Evolving Perceptions of Ireland in French Writing 1891-1923

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Ian Gerald McKeane.

October 2004

Evolving Perceptions of Ireland in French Writing 1891-1923

Map of Ireland from *L'Illustration* 19/03/1921

Catholiques et protestants en Irlande.

Le grisé indique les comtés où dominent les protestants.

Preface

The years between 1891 and 1923 were a time of political development and self-definition of two of Britain's closest neighbours France and Ireland. They both underwent a process of modernisation which, although different in detail, led to the establishment of enduring political systems in each country. At first sight France and Ireland may seem to be very different. At the turn of the twentieth century, there was a population ratio of approximately 10:1 respectively, which, when linked with the differences in geographic extent, points to a key difference of scale. The economic historian Louis Cullen has indicated some similarities and some relative differences between the historical economies of the two countries. His summary of their political and cultural links since 1600 is masterly and deserves to be quoted in full:

> Ireland and France have had many ties in recent centuries, more particularly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a fact of which people are more aware in the smaller country, but which is not wholly ignored in the larger country either. In the military campaigns of 1689-1691 in Ireland, French soldiers fought alongside Irish Jacobites, and the French aid often invoked in later decades in popular song and emigré representations almost materialised a century later. Had Hoche's great expedition ridden out successfully the terrible gales of December 1796, the course of subsequent Irish history might well have been different. If Ireland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries looked to France in military terms, it did so in other terms as well for Catholics, careers in the church, in the army and in other professions had to be pursued abroad rather than at home. The Irish emigration to France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it should be emphasised, was primarily an upper-class one. The only mass-exodus to France was that of the defeated Irish troops in 1691, and as the eighteenth century wore on, while the Irish brigades continued to be commanded by Irish career officers, Irishmen became fewer in the ranks. Because it was an upper-class emigration, its social contribution to French life was disproportionate to its scale. Professor Meyer has commented on the role of the Irish immigrants in the French commercial revolution of the eighteenth century, and as Monsieur Chaussinand-Nogaret has shown, the exiled Jacobites, among whom the Irish were pre-eminent, had a significant place in the emergence of the Enlightment in and beyond France.[1]

Cullen makes the important point that the links are more real to the Irish while they are not unrecognised by the French. This will be a *leit motiv* of this study.

In Ireland, the development of cultural nationalism and armed insurrection led eventually to qualified independence for most of the country while leaving six

---

[1] L.M. Cullen, and F. Furet, (ed.), *Irlande et France XVII-XX siècles: pour une histoire rurale comparée* (Ann Arbor and Paris, 1980), p.9.

counties still within the United Kingdom. In France, these years saw the firm establishment of republican government, the settling of the relationship between Church and State, a period of cultural brilliance, the Dreyfus Affair and the First World War, during which the North-eastern provinces were devastated. In the 1920s, although the future was far from certain, what was not in question was the survival of the institutions of the Third Republic.

At the end of the nineteenth century Ireland seemed set to develop further as an integral part of the United Kingdom. This state was still the richest in the world with an empire that spread around the globe. The United Kingdom's institutions of monarchy and liberal parliamentary democracy, although with a less than complete franchise, were seemingly unassailable. Ireland had apparently recovered from the effects of the Great Famine and its much reduced population was experiencing a general rise in living standards. Physical force nationalism seemed to be in decline and Irish affairs were generally managed within the political system. In Britain the vast majority of the population now lived in urban surroundings. In Ireland, while this was not the case to the same degree, urban centres were growing, particularly in the North-East. Yet, by 1923, the United Kingdom had split into two, with 26 counties of the island of Ireland, containing about 66% of the Irish population, established as a new 'Dominion': the Irish Free State.[2] This had come about after political agitation and armed rebellion, followed by guerrilla war. Such a revolt had not been seen within the United Kingdom for nearly 200 years. For the mother country of a great empire to lose direct control of such a considerable proportion of her territory for essentially internal reasons was, to say the least, unusual. Yet the status of the new Ireland was not a satisfactory outcome for many who had sought and fought for absolute independence from the United Kingdom. These republican Nationalists had provoked a short but bitter civil war within the 26 counties as the new state was born. It was only in 1927 that the representatives of the majority of these Republicans entered the National Parliament. Thus the early history of the Irish Free State was fraught indeed.

---

[2] The Free State's constitution broadly followed the Canadian model. Although the notion of totally self-governing Dominions within the Commonwealth and Empire was not formalised until the enacting of the Statute of Westminster in 1931 the word was used to describe the countries of the 'white' Empire long before that date. Elie Halevy suggests that Dominion status was the aim of Irish nationalists in 1911 'an independence for which the imprudent formula of Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith permitted them to hope, similar to that possessed by Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.' E. Halevy, *The Rule of democracy 1905-1914,* Vol.2 (2nd edn., London, 1952), p. 543.

Licking its wounds after the abortive Fenian rising of 1867, Irish Republicanism looked back to the unsuccessful rising of 1798 when French arms and aid were sought to achieve the formation of an Irish Republic to complement the new American and French republics. Throughout the nineteenth century France provided sanctuary for disaffected Irishmen and Irishwomen just as Britain had done for politically estranged citizens of France. There was also a tradition of links between Irish gentry and France going back to the late seventeeth century and the first holder of the title of President of the Third Republic proudly bore an Irish surname, MacMahon. For Irish Nationalists, these links with France assumed importance on the back of periodic increases of tension between that country and the United Kingdom. Yet for most French people, Ireland was essentially the back yard of that land whose official name always seemed so hard to remember. Most thought in terms of *l'Angleterre*, which, even if not strictly correct, had at least the advantage of being cognate with the language of the country. In any case, it was England and its huge capital city which the French perceived when, or if, they looked across the Channel. Ireland as a concept required a deal more effort. The historian, Louis Paul-Dubois writing in 1921 identified this difficulty:

> It is not easy since if, as Lady Clanricard, Canning's daughter, said, England is the lofty wall which hides the sun from Ireland, this high wall also hides Ireland from our continental gaze.[3]

Thus, for the French in the nineteenth century, Ireland was only a 'geographical expression', to misappropriate Metternich's famous phrase.[4] Few French people had been there and still fewer had written about it, apart from a flurry of interest in the person and political activities of Daniel O'Connell earlier in the century. Yet, by the early nineteen-twenties, this state of affairs had changed and even in the French popular press, Ireland as a separate entity formed part of that mental construction of the outside world which readers took for granted. That there was an essential difference between *l'Irlande* and *l'Angleterre* was understood. It is also clear that this understanding was not merely because of the emergence of the Irish Free State in

---

[3] Ce n'est pas facile, car si, comme disait Lady Clanricard, fille de Canning, l'Angleterre est le mur trop haut qui cache à l'Irlande son soleil, ce haut mur cache aussi l'Irlande à nos regards continentaux. L. Paul-Dubois, 'Le Drame Irlandais: les origines 1914-1918' in *Revue des Deux Mondes* 15/09/1921, p. 366.

[4] Metternich to Palmerston in 1814, with reference to Italy,

1922, but because of the press coverage of the Anglo-Irish War.

The histories of France and Ireland have moments of convergence from time to time and Irish historiography is an indicator of them. The publication of an edited version of the Franco-Irish correspondence 1688-1691 is one such.[5] Another moment is the decade of the 1790s. The groundbreaking work on the Irish history of the period, of such as Professor Marianne Elliott, rests firmly on French sources.[6] Others have followed.[7] Of course, there is also a wealth of work published in France on this period but what is interesting is that there is an increasing tendency to devote space in such work to the events in Ireland or the activities of the Irish, therefore creating an Irish dimension to French historiography of the period.[8] We quickly recognise that there is a difference in scale in that for France, Ireland was peripheral to the policies of the revolutionary period while any work on the 1790s in Ireland deals in detail with the French military moves in 1796 -1798.[9]

The period of between 1891 and 1923, while not exhibiting moments of such great convergence as in the late 1790s, does have areas of mutual interest or resonance. Irish historians have not examined these areas to any great degree and this study intends to explore some of them. Even on first inspection, examples of these resonances can be perceived quite clearly. The Third French Republic, born out of military defeat, political confusion and civil war, can be seen as a forerunner of the Irish Free State. The debate about institutions and political priorities that marked the first 30 years of the life of the Third Republic resonated in an Ireland experiencing Home Rule agitation, reform of local government and the Cultural Revival which is now being seen as much more political than previously generally thought.[10]

There was a coincidence of the rise of radical syndicalism in both countries in the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century. Again, the degree of success

---

http://www.giga-usa.com/gigaweb1/quotes2/quautmetternichcx001.htm

[5] L. Tate (ed.), *Analecta Hibernica No 21: Franco-Irish Correspondence; December 1688 - August 1691* (Dublin, 1959).

[6] M. Elliott, *Partners in Revolution: The United Irishmen and France* (New Haven and London, 1982) and *Wolfe Tone: Prophet of Irish Independence* (New Haven and London, 1989).

[7] See, for example, H. Gough, and D. Dickson, (ed.), *Ireland and the French Revolution* (Dublin, 1990).

[8] O. Blanc, *Les Espions de la Révolution et de l'Empire* (Paris, 1995), pp. 113 - 143.

[9] See A.T.Q. Stewart, *A Deeper Silence: The Hidden Roots of the United Irish Movement* (London, 1993), his *The Summer Soldiers: the 1798 Rebellion in Antrim and Down*, (London, 1995), and D. Keogh, *The French Disease: The Catholic Church and Radicalism in Ireland 1790-1800* (Dublin, 1993).

[10] See, for example, P. Maume, *The Long Gestation: Irish Nationalist Life 1891-1918* (Dublin, 1999).

and influence of these movements was different but they were an element of national politics in both countries. Finally, there is the question of partition. After the peace settlement of 1871, four French *départements* [Haut-Rhin, Bas-Rhin, Meurthe and Moselle] remained part of the new German Empire.[11] After the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921 Northern Ireland's six counties remained as part of the United Kingdom, although under a Home Rule statute. These arrangements and the differences of international response to them were noted by Irish Republicans and, in the decades of the German 'occupation' of Alsace-Lorraine, the Irish struggle for self-rule was cited to support the justice of demands for the return of the lost *départements*.[12]

The process of modernisation has a clear role in the amplification of these resonances. In 1690 and in the late eighteenth century many in France were aware of the sudden if temporary centrality of Ireland in French foreign policy. However, by the 1890s France was experiencing an increasing consumption of a largely free press. This press reported in detail on the Ulster Crisis of 1910-1914, the Easter Rising of 1916 and the subsequent events leading to Irish independence. There was a growing understanding that the peoples of the British Isles were not a homogenous mass and that there were significant national cultural differences between the English and the other peoples of the archipelago. These were often expressed in racial terms at the time. Notions of Celtic difference can be spotted in the work of Jules Verne, for example, whose early book *Cinq semaines en ballon* (1863), relies heavily in its characterisation on the emotional interplay between the cool, phlegmatic, intrepid, English (Anglo-Saxon) explorer, Samuel Fergusson, and his warm, resolute, stubborn, Scottish companion Dick Kennedy, who is introduced to the reader as Fergusson's alter ego.[13] André Maurois was to take the contrast further with his characters Docteur O'Grady and Colonel Bramble in the 1920s.[14]

In France, despite the work of popular writers like Verne and Maurois, it was the press that laid out *la question irlandaise* for all to see. The enigmatic personage of Charles Stewart Parnell provided a focus in the 1880s and the story of his sudden

---

[11] G. Chapman, *The Third Republic of France: the First Phase 1871-1894* (London and New York, 1965), p. 7.

[12] An example of this is: *Considérations sur l'histoire politique de l'Irlande, lecture faite par Jacques Flach à la séance annuelle de la société des études historiques,* (Amiens, 1889).

[13] J. Verne, *Cinq semaines en ballon: voyage de découverts en Afrique par trois anglais*, (Editions Livre de Poche, Paris 1996), p. 14.

[14] See A. Maurois, *Les Silences du Colonel Bramble,* (Paris, 1922) and *Les Discours du Dr O'Grady*,

poignant fall from influence in 1890-1891, with its mix of politics, betrayal and passion fascinated French readers. In the second decade of the twentieth century the French public rapidly acquired a new passive vocabulary, in English, or in modified English, from their newspapers. Before long the terms *Le Home Rule* and *Les Unionistes* were used without any explanation. Later, *le Dail, Le Lord Maire* and *Sinn-Fein,* without its *fada,* became current. There was even the occasional use of the wonderful *sinnfeinistes.* In addition, the range of epithets in French for varying degrees of civil or political disturbance was used to the full. There was a great variation in style from the detached snootiness of *Revue des Deux Mondes* through the travelogue style of *L'Illustration* to the excited hyperbole of *L'Humanité*. So, even at one remove as it were, the vibrations of *la question irlandaise* resonated in the worldview of many French people at the time.

Recent Irish historiography is beginning to examine the detail of the Dáil's continental offices in the years 1919 - 1923. Paris was the most important of these and its crucial role in the establishment of a credible Irish national identity in the eyes of the European world is being evaluated.[15]

This study will attempt to track the development of the idea of Ireland, as a place apart, in the French worldview during this period and to evaluate their relative importance. It will attempt to indicate the influence of French ideas on the development of the notion of an Irish Republic and on post-independence Irish historiography. In addition, it will attempt to determine the factors which affected French perceptions of the 'Irish Question' and which either aided or hindered comprehension of it on the southern side of the English Channel. Overall, it will also provide a view of the events in Ireland in the years between the fall of Parnell and the establishment of the two Irish political entities of the Free State and Northern Ireland from a different standpoint.

Two principal groups of sources have been examined which has resulted in two distinct sections in this study. The first includes late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century works of literature in French, inspired by or set in Ireland, In addition, works of historiography and other published texts have been consulted. In this way some measure of the concept and the place of Ireland in the French world of

---

(Paris, 1923).

[15] See for example, D. Keogh, *Ireland and Europe 1919-1948* (Dublin, 1988), Chapter 1.

letters and ideas will be gained.

