



Unit 1:

The Land Movement, 1879-1882

SENIOR CYCLE WORKSHEETS

GLADSTONE'S FIRST LAND ACT



PROVISIONS OF THE ACT

GLADSTONE'S 2ND LAND ACT

BACKGROUND:

PROVISIONS OF THE ACT

BACKGROUND: This Act was part of Balfour's plan to destroy the plan of Campaign. It belonged to the wider Conservative policy of Killing Home Rule with kindness'.

PROVISIONS OF THE ACT



68



The Liberal Chief Secretary introduced an amendment to the Wyndham Land Act. The Birrell Act provided additional funds for land purchase as well as introducing an element of compulsory purchase. If over % of the tenants on an estate wished to buy the land, the landlord was forced to sell.

BACKGROUND:



BACKGROUND

From 1885-1906 the Conservative party adopted the policy of *land purchase*. They believed that the demand for Home Rule was fuelled by the lack of progress on the land question. They believed that if aspirations to land ownership were satisfied then the demand for Home Rule would die away.

BACKGROUND:

In an effort to prevent further conflict between landlord and tenant, a land conference was convened in 1902. The earls of Dunraven and Mayo represented the landlords, while William O'Brien and Tim Harrington spoke on behalf of the tenant farmers. They proposed that the government introduce a generous scheme of land purchase that was acceptable to both landlord and tenant. Chief secretary Wyndham accepted it and introduced a comprehensive Land Act in 1903.

**KILLING HOME RULE
KINDNESS 1885-1900**

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 1881 ACT



TUESDAY MORNING 1st JANUARY 1884

THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN ON THE
KENNARD ESTATE.



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UNIT 1:

LC WORKSHEET, LESSON 1: DEBATING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Background:

Between 1850 and 1870 agricultural production in Ireland had improved, eviction rates were low and the general standard of living had risen. This changed in the late 1870s, when a combination of bad weather, poor harvests and falling prices due to an economic depression throughout western Europe gave rise to an agricultural crisis. The advent of refrigeration meant that Irish agricultural exports to England competed badly against cheaper foreign imports of beef and grain. In early part 1879 bankrupt Irish farmers struggled to obtain credit from local banks and shopkeepers who were also calling in loans.

The harsh winter of 1877 was followed by two further years of unusually severe weather. The high rainfall in 1879 led to a blighted crop and a poor grain harvest. In the west of Ireland in particular, this brought back fears of famine, eviction and whole-scale emigration, and revived memories of the catastrophic Famine years of the mid-nineteenth century. Tenant farmers in the 1870s had experiences and expectations far beyond those of their parents in the 1840s and they were not prepared to see their incomes and standards of living reduced. They demanded reductions in rent from reluctant landlords. During this period people were also becoming disenchanted with the Home Rule Movement as the members of Parliament were drawn from the professional or landlord classes and not representative of the feelings or desires of the poor.

TASK 1: 'THE MOST UNDESERVEDLY FORGOTTEN MAN IN IRISH HISTORY'.



James Daly was the owner and editor of the Connaught Telegraph in the late 1870s. During this editorship of the newspaper, Daly used the power of the printed word to campaign forcefully against absentee landlords, rack rents and evictions and to promote land reform, and peasant proprietorship. Growing literacy levels meant that local newspapers such as the Connaught Telegraph had a wider readership and an increased influence.

Step 1: Individually read the short biographical sketch on the next page.

Step 2: In groups of three discuss Daly's input into the movement for tenants' rights and whether you think his contribution has been underestimated by history.

Step 3: Next, each group of three should consider J. J. Lee's comment that James Daly is the 'most undeservedly forgotten man in Irish history'. Together, the group should agree on three strong statements that engage with that comment. These statements might be strongly in agreement or disagreement with Lee. Once you have completed the statements hand them to your teacher.

Step 4: Students stand anywhere in the classroom, at either end of which, your teacher will have posted notices with the words I AGREE or I DISAGREE

Step 5: Your teacher will read out one of the statements. Depending on your point of view, take up a position as close to, or as far away from the 'I agree' end of the room as reflects your position on the statement.

Step 6: Consider the statement carefully before taking your place as your teacher will ask a selection of students to defend their positions.

If the explanations by other students have caused you to reconsider your position, you may move again. Be prepared to explain why you were convinced to move.

James Daly: A Biographical Sketch

Born in Mayo in 1838, James Daly was brought up as a staunch Catholic who was totally against violence and drink. In 1869 he won a seat on the Castlebar Board of Guardians and recommended that there should be polling booths in police barracks to facilitate the secret ballot and wipe out intimidation of tenant farmers by landlords. Daly became a strong defender of the cause of local tenants who suffered great distress at the hands of the landlords and their agents. Daly was a founding member of a local tenants defence association and in the years that followed, he used his newspaper as a propaganda vehicle, giving farmers in the west of Ireland a forum to express their grievances.

Although he worked to bring about a revolution in landownership in the 19th century by breaking down the landlord system, Daly was not a revolutionary. He preferred to work within the law to bring about change. He was a constitutional nationalist and a conservative social reformer who was convinced that the solution to the Land Question was the purchase by the tenants of their land. On 10 February 1877 he wrote: "The soil is the property of the tiller".

Daly encouraged the tenants to organise demonstrations and meetings and in January 1879, he was approached by tenants of Canon Geoffrey Burke's Irishtown Estate requesting that he publish their long list of complaints. Bourke had recently inherited the land and on finding that his tenants were in arrears with their rent, threatened them with eviction. Instead, Daly advised that a mass meeting should be held in Irishtown, which he would promote. The historic gathering of approximately 10,000 took place on the 20th April 1879 and forced Canon Bourke to reduce rents by 25 per cent. The significance of the Irishtown meeting, the first organised for tenants' rights, was that it proved that the small farmers were prepared for agitation for reform. It also proved that combined action was effective and all that was needed was leadership and organisation. The demonstration led to the birth of the Mayo Land League in August 1879 and the beginning of a mass movement that heralded the destruction of landlordism in Ireland.

Daly gained a high profile in after the Irishtown meeting. In the same year he was elected vice-president of the Land League of Mayo, chairman of the historic Westport meeting addressed by Charles Stuart Parnell, and a committee member committee of the Irish National Land League founded in Dublin on October 21st, 1879. At all times he argued that laws should be obeyed and moderated some of the more radical remarks by Fenian speakers. As the agitation caused by the Land Reform movement moved onto the national stage, other leaders like Michael Davitt came to the fore. Daly opted to remain at a local level and didn't pursue a position in the national movement.

James Daly's contemporary, William O'Brien described him as 'a rough-spoken giant with an inexhaustible fund of knowledge of the people and of the quaintest mother wit'. More recently, in his book *The Modernisation of Irish Society*, historian J.J. Lee described him as 'the most undeservedly forgotten man in Irish history'.

The origins of the Land League can be traced to a tenant right meeting in Irishtown, County Mayo, 20 April 1879.
A report carried in *The Connaught Telegraph* on 26 April 1879 captured the scale of the meeting

The Connaught Telegraph

[No. 78 Vol. 21

CASTLEBAR, SATURDAY, APRIL 26th, 1879

[ONE HALFPENNY]

IRISHTOWN TENANTS' DEFENCE MEETING

GRAND DEMONSTRATION

OVER 13,000
TENANT FARMERS

Since the days of O'Connell a larger public demonstration has not been witnessed than that of Sunday last ... the monster procession started from Claremorris, headed by several thousand men on foot – the men of each district wearing a laurel leaf or green ribbon in hat or coat to distinguish the several contingents. At 11 o'clock a monster contingent of tenant-farmers on horseback drew up in front of Hughes's hotel, showing discipline and order that a cavalry regiment might feel proud of. They were led on in sections, each having a marshal who kept his troops well in hand. Messrs. P.W. Nally, J.W. Nally, H. French, and M. Griffin, wearing green and gold sashes, led on their different sections, who rode two deep, occupying, at least, over an Irish mile of the road.

