPs among the speakers. The Birr Band always supported nationalist meetings, but it was broken up after the players refused to play at a reception for the release of John Powell. Fr Sheehan and the League could not cajole them into it.<sup>622</sup> Genuine emotion was more likely to be stirred up by tragic events like the death of William O'Brien MP in Clonmel gaol

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<sup>618</sup> S. Clark, *Social Origins of the Land War*, p344.

<sup>619</sup> *MT*, 28 Oct 1886.

<sup>620</sup> *KCC*, 10 Dec 1886.

<sup>621</sup> *MT*, 16 Dec 1886.

<sup>622</sup> *KCC*, 12 Jan 1888, 10 Jan and 26 Sept 1889.

(County Tipperary). This was followed by a protest meeting in Tullamore against the “legalised Lawlessness” of the government and its “outrageous acts”.<sup>623</sup> According to the *Chronicle*, the League influenced people who thought “that no man except he have a Mac or an O before his name is entitled to live in Ireland”.<sup>624</sup> As late as November 1890 there was a convention of the “National bodies and Leagues” in Tullamore, with notable leaders like Dr Bugler present<sup>625</sup>, but by the time of the Convention the following year the Plan of Campaign had ended.<sup>626</sup>

The Catholic priests were again to the fore, and even supported by some of their bishops.<sup>627</sup> They owned and edited a local paper which revealed plans for boycotting. Local League branches were also run mainly by clergy, who were more defiant than the central organisation.<sup>628</sup> Father Browne was seen as a ringleader in obstructing process-servers. Miles Kehoe brought a slander action against Fr A. Hume of Rhode, claiming he had been called a “drunken Emergency man”. Hume said he thought Kehoe was one of several ‘Emergency’ men put onto evictees’ land, who were generally armed and had been prosecuted for drunkenness. When no MPs were available, the Revs Sheehan, Tuohy, O’Halloran and Dr Lanyon all spoke against the eviction of William O’Brien at a League demonstration. They were also prepared to support Burdett’s tenants under threat of eviction.<sup>629</sup> Many priests and MPs were present at the founding of the Tenant’s Defence Association in King’s County, at Tullamore in 1889. When Fr Murphy of Tullamore died, it was claimed that “he was heart and soul with every movement calculated to better their (the people’s) condition” ... “He was in politics an ardent Nationalist”. In 1889 the Bishop of

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<sup>623</sup> *MT*, 9 Feb 1889.

<sup>624</sup> *KCC*, 29 May 1890.

<sup>625</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 24 Nov 1890.

<sup>626</sup> *Ibid*, 13 Nov 1891.

<sup>627</sup> E. Larkin, *The Roman Catholic Church and the Plan of Campaign 1886-1888* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1978), p314.

<sup>628</sup> *KCC*, 28 Oct 1886; L. P. Curtis, *Coercion and Conciliation in Ireland 1880-1892* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp232-234.

<sup>629</sup> *KCC*, 23 Dec 1886, 17 Mar and 16 Jun 1887.

Neath, the Most Rev Dr Nulty, visited Edward Harrington (MP for Kerry West) and other Catholic prisoners in Tullamore gaol.<sup>630</sup> There were many meetings throughout Ireland in December 1890 to declare against Parnell after his involvement in the O'Shea divorce case, and the reform movement became seriously divided. Dr Michael Bugler presided over such a meeting of local clergy in King's County.<sup>631</sup>

There is much evidence to suggest that the tenant farmers of King's County had no heart for a renewed struggle. The tenants of Judge William O'Connor Morris accepted a fair abatement offer. Tenants at Geashill were called to a meeting at Killeigh by the League, which was also attended by twenty-five police and a government short-hand writer, but there was no trouble. Speeches were given about refusing to pay rents, but the tenants mostly agreed to accept their landlord's offer.<sup>632</sup> On the estate of Captain Cosby the tenants were refused an abatement of 20%, partly he said because of the boycotting and intimidation that had been going on in the district. On the following day they all went in and paid anyway.<sup>633</sup> The *Tribune* encouraged "the tenants who have banded themselves together in defence of their homes and families", and blamed landlords for trying to intimidate tenants into paying their rents.<sup>634</sup> The following year, however, the editor was haranguing the people of Broughall for paying, or promising to pay, their rents and threatening that they would not get back any of the money that they had lodged with the Plan. The landlord Garvey, he said, "has broken the tenants".<sup>635</sup>

The *Chronicle* reported the "Break Down of the Plan of Campaign in the King's County" in March 1887, while at about the same time Timothy Harrington MP was claiming in the Commons that the National League was having widespread success, with over 1,500

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<sup>630</sup> *MT*, 7 Dec, 5 Jan and 27 Apr 1889.

<sup>631</sup> *KCC*, 25 Dec 1890.

<sup>632</sup> *KCC*, 10 Dec 1886.

<sup>633</sup> *Times*, 7 Dec 1886.

<sup>634</sup> *MT*, 13 Jan 1887; *Times*, 12 Apr 1887.

<sup>635</sup> *MT*, 20 Dec 1888.

branches throughout Ireland.<sup>636</sup> Thirty-eight tenants sent a letter to their landlord, Christopher Barron, saying that they would not pay rent to the new agent, Toler Garvey, on his lands near Birr. Tenants of the “badly advised” Earl of Huntingdon at Kinnitty were “obliged” to join the Plan by the landlord’s refusal to give a 20% rent abatement.<sup>637</sup> Some deposited their rent with Fathers Bracken and Scully of Frankford, but Judge Warren ordered them to pay up properly, which they did after the clergy had returned the money. On the estate of A. W. Bermingham in King’s County, thirty-five tenants asked for a 25% abatement. They had previously been refused a settlement because they were accused of being in an “illegal combination”. Both sides now agreed to 10%. A large number of tenants on the Geashill estate of Lord Digby paid their rents at 15 to 20% abatement. They rejected calls from the League to pay only on their terms, and ignored “the advise of the agitators”, of whom there were few.<sup>638</sup> Tenants who paid their rents or refused to join the Plan in the first place, like those at Broughal, risked being mobbed, booed returning from prayers, and boycotted.<sup>639</sup> In Broughal the Plan was considered to have broken down after eighteen months, by the end of 1888.<sup>640</sup> The Rhodes branch of the League had to threaten exclusion to those who did not support the boycotts.<sup>641</sup> Possibly as a result of similar pressure many public apologies appeared. One Rylands apologised to the Philipstown League branch for grabbing a farm, and David Cleary apologised at Birr for frequenting a public house run by a publican who supplied cars to eviction forces.<sup>642</sup>

In December 1889, there was a large convention in Tullamore to launch the Irish Tenants’ Defence Association, which was to replace the “hasty and intemperate Plan of Campaign”.

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<sup>636</sup> T. Harrington MP for Dublin Harbour, *Hansard, HC Deb 01 April 1887 vol 313 cc313-314*.

<sup>637</sup> *MT*, 13 Jan 1887.

<sup>638</sup> *KCC*, 17 Mar and 8 Dec 1887.

<sup>639</sup> British Library St Pancras, Balfour Papers ADD 49822, Draft Bills & comments etc, p116b.

<sup>640</sup> *Times*, 6 Dec 1888; *Blackburn Standard*, 8 Dec 1888.

<sup>641</sup> *Times*, 23 Apr 1888.

<sup>642</sup> *Ireland in 1887* (Dublin: The Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, 1887), pp49 & 63.

In attendance was Joseph Fox (MP for King's County, Tullamore Division).<sup>643</sup> The *Tribune* published a list of subscribers to the Tenant's Defence Fund, which included the editor, three priests and one JP. John Powell, the proprietor of the *Tribune*, was also chairman of the committee formed to raise funds for the erection of a monument to the 'Manchester Martyrs' - one of whom, Michael Larkin, had been a native of Birr. Attempts were still made to gain control in local affairs, hence when Poor Law Guardian elections in Birr went against the old order, the *Tribune* taunted: "Lord Rosse – step aside!" Some success was claimed when some tenants were able to buy farms cheaply after they had been put up for sale by the landlords. John Kelly of the League said that evictions could not go on as they cost too much, and landlords "have very little money to spare"<sup>644</sup>. Across Ireland the Plan did have a number of victories, but its political impact was just as important in shaping future events, and it renewed the alienation of the police, if not the army too.<sup>645</sup>

#### **(b) The authorities and the landlords.**

The Somersets had been "thoroughly popular", but were replaced at Birr in October 1886 by the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The South Wales Borderers, whose short stay had mixed reports.<sup>646</sup> Of their six years at different stations in Ireland, the regimental history conceded that relations with the civilian population were often strained, and that they were glad to return to England in 1889<sup>647</sup> – although their sojourn in Birr was peaceful. Although there was an SWB concert at Birr barracks in January 1887, few civilians attended.<sup>648</sup> The *Tribune* showed unusual interest and reported that the sergeants' St Patrick's night ball, with civilians, had been very good. Some articles did appear in the *Chronicle* that showed an interest in the battalion and

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<sup>643</sup> *KCC*, 12 Dec 1889.

<sup>644</sup> *MT*, 3 and 24 Jan 1891, 31 Mar and 26 May 1887.

<sup>645</sup> R. Kee, *The Green Flag: A History of Irish Nationalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2000), p407.

<sup>646</sup> *KCC*, 14 Oct 1886; G. Paton et al (eds), *Historical Records of the 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment From its Formation in 1689* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co, 1892), p277; SCA DD/SLI/1/1 1/Som Digest, 12 Oct 1886; Everett, *Somerset L I*, p295.

<sup>647</sup> C. T. Atkinson, *The South Wales Borderers, 24<sup>th</sup> Foot, 1689-1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937), pp364-365.

<sup>648</sup> *KCC*, 30 Dec 1886 and 6 Jan 1887.

the army in general<sup>649</sup>, and they were in Birr for the Jubilee celebrations in June 1887.<sup>650</sup> In September 1887 it was announced that 1<sup>st</sup> SWB were due to move to Dublin, and they were to be replaced at Birr by the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Royal Scots Fusiliers from Fermoy.<sup>651</sup>

It is interesting to note how different regiments could attract different responses, so it is not always accurate to talk about attitudes towards the army in general. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Royal Scots Fusiliers marched from Birr to Bracken's Lough in December 1887, and "a number of civilians accompanied the regiment", possibly attracted by the bagpipes. From then on their social engagements seemed to make them popular with the local people. There was a large article on an evening of musical entertainment put on by the RSF and some civilians at Tullamore in 1888. The audience almost filled the Crown Court. There was a children's fete at Birr barracks for soldiers' children in 1889, and local military sports were also reported – with the RSF, using the fourteen acres of the barrack grounds. In November 1889, the RSF at Tullamore put on a variety entertainment in the Court House. The first show in the afternoon was free for children, and the second in the evening was for charity. There was a large turnout, and "‘Youth and Beauty’ assembled to see and be seen".<sup>652</sup>

The battalion nevertheless had its share of tragedy while at Birr. In August 1888, C/Sgt Michael Burns, aged 31, was in charge of a party escorting a drunken Lance-Sgt to Birr barracks when he had a fit and subsequently died. "So many deaths of soldiers have occurred in Parsonstown that it would be possible to learn from the headstones at the Cemetery alone, the name of every regiment that has been stationed at Birr Barracks." There was a long article about Lieut Douglas A. Ross of 1<sup>st</sup> RSF at Birr, who was accidentally killed whilst duck shooting at Lough Derg. The top of his head was blown away

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<sup>649</sup> *Ibid*, 24 Mar and 23 Jun 1887.

<sup>650</sup> G. Paton, *Historical Records of the 24<sup>th</sup>*, p277.

<sup>651</sup> *KCC*, 8 Sept 1887.

<sup>652</sup> *Ibid*, 22 Dec 1887, 2 Feb 1888, 5 and 19 Sept, and 5 Dec 1889.

when he stood up in front of his companion, Lieut C. M. B. Godfrey.<sup>653</sup> The *Tribune* reported a fight where three drunken Scots Fusiliers attacked a grocer's shop in Birr, but a crowd intervened and they then had to be rescued by the police. This seems to have been an isolated incident and the paper reported favourably on the regiment's detachment and band in Tullamore.<sup>654</sup>

The RSF were in Ireland at a difficult time, and both local newspapers agreed that their discipline and standing with the community were maintained despite some unpopular work including evictions. This was largely because the worst aspects of their role were carried out beyond the boundaries of King's County and their headquarters at Birr. Most regiments had outstations to be manned, and in December 1888, for example, the 1<sup>st</sup> RSF had detachments in Tullamore, Loughrea (County Galway) and the Curragh (County Kildare).<sup>655</sup> With Birr being at the western end of the county, troops from there often found themselves called into neighbouring counties.

The *Chronicle* continued to foster support for the Leinsters, with a large article on the presentation of new colours to 1<sup>st</sup> Leinsters in India and an account of the fighting in India and the Leinsters' casualties. There was news of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Leinsters move to the East, because of local interest. The Crinkle barracks fire engine helped at a number of fires in Birr. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters were successfully inspected at Birr in 1889, with the militia battalion approximately 900 strong. In 1891 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters on training, and on a route march with their band, were reported as being very soldierlike. They were inspected again in July 1891, but with only 465 NCOs and men, and still using old Martini-Henry rifles. They had a good report, however, and "their conduct was excellent" for the whole month. The *Chronicle* felt that NCOs in the army were quite young, and that young members of the militia should be

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<sup>653</sup> *Ibid*, 23 Aug 1888 and 8 Aug 1889.

<sup>654</sup> *MT*, 20 Sept 1888, 8 Jun and 7 Dec 1889.

<sup>655</sup> *KCC*, 27 Dec 1888.

encouraged to join the regulars to fill the many vacancies and to seek promotion. Understandably, however, militia officers (like those in 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters) were not keen to encourage men to leave.<sup>656</sup>

Improved prospects for harvests in 1887 did something to divert attention away from protests<sup>657</sup>, but from 1891 onwards, concern over the future of Birr barracks became a recurrent theme, highlighting the economic and social importance of the military connection. Better shooting ranges were needed for the new Lee-Enfield rifle, and it was proposed that one could be built between Clonohill and Thomastown. Lord Rosse wanted to retain Birr barracks, and other owners of the bogs also hoped that their interests would be protected. It was thought that Lord Wolseley's recent official tour might lead to some military stations being evacuated. The *Chronicle* hoped that Birr barracks remained "most healthy", and thought that it would be "suicidal" for tenants to put in any exorbitant claims. It was hoped that the tenants would meet the authorities in the same spirit as the landlords. Government building contracts throughout Ireland, including repairs at Birr and Tullamore, "will prove a boon to the unemployed and circulate money in our towns". It was felt essential that Birr barracks be retained, and that bog owners should be moderate in their asking price for the sale of any land. If they were not, the government would go elsewhere, they would get nothing, and the town as a whole would suffer if the regimental headquarters were withdrawn. Lord Wolseley paid a private visit to Lord Rosse in September 1891, then visited the York and Lancaster Regiment at Birr barracks, where he also saw the rifle range.<sup>658</sup>

During this period, the *Chronicle* did much to emphasise the many faceted work of the RIC. There were some very serious crimes, but a lot of mundane work as well as incidents relating to the agitation. There were several violent crimes in Birr during 1887, for example a

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<sup>656</sup> *Ibid*, 31 Mar 1887, 15 Mar 1888, 24 Jan 1889, 12 Nov 1891, 18 Jul 1889, 23 and 30 Jul and 6 Aug 1891.

<sup>657</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Jul 1887.

<sup>658</sup> *KCC*, 26 Feb, 19 Mar and 24 Sept 1891.

stabbing in September, and a child was murdered in Birr in July 1889 - “butchered” by an unknown killer. In 1891, a six year old girl was murdered at Clara, but overall such crimes were rare. The police had some successes in this area, for example Head-Constable William Roden left Birr after six years in March 1887, and an article on his good conduct included the story of his capture of a murderer.<sup>659</sup>

Most RIC work was more routine, although it is interesting to note an increased use of detectives. Sgt Colgan caught deserter Thomas Wade from a description in the *Hue & Cry*. Short-service soldiers were not so easy to spot from their bearing as old soldiers, if they deserted. Two inveterate deserters, Ptes Callaghan and Malone of the Connaught Rangers, had deserted six times from Galway to their homes in Birr. RIC Sgt Colgan in plain clothes with Const Drennan searched for them, but they had scouts out who whistled and signalled to help the deserters, although they eventually surrendered. Sgt Colgan had also been successful as a detective in dealing with pheasant poaching. The *Chronicle* claimed that the RIC were unrivalled in successful cases – catching thieves, exposing publicans doctoring drink, and catching illegal porter sellers. The RIC “display a marked ability in tracing the criminals and bringing them to justice”. The RIC quickly discovered and disposed of a fortune-telling case in Banagher in 1891, proving the “thorough efficiency of this splendid force”<sup>660</sup>.

Policemen were reported by the *Chronicle* as independent, incorruptible and intelligent, with men now being drawn from a higher class – young men with opportunities for promotion.<sup>661</sup> Sgt Nevin and other policemen manned a fire engine to deal with the fire in a hay store in Birr.<sup>662</sup> More mundanely, RIC cases at the Tullamore sessions in December 1891 included drunkenness, a tramp drunk and disorderly, having a dog without a muzzle, and stealing

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<sup>659</sup> *Ibid*, 8 Sept 1887, 18 Jul 1889, 31 Dec 1891 and 10 Mar 1887.

<sup>660</sup> *Ibid*, 12 Nov 1891, 18 Sept 1890, 25 Jun, 9 Jul and 1 Oct 1891.

<sup>661</sup> *Ibid*, 1 Oct 1891.

<sup>662</sup> *MT*, 24 Mar 1887.

timber.<sup>663</sup> Acting-Sgt McPartland arrested Joseph Harte at Birr for being drunk and disorderly, resisting arrest and assaulting the police. Sgts McPartland and Colgan tackled the insane John Hamilton of Birr, who had attacked his wife and family, killing one of the children.<sup>664</sup> Sometimes their presence proved a deterrence, as when a large party of RIC attended a hurling tournament outside Birr in 1887, but when nothing happened it was sometimes seen as a waste of resources.<sup>665</sup> In May 1889 the Special Commission claimed that King's County was one of those with boycotting but no crime.<sup>666</sup>

The King's County RIC were successfully inspected by Deputy Inspector General Thynne in 1890, and low numbers of court cases seem to indicate their continuing success. There were no crimes for the Quarter Sessions at Birr in the summer of 1890, and in January 1891 there was only one case for trial in King's County - an alleged shoplifting.<sup>667</sup> There was increased agitation due to the Plan of Campaign, but this was intermittent, and not on the same scale as the earlier Land War – although it was claimed in the Commons that a constable in King's County had resigned due to the introduction of the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Act.<sup>668</sup> Shadowing suspects and the use of informers continued with the same mixed results, but officially there were estimated to be 12,000 IRB in Leinster, who were still seen as a real threat.<sup>669</sup> There were no malicious injuries or damages in King's County during summer 1890, except in Garrycastle, which was notorious for burnings.<sup>670</sup>

There were some instances of good relations with the local population, for example a football challenge between Tullamore RIC and Tullamore Fire Brigade, but there were also a number of complaints against the police. An RIC inspector was accused of using threatening

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<sup>663</sup> *KCC*, 31 Dec 1891.

<sup>664</sup> *MT*, 13 Jan 1887 and 16 Feb 1889.

<sup>665</sup> *KCC*, 21 Jul 1887.

<sup>666</sup> *Times*, 22 May 1889.

<sup>667</sup> *KCC*, 15 May and 5 Jun 1890, and 15 Jan 1891.

<sup>668</sup> T. Sexton MP for Belfast West, *Hansard, HC Deb 26 July 1887 vol 318 cc51-2*.

<sup>669</sup> CO 904/15/1/16, RIC memorandum on the IRB, Sep 1890.

<sup>670</sup> *KCC*, 3 Jul 1890.

language towards railway workers at a demonstration in favour of John Dillon. He supposedly said that the leader “would get his neck wrung”, but no action was taken against him. The *Chronicle* said that few complaints were made against the RIC, and then only minor ones, “though their enemies are numerous”. Nationalists were always looking for a chance, but “invariably fail in their efforts to bring home any serious charge”. In 1891, Const Begley was found innocent at Birr of taking money from a drunken prisoner named Hearn, and there were also cases against the RIC for assault, and for assisting an eviction not properly administered. The strictness of the police was shown by the charges made against them by their own officers – for example against Sgts Thornton (Crinkle) and McKenna (Tullamore) for minor infringements in 1890.<sup>671</sup> This situation could be abused, however. Previous arguments were thought to be behind Const Keon of Clonbullogue charging Const Kiely with being drunk on duty, and Sgt Magill with allowing it.<sup>672</sup>

Those who worked with the RIC also faced criticism. Dr James Ridley, the medical officer of Tullamore prison, committed suicide at Fermoy on 20 July 1888. The verdict was later given that he had killed himself with a razor due to temporary insanity “produced by the apprehension of disclosures at the Mitchelstown inquest” – referring to his possible misconduct under pressure. A case was heard at Naas, County Kildare, where Patrick Flynn and a Mr Hennessy claimed damages for alleged malicious prosecution by King’s County magistrate Mr Tyrrell. They had originally been summoned on the basis of suspicion, and won this case because the magistrate had not followed correct procedures.<sup>673</sup> In King’s County there were eighty-four Protestant magistrates and only twenty-three Catholics in 1886, prompting the *Tribune* to comment that “the law is administered ... by a class of men, landlords and their agents, who have proved themselves to be implacable enemies of the

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<sup>671</sup> *Ibid*, 10 and 17 Mar 1887, 5 Jul 1888, 8 May 1890, 9 Jul and 31 Dec 1891.

<sup>672</sup> *MT*, 20 Sept 1888.

<sup>673</sup> *KCC*, 9 and 23 Aug 1888, and 10 Jan 1889.

people”<sup>674</sup>. Some Protestants felt like Henry Clarke JP from Philipstown, who claimed in 1886: “I have never observed an instance of intolerance amongst my Catholic neighbours ... (though) we are in these parts the few amongst the many”<sup>675</sup> - but many Catholics felt that they suffered intolerance from Protestants as represented by the magistracy and senior police officers.

Faced with the Plan of Campaign, the landlords’ King’s County Constitutional Association met in February 1887, with the Earl of Rosse still as chairman. It was proposed that the Association should divide into two, to match the new parliamentary districts of the county with an enlarged franchise. Ladies attended for the first time, and were seen as potentially useful in recruiting. The local Constitutional Association continued to meet annually.<sup>676</sup> Rosse was also encouraged to support the Land Corporation of Ireland, an organisation specifically formed to counter the Plan of Campaign.<sup>677</sup> There was a meeting of the King’s County Orangemen in July 1887. Their positive attitude meant that Jubilee celebrations were not marred, but there was a general fear that Home Rule would lead to civil war. The King’s County Orangemen also continued to meet annually on private estates, like Golden Grove.<sup>678</sup> The *Tribune* felt that “south of the Boyne there is not such another hot-bed of Orangeism as Birr”, with the castle, the garrison, and the symbols of the Cumberland column and the Crimean cannon all helping to suppress nationalism.<sup>679</sup> The growth of unionism was another factor, and there was a large unionist demonstration in Birr under the Irish Unionist Alliance in 1891.<sup>680</sup>

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<sup>674</sup> *MT*, 27 Jan 1887.

<sup>675</sup> A. Webb, *The Opinions of Some Protestants Regarding Their Irish-Catholic Fellow-Countrymen* (Dublin: Richard D Webb and Son, 1886), p8.

<sup>676</sup> *KCC*, 17 Feb 1887, 9 Feb 1888 and 31 Jan 1889.

<sup>677</sup> Rosse Papers M14, letter from Arthur Kavanagh of County Carlow to the Earl of Rosse, 1 Feb 1887.

<sup>678</sup> *KCC*, 21 Jul 1887, 19 Jul 1888 and 17 Jul 1890.

<sup>679</sup> *MT*, 24 Jan 1891.

<sup>680</sup> *Times*, 25 Nov 1891.

Opposition was stirred up by landlords like His Honour William O'Connor Morris, of Gortnamona, who unsuccessfully tried to increase the rent of his tenant Mary Gonoude. The hypocrisy of some Nationalists continued, with the likes of Bernard Molloy (MP for King's County) having several tenants summoned for non-payment of rent. Yet there was another side to the coin. F. T. Dawes-Longworth was an MP, Lord Lieutenant of King's County, a lawyer, a JP and a landowner in several counties. His residence was Glynwood. He introduced improvements in draining and reclaiming wasteland, and improved his cattle by introducing Hereford bulls. He was "a landlord of remarkable indulgence and generosity", and relations with his tenants remained good over "the most trying period that ever existed".<sup>681</sup> An extreme example of how landlords were feeling financial pressure was Edward Barr Reid of Tinnymuck. He was found dead in bed in 1890, and although his house appeared clean on the outside, inside it was a "plague-breeding nest" crawling with vermin.<sup>682</sup>

### **(c) The tactics of the National League.**

The tactics used during this period were largely tried and tested methods applied where there were grievances, rather than the concentration of efforts on specifically targeted estates which happened in other counties.<sup>683</sup> Michael Hill of Lumville, near Edenderry, was boycotted because his father had taken over an evictee's farm. He was not even allowed a coffin for his mother's funeral.<sup>684</sup> Concerns were raised in the Commons about the effect of boycotting and intimidation in King's County, based on RIC reports.<sup>685</sup> When Birr mill owner Joseph Studholme was away, some of his workers refused to accept corn from Morgan Hogan.<sup>686</sup> Morgan Hogan of Redwood was boycotted for some time, and also had RIC

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<sup>681</sup> *KCC*, 17 Oct 1889, 20 Jan 1887 and 19 Dec 1889.

<sup>682</sup> *MT*, 27 Sept 1890.

<sup>683</sup> S. Clark, *Social Origins of the Land War*, pp245-346.

<sup>684</sup> *KCC*, 7 Oct 1886.

<sup>685</sup> W. Hayes Fisher, Conservative MP for Fulham, *Hansard, HC Deb 29 March 1887 vol 312 cc1851-1855*.

<sup>686</sup> *KCC*, 31 Mar 1887.

protection for a while. In July 1887, some of his out-offices were burnt down.<sup>687</sup> Patrick Doolan was threatened with boycotting for working for Hogan, and John Ryan was eventually convicted for this intimidation.<sup>688</sup> In Lusmagh, the pupils boycotted the National School because the “monitress” had attended the wedding of a boycottee.<sup>689</sup> In July 1887 there were eleven boycotting cases in the county, involving eighty-six people, and twenty-six people protected by patrols. A single evicted farm at Mucklagh saw threats from the Rahan League branch force a tenant out, prevent bids for it at auction, and boycott those who wanted to graze cattle there. Later on a herdhouse there was burned down. Three sheep were killed on an evicted farm at Springfield, owned by an absentee landlord, Mr Lucas.<sup>690</sup> In February 1888 a labourer named Gaffney was boycotted at Philipstown, and his child died possibly as a result of that.<sup>691</sup>

In December 1886, the *Chronicle* had claimed that King’s County “has hitherto enjoyed a remarkable immunity from agitation” – but that was soon to change. Process-server Treacy tried to serve eviction notices at Glaskill, but was deterred by a crowd summoned by horns. He seems to have been popular, and so there was no violence, but Daniel Quin at Ballycumber was obstructed and stoned.<sup>692</sup> Quin was an old man, and he died a week after this attack. Another process-server, Patrick McMahon, was knocked down and beaten by a crowd called together by ringing the chapel bell, and he had to throw away his processes.<sup>693</sup> Michael Kenny was a caretaker on evicted land and was condemned by the Edenberry branch of the National League. He left after threats were made against him, but he told the police he would not swear against his persecutors “through fear of the consequences”<sup>694</sup>. A

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<sup>687</sup> *KCC*, 14 Jul 1887; *Belfast News-Letter*, 16 Jul 1887.

<sup>688</sup> *KCC*, 25 Aug and 20 Oct 1887.

<sup>689</sup> *KCC*, 14 Jul 1887; Lord Fitzgerald, *Hansard*, *HL Deb 04 May 1888 vol 325 c1340*.

<sup>690</sup> British Library St Pancras, Balfour Papers ADD 49822, p116. Report on King’s County by Midland Division Magistrate A Butler, July 1887.

<sup>691</sup> *Times*, 27 Feb 1888.

<sup>692</sup> *KCC*, 23 Dec 1886.

<sup>693</sup> BLS Balfour ADD 49822, p116b. Report on King’s County by Midland Division Magistrate A. Butler, July 1887.

<sup>694</sup> *Ibid*, p105. Report by King’s County branches of the INL, 20 May 1887.

case of intimidation on a farm on Lady Bury's estate was given in the Commons. The man who took on the farm despite threatening notices was eventually forced to leave through intimidation, and the farm stock and produce were then boycotted.<sup>695</sup> Bailiffs with seized cattle were attacked in King's County by a group with bill-hooks and sticks, but were rescued by the arrival of the police. Michael Doughan and Thomas Ormonde were tried for intimidation at Shinrone. As before, intimidation was sometimes a cover for other activities - threatening letters were sent by 'Captain Moonlight' at Portarlinton, but they appear to have been more part of a personal feud and the case was dismissed. Seven acres of plantation were burned, including some at Coolderry. The landowner, Capt A. H. Burdett, was granted compensation from the Barony of Garrycastle, although there was doubt as to whether it was malicious or not.<sup>696</sup>

Much property was again destroyed, this time in the wake of the defeat of the First Home Rule Bill in 1886. A labourer's cottage was burned down in February 1887. It had been empty, but a new tenant was not a member of the League.<sup>697</sup> The windows of the Presbyterian Church in Birr were smashed in June 1887, indicating the sectarian nature of the hostilities, although local Catholics condemned it.<sup>698</sup> The house of Chapman, caretaker of a boycotted farm at Mucklagh, was burnt down later in the same year. Burnings were common in King's County by August 1887, especially near Birr, with an average of one a week<sup>699</sup>, and they continued for the rest of the year.<sup>700</sup> The police had some success against the arsonists. When five tons of hay was burned at Cloghan in 1887, Sgt Dunne arrested James Daly and John Chancy. Constable Byrnes arrested Thomas Killeen and Thomas McCormack for burning a ten-ton hayrick of John Hannin JP at the start of June

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<sup>695</sup> E. King-Harman MP for the Isle of Thanet, *Hansard, HC Deb 29 July 1887 vol 318 cc543-4*.

<sup>696</sup> *KCC*, 1 and 22 Dec, and 12 May 1887.

<sup>697</sup> *Ibid*, 24 Feb 1887.

<sup>698</sup> *Times*, 16 Jun 1887.

<sup>699</sup> *KCC*, 21 Jul and 25 Aug 1887.

<sup>700</sup> *Ibid*, 15 Sept and 17 Nov 1887; *Times*, 6 Sep 1887.

1888.<sup>701</sup> Another hayrick burning at Birr was noted as “the work of a practised hand”. The *Tribune* did at least condemn arson attacks and the vandalism to the Presbyterian church in Birr.<sup>702</sup>

There were demonstrations of popular support for the agitation, although the *Chronicle* usually suggested that they were incited by a minority of troublemakers. There was a rowdy demonstration near the residence of David Sherlock of Rahan, a moderate landlord in 1887. Broken bottles were used as trumpets by “malicious idiots” and “puppets of the Irish agitation”. Their cries included: “Hurrah for the Plan of Campaign”. From a crowd of fifty, twelve were charged. Sgt E. McGovern went through the mob taking away horns and they became more threatening, but no major incident occurred. The area was noted as disturbed.<sup>703</sup> There was a nationalist demonstration in Frankford during April 1888, in reaction to landlord Toler Garvey serving several eviction notices.<sup>704</sup> There were some examples of the papers trying to influence events. Tenant William O’Brien refused to pay rent to landlord William Kennedy Marshall. According to the *Chronicle*, the *Tribune* made much of the story, and the Birr branch of the League was “coerced” into organising a demonstration and building a hut for him.<sup>705</sup> The *Tribune* itself tried to rally support for the League and encourage attendance at demonstrations – such as that against the “youthful and inexperienced rack-renting landlord”, Mr Burdett.<sup>706</sup> At Banagher, a black flag with the motto “Queen’s Jubilee; down with royalty; hurrah for liberty” was put up in the tower of ‘The County Galway’ inn. It had to be taken down by the caretaker. There can be little doubt though, that help for victims of eviction or confiscation was genuine. At Philipstown in 1887,

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<sup>701</sup> *KCC*, 1 Dec 1887 and 14 Jun 1888.

<sup>702</sup> *MT*, 25 Oct 1888, 16 Jun and 8 Sept 1887.

<sup>703</sup> *KCC*, 24 Mar 1887.

<sup>704</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 16 Apr 1888.

<sup>705</sup> *KCC*, 16 Jun 1887.

<sup>706</sup> *MT*, 3 Feb and 17 Mar 1887.

Thomas Kelly, James Molloy and a girl were all charged under the Crimes Act with rescuing seized cattle.<sup>707</sup>

John Powell, proprietor and editor of the *Midland Tribune*, was tried at Birr accused of intimidating Broughal tenants who had paid their rents and withdrawn from the Plan of Campaign. His was a career which clearly illustrated the use of newspapers to influence events. He was found guilty of intimidation through the articles he published in December 1888, and was given three months hard labour at Tullamore. This led to outrages in retaliation - an attempt was made to wreck the train carrying Mr Mercer RM at Shannonbridge, and windows were smashed at the home of Mr Sheehy RM.<sup>708</sup> Powell was imprisoned again in August 1890. The *Chronicle* saw him as a scapegoat, with others hiding behind him – he had to “please his bloodthirsty patrons, the wire-pullers”. There were few to see him off, and there was no response to a call for three cheers. Clearly, his “fellow patriots ... (don’t) care ... whether he rots in prison or not”. “The League Outrages Inquiry” articles gave details of violence elsewhere in Ireland, and The League Outrages Report was published in February 1890, which condemned both the Irish Parliamentary Party and the Land League, seemingly justifying the accusations of the *Chronicle*. Although there were outrages in the neighbouring barony of Lower Ormonde (County Tipperary), King’s County had few in May 1890 – “its inhabitants are peaceful and law-abiding”<sup>709</sup> – and in July the *Times* claimed that serious crime had “practically ceased to exist” in the county.<sup>710</sup> RIC figures claimed that the number of National League branches in King’s County dropped from thirteen to three in 1891.<sup>711</sup>

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<sup>707</sup> *KCC*, 7 Jul and 27 Oct 1887.

<sup>708</sup> *Ibid*, 31 Jan 1889; *Times*, 26 Jan 1889.

<sup>709</sup> *KCC*, 14 Aug 1890, 22 and 29 Nov, 6, 13 and 20 Dec 1888, 27 Feb 8 May 1890.

<sup>710</sup> *Times*, 31 Jul 1890.

<sup>711</sup> CO 904/15/75/2, RIC memorandum, Dec 1891.

(d) **The authorities' response.**

The authorities responded in the usual way to outrages - King's County was one of eighteen counties fully proclaimed in July 1887<sup>712</sup> - and evictions followed for challenges to rent prices. Plans to gather a crowd together one night to intimidate Mr Sherlock, an unpopular landowner, were thwarted by the RIC who also responded to the blowing of horns, and eleven arrests were made.<sup>713</sup> Patrick Hogan (alias Patrick Stanton), a suspected Moonlighter, was imprisoned for vagrancy after behaving suspiciously near a farm.<sup>714</sup> In December 1886, William Lander carried out evictions at Clonfanlough, including "two helpless widows and their six fatherless children", with the help of fifty RIC and officials.<sup>715</sup> In April 1887 Alfred Pease attacked the scale of evictions in King's County, and claimed that "a section of the Irish landlords have been morally as criminal in their dealings with the Irish tenants as any society of conspirators or tenants have been to them"<sup>716</sup>. In fact the scale of evictions was low in comparison even with some other counties in Leinster – see Table 3, page 182.<sup>717</sup>

The legality of evictions was sometimes challenged, even in parliament, but the trend could not be halted.<sup>718</sup> Eight farms were seized under writ and put up for sale at Tullamore in 1887, and John Kelly of the Central League advised tenants to act on the Plan of Campaign.<sup>719</sup>

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<sup>712</sup> *Times*, 25 Jul 1887; A. J. Balfour, Chief Secretary for Ireland, *Hansard, HC Deb 25 July 1887 vol 317 c1901*.

<sup>713</sup> A. J. Balfour ADD 49822, p116.

<sup>714</sup> *KCC*, 15 Sept 1887.

<sup>715</sup> *MT*, 16 Dec 1886.

<sup>716</sup> A. E. Pease MP for York, *Hansard, HC Deb 27 April 1887 vol 314 cc111-122*.

<sup>717</sup> *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1887 (C.5095) Evictions (Ireland)*, p2. (See Table 3, p182).

<sup>718</sup> M. Harris MP for Galway East, *Hansard, HC Deb 20 December 1888 vol 332 c865*.

<sup>719</sup> *KCC*, 26 May 1887.

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**TABLE 3 - Total number of evictions across Leinster, April – June 1887**

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Province	County	Total families evicted
<b>Leinster</b>		<b>205</b>
	Carlow	6
	Dublin	7
	Kildare	8
	Kilkenny	14
	King's County	21
	Longford	92
	Louth	6
	Meath	15
	Queen's County	43
	Westmeath	17
	Wexford	36
	Wicklow	3

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Source: HCPP 1887 (C.5095) Evictions (Ireland)

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The level of violence at evictions was again less than elsewhere in Ireland, but still tragic for those involved, and a continuing blight on relations with the army and the police.<sup>720</sup> There was a town eviction at Tullamore, when a Flanagan was ejected for non-payment of rent. There was a struggle and a bailiff was hit in the face by a brick. Sub-Sheriff Richard Ball was seriously wounded by another, which had been thrown by a woman “who merely laughed at the success of her fiendish acts”. The police got a ladder by which to enter the house, but a bailiff was pushed down when he tried to use it. Eventually the RIC had to take over and arrested the occupant and his two sisters.<sup>721</sup> Rody Dooley, his wife and ten children were evicted from the Broughal estate of Christopher Bannon for non-payment of rent, and cast out into a sleet and snow storm, in what the *Tribune* described as “the Devil’s work”. Dooley himself wrote a lucid letter to the *Tribune* about it.<sup>722</sup> He was allowed to remove some manure and turf, and about 200 people turned up to farm the ground, but

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<sup>720</sup> L. P. Curtis, *The Depiction of Eviction in Ireland 1845-1910* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2011), pp136-158.

<sup>721</sup> *KCC*, 22 Dec 1887.