The second section is a detailed look at the reporting in a selection of the French press of particular Irish crises during the years 1910-1923. These cover crucial events in Ireland: the Ulster Crisis; the 1916 Easter Rising; the Anglo-Irish War; the Civil War. This period provides a rich vein of French *reportage* of Irish matters which is examined here for the first time. Sub-themes of French nationalism, imperialism and anglophobia will be evaluated to assess their contribution to the main argument. Finally, conclusions about the relevance to Irish historiography of the construction of a more popular notion of Ireland in the French mind will be drawn.

Work on the French press during the final decades of the nineteenth century of this period has already been carried out in France as part of a fascinating study of the Irish community in Paris by Jannick Julienne.[16] She concludes that the Irish question in France was of little interest to the majority of the French population and that perceptions of Ireland were subject to rigid stereotypes. She goes on to suggest that, for the French elite, Ireland and the Irish do not really belong to the civilised world of the late nineteenth century but were exotic and wild while being simple and essentially good.[17] This post-enlightenment view is radically challenged during the period of the present study.

While reading the editions of *Le Figaro* of the second week of October 1891 a moment of convergence between the histories of France and Ireland leapt from the closely printed type. This was not a convergence of exact parallels but was sufficient to be identified at the time. In the few days between the 6th and 8th of October 1891 the deaths of General Boulanger and Charles Stewart Parnell were reported. Both were disillusioned men. Both had strode the political stage of their respective countries for a period and passion played a part in their respective political and actual demises. The details of their deaths were very different but the accident of the almost coincidental moment of their deaths is indeed striking. A mere two years earlier, Boulanger had been on the crest of a popular wave of support. Financed by aritocrats like the Duchess of Uzès, he had won a seat in the *Chambre des Députés* in the election of 27th January 1889 and seemed to embody the hopes of opponents of the

---

[16] J. Julienne, *The Irish Question in France from 1860-1890: Perceptions and Reactions* (unpublished Doctoral thesis, Paris, 1998).
[17] Ibid., p. 614.

'*opportunistes*' in power who were embroiled in various political scandals.[18] Poised apparently to take power in early 1889, Boulanger refused to move on the Élysée Palace and his hesitation gave his opponents the time to react effectively. His mistress, Marguerite de Bonnemain, left for Brussels where she eventually died. Boulanger fled to London and thence to Brussels and it was there that he shot himself on his lover's tomb. *Le Figaro*, summing up his political activities described him as:

> [...] a man who allowed the middle classes to believe they were heroes without ever having been to war and the members of the *Commune* to believe they were patriots while they continued their betrayal.[19]

His story had the elements of a classic tragedy and his end left the question whether his suicide was an act of cowardice or an act of supreme chivalry. This question was posed and discussed at length in the *Figaro* the next day.[20]

Then, on the 8th October 1891, the *Figaro* opened its report on the death of Parnell with the words:

> Deaths come quickly and love does not bring luck to party leaders. Yesterday Boulanger, today Parnell, and whether the rumours of suicide which were current yesterday in London are confirmed or denied one can say that [Parnell] has been mortally struck down at the moment when one knew and saw that [he] did not only live for his people. One could even say that peoples are jealous of those that they love and that their jealousy brings misfortune. [21]

Parnell lost the confidence of the majority of his party in December 1890 after the famous debate in committee room fifteen and, despite trying to invigorate his minority faction in the Irish Parliamentary Party, he found the opposition of the majority too much for him. His marital retreat into the obscurity of middle-class domesticity in Brighton was not enough to protect him from the 'jealousies' which could have been a factor in his early death. Here was no suicide but the consequence of his sudden death after only a few days illness was similar. The effect on his party and on the cause of Home Rule was eventually to be eclipsed by the construction of

---

[18] A and C. Ambrosi, *La France 1870-1986* (Paris, 1986), p. 25.

[19] [...] un homme permettant aux bons bourgeois de se croire des héros sans jamais aller se battre, et aux membres de la Commune de se croire des patriotes, en trahissant toujours. *Le Figaro,* 06/10/1891.

[20] *Le Figaro,* 07/10/1891.

[21] Les morts vont vite! Et l'amour ne porte pas chance aux chefs de parti. Hier Boulanger, aujourd'hui Parnell, et si les bruits de suicide qui ont couru hier à Londres se confirment ou qu'ils soient démenties, on peut dire que [Parnell] a été frappé mortellement le jour où l'on a su et vu qu'[il] ne vivait pas que pour son peuple. On dirait que les peuples sont jaloux de ceux qu'ils aiment et que leur jalousie porte malheur. *Le Figaro,* 08/10/1891.

the myth of the lost leader. Boulanger, on the other hand, was not so fortunate but his lonely, if splendid, exit, loaded with regret for what was and what might have been, caught the imagination at the time. Parnell's cardiac arrest in his Brighton home before his tearful wife was not of the same stuff but their joint story and his widow's management of the myth of the man helped to safeguard his memory.

It is that week of October 1891, when newspaper readers in France were considering the implications of the sudden deaths of two populist politicians in their own country and also in Ireland, which marks the start of this investigation of the impact of Irish affairs on French writers and newspapers.

Chapter 1

Ecrire l'Irlande I: *Chez Paddy*

French Writers and Ireland : I

1885-1905

The literature published in France between 1891 and 1923 either about Ireland or using clearly identifiable Irish characters falls into two broad periods. These are the period up to 1901 and the period from 1901 to 1923. This material falls into two categories: fiction writing and works of political and historical analysis of Ireland. It cannot be said that the country was a source of great inspiration to French fiction writers, although there are some examples of such work. Events in Ireland though, and the shift in political attitude to the governance of Ireland by the Liberals in the first decade of the new century, stimulated attempts at explanation of, and reflection upon, those events. As a result, historical and political analysis became the overarching themes of writing in French on Ireland. The relationship between France and Britain saw a change after 1901. The end of Queen Victoria's reign was a period of high anglophobia in France yet, in a very short time, this all changed and cartoons lampooning the British monarch disappeared from the popular press. The first decade of the new century saw the development of the *Entente Cordiale* between Britain and France which formed the basis of Anglo-French relationships until 1919. This had the effect of closing off the Irish dimension to French writers of whatever degree of intensity of anglophobia. Writing about Ireland could no longer be a way of chipping away at the Anglo-Saxons across the Channel. To do so would lessen the effect of preparing for conflict with Germany and the retaking of the lost provinces. This was much more likely to be successful with the United Kingdom as an ally and so anglophobia became the province only of the sadly obsessed. Once the Great War was over then fiction writing began to place Irish themes or characters before the French reader. These works will be examined in the next chapter.

From the seventeenth century France had given asylum to Ireland's Lords and commoners who provided fresh blood and muscle for France's aristocracy and armed forces. From the moment of James II's precipitate abandonment of his kingdom of Ireland in 1691, France was to benefit from the energy and resourcefulness of Irish political refugees. For example, in the century following 1691, one family alone, the Dillons, were to provide France with an archbishop of Narbonne, various counts, generals, regimental colonels and lady confidantes of Marie-Antoinette. After the Revolution, female Dillons married into the native post-Revolutionary aristocracy including General de Bertrand, Napoleon's Grand Chamberlain and the Marquis de la Tour du Pin, ambassador to the Hague and one of Talleyrand's diplomats at the

Congress of Vienna.[22]

Ireland had played a role in French *realpolitik* over the centuries because of its geographical position on England's flank. In the modern period, the French Government exploited Ireland's geographical position when it suited. This relationship came to be magnified in the folklore of Irish nationalism and codified in the 1840s in articles and songs of such as those of the Young Irelander, Thomas Davis.

How much did Ireland impinge upon the French literary consciousness? The short answer must be, not that much. Ireland was a kind of *Ultima Thule* for the French in the early modern period as the following item proves. In Charles Sorel's [c.1582 - 1674] not very serious work, *Les Mal Mariez,* the character, Alerio, laments how, having caught the King *in flagrante* with his wife, Celistée, the King's response was to send him to Ireland, of all places:

> The King having thought
> Upon it, found no better solution
> Than to distance me
> From the court, and sent me to the isle
> Of Ireland on business
> Of state. While I was there,
> Without thinking what might befall
> He entertained Celistée as he pleased.[23]

French visitors to Ireland in the seventeenth century were invariably military men on campaign who recorded their impressions in correspondence. They were usually justifying their lack of progress and despair at the lack of co-operation of the population and the sheer awfulness of the weather was frequently expressed. The following brief examples give a feel for the material. First, from a letter from Major-General de Boisseleau to Louvois [Louis XIV's minister for war]:

> The bakers are all Protestants, and when they think that the troops need bread they hide their flour and cook nothing. When [...] I needed to march troops towards Kinsale I was obliged to have three days biscuits rations distributed to the soldiers.[24]

---

[22] H-L Dillon, Marquise de La Tour du Pin, *Journal* (trans. F Harcourt, London, 1979), appendix.

[23] Le roy ayant songé / là dessus, ne trouva point d'expedient / meilleur que de m'esloigner/ de sa cour, et m'envoya en l'isle / d'Irlande pour quelques affaires / de son estat. Tandis que j'y estois / sans m'imaginer ce qui estoit avenu, / il entretenoit Celistée à sa volonté. C. Sorel, *Les Mal mariez* dans 'Les nouvelles françaises où se trouvent divers effets de l'amour et de la fortune' (Paris, 1623), p. 159.

[24] Messieurs les boulangers sont tous Protestans, et lorsqu'ils croyent que les troupes ont besoin de pain, ils cachent leur farine et ne cuisent pas. Lorsque [...] je fus obligé de marcher avec les troupes du costé de Kinsale je fus obligé de faire donner pour trois jours de biscuits aux soldats. L. Tate, (ed.), 'Franco-Irish correspondence; December 1688 - August 1691' in *Analecta Hibernica* no. 21 (Dublin, 1959), p. 142.

A letter to James II from his Marshal-General, Conrad von Rozen, commander of the siege of Londonderry during the summer of 1689, expresses his despair at the prevailing weather conditions:

> [...] the impossibility of having to live in the trenches which are flooded either by the river because of the tides or by the continuous rain which will ruin and lose the troops that Your Majesty has before this place.[25]

A century was to elapse before there was a notable French literary response to Ireland. In the late eighteenth-century travel writing emerged in France. This was writing describing journeys made and highlighting the exotic. Although Montaigne's *Journal de Voyage* dates from 1580-81, it was first published over 100 years later. It was the first of this type of literature and describes a journey to Switzerland and Italy. Montaigne never went near Ireland but, in 1796, the émigré Chevalier de Latocnaye did, and he has left us with a cheerfully perceptive account of his journey. Having visited Scotland he travelled to Ireland and, after staying a while in Dublin, set out on his *promenade,* quite literally a 'walk' around Ireland, travelling light. His kit was packed in two silk stockings and a bag for his shoes. On the road he would carry these in a large handkerchief over his shoulder on the end of his sword-stick. This last had an umbrella fixed above it, to the general amusement of passers by.[26] This was the first of a series of literary attempts to describe and explain Ireland to French readers.

A hiatus caused by the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars delayed further essays of the *genre*. However, these wars provoked a lasting insertion of French ideas into the Irish revolutionary blueprint. The Directory, initially unconvinced of the strategic value of Ireland, was, nevertheless, successfully lobbied by Wolfe Tone and it authorised a project for invasion in 1796 under General Lazare Hoche. Following the failure of Hoche's expedition, another attempt was made in 1798 and a landing took place under General Joseph Humbert. This was intended to support the United Irishmen's rising, but it ended in military defeat after a few weeks. Nevertheless, in later years the events of 1798, 'the Year of the French,' became part of the Nationalist canon.

The differing perceptions of the events of that year on both sides of *La Mer*

---

[25] [...] l'impossibilité qu'il y a de pouvoir habiter dans les tranchées qui sont inondées tant par la rivière, à cause de la marée, que par les pluys continuelles qui vont entierment ruiner et perdre les troupes que Votre Majesté a devant cette place.. Ibid., p. 151.

[26] De Latocnaye, *Promenade d'un Français dans l'Irlande* (Trans: J. Stevenson); (Belfast 1917 with

d'Iroise [the Western Approaches] can be seen as a paradigm of the awareness of both countries of each other. For the Irish in rebellion, France and French arms were seen as potentially crucial to success and the establishment of an independent Ireland. For the French, despite the temporary establishment of the *Directoire de Connachie* [Directory of Connacht] and a brief flutter of interest in the Paris press, the enterprise was destined by failure to be of little permanent interest. Public opinion was more attracted to reports of General Bonaparte's activities in Egypt.[27]

Throughout the nineteenth century a few scholars and writers produced works inspired by, and describing, Ireland. The influence on French political thinking of Daniel O'Connell's campaigns for Catholic emancipation and later for Repeal of the Union continues to exercise academics in France. Recently, one has even gone so far as to suggest that O'Connell's political activity had a direct influence on the direction of French politics and that this was the first occasion since the middle ages that France was influenced by Ireland.[28]

The last quarter of the century saw a period of violence and change in both Ireland and France. Ireland experienced the Land League agitation, political violence and assassination. France, finally eschewing dictatorship in 1871 and monarchy in 1877, established the Third Republic out of the ashes of national defeat at the hands of the Prussians, suffered the ignominy of seeing Alsace and Lorraine absorbed into the German Empire. This suggests that, while still an imperialist power, France had nevertheless a certain openness to other European peoples who expressed dissatisfaction with the political *status quo.* The Nationalist potential of Ireland's situation was clearly set out in 1885 at a lecture given at the annual meeting of the *Société des Études Historiques* in Amiens where the Act of Union came under criticism:

> Throw an act [of government] into the midst of human society and you will see the surface of the popular masses move and shake, you see waves flow out to the ends of space and time, you will see successive generations feel the shock."[29]

---

introduction by J Gamble FRGS 1984), p. 125.

[27] M. Elliott, *Partners in Revolution*, p.225.

[28] L. Colantonio, *Daniel O'Connell et la France* (Unpublished doctoral paper, Paris-St Denis, 1995), passim.