Next followed a train of carriages, brakes, cars, etc. led on by Mr. Martin Hughes, the spirited hotel proprietor, driving a pair of rare black ponies to a phaeton, taking Messrs. J.J. Loudon and J. Daly (editor of the *Connaught Telegraph*). Next came Messrs. O'Connor Power, J. Ferguson, and Thomas Brennan in a covered carriage, followed by at least 500 vehicles from the neighbouring towns.

On passing through Ballindine the sight was truly imposing, the endless train directing its course to Irishtown – the neat little hamlet on the boundaries of the counties Mayo, Roscommon and Galway. Here a large platform was erected in a spacious field ... close to Carton House, the residence of Alexander T. Leonard Esq.



EVICITION SCENE 1880s [SOURCE: LAWRENCE COLLECTION, NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND Ref: L_ROY_1771]

MR JAMES DALY PRESIDED

Mr Daly, on coming forward said – 'People of Mayo, Roscommon and Galway ... as chairman it is my duty to explain to you the origin and object of this great demonstration. It is to demand a reduction of rents (tremendous cheering)

We have had a succession of bad crops during the last ten years, and the prospect of the eleventh are anything but promising ("True"). You have a reduction of from 35 to 50 per cent of the value of produce in the last five years ... The price of corn, pigs, butter and wool – the staple production of our country – are deteriorated in value to an enormous extent, and up to the holding of this meeting, there is not a move made to effect a reduction of rent in proportion. (Cheers)...

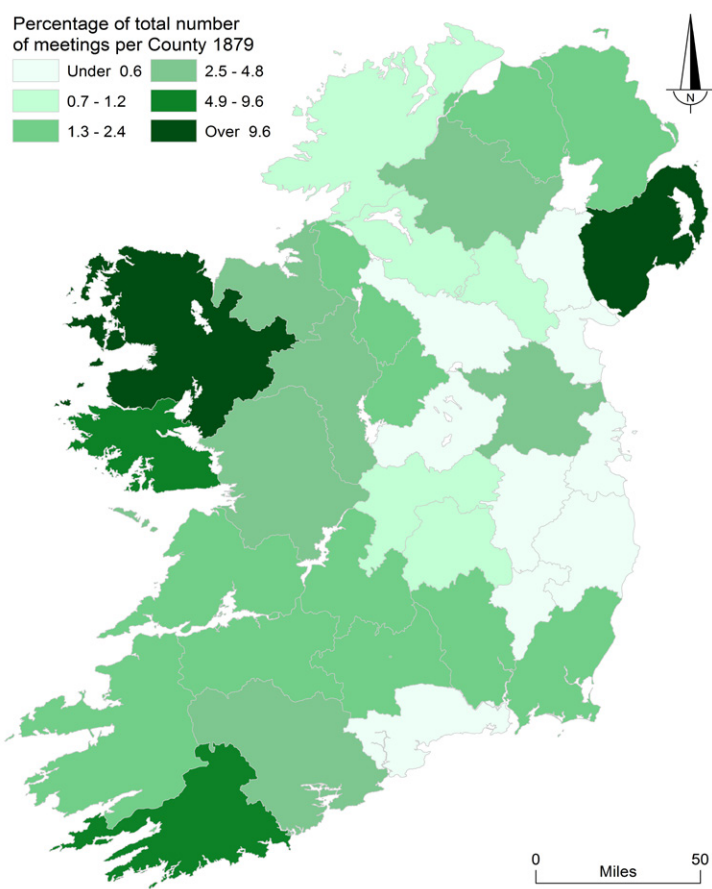
I have had the painful experience of seeing, since January last, in this county alone, at Quarter Sessions,

350 tenants evicted for non-payment of rents, (cries of 'Oh, Oh'), and still the landlords have not made an abatement ...

The work of eviction is going on silently, and how is it to be counteracted unless by public meetings such as this, and by allowing the land of the evicted to stand desolate and waste (cheers). Those who take the land of the evicted are the enemies of the country, and are as culpable as the landlords ...

I read the other day in a Dublin paper of a return of the number of bankrupt farmers in Ireland in 1871; there were 816 as against 2,449 in 1878, with the prospect of an additional thousand in 1879...

Organise you tenant defence meetings in every parish, and let your agitation be – the land of Ireland for the people of Ireland (loud cheers)



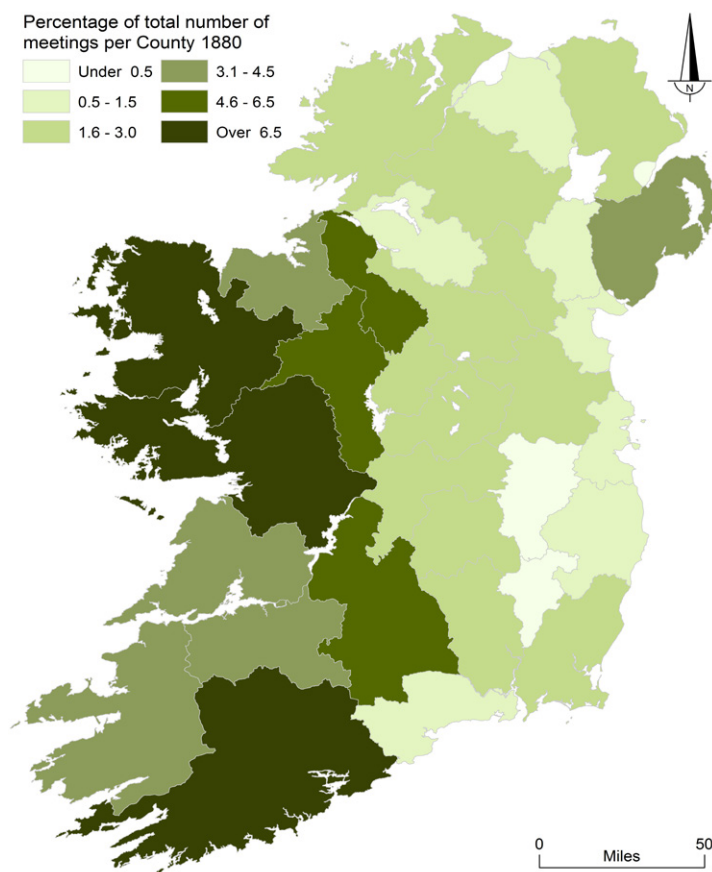
Map A: Distribution of Land League Meetings in 1879

The epicentre of the movement in 1879 was Co. Mayo with 21% of the total number of Land League meetings across the island. Early mass meetings at Irishtown, Castlebar and Milltown, Co. Galway reverberated throughout the rest of Connacht.

A second epicentre emerged in Co. Down where 23 Land League meetings and associated branches were founded in the last months of 1879 (13% of the island-wide total).

16 (9.1%) of the total number of Land League meetings were held in West Cork. The parishes of Munster constituted one-fourth of all of the Land League energy in 1879, two and a half times that of Leinster.

Land League meetings more than trebled from 163 to 575 between 1879 and 1880



Map B: Distribution of Land League Meetings in 1880

Mayo with 55 meetings in 1880 still constituted the most dynamic core of the movement but all the Connacht counties saw a significant intensification in participation. Proximity to the dynamic Connacht core – now ablaze with protests, boycotting and large meetings – affected nearby Co. Cavan which held 15 meetings in 1880.

The intensification of mobilisation in Munster saw as many as 160 meetings and the counties of the 'Pale' – Louth, Kildare, Dublin, Wicklow and Carlow – remained the least involved.

The Catholic-Irish participation in Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan intensified. However the remaining counties were only marginally involved thus reducing Ulster's overall impact on the Land War.

Later Modern Ireland: Topic 2
Movements for Political and Social Reform, 1870-1914

These documents do not relate to the three case studies in this topic, but will help with your document work and add to your understanding of the Land Movement.

Study the Documents on the previous page and answer the questions below.