<sup>722</sup> *MT*, 29 Mar and 5 Apr 1888.

fourteen of the ringleaders were arrested and imprisoned for unlawful assembly.<sup>723</sup> When they were released from Tullamore gaol, “a contingent of sympathisers had come from Frankford”.<sup>724</sup>

William Hanlon had been evicted following a dispute over land with Edward Whitten, and Whitten then got the protection of two ‘Emergency’ men and two constables. In July 1889 there was a confrontation between Whitten and Hanlon’s brother Robert, who was brandishing a pistol. Whitten got the pistol off him with the help of an ‘Emergency’ man, and Hanlon was arrested. William Hanlon then started another fight, during which he was shot dead by Whitten. The RIC heard two shots, and there was a suspicion that Whitten may have shot Hanlon deliberately, but he was cleared and released, and the judge praised him for his courage. Robert Hanlon was then arrested for attempted murder.<sup>725</sup> The *Tribune* claimed that the nephew of William O’Brien, who had been evicted by Laurence Kennedy, was later attacked by ‘Emergency’ man Oakley, who had occupied the uncle’s farm since the eviction. Margaret Kelly, another of Kennedy’s tenants, was allowed to return after eviction, but at an increased rent.<sup>726</sup> Catherine Murray of Coolnalina was partially evicted in July 1891. Half her things were put out, and half were not. She had two daughters – one was sick in bed, and the other was let back in as caretaker to nurse her, but the mother was not. Two ‘Emergency’ men were left on guard.<sup>727</sup> Those who were involved in resistance at evictions could be brought to trial afterwards, as was the case with John Flanagan and his two sisters, who were charged under the Coercion Act with assaulting and obstructing Sub-Sheriff Ball.<sup>728</sup>

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<sup>723</sup> *KCC*, 3 May 1888; *MT*, 10 May 1888.

<sup>724</sup> *KCC*, 31 May 1888.

<sup>725</sup> *Ibid*, 8 and 15 Aug, and 19 Sept 1889.

<sup>726</sup> *MT*, 30 Aug and 13 Sept 1888.

<sup>727</sup> *KCC*, 30 Jul 1891.

<sup>728</sup> *MT*, 29 Dec 1887.

**(e) Focus – The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the York and Lancaster Regiment, Birr 1889 - 1892.**

In mid-December 1889, the 1<sup>st</sup> RSF moved to Dublin, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the York and Lancaster Regiment took over in Birr with outlying detachments at Tullamore, Kildare (County Kildare) - transferred to Athlone (County Westmeath) in 1892 - and Portumna (County Galway).<sup>729</sup> The York and Lancasters had their own regimental journal – the *Tiger and the Rose* – which was not common at the time, and which was seen as showing the concern of the officers for their men. The *Chronicle* used this as a source for news about the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion, emphasising their good relations with the local population. It claimed that “Our Local Military Band” of the York and Lancasters was well known in Birr – see Figure 3, page 308 - and praised at the Royal Military Exhibition in London. “Parsontonians of superior culture” agreed.<sup>730</sup>

In May 1890 the York and Lancasters celebrated the Queen’s birthday with a trooping of the colour parade, together with the Leinsters Depot<sup>731</sup>, and in July they completed successful manoeuvres with 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters at Birr. In September 1890, the York and Lancasters swapped detachments at Tullamore after nine months. The men under Capt Hughes and Lieut Baines had “made many friends in Tullamore and were altogether extremely popular in the town”. They took one prisoner with them – a soldier who had deserted his sentry post to marry without leave. In 1891, a similar report noted that Capt Broughton and Lieut Palmer with D Company, 1<sup>st</sup> York and Lancasters at Birr, took over at Tullamore from Capt Aiken and Lt Armstrong with E Company. At Tullamore, “very friendly relations existed between them and the townspeople. They were remarkably well-conducted.” “Young soldiers” of the York and Lancasters were “smart, cleanly (sic), and kindly looking fellows at home”. The

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<sup>729</sup> KCC, 5 Dec 1889; H. C. Wylly, *The York and Lancaster Regiment 1758-1919 (Vol 1)* (Unknown, 1930), p133; E. Broughton, *Memoirs of the 65<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion the York and Lancaster Regiment, 1756-1913* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1914), pp101 and 105.

<sup>730</sup> KCC, 2 Jan, 3 Apr and 5 Jun 1890.

<sup>731</sup> E. Broughton, *Memoirs of the 65<sup>th</sup>*, p102.

officers took an interest in their welfare by encouraging sports and started a Soldiers Institute.<sup>732</sup> All of this was confirmed by several successful inspections during their time at Birr, including one by General Wolseley.<sup>733</sup>

General interest in the regiment was reflected in a number of articles about domestic events. Christmas social events at Birr barracks, for example, with the Depot and the York and Lancasters, were attended by soldiers and “civilian friends”.<sup>734</sup> What crime there was involving soldiers of the battalion, seemed to be mainly within the military ranks. There was a robbery at Birr barracks in February 1891 when Pte James Mulligan, the servant to Capt Munny of 1<sup>st</sup> York and Lancasters, stole £13 5s from the captain’s drawer and deserted.<sup>735</sup> At Birr petty sessions, Pte John Cooke of the York and Lancasters was accused of shooting at Mrs Jane McLoughlin and wounding her in the head. She was the wife of a fellow private, employed as a washer-woman. Pte Arthur Kendall was accused of aiding him, but Cooke claimed that the gun went off when he was cleaning it.<sup>736</sup> A couple of exceptions were reported by the less sympathetic *Tribune*. In 1891, two privates from the regiment broke shop windows and destroyed goods in Birr. One, Molloy, was grabbed by Pte Carpenter of the Leinsters and handed over to the military police, the other was taken by merchant John Dooley to the military picket. The paper did concede that the York and Lancasters were generally well behaved, and that this incident was “deeply regretted”. One of the battalion’s soldiers, Michael Slattery, was found guilty of indecent assault at Birr barracks on an under-aged girl, Margaret Keatinge. He beat her with a stick and tried to choke her, and having admitted previous offences he was sentenced to eighteen months hard labour.<sup>737</sup> On the other hand, Sgt Bradley and a picket of the York and Lancasters rescued an Edward Keeffe from assault by Michael Guilfoyle, on their return from Castletown races. The *Chronicle*

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<sup>732</sup> *KCC*, 10 Jul and 11 Sept 1890, 3 Sept 1891 and 20 Nov 1890.

<sup>733</sup> E. Broughton, *Memoirs of the 65<sup>th</sup>*, pp102-103.

<sup>734</sup> *KCC*, 19 Mar and 31 Dec 1891.

<sup>735</sup> *Ibid*, 26 Feb 1891.

<sup>736</sup> *KCC*, 23 Jul 1891; *MT*, 18 Jul 1891.

<sup>737</sup> *MT*, 7 Feb and 13 Oct 1891.

claimed that soldiers “do far more for the protection of the people than they ever get credit for”.<sup>738</sup>

There was a long article on the York and Lancasters in the *Chronicle* during January 1892, and shorter ones on their social events and achievements. The regimental journal was still being used as a source of information, on their training as well as their social life. The regiment was on manoeuvres in March 1892, and it was noted that “these route marches have become a pleasant feature of garrison life, and the men appear to enjoy them”. On 29 February 1892, the York and Lancasters held their quadrennial ball to mark the Battle of El Teb in the Sudan 1884, at Oxmantown Hall, attended by 300 guests including the Rosses. It was noted, however, that this “popular regiment” would soon be leaving<sup>739</sup>, and the last chance for the people of Birr to see the York and Lancasters march through the town was in March 1892.<sup>740</sup> There was a long article about theatricals by the York and Lancasters for the fund to start a local branch of the Soldiers and Sailors Wives’ & Families Association, “before a crowded & fashionable audience”. It was noted that Capt Tebbit’s company of the York and Lancasters, on detachment at Athlone, “had good fitting boots, and were personally in splendid physical condition”. The York & Lancasters’ annual sports took place at Birr, and “a vast assemblage”, including many country people, came to see the free entertainment.<sup>741</sup>

There were “feelings of unusual regret” that the York and Lancasters were to leave in September 1892, as they had “lived on terms of cordial friendship with the people”. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the South Lancashire Regiment were due to take over<sup>742</sup>, but there was a temperance concert and readings at Birr barracks first in September 1892. The York and Lancasters were to move to Cork after two years and nine months in Birr. Few regiments

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<sup>738</sup> *KCC*, 9 Jul 1891.

<sup>739</sup> *Ibid*, 28 Jan, 4 Feb, 3 and 10 Mar 1892.

<sup>740</sup> *Ibid*, 31 Mar 1892; *Irish Military Guide*, Mar 1892.

<sup>741</sup> *KCC*, 5 May, 16 June and 18 Aug 1892.

<sup>742</sup> *KCC*, 25 Aug 1892; E. Broughton, *Memoirs of the 65<sup>th</sup>*, p105.

stayed that long and “none exceeded in local popularity” - “They liked the people and the people liked them.” In September 1892, the York and Lancasters detachment at Tullamore gave two final concerts in aid of the King’s County Infirmary.<sup>743</sup> The good relations between this battalion and the local population are all the more interesting given that the Plan of Campaign was still very much active in other parts of Ireland until 1891. This impression is, of course, based mainly on accounts in the *Chronicle*, but if the situation had been significantly different it is unlikely that the *Tribune* would have failed to make this clear. If relations were indeed that good, at least with most of the population, then it was due in no small part to the positive attitude of the officers towards their men, and the battalion’s involvement in, and organisation of, local events.

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This chapter shows that relations between the army and the local population seem to have improved after the Land War as its reforms began to take effect, and social contact increased. The Leinsters became identified as the local regiment, and the presence of Irishmen in other regiments also helped. There was still continued agitation, however, and the police remained unpopular for having to deal with this, including the use of informers. They also had to attend to discipline within their own ranks. The position of the landlords had been undermined by government legislation, but conflict continued between them and the National League. The effectiveness of the League was viewed differently by the *King’s County Chronicle* and the *Midland Tribune*, each championing its own side as outrages and evictions continued.

It seems that there was a lack of enthusiasm for the Plan of Campaign in King’s County, possibly following the experiences of the Land War, but also because new laws were helping to solve rent disputes. Priests were active again in the county, but opposition to rents

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<sup>743</sup> *KCC*, 8 and 15 Sept 1892.

remained restrained and there was limited targeting of large estates, as opposed to what was happening elsewhere in Ireland. There were renewed outrages, but the League itself undertook real work to relieve the suffering of victims of eviction. There were comparatively few evictions in the county, but women were again to the fore in resisting ejections. As this is beyond the period covered by J. TeBrake, the evidence presented here about women is particularly important in advancing the case for a more thorough study to be made of their role. Although the League was still active in local affairs, the Plan eventually petered out.

The experience of different regiments varied in the county, but overall it seems that the army continued to encourage social contact with the general population, and remained fairly popular. The experience of the 1<sup>st</sup> York and Lancasters at the height of the Plan activity showed that this was possible. This was undoubtedly helped by the localisation reforms, and the fact that the army used King's County as a base for operations that took place in other neighbouring counties. Economic concerns over the fate of Birr barracks showed that there was a pragmatic reason for maintaining a military presence.

Renewed agitation brought people into conflict with the police again, although the *Chronicle* was keen to protect the RIC's reputation. There was much success in routine work, but the police also had to maintain a harsh discipline themselves. They became the targets of hatred again, and the preponderance of Protestant magistrates left the tenantry feeling that the administration of justice was very one-sided. As these points are not covered by E. Malcolm, their inclusion here is very important in establishing how unpopular the RIC had become.

The next chapter will look at County Donegal during the same period to compare how the Plan of Campaign fared there.

## Chapter 5 - The Plan of Campaign in County Donegal, c1883-1891.

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Starting with the years immediately after the Land War, and leading into the Plan itself, we again need to look at relations between the army, the police and the civilian population. A very different situation from that in King's County will be observed as the National League did employ the full strategy of the Plan in Donegal. The spread of the Plan here was more akin to that in County Cork, as described by James Donnelly – although his assertion that Cork can be seen as “a microcosm of the entire country” is misleading, for it is asserted here that there was no ‘typical’ county experience, and comparisons between them are vital to building up the whole picture.<sup>744</sup>

Predictably, the escalation of the conflict affected relations between the different parties for the worse, right up until the turn of the century. It will be shown how the Plan of Campaign became very confrontational in County Donegal, especially in Gweedore and Olphert's estate. Priests were again to the fore, but so were ordinary women. As in King's County, the army was becoming identified with the local area here, but the RIC were often involved in violent confrontations, especially at evictions. All of this left a bitter legacy in County Donegal.

### 1. The intervening years c1883-1886

#### (a) The authorities

In February 1883, the *Herald* reported “returning orderliness, or ... merely the pause before another outbreak”<sup>745</sup>, and the back page was no longer religious, and was less extreme in

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<sup>744</sup> J. Donnelly, *The Land and the People of Nineteenth Century Cork* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp2 and 334-339.

<sup>745</sup> *Ballyshannon Herald*, 17 Feb 1883.

tone.<sup>746</sup> When the *Donegal Independent* took over from the *Herald*, it did not carry the religious propaganda of its predecessor, but sectarianism still continued to be an issue.<sup>747</sup> In the House of Commons, Frank O'Donnell (MP for Dungarvan in County Waterford) claimed that all the officials in the Donegal workhouse were Protestants, whereas 90% of the inmates were Catholic. The officials refused to appoint a Catholic catechist for the children, the Catholic chaplain resigned and four elected Catholic Guardians were called on to resign.<sup>748</sup> In March 1885, a special court at Stranorlar held under the Crimes Act, with three RMs, tried twenty men complicit in an attempt to blow up the Protestant church in Kiltееvoge.<sup>749</sup> It was claimed that there was never “one single Catholic appointed to an elective position by the non-Catholic minority” in Donegal.<sup>750</sup> Other problems were also evident, for in April 1884, £3,081 5s & 9d were collected in county rates, but £2,333 16s and 4d were still owed, and the Local Government Board had a debt with the bank.<sup>751</sup> In 1883 the Irish Executive confirmed the policy of only giving outdoor relief to able-bodied men if the workhouse was full, or there was a risk of disease in it, despite widespread reluctance to enter workhouses at all.<sup>752</sup> Private acts of assistance proved invaluable to relieve the suffering.<sup>753</sup> Nevertheless, in October 1884, the *Times* correspondent noted when travelling through Donegal, that the discomforts were over-rated and that things had greatly changed.<sup>754</sup>

More military information began to appear in the local newspapers. In May 1883, the funeral of Sgt McRoberts, 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, took place at Mullinashee – the first military funeral in the town for thirty years.<sup>755</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Inniskillings were stationed in the north of Ireland from December 1881 until the end of 1885, and had a company strength detachment

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<sup>746</sup> *BH*, 17 Mar 1883.

<sup>747</sup> *Donegal Independent*, 12 Apr 1884.

<sup>748</sup> *BH*, 28 Apr 1883.

<sup>749</sup> *DI*, 28 Mar 1885.

<sup>750</sup> C. Dawson, *The Treatment of Minorities in Ireland* (London: Irish Press Agency, 1886), p15.

<sup>751</sup> *DI*, 26 Apr 1884.

<sup>752</sup> *Daily News*, cited in W. Field, *Suggestions for the Improvement of the Irish Poor Law* (Dublin: R D Webb and Son, 1883), pp22-23.

<sup>753</sup> M. Ward, *Famine-Stricken Tirconnaill* (Belfast: The Philo-Celtic Society, 1883), p6.

<sup>754</sup> *DI*, 4 Oct 1884.

<sup>755</sup> *BH*, 26 May 1883.

in Ballyshannon on and off until July 1883.<sup>756</sup> Officer appointments were listed in the *Herald* in June. In June 1883, there was a review of the 5<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings, formerly the Prince of Wales's Own Donegal Militia, at Lifford. Eight companies turned out for a few days training.<sup>757</sup> Yet the lull in hostilities had a down side for the army too. In April 1884, it was announced that the military detachment at Ballyshannon was to be removed and not replaced. "What will the poor girls do then?", asked the *Independent*.<sup>758</sup>

The *Independent* examined the history of the Ballyshannon garrison in May 1884, claiming that the town "thought herself no small biscuits" for getting it three years before. But now it was to be removed, the girls wept but the soldiers cheered on leaving "the dirty town". Capt Thurlow, Lieut Hillas and the Somerset Light Infantry detachment left to join the rest of their battalion in Enniskillen.<sup>759</sup> Troops were redistributed to their pre-land agitation positions, and Ballyshannon barracks were left with just a caretaker. The town had been garrisoned from 1688 to 1853 but, like other Irish towns, it was manned by local militia during the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny. After that the Enniskillen-Dublin railway and the proposed Bundoran line made permanent occupation unnecessary, and Ballyshannon barracks were kept empty with caretakers. With the agitation of the 1880s, Ballyshannon, Dungloe, Carndonagh, Dunfanaghy and other places were given small military detachments. At Ballyshannon their services were only required once or twice at evictions, and as the agitation declined so the garrison was reduced from seventy or eighty to thirty-five. In April 1885, Ballyshannon military barracks were declared unsanitary and also unfit for the RIC to take over.<sup>760</sup>

## **(b) Landlords and Leaguers**

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<sup>756</sup> Regimental Historical Records Committee, *The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1688-1914* (London: Constable and Co, 1934), pp522-523.

<sup>757</sup> *BH*, 2 & 23 Jun 1883.

<sup>758</sup> *DI*, 26 Apr 1884.

<sup>759</sup> H. Everett, *The Somerset Light Infantry, 1685-1914* (London: Methuen, 1934), p295.

<sup>760</sup> *DI*, 17 May and 4 Apr 1885.

Within the county this was a time for land appeals to the Appeal Court of the Land Commission. In August 1883, the Donegal Sub-Commission fixed judicial rents for tenants in the county, and 165 out of 177 cases were reduced.<sup>761</sup> In that year some landlords decided to settle out of court, with Lord Arran introducing a 22% abatement on his Donegal estate, and Lord Templemore granting nearly 16%.<sup>762</sup> In April 1884, the Donegal Sub-Commission in Killybegs only increased one farm rent out of eleven – the remainder were either reduced or remained the same, and in May 1884, the Ballyshannon Sub-Commission reduced all judicial rents on forty-seven farms. Later in the same month, twenty farms near Ballyshannon, and forty-three near Lifford, all had their rents reduced.<sup>763</sup> Some landlords, however, tried to nullify the effects of the Land Act by raising a second rent on turf-banks, which the *Freeman's Journal* described as “quazi-legalised trickery”.<sup>764</sup>

There were other interests apart from land, however, and in May 1884, “Veritas” (a labourer) wrote a letter to the *Independent*, blaming railways for the loss of work in Donegal town, to which the editor replied: “trade begets trade”.<sup>765</sup> To the shopkeepers and small businessmen of Donegal the railway was a boon, and they were very influential within the county.<sup>766</sup> The *Independent* noted that “Gweedore has a sad notoriety ... Hope is long dead in their hearts.” It claimed that “Donegal is in Ulster, but not of Ulster”<sup>767</sup>, for some areas fared much better than others and followed different customs. Distress from crop failures and the threat of starvation were continuing problems, even with the use of a seed fund.<sup>768</sup> Although the Donegal National League might sometimes be diverted, as in February 1885 when they supported Ballyshannon district in opposing hunting, rent disputes still continued. The tenants of Upper Templecrome requested reductions in rent in November 1885. The

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<sup>761</sup> *BH*, 28 Apr and 18 Aug 1883.

<sup>762</sup> T. Healy, *A Word for Ireland* (Dublin: M H Gill and Son, 1886), p136.

<sup>763</sup> *DI*, 12 Apr, 3 & 17 May 1884.

<sup>764</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Nov 1884.

<sup>765</sup> *DI*, 3 May 1884.

<sup>766</sup> D. Jordan, *Land and Popular Politics in Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p166.

<sup>767</sup> *DI*, 5 July and 4 Oct 1884.

<sup>768</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Jan, 7 Mar and 25 May 1883.

appeal was led by Fr Charles McGlynn, and made through the agent of the absentee landlord, the Marquis of Conyngham, at Dungloe. Colonel Ffolliott came to Ballyshannon in December 1885, to collect rents in nearby estates and was met by a deputation, led by Canon Clifford of Bundoran. The colonel said he would consider each claim, and he had already given some abatements.<sup>769</sup>

### **(c) Outrages and evictions**

Outrages seem to have been reduced during this period, although agrarian hostility still continued. The *Independent* felt that Wybrants Olphert might have overstepped the mark in his 1884 evictions, as a commission could have suspended proceedings while a fair rent was fixed. After evictions at Gweedore, Capt Peel RM found over 140 people sleeping in the open, but they refused workhouse transport offers, saying that the Fr McFadden would take them all. Other crimes added to the plight of the county, with cases heard at Bundoran in January 1885 including robbery, attempted arson and intimidation.<sup>770</sup> The Anglican church at Kiltcevogue was dynamited in March<sup>771</sup>, and the Ballyshannon Presbyterian Church had its windows smashed in November. The lawlessness at Gweedore was discussed in the House of Commons. After a National League meeting at Clonmany in September 1885, there were the first examples of boycotting noted in the district.<sup>772</sup> In the last quarter of 1885, no outrages were officially recorded in Donegal, and the same was true of the rest of Ulster.<sup>773</sup>

In December of the same year, two men bringing oats from Loughanure to Mr Robertson at the Gweedore Hotel, were stoned by a crowd of women on the way. In an extreme example of the direct participation on women that we noted earlier, they climbed onto the carts, beat

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<sup>769</sup> *DI*, 28 Feb, 7 Nov and 19 Dec 1885.

<sup>770</sup> *Ibid*, 12 and 19 Jul 1884, and 31 Jan 1885.

<sup>771</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 5 Mar 1885.

<sup>772</sup> *DI*, 14 Nov, 2 May and 3 Oct 1885.

<sup>773</sup> *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers*, 1886 [C.4617] Agrarian outrages (Ireland), p2.

the men and cut open the sacks with knives – the possession of which certainly indicated premeditation. Robertson was under a ban of the Gweedore National League. Sgt Doyle and the police escorted the men home, but they were too intimidated to name their assailants. Later, James Gallagher from Dore, also carrying oats to the Gweedore Hotel, was attacked by a crowd of women and girls with stones and knives – “the daughters of Gweedore”. He managed to escape and reported the incident to Sgt Doyle, naming his assailants before a magistrate.<sup>774</sup>

Evictions were a regular feature of life in the county<sup>775</sup> and Gweedore was the target for several ejection notices. In early April 1885, a large force of police under Capt Peel RM, with DIs Gillman and Tweedie, set out for the property of Mr Key to evict about twenty-one families. Through the ignorance of the agent, George Hewson, they at first began to remove furniture from the wrong house, until corrected by Fr James McFadden. On moving to the right area, their way was blocked by a crowd “numbering some thousands”, many of whom had walked several miles in the drenching rain. Fr McFadden did much to restrain the mob, who allowed the police through, but continued to crowd them – he would not, however, call them off as the sub-sheriff asked him to. In fact, he then questioned the legality of Capt Peel’s documents. DI Gillman drew his sword and the police fixed bayonets and advanced on the people, only to be stopped by Frs McFadden and Nelis stepping in between with raised umbrellas. Capt Peel then decided that he did not have enough strength to handle the situation, and ordered the police to retire – denying that he had ever told them to charge.<sup>776</sup> In the last quarter of 1885, only nine families were evicted, but conflict with the RIC and the army still continued.<sup>777</sup>

## 2. The Plan of Campaign, 1886-1891

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<sup>774</sup> *DI*, 19 Dec 1885.

<sup>775</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 16 May 1884.

<sup>776</sup> *DI*, 4 Apr 1885.

<sup>777</sup> *HCPP*, 1886 [C.4619] Evictions (Ireland), p2.

### **(a) The National League, priests and tenants**

“The Fermanagh natives as a rule look upon their neighbours as akin to savages”, and South Donegal was the most illiterate constituency in Ireland - fifty percent of voters could not read or write.<sup>778</sup> Yet in the 1886 elections, when Fermanagh police were sent to Donegal there was no trouble – but there were disturbances back in their own county. Nevertheless, there was much suffering in parts of Donegal at the time of the Plan of Campaign, although only a few of the 200 estates affected by the Plan were within this county.<sup>779</sup> In late May 1886, about 200 starving peasants from Gweedore applied for outdoor relief to the relieving officer at the Gweedore hotel. Many had walked several miles and got refreshments from a police sergeant’s wife. Fr McFadden complained to the relieving officer about his inconvenient location, and the fact that he had kept his presence secret. The officer said that they were unlikely to get outdoor relief and should apply to a workhouse. Fr McFadden was able to buy ten tons of Indian meal “through unexpected aid”. Many had been “very much demoralised by the indiscriminate distribution of charity”, with some who did not need it being recipients.<sup>780</sup> In 1890 the potato blight made the prospects “very bad indeed”.<sup>781</sup>

Priests were once again to the forefront in this new struggle.<sup>782</sup> The *Times* correspondent wrote of the August evictions in Gweedore, that half of the tenants were put back as caretakers and would probably redeem before the six month period allowed expired. Many admitted that they could have paid the rent when it became due, but that it became more difficult once they were in arrears. Major John Dickson leased an estate in County Donegal.

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<sup>778</sup> *DI*, 16 Jan and 31 July 1886.

<sup>779</sup> L. P. Curtis, ‘Three Oxford Liberals and the Plan of Campaign in Donegal, 1889’, in *History Ireland* (19), May/June 2011, p35.

<sup>780</sup> *DI*, 5 June and 13 Nov 1886.

<sup>781</sup> *The National Review*, Oct 1890.

<sup>782</sup> The National Archive, PRO 30/60/12, *Irish National League: Suppressed Branches*, p7, County of Donegal.

He asked for fifty percent abatement but was refused. As he was no longer in the army he could not afford the rent since the land could not be made to pay for itself.<sup>783</sup> According to an anonymous letter in the *Independent* in April 1887, Gweedore was the only area in Donegal to offer organised resistance, with Fr McFadden in a leading role. He was credited with forcing Captain Hill into reducing the rents on his estate from £1,100 to £800 during 1887 through the combined use of the courts and the Plan of Campaign.<sup>784</sup>

That resistance was not always due to poverty was shown by several examples – one man who would not pay his own rent of £2 a year, bought another man's farm for £57. There was also hypocrisy, with Fr McFadden himself selling the tenant-right of a piece of land for £115. Father McFadden was arrested in January 1888, along with Alexander Blane (MP for South Armagh), for making allegedly criminal speeches. This happened in Derry, and they were transported to Dunfanaghy for trial. Police, dragoons and the King's Royal Rifles were all deployed at a stopping point in Letterkenny on the way, but the crowd contented themselves with cheering the prisoners and jeering the authorities. Fr Stephens, McFadden's curate, was arrested soon afterwards. Fathers McFadden and Stephens presented their appeal at Letterkenny Quarter Sessions in April 1888<sup>785</sup>, but to no avail, and they were both imprisoned that month for inciting others to join the Plan of Campaign.<sup>786</sup> Fathers McFadden and Stephens were both presidents of their local League branches, and both were to be imprisoned again in 1889.<sup>787</sup> They were celebrities of their time, with their work recorded by supporters in works like *A Sketch of the Donegal Land War*.<sup>788</sup> A souvenir photograph of Fr McFadden survives with the inscription: "Patriot Priest of Tyrconnel ... incarcerated ... for upholding the Poor Persecuted Peasantry of Gweedore."<sup>789</sup>

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<sup>783</sup> *DI*, 19 Feb 1887.

<sup>784</sup> H. Massingham, *The Gweedore Hunt* (London: T Fisher Unwin, 1889), p6.

<sup>785</sup> *DI*, 30 Apr 1887, 28 Jan, 4 Feb and 21 Apr 1888.

<sup>786</sup> *Ibid*, 28 Apr 1888; T. Harrington, *A Diary of Coercion, Part II* (Dublin: The Nation Office, 1889), p36.

<sup>787</sup> PRO 30/60/12, p7; T. Harrington, *Diary of Coercion, Part III*, pp72 and 82.

<sup>788</sup> J. MacVeagh, *A Sketch of the Donegal Land War* (London: The Home Rule Union, 1889).

<sup>789</sup> County Donegal Archive, P21/1.

In June 1888 the Roman Catholic clergy of the Diocese of Raphoe held a conference in Letterkenny and produced a number of resolutions. These expressed sympathy for the imprisoned priests and others who tried to help the poor tenants, and support for those who refused to become “spies and informers”. They condemned “the impossible demands of cruel landlords”, the machinations of “the creatures of an odious despotism” and the introduction of “a secret court of inquiry”. They proposed to raise a fund for the prisoners and set up a committee which included Father McFadden.<sup>790</sup> There was a nationalist demonstration in Ballyshannon at the end of July 1888 to celebrate the release of Father Stephens. Fr McFadden gave a press interview in May 1889, which enabled him to explain his views about Olphert’s rent policy and how it affected his parishioners.<sup>791</sup>

A correspondent of the *Independent* visited the highlands of Donegal in 1888. Father Kelly impressed him “as a man who has the welfare of his numerous flock – chiefly of the small tenant class – most anxiously at heart”. Fr Kelly described this land as the worst in the country, reclaimed only by the people’s hard work. In a good year they could produce crops and pay some rent, but 1888 had been cold and wet.<sup>792</sup> There was still a custom of dividing tenancies as children grew up and married, but this led to ever decreasing sizes of plots.<sup>793</sup> The problems of Donegal’s crop failures and distress were frequently raised in parliament at this time.<sup>794</sup> Eventually, in 1891, 429 electoral divisions in Donegal and seven other western counties were scheduled as ‘congested districts’ – “where poverty was most acute” – and the Congested Districts Board was set up to deal with them.<sup>795</sup>

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<sup>790</sup> *The Freeman’s Journal*, cited in *DI*, 23 Jun 1888.

<sup>791</sup> *DI*, 4 Aug 1888 and 25 May 1889.

<sup>792</sup> *Ibid*, 8 Dec 1888.

<sup>793</sup> *Ibid*, 8 Dec 1888; S. Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish Land War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp45-46.

<sup>794</sup> *Hansard*, *HC Deb 12 November 1888 vol 330 c890*, *HC Deb 15 November 1888 vol 330 cc1220-2* and *HC Deb 04 April 1889 vol 334 cc1559-60*.

<sup>795</sup> F. Campbell, *Land and Revolution: Nationalist Politics in the West of Ireland 1891-1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p10n.

In “an Englishman’s account of the Falcarragh evictions”, E. P. Monckton claimed that the poverty in Gweedore had been exaggerated. The rents were not excessive, and in many cases had been paid – but to the Campaign not the landlord. Official records for 1890, however, show that two Unions in the county were in debt over seed potatoes under the 1880 Act, and £4,694 had been paid for relief work in Donegal town and Killybegs.<sup>796</sup> Mr Olphert was over eighty years old, and the League thought he would be an easy target and give them an easy victory, but they were wrong. When Monckton asked Father Boyle if the tenants really could not afford to pay, he would not give a straight answer.<sup>797</sup> Fr Stephens said of Olphert, “it will take all our united energies to beat him down”.<sup>798</sup> Stephens was one of the priests who featured in the RIC report on connections with agitation in 1892, but by that time their influence had declined.<sup>799</sup>

The nationalists were often very successful in national and local elections – for example the unionists did not bother to canvass for their candidate in East Donegal, and did not even contest West Donegal in 1885 and 1886.<sup>800</sup> They were open to criticism on several levels, however, all of which weakened their ability to follow through with the Plan. There were disorderly scenes at the January 1889 meeting of the Ballyshannon Board of Guardians, when the chairman was accused of dishonest and dishonourable conduct in taking tenders. A tenant was evicted by a Roman Catholic, even though he had paid up all the high rent due, but the Ballyshannon League took no action over this. Nationalist bands broke the law

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<sup>796</sup> British Library St Pancras, Balfour Papers, ADD 49823, pp127-131 & 141. MS notes on the ‘Former Seed Potatoes Act’ 1880, collected in 1890.

<sup>797</sup> The *Stamford Post*, cited in *DI*, 30 Nov 1889.

<sup>798</sup> H. Mends, ‘Donegal 1889’, in *The King’s Royal Rifle Corps Chronicle*, 1929, p17.

<sup>799</sup> The National Archives of Ireland, Crime Branch Special report, 4519/S. Catholic clergymen & their connection with boycotting, intimidation etc, 27 Jan 1892.

<sup>800</sup> D. Savage, ‘The Origins of the Ulster Unionist Party, 1885-6’, in *Irish Historical Studies* (12), Mar 1961, pp205-206.

by disturbing Protestant Sunday worship in Bundoran. The *Independent* warned that they should be wary of annoying the visitors who brought money into the town.<sup>801</sup>

In April 1888 the Land Sub-Commission released a series of decisions on rents in Donegal, all of which reduced the rents. A longer list in October showed that the majority were to be reduced. The Plan of Campaign was abandoned on the Nixon estate in Falcarragh district by December 1889. The County Donegal Labourers' Organisation was founded in February 1890, and there was a meeting of the Ballyshannon National League in September of the same year, but the Plan could not be continued. Although distress meetings were held throughout the county, the Parnell scandal fatally split the nationalist movement. Fr McFadden was now "dead against" Parnell as "a sad fraud", and there was a split in the Letterkenny branch of the League over support for Parnell.<sup>802</sup> The editor of the *Vindicator* criticised Parnell and his supporters, and noted that the Protestant Home Rule Association had also dissociated itself from him.<sup>803</sup>

#### **(b) The authorities and the landlords**

At the start of 1887 there were 132 magistrates in Co Donegal. Of these, 114 were Protestant (including 25 Presbyterians) and 18 Catholic. Eighty were landlords, 25 land agents, 12 were farmers, 9 were bakers and the rest were professionals.<sup>804</sup> This situation constituted "a very serious grievance".<sup>805</sup> Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee was successfully celebrated throughout the county.<sup>806</sup> A Donegal Grand Jury resolution hoped vainly that this event would see the restoration of law and order in Ireland.<sup>807</sup> Even though Lifford gaol

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<sup>801</sup> *DI*, 26 Jan, 31 Mar and 6 Jul 1889.

<sup>802</sup> *Ibid*, 21 Apr and 13 Oct 1888, 7 Dec 1889, 1 Mar and 13 Sept 1890, 10 and 17 Jan, and 27 Feb 1891.

<sup>803</sup> *DV*, 2 Jan 1891.

<sup>804</sup> *DI*, 29 Jan 1887.

<sup>805</sup> J. O'Connor Power, *The government of Ireland; the Irish magistracy, the root of Irish discontent*, 'National Press' Leaflet (No 45), 1886.

<sup>806</sup> *DI*, 25 Jun 1887.

<sup>807</sup> *The Irish Times*, cited in The Irish Loyal & Patriotic Union, *Ireland in 1887* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co, 1887), p13.

closed down in early 1886, the authorities were still in a strong position, but Protestants felt on the defensive. Donegal Presbyterians held a crisis meeting in January 1886, to support the Queen, oppose Home Rule and to call for the protection of minorities. Loyalist meetings were held in Lifford and Donegal during March 1886. "The Orange Army of Ulster" was prepared to fight Home Rule. It was organised in four divisions, but did not include County Donegal. At election time in July 1886, there was a nationalist demonstration at Ballyshannon, and an Orange meeting at Ballintra. The *Independent* carried large reports on the 12 July Orange meetings in the county. There was an "Orange Soiree" at Ballyweel in November 1887, another in Ballintra in February 1888, and another also in Ballintra in November 1889. A Mr McEvoy and a woman were selling food and refreshments at an Orange meeting, but they were attacked when it was discovered they were Catholics, despite trading at such meetings for over twenty-five years. In March 1886, the Rev A. Lowry was awarded £5 by the Donegal Grand Jury for malicious injury to his Protestant church in Ballyshannon.<sup>808</sup>

There were many reasons to suppose that the Plan would not succeed. In December 1887 the *Independent* listed the reductions in judicial rents in County Donegal. A "Manchester Tourist" wrote in the *Independent* about his visit to Gweedore. He claimed that there was not the poverty he had been expecting, that the land supported good farming, and that the League were campaigning over small differences in rent merely to make an example of Olphert. Many tenants, he wrote, only joined the Campaign out of fear of the League, they often wasted what money they had, and did not understand what Home Rule meant anyway. The Marquis of Conyngham was "an absentee", but not "like most Donegal landlords", which was also claimed. His agent, C. W. Osborne, was a reasonable man who came to an agreement with tenants over abatements, but the Marquis refused to accept the deal. Evictions had to be adjourned, and the magistrates at Glenties were unhappy with the

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<sup>808</sup> *DI*, 6 Feb. 30 Jan, 6 and 27 Mar, 5 Jun and 17 Jul 1886, 16 Jul and 12 Nov 1887, 4 Feb 1888, 16 Nov 1889, 24 Jul and 20 Mar 1886.

Marquis over that. The correspondent of the *Independent* in the highlands of Donegal during 1888 interviewed Capt Murphy, a sub-agent on the Ards estate of Mr Stewart. He claimed that there had been no more than two evictions on this estate during the previous thirty years. Some tenants went harvesting in England and Scotland, and kept a pig to pay the rent, but those who kept cattle had fared less well. Nevertheless, rents had been reduced and there was “no real poverty in this neighbourhood”. He claimed that Fr McFadden and the League had only caused problems, and tenants were now in arrears where before they were not.<sup>809</sup>

T. W. Russell (MP for Tyrone South) claimed that O’Brien’s “tawdry rhetoric” about the “magnificent success” of the Plan of Campaign was “simply absurd”. He said that it was collapsing everywhere, even in Donegal where many people were no more than poor migratory labourers on wretched land. The tenants on three townlands (Magheroarty, Derryconnor and Meenlaragh) had paid their rents and costs in full, and the League agents there were unable to stop them. Meanwhile the rest of the estate was being successfully farmed with the help of a small syndicate.<sup>810</sup> By mid-October 1890 there were ninety tenants on the Olphert estate near Falcarragh, who had joined the Plan of Campaign, but who had now paid their rent and costs to the landlord. They were now being boycotted, but the *Independent* expected others to follow suit.<sup>811</sup>

Several landlords sold their estates in County Donegal, but others were prepared to make a stand. There was a convention of landowners in Lifford in July 1888.<sup>812</sup> It was said that Mr Wybrants Olphert was not spoken against until the 1880s, and Olphert said that he never had any trouble with his tenants before the Land League was formed.<sup>813</sup> There was a

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<sup>809</sup> *Ibid*, 31 Dec 1887, 11 Oct 1890, 15 Sept and 8 Dec 1888.

<sup>810</sup> *The Scotsman*, cited in *DI*, 11 Oct 1890.

<sup>811</sup> *DI*, 18 Oct 1890.

<sup>812</sup> *Ibid*, 28 May 1887 and 14 Jul 1888.

<sup>813</sup> Letter from T. W. Russell MP to the *Times*, cited in *DI*, 19 Jan 1889.

statement issued by loyalists in support of Olphert, saying he had lived his whole life in Donegal and looked after the interests of his tenants. Olphert saw himself as fighting against anarchy. He said that he had no quarrel with the tenants and always got on well with them. In the House of Commons in May 1889, Balfour declared that the amount of rent due for the fourteen tenants recently evicted from the Olphert estate was £109 1s, and that the landlord had previously offered terms. Timothy Healy (MP for Longford North) asked whether nothing could be done to promote compromise and avoid expenditure ten times what was actually owed. Balfour merely replied that the Plan of Campaign was to blame for the situation.<sup>814</sup>

In fact the slowness of the Land Court system played a major part in adding to tenants' frustration, and Balfour admitted that fewer than one in eighty of Olphert's tenants had had their case heard, despite their applications going back to October 1887.<sup>815</sup> The Duke of Abercorn, as Chairman of the Donegal Central Committee of the Olphert Defence Fund, made an appeal for funds from Ulster.<sup>816</sup> Those who opposed Olphert regarded him as merciless and vindictive – “the robber”<sup>817</sup>. The *Vindicator* claimed that in 1889 he had the ‘Emergency’ men and a large force of RIC destroy all the turf cut for sale on the island of Innisboffin in revenge after a previous dispute, and left them to face starvation in the winter. “This single act will do more to alienate public sympathy from Mr Olphert than even all the evictions he has undertaken.”<sup>818</sup> Rent reductions, which helped to undermine the Plan in Donegal, were announced by the Land Commissioners, and it was reported that there were good relations between the landlords and tenants on the Atkinson estate in South Donegal, and the Countess of Shaftesbury's estate at Burnfoot.<sup>819</sup> Sometimes even the new opportunities for tenants were not good enough however. Kildoney tenants were offered a

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<sup>814</sup> *DI*, 16 Nov and 1 Jun 1889.