[29] Jetez un acte au milieu des sociétés humaines vous voyez la surface mobile des masses populaires s'agiter et tréssaillir, vous voyez des ondes courir jusqu'aux extremites de l'espace et du temps, vous voyez les générations successives en ressentir la secousse. J. Flach, *Considérations sur l'Histoire Politique de l'Irlande* (Amiens, 1885), p. 1.

The speaker, Jacques Flach of the Collège de France, was from Alsace and was explicitly connecting Irish desires for self rule under the Union with post-1871 revanchist French desires for reunion with the lost provinces.

At the same time other Nationalists sought justification for France's imperial role by tracing the foundation of the nation-state back to dynastic and territorial developments with historical analogies with England in contrast to the scrambled arrangements of German and Italian unity. The French historian, Ernest Renan, noted acidly that a community of interests was not enough to create a nation. He put it in truly 'eurosceptic' terms in his lecture at the Sorbonne in 1882 when he stated that:

.... a customs union is not a mother country.[30]

Literature in French of the Belle Époque and the first two decades of the twentieth century does not appear, at first sight, particularly rewarding for the researcher seeking images of Ireland. Nevertheless, a significant literature about Ireland does exist and French language writers, some even of considerable reputation, did produce works set in, about, or describing the country. This study examines these works.

One of Jules Verne's least-known books, *P'tit Bonhomme,* published in 1893, is set in Ireland and although the plot is not particularly Irish, there is some local colour in it. In other previous works Verne had made reference to Irish emigration[31] and Daniel O'Connell was one of his political heroes.[32] There were also writers who had an academic interest in some aspect of Irish affairs. Problems of land tenure, the governance of Ireland, the state of the Catholic Church in Ireland and Irish literature, all had their adherents. Baron de Mandat-Grancey's *Chez Paddy* (1887) examines the land question in Ireland at the time of the Land War and offers a critique of the Irish national character. Although this was first published just before the period under discussion, its translation as *Paddy at Home* was widely sold in Ireland in the early 1890s. The social historian, Fustel de Coulanges, comments on Celtic land tenure in ancient times.[33] Achille Lemire in his *De l'Irlande en Australie*[34] devotes an entire

---

[30] ..... un *Zollverein* n'est pas une patrie - E. Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation? Conférence fait en Sorbonne 11/03/1882* (Paris, 1934), p. 77.

[31] J. Verne, *Les Enfants du Capitaine Grant, Vol 2* (Paris, 1930), pp. 67- 69.

[32] J. Chesneau, *Jules Verne: un regard sur le monde* (Paris, 2001), p.18.

[33] F. de Coulanges, *The origin of property in land* (trans. M. Ashley, London, 1891).

chapter to '*Pourqui j'aime l'Irlande'* which dwells at some length on the Catholic faith of the Irish.

Various academics were interested in Irish literary matters and their activities form part of the literature on Ireland in French in the years 1890 to 1923. Best known of these is Henri d'Arbois de Jubainville, *Professeur* at the Collège de France between 1880 and 1906, whose *Introduction à l'étude de la littérature celtique* (1882) is still available as an e-book.[35] Other academics include the previously mentioned Jacques Flach, who also taught at the Collège de France, whose *Considérations sur l'Irlande* was published in the *Revue de la Société des études historiques* in 1885 and who delivered lectures on the theme in various venues.[36] In 1893, Jules Michelet's *Sur les chemins de l'Europe* was re-published and between pages 78 and 103 there are notes on his journey to Ireland.[37] The school of historical writing headed by Jules Michelet comes down to our period through the works of Hippolyte Taine, Taine's friend and colleague Ernest Renan and his son-in-law Louis Paul-Dubois. Hippolyte Taine has been described as undeniably French yet, strikingly, an 'eminent Victorian'.[38] A polyglot and supreme intellect, his observations of English society were inspired by visits to the country and reinforced by his reading of the works of Macaulay and George Eliot, amongst others. Although Taine never wrote specifically about Ireland, his *Notes sur l'Angleterre* are useful as a reminder to us, who live in the world of the European Union and globalisation, of just how foreign England seemed to French eyes in the second half of the nineteenth century. Therefore, we can reasonably conclude that Ireland must have seemed even more so.

There is a direct connecting link between French historians and the Irish Cultural Revival. Jules Michelet constructed a view of the Revolution as the fundamental event in the development of modern France in his *Histoire de France* (1867). This work was an inescapable backdrop to French historiography of the Third Republic and informed much of Taine and Paul-Dubois' work. In his early work *Introduction à l'histoire universelle* (Paris, 1831) he notes how the nations [races] of the United Kingdom live uneasily together.

---

[34] A. Lemire, *D'Irlande en Australie* (Lille, 1890), Ch. XIV pp. 121-148.
[35] http://www.arbredor.com/titres/littceltiques.html
[36] see note 29 above J. Flach, (Amiens, 1889).
[37] J. Michelet, *Sur les chemins de l'Europe: Angleterre, Flandre, Hollande, Suisse, Lombardie, Tyrol,* (Paris, 1893).

> Excessively reduced in a narrow space, these [races] are not mixed together. And I am not speaking of the fatal dead weight of Ireland which England can neither tow behind her nor throw into the sea. But in the very [British] island itself the Welshman sings of the coming humiliation of England with the return of Arthur or Bonaparte. Was it so long ago that the Highlanders fought the English at Culloden?[39]

In his book *Le Peuple* he also set out his notion of history as being a statement of their '*resurrection*'. 'I called it [history] and this definition will remain'.[40] History as discourse of resurrection is indeed the natural follower of the Easter 1916 myth of the blood sacrifice. French historians writing during the Third Republic may not have used quite the same language but, with the exception of Rodolphe Escouflaire, they saw the 'resurrection' of the Irish people in Sinn Féin's struggle for power. The work of these French historians of the Michelet school fed into early twentieth-century Irish republican ideology and led to a particular interpretation of Irish history. The roots of Irish Nationalist historiography, such as the work of Dorothy McArdle, therefore lie in the work of the great nineteenth-century French historians.[41]

Paul-Dubois was a friend of Tom Kettle, Redmondite M.P. for East Tyrone in 1908, who translated his first major work on Ireland. It was Tom Kettle, who asserted that 'it is the French that have come closest to the secret of Ireland'.[42] In France, academic exploration of the mystery of Ireland developed in the new area of Celtic studies. The principal exponent was Henri d'Arbois de Jubainville who was an associate of Maude Gonne during her time in Paris. John Millington Synge attended all his classes in Old Irish in 1902, at times being the only student present.[43] Ironically, one of Arthur Griffith's noisy young men who disrupted Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* at the Abbey theatre in 1907 was the same Tom Kettle who clearly felt that Synge had misunderstood the secret of Ireland despite having sat at the feet of

---

[38] H. A., Taine, *Notes on England* (trans. E. Hymans, London, 1957 and 1995), p. xxv.

[39] Condensées à l'excès sur un étroit espace, elles ne s' y sont pas pour cela mêlées davantage. Et je ne parle pas de ce fatal remora de l'Irlande que l'Angleterre ne peut ni traîner, ni jeter à la mer. Mais dans son île même, le Gallois chante, avec le retour d'Arthur et de Bonaparte, l'humiliation prochaine de l' Angleterre. Y a-t-il si longtemps que les higlanders combattirent encore les anglais à Culloden ?J. Michelet, *Introduction à l'histoire universelle* (Paris, 1831), p. 458.

[40] 'Je l'ai nommé résurrection, et ce nom lui restera'. J. Michelet, *Le Peuple* (Paris, 1974, edn. Flammarion), p. 73.

[41] MacArdle cites L. Paul-Dubois, Y. Goblet, L. Le Roux and S. Briollay in her bibliography.

[42] L Paul-Dubois, *Contemporary Ireland* (trans T.M. Kettle, Dublin and New York 1908), Introduction p. v.

[43] D. H. Greene, and E. Stephens, *J.M.Synge* (New York, 1959), p. 125.

de Jubainville and even [on 19th April 1902] at his dining table.[44]

The 1880s was the decade of the Land War in Ireland, when the second major nineteenth-century political mobilisation of the Irish rural poor for land tenure reform and Home Rule took place. While O'Connell had essentially failed in the 1840s to achieve his aim of repeal of the Union, his mobilisation of the rural population was generally peaceful. The violent outburst of the Young Ireland movement in 1848 only took place after his death. But in the 1880s Charles Stewart Parnell led the repeal movement in the House of Commons while being well aware of the currents of violence which ran though the grassroots of his movement. He is alleged to have remarked to a colleague shortly before he was arrested in October 1881 that 'If I am arrested, Captain Moonlight will take my place.' This was a reference to the mythical leader of the movement of intimidation and agrarian outrage which was rampant in the Irish countryside and which was often the violent local face of the Home Rule campaign.[45] Whether he actually said this is debateable, but what is clear is that those close to him recognised that Parnell understood the localised violence integral to his movement.

This decade also saw a number of works in French on Ireland that set the scene for this study. Works showing some analysis include that by E. Hérvé, who addresses what he sees as the three problems of Ireland: legislative autonomy; religious liberty; the agrarian question.[46] He did not envisage a complete separation of Ireland from England but felt that an 'Austro-Hungarian' solution was being the most practical. He suggested that the solution would require the Empire to be turned into a federal parliamentary institution. He saw the best solution to be an *Ausgleich* on the Austro-Hungarian model of 1867. This is interesting in the light of Arthur Griffith's articles in *The United Irishman* early in 1904 and his later monograph, *The Resurrection of Hungary* (1904). William Smith O'Brien had already made the link between Young Ireland and Young Hungary in 1848 and Griffith quoted his remark that the case of Ireland is as nearly as possible parallel to the case of Hungary.[47] Hervé sums up the problem of the relationship between England and Ireland as that of two countries

---

[44] Ibid.

[45] R. Kee, *The Laurel and the ivy: the story of Charles Stewart Parnell and Irish nationalism* (London, 1993), p. 390.

[46] E. Hervé, *La Crise irlandaise depuis la fin du dix-huitième siècle à nos Jours* (Paris, 1885), passim.

[47] A. Griffith, *The Resurrection of Hungary: a parallel for Ireland,* (Dublin 3rd ed, 1918),

which nature made to live united and which the differences of races, religion and customs have, for centuries, placed in a state of hostility.[48]

The aristocratic travel writer, Baron de Mandat-Grancey was a fine observer of Ireland.[49] His book, *Chez Paddy*, (1887) caused a deal of criticism, particularly from Catholic writers.[50] It was written with an acute degree of observation and empathy for those with whom the Baron came in contact. The book is in two distinct parts. The first is a travelogue interspersed with reflections on what he has observed. He sought to be impartial and to report what he saw, noting comic detail where he saw fit. The Baron had a certain status as a travel writer since he had a naval background which took him around the world and he knew the Anglo-Saxon countries well. Previous publications included *Dans les montagnes Rocheuses* (1884) and *En visite chez l'oncle Sam, New-York et Chicago* (1885) which revealed a scepticism about American civilisation. As a conservative landowner, he held firm views on the Land League's activities and the rights of landlords.[51] His family had a major property at Grancey-le-Chateau which is about half-way between Dijon and Langres in the northern part of the *département* of the Côte d'Or.[52]

There is a conflict throughout *Chez Paddy* between the author's understanding of the landowners and his compassion for the misery of the Catholic rural poor which stops short of active sympathy for the victims of eviction. The more time he spends in Ireland the more he sustains the landlords, laying the blame for the misery of the poorest labourers on the habit of subletting portions of a holding by the larger tenants. The content of the book and the nature of the criticism it provoked on publication, render it essential reading for this study. The responses to it illuminate the aspects of the late nineteenth-century French view of Ireland which justify its inclusion in this study, despite the fact that its date of publication was just before our period.[53]

The journey described in the book takes place during July 1886 and takes the author from London to Holyhead, to Dublin and then to Limerick, Kerry and Cork. He

---

frontespiece.

[48] deux pays que la nature a faits pour vivre unis et que les differences de races, religion et de moeurs, ont mis depuis des siècles en état d'hostilité. E. Hervé, p. 370.

[49] Baron de Mandat-Grancey, *Chez Paddy* (Paris, 1887).

[50] See E. Piché, *Réponse à 'Chez Paddy'. Pour l'Irlande* (Paris, 1887), and A. Lemire, p. 121.

[51] Mandat-Grancey p. 279 Mandat-Grancey was a distant relation by marriage of Alexis de Tocqueville whose cousin was la Comtesse de Grancey, to whom the author dedicated *Chez Paddy*.

[52] Mandat-Grancey, p. 80.

[53] It was translated as *Paddy at home* (London, 1893), and was popular in Ireland during the following

meets William O'Brien editor of the Parnellite *United Ireland,*[54] Dwyer Gray of the more moderate '*Freeman's Journal,*'[55] certain military landowners in Limerick and Mr Townsend Trench of Lansdowne Lodge, Kenmare.[56]

Chapter Six is an interesting description of his experience of attending a meeting of the Kerry Grand Jury and his reflections on this form of local government. In Chapter Seven he examines in detail the boycotting of Mr Thompson of Shannganeen in Co. Cork and the response of the local landowners through the Cork Defence Union. Finally, Chapter Eight constitutes the second part of the book and sets out the conclusions reached following his sojourn *chez* 'Paddy'. He expresses the view that the Irish with their Land League activity are pursuing a mistaken goal. He likens them to mice in a box trap desperately seeking the exit and states that, like the mice, the Irish are aggravating their situation since 'the exit door is not where they seek it.'[57] He accepts that the misery of the people in the rural areas is real enough but suggests that the Land League's objective of obtaining tenant land ownership was misconceived. He also comments that, given the degree and spread of agitation [*fermentation*] and, given the inability of the Government to maintain order, he is tempted to believe that a bloody revolution will result. He sees this as the logical conclusion of the activity of the Land League leaders and that of their supportive journalists. The suppression of such a revolt would be a long drawn-out and bloody affair - a fair conclusion in this case.