1. (a) According to document A, what was the object of the meeting in Irishtown in April 1879?
(b) How did James Daly propose to counteract the evictions in County Mayo?
(c) In 1879, what percentage of total Irish Land League meetings were held in County Mayo?
(d) Which Munster county saw the greatest percentage increase in meetings between 1879 and 1880? (20)

2. (a) Do both documents reflect the popularity of the Land League in County Mayo in 1879?
Explain your answer with reference to both documents.
(b) Which document most effectively captures the swell in popular resistance to high rents in 1879? (20)

3. (a) Does Document A show sympathy for the cause of the tenant farmer? Give reasons for your answer?
(b) What are the strengths and weaknesses of Document B as a historical source? (20)

4. What was the contribution of Michael Davitt to social and political reform 1879-1882? (40)

ILLUMINATED ADDRESS PRESENTED TO CHARLES STEWART PARNELL BY THE TENANT FARMERS OF IRELAND, 1880

- Document C -

An illuminated address - a standard feature of late nineteenth-century Irish nationalism - was generally presented in recognition of outstanding achievement. This parchment was presented to Parnell by the leadership of the Land League to commemorate the occasion of his address to the United States' House of Representatives in February 1880 during his fundraising tour of America. The text praises Parnell for his fund-raising efforts and for highlighting the land situation in Ireland.

With the threat of eviction hanging over tens of thousands of families at home, Parnell appealed to Congress for support for Ireland. His address recognised their shared heritage and made a direct appeal to Irish-Americans for their support. It also reflected the contemporary anger and resolve in rural Ireland that 'the fate which befel [sic] our famine slaughtered kindred', 'through the operation of an infamous land system' by 'felonious landlordism', would never be repeated.

The manuscript, painted by Thomas Lynch of Dublin, is heavily influenced by the motifs and emblems of the late nineteenth-century Celtic revival. Typical of this artistic reawakening of interest in Gaelic history, culture and art, the manuscript incorporates Celtic design, cross patterns and Irish monastic art. The symbolism suggests an ancient nation, new in its aspirations and resolve. The use of the shamrock, round towers, harps, wolfhounds and Gaelic maidens also originated during this period. Images of the Great Famine reflected the importance of emigration and the role of the Irish diaspora to the success of the 'New Departure'.



Details from Conor McNamara, *History Ireland*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (January/February 2011), pp. 32-33

[High Resolution Online Image accessible here](#)

YOUR TASK

The Land League presented their president with this illuminated address on his return to Ireland. Write the text of Parnell's acceptance speech demonstrating an awareness of his audience and mirroring the tone and symbolism of the parchment. The content of the speech should include - but is not limited to - the following points



- ☐ His appreciation for the gesture of recognition
- ☐ A short account of his experience in America and its benefits for the League
- ☐ His appraisal of the successes of the Land Movement to date
- ☐ His hopes and aspirations for the future of the movement

THE TEXT OF CHARLES STEWART PARNELL'S ACCEPTANCE SPEECH TO THE TENANT FARMERS OF IRELAND, 1880

Introduction: His appreciation for the gesture of recognition

A short account of his experience in America and its benefits for the League

His appraisal of the successes of the Land Movement to date

His hopes and aspirations for the future of the movement



TASK 3: THE LAND MOVEMENT IN SEQUENCE

When writing an exam-style essay at Senior Cycle, you will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the question and make an argument in response to that question supported by historical evidence. This evidence might be, for example, factually correct historical data relevant to your argument, accurate definitions/ descriptions of key concepts and the correct sequencing of events.

Statistical information and quotations by historical or modern figures (relevant to your argument) are also an excellent way to bolster an argument. Quotations are also useful as an opening or closing sentence to an essay.

The task below will help you to gather these valuable pieces of historical evidence and become more familiar with the sequences of important events relevant to the land movement and Fenianism in the late 19th century.

Step 1: The teacher divide the class into groups of four students. Each group should divide the following tasks between them.

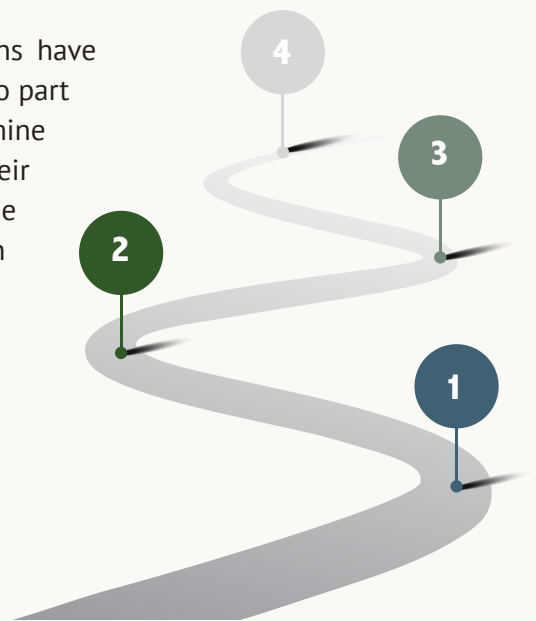
- ☐ Tape the four pages of the time-line template together so that the dates line up in chronological sequence
- ☐ Cut out the individual quotation cards
- ☐ Cut out the individual description cards

Step 2: Together the members of each group should match the description cards to the corresponding event on the time-line. The first group to finish placing their description cards to should raise their hands.

Step 3: Beginning at the top of the timeline, a spokesperson from that group calls out the sequence of their descriptions. At any time, a student from another group may raise their hand to dispute the placement, but must be prepared to explain why they disagree.

Step 4: Once the class is satisfied that the descriptions have been placed correctly, the groups will move on to part II of the task. This requires the groups to examine the quotation cards and match these to their corresponding date, event and description. The first group to finish placing their description cards to should raise their hands.

Step 5: Once again, the group's findings will be debated in a class forum



	Event	Description	Quotation/Statistic
1845	Failure of the potato crop and the beginning of the Great Famine		
1848	Abortive Young Ireland Rebellion		
1850	Michael Davitt's family evicted from their home in Straide, Co Mayo		
1858	The Irish Republican Brotherhood (the Fenians) founded in Dublin		
1867	Failed Fenian uprising		
1868	General Election Liberals come to power		
1869	Gladstone's Disestablishment Act		
1870	Gladstone's First Land Act:		

**May
1870**

Michael Davitt
arrested in
London for arms
trafficking

1874

General Election:
Gladstone's
administration
replaced by the
Conservatives under
Disraeli