<sup>815</sup> J. Clancy, *The Irish Tenant in 1889* (London: The Irish Press Agency, 1890), p15.

<sup>816</sup> *DI*, 30 Nov 1889.

<sup>817</sup> H. Massingham, *The Gweedore Hunt* (London: T Fisher Unwin, 1889), p6.

<sup>818</sup> *DV*, 24 Aug 1889.

<sup>819</sup> *DI*, 23 Aug 1890 and 31 Jul and 30 Oct 1891.

chance to purchase their holdings under Lord Ashbourne's scheme, but they were advised by the League not to accept unless their arrears were written off, which the landlord refused to do.<sup>820</sup>

The Donegal Assizes noted that the number of cases had doubled since the last sitting. There were a number of homicides and more routine cases, but there were also some agrarian outrages, including the mutilation of cattle – “a very cowardly and outrageous crime”. The crime was not all on one side, however. Bailiff, Robert Bankhead, was summoned to Falcarragh Petty Sessions and fined for kicking in a door in a rage. He was also accused of shooting at a woman. The police once again found themselves dealing with a wide range of offences in addition to agrarian ones. In September 1886 there was a lot of drunkenness and brawling, and a stabbing was noted on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Sgt Horigan arrested Patrick O'Donnell for drunkenness, who proclaimed himself “a good Fenian”. James McHugh and Condy Burke were ordered to leave a house they had illegally occupied within fourteen days. Thomas McCready, a publican in Mountcharles, was charged with being drunk and assaulting Constable Cain in January 1887. John Harry, Anthony Porter and Thomas Bogle assaulted RIC Sgt Thomas Barber at Mountcharles Fair – they were resisting arrest for being drunk. The case against Frank Farrell was adjourned to allow him to join the army. At Ballyshannon Petty Sessions in October 1887, Constable McCarvill charged Patt Thomas with trying to intimidate the policeman into not giving evidence against him. Although the witnesses were reluctant, and their statements inconclusive, the magistrates decided to fine Thomas. Robert Walker was fined for being drunk and disorderly in the possession of a loaded revolver. He claimed to have severe injuries that had been inflicted by the police, but he was ignored and not allowed to raise a case against DI Martin.<sup>821</sup>

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<sup>820</sup> *DV*, 16 Feb 1889.

<sup>821</sup> *DI*, 23 Mar 1889, 13 Sept 1890, 25 Sep and 2 Jan 1886, 29 Jan, 5 Mar and 29 Oct 1887, and 29 Sep 1888.

Constables Walden, Cullatin and Keogh from Kilmacrennan station were on revenue duty in 1886 Fawnes when they chased a suspect who dropped a still. Sgt O'Neill and Constable McSherry then discovered an illicit distillery at Belalt. Sgt Barber, with Constables Cain and McClatchey of Mountcharles, discovered a very large one in April 1886, and many more were seized up to 1890. An illicit still was broken up by the RIC in Glenallyganyhigh, and another in the county in 1887. Several illicit distilleries were seized by the RIC in 1889, and Sgt Barber and the RIC seized several stills in 1890. The Police acted on complaints about nude bathing at Bundoran and Constables Potter and Bamford caught several men attending a cock-fight in Ballyshannon. Bella McIlwaine was arrested and sentenced to hang in December 1888 for the violent murder of Nancy Ferry. The police also had to arrest a demented father who killed his son because he was dying of meningitis. In August 1887 the Bundoran nationalist band was told that they could not play during the hours of divine worship on Sundays, which led to scuffles between the RIC under Sgt Howe and the "Nationalist rowdies". The police prevented any further disturbance to Protestant church services in Bundoran, however, when a large party arrived by train with bands. The RIC had been forewarned and reinforcements brought in. DI Martin was able to persuade the bands not to play during services as they arrived at the railway station.<sup>822</sup> There was a lengthy article in the *Vindicator* in 1890 which summarised nationalist attitudes to the RIC. The majority of the senior officers were Protestant and from the families of landlords and clergymen, and their aim was to uphold the landlord system.<sup>823</sup>

In some cases the RIC were not successful, or appeared in a bad light. There was a large demonstration by navvies armed with sticks brought on by an unfounded rumour of an Orange march in Bundoran in July 1886. There were only thirteen RIC to control the 400 large crowd, and it was observed that "it is not the first time that the police of the district have

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<sup>822</sup> *Ibid*, 9 Jan and 10 Apr 1886, 16 Apr and 14 May 1887, 5 Oct 1889, 4 Jan 1890, 2 Jul 1887, 21 Jun 1890, 15 Dec 1888, 31 May 1890, 6 and 27 Aug 1887.

<sup>823</sup> *DV*, 3 Oct 1890.

been unable to do their duty, through fewness of numbers". "Enniskillen has at times more military than it can conveniently accommodate and it could easily give Ballyshannon fifty men", complained the *Independent*. Following an attempt by Constable McCoy to arrest a drunken man, Patrick Fury, in Donegal, there ensued a general melee between the police and a group of civilians, which continued later down at the police barracks. They then accused each other of assault, with Sgt Stephens, and Constables Carton and McCoy on one side, and Connel and Patrick Cannon on the other. Rather surprisingly, all the cases were dismissed, partly because Carton was suspected of being a bully. Constable James Black was fined for using excessive force in arresting a man in Dunfanaghy.<sup>824</sup>

In January 1888 DI Brett and twenty-four RIC from Dunfanaghy made a surprise raid on the townland of Meenaclady to execute seed rate warrants on behalf of the local Board of Guardians. They successfully seized a horse and two cows before the people had arisen, and headed back towards their barracks. Then, however, a horn and a whistle roused the boys and girls of the district who jeered at the police and impeded their progress. The officer in charge ordered a bayonet and baton charge and the struggle continued for the last quarter of a mile. One girl, Mary McCafferty, was stabbed in the back by a bayonet that went through three layers of material, a corset and a chemise. The crown of Bridget Curran's head was split by a truncheon blow, and Mary Doogan almost had her eye taken out by a helmet spike. A frail middle aged woman and a young boy were taken prisoners.<sup>825</sup> These are clear examples of excessive violence on the part of the police.

Thirty police under DI Brett arrested Hugh McGonigly and Daniel Brogan near Falcarragh in February 1888 for riot and unlawful assembly. There was a lot of indignation about these arrests, and the fact that both men had been seized from their beds at 2 am. When Brett and forty police attended the Roman Catholic church at Falcarragh that Saturday, nobody

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<sup>824</sup> *DI*, 3 and 10 Jul 1886, 15 Jun 1889, 8 Nov 1890.

<sup>825</sup> *Ibid*, 21 Jan 1888.

would allow them to sit in their usual places or anywhere else, and they were abused as 'nightwalkers' and 'buckshots'. This was quite common, and the Sunday before a man had deliberately moved the seat from behind a District Inspector. The "intolerant" behaviour of these "scoundrels" was made worse by the fact that the police had individually contributed to building the chapel, which many locals had not.<sup>826</sup> In 1889 the police tried to break up a crowd sleighing in the snow because it was too large, but the result was farcical. "It takes a much smarter man than the average constable" to stop a speeding sleigh with its occupant, quipped the *Vindicator*. On another occasion, many made their way from Bannys Shannon to a mass League meeting in Corker (County Sligo), and most managed to by-pass "the representatives of law without order" who were trying to stop them. To the *Vindicator*, the RIC were the "Ruffianly Irish Constabulary", and according to a poem by 'Trooper Duffy', the "lick-spittle servant" to the powers that be.<sup>827</sup>

Questions were asked in the House of Commons by Arthur O'Connor (MP for Donegal East) about the police impressment of farmer's carts at Letterkenny for use by the army. He queried whether the police had a warrant, and whether it was all done according to the law with due care being taken of the original loads. Colonel King-Harman (Parliamentary Under Secretary) said that everything had been done correctly.<sup>828</sup> Thomas O'Hanlon (MP for Cavan East) accused the police of assaulting him when prevented from passing through the cordon at Father McFadden's appeal case.<sup>829</sup> Questions were asked in the House of Commons by Timothy Healy (MP for Longford North) about police methods in questioning people about a suspected conspiracy against Mr Olphert. Hugh Boyle was a grocer who was imprisoned for refusing to answer questions about the Plan of Campaign, and he was also accused of boycotting Olphert. Arthur Balfour defended all the police actions as

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<sup>826</sup> *Ibid*, 11 Feb 1888.

<sup>827</sup> *DV*, 16 Feb, 25 May, 13 and 20 Jul 1889.

<sup>828</sup> *DI*, 31 Mar 1888; *Hansard, HC Deb 26 March 1888 vol 324 cc242-4*.

<sup>829</sup> *DI*, 21 Apr 1888.

correct.<sup>830</sup> In October 1888 news of Fr McFadden's release from gaol led to celebrations in Donegal. Tar barrels were set alight at Ballybofey races. When the RIC under DI McClelland attempted to put them out they were attacked by the crowd. A baton charge was then ordered in which a number of people were injured, and Fr E McDevitt was arrested.<sup>831</sup> Following the killing of DI Martin in 1889, the police and the army spent a lot of time searching for suspects. The *Vindicator* questioned what the police were for, because they seemed "altogether unfitted for the duty which ought to be their primary and principal one – the protection of the lives and property of the community". When it came to hunting priests and peasants, "oh were not the police the boys for it!"<sup>832</sup>

The Tivelough constabulary was boycotted, and the local branch of the National League was suspected of being behind it, although the reason was unknown. It was foolish because the money that the police spent would then go elsewhere.<sup>833</sup> Questions were asked in the Commons by John McNeill (MP for Donegal South) and James Dalton (MP for Donegal West) about more evictions due in the county: thirty-nine families from the Stewart estate at Falcarragh, six from the Swiney estate in the same district, and over sixty from Olphert's.<sup>834</sup> Balfour claimed that "the forces of the Crown will not be employed in carrying out the evictions; but they will be present in compliance with the requisition of the Sheriff to afford him and his officers protection should the occasion arise".<sup>835</sup> This was blatantly untrue of the role actually taken by police at evictions, but whether this was through ignorance or designed to be misleading is unclear. Unpopular both with ordinary people, and often with the police themselves, was the undercover work of shadowing suspects and trying to track the work of secret societies. Men like Francis McMenamin, a reporter from Strabane on the

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<sup>830</sup> *Ibid*, 23 Jun 1888; *Hansard, HC Deb 07 June 1888 vol 326 cc1382-3*.

<sup>831</sup> *DI*, 27 and 20 Oct 1888.

<sup>832</sup> *DV*, 16 Mar and 20 Apr 1889.

<sup>833</sup> *DI*, 12 Jan 1889.

<sup>834</sup> *Ibid*, 14 Jun 1890; *Hansard, HC Deb 09 June 1890 vol 345 cc342-3 & HC Deb 16 June 1890 vol 345 cc1013-4*.

<sup>835</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 09 June 1890 vol 345 cc342-3; DI*, 14 Jun 1890.

border between County Donegal and County Tyrone, were suspects just because they corresponded with members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood – even though they were not considered to be active themselves.<sup>836</sup> Arthur O'Connor (MP for East Donegal) was black-listed for receiving £500 from sympathisers, in recognition of services rendered during agitation.<sup>837</sup> Informants were still used, like 'Dalton', who identified two men as the most responsible for the murder of DI Martin in 1889 – which will be discussed later.<sup>838</sup> Sometimes, however, the information was totally unreliable, as in the case of Caldwell Moore, who committed the outrage that he reported himself.<sup>839</sup>

Discipline within the RIC sometimes came into question. DI Hill, Sgts Reynolds and Clark, and several constables and 'Emergency' men were accused of riot, affray and assault at an eviction on 15 November 1890 at Meenacladdy. The magistrates agreed that they had been throwing stones, but that it was lawful on their part. Other charges were dismissed because they could not be brought by individuals.<sup>840</sup> These decisions were upheld at a second hearing, which both local papers reported.<sup>841</sup> The *Independent* could not ignore breeches of discipline by the RIC. A Miss Borthwick, who was visiting Donegal with other English ladies, said that she saw the RIC "gather up stones in their arms and throwing them in volleys" and "Sgt Reynolds throwing stones into the windows". At Donegal Assizes at Doaghbeg in March 1886, Constable Robert Duncan was accused of assaulting Sgt Michael Connolly. It was claimed that Duncan threatened the sergeant with his loaded rifle, and then with his bayonet, but that Connolly disarmed him of both. Duncan was a Protestant, but he shouted for Home Rule. He was given four months in prison. The defence had suggested that Connolly had made the story up to cover the fact that he had taken a drunken man on patrol.

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<sup>836</sup> The National Archive, Colonial Office Records 904/18/760. Register of suspects: F. McMnamin, May 1896 – referring back to previous involvement.

<sup>837</sup> CO 904/15. Testimonials Received by Leading Nationalists.

<sup>838</sup> CDA, P/21/5/8-1. Memorandum on the death of Inspector Martin.

<sup>839</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 25 February 1886 vol 302 c1200*. Question from James O'Doherty, MP for Donegal North, to the Chief Secretary for Ireland.

<sup>840</sup> *DI*, 17 Jan 1891.

<sup>841</sup> *Ibid*, 6 Feb 1891; *DV*, 6 Feb 1891.

There was a constabulary inquiry at Dungloe, following an incident on licensed premises. Constables Kerr and Quin were on prisoner escort duty in Dungloe, and were staying at Mr Gallagher's public house. Constable Delaney, on his beat, came in and charged them both with a breach of the Licensing Act. They thought he was joking, but he was not and he assaulted one of them. There was another constabulary inquiry about Sgt Finn and Constable James Fitzsimmons who were playing cards in a public house when they should have been on patrol duty. Finn was reduced to a constable and Fitzsimmons was dismissed. A Court of Inquiry at Ardara in May 1890 reduced Acting-Sgt Thompson to the rank of constable. This was the eighth reduction of a police NCO in twelve months.<sup>842</sup>

Sometimes the ordinary people would help the police. John McCann pleaded guilty at Donegal to shooting and wounding Bridget Gallagher in Meentycahan. Her husband and thirty to forty people gave chase for eight miles and surrounded him for the police, for which act the RM congratulated them. At other times there was personal animosity: James Kelly was referred for trial accused of trying to poison Sgt James Maher.<sup>843</sup> Even prisoners could make accusations about the police, although they may have been regarded as "of the usual bogus character".<sup>844</sup> The police and the magistracy did not always see eye to eye. The police objected to the practice of Ballyshannon magistrates giving time for offenders to pay fines - this was not done elsewhere. Policemen could move, or be moved to other counties - the transfers within County Donegal RIC were listed - but sometimes the pressure was inescapable. Constable Maxwell of Glencolumbkille shot himself dead in May 1886, and Constable McStay killed himself in June at Fintown, near Glenties. Even the *Independent* had to acknowledge the few policemen who refused to continue with their duties. At an eviction in Gweedore in 1887, when eight constables were lined up to face a crowd, one Constable James Haughrey put his rifle down and said he would not fire on the people. He

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<sup>842</sup> *DI*, 27 Feb 1891, 20 Mar 1886, 15 Jun 1889, 22 Feb and 14 Jun 1890.

<sup>843</sup> *Ibid*, 5 Jul 1890 & 22 May 1891.

<sup>844</sup> Crime Branch Special CSO/CB(S) 128/S. Report on prisoner McCarthy, 14 Apr 1890.

came from Omagh, but was stationed in County Donegal and had seven years' service. Patrick Quigley, a police shorthand writer, was charged with withdrawing from duty without leave. Having volunteered specifically to be trained to take notes at speeches he was sent to Gweedore for that purpose. After the arrest of Fr McFadden, however, he put in his resignation and while this was pending he refused to perform his duties or to wear uniform. He was ordered to pay a £5 fine or else serve two months imprisonment.<sup>845</sup>

The 5<sup>th</sup> Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (or Donegal County Militia) left Lifford for training in the Curragh in 1887. The regiment, formerly The Prince of Wales's Own Donegal Militia, had been well trained and well behaved.<sup>846</sup> Arthur O'Connor (MP for Donegal East) had asked the Secretary of State for War if the Donegal Militia had to go to the Curragh Camp for training. This was expensive and they could have camped locally. Brodrick replied that regiments took it in turn, and it was worth the expense.<sup>847</sup> 'The Donegals' were praised for their "soldier-like bearing" and "the efficiency and general conduct of the regiment during the whole training". This was particularly note-worthy as they were away from their home county where they were an accepted part of the community. They were inspected by the Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, and considered "a credit to the county". The *Independent* noted that it was "very gratifying to know" that not even at the end of the training "was one single man taken up the worse for liquor". The 5<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings had their annual training at Lifford under Col Lord C J Hamilton in 1888.<sup>848</sup>

An appeal was sent from "the inhabitants of Ballyshannon" to Edward Stanhope, Secretary of State for War, in 1888 requesting that the headquarters of the 5<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings be moved from Lifford to Ballyshannon. The barracks at Lifford had inadequate accommodation, stores and range, and had recently been condemned, whereas Ballyshannon had a larger

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<sup>845</sup> *DI*, 17 Sept 1887, 20 Mar 1891, 15 May 1886, 12 Jun and 8 Oct 1887, and 17 Mar 1888.

<sup>846</sup> *Ibid*, 7 May 1887.

<sup>847</sup> *Ibid*, 12 Mar 1887; *Hansard, HC Deb 07 March 1887 vol 311 cc1398-1399*.

<sup>848</sup> *DI*, 11 and 9 Jun 1888.

barracks vacant and ready to occupy.<sup>849</sup> Later advertisements for army contracts to supply provisions in Ireland which appeared in the *Independent*, and a plan for a Letterkenny and Gweedore Light Railway show an awareness of possible business opportunities. The 5<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings expected more recruits from neighbouring counties if they moved to Ballyshannon, although many went from the militia into the regulars which was better for the army in general. Lifford was also too close to other units: 4<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings in Derry, 6<sup>th</sup> battalion in Omagh, and Royal Artillery militia in Letterkenny. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Inniskillings might also move, although this was strongly linked to Enniskillen. The 5<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings were due to be presented with new colours in 1889, but after parading and carrying out the trooping of the old colours, the colonel of the regiment, Lord Claud Hamilton MP, announced that the presentation could not go ahead. Hamilton had asked if the new colours could be blessed by a Catholic priest instead of a Protestant, which the authorities assented to, although this had only happened once before. Rev O'Hagan of Strabane was approached to do this, but refused to take part in a ceremony which also involved a Protestant clergyman. The Donegal Artillery Militia were based in Letterkenny, but actually recruited from all over Ireland, and in March 1891 they received recruits from Connaught at their headquarters<sup>850</sup>.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, the King's Royal Rifle Corps moved from Athlone to Enniskillen in January 1888, with company detachments in Londonderry and Belturbet (County Cavan), and they were also active in Co Donegal at this time.<sup>851</sup> They were nicknamed the 'wee policemen' by the locals because they wore a similar uniform to the RIC, but were usually much shorter.<sup>852</sup> For the trial of Rev McFadden, one hundred men of the Rifles made a forced march from Letterkenny to Dunfanaghy in that January. A few days later another detachment arrived in cars seized under the Mutiny Act by Colonel Kinloch, as nobody would supply them freely.

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<sup>849</sup> *Ibid*, 1 Dec 1888; *Hansard, HC Deb 10 December 1888 vol 331 cc1573-4*. Question from John MacNeill (MP for Donegal South) to the War Secretary.

<sup>850</sup> *DI*, 10 Jan 1891, 29 Dec 1888, 29 Jun 1889, 20 Mar 1891.

<sup>851</sup> S. Hare, *The Annals of the King's Royal Rifle Corps, Vol IV* (London: John Murray, 1929), p156.

<sup>852</sup> S. Trimble, 'The Fenian Rebellion of 1865', in *The King's Royal Rifle Corps Chronicle*, 1937, p19. The writer continued with memories of the 1880s.

There were ultimately nearly a thousand soldiers and police in the town, and locals had to provide quarters for them.<sup>853</sup> When local traders were unwilling or unable to supply provisions for this force, they had to be brought in from Belfast under cavalry escort.<sup>854</sup> A Company of the Rifles were left at Dunfanaghy in February 1888, and “were constantly being called out ... to support the Royal Irish Constabulary at evictions, arrests of offenders and trials”. The police “frequently met with resistance of the most violent type”, but this stopped when the troops arrived. Magistrates gave orders to fire on several occasions but the threat was enough to end the trouble. The people felt that the police would not shoot, as they would be marked men and let down by the authorities afterwards, but the army was a different matter.<sup>855</sup>

A number of rioters were brought to trial at Bunbeg in March 1888. Fifty riflemen under Sir Guy Campbell and Lieut Thompson joined fifty police with five District Inspectors to protect the courthouse under Mr Bourke RM. As a large crowd approached with bands and banners, the police moved forward to stop them half a mile away. Later, however, the crowd – estimated at several thousand – began to surround the courthouse. “It was known that the riflemen had been served with sixty rounds of ammunition, and that arrangements were made in the event of firing on the crowd being necessary.” It was believed that the RIC were regarded “as fair game”, but that troops were taken more seriously, and were therefore seldom required to take serious action.<sup>856</sup> A combined bayonet and baton charge was then able to drive the mob back, which then dispersed under the influence of Fr McFadden. When Father McFadden’s appeal was to be heard at Letterkenny Quarter Sessions in April 1888, the authorities were again taking no chances. A force of 200 Riflemen, a troop of the 5<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards and over 200 RIC concentrated near the courthouse. When Fr

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<sup>853</sup> *DI*, 4 Feb 1888; S. Hare, *Annals of KRRC*, p156.

<sup>854</sup> *DI*, 11 Feb 1888.

<sup>855</sup> S. Hare, *Annals of KRRC*, p157.

<sup>856</sup> *Ibid*, p112; H. Mends, ‘Donegal, 1889’, p25.

McFadden failed to turn up at court in January 1889, there was a detachment of the Rifles quartered in the Gweedore Hotel and also 150 police present.<sup>857</sup>

Although the Riflemen did not get involved in the physical eviction process at the houses, they did the work they were given with firmness, which strengthened the belief that they would fire if ordered to do so. Cordons were rigidly held, and they were not reluctant to manhandle priests or even barge them out of the way.<sup>858</sup> Mends himself struck a man in a jeering crowd to clear the way to a courtroom, and knocked his teeth out.<sup>859</sup> If they were ever angry, it might have resulted from the constant disruption to their routine, the long marches, or simply because they objected to being removed from comfortable quarters. They considered that their resentment was justified against those who had only brought trouble on themselves. Soldiers certainly cheered up at the prospect of “going back to warm barracks, regular meals, and where they could have a good wash”.<sup>860</sup>

### **(c) The tactics of the National League**

Under the Plan of Campaign, all the old tactics were used, but concentrated on particular estates. The National League was able to use resources more effectively, with the result that there were often bitter struggles on the targeted estates, which were graphically depicted by contemporary artists and photographers.<sup>861</sup> Local branches of the National League held regular meetings, and these were at the centre of policy making and also keeping the tenants in order. In Inver some members were expelled for “grabbing the grass of an evicted farm”. At Bundoran a resolution was issued condemning the government for imprisoning Fr Fahy. At Dungloe any member supplying cars for the RIC at evictions would be dismissed. At a National League meeting in Gweedore in October 1886, chaired by Fr

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<sup>857</sup> *DI*, 17 Mar and 21 Apr 1888, and 2 Feb 1889.

<sup>858</sup> S. Trimble, ‘Fenian Rebellion’, pp25-26.

<sup>859</sup> H. Mends, ‘Donegal, 1889’, p24.

<sup>860</sup> S. Trimble, ‘Fenian Rebellion’, pp20-25.

<sup>861</sup> See L Curtis, *The Depiction of Eviction in Ireland 1845-1910* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2011), pp194-276.

McFadden, two evicted tenants – Denis Gallagher and H Doogan – proposed a 33% abatement on rents. The tenants would not be diverted from their cause by any “threats or methods of intimidation” from the landlords. Fr McFadden claimed that the landlords had made Gweedore “the cockpit of their unholy warfare against the people.” At a League meeting at Derrybeg in September 1887, they blamed Captain Hill for “sending his bloodhounds to Gweedore to harass and oppress his rack-rented tenants” and pledged to resist “dying landlordism”, “by every constitutional means”. Fr Daniel Stephens called on them to “fight for their homes, but fight within the law”.<sup>862</sup> Priests were again to the fore in the struggle. Though Major Mends did not like Fr McFadden, he later conceded that he was “a leader of activity and audacity”, but pointed out that there was another priest in the area with the same name who took no part in the agitation at all.<sup>863</sup>

Certain individuals could also have an important influence. There was a serious riot in Dungloe in May 1888 following the imprisonment of John Sweeney, a leading member of the National League, for refusing to give evidence in relation to the Crimes Act.<sup>864</sup> Mr Conybeare MP served three months in Derry gaol for promoting the Plan of Campaign in Donegal, and there were crowds to cheer him off.<sup>865</sup> He was released from prison in October 1889 and a nationalist crowd gathered outside in the rain to greet him, but the prison officials delayed his release until the evening. When Conybeare had cheered another prisoner and the Plan he was put back into his cell, and then released a few hours later.<sup>866</sup> Other individuals became involved with the local Poor Law and local government in order to spread the League’s influence, although Feingold argues that they were less radical here

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<sup>862</sup> *DI*, 16 and 30 Oct 1886, and 1 Oct 1887.

<sup>863</sup> H. Mends ‘Donegal, 1889’, pp15 & 20.

<sup>864</sup> *PRO* 30/60/12, p7.

<sup>865</sup> *DV*, 13 Jul 1889; T. Harrington, *Diary of Coercion Part III*, p102.

<sup>866</sup> *DI*, 12 Oct 1889.

than in counties with larger farms and a stronger rural influence. Unusually for Ulster, townsmen were well represented among office-holders.<sup>867</sup>

Other organisations could help with their aims - The Gaelic Athletic Association was “said to be a Fenian organisation”. Nationalists tried to gain influence through becoming Poor Law Guardians, and later in local government, although this was not without its own problems. At Ballyshannon and Manorhamilton the Boards of Guardians were controlled by nationalists. The *Independent* accused them of ruining them both through jobbery. A letter from “A Ratepayer” in the *Independent* of 15 October 1887 was the “protest of a disgusted Nationalist against the continued jobbery of the Ballyshannon Board of Guardians”, despite having a “Nationalist majority”. The Poor Law Guardians in Ballyshannon eventually admitted jobbery. Nevertheless, the League could also provide practical assistance, with support for court cases or building League Huts. Land agent Hewson was accused of illegal seizure by James Sweeny in Manorhamilton, after Hewson broke in, threatened Sweeny with a gun and took his cattle. Hewson was fined £2. The league had a cargo of wood and felt delivered by steamship, and contractors from Derry were hired to build a village of huts for prospective evictees near Falcarragh. Local issues and internal divisions could also raise problems, most significantly after the split of the whole nationalist movement over Parnell. There was a demonstration by the Donegal Federation at the end of June 1891. They felt that evicted tenants should not be allowed to suffer, and Parnell had funds he could release. Parnell was now seen as a “traitor”.<sup>868</sup> Only one delegate from Donegal attended the National Convention of the INL in July 1891, and the number of branches in the county fell from twenty in March to one in December, reflecting the nationwide picture.<sup>869</sup>

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<sup>867</sup> W. Feingold, *The Revolt of the Tenantry* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1984), pp206-209 and 215-216.

<sup>868</sup> *DI*, 5 Nov 1887, 11 Dec 1886, 15 Oct 1887, 8 Nov 1890, 16 Apr 1887, 18 Oct 1890 and 3 July 1891.

<sup>869</sup> CO 904/16, Secret Societies 1890-1893.

Tenants themselves could move back into homes that they had been evicted from, reclaim or block the sale of seized property, or impede the work of the process-servers. James Quigley and his wife were prosecuted for the forcible re-possession of a house in County Donegal.<sup>870</sup> In 1888 a crowd at Meenacladdy vainly tried to stop the police executing a warrant for the recovery of seed-rate. The ring-leaders were not punished, but a police barracks was set up there in a house rented from Mrs McGinley. She was later evicted from all her properties during the Plan of Campaign, so when the police decided to close their barracks, she moved back in illegally. In April 1889 seven men and two women were arrested at Falcarragh for resisting eviction and holding forcible possession of evicted land. In June, two men and five women were arrested in the same place for resisting the sheriff at an eviction.<sup>871</sup> In May 1890 the police beat back a stone-throwing crowd with batons in order to evict Mrs McGinley and put in a caretaker – but once they had left, the crowd reclaimed the house.<sup>872</sup> In March 1888 seven men were tried under the Crimes Act at Bunbeg for riotous behaviour at Meenaclady. They were the ringleaders of a group that tried to reclaim cattle just seized under seed rate decrees. They got between three and six months hard labour each, except for one who was released on bail.<sup>873</sup>

‘Unlawful assembly’ and ‘riot’ were common charges, although this did not necessarily reflect the seriousness of a situation.<sup>874</sup> On one occasion in Dungloe during June 1888 a demonstration by a youth band led to James Boyle getting twelve months in prison for ‘riot’, although it seems that the trouble was caused by the police using batons.<sup>875</sup> At Glenties, bailiffs trying to auction seized goods were locked out to stop them doing so. Process-server Neil Sharkey was surrounded by a large crowd while serving ejectment processes in Townawilly. This group were known as the “Townawilly lambs”, and they forced him to run

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<sup>870</sup> *Ibid*, 10 Apr 1886.

<sup>871</sup> T. Harrington, *Diary of Coercion Part III*, pp101 & 113.

<sup>872</sup> *The Sentinel*, cited in *DI*, 10 May 1890.

<sup>873</sup> *DI*, 17 Mar 1888.

<sup>874</sup> T. Harrington, *Diary of Coercion Part II*, pp103-104, and *Part III*, pp62-63.

<sup>875</sup> *Ibid*, p95.

away by pelting him with stones. Sharkey reported the incident to the police, but said that he did not recognise any of them, even though he was brought up close by. He was so frightened by his experience that he refused to return, even under police escort, and posted up the writs at Donegal Courthouse instead. It was clear that some tenants had the resources to pay their rents, but refused to do so under the Plan of Campaign. A process-server named Bankhead claimed that on one day he found all the doors shut and was chased off by a crowd of twenty or thirty, but the following day he went back and found all the doors removed. He had to nail the writs to the door posts, and the judge decided that this was good enough. Lists of process servers were still readily available in the press, making them vulnerable to intimidation.<sup>876</sup>

Then there were boycotting cases and outrages.<sup>877</sup> The *Independent* recorded fifty-one cases of boycotting in the Bundoran area in July 1887. It also noted “the foolish resistance to the law which the people have recently been *forced* into”, and a gang which had been terrorising the neighbourhood without the Crimes Act to restrain them. It questioned whether the law was strong enough to control the situation.<sup>878</sup> In July 1887 there were sixty-one people being boycotted in County Donegal, but by January 1888 this had been reduced to thirty-six.<sup>879</sup> Nationalists refused to allow an old Crimean War veteran called Cavanagh to be buried as a Catholic in Clonmany, despite appeals from the clergy. He had been boycotted for taking care of evicted farms, and so had to be buried elsewhere.<sup>880</sup> On the steamer from Moville to Derry in June 1888, James Dunion threatened Mr Hamilton RM, Crown Prosecutor, for sending Rev McFadden and John Dillon to gaol. “Your days will be short”, he told him, and he received one month’s hard labour for his boldness.<sup>881</sup> Assaulting

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<sup>876</sup> *DI*, 23 Nov 1889, 17 Mar and 28 Jan 1888, 1, 13 and 20 Nov 1890.

<sup>877</sup> *PRO* 30/60 12, p7.

<sup>878</sup> *DI*, 30 Jul 1887.

<sup>879</sup> *Ibid*, 18 Feb 1888; Balfour ADD 49822, p109b – Notes on Donegal 27 Jul 1887.

<sup>880</sup> *The Sentinel*, cited in *DI*, 30 Jun 1888.

<sup>881</sup> *DI*, 7 Jul 1888.

bailiffs was commonplace, and occasionally land agents as well.<sup>882</sup> Large scale intimidation was evident when crowds were gathered outside courthouses, or applied to car drivers, so that in 1887 the army and police had to use a gunboat for transport.<sup>883</sup> Heath was set alight on Keeldrum Mountain on the Ophert estate, and there were some malicious burnings and injuries to cattle in March 1891, referred to as “Whiteboyism”.<sup>884</sup> A bull at Bundoran was beaten and mortally injured – his left foreleg was broken in several places, and reduced almost to a pulp.<sup>885</sup> In the last quarter of 1891 there was only one outrage recorded in Donegal, and very few throughout Ireland.<sup>886</sup>

Ultimately, the strength of the Plan of Campaign depended on the resolve of the tenants to refuse to pay rents, and to face possible eviction as a result. At the Land Court in Dublin, some abatements were awarded on Teevan’s estate between Ballyshannon and Bundoran, but there was no general reduction. The *Independent* claimed that some tenants still wanted to settle, but were intimidated into refusing – so a hundred eviction notices were issued against those well able to pay. A letter in the *Times* from Somerset Ward, quoted in the *Independent*, claimed that up until the death of Lord Hill in 1879 rents were punctually paid, but that now nearly all the tenants owed at least a year and a half’s rent. “The people are quiet, industrious and well disposed, if left to themselves, but, unfortunately for them, the National League has been particularly active in their parish, and has brought them into their present deplorable condition.”<sup>887</sup> Trimble later claimed that most tenants were not troubled by the threat of eviction because they could intimidate anyone who took over an evicted farm, whilst “old men who disliked this new agitation ... were terrorised by the Leaguers into

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<sup>882</sup> T. Harrington, *Diary of Coercion Part II*, pp47 & 64; *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 25 May 1888.

<sup>883</sup> Balfour ADD 49822, p109b. Notes on Donegal 27 Jul 1887.

<sup>884</sup> *DI*, 7 Jun 1890 and 20 Mar 1891.

<sup>885</sup> *DV*, 20 Sept 1890.

<sup>886</sup> *HCPP*, 1892 [C.6579] Agrarian outrages (Ireland). pp2-3.

<sup>887</sup> *DI*, 16 Jan, 27 Feb and 11 Sept 1886.

submission".<sup>888</sup> *The Diary of Coercion* mentions over a hundred people involved in agitation and resisting evictions in Co Donegal, which shows that there was a widespread problem, but 70% only appear once. Only ten names appear more than twice, like the League leader John Sweeney, suggesting that there were a limited number of 'ringleaders'.<sup>889</sup> The suppression of several League branches in the county in 1889 eventually undermined resistance, and together with prosecutions saw "the disappearance of boycotting ... and the abandonment of all agrarian agitation", except on the Olphert estate where "the Nationalists have made it a point of honour" to continue.<sup>890</sup>

Under the Plan, physical defence against eviction could be very well organised. In January 1887, Sub-Sheriff McCay led a force to carry out evictions at Knockfolla, Gweedore. The police had to march on foot since they could not obtain any carriages and their way was blocked by granite boulders. Horns and other signals were used to gather the crowds, and scouts watched the police progress, so that the crowd were able to head them off. After a constable raised his baton, the crowd pelted the police with stones. The police responded with their batons and both sides suffered casualties until Fr McFadden persuaded the police to hold back. The evictions then met with mixed success. Patrick Gallagher was evicted, though he had paid most of his arrears, but another eviction was abandoned because there was a body awaiting burial inside. A widow of eighty was spared, but only because the writ was in the wrong name. Being unable positively to identify the next houses to be visited, the 150 police withdrew, and the crowd carried Patrick Gallagher and his family back into their home. The authorities had therefore achieved nothing, and the ejectments were to lapse in two days.<sup>891</sup>

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<sup>888</sup> S. Trimble, 'Fenian Rebellion', p19.

<sup>889</sup> T. Harrington, *Diary of Coercion, Co Donegal Parts II and III*.

<sup>890</sup> PRO 30/60/12, p7.

<sup>891</sup> *DI*, 22 Jan 1887.

In April 1887 there was a failed eviction at Bundoran when one Reilly barricaded himself in against R Sweeny JP and Special Bailiff McClay. They tried again the next day, but Reilly pelted them with stones. Some furniture was taken after gaining entrance, but McClay was injured and the attempt was abandoned. It was reported that the RIC stood by and took no part in this matter. By September 1887, only twenty out of a total of 763 agricultural holdings in Gweedore had paid rent in the previous twelve months. Some tenants owed up to seven years' rent, with an average annual rent of twenty-two shillings per holding. One tenant, Mary Gallagher owed eighteen years' rent at ten shillings per annum. "The cause, as usual, is the refusal of the Rev James McFadden's parishioners to pay rent, or to recognise either the rights of the landlord or the law of the land".<sup>892</sup>

Publicity was another valuable weapon. Some accused the League of using "professional agitators" to incite the tenants, and also to exploit specific incidents for the benefit of witnesses.<sup>893</sup> The use of battering rams by eviction parties was an obvious target.<sup>894</sup> With several evictions being due at Glasserchoo, and a force of 250 police and soldiers organised to carry them out, the expected victims erected barricades in their houses and prepared other defences. Patrick O'Brien MP visited the scene the day before and photographed several of the houses. MPs W. Redmond and J. Kenny were due to visit on the morning of the evictions and the Gladstonian deputation from Leeds had arranged for a meeting with some pressmen.<sup>895</sup> The Leeds deputation sent a telegram to the queen, congratulating her on her seventieth birthday, but also saying that the use of crown forces to evict families was "a disgrace to humanity and a shame to Great Britain".<sup>896</sup> There was a rent strike by those in labourers' cottages in May 1890, but the conditions in the countryside made success unlikely. The Special Commissioners of the *Scotsman* found that in many places, the effect

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<sup>892</sup> *Ibid*, 16 April and 1 Oct 1887.

<sup>893</sup> *The Daily Chronicle*, cited in *The Donegal Evictions*, described by an 'Independent Observer' (London: Liberal Unionist Association, 1889), pp1-8.

<sup>894</sup> L. P. Curtis, *The Depiction of Eviction*, pp252-253.

<sup>895</sup> *DI*, 25 May 1889.