Mandat-Grancey then comments of the historical ineffectiveness of Irish rebellions so far. He contrasts past rebellions with that of the Royalist and Catholic opposition to the first French Republic in the Vendée and in Brittany where, he maintains, royalist rebels [*les chouans*] successfully held down government forces at the end of the eighteenth century with little or no resources. He finds this difficult to explain, given the value and competence of Irish soldiery both as an ally and as an opponent of France. He feels that in Ireland there is a natural propensity for conspiracy but that the conspirator evolves only with difficulty into a rebel.[58] He also maintains that the leadership of all the revolts so far have had the feeling that independence for

---

two decades.

[54] Baron E. de Mandat-Grancey, p. 30.

[55] Baron E. de Mandat-Grancey, p. 77.

[56] Baron E. de Mandat-Grancey, p. 140 ff.

[57] la porte de la sortie n'est pas du coté où ils la cherchent. Baron E. de Mandat-Grancey, p. 292.

Ireland is an impossibility because the English would never surrender their strategic interest in Ireland and that the Irish always need England economically to survive. He suggests, with fully intentional irony, that the only way for the Irish to avoid being at the economic mercy of England would be for them to invade and conquer her. They could then make Dublin the capital of the reconstituted United Kingdom and ensure that all tax revenues flowed into and not out of Ireland. Failing this, the Irish would have to establish other markets for their produce, in France, for example, in order to survive. But as long as the English were able to buy their beef and dairy produce elsewhere, the Irish, even if nominally independent, would remain economic hostages to England. Logically, as the Irish lacked an export infrastructure on a European or world scale, they were obliged to remain *de facto* subject citizens of the United Kingdom.

Home Rule, which he calls *la separation rélative*, is considered equally unreasonable since he fears that this would result in the outflow of capital from Ireland with disastrous results for its industrial development and in particular improvement of its agriculture. Furthermore, Mandat-Grancey sustains the notion that the times are not propitious for the transfer of land to the peasantry. He maintains that, all over Europe and the United States of America, the actual tendency is for the consolidation of farming units with larger units making better economic sense in the world of the 1880s. He gives the example of the United States, where the Government provided immigrants with holdings in units of 160 acres, granted on condition that they are not sold on for five years. After that time he has observed that the holdings are then sold and that serious agricultural activity only takes place on aggregated holdings of 5000 acres or more. The Land League ideal of small tenant ownership is therefore doomed to economic disaster. The nub of his argument is that agriculture needs capital investment in order to be successful and the only way in which the Land League ideal can flourish is by state ownership of the land. He sees this as impractical in addition to being politically undesirable, because of the implications for the national debt. The tax burden currently carried by the landowners would be transferred to the smallholders with the addition of the interest payments on the increase in the national debt leading to inflation. Consequently, he develops the argument for capitalist exploitation of large holdings where the landowner 'contracts' the expertise

---

[58] le conspirateur se transforme très difficilement en rebelle. Baron E. de Mandat-Grancey, p. 293.

of agricultural workers [*cultivateurs de profession*] to ensure production from the land. The landowner does not give up his property, gains 3-4% per year from the advanced capital, by buildings, equipment etc., rented by the tenant farmer, who himself makes 8-10% on this value per year. He suggests that this European system of farming out, [*fermage*] is the only way for agriculture to survive.[59]

Given that *fermage* requires a stability of relationship between landowner and tenant, he considers whether it is legitimate to accuse the Irish landowners of over-exploiting their tenants. He takes the view that as leases are long, over three generations, in Ireland, landowners quite naturally seek to recoup their share of the value that rising prices have brought to the country over past years.[60] This they did by raising the lease-price when it fell due. Now that prices have fallen back he suggests that leases should also do so. However, this has not happened and in fact certain landowners realised high returns when a number of leases fell due by selling them on as speculation. He accuses Parnell himself of this activity.[61] When he found a victim of the system bled white, it was always an under-tenant and not a tenant farmer. He maintains that there is hardly one of the latter who does not manage to sub-let to a number of unfortunates, like the man in the cabin in Derrygarriff. He suggests that there might be some 300,000 similar cases in Ireland and takes a Malthusian view of this state of affairs, blaming the fecundity of the Irish and the diminishing number of properties for the pressure. On most estates there is too much land which under-tenants have subdivided to raise the rent.[62] This criticism of tenure of encumbered estates in the West provides a context for the process of commercialisation and modernisation of the agriculture elsewhere in post-Famine Ireland where pasture was replacing tillage, a process clearly identified by various modern Irish historians.[63]

Mandat-Grancey discusses the problem of over-population in a rather odd manner. First, he wonders what the Government can do. He accuses the Government in fact of being the greatest absentee landlord. He suggests that some of the state

---

[59] Baron E. de Mandat-Grancey, p. 302.

[60] For a modern justification of this viewpoint see W.E. Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in Ireland 1848-1904* (Dublin, 1984).

[61] Baron E. de Mandat-Grancey, p. 310.

[62] Baron E. de Mandat-Grancey, pp 137 and 318.

[63] see P. Bull, *Land, Politics and Nationalism,* (Dublin, 1996), p. 38, A Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998,* (Oxford, 1999), pp 81-82, R. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972,* (Harmondsworth, 1988), p. 410, S. Duffy (ed), *Atlas of Irish History,* (Dublin, 1997), pp. 104-105 and C. O'Grada, *Ireland, before and after the Famine,* (Manchester, 1988), passim.

industries such as naval shipyards could be transferred to Ireland to provide much needed work. By such an initiative emigration could be lessened. He feels that this is desirable, since the United Kingdom, as the mother country of the British Empire, needs to maintain her population to justify her position before the white Dominions whose population is growing day by day.[64]

In the light of this reasoning he feels that Gladstone's Home Rule Bill of 1885 was a potential disaster for Ireland and rejoices in its failure. A reorganisation of local administration would be better, leading to a real move from tillage to pasture, which he sees as adding value and thereby enriching the country. He comments on the collections in the Irish-American community which sustain the Land League and the falling off of support in the USA for these collections. He quotes a speaker at a Chicago Irish-American convention who maintained:

> that if the millions of dollars sent to Ireland were only used to enable the occasional shot to be fired at a landlord, from behind a hedge, the result would not really be in proportion to the sacrifice made.[65]

In addition, Mandat-Grancey feels that the clergy are just looking for a way out of their position of general support for the Land League, since religion has little to gain from its success. But it is emigration that will finish the Land League, since the more who emigrate the less competition there will be for land in Ireland. The Baron comments that he had always considered that the Irish were relatively glad to emigrate but now he knows that in the past this was not the case. Emigration was always a last resort but now he finds the young thinking of nothing else.[66]

The Baron maintains that Irish independence, or a modification of the actual political situation, cannot be achieved by the Land League. If the Nationalist agenda was only to take revenge on England for past injustices they might have better chances for success, but in this event, they would be crushed under the ruins of her destruction. Yet such an event would not be wholly negative. The reasons for Ireland's misery would be fully exposed and the suffering of that section of the population, which clings obstinately to land, land which cannot feed them, would be shortened. By the time the book appeared, a second Ireland existed in the USA and third was opening up

---

[64] Baron E. de Mandat-Grancey, p. 317.

[65] que si les millions de dollars envoyés en Irlande ne devait servir qu'à faire tirer de temps en temps un coup de fusil sur un landlord, de derrière une haie, le résultat n'était vraiment pas proportionné aux sacrifices. Baron E. de Mandat-Grancey, p. 318.

in the Dominions and Mandat-Grancey feels that these Irelands will provide the opportunities for the suffering Irish. However, he wonders whether, in the prosperity that the Irish will find there, they will preserve their qualities of religious faith, morality and gaiety so strongly maintained at home. Mandat-Grancey fears not but hopes that these qualities will remain amongst those left in Ireland.

Mandat-Grancey's grasp of Irish politics seems tenuous but he is on firmer ground with certain of his economic arguments. He foresaw the continuing economic dependence of the Irish Free State on Britain after 1923 and, implicitly, the cost to Ireland of *de Valera*'s economic war with Britain. What he was not able to perceive was the strength of Irish national self-definition which was to play such an important part in Irish political life in the second decade of the twentieth century. This said, the value of the work lies in its descriptions of Ireland at the time of the Land League. For us, and this is the important point, *Chez Paddy* is much more than just a banal travelogue. It is written with a degree of wit and genuine compassion. If used with care, given the prejudices of the author, it can take on the role of a primary source providing an intriguing insight into the world of rural Ireland in the 1880s. For example, he shows us that, long after the Famine, the practice of subdivision of holdings was still being carried out on encumbered estates in the West, in spite of the attempts of land agents to stop it. He has Trench explaining how one of his tenants now has 12 hectares of indifferent land supporting 45 souls because of this practice.[67]

Mandat-Grancey repeatedly exposes the economic failure of the land tenure system and points out that, although the landowners are frequently English, the actual exploitation of the majority of the Irish rural poor is carried out by other Irish tenants who subdivide and rent out their holdings. The Baron's musings on the Irish political and economic situation do not stand up to close analysis but some of his conclusions are interesting. He argues against the drain of emigration and feels the Government must address the Irish question with more dedication. The book's strength for us today is in the descriptive passages which illuminate the different worlds of the rural poor in the West and the Anglo-Irish administrators and agents.

As indicated above, the book has two quite distinct parts. The first is essentially a travelogue highlighting Ireland, the exotic and the dangerous. Travel is

---

[66] Baron E. de Mandat-Grancey, p. 319.
[67] Baron E. de Mandat-Grancey, p. 156.

described as a scary business, given the potentiality of Land League violence. Mr Townsend Trench meets the Baron off the train at Killarney with his horse and trap:

> 'You are not afraid to sit beside me?' asked Trench laughing. 'We shall be passing through some of my worst villages. If I get shot at you will also get your share of buckshot.'[68]

Then, as they start off Trench points out a large castle where 20 constables mount a round-the-clock guard following Land League threats to blow the place up. Trench concludes:

> Trench: 'That costs the government 50,000 francs a year.'
> Mandat-Grancey: 'Do you really think that if they were withdrawn, the castle would be blown up?'
> Trench: 'I'm absolutely convinced of it, the dynamite is quite ready.'[69]

Yet his descriptions of the state of the poor in Co. Kerry are pithy but evocative and with a degree of empathy. For example:

> The family around us is made up of a man of about forty, his wife and her mother-in-law, who is seventy-seven and is blind, and four children between the ages of ten and two. I have never seen, in any part of the world, such misery. The man is covered with rags to which one could just about give the name of clothes. He alone is wearing shoes. In this country all work in the fields is done with a spade. In order to dig one must have shoes. That is why men are always the ones to have shoes; but what beggars description are the nameless tatters that hang on the women and the children. The old woman, who is blind as I have already stated, is wearing only a shift and a skirt which scarcely reaches her knees. These two items of clothing are in such a state that she is in reality almost naked.
> ....
> The other woman is dressed in more or less the same way. Two of the children, the youngest, are stark naked. They seem to be the best off. What is terrible is to see the muddy skin, hollow cheeks and drawn features of all these people. It is quite clear that they are suffering from starvation.[70]

---

[68] Vous n'avez pas peur de vous asseoir à côté de moi? me dit en riant M.Trench; nous allons passer dans quelques-uns de mes plus mauvais villages. Si on tire sur moi, vous recevrez votre part de la charge. Baron E. de Mandat-Grancey, p. 144.

[69] - Cela coûte 50,000 francs par an au gouvernement - Croyez-vous réellement que si on les retirait, le château sauterait? - J'en suis absoluement convaincu, la dynamite est toute prête. Mandat-Grancey, p.145.

[70] La famille, qui nous entoure, se compose d'un homme de quarante ans environ, de sa femme, de sa belle-mère, qui a soixante-dix-sept ans et est aveugle, et de quatre enfants de dix à deux ans. Je n'ai jamais vu, dans aucune partie du monde, de misère pareille. L'homme est couvert de guenilles auxquelles, à la rigueur, on peut donner le nom de vêtements. Il a des souliers. Dans ce pays toute la culture se fait à la bêche. Pour bêcher, il faut avoir des souliers. C'est pour cela que les hommes sont toujours les seuls de la famille à être chaussés; mais ce qui défie toute description, ce sont les loques sans nom dont sont affublés les femmes et les enfants. La vieille, qui est aveugle, comme je crois l'avoir déjà dit, n'a qu'une chemise et un jupon qui lui vient à peine aux genoux. Ces deux vêtements sont dans un tel. état qu'en réalité elle est à peu près nue .... L'autre femme est habillée à peu près

This is a harrowing description which is all the more striking, given the social standing of Mandat-Grancey. He also deplores the savage behaviour of the drunken Dragoons who beat a man senseless.[71] His occasional descent into 'paddy-whackery', which is as bad as some modern humorous writers on 'Iorland', may be excused perhaps when there are passages like this. He is occasionally genuinely comic. One of the funniest passages is when he describes a dinner with the English or Anglo-Irish colleagues of land agent Trench declining into farce as bullets fly in the dining room as a result of a guest questioning the shooting skill of Mr Trench. Mandat-Grancey finds himself under the table in terror as Trench demonstrates his accuracy with a revolver.[72]

Chez Paddy was rapidly translated into English and on sale in Ireland in the early 1890s and provided a source for later studies. The response was almost immediate. The first salvo of outrage in France was fired by Father Émile Piché. He was French-Canadian and had worked in Ulster as a parish priest in Lurgan in Co Armagh. He held Nationalist sympathies developed by his experience amongst the Catholic population in what was a very mixed area. He was outraged by Mandat-Grancey's style and analysis. His little book, actually more of a super-pamphlet, is therefore a bitter attack on the Baron.[73]

After presenting a list of casualties of the 'benefits' of the last fifty years of British rule in Ireland, Piché's book opens with a bitter *Avant-propos.* This takes the form of a letter to Baron Mandat-Grancey. In his final paragraph he says:

> The cheerful soul who wrote *Chez Paddy* and amused himself by engaging in political economy while dining with [land] agents will understand my frankness and will perhaps accept that his caricature of my dear Ireland is miserable and false.[74]

Piché then proceeds to set out the question at issue. This is followed by his argument that British administration of Ireland since 1860 proves the need for Home Rule, and

---

de même. Deux des enfants, les plus petits sont tout nus. Ce sont encore eux qui semblent les mieux. Ce qu'il y a de terrible, c'est qu'à voir la peau terreuse, les joues creuses et les traits tirés de tous ces gens, il est manifeste qu'ils souffrent de la faim. Baron E. de Mandat-Grancey, pp. 147 - 149.