1875

MP for Meath,
Charles Stewart
Parnell delivered
his maiden speech
in parliament

1878

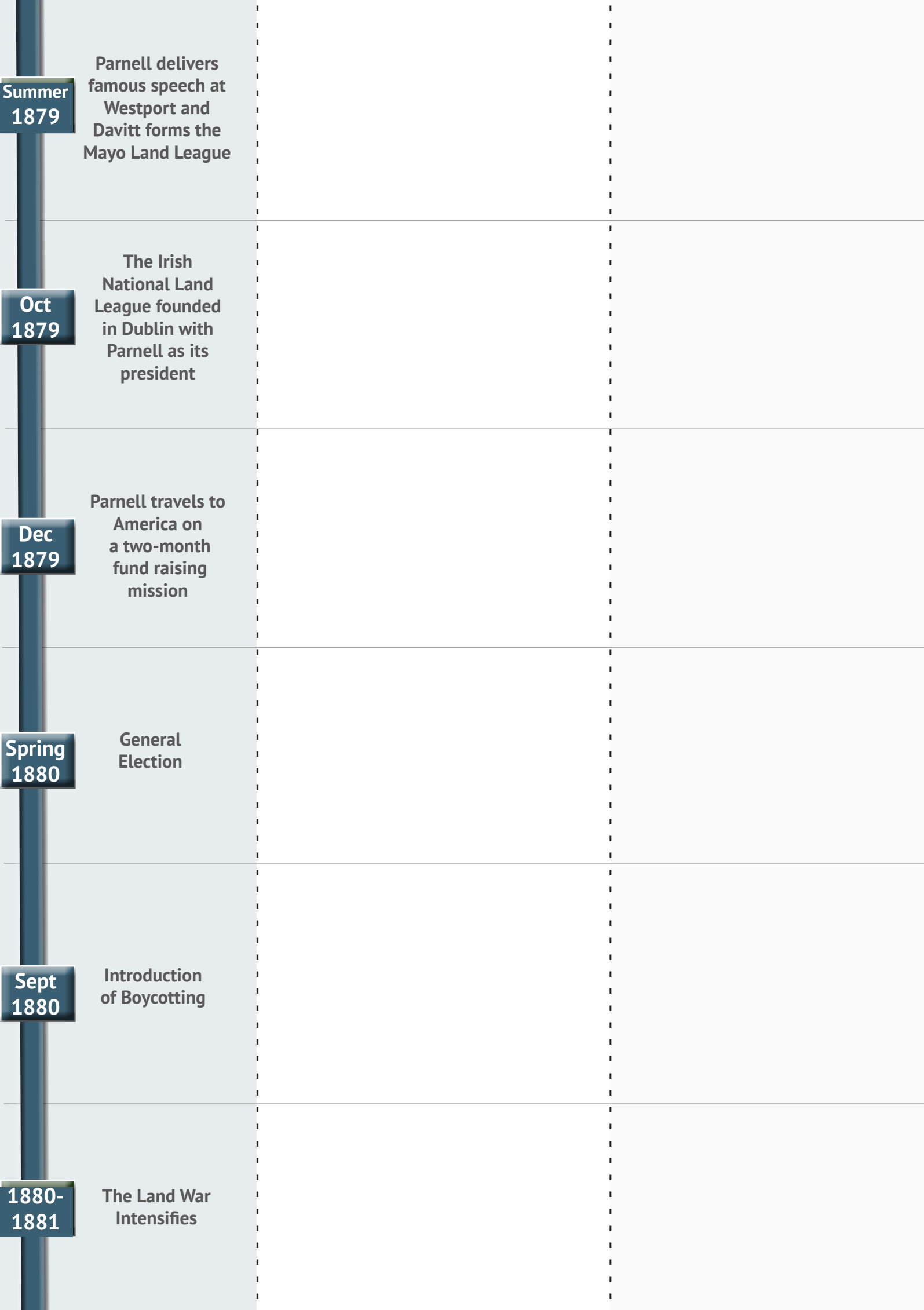
Michael Davitt
and John Devoy
plan the 'New
Departure'

**Jan
1879**

The Supreme
Council of the IRB
in Paris reject the
New Departure

**April
1879**

Launch of land
agitation at
Irishtown,
Co. Mayo



Summer
1879

Parnell delivers famous speech at Westport and Davitt forms the Mayo Land League

Oct
1879

The Irish National Land League founded in Dublin with Parnell as its president

Dec
1879

Parnell travels to America on a two-month fund raising mission

Spring
1880

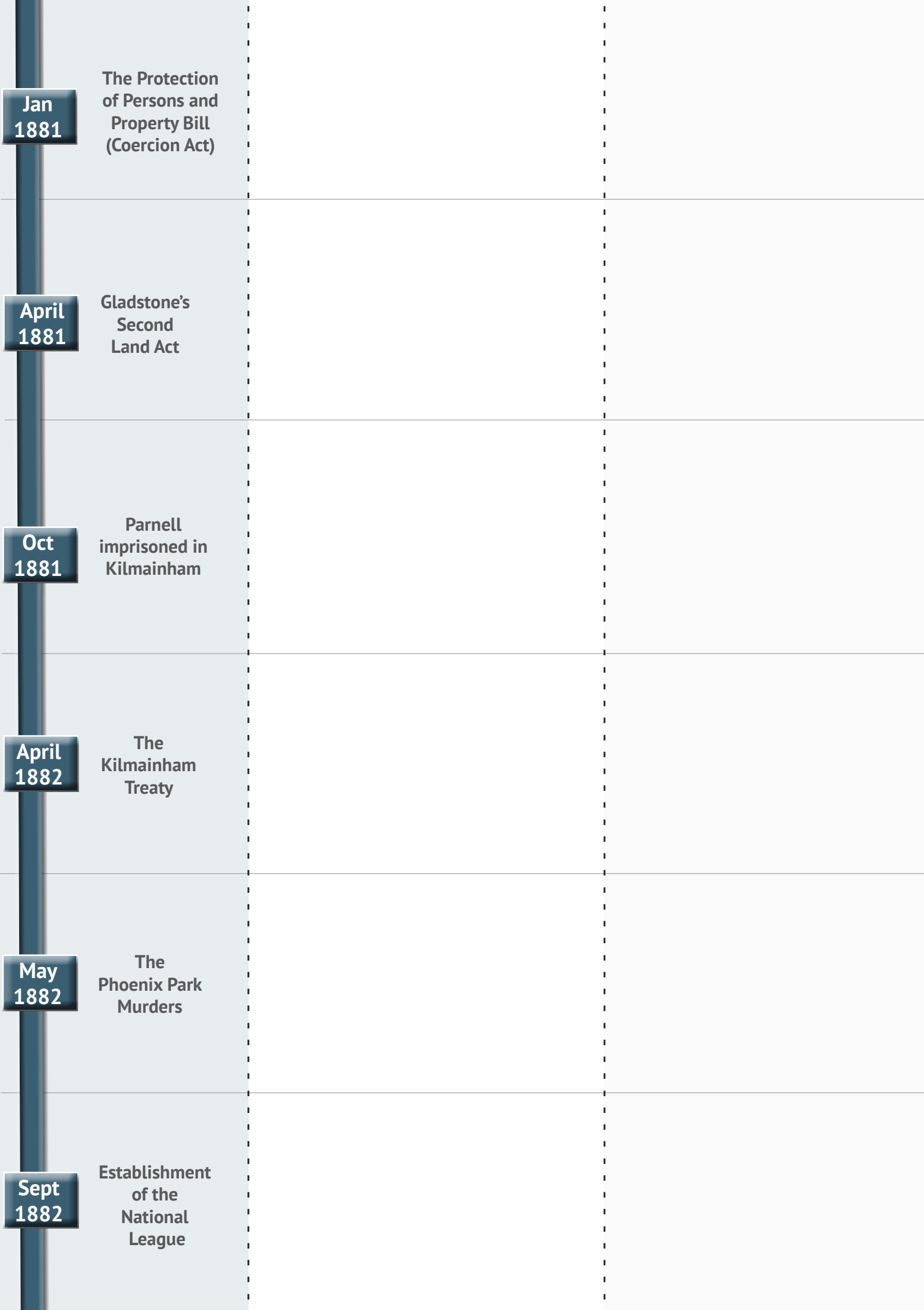
General Election

Sept
1880

Introduction of Boycotting

1880-
1881

The Land War Intensifies



Jan
1881

The Protection
of Persons and
Property Bill
(Coercion Act)

April
1881

Gladstone's
Second
Land Act

Oct
1881

Parnell
imprisoned in
Kilmainham

April
1882

The
Kilmainham
Treaty

May
1882

The
Phoenix Park
Murders

Sept
1882

Establishment
of the
National
League

The Ulster Custom (3Fs) was legalised where it already existed. Where it did not, out-going tenants were given compensation for improvements made and for 'disturbances' (evictions for any other reason than non payment of rent). The Bright Clause: 2/3 of the purchase price to be paid back with interest of 5% over 35 years.

Davitt joined the IRB in 1865 and quickly rose through the ranks. On 14 May 1870, 24-year-old Davitt was arrested at Paddington Railway Station, convicted of gun running to Ireland and sentenced to 15 years penal servitude.

Parnell spoke publicly in 60 American cities emphasising the need for famine relief and to abolish landlordism in Ireland. In Feb 1880, he was granted the privilege of addressing the United States Congress about on the land situation and the distress in Ireland.

Young Ireland exile, James Stephens established the secret, oath-bound IRB. Its aim was to make Ireland an Independent democratic republic by force of arms. Despite the disapproval of the Catholic Church, the movement grew rapidly and its U.S. counterpart, the Fenian Brotherhood, received support and funding from the large post-famine emigrant population.

New Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone took a keen interest in Ireland, believing that violence stemmed from grievances that were not addressed through political channels.