<sup>896</sup> *DV*, 1 Jun 1889.

of the potato blight was as bad as it had been reported. The majority of tenants had holdings between five and thirty acres, but between a third and a half of this was impossible to cultivate. "The greater part of Donegal is a bleak, bare, mountainous country" - It was true, however, that farming methods could have been improved.<sup>897</sup> Major Mends recalled the Gweedore region, however, as having "little real poverty" in 1889, and the people as "ignorant and semi-civilised".<sup>898</sup> There were real fears for the potato crop in Donegal by November 1890<sup>899</sup>, and Balfour visited the county to assess the situation for himself. He was greeted by Loyalists<sup>900</sup>, but also by nationalists who had, so he claimed, seen "the error of their ways".<sup>901</sup> Balfour came away thinking that the main concern was the improvement of rail links, but many examples of distress were still being reported in 1891. In 1890, the *Vindicator* felt that things were changing for "the tyrant hand of landlordism", and looked forward to a time when "the breath of a paltry malice-seeking agent and his hordes of bailiffs and bog-trotters will not be heard".<sup>902</sup> According to the *Independent*, however, John Redmond was "forced to admit that the Plan of Campaign is a total failure" in 1891.<sup>903</sup> A Crime Branch Special report of May 1891 recorded eighteen estates throughout Ireland on which settlements had not been reached, and only one (Olphert's) was in County Donegal.<sup>904</sup>

#### **(d) The authorities' response**

The authorities could respond with legal action, suppression of meetings and protection parties. In July 1887, Donegal became one of eighteen counties proclaimed under the Coercion Act.<sup>905</sup> In February 1887, several tenants of A Hill were charged with forcibly re-

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<sup>897</sup> *DI*, 17 May and 1 Nov 1890.

<sup>898</sup> H. Mends, 'Donegal, 1889', p15.

<sup>899</sup> *DI* Supplement, 1 Nov 1890.

<sup>900</sup> *DI*, 8 Nov 1890.

<sup>901</sup> Letter from Balfour to Salisbury, 7 Nov 1890. Cited in *DV*, 14 Nov 1890.

<sup>902</sup> *DV*, 30 Jan and 13 Feb 1891, and 26 Apr 1890.

<sup>903</sup> *DI*, 24 Apr 1891.

<sup>904</sup> CBS 3408/S. List of Plan of Campaign estates not settled, 19 May 1891.

<sup>905</sup> J. Clancy, *A Year of 'Unionist' Coercion* (London: The Irish Press Agency, 1888), p2.

entering the houses they had been evicted from. The county court judge wanted the cases referred to the assizes, possibly because he did not trust a local jury.<sup>906</sup> Witnesses sometimes preferred gaol to giving evidence.<sup>907</sup> A Plan of Campaign meeting at Townawilly was stopped by a force of RIC turning up at the spot first, with DI Martin and Mr Mercer RM in charge. As the people passed out of the chapel they cheered for the “Plan, Parnell and the League”. A special court of Petty Sessions under the Crimes Act was held at Ballyshannon in July 1888 under RMs Capt McTernan and Harvey. DI Martin prosecuted William Travers and James Munday for using violence and intimidation towards Terence Feelihy because he had prosecuted poachers and defended his house against attacks at night. Feelihy had his police escort as witnesses when Travers called him “Terence the informer” in a threatening manner, and Munday also joined in.<sup>908</sup> By July 1887 there were four families under constant police protection.<sup>909</sup> The police intervened in an outrage at the home of Edward Curran in Gweedore. A crowd of “Moonlighting” men stoned Curran and surrounded his house because he had seceded from the Plan and paid his rent. On this occasion the RIC arrived in time to make two arrests, and the prisoners were taken to Glasserchoo police hut.<sup>910</sup>

The authorities always had to be cautious to act within the law, otherwise it undermined their credibility and handed a propaganda gift to the other side. James Wasson, a sheriff’s bailiff, was indicted for a second time for extortion in July 1887. He took five shillings from one Patrick McFadden, from the Ards estate near Dunfanaghy, under the threat of eviction, but only carried unlawful documents that had not been signed by the sheriff. The agent was not punished for giving him these papers, but other similar cases were known and Wasson was not allowed bail pending sentencing. He later received four months hard labour, and the

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<sup>906</sup> *DI*, 5 Feb 1887.

<sup>907</sup> T. Harrington, *Diary of Coercion, Part II*, pp54-58.

<sup>908</sup> *DI*, 7 May 1887 & 7 Jul 1888.

<sup>909</sup> Balfour, ADD 49822, p109b. Notes on Donegal 27 Jul 1887.

<sup>910</sup> *DI*, 6 Feb 1891.

judge, Mr Justice Murphy, referred to his victims as “very poor creatures” and condemned Wasson’s abuse of power.<sup>911</sup> In May 1889, four prisoners challenged the legality of their sentence following evictions in Donegal, when they were given additional suspended sentences in case they jumped bail on release.<sup>912</sup> John McGee, aged 21-22, died in Dunfanaghy in August 1889, having recently been released from Derry gaol as a Campaign prisoner. He was ill when he was released, and it was suggested that his condition was neglected by the prison authorities.<sup>913</sup>

Evictions became the focus of the struggle against the National League, and therefore a tactic in their own right. In 1885, there were only three evictions sanctioned by the winter Quarter Sessions at Ballyshannon, but the Plan of Campaign was to change that. In April 1886, seventy RIC, under County Inspector Alcock, District Inspector Gilman and M. Mercer RM, went to carry out six evictions on the estate of the Marquis of Conyngham at Glenties. All but one were settled beforehand, and at the last man’s house he signed an agreement to settle within six months. A number of evictions were carried out on the estate of Surgeon-General Teevan at Dunmuckram in June 1886. A large force of police were involved, but there was no trouble. Most tenants were re-admitted as caretakers.<sup>914</sup>

In August 1886 Sub-Sheriff McCay and 200 police, in fifty cars, proceeded to Brinlack to carry out evictions on the property of Mr Dixon. Most of the adult population of the district were scattered throughout Ireland searching for work, so that it was mainly old people and children who were left behind. The cost of the ejectments was greater than the amount of rent sought. “The inhumanity of overturning the families on the road-side” was avoided, however, by allowing the tenants back in as caretakers. The land there was poor, and nearly all of the families involved were in the workhouse in the summer. There was no

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<sup>911</sup> *Ibid*, 23 Jul 1887.

<sup>912</sup> *Times*, 6 May 1889.

<sup>913</sup> *DI*, 17 and 31 Aug 1889.

<sup>914</sup> *Ibid*, 2 Jan, 10 Apr and 12 Jun 1886.

trouble. The next day evictions were resumed on the property of Capt Hill. The area was bleak and the people half-starved. Widow Mary Doogan was evicted, although John Sweeny and his sick wife got a temporary reprieve. The widow Margaret McPaul, her widowed daughter-in-law and eight children were shown no mercy and were “thrown on the street ... friendless and penniless”. The force continued its work for a third day in Carrick, on the estate of Captain Hill, where similar stories were enacted, with only a few being readmitted as caretakers. One case did not have the proper authority behind it, and the family were saved by the intervention of the parish priest.<sup>915</sup>

Continuing evictions in Gweedore led to strained emotions among the people, and the authorities employed tighter cordons in case of trouble. In some cases, involving widows and the elderly, returning as caretakers was allowed – but others were treated without emotion. Boats were used to ferry policemen out to the sparsely populated islands in Gweedore Bay, where further evictions were carried out. The *Independent* editorial concluded: “The entire result of cash out of this costly business is £4. Is the game worth the candle?” No-one ever suggested that these people could pay, and many then built sod houses for themselves on or near their former holdings. Questions were asked in parliament by Arthur O’Connor about the cost of the evictions. The amount of rent due was £290, and the amount recovered just £4. But Edward Saunderson (MP for Armagh North) claimed that Gweedore, like many other places, was not a fight between landlord and tenant, but between the landlords and their enemies the National League.<sup>916</sup> In January 1887 a force of one hundred police plus officials were to carry out an eviction at Knockfolla, but were obstructed by a 300-strong mob of men and women. When the crowd became violent the magistrate, F. N. Cullen, read the Riot Act and the police were ordered to load. Fr McFadden then persuaded the people to withdraw and one tenant was evicted. No-one had volunteered to

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<sup>915</sup> *Ibid*, 14 Aug 1886.

<sup>916</sup> *Ibid*, 21 and 28 Aug 1886.

act as bailiff, "intimidation being so great".<sup>917</sup> The eviction decrees issued at Glenties in April 1887 were the "result of the Plan of Campaign" – forty on the Marquis of Conyngham's estate, twenty on Murray-Stewart's and twenty on Messrs Musgraves.<sup>918</sup>

In 1887, "what may be termed the campaign against the Plan of Campaign in South Donegal commenced." A large number of evictions were planned on various estates, where up to six years rent was due. Seventy RIC turned out under CI Lennon and DIs McClelland and Martin. Some only had batons and side arms, but others had rifles and bayonets. The RM was Captain Preston, with bailiffs and four 'Emergency' men who had been unable to find lodgings the previous night – Catholics being in the League, and Protestants fearing reprisals. At Tawnawilly the police faced hostile crowds but encircled buildings and kept the people at bay while the "awful work of eviction began". Fr McFadden helped with negotiations, and some tenants were allowed to escape eviction by signing agreements to pay later.<sup>919</sup>

At the start of June 1887, Sub-Sheriff McCay with CI Lennon and fifty police renewed the evictions in south Donegal.<sup>920</sup> There were nine evictions on the Musgrave estate, eight of whom were allowed back as caretakers. Further evictions were carried out over the next few days without incident.<sup>921</sup> Questions were asked in parliament by Patrick O'Hea (MP for Donegal West) about whether it was intended, not only to evict sixty more tenants from Captain Hill's Gweedore estate, but also to evict thirty-seven who had been reinstated as caretakers and their houses pulled down.<sup>922</sup> Patrick Gallagher of Knockfolla, Gweedore, was evicted by a force of nearly one hundred police after re-entering a house and farm on the estate of Mrs Ann Stewart from which he had previously been evicted. Others were

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<sup>917</sup> Balfour, ADD 49822, p109b. Notes on Donegal 27 Jul 1887.

<sup>918</sup> *DI*, 16 Apr 1887.

<sup>919</sup> *Ibid*, 4 Jun 1887.

<sup>920</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Jun 1887.

<sup>921</sup> *DI*, 11 Jun 1887.

<sup>922</sup> *Ibid*, 16 Jul 1887; *Hansard, HC Deb 12 July 1887 vol 317 cc509-10*.

punished for rioting before the eviction, and after it they helped him gain possession yet again. This took place in January, and when he later appeared in court for illegal possession, Gallagher spoke Irish through the court interpreter. At the Donegal Quarter Sessions of October 1887, ejectments at Ballyshannon were delayed by incorrect paperwork. Evictions on the Kildoney Glebe estate for unpaid rent were postponed because they were within three months of the owner's death, and so twelve months rent had not yet accrued.<sup>923</sup>

After evictions began again in Gweedore during September 1887, the authorities used the courts, with supporting force, to back up their actions. Among the cases heard were caretakers who refused to give up possession, other tenants accused of trespass, and two women accused of throwing either stones or hot water at officials. In early October 1887 the police told the agent, Colonel Dopping, that they would protect his eviction party, but intimated that they would withdraw if he started to level buildings as threatened. One hundred police, half armed with rifles and bayonets and the other half with batons, were led by Mr French RM, CI Lennon and DIs Winder and Stephenson. A car had to be sent to Bunbeg to fetch the delayed warrants, and Lennon tried vainly to negotiate with Father McFadden. When the evictions were undertaken, there was some fierce defending with boiling water and stones from within barricaded houses. As an angry crowd gathered, the Riot Act was read and the evictions were eventually successful. The *Independent* felt that the authorities had not made enough resources available, although they eventually won through. Further evictions took place in Gweedore that week with similar resistance. Dopping told Father McFadden that he was inciting the people.<sup>924</sup>

In January 1888, Lifford Quarter Sessions recorded a particularly heavy case load which included 158 ejectments. Mr Toland, defence lawyer for the Oliphant tenants, requested an

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<sup>923</sup> *DI*, 23 Jul and 15 Oct 1887.

<sup>924</sup> *Ibid*, 1 and 8 Oct 1887.

adjournment claiming that some of the eviction notices were for the wrong tenants and that Father McFadden, with his local knowledge, was needed to clear up this confusion. The judge, Dr Webb, refused this and the cases continued. In March 1888 Donegal County Court approved over sixty evictions on the Glencolumkille estate of Mr McGlade, some tenants owing over twenty years' rent.<sup>925</sup> The people of Townawilly, near Donegal, were noted as radicals, frequently involved in agitation and in debt to shopkeepers as well as landlords. In March 1889, long planned evictions eventually took place after negotiations failed to reach any conclusion. It was said that some tenants wanted to settle, but were prevented by agitators. A large military force was assembled, including 150 Rifles who arrived by train, which the *Independent* considered to be unnecessary – and the column took a battering ram with them. Some tenants were indeed able to settle, or reach an agreement, but those that were not were evicted.<sup>926</sup>

In early 1889 the government suppressed several League branches in County Donegal, and felt that rents were “being better paid all over the suppressed area” and “the demeanour of the peasantry is wonderfully improved” except for the Olphert estate.<sup>927</sup> In April a large force of police and Rifles, together with a battering ram, undertook several evictions at Falcarragh, where they encountered some stiff opposition.<sup>928</sup> On the eve of further evictions, W Olphert offered about eighty of his poorest tenants, who owed rent arrears from before the Plan of Campaign, a chance to pay a reduced amount as a temporary settlement. In August 1889, Balfour announced in the Commons that of the 450 tenants on the Olphert estate, 320 had fair rents fixed, forty had rents fixed out of court, and ninety were still owing. In August 1889,

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<sup>925</sup> *Ibid*, 28 Jan and 31 Mar 1888.

<sup>926</sup> *Ibid*, 23 Mar 1889. For the pros and cons of using battering rams in evictions 1887-1890, see L. P. Curtis, *Depiction of Eviction*, pp224-253. For Balfour's defence of their use on the Olphert estates, see *Times*, 7 Aug 1889.

<sup>927</sup> PRO 30/60/12, p8.

<sup>928</sup> *The Daily Chronicle*, cited in *The Donegal Evictions*, described by an ‘Independent Observer’ (London: Liberal Unionist Association, 1889), pp1-5; L. P. Curtis, *Depiction of Eviction*, pp262-269.

Edward McGinty was evicted in Drumminin for owing five and a half years' rent. There were still a hundred more evictions due on Olphert's estate at Falcarragh in December 1889.<sup>929</sup>

One hundred and fifty new evictions were due in Donegal by early 1890, mainly in Gweedore. Both sides prepared for trouble and questions were asked in the House of Commons.<sup>930</sup> When they actually began in March there was less interest in them, and less trouble than in the previous year. DC Cameron and the RIC were now joined by sixty men from the North Lancashire Regiment, and twenty-four families on Olphert's Gweedore estate were all evicted in less than five hours, their redemption time having already expired. There were no crowds, or resistance or visitors – only Rev McFadden and two other priests. The Olphert eviction campaign ended in April 1890. It took four days to clear out approximately seventy families comprising some 300 people. There was no resistance as “the people who are under the cruel bondage of a wicked organisation and conspiracy submitted to their fate”. There were no distinguished visitors to act up to, and only one girl threw scalding water. The *Vindicator* agreed that there was a lack of serious resistance this time, but the claim in the *Independent* that the ‘Emergency’ men and police were “subjected to the good-natured bantering of the crowds of peasantry” seems unlikely. Half the Olphert tenants were now cleared from the Gweedore estate, and the rest were due to be put out by August, apart from a few non-campaigners, and they would be converted to caretakers. Evictions were also taking place at this time on the Stewart and Swiney estates.<sup>931</sup>

More evictions began on the Olphert estate in November 1890. DC Slacke with DI Heard and a hundred policemen set off, and there were also various visitors and priests, including Rev McFadden with a camera. The Plan of Campaign had been in place on the estate for nearly four years, during which time there had been about 250 evictions. Over fifty tenants

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<sup>929</sup> *DI*, 25 May, 10 Aug and 21 Dec 1889.

<sup>930</sup> *Ibid*, 22 Feb and 15 Mar 1890; *Hansard, HC Deb 07 March 1890 vol 342 cc246-7, HC Deb 07 March 1890 vol 342 cc245-6 and HC Deb 13 March 1890 vol 342 c703.*

<sup>931</sup> *DI*, 29 Mar and 5 April 1890.

had paid their rents – some were Protestants not involved in the Campaign anyway, and others were allowed to pay by the League to avoid wholesale clearance. The first day saw 143 warrants for eviction ready for actioning, representing 1,000 individuals. The evictions went on apace without incident, apart from the interruptions of Mr John MacNeill (MP for Donegal South) and the visitors tramping around. It rained heavily in the afternoon, and so operations were suspended at the sixteenth house. They began again the next day, but apart from a jeering crowd there were no disturbances.<sup>932</sup>

At the beginning of 1891, American reporter Luke Sharp wrote a detailed report on another Gweedore eviction. At the home of Maginley, 150 police were pitched against five youths. He commented on “the hatred with which the police are regarded in Ireland”. As the assault began, a crowbar man was hit by a stone, at which the crowd cheered. The police then managed to get onto ladders, and although two of them were knocked off, one got onto the roof and smashed through the slates with a hatchet. Stones were being thrown from the house, but the police replied in kind. The RIC then stormed the house, throwing stones down through the hole in the roof and breaking in through a window. The five defenders, aged 16 to 24, were all captured and two of them were badly injured. To complete the eviction, an officer had to stamp out any spark of fire inside, and a slate or piece of earth had to be handed to the landlord to represent the property. No domestic animal was allowed to stay inside otherwise the eviction was invalidated. This included dogs, but cats were considered wild and did not count.<sup>933</sup> The eviction of Daniel Campbell at Glasbolly was undertaken by bailiffs and twenty policemen, who were not actually needed.<sup>934</sup> In the last quarter of 1891 only four families were actually turned out by eviction in the county, with

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<sup>932</sup> *Ibid*, 15 Nov 1890.

<sup>933</sup> *Detroit Free Press*, cited in *DI*, 10 Jan 1891.

<sup>934</sup> *DI*, 27 Feb 1891.

many more being re-admitted - a situation repeated throughout most of Ireland – see Table 4 below.<sup>935</sup>

**TABLE 4 - Total number of evictions & re-admittances across Ireland, Oct-Dec 1891**

Province	County	Total families evicted without re-admittance		Total re-admitted as caretakers etc
<b>Leinster</b>		<b>30</b>		<b>183</b>
	Kilkenny & Longford (largest number)	7 each	Longford (largest number)	44
<b>Munster</b>		<b>62</b>		<b>185</b>
	Cork West Riding (largest number)	13	Cork(largest number)	71
<b>Ulster</b>		<b>43</b>		<b>283</b>
	Cavan (largest number)	11	Tyrone (largest number)	122
	(Donegal)	4		39)
<b>Connaught</b>		<b>47</b>		<b>189</b>
	Mayo (largest number)	15	Mayo (largest number)	69

Source: HCPP 1892 (C.6581) Evictions (Ireland)

**(e) Focus – The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, the King’s Royal Rifle Corps and the Donegal RIC in the Gweedore evictions, 1889.**

At the start of January 1889 a force of 100-150 police and 100 Rifles converged on Falcarragh and the Olphert estate to carry out evictions<sup>936</sup> - see Figure 7, page 310. Wybrants Olphert was an unpopular landlord, and it had been rumoured that there was a conspiracy against him.<sup>937</sup> With them were a squad of ‘Emergency’ men, equipped with the “most improved machines” for battering down houses where resistance was offered. Mr

<sup>935</sup> HCPP, 1892 [C.6581] Evictions (Ireland), pp3 & 5. (See Table 4 above).

<sup>936</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, 3 Jan 1889; L. P. Curtis, *Depiction of Eviction*, pp256-261.

<sup>937</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 15 June 1888 vol 327 cc238-239*. James Carew, MP for Kildare North, to Chief Secretary.

Hewson, the agent, had a cart full of equipment including ladders, planks, crowbars and sledge hammers. It was reported that Major Mends of the Rifles told his men that if they received the order to fire, they were not to shoot women or children. They were, however, to make sure that they got the men, especially any ring leaders. According to the *Independent*, “the speech has created a great sensation”, but Mends himself did not mention it.<sup>938</sup> The authorities put out patrols beforehand, but the peasants were still able to damage three bridges and hinder the advance. Having brought up planks of wood from Dunfanaghy, the force was able to make some repairs, with the loss of only one cart that fell into the stream, and the advance was resumed. Ulick Bourke was the RM in charge, Major Mends was assisted by Lieuts Pixley and Christian, and CI Lennon had with him DIs Heard and Stephenson.

According to the *Independent* the inhabitants of this area were “fairly substantial tenants”<sup>939</sup>, though they were later recalled by Major Mends as “the great majority peasants, smallholders and farmers, Irish speaking, ignorant and fanatical”<sup>940</sup>. Samuel Trimble, the influential journalist, said that “few were then educated and were a wild undisciplined lot ... they were only concerned with their poor little holdings, and those who lived along the seaboard with the fishing”.<sup>941</sup> The first house targeted was that of Patrick O'Donnell at Bedlam. It was a two storey building that had been well prepared for defence, with doors and downstairs windows blocked by stones, loopholes cut in the walls further up and slates loosened to use as missiles. A crowd of about two thousand men and women from far and wide had gathered to cheer the defenders as the ‘Emergency’ party began the assault. Beaten back from the door by a hail of stones, the bailiffs then began to hurl rocks back whilst others tried to get a ladder against a wall. This also failed with one head injury and a pitchfork stab wound. When the tenant still refused to surrender, the police were ordered to

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<sup>938</sup> *DI*, 5 Jan 1889; National Army Museum, Mends Papers, 8006-19-4/01 – Report on eviction, 2 Jan 1889.

<sup>939</sup> *DI*, 5 Jan 1889.

<sup>940</sup> H. Mends, ‘Donegal, 1889’, p15.

<sup>941</sup> S. Trimble, ‘Fenian Rebellion’, p18.

fix bayonets, at which Father McFadden protested that they had no right to do anything but protect the bailiffs. A number of priests, including McFadden and Stephens, were allowed inside the cordon of Rifles and police together with reporters and Mr Kelly, a National League organiser.<sup>942</sup> Major Mends did not record the priest's protests, but agreed on the "determined resistance" that they met, and the sequence of events.<sup>943</sup>

DI Stephenson led half a dozen police in a bayonet charge to get up a ladder. Sgt McComb was first up the ladder, but received several wounds and had to retire. The defenders were cheered by the crowd as they sang "God Bless Ireland", but Mr Bourke then read the Riot Act. O'Donnell, the tenant, protested at the landlord's raising of his rent (which Bourke himself as Land Commissioner had subsequently reduced), but he could not halt events. An attempt to get a cart up to a wall for cover was defeated by more stones, and Bourke warned O'Donnell that the troops would be ordered to fire. Fr McFadden "objected to the police acting as Emergency-men" but he was just told to stop talking. A line of riflemen was drawn up on the road facing the front of the house protected by others with fixed bayonets, and Bourke wrote out the firing warrant. Father Stephens tried in vain to get the defenders to surrender, and Fr McFadden questioned Bourke's authority to give the order to fire, but both the RM and Major Mends insisted that the wounding of a policeman had changed the situation. After the bailiffs had again been forced back by stones, and with the soldiers about to fire, Fr Stephens eventually persuaded O'Donnell to give in. The siege had lasted over five hours, and thirteen prisoners were now taken back to Falcarragh.<sup>944</sup> Mends thought that O'Donnell himself was the only local man among them.<sup>945</sup>

When the evictions resumed two days later, the crowds were smaller, but still at times up to a thousand strong, "a large proportion of which were women" – again illustrating their

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<sup>942</sup> *DI*, 5 Jan 1889; H. Mends, 'Donegal, 1889', pp18-19.

<sup>943</sup> Mends, 8006-19-4/01 – Report on eviction, 2 Jan 1889.

<sup>944</sup> *DI*, 5 Jan 1889; H. Mends, 'Donegal, 1889', pp19-22.

<sup>945</sup> H. Mends 'Donegal, 1889', p18.

important role. Little resistance was now met, and three further evictions were carried out that day.<sup>946</sup> On Friday, however, a scene more like that of Tuesday took place, with a force of 200 soldiers and police aiming to evict Neil Doogan, a caretaker, from the Olphert estate at Ardsmore. The bailiffs and police were unable to break into the well defended two storey house. Fr Stephens warned the defenders to hand over any rifles they might have – but Doogan refused to reveal anything. With firing parties of riflemen all around the building, Bourke the RM gave the order to move up the Rifles and open fire. Major Mends brought ten soldiers close to the building, loaded and ready to fire, and only then did Doogan surrender. Thirteen prisoners were again taken. Mends was convinced that Doogan had originally replied: “We were told by the priests to die here”, but this was later denied. In fact, Mends was convinced that the priests were behind all the serious resistance.<sup>947</sup>

Of the remaining four evictions carried out on the Saturday, only one offered any serious resistance: James McNulty. A final target, ‘Curran’s fort’, was not reached until late in the day, and being well defended it was decided to leave it until Monday. In fact, no action was taken until Tuesday when the authorities began by taking the home of James McHugh, before then proceeding to Curran’s fort. The Emergency men began here by trying to use the battering ram first, but could not get close enough. Mr Bourke then threatened the use of rifles, read the Riot Act and gave Ned Curran an hour to come out, which he eventually did. Major Mends had been a prominent figure in these events. He was actually warned that there was a conspiracy by members of the RIC to murder him, but this was probably a hoax.<sup>948</sup> He was later to claim that, although given written orders to fire twice, “on both these occasions, and on many others, I was able, without resorting to such an extreme measure,

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<sup>946</sup> *DI*, 5 Jan 1889.

<sup>947</sup> *Ibid*, 12 Jan 1889; Mends, 8006-19-4/02 – Report on evictions, 3-8 Jan 1889, 8006-19-5/03 - Report on evictions , 2-4 Jan 1889, 8006-19- 6/04 - Letter Mends to commanding officer, 14 Jan 1889; Mends, ‘Donegal, 1889’, p20.

<sup>948</sup> Mends, 8006-19-7/05, Letter Major H Mends to Deputy Adjutant General, 6 Feb 1889 and 8006-19-8/06, Letter from Royal Hospital Dublin to Maj Mends.

to obtain complete submission to the law”.<sup>949</sup> There is no doubt that Major Mends would have ordered his men to fire if it had been absolutely necessary, on those occasions that magistrates gave their permission to do so, but it is important to note that he did not. He later rose to become a brigadier, and was recognised by others for “the judgement, zeal and tact that he displayed under very trying circumstances”.<sup>950</sup>

Fr McFadden had declared that he would not respect a Crimes Court summons, and after being served with one on 15 January 1889, he failed to appear in court to answer charges against him at the end of the month. After giving him two hours to turn up, a warrant was issued for his arrest. DI Markham from Dungloe was tasked with watching Fr McFadden’s house and preventing his escape, but on the night of 29/30 January he failed to do this. In the face of a crowd of possibly 2-3,000 he withdrew his force of thirty-one policemen, and did not think to call for assistance from nearby Bunbeg. In May he was found guilty of neglect of duty and cowardice, and reduced in rank, and Sgt John Dillon who had been with him was reduced to constable. A Sgt Walsh was also later reduced to constable for not patrolling close enough to Fr McFadden’s house.<sup>951</sup>

The *Independent* allocated much column space to the murder of District Inspector Martin in February 1889. It admitted that “murders perhaps as brutal have been committed, in the South and West of Ireland”, but that such “horrible butchery” should occur in their own county really forced the message home. The message was that government policy was too weak, and “three hundred savages were allowed to murder one man, and all but murder six or eight more whilst fifty police, armed with loaded rifles, stood quietly by within a few hundred yards”.<sup>952</sup> On Sunday 3 February 1889, DI Martin had proceeded to Derrybeg Chapel with a large force of police under CI Lennon to arrest Father McFadden after mass.

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<sup>949</sup> Mends, 8006-19-30, Outline of own service, 20 Apr 1894.

<sup>950</sup> Mends, 8006-19-28. Draft reference for Mends by Duke of Abercorn, 16 Nov 1891.

<sup>951</sup> *DI*, 2 Feb, 18 May and 15 Jun 1889.

<sup>952</sup> *DV*, 16 Feb 1889.

Lennon had the main body drawn up on the road, but small groups were distributed around the area, and one of these consisted of DI Martin, Sgts Dunning and Casey, and five or six constables. When mass was finished most of the congregation had already come out when Fr McFadden appeared at the door directly opposite Martin, accompanied by 300 men “described as a bodyguard”. Martin put his hand on the priest’s shoulder and arrested him, and when the crowd began to press forward he drew his sword. Sgt Dunning produced the warrant when challenged to do so, and they then all walked towards the house with four constables behind, and Martin and Dunning still holding the priest’s cassock. At this point the furious crowd began to hurl stones and rip out fence stakes to use as clubs, and as they closed in on the constables *they* used their rifle butts in defence. DI Martin turned to face the crowd and McFadden ran into his house. Martin now became the focus of the violence as he slashed about him with his sword, but once felled by a blow to the head the mob continued to smash at his skull. The rest of the policemen managed to drag themselves, and Martin, into McFadden’s house.<sup>953</sup>

Father McFadden shouted from an upstairs window for the crowd to stop, at which they all dispersed.<sup>954</sup> Reinforcements now arrived, but they found Martin dying and all of the policemen with him were seriously injured: Sgt Carey, and Constables Lynch, Orr, Varrily, Watson and Sherlock. CI Lennon found that two of the RIC had loaded their rifles, but he prevented them from shooting any ring leaders and the crowd then rapidly disappeared. Fr McFadden was immediately arrested and taken to Letterkenny, and the next day an inquest was held at the Gweedore Hotel.<sup>955</sup> According to Major Mends, it was he and a body of Riflemen who actually arrested McFadden and took back Martin’s body.<sup>956</sup> Father McFadden was committed for trial for murder at Gweedore<sup>957</sup>, but managed to put his side of

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<sup>953</sup> *DI*, 9 Feb 1889; CDA, P/21/5/8-2, Statement by Constable Armstrong 9 Mar 1889.

<sup>954</sup> CDA, P21/5/15, Statement of Constable Leonard.

<sup>955</sup> *DI*, 9 Feb 1889.

<sup>956</sup> H. Mends, ‘Donegal, 1889’, pp21-22.

<sup>957</sup> CDA, P21/2/1. Copy of notice served on Fr McFadden, 1 Feb 1889.

the story in letter to the *Independent* and the *Vindicator*. Several other suspects were also arrested, and Mrs Martin received many letters of sympathy. There were several attacks on McFadden from Protestant pulpits, and some Catholics responded in like form.<sup>958</sup> Many arrests were made, but at this stage nobody was charged, and prisoners continued to be released. The case was covered in the *Independent* over several issues. A memorial fund for DI Martin was established with contributions noted in the paper<sup>959</sup>, although there were arguments within the Protestant congregation about its appropriateness when it was produced – see Figure 8, page 310.<sup>960</sup> When it seemed that there would not be a memorial, the *Vindicator* commented sarcastically: “well, well, we will all manage to survive the blow”. Martin’s legacy was arguably one of bitterness as his death brought “untold misery to hundreds of poor peasants, who never saw or even heard of him”, and the wreaths on his own tomb were destroyed.<sup>961</sup>

The *Independent* did not agree with the charge of murder against Revd McFadden, but did say that he was guilty of encouraging “the ignorant peasantry of Gweedore to open violation of the law”. It also accused him of being more concerned for the killers than the victim. CI Lennon is then accused of putting a small number of men in harm’s way, and failing to arrest some of the culprits on the spot. The *Vindicator* also decried the killing of Martin, but said that it was not necessary to adjourn the Ballyshannon petty sessions, where many poor people still had to pay their solicitors.<sup>962</sup> It also implied that Martin brought it on himself by quoting a sergeant who had served under him, saying he had been “too zealous”, “imperious and dictatorial”.<sup>963</sup> The *Vindicator* was sure that “a sweet revenge will doubtless be exacted” by the police.<sup>964</sup>

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<sup>958</sup> *DI*, 23 Feb 1889; *DV*, 16 Feb 1889.

<sup>959</sup> *DI*, 9 Mar, 9,16 and 23 Feb, 2, 9 and 23 Mar, 6 Apr, 13 Jul and 23 Mar 1889.

<sup>960</sup> *DI* Supplements, 7 and 21 Dec 1889.

<sup>961</sup> *DV*, 4 May and 14 Dec 1889.

<sup>962</sup> *DV*, 16 Feb 1889.

<sup>963</sup> *The Glasgow Herald*, cited in *DV*, 16 Feb 1889.

<sup>964</sup> *DV*, 16 Feb 1889.

The murder charge against Fr McFadden was eventually dropped in May 1889<sup>965</sup>, but his trial on a lesser charge, and that of the other suspects, began in October 1889 in Maryborough, Queen's County. Extra police were drafted in and many witnesses including priests were called.<sup>966</sup> The brutality of the struggle was recalled by police witnesses. Constable Varrily described "Martin's skull ... smashed in like an eggshell" by a circle of men. Constable Watson produced Martin's battered helmet and bent sword, and explained how *he* had to use his rifle to ward off blows, and "thinks he split the rifle stock on a man's back". One of the accused was William Coll, who had a Sgt Boyle of the Donegal Artillery Militia as a witness in his favour, but who was found guilty of manslaughter, though not of murder".<sup>967</sup> He received ten years' penal servitude. Patrick Roarty and Dominick Rodgers received seven years' penal servitude for manslaughter, and Connell McGee got five years' penal servitude. Eleven others got lesser sentences of between two and six months hard labour. Revd McFadden pleaded guilty to obstructing the police and was released on bail.<sup>968</sup>

A second series of evictions on the Olphert estate began on 9 April 1889. This time there was no barricading of houses, and the "siege train" did not have to be used. DC Allan Cameron was in overall command of a mixed force of police, infantry and cavalry – the latter based at Olphert's residence, Ballyconnel House.<sup>969</sup> Questions were asked in the Commons by Thomas Sexton (MP for Belfast West) about the scale of the Gweedore evictions.<sup>970</sup> Balfour defended these actions, claiming that accusations about poor peasants having to live on Indian meal were exaggerated, and said that battering rams had only been used in defence. Mr Sexton asked what the number of families to be affected was, to which Balfour

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<sup>965</sup> *DI*, 25 May 1889.

<sup>966</sup> *Ibid*, 19 October 1889; *DV*, 16 Feb 1889; CDA, P21/3/1 – List of witnesses. From 1929 renamed Port Laoise in Co Laois.

<sup>967</sup> *DI*, 26 Oct 1889.

<sup>968</sup> *Ibid*, 2 Nov 1889; *Hansard, HC Deb 12 April 1892 vol 3 cc1236*.

<sup>969</sup> *DI*, 13 Apr 1889.

<sup>970</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 11 April 1889 vol 335 cc225-7*.

answered twenty-three, but he blamed the Plan of Campaign for this situation and for the poverty.<sup>971</sup> The futility of some of these operations was shown by fifty tenant families at Falcarragh returning to their homes en masse after being evicted in April 1889. Olphert then had to get new summonses.<sup>972</sup>

In further Olphert evictions, the women again put up a defence while the men were with the crowd outside. There was more barricading this time, but all were overcome. It was noted that there was no sign of the extreme poverty referred to elsewhere. Many evictions were carried out without any resistance. “The Nationalist fiction that there is friction between the rifles and the police is contradicted on all hands.” The force in the district was then 250 police, fifty Rifles under Capt Butler at Ballyconnell and 150 under Capt Riddell at Dunfanaghy. “The Gweedore district is simply a grouse mountain” and “is utterly unfit for human habitation”. The Gweedore peasant was not seen as a farmer, but as a labourer in Scotland or England with a small patch of land in Ireland for potatoes. Those “aiding and abetting” the Plan of Campaign, eg: giving supplies to those who re-possessed property, could be prosecuted – as in the case of Mr Conybeare MP and the Olphert estate.<sup>973</sup>

More Olphert evictions at Glasserchoo took one day to complete at the end of May 1889. Under DC Cameron were CI Milling and 100 police, and Capts Butler and Riddell with 150 Rifles. Hugh McCafferty’s house was taken without a struggle, as was Paddy Hegarty’s. At the dwellings of Bridget McGeever, Biddy Hegarty, Philip Magee and others there was some resistance with stones and hot water, but it was fairly easily overcome. Twenty arrests were made in all – seventeen women and three men. A couple of days later, the authorities tackled the home of James McGinley, which had been strengthened in a similar manner to others before. The downstairs was barricaded and loopholes were cut upstairs. Bizarrely,

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<sup>971</sup> *DI*, 20 Apr 1889.

<sup>972</sup> *Daily News*, 16 Apr 1889.

<sup>973</sup> *DI* 20 and 27 Apr, and 4 May 1889.

the press and priests walked about the house beforehand talking to the tenant, his son and a nephew. After an exchange of words with the Sheriff, the 'Emergency' men tried to gain access to the house, but failed. The police were then ordered forward with shields and ladders, and a considerable struggle took place, but they eventually broke in through the roof. DIs Heard, Crane and Law were all involved in this struggle. The defenders were eventually taken prisoner, but there were over twenty-five casualties on DC Cameron's side.<sup>974</sup>

Mass evictions were due to take place on the Olphert estate near Falcarragh in October 1889. These would be different from previous evictions here because, six months having expired from the process serving, they could be cleared out straight away. Little resistance was expected after recent experiences, but fifty Rifles under Lieut Edward Fitzgerald were camped at Falcarragh. The evictions were resumed towards the end of the month by police and the army. John Diver was declared unfit to be moved for a second time by the army surgeon, but in other cases more resistance was encountered than had been expected. The aged wife of John McGlady struck an 'Emergency' man in the face and raised stones to throw before being driven outside of the cordon by police. The house of Edward Gallagher was barricaded and the defenders used hot water and stones in their vain effort to avoid eviction.<sup>975</sup> The Plan of Campaign clearly marked a low point in relations between the Donegal tenantry, the army and the police – but there was to be some improvement over the following ten years.

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This chapter shows that, unlike in King's County, relations between the police and the local population in County Donegal were already strained before 1886, and only deteriorated with the introduction of the Plan of Campaign. Sectarianism had continued even when there was

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<sup>974</sup> *Ibid*, 1 Jun 1889.

<sup>975</sup> *Ibid*, 5 Oct 2 Nov 1889.

a lull in agrarian disturbances and troops had been withdrawn from the county. Gweedore continued to be the hub of any outrages, and also the chief target for evictions. Although there was hope for improvement in some parts of the county before 1886, conditions in other parts deteriorated, and the threat of starvation made Donegal a breeding ground for discontent again. This contrasted with King's County, where better economic conditions helped to dampen enthusiasm for further conflict.

The extent of poverty in County Donegal from 1886 was open to dispute, but most evidence suggests that it was severe. Even if there were sometimes other causes for disturbance, it must be regarded as the most important, and opened the way for the National League to introduce the Plan into estates in the county. Catholic priests again led the fight, and faced imprisonment as a result. The hostility generated by the Plan through outrages by one side and evictions by the other led to more extreme behaviour than in the past by both tenants and police. Ordinary women were again vital in resisting evictions and many other activities, and Gweedore was again the centre of agitation, which King's County lacked. These examples of the role of women again move beyond the period covered by J. TeBrake, and are even more important for the violence displayed. It is true, however, that across Ireland, more families were being readmitted on one basis or another after being evicted.