[71] Baron E. de Mandat-Grancey, p. 187.

[72] Baron E. de Mandat-Grancey, p. 168.

[73] E. Piché, *Pour l'Irlande: Reponse à "Chez Paddy"* (Paris, 1887).

[74] Le rieur qui a composé *Chez Paddy* et s'est amusé à faire de l'économie politique en dînant chez les *agents* comprendra ma franchiese et reconnaîtra peut-être que sa caricature de ma chère Irlande est fausee et malheureuse. E. Piché, pp. vi and vii.

also that the agrarian question in Ireland is distinct from the contemporary crisis which affects the continent and requires special local solution. In the final part of his book entitled 'Objections' he makes generally disparaging remarks about 'The London Tory-Orange Press', and quotes from several articles in the *Times* to illustrate his theme.[75]

Piché makes the following observation about Mandat-Grancey's visit to Ireland. He remarks that Ireland is a far off place and in a short stay of two or three months nobody can discover everything.[76] Thus Mandat-Grancey is immediately accused of superficiality and exploiting his hosts. Having spent much of his time with the gentry, Mandat-Grancey cannot have gained a fair impression of the problems of the Catholic poor. Piché quotes advice given him when he first arrived in Belfast:

> I met a perfect gentleman ... (who, speaking of the South asked) - What? You have come to Ireland? But everything is in flames and blood is being spilt; it is not safe for a foreigner to venture abroad here. Look, in your place, I would have gone to Switzerland![77]

To illustrate how matters stood for the Catholic population, Piché describes how the Orange area of Lisburn was the least 'moral,' the most violent and the most bigoted of the two, but was left without police patrols. The Catholic area, meanwhile, was under the control of a crowd of policemen who were sometimes drunk and abused their authority.[78] Piché is suggesting that he has a better view of matters given his experience but seems to forget the vivid description of the *dragonnade* in Mandat-Grancey's book. The Baron is reproached for having only made a flying visit to some Nationalists in Dublin and then spent more time with the land agents, Trench & Thompson. He is accused of mocking a priest, of having represented Limerick on a Fair Day, of giving a suggestive description of a young Irishwoman who was wearing a traditional shawl and having described an eviction with the conclusion that if the

---

[75] 1: *The Times* 1/04/1837 Remarks on Daniel O'Connell. 2: *The Times* 29/07/1844 Orange lodges. 3: *The Times* 26/06/1845 Famine. 4: *The Times* 12/01/1860 Catholic Medievalism.

[76] L'Irlande c'est bien loin et dans un court sejour de deux ou trois mois on ne peut pas tout savoir. E. Piché, p. 3.

[77] Lors de ma premiere arrivée à Belfast je rencontrai un parfait gentleman ..... (qui me parlait du sud m'a demandé) 'Comment, Monsieur, vous venez en Irlande? Mais tout y est à feu et à sang; mais il n'est pas prudent pour un étranger de s'aventurer. Tenez, moi à votre place, je serais allé en Suisse!' E. Piché, p. 5.

[78] Le quartier orangiste (de ma petite ville) [Lisburn] était le moins morale, le plus tapageur et le plus fanatique des deux; mais qu'il était laissé sans surveillance de la police, tandis que le quartier catholique était sour le contrôle d'une foule d'hommes de police qui, parfois ivres, abusaient de leur autorité. E. Piché, p. 6.

poor die of hunger then they must have deserved it.[79]

Piché goes on to describe the ideal of Home Rule as 'like that of Canada' [80] and gives a list of twenty-three colonies that have Home Rule as proof that 'Home Rule is not separation from England.'[81] Piché's anglophobia, induced by his experience amongst the Catholic Irish, breaks through what could appear to a casual reader to be a straight attack on de Mandat-Grancey. The *Québecois* has hitched his views on 'Anglo' domination to the cause of the Catholic Irish which he sees as having been ill served by *Chez Paddy*.

Piché's solution to the agrarian question was to recognise the need for an Act of Parliament to allow the Government to buy out the landlords and allow the tenants to buy their holdings with state backed mortgages. This would remedy the situation where tenants are insolvent and landowners are bankrupt.[82] This would, he suggests, remove the culture of emigration from Ireland which he likens to a vampire which takes deep draughts from the vital strength of Ireland and peoples the world with bitter enemies of England. [83]

As a final thrust, Piché accuses Mandat-Grancey of plagiarism by claiming authorship of the Baron's story about the priest who, faced by the man who confessed to killing several policemen, gave absolution with the words 'Fool! You should have told me sooner!' The Baron is accused of elaborating the story and so putting in question much of the rest of his book.[84]

The work of this irate priest concludes with the reminder to Mandat-Grancey and the general reader, that many Irishmen and Irishwomen considered that Ireland was a separate nation which had acted independently from Britain by supporting the cause of France in the Autumn of 1870 and had sent men to fight for it.[85] His readers would know that Britain adopted a policy of vaguely pro-Prussian neutrality during the Franco-Prussian War. What his readers might not have known is that the 'official' Irish contribution to the French cause was actually two *ambulances* or medical

---

[79] E. Piché, pp. 7-8.

[80] semblable à celle du Canada. E. Piché, p. 9.

[81] Le Home Rule n'est donc pas la separation d'avec l'Angleterre. E. Piché, p. 10.

[82] Nous avons actuellement des tenaciers insolvables et des proprietaires en banqueroute. E. Piché, p. 12. Here, he is suggesting the principle of the Wyndham Act of 1903 which accelerated the transfer of land ownership to tenant farmers in Ireland

[83] L'emigration, c'est le vampire qui boit à longs traits les forces vitales de la pauvre Erin, c'est le système qui peuple le monde d'ennemis acharnés contre l'Angleterre. E. Piché, p. 13.

[84] E. Piché, p. 15.

columns which were sent to Picardy and the Loire and served with some distinction during the winter of 1870.[86] A number of Irishmen did serve as *francs tireurs* in eastern France in a quite unofficial and not terribly effective capacity.[87] Piché does give the impression that Irishmen flocked to the French colours which was not at all the case.

All in all, Piché delivers a rant which, while raising some issues, leaves Mandat-Grancey generally unscathed. Another priest, the Augustinian, Achille Lemire, whose memories and impressions of a journey in Ireland were noted down as he crossed the Indian Ocean on his way to Australia, articulated a further critique in 1890. These were published in Lille by his brother Jules Lemire. Lemire devotes Chapter XIV of his book to a discussion of the character and the religious faith of the Catholic Irish. He links this faith with a love of country and suggests that the whole history of Ireland can be summed up in the Latin motto *ubi crux, ibi patria* [where there is the cross, there is my country].[88] He also stresses the historical links between Ireland and France and suggests that the Irish gave France its Catholic identity by sending many Irish monks to carry out a peaceful invasion of France in the seventh century.[89] Lemire gives a list of the great Franco-Irish starting with the eighteenth-century Irish Brigade, or 'Wild Geese,' Lally-Tollendal, governor of French India and Maréchal MacDonald, Duke of Taranto, who is described as one of the most glorious lieutenants of Bonaparte, despite being instrumental in the Emperor's abdication. He also lists Maréchal de France MacMahon, Abbé Edgeworth, who confessed and stood by Louis XVI on the scaffold, and finally, Surgeon O'Meara who attended Bonaparte on St. Helena and refused to spy on him for the British.[90]

Achille Lemire reproaches Mandat-Grancey for the fact that his book is superficial. He criticises the Baron's lightness of touch and fears that his 'frivolities' might pass for the 'words of an oracle.' He reproaches the humour in the book and feels that for a Frenchman to joke about Ireland's woes is in the worst of taste. Also, he feels that criticism of the characteristics of the Irish people should be left to the

---

[85] E. Piché, p. 16.
[86] See A. Duquet, *Irlande et France,* (Paris, 1872), *The Times,* 20/09/1870 and J. Fleetwood, "An Irish Field Ambulance in the Franco-Prussian War," in *The Irish Sword* , vol VI p. 137ff.
[87] See M. W. Kirwan, *La Compagnie Irlandaise* (Dublin, 1873).
[88] A. Lemire, p. 138.
[89] A. Lemire, p. 132.
[90] A. Lemire, p. 133.

English press who are constantly shouting out that the Irish are lazy, cruel, dirty, drunkards, thieves and murderers. It ill becomes a Frenchman to do their work for them.[91] Lemire defends the Irish with great passion and places the Catholic faith firmly in the frame of Irish Nationalism. In this respect he is more accurate than either Mandat-Grancey or Jules Verne. One can hesitate perhaps to go along with all of his arguments but his experience of Ireland and his knowledge of the Irish situation when added to his own position as a priest give his comments some weight. He is also of his time when he suggests that there is an Irish 'race' very similar in its qualities to the French 'race.'[92] This notion was to persist well into the 1920s.

Achille Lemire gives a measured commentary on his time in Ireland, on his feelings of sympathy for the Catholic Irish and on the frivolity of Mandat-Grancey's work. The whole is more readable and less angry than Father Piché's polemic but none the less, is quite dismissive of the Mandat-Grancey book.

In contrast to this Catholic writer's wok on Ireland it is instructive to examine one of the few novels in French inspired by events in Ireland at this time. It was the work of Edouard Rod, a Swiss of Protestant origin, born in Noyon [Vaud] in 1857, who studied and worked in Paris from about 1878. He was a critic and minor writer of the 'naturalist' school,[93] a supporter of Emile Zola and friend of Alphonse Daudet.[94] He published several works the best known of which is *La Course à la mort* (1886). He translated the Italian novelist, Giovanni Verga's, *I Malavoglia* (1881) into French and was involved in arranging for Verga and Emile Zola to meet in 1882.[95] After a period teaching in Geneva, his later work concentrated on examining the phenomenon of conflicts of conscience in his characters. It is to this category that his book, *La vie privée de Michel Teissier* (1893), belongs.[96] He died in Grasse early in 1910.[97]

Parnell's love affair, fall, divorce and subsequent marriage provide the inspiration for the novel.[98] Michel Teissier is not Parnell but the novel is written as an allegory in that the psychological and moral dilemmas that faced Parnell are examined

---

[91] A. Lemire, p. 121.
[92] A. Lemire p. 131.
[93] P. Martino, *Le naturalisme français* (Paris, 1930), p. 190.
[94] C. Beuchat (ed.), *Histoire du naturalisme français* (Paris, 1949), p. 382.
[95] G. Verga, *I Malavoglia* (Roma, Edizione BEN, 1985), p. 20.
[96] E. Rod, *La vie privée de Michel Teissier* (Paris 1893).
[97] *L'Illustration,* 05/02/1910.
[98] I am indebted to my good neighbour and friend, the late Professor K. McWatters, for pointing this out to me.

in the context of Teissier's story. Rod avoids the necessity of creating an Irish or British milieu by setting his characters in Paris with Teissier as Deputy Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies and on the way to a ministerial post.[99] Formerly, he was editor of a centre-right paper *L'Ordre.* We are presented with the picture of a busy politician whose career is beginning to affect his family life.

Other principal characters are the Teissiers' closest friend, Jacques Mondet, one of Michel's two close childhood companions, who teaches Latin at the Lycée d'Annecy - the school they had both attended as boys. Mondet is:

> a good man, lacking ambition or money, with unexceptional aspirations, who, hid a rare nobility of heart and exceptional intelligence under a rough and ready exterior. He seemed to her [his wife, Suzanne] to be, as she said, Michel's guardian angel[100]

Teissier's ability as a political leader is made clear as Mondet praises 'the way in which he organised the conservative forces.'[101] Further details are given as Suzanne reports Michel's recent speech in the Chamber:

> 'He introduced a motion to obtain the repeal of the divorce law'
>
> Mondet opened his eyes wide with astonishment
>
> 'Why does he want to outlaw divorce?' he exclaimed, 'Divorce is necessary, divorce has its own *raison d'être,* divorce...'
>
> Suzanne interrupted him quickly
>
> 'Oh! Michel is quite right! ... If you were to hear him you would agree with him. You mustn't forget that in his system everything is interdependent, family, society, the church. It is an inviolate whole which must be respected...'[102]

The last principal character is Blanche Estève, daughter of the third of the trio of friends at the Lycée d'Annecy, Raoul Estève who had died in a train crash. On his death, Michel had rescued Blanche and her mother from a precarious financial situation. Since her mother's re-marriage Blanche has spent more and more time with the Tessiers and now at the age of eighteen is 'a slim young woman whose presence

---

[99] Vice-président de la Chambre, en passe de devenir ministre. E. Rod, p. 2.

[100] un brave homme, sans ambition ni fortune, aux désirs sages, qui, sous un dehors un peu frustes, cachait une rare noblesse de coeur et un exceptionelle ouverture d'intelligence, lui semblait, come elle disait, le «bon ange» de Michel. E.Rod, p. 6.

[101] la façon géniale.....dont il a organisé les forces conservatrices. E. Rod, p. 9.