Descriptions

The Church of Ireland was to become a voluntary body and its property was confiscated and given over to the Church Temporalities Commissioners to pay its clergy and teachers. Tenants on church land were given the option to buy out their holdings. 3/4 of the purchase price at 4% interest.

The Young Irelanders, a band of literary romantic nationalists, staged a failed uprising which reinforced anti-Irish sentiment in Britain. Some of its leaders escaped to America and Paris where they would sow the seeds of the Fenian movement.

Tenant farmer, Martin Davitt, was one of thousands evicted at the height of the famine. The family emigrated to Lancashire where Michael Davitt grew up listening to stories of the horrors of the famine and the injustice of the landlord system.

The mass protest meeting at Irishtown, and the subsequent mass meetings in the West of Ireland, began to convince a cautious Parnell of the potential of combining constitutional, agrarian and revolutionary traditions in one popular movement.

Gladstone's Coercion Act allowed the imprisonment without trial anyone suspected of being involved in illegal activity. Obstructionists attempted to hold up the bill and Parnell was physically removed from the House of Commons. When the Bill was passed, Davitt was among those arrested.

Descriptions

The Fenian uprising of March 1967 failed due to internal conflict among the IRB leadership, clerical opposition and informers. An attack on a prison van in Manchester in an attempt to liberate Fenian leader, Colonel Kelly, led to the arrest and execution of William Allen, Michael Larkin and Michael O'Brien. They became known as the 'Manchester Martyrs'.

After his release in December 1877, Davitt was elected to the Supreme Council of the IRB. In January, he traveled to Ireland and was appalled by conditions among tenant farmers in his native Co. Mayo. He began to advocate Fenian participation in land agitation. During a speaking tour of America, Davitt met with John Devoy, leader of Irish-American republican organisation Clan na Gael. Together they formulated a 'New Departure' in Fenian policy.

In the worsening agricultural conditions of 1879, Davitt persuaded Charles Stewart Parnell to address a second key meeting in Westport, Co. Mayo, on 8 June 1879 and to become involved in land agitation. In August, Davitt formed the Mayo Land League to organise and direct the agitation.. His aim was not just the 3Fs but ultimately to replace landlordism with a system of peasant proprietorship: 'the land for the people'.

Parnell satisfied radical supporters by condemning the Land Act and describing Gladstone as a 'masquerading knight errant'. He was arrested for inciting violence and imprisoned in Kilmainham Jail. Parnell said that 'captain moonlight' (bands of agrarian secret societies) would take his place'. The leaders of the Land League issued a "No Rent Manifesto" from Kilmainham and the Land League was immediately suppressed.

Descriptions

Descriptions

Descriptions

A Protestant Irish landlord (heir to the Avondale estate in Co. Wicklow), Parnell's defence of the Manchester Martyrs in Parliament attracted Fenian attention and his obstructionist tactics increased his popularity among more extreme elements of Irish politics.

Even though there was no prospect of a Fenian rebellion in the near future, the President of the Supreme Council of the IRB Charles J. Kickham would not consider cooperation between the Fenians and members of parliament. He refused to commit the IRB to any agrarian agitation.

Davitt persuaded Parnell to turn the Mayo Land League into a national organisation with a programme that could be advocated in parliament. The INLL required that public meetings (organised by IRB men) would be accompanied by the formation of local Land League branches. Membership subscriptions would fund non-violent resistance to unjust actions by landlords and assistance for evicted members.

The first general election since the Secret Ballot Act of 1872 saw an increase in Irish middle class representation. Isaac Butt's Home Rule League (which replaced the Home Government Association in 1873) put forward candidates and 59 MPs were elected on a Home Rule Platform - only 30 of these were firmly committed to Home Rule.

Descriptions

In his celebrated boycott speech in Ennis, County Clare, Parnell advocated social and economic ostracism for those who violated rural codes of conduct: 'land-grabbers and others who would help landlords'. Lord Erne's agent, Captain Charles Boycott would be the first victim. Boycotting,

The Irish population declined from over 8 million in 1841 to 6.6 million in 1851. Approximately 1.5 million people died from starvation or fever and a further 1 million emigrated. The poor in the west of Ireland were most severely affected and the cottier class with less than 5 acres was practically wiped out.

Newly-appointed Chief Secretary to Ireland, Lord Frederick Cavendish and Under-Secretary, T.H. Burke were attacked and brutally stabbed by members of an illegal organisation, *The Invincibles*. Horrified, Parnell offered to resign from parliament. Gladstone refused his resignation but a new Coercion Bill was inevitable.

There were three levels of activity in the land war – through the parliamentary party at Westminster, open land league agitation and through the agrarian secret societies and Fenianism. As the agricultural depression continued and evictions increased, the number of land-related crimes rose. 4,439 'agrarian crimes' recorded in 1881 - (58% of all crime)

Descriptions

The Liberals were returned to power with Gladstone as Prime Minister for the second time. The election in Ireland was fought on the land question. 63 Home Rulers were elected and Parnell was elected chairman of the Irish parliamentary party.

Davitt met Parnell in Avondale in September 1882 and he co-operated with him in setting up the Irish National League which put Home Rule in first place and land-law reform in second.

This Land Act established the principle of co-partnership between landlord and tenant. It conceded the 3Fs and special land courts would establish what a tenant should pay. Land purchase clause: 3/4 of the purchase price repayable over 35 years. Excluded tenants in arrears. To avoid alienating his moderate supporters, Parnell decided wait and 'test' the act.

Afraid of being absent from the political scene for too long and aware that Katherine O'Shea had given birth to their first child, Parnell negotiated a settlement with Gladstone. The Kilmainham Treaty included tenants in arrears and leaseholders in the 1881 Land Act. Parnell would be released and use his influence to pacify the country.

Descriptions

Descriptions

‘This Land Act allowed the fixing of judicial rents for fifteen years by Land Courts and was a radical solution to the land question since it effectively removed the landlords’ right to fix the rent payable for land they owned.’

Historian Myrtle Hill

‘... It appears already that in many places tenants have refused to pay more than government valuation. Landlords will not agree to this, they will evict, and then a great increase of outrages may be expected. It will then be too late to give us extra powers.’

Earl Cowper, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1881)

To moderates Parnell was a good constitutionalist and to extremists he was a dynamic force. Throughout the 1880s he was renowned as Ireland’s ‘uncrowned king.’

Daniel Mulhall

The Kilmainham Treaty marked a turning point in Parnell’s career. ‘He had ridden the storm of agrarian radicalism, but now that this had apparently spent its force, he was anxious to move on’ ... with the aim of achieving Home Rule.

Historian Alvin Jackson

Quotations / Statistics

‘... pay no rents until the government relinquishes the existing system of terrorism and restores the constitutional rights of the people. ... Do not be wheedled into compromise of any sort by the threat of eviction. ...they can no more evict a whole nation than they can imprison them.’

No Rent Manifesto 1881

‘To apply the description *Home Rule Party* to the fifty-nine candidates who were elected after some form of Home Rule declaration, is, then to use a misleadingly suggestive term’.

Historian, David Thornly

‘Why should Ireland be treated as a geographical fragment of England ... Ireland is not a geographical fragment but a nation’.

Parnell’s first speech to Parliament

‘The scattering of the post-Famine Irish across the world was to provide a critical foundation and forum for the Fenian movement.’

Historical Geographer, W.J. Smyth

Quotations / Statistics

‘The Land League harnessed the respectability of Irish representatives at Westminster, the sheer mass of numbers of the rural poor, and the organisational skills of the physical-force tradition at home and in the US.’

Historian Conor McNamara

The Phoenix Park murders - one of the most shocking crimes of the late Victorian era - inspired a backlash that Parnell was able to put to good use in reconstructing the national movement along new, more conservative lines.’

Historian Alvin Jackson

‘Sulking in their Parisian tent, the Supreme Council remained officers without an army’.

Historian J.J. Lee

The Ulster Custom was difficult to define and its existence difficult to prove. The manner of claiming compensation was too complicated. There was little incentive for landlords to sell and few tenants could raise 1/3 of the purchase price. Only 877 tenants bought their holdings.