In Donegal, more so than in King's County, the RIC again became vilified and were shown no respect. Ultimately this contributed to the killing of Inspector Martin, although his actions also reflected the unsound decisions sometimes taken by a force under pressure. The police acted unwisely on a number of occasions, sometimes using unnecessary force. However unpleasant some of their duties were, very few policemen refused to carry them out. E. Malcolm again has big gaps in what she covers with regard to this subject area, hence the examples here are vital for illustrating the unpopularity of the police. Donegal is not covered by her, not even the murder of DI Martin – concentrating instead on two

shooting incidents by the RIC elsewhere in Ireland.<sup>976</sup> She also, therefore, fails to make it clear what pressure the police were under on a regular basis.

The army was kept very busy in County Donegal during the Plan of Campaign, it was employed in large numbers, and these men also – including Irish soldiers – did their duty in unpleasant circumstances. It was a token of the seriousness with which crowds took the threat of troops opening fire, that they would desist their activities in time to avoid it happening – whereas there was no such expectation of the RIC firing, for reasons explained earlier. For all that, regiments continued to strengthen bonds with the counties in their recruiting areas, and the militia continued to recruit, and to feed men into the regulars.

The next chapter will look at King's County up to the turn of the century, and examine what impact the South African War might have had on the domestic situation.

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<sup>976</sup> E. Malcolm, *The Irish Policeman*, pp113-115.

## **Chapter 6 - To the South African War in King's County, c1892-1902.**

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Having looked at the period covering the Land War and the Plan of Campaign, Chapter 6 now takes the story of King's County through to the end of the century and the South African War. In particular it will look at how nationalism fared after the end of the Plan of Campaign, and the fall from grace and death of Parnell. It will be seen how divisions in the nationalist ranks allowed the authorities to gain the upper hand in the intelligence war, and how the various land acts undermined the alliance of tenants and Home Rulers. Nationalists still exerted an influence over local affairs, however, and in many ways were becoming more extreme.

Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations marked a high point for the empire, and gave a boost to the monarchy. The army had also become more popular, but the South African War of 1899-1902 proved to be a very testing time. The contribution of King's County to the war effort will be described, and so too will opposition to it. It will also be explained how the war did, in fact, give the nationalists opportunities of recovery. What differences still influenced civil, military and police relations, and how far they were affected by the war, will now be examined.

### **1. After Parnell, 1892-1899.**

#### **(a) The authorities.**

The agrarian front quietened down after 1891, with only one eviction notice in the county filed in the High Court, and sixteen in the county courts during the first quarter of 1892. This contrasted noticeably with some other parts of Ireland – see Table 5.1 below.<sup>977</sup>

**TABLE 5.1 - Total number of eviction notices across Ireland Jan-Mar 1892**

Province	County	Total families
Ulster	Cavan (largest number)	98
Leinster	King's County	17
	Longford (largest number)	89
Munster	Cork (largest number)	63
Connaught	Mayo (largest number)	320
Total		1287

Source: HCPP 1892 (C.6661) Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1887. (Eviction notices)

There were no cases for Tullamore Quarter Sessions in January 1892, and a few days before there were only two at Birr.<sup>978</sup> The Lord Chief Justice congratulated the Grand Jury on the peaceful condition of the county on more than one occasion.<sup>979</sup> Violent crimes other than agrarian outrages still occurred, of course. James Campbell, a labourer, was tried and hanged for the murder of a six year old child at Clara in 1891, mentioned above.<sup>980</sup> “We had nearly forgotten that the Crimes Act was in existence”, claimed the *Chronicle*, until a case of illegal repossession took place at Ferbane in August 1892. The tenants had been evicted for owing fourteen years rent.<sup>981</sup> The *Tribune* reported on the sequel to an eviction from 1883, when John Egan and his family had been ejected by agent Toler Garvey from a farm

<sup>977</sup> There were 1,287 throughout Ireland. *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1892* [C.6661] Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1887. (Eviction notices), pp2-3. (See Table 5.1 above).

<sup>978</sup> *King's County Chronicle*, 7 Jan 1892.

<sup>979</sup> *Times*, 2 Mar 1892 and 7 Mar 1893; *Hansard Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords Debate 17 July 1893 vol 14 c1673*.

<sup>980</sup> *KCC*, 10 Mar and 7 Apr 1892; *Midland Tribune*, 30 Jan 1892; *Manchester Times*, 1 Jan 1892.

<sup>981</sup> *KCC*, 1 Sept 1892

in Clonlony on the Earl of Rosse's estate. They had lived since then in huts provided for them, but in 1894 his wife and two of his children died of typhus. Egan and his four other children moved to the workhouse, where he died soon afterwards. Garvey wrote to the paper to say that he regretted Egan's death, but said that the whole situation could have been avoided if the tenant had not listened to the wrong advice. In 1897 there were evictions on the Seymour estate under Sub-Sheriff Richard Bull with police led by DI Gamble. Widow Bridget Flanagan was the first target, with three grown children on her forty acres – but she was seriously ill, so the eviction was cancelled. Further on a bailiff had to cross a river on a plank to deliver a writ, but women then removed the plank so he could not get back.<sup>982</sup> Police protection was given to seizures of goods and livestock by night in King's County and elsewhere in order to prevent them being hidden, as often happened during daytime.<sup>983</sup>

As always there were exceptions, and even the *Tribune* was still able to say of Admiral Coote on his death, that he had been “a popular King's County landlord”.<sup>984</sup> Others fell into poverty as the whole agrarian situation changed, as evidenced by the formation of organisations like the Irish Distressed Ladies' Fund.<sup>985</sup> Options for landlords became increasingly limited throughout Ireland, particularly in the early twentieth century.<sup>986</sup> Nevertheless, unionism remained strong in King's County - many beacons celebrated the queen's diamond jubilee in 1897, and the Duke and Duchess of York were applauded during their visit. The peaceful state of the county by 1899 was due, according to the Lord Chief Justice, to the fact that landlords lived in the county and tried to get on with the general population.<sup>987</sup> The rate of evictions had varied during this period, but by the last quarter of

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<sup>982</sup> *MT*, 25 Aug and 1 Sept 1894, and 20 Mar 1897.

<sup>983</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 06 February 1893 vol 8 c559*. J. Morley, Chief Secretary for Ireland.

<sup>984</sup> *MT*, 26 Mar 1898.

<sup>985</sup> *Times*, 14 Sep 1896.

<sup>986</sup> F. Campbell, *Land and Revolution: Nationalist Politics in the West of Ireland 1891-1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p51.

<sup>987</sup> *Times*, 14 Jul and 3 Sep 1897, and 3 July 1899.

1900 there were only nine notices to quit filed with King's County courts, and only 334 across Ireland – see Table 5.2 below.<sup>988</sup>

**TABLE 5.2 - Total number of eviction notices across Ireland Oct-Dec 1900**

Province	County	Total families
<b>Ulster</b>	Down (largest number)	31
	King's County	9
<b>Leinster</b>	Westmeath (largest number)	11
	Cork (largest number)	21
<b>Munster</b>	Galway (largest number)	21
<b>Connaught</b>		
Total		334

Source: HCPP 1900 (Cd.337) Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1887. (Eviction notices)

The RIC were given credit for helping to achieve this new calm, both as individuals and as an organisation. It was certainly felt that the freedom from serious crime around Birr in June 1893 reflected well on the local RIC.<sup>989</sup> Although nationalists argued that there was ill-feeling within the county constabulary due to favouritism towards Protestants, the Chief Secretary refuted this.<sup>990</sup> Sgt Timothy Clarke (Tullamore), used binoculars to halt illegal public house practices. Binoculars had previously been used in Waterford and Donegal for the same purpose, and also to capture illegal stills.<sup>991</sup> In 1895, Sgt McPartland was moved from Birr to Tullamore RIC. He was reported as a “most able courteous and popular police officer”, who had shown “skill and tact ... in the discovery of a larceny or the capture of poachers”.<sup>992</sup> Emily Farrell and Maggie Lander were arrested by McPartland and others in Crinkle for soliciting, and got one month hard labour each. Denis Cleary, arrested with them, got fourteen days hard labour for vagrancy. The *Tribune* noted without any irony “the great

<sup>988</sup> HCPP, 1900 [Cd.337] Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1887. (Eviction notices.), pp2-3. (See Table 5.2 above).

<sup>989</sup> KCC, 1 Jun 1893.

<sup>990</sup> Hansard, HC Deb 27 May 1895 vol 34 cc357-8. T Healy (MP for Louth North) and J Morley.

<sup>991</sup> KCC, 7 Feb 1895, 18 Aug and 8 Sept 1892.

<sup>992</sup> KCC, 16 May 1895.

care and vigilance which the King's County Police exercise in the discharge of their duties", and referred to the detection skills which solved a mail bag robbery in Crinkle.<sup>993</sup> In some quarters, respect was also given to magistrates for their continual efforts to combat crime. Capt L'Estrange RM retired at the maximum age of sixty-five in May 1897. He was from a King's County family, "a singularly popular able member" of the magistracy, and "a gallant gentleman" according to the *Chronicle*.<sup>994</sup>

The other side of the coin showed some constables who did not live up to the standards of conduct expected of them. Constables Despard and Swift were each fined ten shillings in 1892 in relation to the escape of a prisoner from Tullamore, and Constable Doyle from Ballycumber was dismissed in 1897 for obtaining ten shillings by false pretences. Overall, however, the RIC did a good job in circumstances that were becoming less stressful, although they were still stretched to cover a wide range of duties. King's County was peaceful enough to welcome Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebrations in 1897, and there was a long article in the *Chronicle* on "Our Queen's Reign - Sixty Glorious Years". Jubilee celebrations in King's County went ahead peacefully. The Duke and Duchess of York included King's County in their tour of Ireland that year, and the people gave them a "magnificent welcome".<sup>995</sup>

One issue came to dominate the concerns of many in the county after 1891 – the future of Birr barracks. There was a meeting of the Parsonstown Town Commissioners in February 1892, following a rumour that once the York and Lancasters had left, Birr would cease to be the headquarters for a regiment. A similar problem had arisen in 1872, but Cardwell had then been persuaded otherwise. Birr certainly had some advantages – a good barracks, a water supply, a market, a central situation and a railway. The large barracks were then

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<sup>993</sup> *MT*, 20 Mar and 9 Oct 1897, and 9 Mar 1895.

<sup>994</sup> *KCC*, 10 Jun 1897.

<sup>995</sup> *Ibid*, 16 Jun 1892, 4 Feb, 17 Jun, 1 Jul and 2 Sep 1897.

being refurbished, so it was felt unlikely that the government would abandon them. Its disadvantages were that some felt it was not large enough for a proper headquarters, and the range was too short for the new bolt-action rifle. The commissioners agreed to write to Lord Wolseley, GOC forces in Ireland, on the matter. These possible changes “may seriously affect the prosperity of Parsonstown, which derives no small benefit from the residence in its vicinity of so many officers, as well as rank and file ... From a commercial point of view, the removal of these gentlemen would be a serious loss”. Military custom was clearly seen as a stimulus to business interests and a source of secure revenue. It also indirectly helped the other classes, with best quality goods being brought in, which were then also available to the general public. Officers were central to local social life, promoting welfare, charity theatricals and supporting other recreations like the races. “The public have not been unappreciative of the great kindness of these gentlemen, and are unwilling to part with them without a struggle”. The loss of the headquarters would lower the status of Birr, and would mean a severe financial loss for the town. To prevent this, it was suggested that more officer accommodation and longer rifle ranges could be built using the fifty acres connected to the barracks.<sup>996</sup>

The commissioners had not sent their letter by the summer of 1892, but another letter had gone to Horse Guards saying that the people did not want the military in Birr – and this was supposedly from one of the commissioners. The generals were concerned by this, and no replacement for the York and Lancasters had yet been confirmed. Mr Maher denied writing this letter, saying “the military are our main support in Parsonstown, where they spend hundreds upon hundreds of pounds”. The *Chronicle* stated that “we cannot afford to lose the trade that the military bring us”, but Mr Cleary said that many men were employed by local farmers, and “it is the farmers who support the shopkeepers”. The commissioners now sent their letter to Lord Wolseley, asking for the York and Lancasters to be replaced when they

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<sup>996</sup> *KCC*, 11 and 18 Feb 1892.

left. Wolseley replied to confirm that a new battalion would be coming to Birr. Mr Browne said that this had just been a scare, as there were regular rumours about the army leaving. Wolseley *had* looked at the concentration of forces in Ireland, and felt that three things were required: a rifle range, barrack accommodation and rail facilities. With no direct rail link to Portumna, one of the relief detachment stations in the district, Birr was in a weak position here, although the accommodation was satisfactory and the range could be enlarged.<sup>997</sup>

The question of whether Birr would lose its regimental headquarters was raised again in 1894. Bernard Molloy MP was determined it would not, and the commissioners were convinced that any problem with the range could be overcome. In April 1894 the *Chronicle* printed a letter from Molloy stating his resolve to keep the army in Birr.<sup>998</sup> The *Tribune* also accepted that this was an important issue, especially for the small traders in the town. It published an exchange of letters between the War Office and Bernard Molloy MP, acknowledging that trade had built up in the town due to the army, and that transport facilities had improved, but the original plan was to go ahead.<sup>999</sup> After the departure of the East Yorkshire Regiment in 1895, the future of the barracks was again in question. In May 1895 Molloy raised the issue in parliament<sup>1000</sup> and in June a deputation from Birr met Lord Wolseley on his visit to the town, claiming that not only would the removal of a battalion affect the town's trade, but it would also affect recruiting for the army.<sup>1001</sup> In July, another deputation, including James Browne JP (chairman of the town commissioners), saw Bernard Molloy MP on his visit, concerning the resumption of the town as a regimental headquarters and other matters including rail improvements. Molloy himself inspected Birr barracks. Jasper Tully (MP for Leitrim South) asked the Under-Secretary of State for War, in the Commons, whether Birr would lose its status as an RHQ – “meaning a loss to the locality of

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<sup>997</sup> *Ibid*, 4 Aug, 8 and 15 Sept 1892.

<sup>998</sup> *Ibid*, 1 Feb and 12 Apr 1894.

<sup>999</sup> *MT*, 14 Apr and 11 Aug 1894.

<sup>1000</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 31 May 1895 vol 34 cc727-8*.

<sup>1001</sup> *MT*, 15 Jun 1895.

an expenditure there of £40,000 a year". Brodrick replied that the decision had been made in 1890, and it was not likely to change.<sup>1002</sup> Nevertheless, the Hampshire Regiment soon moved in – but when the 1<sup>st</sup> Leinsters left Birr in April 1898, the town was without a visiting battalion again.

Army policy was then to mass troops in camps, so the future seemed very uncertain. Lord Roberts' official visit to Birr barracks in September 1898 encouraged the belief that the War Office was not going to abandon them. Interestingly, M. P. O'Brien, who represented Edenderry on the King's County Council, was also the proprietor of the "Universal Providing Stores" in that town, with branches elsewhere nearby.<sup>1003</sup> Birr Urban District Council raised the issue again in 1899, and reckoned the loss of a battalion would lose the town £23,000 a year. Mr Mathews agreed that "the military were a great loss to Birr", and Mr Barlow was to write to Lord Roberts.<sup>1004</sup> A letter of 1899 from Lord Roberts to the Earl of Rosse blamed the water supply in the barracks as a major problem, but claimed that the town corporation had failed to get water from the town supply in 1897. The War Office had also pointed out the loss of trade that would follow any removal of troops, and Roberts felt that the Urban District Council were more positive.<sup>1005</sup>

By the 1890s the Leinsters were firmly established as the local regiment. Both military news about the progress of the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion in India during 1892, also including reports on cricket matches, and articles about social events like the Depot Leinsters' New Year's Dance received equal coverage. Some individuals also received recognition, such as Capt Huddart of the Leinsters, "a great favourite both in military and civil life here", who was posted to India in March 1892. Most importantly though, the links with the locality were always emphasised, as when a regular draft for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Leinsters in 1892 was reported as reflecting "no little credit

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<sup>1002</sup> *KCC*, 18 and 25 Jul 1895, and 6 Aug 1896.

<sup>1003</sup> *Ibid*, 28 Apr, 15 and 22 Sept 1898, and 11 May 1899.

<sup>1004</sup> *MT*, 11 Feb 1899.

<sup>1005</sup> *Rosse Papers*, M/5/28.

on the county from which they are mainly recruited.” With the harvest over in 1893, it was expected that recruitment for the army would increase. Of those that came to that “splendid corps” of the Leinsters, “very few ... are rejected on the grounds of physical unfitness”. Perhaps it is also significant that by this time the *Chronicle* was using the 1<sup>st</sup> Leinsters’ journal, the *Maple Leaf* as a source of information. In 1895, the *Chronicle* claimed that “this district is one of the best for recruiting purposes in Ireland”. Having returned to Ireland in 1895, originally to Tipperary, the 1<sup>st</sup> Leinsters route marched through Birr in 1897 to strengthen these ties. Stories about the Leinsters were “never a matter of indifference among the civilian population”.<sup>1006</sup> Family tradition also played its part. In the Leinsters depot in 1898, for example, Sgt Clarke had six brothers in the regiment and John Flanagan had four, and a brother-in-law in it – and both their fathers had been in the army before them.<sup>1007</sup>

There were positive achievements of many kinds during these years. Field Marshal Wolseley, as GOC forces in Ireland, visited Birr on a tour of inspection in June 1893, seeing both the 100<sup>th</sup> Regimental Depot and the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Prince of Wales’s Volunteers (South Lancashire Regiment). Lieut T. Ricketts of the Leinsters was a witness to a woman ill-treating her two year old child at Crinkle, for which she was bound over.<sup>1008</sup> There were constant reports of successful service, training and entertainments at home and abroad.<sup>1009</sup> In February 1895 there was a temperance concert at Birr barracks depot, the latest in a series over three and a half years.<sup>1010</sup> The military fire engine from the barracks was used to help tackle a major fire in Birr in 1897.<sup>1011</sup> It was not all good news, however. Lieut A.

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<sup>1006</sup> *KCC*, 31 Mar, 7 Jan, 3 Mar and 21 Jul 1892, 28 Sep and 10 Aug 1893, 16 May and 17 Jan 1895, 25 Nov and 4 Mar 1897.

<sup>1007</sup> *MT*, 14 May 1898.

<sup>1008</sup> *KCC*, 15 June 1893.

<sup>1009</sup> *Ibid*, 17 May and 1 Nov 1894, 3 Jan 1895, 15 Apr 1897, 6 Jan 1898, 19 Jan and 9 Feb 1899.

<sup>1010</sup> *Ibid*, 14 Feb 1895.

<sup>1011</sup> *MT*, 5 Jun 1897.

Sherwood of 1<sup>st</sup> Leinsters was accidentally shot dead on the rifle range later in 1897.<sup>1012</sup> Pte Michael Carey of the Leinsters sold his uniform in preparation for deserting in 1899, but gave himself up. He came from Limerick, and had only been at Birr barracks a short time.<sup>1013</sup>

Nevertheless, relations with the county population remained good, and the *Tribune* commented on “the splendid band of the regiment” when an advance guard left for Canada in 1897.<sup>1014</sup> When the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion were due to leave for Canada, there was a “monster auction” at Birr barracks of Leinsters items including furniture, pianos and bicycles. In April 1898, the 1<sup>st</sup> Leinsters half battalion at Birr (RHQ, B, D, G and H companies) marched out for Canada, and joined the rest of the battalion (A, C, E and F companies) then stationed at Dublin. Birr barracks were, therefore, again without a visiting battalion.<sup>1015</sup> There was actually a lot of resentment, and some insubordination, within the battalion about being sent to Canada so soon after having spent eighteen years abroad, and “the army ... as usual, denied at the time that anything of the kind had taken place” – but this does not seem to have affected relations with the general population.<sup>1016</sup>

The militia especially brought closer relations with the county. The inspection of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters in the summer of 1892 was successful, and afterwards they followed the advice of their colonel, and took their money home for their families – “there were very few cases of drunkenness”. A shortage of officers was noted, but “considering that the population is diminishing and the temptations for employment in other ways, it is gratifying to find the number of men as large as it was.”<sup>1017</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters’ ball was held after four weeks summer training in 1893 and “the regimental records were quite free from crime entries, and

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<sup>1012</sup> *KCC*, 27 May 1897; Lieut-Colonel F. E. Whitton, *The History of the Prince of Wales’s Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians), Part 1 The Old Army* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1924), pp122-123.

<sup>1013</sup> *KCC*, 16 Feb 1899.

<sup>1014</sup> *MT*, 23 Oct 1897.

<sup>1015</sup> *KCC*, 28 Apr 1898.

<sup>1016</sup> *MT*, 12 Nov 1898; F. Whitton, *The Leinsters*, pp123-126.

<sup>1017</sup> *KCC*, 7 and 21 Jul 1892.

the conduct of the men in camp was exceptionally good.”<sup>1018</sup> When the 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters went on annual training in May 1895, however, it was noted that they were never strong because of the flow of recruits to the regulars.<sup>1019</sup> At their annual training in 1896 they mustered only 480 out of a full strength of 600, but the declining population was another factor.<sup>1020</sup> A civilian, Martin Hogan, was accused of assaulting James Horan of the militia outside Birr barracks in July 1896, after a dispute – but unpleasant incidents like this were now rare. The *Chronicle* still recorded successful militia training in 1897, and the careers of individuals like Lieut G. Crooke of the 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion the Suffolk Regiment who was killed in action in India in 1897, having previously been in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters.<sup>1021</sup> The *Tribune* also noted that 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters went “quietly to their homes” after training in 1897, and that Lord Roberts was well pleased with them, the first militia unit he had met. One exception to the general trend was when Kieran Cowley committed aggravated assault on Mrs Reilly in Tullamore. He was an ex-regular soldier, then in the Birr militia, with several previous convictions. On a break from militia training he argued with some lodgers of Mrs Reilly, then broke into her house and attacked her, for which he was given three months hard labour.<sup>1022</sup>

A major detrimental incident was the ‘Birr Barracks Affair’, which occurred in July 1894, leading to seven officers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters being charged with housebreaking. Former Capt A. Armstrong, together with Lieuts W. Gibson, O. Saunders, R. Moore, H. Sheppard, H. Weldon and R. Smyth were accused of breaking into a house in Birr barracks and assaulting two servants, Kathleen O’Donovan and Annie Desmond. The officers, all masked and accompanied by some civilians, had left the officers’ mess one night equipped with ladders and had broken into the house of Surgeon Major Fox. The girls raised the alarm and the guard of the Royal Irish Regiment (part of an advance company of their 1<sup>st</sup> battalion, due the

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<sup>1018</sup> *KCC*, 3 Aug 1893; *MT*, 24 Sept 1892.

<sup>1019</sup> *KCC*, 30 May 1895.

<sup>1020</sup> *MT*, 13 Jun 1896.

<sup>1021</sup> *KCC*, 9 July 1896, 20 May, 3 June and 25 Nov 1897.

<sup>1022</sup> *MT*, 3 Jul 1897 and 1 Jul 1899.

following month) arrived first, before the militia who were only twenty yards away. Several members of the Royal Irish and the militia gave evidence, but the defence lawyers presented the whole thing as a practical joke, and suggested that the women may have acted provocatively. In the end, the magistrates were divided so all the defendants were let off. It was suggested that a single officer should not have had female servants living in, and the affair was raised in the Commons by Bernard Molloy.<sup>1023</sup> The *Tribune* called the officers concerned “scoundrels, with the instincts of cowards”. “The Militia battalions of Ireland are generally supposed to contain the refuse of society”, it continued, but felt that the meanest private was unlikely to do the same.<sup>1024</sup> The *Chronicle* condemned the exaggeration of the affair in other papers, as reprinted in the *Tribune* of 28 July, and also considered it as just a lark, claiming Fox saw it in the same light. The officers involved were criticised, but it was felt that the women were wrong to take it to court. The Field Marshal Commanding in Ireland was called on for a report. Armstrong, Saunders, Gibson and Moore were further accused of common assault and indecent assault. The War Office found scapegoats in telling Fox to dismiss the two servants and then posting him to the West Indies. The officers were finally acquitted in a packed courtroom at Birr Quarter Sessions in October 1894.<sup>1025</sup> Questions were asked in parliament, and letters were later published in defence of the character of the two female servants. The case was re-opened, but eventually “the trial ends in a farce”.<sup>1026</sup>

There was a large article on the changeover between the 1<sup>st</sup> York and Lancasters and the 1<sup>st</sup> South Lancs as the resident regular battalion. Many people were at the railway station to see the new arrivals, and the *Chronicle* printed a history of the South Lancs regiment.<sup>1027</sup> The battalion initially had company detachments at Tullamore and Portumna (County Galway), but these were changed around in 1893, largely to occupy vacant barrack space

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<sup>1023</sup> *KCC*, 26 July 1894.

<sup>1024</sup> *MT*, 21 and 28 Jul 1894.

<sup>1025</sup> *KCC*, 26 July, 16 Aug and 4 Oct 1894.

<sup>1026</sup> *MT*, 11 and 18 Aug, and 6 Oct 1894.

<sup>1027</sup> *KCC*, 15 Sept 1892.

while other units were on summer manoeuvres in the Curragh, not because there was any trouble. So the Portumna detachment moved to Galway, and two companies from Birr went to Athlone (County Westmeath) and Sligo, all returning in September. Two other companies then moved to Galway “owing to the want of accommodation in the barracks at Birr”. The inspecting officer that year was “pleased to see a considerable diminution in the number of courts-martial and fines for drunkenness”, and the short service system meant that the average age of JNCOs and men in the battalion was now twenty-one years and six months, and the average length of service was four years and three months. It is interesting to note, however, that despite the territorial regimental system, nearly ten percent of the NCOs and men were still Irish.<sup>1028</sup>

The South Lancs continued the work of resident battalions in fostering good local relations. There was a football match between the 1<sup>st</sup> South Lancs detachment at Tullamore and the Tullamore Athletic Association in 1893. After the match, the civilians went to the smoking concert at the barracks. The first show by the Musical and Dramatic Club of the 1<sup>st</sup> South Lancs at Birr, in May 1893, included “a large number of the general public” in the audience. The South Lancs band performed in John’s Place, Birr, in July 1893, with the intention of playing once a fortnight. The South Lancs detachment at Sligo took part in water sports. There was a long article about theatricals by the South Lancs at Birr barracks and other entertainments. Queen Victoria’s seventy-fifth birthday was celebrated at Birr barracks by the Leinsters and the soon-to-leave South Lancs, and a number of what the *Chronicle* called “the elite” attended entertainments at Tullamore barracks in July 1894.<sup>1029</sup> Where there was conflict, it was usually blamed on the civilians involved rather than the soldiers. At Birr petty sessions in June 1893, a sweep called John Sheehan was given two months with hard labour for assaulting Cpl Williamson of the 1<sup>st</sup> South Lancs at the races. Sheehan had many

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<sup>1028</sup> *Historical Records of the 40<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> Somersetshire) Regiment, now the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion the Prince of Wales’s Volunteers (South Lancashire Regiment)*, (Devonport: A H Swiss, 1894), pp453-455.

<sup>1029</sup> *KCC*, 5 Jan, 25 May, 20 July, 7 Sept and 5 Oct 1893, 18 Jan, 31 May and 26 July 1894.

previous convictions.<sup>1030</sup> In May 1894, the *Chronicle* deplored “recent wanton attacks on soldiers”. Credit was given to the RIC for catching the guilty parties. It was proved that the soldiers had given no provocation, and their attackers all came from one “brood”.<sup>1031</sup>

In August 1894, the *Chronicle* printed a long history of the Royal Irish Regiment whose advance guard was already at Birr. The rest of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was due to move to Birr, but their stay was very brief.<sup>1032</sup> The regimental history records that patrolling, escorting convoys and clearing farms was “incessant and monotonous work”.<sup>1033</sup> The *Tribune* also recorded that they had shown “exemplary conduct in and out of barracks. They had given balls and parties, and “will carry with them the best wishes for their welfare.”<sup>1034</sup> In November 1894, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the East Yorkshire Regiment moved into Birr, with two companies detached to Galway and one each to Tullamore and Portumna (County Galway). In February 1895 the East Yorks went on a route march from Birr barracks with their corps of drums, accompanied by soldiers from the Leinsters depot. The townspeople “evidently admired the sight”, although the advance guard were scattered by a charging bull. L/Cpl Bell of the East Yorks was accused of stealing postal orders from letters he had been sent to post by C/Sgt Sessions of the Tullamore detachment, but there were no serious offences during this time. In March 1895 it was announced that the East Yorks were to leave Birr, which the *Chronicle* regarded as regrettable, not least because it again raised the question of whether the barracks would be left empty. The regiment was sorry to go as well, as “the average Tommy was looking forward to pleasant cricket matches, and quiet afternoons spent angling”.<sup>1035</sup>

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<sup>1030</sup> *KCC*, 15 Jun 1893; *MT*, 19 May 1894.

<sup>1031</sup> *KCC*, 24 May 1894.

<sup>1032</sup> *KCC*, 16 Aug 1894; *MT*, 11 Aug 1894; G. Gretton, *The Campaigns and History of the Royal Irish Regiment From 1684 to 1902* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1911), p383.

<sup>1033</sup> G. Gretton, *The Royal Irish*, p369.

<sup>1034</sup> *MT*, 27 Oct 1894.

<sup>1035</sup> *KCC*, 14 and 21 Feb, 7 Mar and 16 May 1895.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion the Hampshire Regiment arrived next, their band playing regularly in the barrack square, and the *Chronicle* said it was wanted in the town as well. There was a quadrille party at Birr barracks organised by the Corporals' Dance Club of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Hampshires in 1895, and their warrant officers' and sergeants held a dance at Birr barracks in 1896. Many romances involved the soldiers from Birr barracks. Their stay was peaceful and Birr barracks were inspected in June 1897, including part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Hampshires – A, B and H companies being at Dublin. The Hampshires were later “remembered with kindly sentiments in Birr”, when they were serving in the South African War.<sup>1036</sup>

### **(b) The nationalists.**

The RIC thought that the Irish Republican Brotherhood became largely inactive after the Plan of Campaign, and that the Parnellites practically ceased to promote boycotts and intimidation. They were convinced that “no active secret society work is carried on” in King’s County.<sup>1037</sup> Certain individuals were still politically active, however, like P J White of Clara who visited Dublin in January 1898 to keep IRB men in the fold – so shadowing of suspects had to continue.<sup>1038</sup> There was a large unionist meeting at Edenderry in March 1893, and another in Tullamore during April, but nationalism remained the dominant theme.<sup>1039</sup> By 1894, however, it was felt that King’s County had returned to its “customary attitude of passive neutrality”.<sup>1040</sup> Gaelic sports were not mentioned in the *Chronicle* before April 1897, when there was an assault on a young man after a match. After that, however, they were often mentioned - teams from Birr and Rathdowney taking part in the Rosecrea Gaelic Tournament in May 1897. This aspect of nationalism flourished, as did the control of local

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<sup>1036</sup> *KCC*, 12, 19 and 26 Sep 1895, 27 Feb 1896, 1 Apr and 10 Jun 1897, and 3 May 1900.

<sup>1037</sup> National Archives of Ireland, Crime Branch Special report on the Midland Division 6216/S, 19 Jan 1893.

<sup>1038</sup> CBS report 15245/S, 31 Jan 1898.

<sup>1039</sup> *KCC*, 30 Mar and 20 Apr 1893.

<sup>1040</sup> *MT*, 24 Nov 1894.

government. In the 1898 elections, for example, nationalists had twenty councillors out of twenty-one in King's county.<sup>1041</sup>

Nationally, there was a split between the Parnellites and McCarthyites. There was also an internal split within the Federation when some repudiated a speech at Philipstown by a cleric, although priests continued to be influential in that town as elsewhere. The Very Rev Michael Bugler, Dean of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Killaloe and Parish Priest of Birr, died on 14 November 1893, aged 84. The *Chronicle* obituary commented that "occasionally he entered the field of controversy" but never carried differences into his private life. During the League agitation "he kept aloof as far as possible from embittering political subjects".<sup>1042</sup> The *Tribune* recalled more directly that he had been active in support of tenants, and saved many farms from being cleared for pasture.<sup>1043</sup> The Rev D Sheehan died on 6 October 1898. He had been curate in Birr under the Rev Bugler for over twelve years. The *Chronicle* said that he had "rare intellectual gifts", and was "an earnest striver after what were, according to his lights, the interests of the country".<sup>1044</sup>

There were clear indications that nationalist protest was becoming more extreme. In 1894 the Tullamore Town Commissioners unanimously agreed to write to the prime minister and the chief secretary in support of a bid by Limerick Town Council to ask for the release of those "incarcerated for political offences in connection with Ireland" (ie: dynamiters)<sup>1045</sup>, and the term "Irish political prisoners" was used by the *Tribune* in 1896.<sup>1046</sup> More routine meetings, like that of the Irish National Federation in Birr, continued on a regular basis, and

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<sup>1041</sup> C. Shannon, *Arthur J. Balfour and Ireland* (Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1988), p104.

<sup>1042</sup> *KCC*, 15 Apr and 6 May 1897, 24 Mar and 14 Apr 1892, and 16 Nov 1893.

<sup>1043</sup> *MT*, 18 Nov 1893.

<sup>1044</sup> *KCC*, 13 Oct 1898.

<sup>1045</sup> *Ibid*, 7 June 1894.

<sup>1046</sup> *MT*, 29 Aug 1896.

nationalists defended themselves in print.<sup>1047</sup> In 1897 there was a meeting in Birr addressed by veterans of the 1828, 1848 and 1867 disturbances, and the following year there was a convention at Tullamore for the celebrations of the 1798 Rebellion. Large events took place later that year in Edenderry and elsewhere to mark the bicentenary of the '98. The *Tribune* believed that the forthcoming election for a county councillor in Tullamore, in 1899, “promises to stir up the Nationalist feeling to a degree seldom if ever experienced in that old town” where “political matters had lain dormant for a considerable time past”.<sup>1048</sup> In August 1899, about 2,000 people marched through Edenderry for Wolfe Tone Day.<sup>1049</sup> The nationalists did indeed do well in the 1899 local elections, securing twenty out of the twenty-one seats.<sup>1050</sup> They were not, however, beyond criticism even by the *Tribune*. The paper asked why a soldier could be imprisoned for false enlistment, when some local officials were able to “plunder the ratepayers” hundreds and thousands of pounds, and get away with it. The paper also noted accusations of jobbery among local Guardians at Birr.<sup>1051</sup>

In 1893 the Parsonstown Commissioners turned to a different issue, and debated a proposed memorial to the ‘Manchester Martyrs’ (Allen, Larkin and O’Brien) in Birr – see Figure 5. Mr John Dixon, who had previously suggested a site in John’s Place, claimed that even the English now thought their execution had been wrong – but Mr Mitchell disagreed. Dixon claimed that one excuse used to oppose the memorial was that it would lower the value of nearby property. The debate got heated, with James Browne supporting Dixon. The committee agreed to move the site to Market Square by a narrow margin: eight for, six against (including one JP) and two abstentions. There were four absentees (including three JPs) who might have made a difference. William O’Mears JP said that Market Square was too small and busy on market and fair days for the memorial, but the commissioners decided

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<sup>1047</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 15 Mar and 10 Jul 1895.

<sup>1048</sup> *MT*, 27 Nov 1897, 8 Jan, 28 May and 23 Jul 1898, and 18 Feb 1899.

<sup>1049</sup> *KCC*, 10 Aug 1899.

<sup>1050</sup> *Times*, 8 Apr 1899.

<sup>1051</sup> *Ibid*, 9 Jan 1892 and 13 May 1893.

to carry on. The memorial was unveiled on Sunday 22 July 1894 at a large meeting in Market Square. A number of town councillors took part, who had also been on the memorial committee, for example James Browne from Tullamore, and James Moran. The *Chronicle* was sceptical about honouring “the wrong kind of heroes”, and that the ‘physical force’ talk in O’Donovan Rossa’s speech “was a political blunder and a tactical mistake”.<sup>1052</sup> The *Tribune*, however, had supported it all along and recorded the size of the event with pride.<sup>1053</sup> In November 1895 there were demonstrations to mark the 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ‘Manchester Martyrs’ in Cork, but there was nothing in Birr, nor was the memorial decorated.<sup>1054</sup> It is interesting to note the conflicting attitudes of the commissioners (including nationalists) to the possible loss of the army from Birr on the one hand and the issue of the ‘martyrs memorial’ on the other. In 1897, the thirtieth anniversary of the ‘Martyrs’ was marked by a big parade in Birr, and the *Tribune* claimed that they had been “cruelly murdered to satisfy English lust for Irish blood”.<sup>1055</sup>

If evictions, like those agreed to at Tullamore in April 1894, were reduced, they were still the staple weapon of the landlord. So too, the tactics of the National League and others repeated earlier examples. Capt Wright of Cloghan Castle had three hounds poisoned in 1892, and it was assumed that this was not an accident. Few outrages were reported in July 1892, but there were threatening letters, a pony stabbed and a rick burned. There was a League outrage in August 1892, when a herd of cattle was driven over some prime meadows, leaving them useless, because the land had been let to Conroy, a non-Leagueur.<sup>1056</sup> In the quarter ending 30 September 1893, there were only six agrarian outrages in King’s County, out of a total of 101 throughout Ireland.<sup>1057</sup> A number of tenants were evicted from Mr Somers’ land for non-payment of rent. A caretaker was put in place

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<sup>1052</sup> *Ibid*, 5 Jan and 9 March 1893, and 26 Jul 1894.

<sup>1053</sup> *MT*, 28 Jul 1894.

<sup>1054</sup> *KCC*, 28 Nov 1895.

<sup>1055</sup> *MT*, 27 Nov 1897.

<sup>1056</sup> *KCC*, 12 Mar 1894, 18 Feb, 7 July and 11 Aug 1892.

<sup>1057</sup> *Times*, 17 Nov 1893.

and several cases of damages followed. A bridge on the route used to transport crops was sabotaged, although the damage was discovered before it was used again. "It was the most daring and cunningly-planned outrage that has come to light in the locality for a long time." Acting-Sergeant McHugh from Tullamore arrested Thomas Walsh and Matthew Horan, who were evictees living in a nearby protection hut, for the crime.<sup>1058</sup> In June 1893 the mutilation of animals in King's County was reported in parliament, the motivation being to intimidate poorer Protestant farmers who had signed a petition against Home Rule.<sup>1059</sup> In November 1893, some outrages in King's County were listed, involving damage to houses, goods and a bridge, burning hay and injuring or killing animals. RIC Sgt Long was assaulted by two brothers in Tullamore – both of whom had previous convictions.<sup>1060</sup>

There were more malicious injuries in King's County in early 1894, with the burning of houses in Bunaterin and Frankford, and hay at Seffin.<sup>1061</sup> Bad harvests in 1896 brought renewed rent problems.<sup>1062</sup> In August 1896, William Cully, sheriff's bailiff from Birr, seized cattle for debts from Thomas Garrahy at Killooney (between Cloghan and Ferbane) – but the farmer recovered them. Cully had several problems in this area, and would not act there again without police support. There had been an RIC patrol nearby in this case, but they did not assist him as they had no special order. In May 1897 there was an outrage near Tullamore. On an 'evicted farm' in Ballycowan there was a caretaker named Robert Owen under RIC protection with a police hut. On Sunday 9<sup>th</sup>, Owen and Sgt Carroll were both injured (though not seriously) when an explosion went off as Owen opened a gate. It was thought that a cord from the gate had been attached to the explosive device.<sup>1063</sup> Two men were to serve two months each in prison for this outrage. Owen later brought a case of damage caused by trespass against Daniel Brien at Tullamore quarter sessions in 1898.