[102] - Il a introduit une motion pour demander la supression de la loi sur le divorce..Mondet ouvrit des yeux étonnés...- Pourquoi donc veut-il supprimer le divorce? s'écria-t-il. Le divorce est nécessaire, le divorce a sa raison d'être, le divorce.....Suzanne l'interrompit avec vivacité:- Oh! Michel a parfaitement raison! ... Si vous l'entendiez, vous seriez de son avis.. Il ne faut pas l'oublier dans son système, tout se tient, la famille, la société, l'Église. C'est un tout sacré, dont on doit respecter l'intégrité.. E. Rod, p. 10.

owed rather more to her personality than to her beauty.'[103]

Rod develops the tension between these characters early in the book, making it quite clear that Teissier and Blanche have fallen for each other and that Suzanne is aware of this. Mondet plays the role of mediator between the Teissiers and also serves to link Michel with his roots in Annecy, and the people beyond his rather rarefied circle. He is also the device by which we gain some insight into public opinion. Just before we are made aware of the true nature of Michel's feelings for Blanche, in response to a statement on the divorce law which gains general support amongst his dinner guests, Mondet playfully warns Michel by saying, 'You are condemned to perpetual virtue, my dear fellow!'[104]

Mondet later overhears a snatch of conversation about Teissier in a café:

> 'Yes he's a good man ... who lives honestly in the light of day, without giving the newspapers cause to be concerned with his gambling or his mistresses.'
> 'We don't know the half of it.'[105]

The plot develops, and using various devices such as chapters composed entirely of letters between the main protagonists, Rod leads the reader on to the inevitable conclusion. Suzanne forces a divorce and Michel's career is ruined. Teissier and Blanche marry in secret and as they travel to Rouen, *en route* for England, they hear their case being discussed on the train by two men in their compartment, one of whom critically quotes newspaper comment about the end of Michel's career:

> After all, this tragic collapse, this irrevocable abdication, this hopeless flight from the world with the woman loved to distraction, is perhaps that which is finest in Michel Teissier's life. Indeed yes! no matter how strange such a judgement may be it is no paradox - our colourless age lacks instinctive action and love. Well, Teissier has acted in love and instinctively - if you doubt this try and measure the strength of his feeling against what it has cost him in terms of family, career, opportunity to work for good, reputation - there is no underhand calculation in his folly. He was an honest man and even in his error he remains an honest man.....[106]

---

[103] une svelte jeune fille, dont la personne s'imposait par quelque chose de plus que la beauté. E. Rod, p. 13.

[104] Tu es condamné à la vertu à perpétuité, mon cher! E. Rod, p. 22.

[105] - Oui c'est un brave homme.....qui vit honnêtement au grand jour, sans occuper les journaux de ses paris ni de ses maitresses .... - Il faudrait tout savoir. E. Rod, p. 43.

[106] ...Après tout, ce tragique effondrement, cet irrévocable abandon de tout, ce fuite désespéré hors du monde avec la femme éperdûment aimée, c'est peut-être bien ce qu'il y a de plus beau dans la vie de Michel Teissier. Mon Dieu! oui, quelque étrange que puisse paraître un tel jugement, il n'est point un paradox...notre âge anémique manque avant tout d'instinct et d'amour. Eh bien! Teissier a fait acte d'amour et acte d'instinct. Si vous en doutez, essayez de mesurer la puissance de son sentiment au

The men comment crudely on the article and conclude:

> 'There's no argument ... It was malice aforethought without extenuating circumstances"
> "Quite right, the case is quite simple, he's a man who failed in his duty and went bad....We pass sentence and we say that he is a scoundrel.[107]

This then, is the popular judgement. A feeling of gloom and trepidation for the future closes the book.

Where and how does Ireland come into all this? Roy Foster describes Irish history in the 1880s and 1890s as inescapably linked with the personality of one man: Charles Stewart Parnell.[108] When we examine to what extent the fictional character of Michel Teissier is modelled on Parnell, it is clear that Parnell himself, in a certain sense, is also a fictional character.

Much has been written about Parnell's relatively short political life and the difficulty of sorting myth from fact about his career becomes obvious to any student of the period. Yet, when one seeks to concentrate on discovering what Parnell, the man, was like the difficulty remains. He left few written records. What we know of him as a person comes from the interpretations of others. He was probably seriously dyslexic, although the condition was not recognised at the time. He only admitted to having read one book in his life and few commentators broke ranks on this subject. Those who loved him and those who knew him were aware of the myths surrounding him and sought to preserve them by colouring what they said or wrote about him. This said, it becomes clear that Rod was intrigued by the conflict of conscience and ambition - the moral dilemma of an ambitious politician faced by a personal choice which would wreck his career. Rod was not encumbered by a baggage of specific information about Parnell when sketching out the plot of *La Vie privée.* That Parnell was well known to the newspaper reading public in France by the time of his death is in no doubt. *The Times* carried extracts from obituary articles in *Le Siècle, Le Rappel, La Liberté, Les Débats, Gazette de France, Le Pays, Le Figaro, L'Estafette, La Petite*

---

prix qu'il lui a coûté...famille...ambitions....possibilité de faire du bien...estime publique...il n'y a aucun bas calcul dans sa folie... Il était un honnête homme, et, jusque dans sa faute, il est resté un honnête homme... E. Rod, p. 331.

[107] - C'est qu'il n'y a rien à discuter... La préméditation est établie, et il n'y a pas de circonstances atténuantes. - Parfaitement juste!... Le cas est tout simple: nous avons affaire à un homme qui a trahi son devoir, et a commis une mauvaise action.....Nous le jugeons, et nous disons : Cet homme est un misérable!..... E. Rod, p. 335.

République Française, La Lanterne and *Le Gaulois.*[109] The same day *Le Journal de Génève* carried a long article on Parnell and *The Times* quoted that paper's caustic conclusion two days later:

> The memory left by Mr Parnell will be that of a very strong man who was not sufficiently master of himself. With greater abilities than O'Connell, but greatly his inferior in character, he did not possess even that small fund of sincerity which is necessary for a man, although he intends to deceive the whole world..... [110]

It is fair to assume that Rod would have read this, although he does not kill off his hero but merely sends him to London: purgatory rather than hell, perhaps.

We have already seen the context in which Teissier is set. Although it is inconceivable for Parnell to have been a journalist, Teissier's energy and commitment to his political vision are analogous to those of Parnell. His self-confidence and rather aloof manner are hinted at. Like Parnell, Teissier has roots in the provinces although, as a meritocrat, his class origins are different to those of Parnell. This is an implied criticism of the British class system.

As Michel Teissier is an evocation of Parnell in a French political context, Rod has provided descriptions of Teissier's thoughts and actions which could be therefore applied to Parnell. Although these details may be essential to the characterisation of Michel Teissier, they are no help in unravelling the mystery of the character of Parnell. Yet, in the absence of better sources, copious papers in Parnell's own hand, for example, they are fascinatingly evocative.

In Rod's scenario the political aim of 'moral reconstruction' is to Teissier what Home Rule is to Parnell. When we hear Teissier setting out his political beliefs the analogy with Parnell in the early 1880s is clear. For example, Teissier explains one evening to his guests:

> We want to act before thinking, because it is the only way to get things done... that does not prevent us, note this well, from knowing exactly what we want.[111]

This reminds us of Robert Kee's pithy comment about Parnell:

---

[108] R. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London, 1989), p. 400.
[109] *The Times*, 08/10/1891.
[110] *The Times,* 10/09/1891
[111] - Nous voulons agir avant de penser: car c'est encore le seul moyen de faire quelque chose... cela n'empêche pas, notez-le, que nous savons parfaitement ce que nous voulions. E. Rod, *La Vie privée.* p. 18.

> He was already [1881] making a political art out of not knowing precisely where he was going provided he went in a direction which he thought could help Ireland. He was content in his active plans to have his hands full with immediate political objectives.[112]

On another occasion, talking with his colleagues Teissier responds to a point about political strategy by saying:

> Why do we hesitate to stir up opinion, to excite the public? We can only gain from it.[113]

This pragmatic attitude was also shared by Parnell, who did not hesitate to attempt to 'excite the public.' F.S.L Lyons, discussing Parnell's relationship with the extra-parliamentary section of the Irish Home Rule movement, reminds us that:

> ... in October 1879 Parnell became president of the Land League and, in doing so, vastly increased his own power and prestige. Henceforward he was not merely the leader of a small and vociferous group in the House of Commons, but also of a great and growing popular movement in Ireland.[114]

When we look at the sentimental side of *La Vie privée* we wonder about the O'Shea affair. We can only speculate at Parnell's state of mind as he fell in love with Katherine O'Shea but some confidant could be imagined telling him, as Mondet tells Teissier:

> Yes!...Yes, I understand. You are in love, that's it, it's annoying, I agree... But it's not fatal... [115]

It seems legitimate to speculate that Parnell felt this way. But Rod modifies the parallel for the purposes of the plot, since Teissier cannot be allowed the luxury of Parnell's decade of bourgeois domesticity with Mrs O'Shea.

Mondet continues his probing and is shocked to discover that the object of Teissier's affections is Blanche Estève. The discussion continues and the fact that there is no easy way out becomes clear. The only moral solution is for Michel not to see Blanche again. There is the less 'moral', although probably publicly acceptable alternative for her: to adopt the role of mistress. Teissier rejects both of these

---

[112] R. Kee, *The Bold Fenian Men,* (London, 1976), pp. 73 - 74.

[113] 'Pourquoi redouterions-nous d'agiter l'opinion, de passioner le public? Nous n'avons qu'à y gagner' E. Rod, p. 47.

[114] F.S.L. Lyons, *The Fall of Parnell 1890-91* (London, 1960), p. 8.

[115] - Oui!.....Oui, je comprends. Tu es amoureux, voilà tout c'est fâcheux, je conviens... Mais ça n'est pas mortel...E. Rod, p. 57.

possibilities and is consequently warned seriously by his friend:

> You cannot fool with love...you will fall, a heavier fall than that of those who only have an average conscience and who make do with ordinary compromises, or acceptable pusillanimity. In ordinary peoples' lives a passion is an incident, at most an accident. Mind that in your case passion is not a catastrophe.

Teissier thinks for a few moments, lights his cigar and then replies:

> Bah! the die is cast, ... let's chance the game![116]

There is no doubt that Parnell shared this attitude with regard to his long *liaison* with Katherine O'Shea. Lyons tells us that, 'she offered him an avenue of escape [from the pressures of political life] and it is scarcely surprising that he seized upon it eagerly.'[117] Yet like Teissier, Parnell's love match was to bring disaster to his career and lead to a fall that was indeed 'heavy'.

How can we be sure that Rod was thinking of Parnell and not of, say, the populist politician, General Boulanger who shot himself just a few days before Parnell's death?[118] There seems to be no doubt that it was Parnell who was in Rod's mind. Rod refers to the *Times* letters of 1887. The context is an attack on a Minister in the French Parliament which serves as an omen for Teissier:

> We have seen, in other countries, statesmen of value to their countries fall before accusations which left their honour intact however.[119]

The Minister wins his vote and a supporter shouts out:

> That's the proof that we are not English, and that here Parnell...

to which the Minister replies:

> Yes, in France such things are always forgiven.[120]

Further allusions to Parnell are made as Teissier is involved in divorce proceedings. As in Parnell's case, some of his political allies were supportive. As Teissier tells De Thornes, the Party Leader, that he is resigning, his colleague assures him:

> You must not think that whatever course you take, the party will abandon

---

116 - On ne badine pas avec l'amour.....vous tomberez, d'une chute plus lourde que des gens de conscience moyenne qui s'accommodent des solutions ordinaires, des lâchetés permises. Dans la vie de tout le monde, une passion est un incident, un accident tout au plus....Prends garde que dans la vôtre elle ne soit pas une catastrophe..... Il refléchit quelques instants, allume son cigare et puis répond- Bah! .... La galère est partie,.....vogue la galère! E.Rod, pp. 64 - 65.

117 F.S.L. Lyons, *The Fall of Parnell,* p. 35.

118 *The Times,* 01/10/1891, *Le Figaro,* 06/10/91.

119 - On a vu, dans d'autres pays, des hommes d'État utiles à leur patrie tomber devant des accusations qui cependant laissaient intacte leur honorabilité. E. Rod, p. 185.

120 - Voilà qui prouve que nous ne sommes pas des Anglais, et que chez nous M. Parnell ... - Oui, en France on pardonne toujours ces choses-là. E. Rod, p. 187.

> you: you are its strength, its soul, and it knows that and will support you however difficult that may be. We shall defend you with all our strength, we shall protect you with our authority. And, since after all the French are not Scottish puritans, you need not fear the fate of a Parnell....

Teissier replies:

> Do you think that I would wish to play his role?.....Ah! I have watched with interest and passion the phases of his struggle, the fight he put up and his death! He was nearly a great man; in any case he was an honest man; otherwise it would not have killed him. [121]

Stylistically, the novel has a rather static quality about it. Most of the plot is communicated to the reader through conversations between characters in relatively immobile situations. This reaches its extreme in Chapter Four which is composed of eight letters written by the three protagonists and in Chapter Nine which is another seven letters. Although the scene shifts briefly to other parts of France during the book, we have no descriptive writing to emphasise this. Even the scenes in the Chamber of Deputies are not terribly convincing or evocative. The four main characters, Teissier, Suzanne, Blanche and Mondet are lightly drawn and our knowledge of them is gleaned from what they reveal of their attitudes to the crisis. They are characters with psychological depth rather than physical shape. The novel is essentially concerned with the morality of the main protagonists. Rod's preoccupations are clearly set out in his dedication and the novel examines in some detail the twists and turns of the conflict of conscience of its principal character. It uses the imagined personality of Parnell to provide the model of an honest and honourable conscience in conflict with a stronger passion. On the eve of the Freudian awakening, Rod has provided a popular novel where the action is largely psychological. He has not distracted his readers with lyrical description or annoying detail of the various shadowy figures who circulate around the four principal characters. The result is what is, at times, a rather arid book and we can but hope that Madame Darmesteter, to whom the book was dedicated, appreciated it.