Quotations / Statistics

The census of 1861 showed that out of a population of 5,750,000 in Ireland, four and a half million were Catholic and only 700,000 belonged to the established Church.

6,000 tenants of 8,400 on church land had bought their holdings by 1880.

‘Despite the failure of the Fenians, they had won a propaganda victory. While British public opinion was opposed to their violent tactics, it was acknowledged increasingly that Ireland’s political problems would not be solved by ignoring them.’

Historian Christine Kinealy

59.2% of those arrested under Coercion Act for intimidation and violent crime were farmers, farmers sons and agricultural workers. 24% were townsmen - some with a Fenian background, and 2% were newspapermen arrested for ‘writing for the Land League’.

W.J. Smyth

‘I was then but four and a half years old, yet I have a distinct remembrance of that morning’s scene: the remnant of our household furniture flung about the road; the roof of the house falling in and the thatch taking fire...’

Diary of Michael Davitt

The far-reaching consequences of the Famine included a dramatic decline in population, significant changes in language, social patterns and farming, and the emergence of powerful movements for social and political reform.

Quotations / Statistics

The founding of the National League was ‘the complete eclipse, by a purely parliamentary substitute, of what had been a semi-revolutionary organisation ... the overthrow of a movement and the enthronement of a man’.

Davitt 1903

“When a man takes a farm from which another who has been evicted you must shun him ... [put] him into a sort of moral Coventry, by isolating him from the rest of his kind, as if he were a leper of old.’

Parnell speaking at Ennis, 1880

Placards announcing a land meeting to be held at Irishtown on 20 April 1879 declared ‘The West’s Awake’, ... ‘Down with the invaders! ... Down with the tyrants’. The Land War had begun with the propaganda department to the fore.

Historian Frank Rynne

‘I was then but four and a half years old, yet I have a distinct remembrance of that morning’s scene: the remnant of our household furniture flung about the road; the roof of the house falling in and the thatch taking fire...’

Diary of Michael Davitt

Quotations / Statistics

“A fair rent is a rent the tenant can reasonably afford to pay according to the times ... You must show [the landlords] that you intend to hold a firm grip of your homesteads and lands ... You must not allow yourselves to be dispossessed as your fathers were dispossessed in 1847”.

C.S. Parnell

“The change [in Fenian policy] ... will take the shape of a combination between the advocates of physical force and those who believe in constitutional agitation, such as will leave the former free to prepare for active work while, in the meantime, giving a reasonable support to a dignified and manly demand for self-government on the part of the constitutionalists.”

John Devoy to the New York Herald 1878

During his two-month fundraising tour of the USA, Parnell travelled 16,000 miles and raised about £60,000 for famine relief and £12,000 for the League. The trip was widely publicised in Ireland and America.

“The soil of Ireland for the people of Ireland, to have and to hold from God alone who gave it’.

Young Irelander, James Fintan Lalor 1848

‘My mission is to pacify Ireland.’
William Gladstone

TASK 4: ADVISING A PRIME MINISTER (PART 1)

BACKGROUND

By 1880, William Gladstone was not fully informed about the objectives of the Land League, but was aware that a formal inquiry into the situation in Ireland was needed. The question was whether the non-payment of rents in Ireland was due to genuine “distress” experienced by tenant farmers or “conspiracy”.

In mid-1880, Gladstone’s government established the Bessborough Royal Commission to inquire into all aspects of Irish agriculture. Unwilling to resort to the radical solution of a new Land Act, the Prime Minister had hoped that the Liberal Bessborough Commission would advise caution. However, in early 1881 after hearing evidence from 80 landlords, 70 agents, 500 tenants, the Commission endorsed granting the three Fs: fixity of tenure, fair rents and free sale. In the meantime, the political demand for coercion as a response to the agrarian agitation in Ireland was becoming difficult to ignore.



YOUR TASK:

You are part of a lesser-known secret sub-committee of the Bessborough Commission. While the main group is concerned with investigating the successes and failures of Gladstone’s 1870 Land Act, your job is to investigate:

- (a) The motives and methods of the Land League
- (b) The main reasons for the rising levels of agrarian protest/crime in Ireland

Each subcommittee consists for four members: *Scribe, Statistician, Advisor and Presenter*.

When you have consulted the evidence (**Documents D-G**), you will write a report for Gladstone outlining your main findings and making recommendations about whether to offer **conciliation** (a new Land Act) or to impose **coercion** (or both). These recommendations must be based on the findings of your research.

You should use **Template 1** on the next page to write your report. Remember to use formal, concise language.



For the attention of
W.E Gladstone P.M.
December 1880

Sub-Committee Members

Summary of Findings

- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---

Graph/Pie Chart/Bar Chart to illustrate findings

Reasons for Research

Sources Consulted

Prominent Members of the Land League

Aims of the Land League

Recommendations

Conclusions

Poster advertising a protest against the eviction of Hugh Carr from his farm in Kilbrennan, Co. Westmeath and calling also for the establishment of a local branch of the Land League

THE
LAND FOR THE PEOPLE.

A MONSTER
LAND MEETING

WILL BE HELD ON
HUGH GARR'S FARM,
AT
KILBRENNON,

CONVENIENT TO ROCHFORDBRIDGE,
ON SUNDAY, 10th OCTOBER,

For the purpose of protesting against his eviction, and establishing
a Branch of the Land League.

The following M.P.'s are invited to attend :

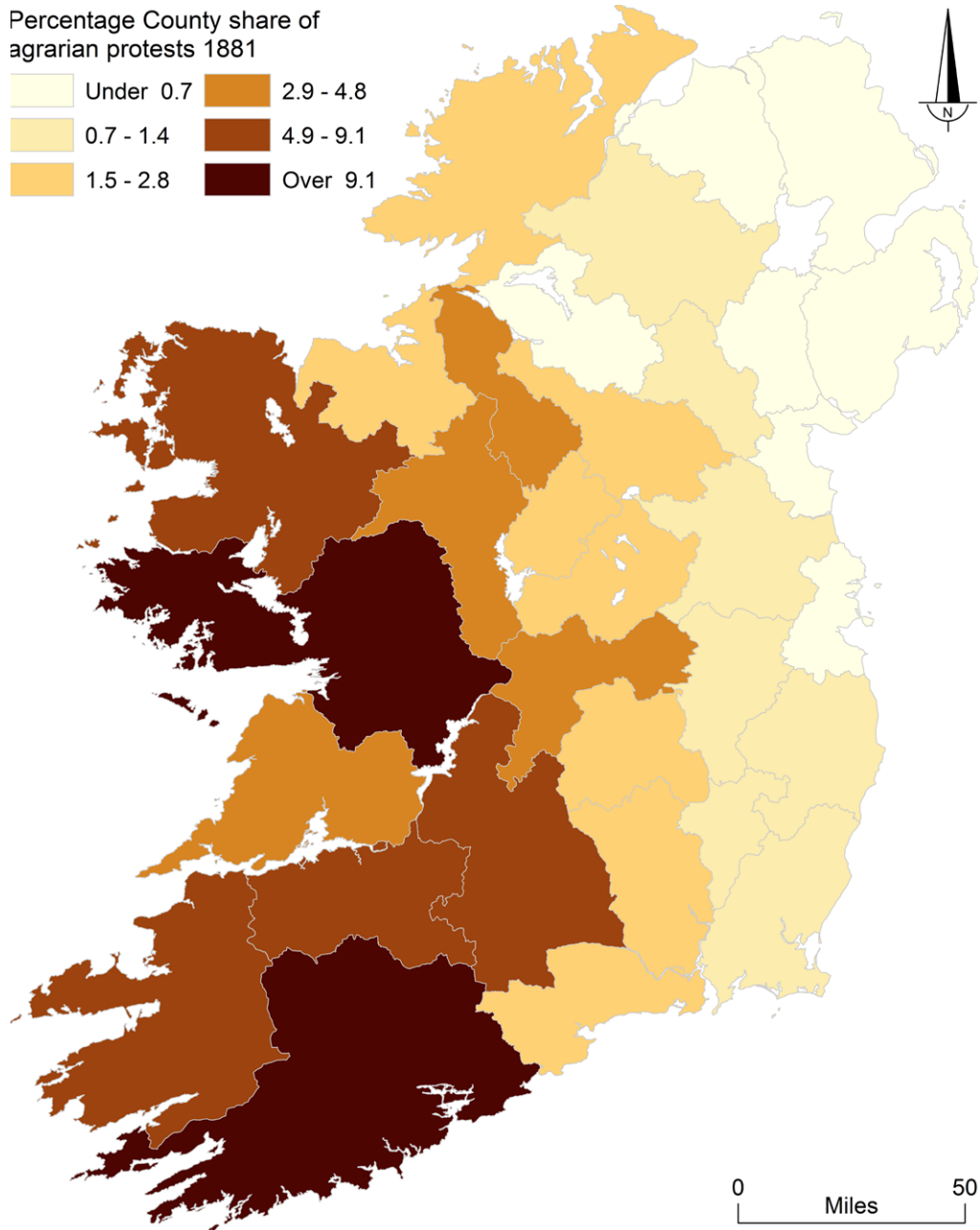
CHARLES STEWART PARNELL,
JOHN DILLON,
THOMAS SEXTON,
T. D. SULLIVAN,
H. J. GILL.