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<sup>1058</sup> *KCC*, 7 Sept 1893.

<sup>1059</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 29 June 1893 vol 14 c337*. T. Russell, MP for Tyrone South.

<sup>1060</sup> *KCC*, 2 Nov 1893.

<sup>1061</sup> *Ibid*, 1 March 1894.

<sup>1062</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Sep 1896.

<sup>1063</sup> *KCC*, 13 August 1896 and 13 May 1897.

Patrick Gilligan was charged at Birr Quarter Sessions with attacking a bailiff, who had to be rescued. The Crown prosecutor did not turn up, however, so the judge expressed his surprise at this but had to adjourn the case.<sup>1064</sup> The *Chronicle* referred to “remnants of the reign of terrorism” still to be found, and “a relic of the older days” with Owen still under armed protection from two constables.<sup>1065</sup> A crowd of 3,000 men from King’s County and Tipperary assembled at Dunkerrin to congratulate Mrs O’Donaghue on being reinstated at Emill after eviction, and their platform bore the motto: “Down with evictors and grabbers”.<sup>1066</sup>

## **2. The South African War 1899-1902.**

### **(a) At home.**

Before hostilities actually broke out, the *Chronicle* was talking of “The Transvaal War”, and claimed that “a great war was never perhaps more imminent”. With “The First Shot”, it also reported on various local officers who were off to the front. From October 1899 onwards, articles on the war and local involvement became a regular feature. The paper was generally in favour of the war, and reproduced a speech by Arthur Balfour in England on the causes of the conflict and refuting the “sedition mongers”.<sup>1067</sup> The *Tribune*, on the other hand, recorded the start of the war and included reports on events thereafter, but in a very matter of fact way. It did not report on the experiences of the local units, and showed increasing sympathy for the Boers, referring to “Chamberlain’s brutal policy” and publishing articles critical of British motives and fighting ability. The British defeat at Stormberg was reported as a “brilliant Boer victory”. The Boer general De Wet became “a brilliant strategist” and “the hero of the war for Boer independence”. The paper’s anti-war stance was clear in

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<sup>1064</sup> *MT*, 26 Mar 1898.

<sup>1065</sup> *KCC*, 13 Jan 1898.

<sup>1066</sup> *MT*, 21 Jan 1899.

<sup>1067</sup> *KCC*, 5 and 19 Oct, and 23 Nov 1899, 4 Jan 1900 and 7 Dec 1899.

publishing a letter from an Irish soldier at the front in 1901, which aimed to discourage others from joining up. He claimed that “an Irishman is only dirt here, no matter what he does”.<sup>1068</sup>

Many militia battalions were embodied, although their intended use was uncertain.<sup>1069</sup> Volunteers were also sought for the Irish Imperial Yeomanry. The experiences of J. W. Langford, a King’s County yeoman in South Africa, were printed in October 1901. Judge William O’Connor-Morris from King’s County wrote to the press suggesting the formation of an Irish guards regiment, which was felt to be opportune with the queen’s impending visit to Ireland. In April 1900 the queen did actually order the formation of the Irish Guards. Lord Oxmantown, son of the Earl of Rosse, who was with the Coldstream Guards in South Africa, was one of the first officers to join the Irish Guards - transferring to them on formation in 1901. With the break up of militia camps for winter quarters, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, the East Surrey Regiment moved into Birr barracks. Some of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> regular battalions of the same regiment later joined them, but this was only seen as a temporary full use of the barracks. In November 1900 there were entertainments at Birr barracks for the Leinsters and East Surreys, and a ball in December. Due to the demands of the war, the army in Ireland was the smallest it had been for a long time, and there was little in the way of entertainments. In January 1901, the East Surreys were on stand-by to leave Birr for South Africa, which was “greatly regretted owing to the popularity of the officers and men.” Local recruiting for Baden-Powell’s South African Constabulary was run by Capt Packman of 2<sup>nd</sup> East Surreys out of Birr Barracks, and over sixty had been recruited in the first three months of 1901.<sup>1070</sup> With the war seemingly coming to an end in 1900, the SAC had been formed to provide a police force for newly conquered Boer territory, but the war dragged on and most

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<sup>1068</sup> *MT*, 14 and 21 Oct, 4 and 11 Nov (including an article cited from the *Boston Republic*) and 16 Dec 1899, and 16 Feb 1901.

<sup>1069</sup> *KCC*, 7 Dec 1899; *MT*, 21 Oct 1899.

<sup>1070</sup> *Ibid*, 8 Mar 1900, 10 Oct 1901, 5 and 19 Apr, and 3 May 1900, 6 Jan 1902, 11 and 18 Oct, 29 Nov and 6 Dec 1900, 2, 17 and 31 Jan, and 4 Apr 1901.

were assigned military duties for the time being instead.<sup>1071</sup> Military recruits for the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> Lancers were stationed in Birr barracks in early 1901, and two of them were injured by a single bullet in an accident on Clonghill ranges.<sup>1072</sup> There were 109 recruits from the Rifle Brigade in Birr barracks for musketry training in November 1901<sup>1073</sup>, and 150 from the 14<sup>th</sup> Hussars in February 1902. They used Clonoghill range – “one of the best in Ireland”. If the water supply had been better, Birr might still have been permanently garrisoned. There had been concern at the War Office for some time about the drains and wells in Birr barracks. In September 1900, a workman died, overcome by fumes when lowered down a shaft to deal with a faulty pump.<sup>1074</sup>

Some local tradesmen still profited from the army – for example, Golden and Co were appointed chemists at Birr barracks in February 1902.<sup>1075</sup> Yet whilst the war dragged on in South Africa, the struggle to maintain order continued in Ireland, although there were only two criminal cases before Birr quarter sessions in May 1900, and only one in Tullamore at the start of 1901.<sup>1076</sup> Crime figures showed a fall in indictable offences, but malicious injuries were slightly increased. Eleven counties had an overall increase in crime, including King’s County. Licensed premises in Rahan district were raided and pillaged in March 1901. Ex-military men continued to have a significant influence – for example, M W Biddulph JP, formerly Lieut-Colonel of 2<sup>nd</sup> Northumberland Fusiliers, became High Sheriff of King’s County. As ever, the police had internal problems to contend with as well - Constable Patrick Byrne was accused by Sgt Murphy of Cloghan of stealing a fowl from near the RIC barracks, but the case was dismissed.<sup>1077</sup> Police methods were sometimes called into

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<sup>1071</sup> S. Spencer, ‘Assembling the South African Constabulary’, pp92-93 and 99.

<sup>1072</sup> *KCC*, 30 May 1901.

<sup>1073</sup> *The Rifle Brigade Chronicle*, 1901, p155.

<sup>1074</sup> *KCC*, 20 Feb 1902 and 27 Sept 1900.

<sup>1075</sup> *Ibid*, 20 Feb 1902.

<sup>1076</sup> *KCC*, 31 May 1900; Hansard, *HC Deb 14 March 1901 vol 90 cc1597-8*.

<sup>1077</sup> *KCC*, 16 Aug 1900, 28 Mar and 28 Feb 1901, and 18 Oct 1900.

question, which did not help their standing within the local population.<sup>1078</sup> Having previously passed a motion of censure against the local RIC, Birr Urban Council rescinded it in November 1901. Messrs Daly, Lowry and Molloy had been in favour of the censure, but Hoctor and Browne were against it. It was argued that there had not been enough members present originally to pass it, and that the matter had not been given enough thought. The motion had originally been made because the police had not dealt with damages caused by “young ruffians”.<sup>1079</sup>

Despite much support for the war effort, this period also saw a rise in Irish nationalist sympathy, giving a stimulus to the IRB and its related organisations.<sup>1080</sup> There was an active Edenderry Gaelic League that wanted the Irish language taught in National Schools.<sup>1081</sup> The League gained from the impact of the South African War, although this also polarised nationalists into pro- and anti-imperial camps.<sup>1082</sup> Undercover police activity concentrated more on Republicans as Irish nationalist politics became more revolutionary at the turn of the century – but always with inadequate resources.<sup>1083</sup> A resolution from the “Protest Against the War Committee” – to stop the war and reach a settlement – was put before Birr Urban Council in May 1900. Mr Treacy (the Chairman) and Mr Lowry (the proposer) supported this, as did Messrs Browne, Donnelly, Ryan, Delaney, Meara, Walsh, Molloy and Hickey. W. O’Meara JP, Messrs Hoctor and Dooly were opposed, and put forward an amendment – but the original motion was passed.<sup>1084</sup> Anti-recruiting campaigns had little success, but laid the foundations for a more effective campaign during the First World War.<sup>1085</sup>

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<sup>1078</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 13 June 1901 vol 95 cc291-2. M Reddy (MP for King’s County, Birr).*

<sup>1079</sup> *KCC, 7 Nov 1901.*

<sup>1080</sup> T. Garvin, *Nationalist Revolutionaries in Ireland 1858-1926* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd, 2005), p48.

<sup>1081</sup> *KCC, 8 Mar 1900.*

<sup>1082</sup> T. Garvin, *Nationalist Revolutionaries*, p85.

<sup>1083</sup> F McGarry, ‘Introduction’ to *Sinn Fein and Republican Suspects 1899-1921* (Dublin: Eneclann Ltd, 2006), pp2-15. A CD version of CO 904/193-216.

<sup>1084</sup> *KCC, 10 May 1900.*

<sup>1085</sup> L. P. Curtis, ‘Ireland in 1914’, in W Vaughan (Ed), *A New History of Ireland, Vol VI* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p184.

A meeting of the nationalists of Tullamore and the east end of King's County took place on 26 August 1900<sup>1086</sup>, and branches of the United Irish League were formed after meetings at Tullamore and Ferbane, demanding self-government and equality for Catholics with Protestants.<sup>1087</sup> The UIL was an attempt to bring the parliamentary groups together behind a new programme of agrarian agitation.<sup>1088</sup> In the election of 9 October 1900, Reddy (United Irish League) defeated Molloy, the long-standing MP at Birr, by 1,451 votes to 1,181. In July 1901, Reddy called for a public inquiry into RIC members obliging publicans to sign petitions to MPs for increased police pay. "Local Gaelic News" became a frequent article in the *Chronicle*.<sup>1089</sup> In 1901 the *Tribune* railed against the mockery of nationalism when the King's County Agricultural Society elected an English instructor, who even the Nationalists had voted for.<sup>1090</sup> There was a second attempt to form a Birr branch of the United Irish League in 1902. There was a small turnout and a problem getting officials, but it was eventually formed with the Rev J Meagher as president. It was significant that there were no shopkeepers or traders at the meeting. There were accusations of jobbing (using official positions for personal advantage) in Birr Urban Council that were debated internally in May 1902. Birr Urban Council proposed to change some street names for nationalist reasons. Duke Street was to become Tara Street, Duke Square to be Geraldine Square and Cumberland Street to be Patrick Street. The UIL 'National Sports' event at Birr in August 1902, however, was a failure.<sup>1091</sup>

Conflict over land issues continued, but on a reduced scale, and grievances over absentee landlords were still felt.<sup>1092</sup> A number of outrages were committed towards the end of 1899. A thatched cottage was burnt at Coleshill, and hay burnt at Ferbane in 1900. The Earl of

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<sup>1086</sup> *KCC*, 13 Sept 1900.

<sup>1087</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 31 May 1900; *KCC*, 27 Sept 1900.

<sup>1088</sup> T. Garvin, *The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd, 2005), p102.

<sup>1089</sup> *KCC*, 11 Oct 1900, 11 and 18 Jul 1901.

<sup>1090</sup> *MT*, 5 Oct 1901.

<sup>1091</sup> *KCC*, 6 Feb, 8 May, 7 and 21 Aug 1902.

<sup>1092</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 25 March 1902 vol 105 cc1086-87. W Delany (MP for Queen's County Ossory).*

Rosse claimed compensation at Birr quarter sessions in May 1900, for the malicious burning of a hundred acres of Clonboniff bog. Michael Flannery, who had taken over evicted premises, reported a rick burning at Shannonbridge, and an unoccupied dwelling of Michael Green's farm at Liscloney was burnt in 1901. Hay and turf were burnt in July 1902. Several MPs and local officials were found guilty of intimidation, inciting intimidation and unlawful assembly in October 1902 – E. Haviland-Burke (MP for Tullamore Division), M. Reddy (MP for Birr Division), W. Lowry (Chairman of Birr Board of Guardians and Birr Urban Councillor), M. Hogan (farmer, District Councillor and Poor Law Guardian), M. Glennan (from County Galway and organiser of the UIL). On the other hand, several ejectments were approved at Birr in 1900, and rent problems and evictions still continued during the war.<sup>1093</sup> In the early twentieth century, the rate of evictions increased again – with 30 filed in the county during the third quarter of 1902, and 848 overall.<sup>1094</sup> Over the whole of Ireland, evictions were becoming less common – there were 1,880 during 1896-1898, but only 1,211 during 1899-1901.<sup>1095</sup> Evictions were pursued for rent owed in 1902, although evictions from agricultural holdings in Leinster during the quarter ending 30 June 1902 numbered only ten.<sup>1096</sup> Towards the end of 1902, however, parts of King's County were still proclaimed under the Criminal Law Amendment Act.<sup>1097</sup>

**(b) Focus – The Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians) during the South African War, 1899-1902.**

The part played by the Leinster Regiment and local men was obviously emphasised. Lt-Colonel H. Northcott, formerly of the Leinsters, on staff duty with the 1<sup>st</sup> Division was among

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<sup>1093</sup> *KCC*, 11 Jan and 7 Jun 1900, 11 Apr and 13 Jun 1901, 31 Jul and 9 Oct 1902, 11 Oct 1900 and 10 Jan 1901.

<sup>1094</sup> *HCPP*, 1902 [Cd. 1339] Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1887. (Eviction notices.), pp2-3. (See Table 5.2, page 243).

<sup>1095</sup> L. P. Curtis, *The Depiction of Eviction in Ireland 1845-1910* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2011), pp281 & 298.

<sup>1096</sup> *KCC*, 9 Jan and 14 Aug 1902.

<sup>1097</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 16 October 1902 vol 113 c12. Referred to by the Speaker.*

the first to be killed.<sup>1098</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> Leinsters themselves were ordered to the front in January 1900.<sup>1099</sup> Their strength was to be made up from reservists – 300 then at Birr, and a second reserve from the Provisional Battalion. About 240 men arrived at Birr from the Leinsters Provisional Battalion at Fermoy. There was concern about how the families would manage, for there was only a modest allowance and the war had put the price of coal up. Despite the war situation, the annual Leinsters Depot dance took place on St Patrick’s eve as usual, and then in March 1900, the 1<sup>st</sup> Leinsters left for South Africa with their reserves. By the summer of 1900, it was felt that “there can be no doubt that a satisfactory conclusion of the war will shortly be announced”, but this was not to be. A draft of a hundred men from Birr were ordered to join the 1<sup>st</sup> Leinsters in South Africa in September 1900.<sup>1100</sup> In South Africa the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion formed part of Major-General Rundle’s Eighth Division, which was noted for the speed of its marches. They took part in many sweeping operations, and then helped to man blockhouse lines, eventually returning to England in October 1902.<sup>1101</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion did not arrive in South Africa, from Barbados, until early 1902, and was engaged in similar sweeping and blockhouse operations to her sister battalion. They moved to Mauritius in 1905.<sup>1102</sup> The *Chronicle* reproduced a letter from Sgt Wall of the 1<sup>st</sup> Leinsters to his father, which referred to the war and local people. “War News”, including casualties among the Leinsters, became a frequent feature. The death was reported of Lieut A. F. G. Foulerton, 1<sup>st</sup> Leinsters, in South Africa in January 1901, and a general article on “The Leinsters at the Front” appeared in May. A “Sketch of the Leinster Regiment” followed in November.<sup>1103</sup>

The King’s County militia had been embodied before, during the 1798 rebellion, the Napoleonic and the Crimean Wars.<sup>1104</sup> After garrison duty in Woolwich in 1899, they were

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<sup>1098</sup> *KCC*, 14 Dec 1899; F. Whitton, *The Leinsters*, p459.

<sup>1099</sup> F. Whitton, *The Leinsters*, pp132-133.

<sup>1100</sup> *KCC*, 18 Jan, 1 Feb, 22 and 29 Mar, 26 Jul and 13 Sept 1900.

<sup>1101</sup> F. Whitton, *The Leinsters*, pp133-149.

<sup>1102</sup> *Ibid*, pp413-440.

<sup>1103</sup> *KCC*, 18 Oct 1900, 10 and 17 Jan, 2 May and 28 Nov 1901.

<sup>1104</sup> F. Whitton, *The Leinsters*, p457.

embodied again on 18 January 1900, and volunteered almost unanimously for service anywhere.<sup>1105</sup> The baggage of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters was got ready at Birr barracks, with 300 out of 360 soldiers due to depart by mid-January 1900. Col J. Holroyd-Smyth was in command, with two of his sons also officers in the battalion, and Major the Earl of Huntingdon as second-in-command. The first batch of 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters left for Woolwich by train from Birr in January 1900, and one of Birr's "most enterprising merchants" brought meat sandwiches to the station. When in Woolwich, the battalion was invited by the War Office to serve with the regulars, and they "volunteered with intense enthusiasm". The 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters had entertainment, including a band, aboard ship en route to Cape Town. Unfortunately, two Birr men – Ptes Flanagan and Keats – took ill and died, and were buried at sea. The battalion landed in South Africa before the 1<sup>st</sup> Leinsters had even left Ireland.<sup>1106</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters were used on the lines of communication, but still found their work "strenuous and harassing".<sup>1107</sup> Capt Charles T. Biddulph of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters died of enteric fever on 26 April 1900. He came from a local landowning family. Biddulph had first joined the militia in 1886, then served with the West Coast of Africa Police in the 1890s, but rejoined the 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters for the war in South Africa. There was a report on 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters in South Africa in April 1901 - they had been in several skirmishes, if not any major engagement. In August 1901, there was a report on the battalion still in South Africa and "Letter From a Third Leinster Man" from South Africa appeared in April 1902. There were great celebrations at the welcoming back of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Leinsters in May 1902.<sup>1108</sup>

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It is clear that agitation declined rapidly in King's County after 1891, reflecting partly the lack of commitment to the Plan of Campaign. A noticeable drop in the number of evictions was

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<sup>1105</sup> *KCC*, 24 Apr 1900; F. Whitton, *The Leinsters*, p458; *Hansard, HC Deb 27 February 1900 vol 79 c1206*. Only two men dissented.

<sup>1106</sup> *KCC*, 18 and 25 Jan, 8 Feb, 19 and 24 Apr 1900.

<sup>1107</sup> F. Whitton, *The Leinsters*, p459.

<sup>1108</sup> *KCC*, 3 May 1900, 18 Apr and 8 Aug 1901, 3 Apr, 29 May and 5 June 1902.

soon followed by a similar trend throughout Ireland. The RIC were still stretched to cover all their duties, but they could at least concentrate on routine tasks and became more accepted in society. The Leinsters, both regular and militia, now seemed firmly identified with the county, and visiting battalions also retained popularity through social contact with local people. It was more the economic consideration, however, which made the future of Birr barracks a cause for concern again. In the same period, nationalists were divided but had a strong cultural influence. They also still had a lot of local power, as evidenced by the 'Martyrs Memorial' at Birr.

The South African War saw increased military involvement in the county, and undoubtedly saved Birr barracks. The *Chronicle* supported the war effort, but, not surprisingly, the *Tribune* was far more critical. Although agrarian conflict continued, it was much reduced and imperialism and the war became the key reasons for bad relations between the authorities and certain elements of the population. Many local men volunteered to fight with the army, and it is important to note the contribution of the militia here. The war proved the necessity of keeping the Irish militia as an imperial reserve, rather than for their official role in home defence, despite their unreliability in many respects. This was also, however, a time of renewed nationalist activity - using their positions in local politics to try to undermine the war effort. It is debateable how successful the anti-recruiting campaigns were, but they prepared the ground for the future. S. Howe says that 1899-1902 saw the "only really major expression of Irish Nationalist enthusiasm for a colonial struggle" in supporting the Boers, with backing from the GAA, but points out that pro-Boer agitation was "heavily Dublin-based".<sup>1109</sup>

Chapter 7 will compare this situation with that in County Donegal during the same period.

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<sup>1109</sup> S. Howe, *Ireland and Empire*, pp56-57 and K. Jeffery (ed), *'An Irish Empire'?*, p67.

## **Chapter 7 - To the South African War in County Donegal, c1892-1902.**

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This chapter will show how the experience of County Donegal during this period was similar to that of King's County, as described in the previous chapter, but different in scale and intensity. The nationalists were similarly divided, but found renewed vigour through new organisations. They also found an opportunity in the South African War to make significant gains. One very interesting aspect to note is the complete change in attitude by the *Independent*. Although there was much county participation in the war, shown by the number of soldiers that served in it, both local newspapers criticised the running of the war, and undermined support for it.

Although agrarian conflict was reduced, it still affected civil, military and police relations. Evictions continued after the plan of Campaign, and throughout the South African War, although more tenants were re-admitted as caretakers. The main difference between the two counties being studied here was the level of poverty, and although the Land Acts helped tenants in both counties, County Donegal still had congested districts, whereas King's County did not.

### **1. After Parnell, 1892-1899.**

#### **(a) The authorities.**

Even though Parnell had gone, and the nationalists were divided, many of those in authority felt that they were increasingly threatened by both developments in Ireland and policies from London. Loyalist organisations continued with their meetings - The East Donegal unionists held a meeting in Lifford in 1892, and a unionist meeting was held at Ballyshannon in July

1895.<sup>1110</sup> In the House of Commons, Edward Saunderson (MP for Armagh North) referred to Fr McFadden as a “murderous ruffian”<sup>1111</sup>, and in the Lords, the Marquis of Londonderry questioned why the men accused of killing Inspector Martin had been released.<sup>1112</sup> Having previously dismissed two summonses for illegal repossession by tenants, a third for John McDaid was sent for trial by Lifford Quarter Sessions in January 1895. The case had previously attracted attention, as McDaid had lived under a bridge since being evicted, but continued to farm some of his old crops. He was from the poorest part of Donegal, and the case was dismissed. This was a surprise as previously “no matter how weak the case was against the tenant he was sure to be subjected to the dock”. Lord Leitrim died in April 1892 – “one of the best friends of County Donegal”. Some changes were definitely for the better, for example the Killybegs railway opened in August 1893<sup>1113</sup>, but a new grievance appeared with the claim that Ireland was being over-taxed.<sup>1114</sup> The *Independent* began to change its outlook, and several articles were published condemning Orange outrages in other parts of northern Ireland.<sup>1115</sup>

The militia continued to prosper, and there were even recruiting advertisements for the 5<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings, “your county regiment”, in the *Vindicator*.<sup>1116</sup> New colours were presented to the 5<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings and blessed in Monaghan where they were camped for annual training in 1896. The 5<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings were recorded as showing “most exemplary” conduct at their summer camp in 1897.<sup>1117</sup> In 1898 they were brigaded with the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion for training, and their inspecting officer noted “a marked advance in efficiency”.<sup>1118</sup> There was a billiards tournament with the local Ballyshannon team, and the battalion’s permanent staff won the

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<sup>1110</sup> *Donegal Independent*, 3 Jun 1892 and 19 Jul 1895.

<sup>1111</sup> *Ibid*, 3 Feb 1893; *Hansard, House of Commons Debate 02 February 1893 vol 8 c265*.

<sup>1112</sup> *Hansard, House of Lords Debate 02 February 1893 vol 8 cc186*.

<sup>1113</sup> *DI*, 25 Jan 1895, 8 Apr 1892 and 25 Aug 1893.

<sup>1114</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 Apr 1897.

<sup>1115</sup> *DI*, 18 Oct and 8 Nov 1895.

<sup>1116</sup> *Donegal Vindicator*, 24 Feb and 10 Mar 1899.

<sup>1117</sup> *DI*, 10 Jul 1896 and 2 Jul 1897.

<sup>1118</sup> Regimental Historical Records Committee, *The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1688-1914* (London: Constable & Co, 1934), p 270.

Brigade Challenge Cup at Finner Camp in 1899. Local businesses benefited from their presence, for example, Peter Kelly JP had the catering contract for Finner Camp, and M Cassidy JP had the meat contract.<sup>1119</sup>

The Donegal Artillery had very successful inspections in 1892 and 1895, and in 1896 “their good behaviour during the time they were not under military control” was particularly noted as useful in encouraging recruitment.<sup>1120</sup> It was one of the strongest militia regiments in Ireland, and was one of the few to train in England during 1897. The Irish artillery militia were generally short of subalterns, however, and the Donegals were one of the worst off, with five vacancies in 1897.<sup>1121</sup> There were still discipline problems in the militia generally. A suspected deserter was arrested in Ballyshannon. He claimed to be in the Donegal Artillery, but one of their sergeants denied this. Thomas McAleer and James Mullin gave false answers at their attestations in order to join the Donegal Artillery Militia, because they were already army reservists.<sup>1122</sup> In 1897, the inspecting officer of the Donegal Artillery, Major-General Burnett, “did not like the way they drank”, and noted “the abnormal amount of crime”<sup>1123</sup>.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings Enrollment (sic) Book for 1884-1895 shows that these militiamen were mainly labourers, and many were under eighteen. Although some went into the regular army, many more were recorded with periods of absence.<sup>1124</sup> John Lafferty was absent from annual training with the 5<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings, but was found to be working in Glasgow and ill, so he was discharged.<sup>1125</sup> Pte L. Gallagher was charged with being absent from church parade

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<sup>1119</sup> *DV*, 21 Apr, 2 June and 26 May 1899.

<sup>1120</sup> The National Archives, War Office Records 68/28, Donegal Artillery.

<sup>1121</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 29 Jan, 23 Mar and 4 Dec 1897, and 3 Feb 1898.

<sup>1122</sup> *DI*, 12 Feb 1892 and 14 May 1897.

<sup>1123</sup> WO 68/28, Records of the Donegal Artillery.

<sup>1124</sup> WO 68/230, 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers Enrollment Book 1884-1895.

<sup>1125</sup> *DI*, 30 Jun 1893.

and being drunk in June 1897.<sup>1126</sup> The *Independent* was critical when there was a major disturbance at Bridgend, County Donegal, in June 1898. Three soldiers of the 5<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings were drunk and disorderly. Sgt McElray RIC accused the militia picket sergeant of neglect of duty, but *he* blamed his men for being unwilling to help. The soldiers turned on the police and they fought each other, with a crowd and more police joining in. An army staff sergeant intervened and dealt with the worst offenders. Three soldiers – Lynch, Doherty and Carson – were arrested, but later released. The JP seemed “anxious to hush up the matter”. There was “another hand to hand encounter”, “batons versus belts” a few days later between police and militia at Ballyshannon. Firstly, there was fighting between militiamen of 4<sup>th</sup> (The Tyrones) and 5<sup>th</sup> (The Donegals) Inniskillings, at which the police were present but did not intervene. As the ‘Donegals’ made their way back to camp they sang rebel songs like ‘The Boys of Wexford’, but were then confronted by the camp picket drawn up in line with fixed bayonets, and the RIC behind them. As more drunken soldiers returned they hurled abuse at the picket. DI Milling then arrived and ordered the police to charge with their batons, and the men were dispersed. Army resentment against the police was increased when, with the soldiers appearing before their commanding officer, the constables swore against all the militiamen listed as absent that night rather than actually identifying them – which accidentally included a soldier who had actually been on guard duty. As the *Independent* observed: “Even militia men are entitled to fair play.”<sup>1127</sup>

Lord Wolseley visited Ballyshannon concerning the plans for a military range.<sup>1128</sup> When it was announced that the headquarters of the 5<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings would move from Lifford and Strabane to Ballyshannon, Lifford in their turn sent a ‘memorial’ to stop it. The move went ahead, however, as Ballyshannon was the largest town in Donegal, with better barrack and

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<sup>1126</sup> WO 68/230, 5<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings Enrollment Book.

<sup>1127</sup> *DI*, 17 Jun and 1 Jul 1898.

<sup>1128</sup> *Ibid*, 18 and 25 May 1894.

range facilities.<sup>1129</sup> On 24 May 1897, the queen's birthday was celebrated at Finner Camp, Ballyshannon. Several militia units were there for training, so 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings and 4<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Fusiliers all took part in the march past. Some Royal Engineers were also on parade. A private of 3<sup>rd</sup> Inniskillings died of bronchitis at camp. A 'smoker' was held for NCOs and men of the Royal Engineers at Ballyshannon barracks. Two hundred and fifty men from 1<sup>st</sup> Inniskillings arrived at Ballyshannon for a camp in June 1897. An article on the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers was published in the *Independent* in June 1897 as the regiment became more identified with the local area. The 1<sup>st</sup> Inniskillings gave an open air concert at Ballyshannon in June 1897, and at church service in July. There was a long article in the *Independent* in July 1897 on the military sports at Finner Camp, with invited civilian guests. Several militia units trained at Finner Camp in 1898, including 5<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings, with 1<sup>st</sup> Inniskillings joining for summer training. Crowds gathered to welcome 'the Donegals' to Ballyshannon. Crowds saw off 1<sup>st</sup> Inniskillings as they marched from Enniskillen to Ballyshannon, and their sports took place at Finner Camp in August 1898.<sup>1130</sup>

Notes on army training etc began to appear in the *Independent*, and were a regular feature by July 1897. There was a football match between Ballyshannon and the Tyrone Militia in June 1897. There was a concert by the detachment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dorset Regiment at Ballyshannon in aid of the poor in the Rock Hall, by permission of Capt Goodman Austen. "A wish was expressed that it would not be the last".<sup>1131</sup> In 1899 the band of the 1<sup>st</sup> Inniskillings was playing every Thursday evening.<sup>1132</sup>

It was not always good news, however, and discipline could also be a problem with regular soldiers. Trumpeter Harvey Etherton, Royal Artillery, was given two months hard labour for

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<sup>1129</sup> *Ibid*, 20 Aug and 6 Sept 1895; *Hansard, HC Deb 24 March 1896 vol 39 c53 – Captain Donelan (MP for Cork East) to William Brodrick (Under-Secretary of State)*.

<sup>1130</sup> *DI*, 28 and 21 May, 4, 18 and 25 Jun, 16 and 23 Jul 1897, 4 Mar, 3 and 17 Jun, 1 Jul and 5 Aug 1898.

<sup>1131</sup> *Ibid*, 21 May, 9 Jul, and 11 Jun 1897, and 8 May 1896.

<sup>1132</sup> *DV*, 21 July 1899.

burning hay ricks at Letterkenny. Regular regiments with detachments in Donegal tended to be based in Enniskillen or Derry. At Enniskillen Petty Sessions, Ptes William Bleehan (Irish surname) and J Power of 2<sup>nd</sup> Dorsets were found guilty of stealing two clocks. Bleehan had served for over three years and Power over two. – they both got six months in gaol. Bleehan exclaimed: “I did one six months and I can do this term too. It is better to be in gaol than to be a soldier any day”. In September 1896, five privates from 2<sup>nd</sup> Dorsets in Ballyshannon went on a day’s leave to Bundoran. They got drunk and the owner of Carroll’s public house tried to get them out. A crowd gathered and a fight ensued. Thady Gillespie, a bar worker, fractured one soldier’s skull with an iron bar, and the soldier had to be taken to Ballyshannon military hospital in a critical condition. Gillespie was arrested, but the rest of the soldiers ran off, three of them also injured. One of those other soldiers, William Short, claimed he “was on good terms with the civilians”, and did not know how the fight started.<sup>1133</sup> Pte Robert Cunningham of the 1<sup>st</sup> Inniskillings was gaoled for fourteen days for breaking a window in Ballyshannon. He had only just returned to duty after 112 days confinement for fraudulent enlistment and seemed determined to get out of the army.<sup>1134</sup>

The County Donegal RIC continued to deal with a range of issues. Bryan O’Donnell of Meelarahg assaulted Hugh Conaghan, a bailiff on the Olphert estate, but this was not during any agrarian situation. Conaghan gave him a good character reference and thought he had been talked into it. O’Donnell was gaoled for one month. At Ballyshannon petty sessions, Constable Williamson charged Thomas Johnston (of the Life Guards) with being drunk and disorderly, and Michael Gilbride with using abusive language towards Johnston. Both these men accused each other of assault, but Johnston admitted being drunk, so they both then withdrew the charges against each other. Johnston ‘took the pledge’ and was fined six pence, but Gilbride’s language was considered likely to lead to a breach of the peace, so he was fined five shillings. John Gallagher was sentenced to three months for assaulting John

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<sup>1133</sup> *Ibid*, 25 Mar 1898, 21 Feb, 11 and 18 Sept 1896.

<sup>1134</sup> *DV*, 7 Jul 1899.

McSharry, a cab driver, and nine months for assaulting Sub-Const Fullin. The judge commended Fullin for his courage and recommended him for promotion. In July 1893, forty to fifty RIC were drafted in to Bundoran because there were disturbances over two Irish Evangelisation Society representatives arriving in the town. The Catholics were afraid of attempted conversions, but the town's reputation as a "popular watering place" had been damaged, especially with over half the visitors being Protestant. Thomas Johnston tried "to take liberties with (a) policeman when he was drunk" and "resentment at these advances being repulsed" led to a scuffle. Johnston received six months hard labour.<sup>1135</sup> There was an unsuccessful attempt to derail a train near Ballybofey in 1897.<sup>1136</sup> There was an alleged infanticide at Laghey in 1898. John Williams was brutally murdered in April 1899, and this became known as the "The Donegal Murder".<sup>1137</sup>

Actual evictions were drastically reduced at this time, although large numbers of tenants were converted into caretakers instead. This was a trend repeated throughout Ireland – see Table 6.1 below<sup>1138</sup>

**TABLE 6.1 - Total number of evictions & re-admittances across Ireland, Jul-Sept 1896**

Province	County	Total families evicted without re-admittance	Total re-admitted as caretakers etc
<b>Leinster</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>261</b>
	Kilkenny (largest number)	5	Longford (largest number) 67
<b>Munster</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>220</b>
	Kerry (largest number)	22	Cork(largest number) 72
<b>Ulster</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>637</b>
	Armagh (largest number) (Donegal)	9 5)	Donegal (largest number) 136
<b>Connaught</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>804</b>
	Mayo (largest number)	8	Mayo (largest number) 533

Source: HCPP 1897 (C.8293) Evictions (Ireland)

<sup>1135</sup> *DI*, 11 Mar and 20 May 1892, 13 Oct and 28 Jul 1893.

<sup>1136</sup> *Hampshire Advertiser*, 24 Mar 1897.

<sup>1137</sup> *DI*, 29 and 7 Apr 1899.

<sup>1138</sup> *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers*, 1897 [C.8293] Evictions (Ireland), pp3-5. (See Table 6.1 above).

John MacNeill (MP for South Donegal) asked the Chief Secretary, William Jackson, whether he might “decline to allow Forces of the Crown to be employed” in evicting poor tenants at Letterilly – but Jackson replied that he could not promise to withhold police protection from those engaged in carrying out the law.<sup>1139</sup> Seventy RIC were used to evict seven families at Glasserchoo on the Olphert estate, but there was no resistance. They were squatters without any title to the land, but Fr McFadden was still there with his camera. Fifty RIC under CI Dobbyn, and DIs Hill and Gardner, assisted Sub-Sheriff John McKay in evicting nine families on the Johnson estate. There was no resistance, and many reached terms to be readmitted as caretakers. John McCay, however, faced with eviction by another group at Tullygay, threatened them with a gun but was soon overpowered.<sup>1140</sup>

A County Donegal RIC convention at Letterkenny in May 1892 concerned the financial settlement of the force in the event of Home Rule being introduced. Notes on RIC training and appointments began to appear, and were a regular feature by July 1897 when a picture of the County Donegal RIC tug-of-war team appeared.<sup>1141</sup> The RIC appeared to be regaining some popularity, partly due to Liberal appointments of nationalist magistrates, but also more promotions to inspector being made ‘through the ranks’ – although these changes were criticised in other quarters.<sup>1142</sup> Const John McLaughlin was promoted to sergeant and transferred to Galway. He was reported as being a “most efficient policeman” and “a general favourite with all classes”.<sup>1143</sup> A letter from N. McVitty reported on the congratulations and presentation given to Sgt Joseph Cusack on his retirement from Bundoran RIC.<sup>1144</sup> A Constabulary Court of Inquiry at Lettermacaward, however, concerned neglect leading to the wrecking of a boat, neglect in performing revenue duty and giving a false return. Sgt David Hanna was reduced to constable and transferred to a distant county. Four constables were

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<sup>1139</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 10 March 1892 vol 2 c509.*

<sup>1140</sup> *DI*, 15 Apr 1892 and 27 Oct 1893.

<sup>1141</sup> *DI*, 5 May 1893, 21 May and 9 Jul 1897.

<sup>1142</sup> *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, May 1895, p798.

<sup>1143</sup> *DI*, 26 Oct 1894.

<sup>1144</sup> *DV*, 26 May 1899.

each fined £2 and transferred to other counties at their own expense.<sup>1145</sup> It was lapses in discipline like these, as with the army, that put improved relations with the civilian population at risk. There was criticism from Timothy Healy (MP for Louth North) of DI Milling of the Fermanagh RIC, for withdrawing a charge of discharging a firearm on a public road against Ballyshannon solicitor R Barron - the suggestion being that this was clear favouritism.<sup>1146</sup>

### **(b) The nationalists.**

The nationalists continued to criticise the actions and policies of the authorities. Accusations were made in parliament about the Inspector Martin murder trial of 1889. Alexander Blane (MP for Armagh South) argued that many of the accused did not speak English, and therefore did not fully understand what was happening. John McNeill (MP for Donegal South) claimed that the jury was deliberately packed with Protestants.<sup>1147</sup> Questions were asked in the Commons by William Macartney (MP for Antrim South) about the cost of a new rifle range in Donegal, and the further cost if some militia units then trained outside of their own counties.<sup>1148</sup> Patrick McManus Jnr wrote sarcastically to the *Independent* about the Donegal magistracy, saying that the “ ‘mere Irishe’ have no rights that may be respected by the Queen’s Irish”. In particular he claimed that “ex-policeman and Removable Hamilton” had dismissed a charge of assault against an official who pleaded guilty, and the person assaulted was bound over to keep the peace. In January 1896, the editorial of the *Independent*, continuing its change in stance, remarked that in Ireland “parliamentary representation is a humbug and a sham” ... “at present an enemy ready to strike should the opportunity arise”. Nationalist footholds within the system suffered a setback with the death of Jerome Boyce JP in June 1899. He had been Chairman of the Donegal Board of Guardians and County Delegate to the National Federation. He was a strong nationalist, but

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<sup>1145</sup> *DI*, 1 Jul 1892.

<sup>1146</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, 3 April 1897.

<sup>1147</sup> *DI*, 15 Apr 1892; *Hansard, HC Deb 12 April 1892 vol 3 cc1235-7*.