No review of the Irish presence in French literature at the end of the nineteenth century could be complete without any mention of the work of one of the best known

---

[121] Ne croyez pas que, quoi que vous fassiez, le parti vous abandonne: vous êtes sa force, son âme, il le sait, et il vous soutiendra, quelque difficile que cela lui soit. Nous vous défendrons de toute notre énergie, nous vous couvrirons de notre autorité. Et, comme après tout les Français ne sont pas des puritains d'Écosse, vous n'avez pas à redouter le sort d'un Parnell..... Croyez-vous que je voudrais jouer son rôle? .....Ah! c'est avec un intérêt passioné et direct, je vous en réponds, que j'ai suivi les phases de sa lutte, que je l'ai vu se débattre et mourir! C'était presque un grand homme, celui-là: c'était

French authors of the period. Jules Verne was born in Nantes in 1820, lived there and subsequently in Paris, in Le Crotoy in the *département* of the Somme, and in Amiens. He died in 1905. This is not the place for a full analysis and account of his immense literary output, but the fact that much of his work was didactic in nature is of importance as is his career-long partnership with the publisher Pierre-Jules Hetzel, until the latter's death in 1886, and later with Hetzel's son, Jules. Verne spent much effort in trying to include scientific and mechanical knowledge and speculation in his work. He also integrated geographical knowledge into his books. This formed the background to his adventure stories, novels written as travelogues and the books for which he is perhaps best remembered, his scientific adventures. He wrote for an age range which ran from adolescence to full adulthood. He aimed to educate, expand understanding, increase factual knowledge of the physical world and to entertain as broad an audience as possible. As he put it himself in a letter to his publisher in 1870: 'When truly one doesn't write only for children, one mustn't be read only by children.'[122] Early in their relationship Hetzel had made this plain:

> Hetzel nurtured the project of a collection which linked education with recreation, and he persuaded the young writer not to plunge into a new 'Human Comedy' but rather to develop the genre of the imaginary journey by bringing an epic dimension where the extraordinary is grounded on the discoveries of the times.[123]

These discoveries could be either scientific or geographic since European knowledge of the world was being expanded. Years later, Verne was still working to this pattern and yet *P'tit Bonhomme* somehow fails to fit this model. Verne was experimenting with Dickensian social realism in this book and his usual style of breathless activity, cliff-hanging episodes and everything eventually working out for the best, sits rather uneasily with the subject matter. Both Hetzels were firm believers in the need for a didactic element in all literary '*récréation.*' As a recent critic put it: 'Without Hetzel's pressure, Jules Verne would not have become the author we know.'[124]

Jules Hetzel, published *P'tit Bonhomme* first as a part-work in *Magasin de*

---

en tout cas un honnêt homme; autrement, il n'en serait pas mort..... E. Rod, p. 273.

[122] Quoted in H.R. Lottman, *Jules Verne, an exploratory biography* (New York, 1997), p. 133.

[123] Herzel nourrit le projet d'une bibliothèque associant l'éducation et la récréation, et il dissuade le jeune romancier de se lancer dans une nouvelle 'Comédie humaine,' l'invitant plutôt à poursuivre le genre du voyage imaginaire en lui apportant une dimension épique où le merveilleux s'appuie sur les découvertes de l'époque. Compère, *Jules Verne: parcours d'un oeuvre* (Amiens, 1996), p. 15.

[124] Sans l'impulsion de Hertzel, Jules Verne ne serait pas devenu l'auteur que nous connaissons. D.

l'Education et de Récréation, which was a magazine aimed at the family market. Then, the work was published in a fine illustrated edition just in time for Christmas.[125] It was a combination of didactic geographical schoolbook, entertainment and moral advice set in the relatively exotic location of the island of Ireland. The characterisation is two dimensional and there is little description of location and topography. It is clear that Verne's knowledge of Ireland is obtained from maps and secondary sources. The 'sights' of Dublin are precisely the main tourist locations. He is politically inconsistent, dismissing boycotting as useless, but referring to the Government as obnoxious. He steers clear of any discussion of the land question that might be construed as having relevance to France, leaving it as a particularly Irish question. The morality of reward coming to those who work hard, are honest and do good to others is very clearly the message of the book, although it is worth noting that formal regular church attendance, or the clergy, have no part in the story. Although this can be seen as evidence of Verne's anticlericalism, it is strange, nevertheless, in a story apparently set so firmly in late nineteenth-century Catholic Ireland. This serves to indicate further how little Verne actually knew of Ireland. The book lacks the feel for personality and perceived national characteristics that one finds in his other books whose main characters hail from the United Kingdom. He invests his 'British' characters with elements of the exotic in their characterisation, in this, his 'Irish' book, the exotic is geographic and geopolitical and then only to a minor degree. The peculiar and possibly exotic, political nature of Ireland is only rarely mentioned. The exploration is a study of the world of adult commerce and provident behaviour. The dangers overcome are those of poverty, crime and drink. Republican values are prominent, members of the British aristocracy are dismissed as chinless wonders and the clergy are ignored.

The issue of how much young French people would learn about Ireland is intriguing. The gazetteer of places visited during the tale might provoke some map-reading - as would any of Verne's geographical works. It begs the question: would Ireland be as fascinating as the African continent? One wonders, despite the quick contemporary reference to Parnell on page 215 linking with the news of the death of

---

Compère, p. 16.

[125] J. Verne, *P'tit Bonhomme* (Paris, 1893), trans. as *Foundling Mick* (London, 1895). All references are from these editions.

the Irish leader in 1891. Verne's geographical and scientific knowledge was renewed and extended by subscriptions to such publications as the *Journal* of the *Société de Géographie* in Paris and *La Nature* 'Journal of Sciences and their Applications.'[126] It seems that Jules Verne had a geographical plan for his books. One writer suggests that Jules Verne had a map in his office indicating areas covered by his stories. On undertaking a new project he would check to see which areas had not been covered.[127] Given that he was not a world traveller himself, despite one short visit to the USA aboard the Great Eastern and visits to England and Scotland, most of his geographical details were gathered from the printed word. In 1894 he stated in an interview that he gained most of his information from sailing and from his own reading.[128]

There are other indications of Verne's research methods. Compère tells us that he would make notes of anything that he found of interest even while dining out with acquaintances. This will account for the observations he makes about Irish politics, the 'tourist' details of Dublin and particularly for the use of Irish catch phrases such as the white-haired boy - the translation of the Old Irish Jacobite song title *An Buchaillin Ban* - an allusion which would be lost on most readers but which must have amused Verne himself who, clearly had noted a reference about the song.[129]

P'tit bonhomme, is one of the rarest of Verne's books nowadays. It was translated anonymously into English in 1895 and published by Sampson Low of London. Since then, it has been republished only once in France.[130] The book was an attempt to emulate Charles Dickens' tales of young people managing to overcome tremendous odds to achieve eventual success. Ireland's exploitation by England is the background to Verne's story where an Irish orphan struggles to escape from absolute poverty. He works with a travelling puppeteer and is taken in by good country people at the age of four. At fourteen he sets up a small street trading business and later opens a shop. He is successful and he achieves riches and is therefore able to ensure the happiness of all who have helped him on the way.[131]

---

[126] Lottman, p. 170.
[127] Lottman, p. 106.
[128] Ibid.
[129] G. Zimmermann, *Songs of Irish rebellion, Irish political street ballads and rebel songs 1780-1900* (Dublin, 2002), p. 107.
[130] J.Verne, *P'tit Bonhomme* (Collection Folio 10/18 n° 1220, Paris, 1978).
[131] Dans l'Irlande exploitée par l'Angleterre, un jeune garçon lutte pour sortir de sa condition misérable d'enfant abandonné. Après avoir été utilisé par un montreur de marionnettes, il est recueilli par de braves fermiers à l'âge de quatre ans. Quelques années plus tard, comme groom, il se heurte à la

The book differs from most of Verne's work in that it seeks to tell a story of rags to riches and the triumph of consistent steadfastness of good and generous character in the young protagonist. There are various 'Vernian' trademarks such as a maritime element in the character of Grip who is Mick's companion in the ragged school and who later returns to Ireland after a career at sea to help ensure the success of the shop. Other characters are temporarily removed from the narrative only to reappear later in the story.[132]

Ireland is described in the opening chapter as beautiful but poor:

> A fair country for tourists is Ireland, but a sad one for the dwellers in it. They cannot fertilise it, and it cannot feed them, especially in some of the Northern districts ... The Irish, who are friends of France, are, as they have always been, enemies of England. [133]

The scene is set in Westport, in Connacht on Clew Bay, which is likened to the Gulf of Morbihan, the land of the MacMahons [a name known to all French children and their parents in 1893].

Verne describes the severity of the winter of 1881 and has floods damage the farm and crops ruined by the weather. He sets out the consequences quite explicitly by stating that those tenants who could not satisfy the collector when he should come round, must prepare for eviction and starvation. He goes on to comment on the Land War:

> The disasters that had befallen the district had reawakened the ever-smouldering agrarian discontent. Boycotting was rife in the district - a useless proceeding which proved ruinous to both farmers and landlords.[134]

Unusually, the politically conservative Verne follows this with a direct comment on the administration of Ireland:

> Already bodies of mounted constabulary patrolled the country [...] and

---

morgue de l'aristocratie anglaise. A quatorze ans, il crée un petit commerce de rue, puis ouvre une boutique. P'tit Bonhomme réussit bien et sème le bonheur autour de lui. Compère, p. 106.

[132] The MacCarthys are evicted and emigrate to Australia only to return at the end of the book to enable Mick to repay their kindness. J. Verne, *P'tit Bonhomme* p.211 and pp. 444 - 455, *Foundling Mick,* p. 150 and pp. 298-303.

[133] Un beau pays pour les touristes, cette Irlande, mais un triste pays pour ses habitants. Ils ne peuvent la féconder, elle ne peut les nourrir - surtout dans la partie du nord. [...] Les Irlandais, amis des Français sont enemies des Anglais. J. Verne, *P'tit Bonhomme* p. 2, and *Foundling Mick*, p. 1.

[134] Du reste, cette avalanche de désastres avait écrasé la plupart des districts du comté. Aussi, dès le début de l'hiver 1881, avaient éclaté partout les menaces de 'boycottage' - procédés inefficaces qui ruinent à la fois le fermier et le propriétaire. J. Verne, *P'tit Bonhomme*, p.203 and *Foundling Mick*, p. 133.

> 30,000 soldiers [were] encamped in Ireland.[135]

This does not seem to stand well with his dismissal of the practice of boycotting which, whatever he might say, was a highly effective means of conducting the Land War and extending the moral economy of the rural poor in Ireland.

In Chapter Eight Verne describes Dublin. His characters visit Sackville [O'Connell] St., see the Custom House, the Four Courts, the Bank of Ireland, St Stephen's Green and Phoenix Park with the Vice-Regal Lodge. Here we are in the realm of pure tourism and the reader is presented with a list of the sights of the city. Verne correctly identifies the commercial and market area of the city as the Liberties where he has Mick deciding to open a boys' bazaar or shop. No equivalent tour of Belfast is offered when the story moves there, however.

Verne's translator describes the city of Belfast as a place where:

> the hardships of the Irish poor have to endure everywhere, have the aggravation of detestation of their religion, and a bitter persecuting spirit on the part of the wealthy and powerful classes.[136]

Verne, despite his normal practice of avoiding any comment on Christian denominations in his books, does tell his readers that:

> there is a fierce struggle between the Protestants and the Catholics. The former are born enemies of the independance demanded by the latter.[137]

Belfast's Dissenter tradition was portrayed only as feeding public disorder without any explanation. He also failed to include any 'Orange' characters in his book even as negative personalities. Had he done so he would have been obliged to offer some explanation of their political identity as opposed to that of the Catholic poor who people his novel.

It is worth noting that *P'tit Bonhomme* was not the only book in which Verne placed Irish characters. In the 1860s Verne had written a successful tale, published in three volumes, which recounted the search for a missing sea captain by his children around the 37th parallel in the Southern Hemisphere. The book ran for two years as a

---

[135] Déjà les escouades de la 'mounted constabulary' parcouraient les campagnes. [...] trente mille soldats campés - c'est le mot - en Irlande. J. Verne, *P'tit Bonhomme*, p.204 and *Foundling Mick*, p. 133-134

[136] J. Verne, *Foundling Mick,* p. 259.

[137] il existe une lutte ardente entre les protestants et les catholiques. Les premiers sont ennemies nés de l'indépendance réclamée par les secondes. J. Verne, *P'tit Bonhomme,* p. 403.

part work from December 1865 and was published in book form in 1867 and 1868.[138] By any standards it is a rattling read with a girl of 16 and a boy of 12 as the key characters under the protection of an aristocratic adventurer accompanied by an absent minded French professor. They escape from cannibals, a volcanic eruption and violent pirates, eventually achieving their objective and being reunited with their father. In Volume II the protagonists travelling through South Australia, meet and are offered hospitality by an Irish Australian, Paddy O'Moore and his family:

> - You're Irish? asked [Lord] Glenarvon taking the hand offered by the colonist.
> - I was once, replied Paddy O'Moore. Now I am Australian. Come in, whoever you are, Gentlemen this house is yours.[139]

They all enter the house. O'Moore shows them to the prepared table and:

> - I was expecting you, he said simply to Lord Glenarvon
> - You were? replied Glenarvon with great surprise.
> - I always expect people who come, replied the Irishman.[140]

This is a wonderfully credible exchange. It is difficult to imagine that Verne had never visited Ireland when one reads this, but it is clear that he had a degree of understanding of the sort of remark that one might hear in Ireland. At least one of his biographers tells us that Verne was not confident in English.[141] Nevertheless, he was able to give a strong hint of Hiberno-English in his text to add to the characterisation. Verne has his Scottish character, Lord Glenarvon, relating easily to O'Moore by suggesting that they have much in common. He bases this not on positive political or cultural factors but on geographical or racial proximity. Their shared tradition according to Verne is in simple terms the fact that neither is English:

> Hardly anything separates the Scot from the Irish. The Tweed, while only some yards wide, digs a deeper ditch between Scotland and England than the twenty leagues of the channel between old Caledonia and green Erin.[142]

---

[138] J. Verne, *Les Enfants du Capitaine Grant* (Édition Hachette, Paris , 1930). Lottman, pp. 113-114.