A Deputation from the Land League will be present.

GOD SAVE IRELAND.

[Source: National Library of Ireland, EPH F257]

- Document E -
Distribution of Agrarian Protests/Crime in 1881



The Land League's objective was to be achieved using 'moral' rather than 'physical' force. However, on the edges of the League's stated policies, illegal forms of resistance grew. There were 863 recorded 'agrarian protests/crimes' in 1879. By the end of 1880, as the effects of Parnell's Ennis speech and the boycotting system took hold, that figure had risen to 2,591.

After Connacht, Munster was the second major area of conflict with 1/3 of the total 'outrages'. Fenianism and secret societies

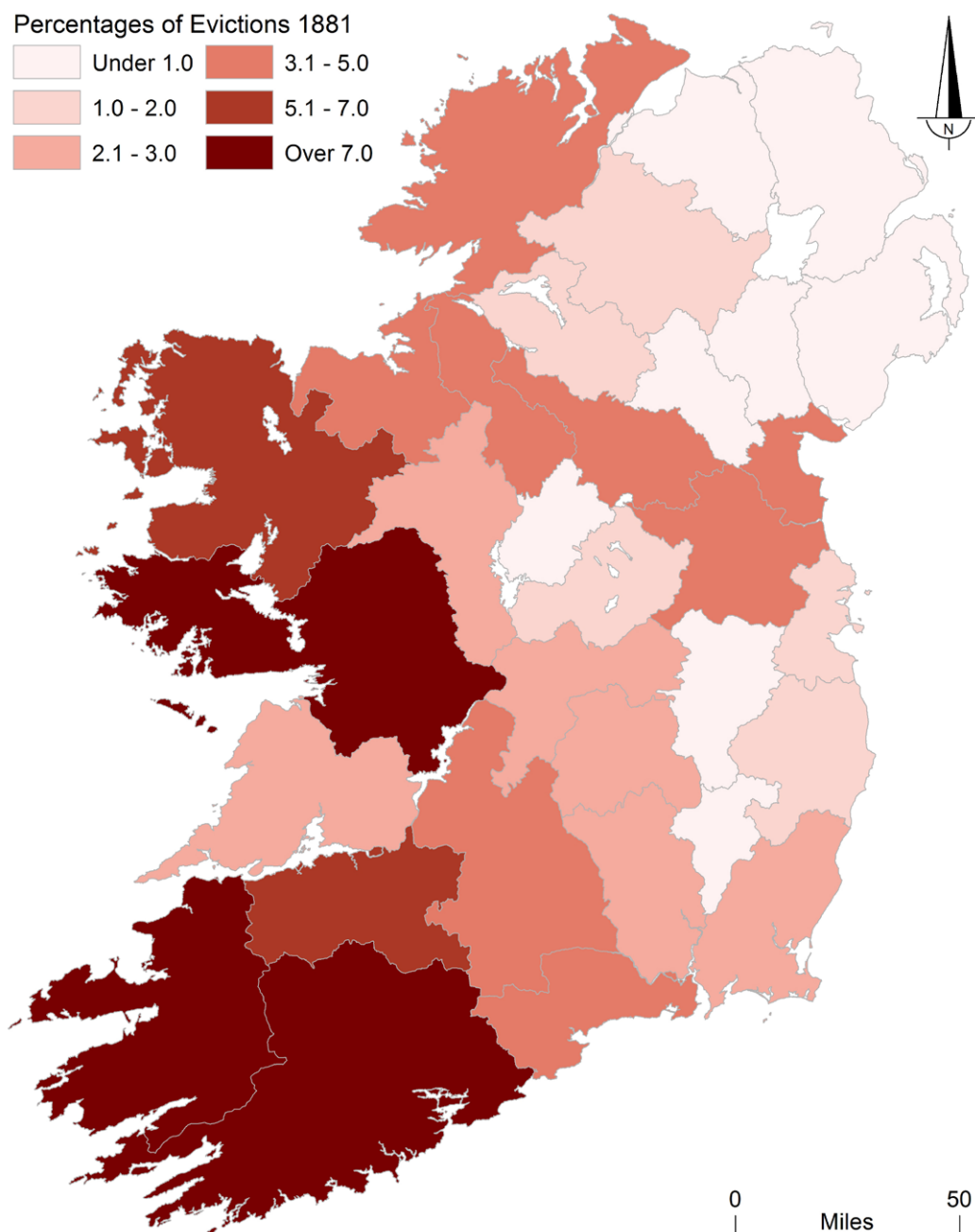
played key roles in the dramatic growth in agrarian agitation in the south-west Munster counties. Leinster and Ulster reported much lower rates of agrarian crime reflecting less involvement by those provinces in the Land War.

4,439 'agrarian crimes' were recorded at the peak of the Land War in 1881. Ulster saw 9.3% of total offences, Leinster 18.8%, Connacht 27.8% and Munster 44.1%. Close to half of all agrarian offences took the form of intimidation of landlords and agents by

'threatening letters'. This tactic was particularly prevalent in Kerry, Limerick and Cork. Connacht's communities are responsible for almost half of the aggravated assaults and half of injuries to property. Almost 50% of all the killing and maiming of cattle is focused on Connacht. Firing at dwellings, firing on persons and assaults on police is much more a feature of Munster - by far the most violent province.

[Source: Annual reports of evictions (Ireland) by the County Inspectorate of the Royal Irish Constabulary, Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons, 1884-85]

- Document F -
Distribution of Evictions per County Populations in 1881



As Land League confrontations with the landlords grew, levels of evictions intensified. Faced with diminished incomes due to reduction or non-payments of rents, landlords adopted ever more ruthless modes of eviction. Between 1877 and 1880 a total of 23,551 evictions were recorded involving at least 117,700 family members. Evictions peaked at 4,439 in 1881 - five times the 1879 level. The battle lines between tenants and landlords were sharply drawn and from the start of 1881,

a strong military force became involved in evictions and forced sales.

South Tipperary with 692 evictions (2.9% of total) represents the national average in 1881. Antrim is at one extreme with 147 (0.6%) evictions whereas East Co. Cork with 1,888 (8.0%), Kerry 1,878 (8.0%) and West Galway 1,773 (7.5%) witnessed the highest number of evictions.

As with Land League meetings and protests, the pattern of evictions

most heavily involved the western and south-western counties. In 1879, Connacht experienced at least half the evictions – but this figure declined in each successive year. In sharp contrast, Munster experienced 16.1% of all evictions in 1879 but 56% in 1884. Together, Munster and Connacht accounted for over 70% of all evictions – the heartland of both the pain and the protests.

[Source: Annual reports of evictions (Ireland) by the County Inspectorate of the Royal Irish Constabulary, Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons, 1884–85]

Extract from Ireland's Disease: The English in Ireland 1887 by Paschal Grousset

The book was based on a series of articles for *Le Temps* newspaper. Like many travel writers to Ireland in the late nineteenth-century, Grousset wrote about the social and political upheaval and the rising tide of political violence in the 1880s.