<sup>1148</sup> *DI*, 22 Sept 1893; *Hansard, HC Deb 18 September 1893 vol 17 c1469*.

widely seen as a fair JP.<sup>1149</sup> At the local level a letter from “Fair Play” in the *Vindicator* criticised jobbery at Clogher Union. The Donegal Union challenged the Local Government Board over the pay for a temporary doctor, which the Board said had been too much, and saw “the Castle Gang ruthlessly exposed”.<sup>1150</sup>

The advances made by nationalism were reflected in the forming of several new organisations, some using the centenary of the 1798 Rebellion as a springboard. Fr McFadden became chairman of the Gweedore branch of the National Federation. In January 1894, MPs John Dillon and Swift MacNeill addressed a monster nationalist meeting at Donegal, and the first meeting of the Donegal (Red Hugh O’Donnell) Branch, the Irish National Federation, took place in January 1896. There was a ‘Red Hugh O’Donnell’ branch meeting of the Federation, and also a meeting of the ‘Father Murphy ’98 Club’ at Donegal in February 1898. Weekly meetings of the United Irish League took place at Ballyshannon, and there was a meeting of the south Donegal branch of the United Irish League in July 1899. The *Independent* of November 1897 published a letter from “a grandson of a ’98 victim”, calling on people to celebrate the centenary of the rebellion, and a long article on “The Story of ’98”, highlighting military atrocities. There was a large meeting at Letterkenny to mark the ’98 centenary in February 1898<sup>1151</sup>, and several reports on the “ ’98 Centenary Movement”.<sup>1152</sup> Songs of the ’98 rebellion were reprinted in the *Independent*, as were portraits of ’98 heroes. At a meeting of the Ballyshannon ’98 Club in March 1899, they congratulated themselves on awakening nationalism in the town. Sketches of lives of “The Manchester Martyrs” also kept more recent events alive. There was a local football report in January 1898, but also a note of the formation of the Ballyshannon branch of the Gaelic

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<sup>1149</sup> *DI*, 7 Jun 1895, 24 Jan 1896 and 9 Jun 1899.

<sup>1150</sup> *DV*, 22 and 29 Sep 1899.

<sup>1151</sup> *DI*, 25 Nov 1892, 11 Jan 1895, 10 Jan 1896, 18 Feb and 22 Dec 1898, 21 Jul 1899, 27 Aug and 5 Nov 1897, and 4 Feb 1898.

<sup>1152</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 31 Dec 1897; *DI*, 4 Mar 1898.

League in the *Independent*.<sup>1153</sup> The *Vindicator* continued with Militia Notes, but it also reported on the Gaelic League. In January 1899, the United Irish League met in Donegal town, and both Davitt and McNeill made speeches there.<sup>1154</sup> County Donegal had only three branches with 600 members at this time, but they expanded rapidly over the next few years.<sup>1155</sup>

Agrarian problems were now reduced, but were still simmering at this time. The Congested Districts Board continued to battle against poverty<sup>1156</sup>, although there was a revival in fishing<sup>1157</sup>. In February 1892 Philip Doherty, a 'land-grabber' from Donnany was beaten, along with his wife, by six men who broke into their house at night.<sup>1158</sup> In the first quarter of 1892, there was only one outrage recorded in County Donegal, a case of intimidation, and such offences were drastically reduced across Ireland as a whole<sup>1159</sup> - a trend which was to continue<sup>1160</sup>. In 1893 the police Register of Prosecutions listed only one case of agrarian related assault in Donegal, and one case each of riotous proceedings and intimidation of witnesses which were not considered agrarian. Entries for County Donegal continued to be few for the rest of the period.<sup>1161</sup> The *Vindicator* claimed a "great victory for the 'Plan' " when forty-two evicted tenants were reinstated on the Stewart estate in Falcarragh for a compromise payment, and said that the 'Plan' was then narrowed to the Olphert estate alone.<sup>1162</sup> Four large turf stacks were burned at Glenties in September 1893. One of their owners, Daniel Boyle, had recently bought a farm and refused to be bought off by rivals in America. A horse was mutilated at Carnone - "an outrage of an unusual character in this

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<sup>1153</sup> *DI*, 29 Apr and 27 May 1898, 31 Mar 1899, 17 Dec 1897, 14 Jan and 18 Mar 1898.

<sup>1154</sup> *DV*, 21 Apr and 27 Jan 1899.

<sup>1155</sup> The National Archives, Colonial Office Records 904/20, Summary Return of United Irish League Branches, 31 Jan 1899.

<sup>1156</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Sep 1895; *HCPP*, 1893-94 (417) Congested Districts Board (Ireland), pp2-3.

<sup>1157</sup> *Times*, 5 Jan 1897.

<sup>1158</sup> *North-Eastern Daily Gazette*, 11 Feb 1892.

<sup>1159</sup> *HCPP*, 1892 [C.6655] Agrarian outrages (Ireland), pp2-3. Presumably this referred to the Doherty case, as it is not recorded under "offences against the person".

<sup>1160</sup> *HCPP*, 1897 [C.8294] Agrarian outrages (Ireland), p3. (See Table 6.2, page 284 ).

<sup>1161</sup> CO 904/30, RIC Register of Prosecutions 1893-1901.

<sup>1162</sup> *DV*, 18 Mar 1892.

part of the country". A drunken servant shouting for 'Home Rule' had been rebuked and took his revenge on his master's horse. There was a series of robberies at Glenties from Dr John Kelly JP, including weapons. There was Moonlighting at Tullybrook, near the town of Donegal. Forty-two tons of saved hay were scattered and rendered useless.<sup>1163</sup>

After Charles Johnston died, his estate went to Chancery, and his widow was only allowed to move back into the house after having been evicted. It was Mr Fox who now leased the land that was the target of an outrage, and one of his workers had also received a threatening letter. The *Independent* claimed that personal assaults were "rare about Donegal"<sup>1164</sup>, but in 1897 William Mulbraine was attacked by two men after refusing to join them in "the cause"<sup>1165</sup>. Another assault was recorded on two boycotted men in 1898.<sup>1166</sup> There were appeals to help evicted tenants in St Patrick's Church, Ballyshannon, in 1892<sup>1167</sup>, and in the form of a letter from the Chairman of the Irish Parliamentary Party, Justin McCarthy, to the *Independent* in October 1893. A circular was then re-printed in December 1893, and the following week an editorial supported the need for aid. In January 1899, the *Independent* asked: "What is a landgrabber"? Having offered some definitions, it then remarked: "There are plenty of such men in all districts and electors should consider these points before entrusting power to any of those now seeking there (sic) votes."<sup>1168</sup>

## **2. The South African War 1899-1902.**

### **(a) At home.**

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<sup>1163</sup> *DI*, 8 and 15 Sep 1893, and 25 Sept 1896.

<sup>1164</sup> *Ibid*, 11 Dec 1896 and 18 Feb 1898.

<sup>1165</sup> *Times*, 2 Apr 1897.

<sup>1166</sup> *DI*, 18 Feb 1898.

<sup>1167</sup> *DV*, 15 Jan 1892.

<sup>1168</sup> *DI*, 27 Oct, 22 and 29 Dec 1893, and 20 Jan 1899.

The *Donegal Vindicator* reported on “the war in the Transvaal” in a matter-of-fact way. It criticised the way that the war was run<sup>1169</sup>, but continued to show concern for the Inniskillings at the front. It was impossible to ignore the army’s failures, and after a disaster near Ladysmith, where many British soldiers were captured, the *Vindicator* blamed “General White – general bungler”.<sup>1170</sup> Surprisingly, perhaps, the *Donegal Independent* now became both nationalist and pro-Boer. Reports of the war were fairly brief, and did not include news of local regiments. A poem was published called “De Wet’s (sic) Escapes Again” which referred to “The ‘Butcher Boy’ of Omdurman” (ie: Kitchener). The *Independent* claimed that “Boer ingenuity outwits British invention” by carrying vinegar to counter the effects of Lyddite – “noxious shells” with the aim of “poisoning the air for miles around”. It published provocative headlines like: “What Chamberlain’s war will cost” and “Boer chief’s wonderful deeds”. Letters from the South African Constabulary were printed, with editorial comment to show how policemen were put to service as soldiers without proper training, and how the commissariat were not able to supply enough food for the troops.<sup>1171</sup> There were reports of British soldiers shooting Boer prisoners because they were short of food.<sup>1172</sup>

The *Vindicator* reported that Major John McBride, second-in-command of the Irish Brigade which fought against the British, was not mad, as some British newspapers claimed, but a “determined revolutionary”. The editor nevertheless regretted the forming of such a unit, “for I believe it is Ireland’s destiny to be strong and free within ... the British Empire”.<sup>1173</sup> The *Independent*, on the other hand, later reprinted an interview with McBride from the *Westminster Gazette* which was sympathetic towards his achievements.<sup>1174</sup> That same year the *Vindicator* printed the experiences of Colonel Arthur Lynch of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Irish Brigade with

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<sup>1169</sup> *DV*, 10 Nov and 15 Dec 1899.

<sup>1170</sup> *DV*, 20 Oct, 10 Nov and 15 Dec 1899, and 3 Nov 1899.

<sup>1171</sup> *DI*, 11 and 18 Jan, 1 and 8 Mar 1901, 3 Jan 1902, 7 Jun and 1 Feb 1901. Lyddite (picric acid) was used as a propellant for artillery shells, not as a chemical weapon. The SAC was in fact “staffed with mostly former soldiers” – see S. Spencer, ‘Assembling the South African Constabulary, 1900-1902’, p104.

<sup>1172</sup> *DI*, 15 Nov 1901.

<sup>1173</sup> *DV*, 27 Oct 1899.

<sup>1174</sup> *DI*, 29 Nov 1901.

the Boer forces.<sup>1175</sup> These so-called 'Irish Brigades' were in fact made up from a mixture of nationalities, and comprised 300 men at the most – whereas 30,000 Irishmen served in the British army.<sup>1176</sup> Nevertheless they served as an example for nationalists and the war has arguably been underestimated for its significance on Irish politics in the early twentieth century.<sup>1177</sup> It was noted that even some English papers poured scorn on the war effort – “pouring ridicule on the British”. “England will never conquer the Boers”, was the title of a speech by Boer Commandant Snyman in Washington. There was a letter from Fr Kavanagh against recruiting - Roman Catholic attitude to war was that the cause had to be just, otherwise an individual risked their soul in participating in an unjust war. In South Africa troops were used in “the wrecking of houses and the harassing of women and children, and other defenceless persons”. There was also a long article about “English atrocities”, looking at the concentration camps. The end of the war was noted but not celebrated. The *Independent* published a letter from H. J. Ponsma MD, Chief of the Orange Free State division of the Red Cross, alleging that British troops had deliberately fired at his hospital and then looted it in October 1901. A nurse had been seriously injured. Under the title “Flag of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Irish Brigade – A touching story”, the *Independent* related how this flag had been found by a British soldier on a dead 'Boer', and presented to Kingston-upon-Thames. Attached to the flag were mottoes and relics of the '98 rebellion.<sup>1178</sup>

The *Independent* reported accusations made by Mr Dillon of “police made crime”, or how agrarian outrages were manufactured by the police. There was a ‘system’, it claimed, of the RIC organising crime and convicting innocent people, as a result of which people felt the law

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<sup>1175</sup> *DV*, 18 Jan 1901.

<sup>1176</sup> D. Fitzpatrick, ‘Militarism in Ireland, 1900-1922’, in T. Bartlett and K. Jeffery (eds), *A Military History of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp379-380; D. Lowry, ‘The Boers were the beginning of the end’?: the wider impact of the South African War’, in D. Lowry (ed), *The South African War Reappraised* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp212-214.

<sup>1177</sup> D. Lowry, ‘The wider impact of the South African War’, pp223-225; D. McCracken, *The Irish Pro-Boers 1877-1902* (Johannesburg and Cape Town: Perskor, 1989), ppxix-xx.

<sup>1178</sup> *DI*, 14 Feb and 21 Mar 1902, 22 Nov 1901, 6 Jun, 31 Oct and 4 Jul 1902.

was unjust.<sup>1179</sup> In fact, numbers of both outrages and evictions remained very low during the war, although they did continue – see Tables 6.2 & 6.3, below and page 286 .<sup>1180</sup> Police reports recorded seven outrages in January and February 1900, and seventeen evictions in June, claiming the county was “in a peaceable state”<sup>1181</sup>. The *Independent* reported “police tyranny” in County Leitrim, with the RIC intimidating the people and propping up landlordism.<sup>1182</sup> Individual policemen were also criticised. Sgt Brooks and Const Goulding of Ballybofey were sued for assault by John McMonagle, but the case was dismissed when it was decided that McMonagle had been drunk at the time.

**TABLE 6.2 - Total number of agrarian outrages across Ireland, Jan-Mar 1900**

Province	County	Total
<b>Leinster</b>		<b>4</b>
	King’s County (largest number)	2
<b>Munster</b>		<b>21</b>
	Kerry (largest number)	8
<b>Ulster</b>		<b>10</b>
	Tyrone (largest number)	4
	(Donegal)	1)
<b>Connaught</b>		<b>29</b>
	Galway, East Riding & Roscommon (largest number)	8 each

Source: HCPP 1900 (Cd.156) *Agrarian Outrages (Ireland)*

In a similar case, Const Jerrard Henderson of Lifford was accused of assault by a man judged to be drunk, but Henderson was fined twenty shillings for being over-zealous. Not that misbehaviour was limited to the lowest ranks – Patrick Mooney JP and Patrick McNulty were both fined for assault after a St Patrick’s Day brawl.<sup>1183</sup> The *Independent* published many critical articles, including a letter from T W Russell in the *Times* against coercion, and

<sup>1179</sup> *Ibid*, 23 Aug 1901.

<sup>1180</sup> HCPP, 1900 [Cd.156] *Agrarian outrages (Ireland)*, pp2-3, and 1900 [Cd.163] *Evictions (Ireland)*, pp3-5. (See Tables 6.2 & 6.3 above and p286).

<sup>1181</sup> CO 904/70/35-37, confidential monthly report for Donegal, 3 Mar 1900 & 904/70/576-578, report 6 July 1900.

<sup>1182</sup> *DI*, 7 Mar 1902.

<sup>1183</sup> *DV*, 26 Jan 1900, 24 Jan 1902 and 30 Mar 1900.

a debate in Parliament about the police and landgrabbing. When reporting on evictions elsewhere, the *Independent* talked of “The Land War” and “armed forces at the Devil’s work”.<sup>1184</sup> By 1902 the ‘shadowing’ of magistrates by police in Ballyshannon was a cause of friction.<sup>1185</sup>

**TABLE 6.3 - Total number of evictions & re-admittances across Ireland, Jan-Mar 1900**

Province	County	Total families evicted without re-admittance	Total re-admitted as caretakers etc
<b>Leinster</b>		<b>21</b>	<b>105</b>
	Wexford (largest number)	5	18
	King’s County (largest number)		
<b>Munster</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>119</b>
	Cork (largest number)	6	40
<b>Ulster</b>		<b>43</b>	<b>294</b>
	Tyrone (largest number)	12	62
	(Donegal)	6)	
<b>Connaught</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>207</b>
	Mayo (largest number)	15	113

Source: HCPP 1900 (Cd.163) *Evictions (Ireland)*

The *Independent* published a letter from William O’Brien (MP for Cork) on the United Irish League, that he had founded, as a source of power for change against landgrabbers.<sup>1186</sup> Organisations like the UIL and the Gaelic League continued to meet during the war, and some agrarian problems also continued.<sup>1187</sup> In July 1900 the UIL had fifteen branches in Donegal, with 1,212 members, and by June 1902 this had increased to forty-two branches with 3,931 members. Interestingly though, there were no outrages attributed to them in

<sup>1184</sup> *DI*, 21 Mar and 11 Jul 1902.

<sup>1185</sup> *DV*, 14 Feb 1902.

<sup>1186</sup> *DI*, 4 Jan 1901.

<sup>1187</sup> *DV*, 8 Dec 1899 and 23 Feb 1900.

County Donegal between 1898 and 1900.<sup>1188</sup> Evictions were rare after 1900, and the disturbances of the Edwardian period took place mainly outside of Ulster.<sup>1189</sup>

The *Vindicator* reported a malicious attack on a donkey, and crop burning at Belleek. The son of an Emergency man, Stinson, who was the caretaker of an evicted estate, was struck by a certain Kerrigan. Kerrigan was fined, but Stinson tried to attack him afterwards and the RIC did not interfere. The *Vindicator* sympathised with the boy, but nevertheless felt that any man who took on an evicted estate must “per se be a scoundrel”.<sup>1190</sup> A Mr Moohan was evicted from the Barton estate for owing two years’ rent. The *Independent* announced that evictions were to take place at Gweedore and Tory Island. The landlord, Baptist Rev Benjamin St John, wanted all tenants cleared out, even those owing only one year’s rent, and without Fr McFadden or a local organisation to oppose him, he hoped to succeed easily. Fr McFadden of Gweedore was made the new pastor of Inniskeel, and was welcomed by crowds of people. The paper later had to retract the reference to Tory Island, where tenants were practically freeholders, as only a rumour. Robert Doherty of Ardfarne retook possession of his property after being evicted. The Bundoran police arrested him and sent him to Derry gaol. The *Independent* hoped that people would give him “a right royal reception when he comes home”. In March 1902, William and Denis Doherty stopped a boy selling boycotted potatoes at market, and then resisted arrest. Under the Peace Preservation Act, William was bound over to keep the peace and his son Denis was fined 10 shillings. The anniversary of the Manchester Martyrs was celebrated in Ballyshannon.<sup>1191</sup>

On coronation day in August 1902, there were celebrations by loyalists “who are only a handful in the community”, and extra police were drafted in. There was a rival nationalist

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<sup>1188</sup> CO 904/20, Summary Returns of United Irish League Branches 1899-1902 and Lists of Cases and Outrages 1898-1900.

<sup>1189</sup> L. P. Curtis, *The Depiction of Eviction in Ireland 1845-1910* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2011), p294.

<sup>1190</sup> *DV*, 3 Nov 1899, 29 Nov and 15 Mar 1901.

<sup>1191</sup> *DI*, 7 Jun 1901, 24 Jan 1902, 28 Jun 1901, 7 Feb, 8 Aug and 9 May 1902, and 29 Nov 1901.

crowd, and the police drew batons to escort the loyalists home. In a long article on county and district elections, the *Independent* told its readers to vote for nationalist candidates, listing their experience and virtues, and citing the wrongs of any others. Examples of nationalist candidates were Gavigan (Ballyshannon Rural) with twenty-five years on the Board of Guardians, Daly (Bundoran) with nine years on the Board of Guardians, McNulty and Sweeny (Ballyshannon Urban) who would give labourers good houses, and McGonigle (Ballintra) who was an evicted tenant. By contrast, Moore, although a Land Leaguer, had sold evictees land.<sup>1192</sup>

**(b) Focus – The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and Donegal Artillery during the South African War, 1899-1902.**

Army reservists were recalled to the colours on 9 October 1899, and later that same month 1<sup>st</sup> Inniskillings left Mullingar, in Co Westmeath, for South Africa.<sup>1193</sup> There was, apparently, great enthusiasm at the chance for action.<sup>1194</sup> They set sail from Queenstown<sup>1195</sup>, County Cork, to a rousing send-off including bands. Once in South Africa they took part in several actions, including Colenso, Spion Kop and the relief of Ladysmith before manning blockhouse lines in the Orange Free State. Inniskilling Hill was named after them following their assault in February 1900. They returned to Enniskillen in February 1903 to an enthusiastic welcome. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Inniskillings were in India until 1902, and then moved to South Africa in February to work in the blockhouse lines in the Transvaal. In 1903 they were sent to Egypt.<sup>1196</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> Inniskillings suffered heavy casualties in South Africa, and a letter from Sgt J Arthur to his brother-in-law in the militia was published in the *Vindicator* in January 1900. He

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<sup>1192</sup> *DI*, 15 Aug and 23 May 1902.

<sup>1193</sup> Regimental Committee, *Inniskillings*, pp381-382.

<sup>1194</sup> D. and J. Bowen, *Heroic Option: The Irish in the British Army* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Books, 2005), p159.

<sup>1195</sup> Renamed Cobh in 1922.

<sup>1196</sup> Regimental Committee, *Inniskillings*, pp383-499.

reported how mismanagement of an attempt to cross the Tugela River cost the battalion nineteen dead and fifty wounded. In action during February 1900 the Inniskillings were reported as being “sadly cut up”, and their fate as “the butchery of the Inniskillings”. The *Vindicator* printed a history of the regiment, and was proud that they were the only ones to use the old Irish war-pipes.<sup>1197</sup> It cited a letter from “Ixion” to the *Weekly Nation* which said that the queen’s visit to Ireland was “a great thing for the tradespeople”, but that the soldiers were being neglected. The editor was sympathetic to claims that despite the performance of the Inniskillings in South Africa, the promotion of their surviving officers was being blocked at the War Office on technicalities.<sup>1198</sup> Concerns were also expressed in parliament about the treatment of discharged soldiers from, and under-age recruits to the Inniskillings during the war.<sup>1199</sup>

During the war, the 27<sup>th</sup> Regimental District raised a fund to assist the Soldiers and Sailors Families’ Association in Donegal.<sup>1200</sup> A mixed civilian and military concert was organised in Ballyshannon in support of this fund in 1900.<sup>1201</sup> All three militia battalions of the Inniskillings were embodied during the war and moved to England at different times. They did not serve overseas as units, but between them sent twenty officers and nearly 400 other ranks as reinforcements to South Africa – mainly to 1<sup>st</sup> Inniskillings.<sup>1202</sup> Captain Robert Johnstone, previously of 5<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings, won the Victoria Cross while serving with the Imperial Light Horse at Elandslaagte in October 1899.<sup>1203</sup> When the 5<sup>th</sup> Inniskillings reported for training in 1900, they marched to the station singing rebel songs. Their numbers were low because

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<sup>1197</sup> *DV*, 19 Jan, 2 and 9 Mar 1900.

<sup>1198</sup> *Ibid*, 13 Apr 1900; *Hansard, HC Deb 03 May 1900 vol 82 c578*. John MacNeill (MP for Donegal South) to George Wyndham (Chief Secretary).

<sup>1199</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 03 July 1900 vol 85 c39*. MacNeill to Wyndham, and *HC Deb 19 February 1901 vol 89 c474* – William O’Doherty (MP for Donegal North) to Lord Stanley.

<sup>1200</sup> *DV*, 10 Nov 1899 and 12 Jan 1900; *A Short Account of the Part Played by the First Battalion The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers During the South African Campaign 1899-1902* (R Inniskilling Fusiliers: Enniskellen, 1903), p17.

<sup>1201</sup> *DV*, 20 Apr 1900.

<sup>1202</sup> Regimental Committee, *Inniskillings*, pp548 & 554; M. Cassidy, *The Inniskilling Diaries 1899-1903* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 2001), pp169-213; *First Inniskillings in South Africa*, p72.

<sup>1203</sup> M. Cassidy, *Inniskilling Diaries*, p232.

many had already volunteered to go to South Africa, but they took part in Queen Victoria's funeral in 1901, and were placed third in the South-Eastern District Military Tournament that same year. The *Vindicator* printed several reports on "the Donegal's Own" during training in England, and recorded the production of their own journal.<sup>1204</sup> The prolonged period of training without direct involvement in the war eventually led to some dissatisfaction, for many of the men needed to tend to their farms.<sup>1205</sup> They returned to Ballyshannon in July 1901, but neither the *Independent* nor the *Vindicator* recorded any particular celebrations.<sup>1206</sup>

The Donegal Artillery formed a Special Service Company for South Africa at Letterkenny, which departed in March 1900.<sup>1207</sup> After arriving at the Cape their first casualty was a death from pneumonia.<sup>1208</sup> In April the unit was sent to St Helena to guard Boer prisoners along with the Antrim artillery company.<sup>1209</sup> Capt William McSwiney commanded the Donegals, with Colonel Pottinger in overall command.<sup>1210</sup> They returned home via the Cape in 1901, and were subsequently awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal.<sup>1211</sup> The war had revealed mixed reactions to the army, but also to the imperial idea. The empire had been at its height during the 1897 Diamond Jubilee, but its weaknesses had been exposed by the Boers, and there were increasing numbers of Irish with a desire to exploit them for their own advantage.

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Although the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers did become identified with County Donegal, as the Leinsters did with King's County, much more was made in the Donegal papers of their lack of discipline – both among regulars and militia. There is more evidence as well of problems

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<sup>1204</sup> *DV*, Feb and 20 Mar 1901, 17 Jan 1902.

<sup>1205</sup> *Hansard, HC Deb 09 May 1901 vol 93 cc1142-3*. Edward McFadden (MP for Donegal East) to Lord Stanley (Financial Secretary to the War Office).

<sup>1206</sup> Regimental Committee, *Inniskillings*, pp548 and 554.

<sup>1207</sup> WO 68/28, Records of the Donegal Artillery; *Yorkshire Herald*, 27 Mar 1900.

<sup>1208</sup> Aberdeen weekly Journal, 21 Apr 1900.

<sup>1209</sup> WO 68/28, Donegal Artillery.

<sup>1210</sup> WO 68/28 and 68/29, Donegal Artillery.

<sup>1211</sup> WO 68/28, Donegal Artillery.

with other units, highlighting periodically strained relations between the army and the RIC. This may just have been a case of the Donegal papers having a different agenda, however, as social contact with local people seems to have continued, and there were serious attempts to stop troops being moved from Lifford.

Although there was continued sectarianism in County Donegal, which had never been a real issue in King's County, agrarian problems showed a decline similar to that in the latter. Donegal also followed the trend across Ireland around the end of the century for having fewer evictions, and many more tenants being re-admitted as caretakers. Poverty, not a major issue in King's County, was reduced, though by no means eradicated, in County Donegal. Nationalists continued to organise meetings and use their positions in local government – having eighteen out of twenty councillors in County Donegal after the 1898 elections.<sup>1212</sup> In both of the counties in this study, the police were able to concentrate more on routine work, and were becoming more accepted – although, as with the army, lack of discipline sometimes put that at risk.

It was during the South African War that the *Independent* became a fully nationalist and anti-war newspaper, reflecting changes in ownership and readership. So both County Donegal papers were critical of the war and the way it was being run, and themselves helped to foster Irish nationalism for the early twentieth century. There was support for the Irish Brigades, accusations of British atrocities, and letters from disaffected soldiers. As with King's County, however, many men from County Donegal joined the British army, and it is important to notice again the contribution of the militia. The gulf between nationalists and loyalists was shown by the potential clash between two rival crowds in 1902, which had to be separated by the RIC. As mentioned previously, the pro-Boer nationalists had limited effect at the time,

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<sup>1212</sup> C. Shannon, *Arthur J. Balfour and Ireland* (Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1988), p104.

but “their opposition to the 1899-1902 war powerfully boosted the development of militant separatism in Ireland”.<sup>1213</sup>

Having looked at King’s County and County Donegal throughout the c1870-1902 period, it is now necessary to see what conclusions can be drawn regarding civil, military and police relations.

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<sup>1213</sup> K. Jeffery (ed), *‘An Irish Empire?’*, p8.

## Conclusion

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This thesis makes a detailed contribution to the study of social relations between tenantry, landowners, police and military and challenges some approaches to, and beliefs about, Irish history through a comparative study of two different counties. In studying two counties in detail, it goes beyond many generalised approaches to reveal continuities and complexities in these relationships that have usually been overlooked or underestimated. This study makes a particular contribution to knowledge by unearthing and synthesising a large amount of new primary evidence, gathered from a range of archival sources, and particularly from provincial newspapers. It also compares two under-researched counties, and helps us to better understand events from an individual viewpoint. The main contributions to the subject that this thesis makes will now be examined in order of importance.

Of overarching importance, and evident in both counties, was that hostility and conflict continued throughout the period in question, and that convenient historical labels for times of heightened activity conceal the ongoing tension. It has been suggested by Fergus Campbell that the period 1879-1909 could actually be called “the ‘long’ land war”<sup>1214</sup>, and this thesis would support that view. In adopting this approach, previously compartmentalised periods would become phases of one long struggle, as proposed by James Donnelly – although he only considers events up to 1892.<sup>1215</sup> Combined with this, as discussed in the Introduction, it is not sufficient to approach this topic simply from a traditional or revisionist point of view. This work demonstrates the need for a selection of approaches, including ‘history from

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<sup>1214</sup> F. Campbell, ‘ “Killing time” in rural Ireland, c1881-2013’, in *Irish Studies Review* (21), Aug 2013, p274.

<sup>1215</sup> J. Donnelly, *The Land and the People of Nineteenth Century Cork* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp251-307 and 308-376.

below', military and police history, imperial history, local history, gender history – and in terms of methodology, the use of provincial newspapers and regimental records.

Secondly, this thesis demonstrates that ordinary women played a central role in expressing discontent and resisting evictions, and that this has not been fully recognised elsewhere. The Ladies Land League (1881-1882) represented the first involvement of educated and well-off women in Irish nationalist politics, and several of those involved continued as political activists. At the grass roots level, however, the role of ordinary women was more sustained and fundamental. Women from tenant families played a central role in many organised protests and physical resistance to evictions. They were not afraid to risk injury facing the authorities, and often took the lead in violent demonstrations. Sometimes the women would be more in evidence than the men, which was suspected as being a tactic to embarrass the army and police, although in Donegal for example, men might be away as itinerant workers.

There was no official policy of being lenient towards women involved in such activities, although any harm to them was bound to be bad propaganda for the authorities. Major Mends was supposed to have warned his men not to shoot the women, but the RIC often showed no compunction in dealing with women the same way that they would have done with men. Fraternisation between soldiers and local women was most likely to take place in the towns, where the barracks were situated, but in the countryside women were more likely to be hostile towards the military and the police. Anne O'Dowd and others have described the work of rural women, not only in the home, but also in the fields and even labouring in Scotland - but there is a lack of references to them in agitation or evictions during this time.<sup>1216</sup> As happened with other periods, this may have been because they were seen, as

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<sup>1216</sup> A. O'Dowd, 'Women in Rural Ireland in the Nineteenth Century and Early Twentieth Century', in A. Hayes and D. Urqhart (eds), *The Irish Women's History Reader* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp209-211.

J. Cannavan put it, as acting in an 'unfeminine' way.<sup>1217</sup> Whatever the reason, one of the main contributions of this thesis is to correct that injustice and draw attention to the range and significance of women's actions.

The third point demonstrated here, this time relating to primary material, is the vital importance of the the local press and regimental records. The provincial newspapers are important both as evidence of events and ideas, and as important influences on the relations between the police, the army and the rest of the population. The authorities were certainly concerned about the influence of the press, with the Irish Office keeping newspaper cuttings – and adding their own comments – as well as prosecuting proprietors.<sup>1218</sup> Caution has to be exercised when looking at local newspapers as historical sources, since their proprietors and editors determined their whole approach, and they were usually recognised as supporting a particular political standpoint. Papers are vital, however, because they provide the only continuous thread of 'evidence' for local events during this period, despite sometimes exhibiting the most extreme religious, social and political bias. They have not always been fully utilised by historians, and there are obvious gaps in coverage. Janet TeBrake's important work on peasant women, previously referred to, uses few newspapers for the whole of Ireland, and since she only deals with the Land League there is nothing before 1879 or after 1882.<sup>1219</sup> This thesis has added very considerably to TeBrake's research.

In King's County, the *King's County Chronicle* and the *Midland Tribune* looked very similar, and were often not so different in tone. Yet they differed fundamentally in their attitude and could influence public opinion one way or the other, but were more likely to reinforce the

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<sup>1217</sup> J. Cannavan, 'Romantic, Revolutionary Irish Women', in M. Kelleher and J. Murphy, *Gender Perspectives in Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1997), p218.

<sup>1218</sup> Balfour, ADD 49822, p1, 1882 memo; PRO/30/60/10, cuttings and comments from 1888; Balfour, Confidential Official Papers BP13/8(13), memos of 8 and 9 March 1888.

<sup>1219</sup> J. TeBrake, 'Irish Peasant Women in Revolt: The Land League Years', in *Irish Historical Studies* (28) 1992-1993, No 109, (May 1992), pp63-80.

views of their readership than to make any conversions. Most important in the context of influencing attitudes was the political stance taken by both papers. The *Chronicle* was clearly against the Leagues, and criticised the proposed 'Manchester Martyrs' memorial in Birr. Socially it concentrated on the King's County hunt, lawn tennis and rugby - hardly giving Gaelic games, with their nationalist associations, a mention. The *Tribune*, on the other hand, was very much identified with the Leagues and the Plan of Campaign, and the editor, John Powell, was imprisoned several times for inciting intimidation through his publication.<sup>1220</sup>

In County Donegal the difference between the two newspapers was even more pronounced to begin with, but the *Donegal Vindicator* did not appear until 1889. Before then the *Ballyshannon Herald* was given to sparring with other local papers. In 1884 the *Donegal Independent* took over the *Herald* with a more moderate tone. From 1889 the *Donegal Vindicator* provided a nationalist alternative to the *Independent* and supported the tenants in the Plan of Campaign. By the time of the South African War the *Independent* had become a nationalist paper, and so the clash between the two did not last that long. This dramatic change showed that not only could papers influence the people, but that the reverse could also be true, as different proprietorship recognised a shift in public opinion.

In general, the Conservative newspapers fostered support for the army and the police, and nationalist papers were more critical, although that was not true all of the time. They played their part, therefore, in shaping the relationship between the army, the police and the civilian population and are significant as evidence of attitudes in their own right, not just as sources of information about others. They could be used by those writing in letters to express their side of an argument or beg forgiveness from one of the Leagues. The editors could spread propaganda or even intimidation through their columns. Except in a few cases it is

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<sup>1220</sup> *Midland Tribune*, 16 Aug 1890.

impossible now to prove with any certainty who was right and who was wrong, and so their use remains one of judgement. As discussed in the Introduction, corroboration provides more certainty, or giving an opinion contrary to that normally expected might suggest plausibility, but often it is a case of deciding what is probable.

This thesis is also important for the use of individual regimental records, which have similarly been neglected. Military papers in large collections are well researched, but the records of individual regiments are spread all over the country in local museums and archives. Of the general works on the army, only E. Spiers uses regimental records, and then only for the papers of notable individuals.<sup>1221</sup> It is only through involvement at the lowest level that the rich details of personal involvement can be revealed, and so this is another substantial contribution made by this work.

The fourth important theme revealed in this study is the surprising level of violence sometimes used by both sides. Bitterness towards Britain, and agrarian and political discontent combined with traditions of rural violence and secret societies to provide an atmosphere where conflict with the authorities was almost inevitable from time to time – with economic conditions as the catalyst. Writers of general works on this period, such as D. George Boyce and Roy Foster, have often glossed over this violence.<sup>1222</sup> Only more specific works by Charles Townshend and L. Perry Curtis really come to terms with it.<sup>1223</sup> Yet it is this violence which gives the period its appearance of an actual war, and which has to be recognised. The idea of an eviction can summon up a stereotypical picture, but only those who study more detailed works will know about the cruelty meted out to animals through

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<sup>1221</sup> E. Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army, 1868-1902*, pp340-342.

<sup>1222</sup> D. Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2005), pp166-199 and R. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1989), pp400-428.

<sup>1223</sup> C. Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp105-180 and L. P. Curtis, *The Depiction of Eviction in Ireland 1845-1910* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2011), pp81-293.

agrarian outrages, or the level of unnecessary violence sometimes indulged in by the police during confrontations with tenants. This close-textured detail enables this thesis to make a substantial contribution to our knowledge of rural violence at the local level. Although historians may now give a more balanced view of landlord-tenant relations, and not always present the tenants just as victims, they have also played their part in sanitising what was often a very unpleasant struggle. This study makes a substantial and distinctive contribution to our knowledge of the real violence used by both sides during this period, and to a better understanding of some of their reactions.

Fifthly, the thesis addresses the position of Ireland in relation to the empire, and the nature of internal conflict. This period undeniably saw much damage and intimidation, and there were many injuries and even some fatalities – so it was obviously a time of serious conflict, if somewhat guerrilla in nature. If it is going to be considered as a war, however, it must be seen as a civil war – not only because it took place within the United Kingdom, but because Irish men and women could be found on both sides. Although the British, and particularly the English, have been presented as the oppressors, there were many situations where most if not all of those taking part would have been Irish – albeit sometimes from different cultural and religious backgrounds. In agrarian conflict the main participants – tenants and policemen – could even have come from the same background and religion. As we approach the centenary of 1916, modern studies are making people aware of the diversity of the individual Irish experience, but it is important to continue this back into history to see how this diversity has in fact been evident for centuries.<sup>1224</sup> To acknowledge its existence in the period c1870-1902 must be part of that process. This is linked to the question (discussed in the Introduction) of how far Ireland should be considered to be a colony, and this work adds

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<sup>1224</sup> R. O Floinn, *Soldiers and Chiefs: The Irish at War at Home and Abroad* (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 2007), p1; T. Burke, 'Brotherhood Among Irishmen? The Battle of Wijtschate-Messines Ridge, June 1917', in *History Ireland* (15), Sept/Oct 2007, pp28-33; P. Yeats, 'Oh What a Lovely War! Dublin and the First World War', in *History Ireland* (19), Nov/Dec 2011, pp22-24; F. McGarry, 'Too Many Histories? The Bureau of Military History and Easter 1916', in *History Ireland* (19), Nov/Dec 2011, pp26-29.

to our understanding of that situation. It is argued here that whilst Ireland was nominally a member of the United Kingdom, which benefited a minority, it was actually run as a colony, keeping the majority under control. As Stephen Howe has said: Ireland had “a colonial past ... though one that took unique hybrid forms, involving integration and consensual partnership as well as exploitation and coercion”.<sup>1225</sup>

The sixth theme in this study is a clear demonstration of how Irish, mainly Catholic, recruitment into the army and the RIC continued without any adverse effects on the position of the authorities overall. Irish soldiers performed their duties well, both in Ireland and beyond. Although the high level of Irish recruitment into the army declined during the late nineteenth century, the percentage of Irish soldiers (including the Irish resident in Britain) was still larger than the proportion of Irish in the UK population as a whole. Their presence was more noticeable also because they tended to concentrate in the infantry and artillery. Surprisingly perhaps, given the Irish love of horses and the perfect cavalry training area in the Curragh, Irish cavalry regiments were never strongly Irish in composition. This may have been partly due to the lack of any yeomanry cavalry in Ireland, and because the Irish militia – from whence many regular recruits came - were either infantry or artillery. This work illustrates one area in which army reforms were particularly successful in Ireland, which was in identifying regiments with local areas, even though Irishmen continued to join non-Irish regiments as well. This is evident in the way that local regimental events were well supported, and recruits were often clearly identifiable as local youths. Although campaigns against recruiting increased at the end of the century, nationalist MPs would be prepared to condemn British imperialism, but not the Irish soldiers who took part in it – often acknowledging their bravery.

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<sup>1225</sup> S. Howe, *Ireland and Empire* (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 2000), p232.

The Royal Irish Constabulary attracted what was judged to be a better class of recruit than the army, coming mainly from the tenant farmer class, and their reasons for joining are discussed in the Introduction.<sup>1226</sup> This meant, however, that they were increasingly regarded as traitors in rural Ireland and hated more than the army. There were other reasons for them to be disliked as well. The police carried out the dirty work at evictions when bailiffs failed to gain an entrance, and they regularly exceeded their authority on such occasions where they were supposed to be protecting the other officials. The police did not appear to feel so constrained by regulations as the army. Not only that, but they were sometimes over-zealous in tackling demonstrators or eviction resisters, possibly through frustration. Occasionally they showed regret at having to take action against an obviously pitiable victim, but very few refused to do their duty. Elizabeth Malcolm points out that nationalist writers have been hostile to the RIC, and that it is only since the 1980s that a more balanced approach has been evident – but this study clearly shows that there were often good reasons for their unpopularity.<sup>1227</sup> Held together by their own *esprit*, in the face of widespread hostility, and hardened by experience, they do not seem to have found it difficult to carry out orders against people who were at least not from their own counties.