On the dusty road before us slowly walking five cows in rather an emaciated condition. Those beasts strike me by an odd appearance which I am unable to make out at first. When I am close to them I see what it is; they have not tails. The absence of that ornament gives the poor animals the awkwardest and most absurd look. I turn to my guide who is laughing in his sleeve.

'Look at their master!', he whispers in a low voice.

'Well?'

'The cows have no tails, and the man has no ears.'

It is true. The unlucky wretch vainly endeavoured to hide his head, as round as a cheese, under the brim of his battered old hat; he did not succeed in hiding his deformity.

'By Jove! who arranged you in this guise, you and your cows?', I said to the poor devil, stopping before him.

He made a few grimaces before explaining; but the offer of a cigar, that rarely misses its effect, at last unloosed his tongue. He then told me that the Moonlighters* had come with a razor to cut his ears, a week after having cut the tails of his cows as a warning.

'And what could have been the motive of such cowardly, barbarous mutilation?'

He had accepted work on a boycotted farm, though the League had expressly forbidden it; in other words he was what the Irish call a 'land-grabber'.

'Where are you going with your cows?'

'To sell them at Listowel, if I may, which is not certain.'

'Why is it not certain? Because they are unprovided with a tail? At the worst that would only prevent them from being made into ox-tail soup', I say, trying to enliven the conversation by a little joke. 'That's not it,' answers the man. 'But the interdict applies to the sale of the cows as well as to having any intercourse with me. I am forbidden to buy anything, and anyone speaking to me is fined two shillings.'

He seemed to think this perfectly natural and even just.

Source: Grousset, Paschal: *Ireland's Disease The English in Ireland 1887*, Reprinted by Blackstaff Press, 1986, p. 128

* **Moonlighters** was the name given to people who, under the cover of darkness, engaged in agrarian crimes such as cattle-maiming, assault and arson.

TASK 4: ADVISING A PRIME MINISTER (PART 2)

BACKGROUND

Gladstone's second Land Act (1881) revolutionised the landlord-tenant relationship in Ireland by establishing the principle of co-partnership or dual ownership. It conceded the 3F, landlords could no longer evict at will, and tenants were encouraged to apply to a special Land Court where rents would be fixed by judicial arbitration for a period of 15 years. The act also improved upon the land purchase provisions of the 1870 act. Now tenants only had to cover $\frac{1}{4}$ of the value of their holdings. Excluded from the benefits of the Land Act, however, were 150,000 leaseholders and 130,000 tenants who were in arrears with their rent.

The Land Act, intended to divide and weaken the Parnellite coalition, showed some signs of succeeding. To appease both moderates and radicals, Parnell did not commit himself to either supporting or opposing the Land Act.

Arrested under the Coercion Acts on 13 October 1881, Parnell wrote to Kitty O'Shea, the wife of Home Rule MP, Captain W. H. O'Shea, and the woman with whom he had been having an affair:

“POLITICALLY IT IS A FORTUNATE THING FOR ME THAT I HAVE BEEN ARRESTED, AS THE MOVEMENT IS BREAKING FAST AND ALL WILL BE QUIET IN A FEW MONTHS, WHEN I SHALL BE RELEASED.”

Parnell and the other Land League leaders were lodged in Kilmainham Gaol from where they issued a No-Rent-Manifesto on 18 October 1881. The League was immediately suppressed and, as Parnell had predicted, 'Captain Moonlight' took his place. Agrarian protests and 'outrages' escalated to unprecedented levels. In the meantime, Kitty O'Shea had given birth to a baby girl who was not expected to live.

YOUR TASK: ADVISING A PRIME MINISTER (PART 2)

Because your secret sub-committee made such valuable recommendations to the Prime Minister in 1880, you are being called to service once again. In the time since the 1881 Land Act, the leaders of the Land League have been imprisoned, agrarian violence has increased and Parnell issued a No Rent Manifesto from Kilmainham Jail.

You have been convened to research documents H and I and make recommendations to Gladstone about whether or not to negotiate a settlement with Land League President and Home Rule leader, Charles Stewart Parnell.

Once again, you should use the formal template (**Template 2**) provided in this worksheet to submit your report to the Prime Minister.





For the attention of
W.E Gladstone P.M.
October 1881

Sub-Committee Members

Summary of Findings

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-
-
-
-
-
-

Conclusions

Reason for Research and Research Procedure

Charles Stewart Parnell: Biographical Details

Recommendations

Text of the 'No Rent Manifesto' issued on 18 October 1881 by the imprisoned leaders of the Irish National Land League. It appeared on the front page of *United Ireland* on 22 October and was also published in the New York Times.

NO-RENT MANIFESTO

Fellow-countrymen! - The hour to try your souls and to redeem your pledges has arrived. The executive of the National Land League forced to abandon the policy of testing the land act, feels bound to advise the tenant-farmers of Ireland from this day forth to pay no rents under any circumstances to their landlords until the government relinquishes the existing system of terrorism and restores the constitutional rights of the people.

Do not be daunted by the removal of your leaders ... Do not be wheedled into compromise of any sort by the threat of eviction. If you only act together in the spirit to which, within the last two years, you have countless times solemnly pledged your vows, they can no more evict a whole nation than they can imprison them.

Our exiled brothers in America may be relied upon to contribute, if necessary, as many millions of money as they have contributed thousands to starve out landlordism and bring English tyranny to its knees. No power on earth except faintheartedness on your own part can defeat you. Landlordism is already staggering under the blows which you have dealt it amid the applause of the world ... One more heroic effort to destroy landlordism at the very source and fount of its existence, and the system which was and is the curse of your race and of your existence will have disappeared forever ... No power of legalised violence can extort one penny from your purses against your will. If you are evicted, you shall not suffer; the landlord who evicts will be a ruined pauper, and the government which supports him with its bayonets will learn in a single winter how powerless is armed force against the will of a united, determined, and self-reliant nation.

Signed

CHARLES S. PARNELL, President, Kilmainham Jail

MICHAEL DAVITT, Hon. Sec. Portland Prison;

THOMAS BRENNAN, Hon Sec. Kilmainham Jail

JOHN DILLON, Head Organizer, Kilmainham Jail;

Propaganda poster calling Irish people to boycott paying land rents as they are damaging the work done by Charles Stewart Parnell and Michael Davitt.

HOLD THE RENTS!

Who are the GAOLERS of
CHAS. STEWART PARNELL & MICHAEL DAVITT?

Not MAD GLADSTONE or BLUNDERING BUCKSHOT, but
YOURSELVES, IRISHMEN!

Who are content to seek and accept paltry REDUCTIONS, and to let
the men who won them for you,—aye, and who will win much more, if
you will but follow them faithfully,

ROT and DIE in BRITISH DUNGEONS!

IRISHMEN!

When the cowardly and the selfish tell you not to mind the "Suspects,"
but to do the best you can for yourselves, REMEMBER that the beggarly
"shillings in the pound" you get as "Reductions" are STAINED with
the LIFE

BLOOD OF JOHN BILLOM,

WHO IS DYING FOR YOU :

And that the chink of the vile money in your pockets is the RATTLE of

THE CHAINS OF MICHAEL DAVITT,

For you SLAVING in PORTLAND PRISON.

Here is what the hireling LONDON "TIMES," your deadliest foe, and
GLADSTONE'S well-bribed organ, says of you :---"The amelioration already
"visible in the state of Ireland after a little more than three months of severe
"and firm administration of the Coercion Acts affords NO GROUND FOR
"RECEDING, but rather for PERSEVERING in the SAME COURSE . . . it
"would be manifestly foolish to suspend coercive measures the moment they
"are beginning to

"PRODUCE THE DESIRED RESULTS"!

(THE PAYMENT OF RENTS.)

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN!

Some of you Have Already Double-Locked the Dungeon Doors on your

BEST AND TRUEST FRIENDS:

WILL YOU LET COERCION PROVE A FINAL SUCCESS?

GOD FORBID!

[Source: National Library of Ireland, EPH F20]