In addition to the six contributions noted above, this thesis makes a number of other points relating to civil, military and police relations which might be noted here. Army reforms of the late nineteenth century proved long-term successes, and neither the abolition of purchase nor the introduction of shorter service spelt disaster for the army in Ireland or elsewhere. If discipline off duty continued to be an issue, this was certainly not a purely Irish problem, but conflict with civilians seems to have been minimal. It is shown here how, in both King's County and County Donegal, centres of military activity were recognised as economic

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<sup>1226</sup> The quality of recruits was declining, however, by the turn of the century – see P. Hart, *The IRA and Its Enemies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p3.

<sup>1227</sup> E. Malcolm, *The Irish Policeman 1822-1922: a life* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), pp26-35.

assets, which only the most extreme nationalists wanted to put at risk. The relationship between the military and the civilians was therefore on more levels than is sometimes recognised, and both sides stood to gain. Opinions about the army would always be divided politically, but practical considerations often outweighed idealism.

In quiet times Ireland offered pleasant surroundings with opportunities for social engagement and sporting activities, especially for the officers. In times of unrest, however, the army was forced into supporting the civil power – a role that was detested by all – and a miserable existence often made worse by foul weather. This work shows how the army was respected as a serious force that was not to be trifled with, and there was little doubt that troops would open fire if ordered to do so. That there was so little shooting is not only a token of the discipline of the soldiers of course, but also of the awareness of their opponents of when to change tactics. It may also not be generally understood how the army was restrained by the limitations put on its activities by the requirement to always act within the law, and in co-operation with local officials and the police – they did not have a free hand just to act as they pleased.

Involvement in evictions was acknowledged to be regrettable work for the army. It is difficult to judge how individual soldiers might have felt, but we can get a better understanding from the sources used in this study. It should be noted that the troops always did what was required of them, including Irish soldiers and Irish regiments. Burning enemy villages in the empire was a common occurrence, and the South African War led to blowing up Boer farms and putting the women and children into concentration camps. These activities aroused no great movement of indignation among the soldiers, but it might be thought that turning out poor families in Ireland would have been seen differently.<sup>1228</sup> That this does not seem to have been the case might have been due to several factors. The soldiers did not do the

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<sup>1228</sup> E. Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army, 1868-1902*, pp310-311.

physical work of eviction in Ireland, but provided a protective cordon and pickets for those who did. Soldiers were also, in Ireland as in the rest of the UK, increasingly recruited from the urban poor who did not necessarily sympathise with rural tenants, many of whom farmed sizeable properties and in certain instances were not actually destitute at all. Soldiers were sometimes quite simply resentful at the discomfort they had to suffer through having to deal with agrarian unrest, and felt that the evictees often brought the suffering on themselves anyway.

This work shows how the army still had an off-duty discipline problem, but that it often tried to foster good relations with the local population through sport and cultural activities. Apart from the presence of the regular army, Ireland also had a strong militia - which recruited the same class of man as the regulars - but no yeomanry cavalry or volunteers. The militia were, therefore, the only auxiliary force on the island, but were felt to be unreliable and often ill-disciplined. As a result of this they were seldom used to deal with internal unrest, and have received little attention. The militia deserve closer study, however, for their significance lies elsewhere. The militia became purely voluntary in the nineteenth century, designed for home defence, but then acted as a source of recruits for the regular army, both for officers and other ranks. In this way men received an introduction to military life before committing themselves to it full-time, and this became a steady stream to keep the army's numbers up. This was particularly successful after the Cardwell-Childers reforms. Militia units could also be mobilised en masse, and this happened during the South African War. In this way, regular units were replaced in routine duties at home and released to fight in the war, although some militia units also volunteered to go to South Africa. Either way, their contribution was invaluable – something rarely acknowledged in other works.<sup>1229</sup>

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<sup>1229</sup> E. Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army, 1868-1902*, pp309, 312 and 322.

Relations between the police and the rest of the population were obviously strained. Not only were the police hated, but there was a growing lack of respect. Although Elizabeth Malcolm mentions RIC sports matches against the army and dances open to the local community, these do not seem to have been as successful in terms of public relations as were those organised by the military.<sup>1230</sup> Although the police could use a range of weapons, it was commonly felt that they would not use live ammunition against a crowd for fear of reprisals. For any unpopular action a constable could find himself a marked man, and apart from on eviction duties they would live and operate in much smaller numbers than the army. Recruitment was often a problem as many men would not wish to be involved in the work that the RIC was given, and among those that did join there were sometimes problems of discipline or low morale. Not that these issues were unique to the Irish police. Most discontent seems to have stemmed from poor pay and conditions, however, rather than from a dislike of their type of work. This study makes it quite clear that the RIC were not accepted by nationalists and tenants with whom they came into conflict, even if they were by other elements of society – which contrasts with the picture sometimes presented of them. That general respect was really more evident in the early twentieth century.

Catholic parish priests were clearly at the centre of local agrarian and political agitation. This is not a new claim, but it is hoped here to emphasise their commitment, and not to write them off as simple fanatics. Some priests were not so engaged, concentrating on their spiritual role, but others identified closely with the worldly problems of their congregations. They were looked to for leadership in all matters and regarded as almost saint-like – certainly not to be physically mistreated in any way. Any official who ignored this attitude did so at their own peril. The priests themselves were not only reactive to particular events, but were actually at the centre of the organisations that planned displays of agrarian discontent. This was recognised by the Crime Branch Special report of January 1892, which connected

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<sup>1230</sup> E. Malcolm, *The Irish Policeman*, pp186-187 and 190.

them with both boycotting and intimidation, but considered that their influence was drastically reduced after the Parnellite split.<sup>1231</sup>

That the government and the landlords represented mainly Protestant wealth and power made the alliance of Catholic priests with the poor tenantry all the stronger – although there was obviously much more to the situation. These priests were intelligent men, who had after all been well educated, and were more than the rabble-rousers that the British liked to portray. The more extreme sectarian divides of the time played a part in this animosity, but also the fact that the Catholic priests behaved in ways that would have been unthinkable for most Anglican clergy, who represented a more cosy social relationship with the aristocracy and gentry. Irish Catholic priests tended to rank with the lower middle class.<sup>1232</sup> One Father Blayney claimed that the clergy were “almost powerless against secret societies”, and that those in the societies were not the most religious<sup>1233</sup> - but it is obvious that many priests did not need prompting. Not that the Catholic hierarchy were always in favour of what parish priests and even some higher clergy were involved in. For them there was always the consideration that they did not want to antagonise the Protestant state against Catholics in the UK generally. After Catholic Emancipation, the Maynooth Grant, the re-establishment of a Catholic hierarchy in England and the Disestablishment of the Anglican Church of Ireland were all signs of increasing toleration (albeit tempered with pragmatism) that could not be put at risk.<sup>1234</sup>

The work of the Leagues obviously put them at odds with the authorities, and so their supporters would tend to be alienated from the army and the police. What is also clear,

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<sup>1231</sup> **The National Archives of Ireland, Crime Branch Special Papers 4519/S, RIC report on Catholic clergy and agitation, 27 Jan 1892.**

<sup>1232</sup> **D. Keenan, *The Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1983), p64.**

<sup>1233</sup> **CBS 13322/S, Report by DI W Harrel, c1899.**

<sup>1234</sup> **St Patrick’s College, Maynooth, was the principal seminary for training Irish Catholic priests. Sir Robert Peel’s first state grant to them was in 1845.**

however, is that the Leagues had many weaknesses - they had internal divisions at all levels and their influence was undermined by government land reforms. How much support for them was genuine and how much was enforced by intimidation is now impossible to gauge, but many tenants were reluctant followers, and time and again they gave in to self-interest and abandoned the current policy of the Leagues. Intimidation could also be counter-productive in some cases, but the players on both sides were to a great extent pawns in the game. Willing or otherwise, those who took part in demonstrations of discontent contributed to the animosity that built up against the authorities. A lot would also depend on where people lived, for there were certainly areas more given to militancy than others, and Gweedore in County Donegal is a prime example of that. Although there are stories of good humour at some evictions, they are few and far between even if true, and the overall impression of this period is one of violence breeding more violence. The detailed picture of the tactics used by both the authorities and the demonstrators and resisters provided in many chapters of this thesis helps to explain this violence, and is thus another important contribution to the study of this period. Ultimately, the South African War was a boon to the nationalists – providing a unifying factor for many, if not all, of them, and new organisations paved the way for a resurgence in the early twentieth century.

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King's County and County Donegal were two very different areas, but this study shows that they followed similar trends between c1870 and 1902 in terms of agrarian and political agitation and change, and the relations between the army, the police and the general population. The differences tended to be in intensity and scale rather than in anything more fundamental. King's County, for example, had a much higher proportion of outrages in relation to its population than County Donegal between 1879 and 1882 – but most of these were non-violent. Donegal had more violent outrages than King's County during the Land War and was more prominent during the Plan of Campaign – when strong resistance to evictions was often offered – but both saw the same tactics being used by the authorities

and the Leaguers. County Donegal still had many congested districts in the latter part of this period, whereas King's County had none – but they had similar percentages of total acreage purchased by tenants under the Land Acts.<sup>1235</sup> Agrarian reform had played a part in reducing tenants' enthusiasm for rent strikes – particularly in King's County. Both counties had Catholic majorities, but both had strong Orange lodges and both appreciated the economic importance of a military presence, though more so in King's County with its major garrison at Crinkle. In this way the two counties could be said to form different sized and shaped pieces of the same jigsaw, as do the other Irish counties, all adding to the total picture. Overall, therefore, this thesis contributes to a better understanding of the diversity of the Irish experience in geographical terms. As has been the case with the revolutionary period 1916-1923, more county studies during the period 1870-1902 could add a great deal to what we know about later nineteenth century Ireland.

These influences on relations are evident across Ireland during the period in question, but not always with the same result. Enlistment to the army was low in Connaught during the late Victorian period, for example, despite all the reforms.<sup>1236</sup> In this province and Munster, with over 90% of the population Catholic, the priests and the local press could be even more influential in supporting the Leagues, who in their turn could have more success.<sup>1237</sup> Although Leinster also had a high percentage of Catholics, King's County shows that local economic considerations could outweigh political ones. In areas with high eviction rates, the hatred of the police was greater, and the role of ordinary women even more important. This study has highlighted differences between the two counties in the title and those in the rest of Ireland. That the poorer western and southern counties suffered most is evident in many of the figures.<sup>1238</sup> Connaught and Munster were the provinces with the most agrarian

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<sup>1235</sup> S. Duffy (ed), *Atlas of Irish History* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2000), p109.

<sup>1236</sup> D. Fitzpatrick, 'Militarism in Ireland 1900-1922', in T. Bartlett and K. Jeffery (eds), *A Military History of Ireland* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1997), p381.

<sup>1237</sup> R. Edwards, *An Atlas of Irish History* (London: Methuen, 1973), pp127-129.

<sup>1238</sup> C. Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p108.

outrages by far in 1870, and they had the most evictions in 1882.<sup>1239</sup> Even when total numbers of outrages had declined in 1892, Connaught and Munster still had the most.<sup>1240</sup> Within Connaught, County Mayo had the most outrages across Ireland in 1870, and the most eviction notices in 1892.<sup>1241</sup> Yet the figures also show that trends cannot always be predicted, for it was Ulster, with its sizeable Protestant minority, which had the most evictions in 1881, with County Donegal having the most eviction decrees that Easter in all Ireland.<sup>1242</sup> Donegal's eviction figures then became very small in 1891 and 1896.<sup>1243</sup>

There were obviously big differences between the experiences of the counties of Ireland, but it is also important to see that there were different expectations within each county community. The different political and religious communities did not live in completely separate parts of Ireland, nor live entirely separate lives – although in some cases this was almost the case. In King's County, for example, some citizens of Birr benefited economically from the army's presence and enjoyed their social events, whereas others plotted the downfall of landlordism and crusaded for a memorial to the 'Manchester Martyrs'. In between there would be those with no strong opinions who just wanted to live their own lives quietly, such as many tenants, and others who had a foot in both camps, like publicans. In County Donegal more isolated communities were part of the troubled western counties, but even they could not escape some contact with other groups through trade, migrant work or the administration of tenancies. The experience of the Irish people during this period was therefore diverse, as was that of the army and police in the country, whether Irish or not. Reaction to the authorities varied greatly across Ireland, as this study illustrates, but although this period ends in a time of reduced agitation, it was the differences between Irish people and communities which were to prove more decisive in the twentieth century.

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<sup>1239</sup> See Tables 1.3 and 2.1, pp112 and 121,

<sup>1240</sup> See Table 6.2, p284.

<sup>1241</sup> See Tables 2.1 and 5.1, pp121 and 243.

<sup>1242</sup> See Tables 1.1 and 1.2, pp99 and 101.

<sup>1243</sup> See Tables 4 and 6.1, pp230 and 276.



Figure 1: King's County Royal Rifles Militia c1875. (With the permission of County Offaly Library)



Figure 2: Birr Barracks – infantry on parade c1890. (With the permission of County Offaly Library)

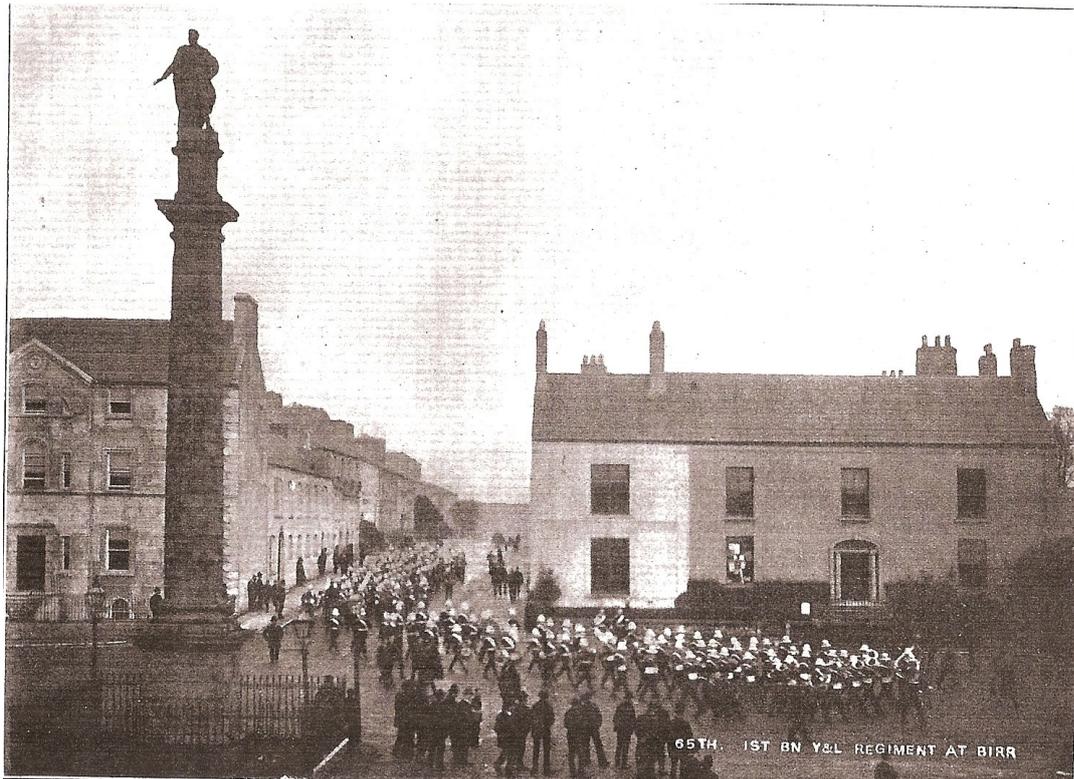


Figure 3: The York and Lancasters march through Birr with their band, c1890.

(E Broughton, *Memoirs of the 65<sup>th</sup> Regiment* (1914))



Figure 4: Birr barracks today.



Figure 5: The Manchester Martyrs memorial in Birr today.

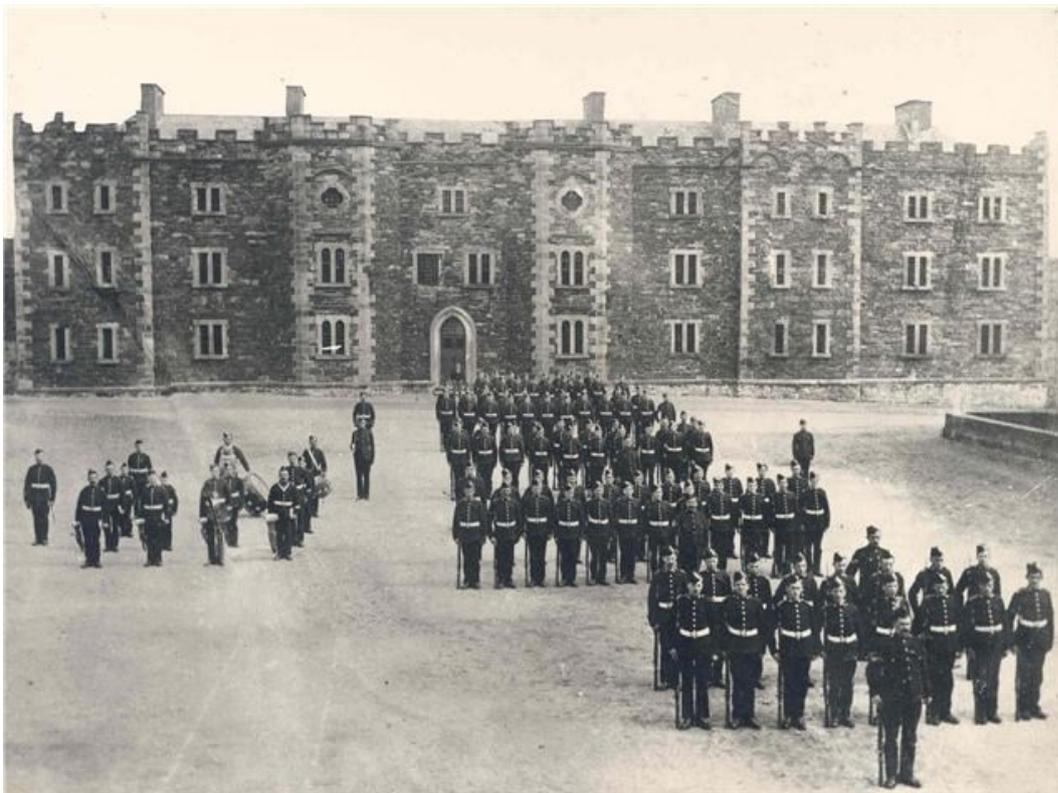


Figure 6: 5<sup>th</sup> Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, Donegal Militia, in front of Lifford Gaol c1900. The gaol was closed in 1886 and demolished in 1907. (With the permission of County Donegal Archives)



## **APPENDIX A – POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS.**

### **1. Ministries**

William Ewart Gladstone	1868-1874	Liberal	First Gladstone Ministry
Benjamin Disraeli	1874-1880	Conservative	Second Disraeli Ministry
William Ewart Gladstone	1880-1885	Liberal	Second Gladstone Ministry
The Marquess of Salisbury	1885-1886	Conservative	First Salisbury Ministry
William Ewart Gladstone	1886	Liberal	Third Gladstone Ministry
The Marquess of Salisbury	1886-1892	Conservative	Second Salisbury Ministry
William Ewart Gladstone	1892-1894	Liberal	Fourth Gladstone Ministry
The Earl of Rosebery	1894-1895	Liberal	
The Marquess of Salisbury	1895-1902	Conservative and Unionist	Third Salisbury Ministry
Arthur Balfour	1902-1905	Conservative and Unionist	

### **2. Lords Lieutenant of Ireland**

The Earl Spencer	1868-1874
The Duke of Abercorn	1874-1876
The Duke of Marlborough	1876-1880
The Earl Cowper	1880-1882
The Earl Spencer	1882-1885
The Earl of Carnarvon	1885-1886
The Earl of Aberdeen	1886
The Marquess of Londonderry	1886-1889
The Earl of Zetland	1889-1892
The Lord Houghton	1892-1895
The Earl Cadogan	1895-1902
The Earl of Dudley	1902-1905

### **3. Chief Secretaries for Ireland**

Chichester Parkinson-Fortescue	1868-1871
The Marquess of Hartington	1871-1874
Sir Michael Hicks-Beach	1874-1878
James Lowther	1878-1880
William Edward Forster	1880-1882
Lord Frederick Cavendish	1882
George Trevelyan	1882-1884
Henry Campbell-Bannerman	1884-1885
Sir William Hart Dyke	1885-1886
William Henry Smith	1886
John Morley	1886
Sir Michael Hicks-Beach	1886-1887
Arthur Balfour	1887-1891
William Jackson	1891-1892
John Morley	1892-1895
Gerald Balfour	1895-1900
George Wyndham	1900-1905

#### 4. Under-Secretaries for Ireland

Thomas Henry Burke	1869-1882
Robert George Crookshank Hamilton	1882-1886
General Sir Redvers Henry Buller	1886-1887
Sir Joseph West Ridgeway	1887-1893
Sir David Harrel	1893-1902
Sir Anthony MacDonnell	1902-1908

#### 5. Members of Parliament

##### (a) King's County

Returned two MPs 1801-1885.

First Member

1852-1885 Sir Patrick O'Brien (Conservative)

Second Member

1868-1880 David Sherlock  
1880-1885 Bernard Charles Molloy  
(Home Rule League)

County then divided into two constituencies, each returning one MP.

King's County Birr

1885-1900 Bernard Charles Molloy (Irish Parliamentary, then Anti-Parnellite)  
1900-1918 Michael Reddy (Irish Parliamentary)

King's County Tullamore

1885-1900 Joseph Francis Fox (Irish Parliamentary, then Anti-Parnellite)  
1900-1914 Edmund Haviland-Burke (Irish Parliamentary)

(The constituency of Portarlinton was partly in King's County, but mainly in Queen's County. It returned one MP, but was abolished in 1885).

##### (b) County Donegal

Returned two MPs 1801-1885.

First Member

1860-1880 The Marquess of Hamilton  
(Conservative)  
1880-1885 John Kinnear  
(Irish Parliamentary)

Second Member

1849-1876 Thomas Connolly  
1876-1879 William Wilson (Irish Parliamentary)  
1880-1885 Sir Thomas Lea (Liberal)

County then divided into four constituencies, each returning one MP.

### North Donegal

- 1885-1890 James Edward O'Doherty (Irish Parliamentary)
- 1890-1892 James Rochfort Maguire (Irish Parliamentary, then Irish National League)
- 1892-1895 John Mains (Irish National Federation)
- 1895-1900 Thomas Bartholomew Curran (Irish National Federation)
- 1900-1905 William O'Doherty (Irish Parliamentary)

### South Donegal

- 1885-1887 Bernard Kelly (Irish Parliamentary)
- 1887-1918 John Gordon Swift MacNeill (Irish Parliamentary, then Anti-Parnellite, then Irish National Federation, then Irish Parliamentary)

### East Donegal

- 1885-1900 Arthur O'Connor (Irish Parliamentary, then Anti-Parnellite, then Irish Parliamentary)
- 1900-1906 Edward McFadden (Irish Parliamentary)

### West Donegal

- 1885-1890 Patrick O'Hea (Irish Parliamentary)
- 1890-1892 James Joseph Dalton (Irish Parliamentary, then Irish National League)
- 1892-1900 Timothy Daniel Sullivan (Irish National Federation)
- 1900-1902 James Boyle (Irish Parliamentary)
- 1902-1918 Hugh Alexander Law (Irish Parliamentary)

## **APPENDIX B – THE BRITISH ARMY: Organisation.**

### **1. Commanders-in-Chief, Ireland.**

Field Marshal Lord Strathnairn	1865-1870
General Lord Sandhurst	1870-1875
Field Marshal Sir John Michel	1875-1880
General Sir Thomas Steele	1880-1885
Field Marshal HH Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar	1885-1890
Field Marshal Lord Wolseley	1890-1895
Field Marshal Lord Roberts	1895-1900
Field Marshal HRH The Duke of Connaught	1900-1904

### **2. Principal ranks in the army.**

Some of these were different in the various branches of the army.

Field Marshal  
General  
Lieutenant-General  
Major-General  
Brigadier-General  
Colonel  
Lieutenant-Colonel  
Major  
Captain  
Lieutenant  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant (Used universally throughout the army from 1871)

Sergeant-Major  
Colour-Sergeant  
Sergeant  
Corporal  
Lance Corporal  
Private

In the infantry, the battalion was the principal unit, which was commanded by a lieutenant-colonel with his regimental staff. The eight companies that it was divided into were commanded by a major or a captain, assisted by one or two subalterns (lieutenants or 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenants). Each company was divided into half companies each commanded by a subaltern, and they in turn could be further divided into sub-units under non-commissioned officers. There was one sergeant-major in each battalion, and a colour-sergeant was the senior NCO in each company.

**APPENDIX C - THE BRITISH ARMY: Infantry regiments of the line.**

**Before 1881**

**After 1881**

1st or The Royal Scots Regiment	The Lothian Regiment (Royal Scots)
2nd (Queen's Royal) Regiment	The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)
3rd (East Kent - The Buffs) Regiment	The Buffs (East Kent) Regiment
4th (The King's Own Royal) Regiment	The King's Own Royal Regiment (Lancaster)
5th (Northumberland)(Fusiliers) Regiment	The Northumberland Fusiliers
6th (Royal 1st Warwickshire) Regiment	The Royal Warwickshire Regiment
7th (Royal Fusiliers) Regiment	The Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment)
8th (The King's) Regiment	The King's (Liverpool Regiment)
9th (East Norfolk) Regiment	The Norfolk Regiment
10th (North Lincoln) Regiment	The Lincolnshire Regiment
11th (North Devonshire) Regiment	The Devonshire Regiment
12th (East Suffolk) Regiment	The Suffolk Regiment
13th (1st Somersetshire)(Prince Albert's Light Infantry) Regiment	Prince Albert's Light Infantry (Somersetshire Regiment)
14th (Buckinghamshire - The Prince of Wales's Own) Regiment	The Prince of Wales's Own (West Yorkshire Regiment)
15th (York, East Riding) Regiment	The East Yorkshire Regiment
16th (Bedfordshire) Regiment	The Bedfordshire Regiment
17th (Leicestershire) Regiment	The Leicestershire Regiment
18th (The Royal Irish) Regiment	The Royal Irish Regiment
19th (1st Yorkshire, North Riding - Princess of Wales's Own) Regiment	The Princess of Wales's Own (Yorkshire Regiment)
20th (East Devonshire) Regiment	The Lancashire Fusiliers
21st (Royal Scots Fusiliers) Regiment	The Royal Scots Fusiliers
22nd (Cheshire) Regiment	The Cheshire Regiment
23rd (Royal Welch Fusiliers) Regiment	The Royal Welsh Fusiliers
24th (2nd Warwickshire) Regiment	The South Wales Borderers
25th (King's Own Borderers) Regiment	The King's Own Borderers
26th (Cameronian) Regiment	1st Battalion, the Cameronians (Scotch Rifles)
27th (Inniskilling) Regiment	1st Bn, the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers
28th (North Gloucestershire) Regiment	1st Bn, the Gloucestershire Regiment
29th (Worcestershire) Regiment	1st Bn, the Worcestershire Regiment
30th (Cambridgeshire) Regiment	1st Bn, the East Lancashire Regiment
31st (Huntingdonshire) Regiment	1st Bn, the East Surrey Regiment
32nd (Cornwall) Light Infantry	1st Bn, the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry
33rd (The Duke of Wellington's) Regiment	1st Bn, the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment)
34th (Cumberland) Regiment	1st Bn, the Border Regiment
35th (Royal Sussex) Regiment	1st Bn, the Royal Sussex Regiment

36th (Herefordshire) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Worcestershire Regiment
37th (North Hampshire) Regiment	1st Bn, the Hampshire Regiment
38th (1st Staffordshire) Regiment	1st Bn, the South Staffordshire Regiment
39th (Dorsetshire) Regiment	1st Bn, the Dorsetshire Regiment
40th (2nd Somersetshire) Regiment	1st Bn, the Prince of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire Regiment)
41st (The Welsh) Regiment	1st Bn, the Welsh Regiment
42nd (The Royal Highland) Regiment (The Black Watch)	1st Bn, the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders)
43rd (Monmouthshire Light Infantry) Regiment	1st Bn, the Oxfordshire Light Infantry
44th (East Essex) Regiment	1st Bn, the Essex Regiment
45th (Nottinghamshire Sherwood Foresters) Regiment	1st Bn, the Sherwood Foresters (Derbyshire Regiment)
46th (South Devonshire) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry
47th (Lancashire) Regiment	1st Bn, the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment
48th (Northamptonshire) Regiment	1st Bn, the Northamptonshire Regiment
49th (Hertfordshire - Princess Charlotte of Wales's) Regiment	1st Bn, the Princess Charlotte of Wales's (Berkshire Regiment)
50th (The Queen's Own) Regiment	1st Bn, the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment)
51st (2nd York, West Riding, The King's Own Light Infantry) Regiment	1st Bn, the King's Own Light Infantry (South Yorkshire Regiment)
52nd (Oxfordshire Light Infantry) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Oxfordshire Light Infantry
53rd (Shropshire) Regiment	1st Bn, the King's Light Infantry (Shropshire Regiment)
54th (West Norfolk ) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Dorsetshire Regiment
55th (Westmorland) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Border Regiment
56th (West Essex) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Essex Regiment
57th (West Middlesex) Regiment	1st Bn, the Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex Regiment)
58th (Rutlandshire) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Northamptonshire Regiment
59th (2nd Nottinghamshire) Regiment	2nd Bn, the East Lancashire Regiment
60th (The King's Royal Rifle Corps)	The King's Royal Rifle Corps
61st (South Gloucestershire) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Gloucestershire Regiment
62nd (Wiltshire) Regiment	1st Bn, the Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire Regiment)
63rd (West Suffolk) Regiment	1st Bn, the Manchester Regiment
64th (2nd Staffordshire) Regiment	1st Bn, the Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment)
65th (2nd Yorkshire, North Riding) Regiment	1st Bn, the York and Lancaster Regiment
66th (Berkshire) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Princess Charlotte of Wales's (Berkshire Regiment)

67th (South Hampshire) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Hampshire Regiment
68th (Durham - Light Infantry) Regiment	1st Bn, the Durham Light Infantry
69th (South Lincolnshire) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Welsh Regiment
70th (Surrey) Regiment	2nd Bn, the East Surrey Regiment
71st (Highland Light Infantry) Regiment	1st Bn, the Highland Light Infantry
72nd (Duke of Albany's Own Highlanders) Regiment	1st Bn, the Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs, the Duke of Albany's)
	2nd Bn, the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders)
73rd (Perthshire) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Highland Light Infantry
74th (Highlanders) Regiment	1st Bn, the Gordon Highlanders
75th (Stirlingshire) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment)
76th Regiment	
77th (East Middlesex) Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own)	2nd Bn, the Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex Regiment)
78th (Highland) Regiment (The Ross-shire Buffs)	2nd Bn, the Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs, The Duke of Albany's)
79th (Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders) Regiment	The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders
80th (Staffordshire Volunteers) Regiment	2nd Bn, the South Staffordshire Regiment
	2nd Bn, the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment
81st (Loyal Lincoln Volunteers) Regiment	
82nd (Prince of Wales's Volunteers) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Prince of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire Regiment)
83rd (County of Dublin) Regiment	1st Bn, the Royal Irish Rifles
84th (York and Lancaster) Regiment	2nd Bn, the York and Lancaster Regiment
85th (Buckinghamshire Volunteers)(The King's Light Infantry) Regiment	2nd Bn, the King's Light Infantry (Shropshire Regiment)
86th (Royal County Down) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Royal Irish Rifles
	1st Bn, the Princess Victoria's (Royal Irish Fusiliers)
87th (Royal Irish Fusiliers) Regiment	
88th (Connaught Rangers) Regiment	1st Bn, the Connaught Rangers
	2nd Bn, the Princess Victoria's (Royal Irish Fusiliers)
89th (Princess Victoria's) Regiment	2nd Battalion, the Cameronians (Scotch Rifles)
90th (Perthshire Light Infantry) Regiment	
91st (Princess Louise's Argyllshire Highlanders) Regiment	1st Bn, the Princess Louise's (Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders)
92nd (Gordon Highlanders) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Gordon Highlanders
	2nd Bn, the Princess Louise's (Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders)
93rd (Sutherland Highlanders) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Connaught Rangers
94th Regiment	2nd Bn, the Sherwood Foresters (Derbyshire Regiment)
95th (Derbyshire) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Manchester Regiment
96th Regiment	2nd Bn, the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment)
97th (The Earl of Ulster's) Regiment	

98th (The Prince of Wales's) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment)
99th (Duke of Edinburgh's) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire Regiment)
100th (Prince of Wales's Royal Canadian) Regiment	1st Bn, the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians)
101st (Royal Bengal Fusiliers) Regiment	1st Bn, the Royal Munster Fusiliers
102nd (Royal Madras Fusiliers) Regiment	1st Bn, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers
103rd (Royal Bombay Fusiliers)	2nd Bn, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers
104th (Bengal Fusiliers) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Royal Munster Fusiliers
105th (Madras Light Infantry) Regiment	2nd Bn, the King's Own Light Infantry (South Yorkshire Regiment)
106th (Bombay Light Infantry) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Durham Light Infantry
107th (Bengal Light Infantry) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Royal Sussex Regiment
108th (Madras Infantry) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers
109th (Bombay Infantry) Regiment	2nd Bn, the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians)
The Prince Consort's Own (Rifle Brigade)	The Rifle Brigade(The Prince Consort's Own)

NB: After the Childers Reforms had replaced regimental numbers with territorial titles, the numbers were still sometimes used unofficially. Some titles were altered later.

The use of Bengal, Bombay or Madras in a regimental title indicated former units of the Honourable East India Company, but they recruited Europeans (mainly British and Irish) not Indians.

## **APPENDIX D - THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY.**

### **1. The Inspectors General.**

Col Sir John Stewart Wood (for Irish Constabulary then RIC)	1865-1876
Col George Hillier	1876-1882
Col Robert Bruce	1882-1885
Sir Andrew Reed	1885-1900
Col Sir Neville Francis Fitzgerald Chamberlain	1900-1916

NB: Only one was from the RIC (Reed), the rest were regular soldiers.

### **2. Principal ranks in the RIC.**

Some of these were further divided into classes. They followed military lines, including badges of rank, and had the same division between officers and other ranks.

<b>(a) Before 1883</b>	<b>(b) After 1883</b>
Inspector General	Inspector General
Deputy Inspector General	Deputy Inspector General
Provincial Inspector	Assistant Inspector General
County Inspector	County Inspector
Sub-Inspector	District Inspector
Head Constable	Head Constable
Constable	Sergeant
Acting Constable	Acting Sergeant
Sub-Constable	Constable

Within each district, the district inspector was assisted by a head constable (the equivalent of a sergeant-major in the army). Each RIC barracks would be under a sergeant with at least four constables.

## APPENDIX E - LANDOWNERSHIP IN KING'S COUNTY

Source: J Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland (1883)*.

<u>Landowners</u>	Titled	Titled Women	Other Women	Clergy	Soldiers	Rest
	13	1	4	2	3	26
						Total
						49
<u>Seats</u>	Local	Irish	GB etc	Not known	Total	
	11	32	5	1	49	
<u>Titled seats</u>	Local	Irish	GB etc	Not known	Total	
	3	9	1	1	14	
<u>Acreage</u>	Titled	Remainder	Total			
	82,488	71,276	153,764			
<u>Annual value</u>	Titled	Remainder	Total			
	£41,034	£35,071	£76,105			
<u>Av value per acre</u>	Titled	Overall				
	Less than 10/-	Less than 10/-				
<u>Av value per acre rest of Ireland</u>						
	Overall					
	10/- or more					
<u>Av value per acre GB</u>						
	Overall					
	£1 6s or more					
<u>The top three largest landowners in King's County (ie: not including other estates)</u>						
			Acres	Ann. Value		
	Rosse, Earl of		22,513	£8,964		
	Charleville, Countess of		20,032	£10,052		
	Bernard, Col Thomas		14,629	£6,705		
<u>The top three largest landowners in King's County &amp; elsewhere (ie: including estates elsewhere)</u>						
			Acres	Ann. Value		
	Lansdowne, Marquis of		142,916	£62,025		
	Downshire, Marquis of		120,189	£96,691		
	Ashtown, Lord		43,643	£34,689		
<u>The bottom three smallest landowners in King's County (ie: not including other estates)</u>						
			Acres	Ann. Value		
	Boyse, Henry		159	£86		
	Beresford, Most Rev Marcus		94	£75		NB: Better value
	Marlay, Charles		38	£33		land than Boyse
						ditto
<u>Extent of estates overall</u>						
	Local only	+ other Irish	+ British	+ other Irish & Brit	Total	
	5	33	2	9	49	
<u>Extent of titled estates overall</u>						
	Local only	+ other Irish	+ British	+ other Irish & Brit	Total	
	1	8	0	5	14	

## APPENDIX F - LANDOWNERSHIP IN COUNTY DONEGAL

Source: J Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland (1883)*.

<u>Landowners</u>	Titled	Titled Women	Other Women	Clergy	Soldiers	Rest	Total
	16	0	0	2	0	30	48

<u>Seats</u>	Local	Irish	GB etc	Not known	Total
	15	26	7	0	48

<u>Titled seats</u>	Local	Irish	GB etc	Not known	Total
	3	9	4	0	16

<u>Acreage</u>	Titled	Remainder	Total
	335,233	330,145	665,378

<u>Annual value</u>	Titled	Rest	Total
	£85,646	£65,501	£151,147

<u>Av value per acre</u>	Titled	Overall
	5/- or more	Less than 4/-

<u>Av value per acre rest of Ireland</u>	Overall
	13/- or more

<u>Av value per acre GB</u>	Overall
	£1 6s or more

### The top three largest landowners in County Donegal (ie: not including other estates)

	Acres	Ann. Value	
Conyngnam, Marquis	122,300	15,166	NB: Poor value land
Leitrim, Earl of	54,352	9,406	ditto
Adair, John	42,000	746	ditto

### The top three largest landowners in County Donegal & elsewhere (ie: including estates elsewhere)

	Acres	Ann. Value
Conyngnam, Marquis	166,710	£50,076
Murray-Stewart, Horatio	98,269	£22,822
Abercorn, Duke of	78,662	£53,400

### The bottom three smallest landowners in County Donegal (ie: not including other estates)

	Acres	Ann. Value	
Johnston, William	498	£362	
Knox, Charles	446	£722	NB: Better value land than others
Montgomery, Robert James	227	£242	

### Extent of estates overall

Local only	+ other Irish	+ British	+ other Irish & Brit	Total
14	24	4	6	48

### Extent of titled estates overall

Local only	+ other Irish	+ British	+ other Irish & Brit	Total
3	8	0	5	16

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