[139] - Vous êtes Irlandais? dit Glenarvan en prenant la main que lui offrait le colon- Je l'ai été, répondit Paddy O'Moore. Maintenant, je suis Australien. Entrez, qui que vous soyez, messieurs cette maison est la vôtre. J. Verne, *Les Enfants du Capitaine Grant,* p. 68.

[140] - Je vous attendais, dit-il simplement à lord Glenarvan./ - Vous? répondit celui-ci fort surpris./ - J'attends toujours ceux qui viennent , répondit l'Irlandais. Ibid.

[141] Lottman, p. 295.

[142] D'Écossais à Irlandais, il n'y a que la main. La Tweed (rivière qui sépare l'Écosse de l'Angleterre), large de quelques toises, creuse un fossé plus profonde entre l'Écosse et l'Angleterre que les vingt lieues du canal d'Irlande qui séparent la vieille Calédonie de la verte Erin. J. Verne, *Les Enfants du Capitaine Grant*, p. 68.

We see here evidence of his categorisation of peoples by race and his knowledge of Scotland gained from his visit and his reading of Scott.[143]

Verne, writing in the mid-1860s, was quite accurate in placing his successful Irish emigrant in Australia. In contrast to mid-nineteenth-century Irish-Americans who were, for the most part, urban workers or miners, the Irish in Australia were essentially rural settlers. The dispersion was a function of a generally rural economy.[144] The remark Verne makes about O'Moore eschewing mining for agriculture is also interesting. At this time copper was being mined in the State and the industry would have provided opportunities for immigrants. Irish migrants from West Cork and from Ulster were attracted by this sort of work, since mining had been a tradition in those areas.[145] There is no evidence that Verne was aware of this, after all O'Moore was a farmer, but he would have been aware of the mining industry in South Australia in the 1860s. Yet, in this relatively early novel Verne does include Irish characters with some attempt to give sufficient detail to specify their separate cultural identity. It is strange, when one considers the wide-ranging scenarios of his work, that nearly thirty years were to elapse before he was to set a book in Ireland. The country just did not impinge on his imagination and it is probable that, even when he did set *P'tit Bonhomme* there, it was mainly because he needed to find a scenario where a description of extreme poverty would be credible. His model, Charles Dickens, used the slums of London and the North of England as the setting for his novels of child poverty. Verne had seen the poverty of mid-century Liverpool and had been shocked by the slums there and, although his notes of that journey were not published in his lifetime, he could have used the material as a resource.[146] Yet, when he felt moved to write a Dickensian novel where poverty would have to be the backdrop, at least to start with, Verne takes us to Ireland, territory not exploited by Dickens. His natural conservatism seems to swing him behind the view that, within the United Kingdom, Ireland provided the best example of poverty. This is the same conservatism which, while allowing him a generally mildly anglophobic outlook, forced him to feel respect for English achievement and for the perceived national

---

[143] Lottman, p. 80.
[144] P. O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia* (Sydney, 1987), p. 117.
[145] D. Emmons, 'Faction fights : the Irish worlds of Butte, Montana, 1875-1917' in P. O'Sullivan (ed.), *The Irish in the new communities* (Leicester, 1992), pp. 83 and 84.

characteristics of the English race. While French and American characters are his favourites, the English and the Scots do figure strongly amongst his characters. Only one other Vernian Irish character makes a brief appearance in *A Floating City*.[147] He is the sailor O'Kelly, who, in Chapter Twenty-one, is running in the deck race organised for the amusement of the passengers. Despite O'Kelly being promoted by the villain, Drake, a Scottish sailor wins by a short head and this nearly provokes a showdown between the eventual hero, Fabian, and the evil Drake. Verne has had the Irishman just beaten by the preferable Scot and has linked them to the two factions representing good and evil in the story. O'Kelly did not really deserve this and it reveals Verne's own ethno-cultural preferences. Perhaps he would have been content that his only 'Irish' book has sunk almost without trace.

---

[146] J. Verne, *Voyage à reculons en Angleterre et en Écosse* (Paris, 1989), p. 77.
[147] J. Verne, *Une Ville flottante* (Paris, 1871).

Chapter 2

Ecrire l'Irlande II: *Les Cœurs Purs*

French Writers and Ireland : II

1905-1923

The new century saw the development of fundamentally changed relationships between France and Britain. Various reasons for this can be identified. Amongst them are the rising presence of the German Empire, which led to a desire in France for stronger links with Britain, the settlement of Anglo-French rivalry in the imperial overseas sphere and not least, the fact that in both countries, a generation change was taking place amongst those in power. This last is often ignored in historical analysis but the fact remains that both in Paris and in London, new faces and new men were at the centre of affairs. In France, the first generation of the politicians who had set the Third Republic on its course was giving way to politicians who had experienced no other form of government. In the United Kingdom a period of Conservative and Unionist government was nearing its end. Ireland was passing through a relatively peaceful period with land tenure reform underway and cultural self-confidence emerging, while Irish cultural associations were now in operation at many levels of society. This stimulated renewed questioning amongst some of the value of the Union with Britain. Political groups were forming and putting forward the desirability of some form of political self-determination for Ireland, but whose influence was, as yet, very limited. The most important formal political development was the reunification in 1900 of the Irish Parliamentary Party under John Redmond following its division into pro- and anti-Parnell factions in late 1890. This meant that once again the Irish MPs at Westminster were ready to constitute a significant bloc in the House of Commons, a bloc which would have to be taken note of by any future governing party. As the first decade of the twentieth century wore on, the ability of the Irish MPs to punch above their weight became increasingly evident.

As France's new ally, the United Kingdom's politics became increasingly interesting to the French, as did the functioning and the political problems of the Liberal Government. This meant that, indirectly, Irish matters began to be reported with increasing frequency in the French press and the Home Rule crisis of 1910-1914 was well covered. The outbreak of the Great War in August 1914 began a period of shared experience for politicians and ordinary citizens on both sides of the Channel. In 1916, the Easter Rising in Dublin took Ireland onto the front pages of the French press and the outbreak of political violence there ensured that Ireland remained of interest to the French readership.

Between 1905 and 1930 several works on Ireland of history or reportage were published in France. These were: R. Escouflaire, *L'Irlande ennemie...?*(1918); Y. Goblet, *L'Irlande dans la crise universelle 1914-1920* (1921); E. Guyot, *L'Angleterre: sa politique intérieure* (1917); L. Paul-Dubois, *L'Irlande contemporaire* (1907); S. Téry, *En Irlande: de la guerre d'indépendance à la guerre civile 1914-1923* (1923) and *L'Ile des bardes* (1925). These texts are attempts to analyse and explain the 'Irish Question' to the French reader. Interest in British politics grew as a function of the development of the Entente between the two governments in the first decade of the century and the major change in the Westminster Government after the electoral victory of the Liberals in 1905. As this change meant a different approach to Ireland, the politics of the 'Irish Question' became an essential element in any explanation of the British political scene. The first attempt at this was carried out by L. Paul-Dubois with his masterly *L'Irlande contemporaire.* He was to add to this work in 1934, but until Halévy's major historical work on Britain and Ireland, Paul-Dubois' initial volume remained the most respected analysis in France.[148]

Louis François Alphonse Paul-Dubois was a member of a new generation of writers interested in Irish matters. Writers working in previous decades had been interested in or inspired by the Land League struggle of the 1880s. Now a new generation was appearing stimulated by the potential of some form of Home Rule being granted to Ireland, with all the resultant implications for the constitutional readjustment of the United Kingdom. Paul-Dubois was the son of the president of the *Académie des Beaux Arts,* son-in-law of the influential writer and historian Hippolyte Taine and one of the chief officials of the *Cour des Comptes.* Like Edouard Rod, he was associated with the *Revue des deux Mondes* group and occasionally wrote for that journal.

In the introduction to his English translation of Paul-Dubois' book, *L'Irlande contemporaire,* Tom Kettle tells us that the author sees a link between Ireland and France forged by history and complementary minds.[149] Paul-Dubois perceives the 'Irish Question' as an 'extreme case of social pathology' or of 'arrested [national] development.'[150] The work is laid out as a review of Irish history, since he holds that

---

148 E. Halevy, *The Rule of democracy 1905-1914* (London, 1952, two vols).
149 L. Paul-Dubois,*Contemporary Ireland* (trans T.M. Kettle, Dublin and New York, 1908).
150 L. Paul-Dubois, p. vii.

the past must be studied by the social reformer in order to gain insight into the present. The book is in four parts. The first, a historical introduction, treats in two chapters the history of Ireland before the Union and since the Union. The second of these chapters covers O'Connell, Young Ireland and the Revolution of 1848, the Great Famine, emigration, Fenianism and Parnell. The second part deals with political and social conditions. The notion Paul-Dubois calls the 'two Irelands' is dealt with by chapters on the English colony – 'Oligarchy, Ulster & the Crisis of Unionism' and on 'National Ireland - Separatism or Physical force, Constitutional agitation, Parliamentary Action and Nationalist Policy'. He examines the national and anti-English spirit including a section on Irishmen and France. Finally, he examines the government, administration and the judiciary. The third part of the book is entitled 'Material Decadence' and deals with the land question, the government's attempts to deal with it and the particular problems of the West. A chapter in this section deals with the economic situation and discusses industry, taxation and emigration.

The final part examines possibilities of regeneration and discusses the education question, the Gaelic revival movement, economic reform and the religious question. The whole book is summed up in a short conclusion followed by data in a translator's appendix. Throughout the book there are copious footnotes and cross-references. The writer had a considerable culture of works on Ireland both in English and French as his references indicate.

In his conclusion Paul-Dubois sees Ireland at a turning point in her history faced with a choice between final decay or regeneration. He feels that the ten to fifteen years to come [1908-23] may well see the setting of the course that Ireland will take. In this he seems at first sight to have been remarkably prescient.[151] In the North he sees signs of a radical awakening of Orangeism with democratic principles. In Nationalist Ireland he sees development on the political front. Local government is giving valuable experience, the Gaelic movement is developing national self-confidence and there are signs of co-operation across the classes for the common good. All in all, there is a 'meditation upon self' an allusion to the cultural revival, which he feels could well lead to the development of a living nation and a regeneration of society.[152]

---

[151] L. Paul-Dubois, p. 512.
[152] L. Paul-Dubois, p. 513.

The problem of modernisation is clearly seen: how to move an essentially peasant society towards democracy fit to compete with other nations. But the fact of foreign domination means that development will be arrested until this problem is addressed. Paul-Dubois discusses the maintenance of the Union as the only actual means of giving strong government to Ireland but concludes that modification of the terms of the Union is essential. The long-term goal must be Irish independence. He fears that the boat may have been missed by the rejection of the Home Rule Bill in 1886, which he feels could have provided the framework of Irish development which would have probably mitigated the pressure for a break with England.[153]

As it is, despite the relatively benign legislation of recent years, the essential problem of the Union is moving into increasingly clear relief, the impossibility of satisfactorily governing a country against its will. This said, Paul-Dubois has difficulty with the notion of independence. He cannot see how England as a great imperial power can grant independence. He quotes Grattan: 'St. George's Channel forbids union, the Ocean forbids separation'.[154] A middle way must be sought. Pure federalism is a possibility but he realises that this would have implications for Scotland and Wales and the colonies. Furthermore, there is the problem of the security of the United Kingdom in the event of Ireland becoming independent. This is dismissed, given the strength of the Navy and the effectiveness of an army presence in a self-governing Ireland. In short, Paul-Dubois sees the actual [1907] need to be in favour of Home Rule within the Union to provide the social and economic conditions which will allow Ireland to fully develop her national resources and establish a benign presence which can be accorded full independence when conditions permit.

He sees this situation as inevitable and he recommends that the Nationalists should accept this and, if offered Home Rule, should exploit this offer for the long-term goal. England will not be able to deny self-determination to Ireland given her desire to establish and maintain good relations with the United States, that 'Greater Ireland.'[155] Also, he identifies the development of Nationalist movements in opposition to Imperialism amongst smaller nations which is gaining ground. Here, he must have been thinking of Empires other than the British or French. He closes with

---

153 L. Paul-Dubois, p. 515.
154 L. Paul-Dubois, p. 516.
155 L. Paul-Dubois, p. 521.

Grattan's vision of Ireland: 'She is not dead only sleeping.'[156]

Irish independence from Britain then, is seen as ultimately inevitable but Home Rule within the Union is identified as the way forward to that eventual goal. Paul-Dubois' fifteen-year time scale was to see the simultaneous establishment of Independence within the Empire and Home Rule for two distinct parts of the island. This was to be achieved after armed civil disobedience in Ulster, the Great War and rebellion, followed by insurrection and civil war elsewhere in the country. These were the unforeseen alternatives to Paul-Dubois' analysis in 1907. It could be argued that he failed to suggest that the events in Ireland might be the result of failure on the part of the British to grant Home Rule. This would be to ignore the effect of the Great War on Britain and her Empire. In the crucial year of 1916 events took place in Ireland that neither Paul-Dubois, nor those who had written thoughtfully about Ireland in an earlier decade, had foreseen. The same year Tom Kettle, Paul-Dubois' translator, died in the defence, not of the Irish Republic, but ironically or perhaps appropriately, that of France. He was not alone. The bodies of thousands of Irishmen also lay in the Flanders mud by the end of that terrible year. The shared military history of Ireland and France, so often evoked by the French writers on Ireland, had a new element which was to play a role in later publications.

The European world of 1923 was very different to that of 1908. Empires had fallen and had been replaced by new nations or new governments. Old alliances had collapsed. Nevertheless, despite all these unforeseen developments, it is clear that Paul-Dubois foresaw the need and the will for independence as well as the seeds of 'fatal decay' contained in the blind maintenance of the Union.[157] The subsequent histories of the six and twenty-six county parts of the island of Ireland reveal how right he was in this respect.

A singular book about on Ireland was also published in the first decade of the twentieth century. This was by Rodolphe Escouflaire, a Belgian commentator with a fiercely imperialist attitude to the Irish question.[158] His book is a history of Ireland in the nineteenth century which is a catalogue of agrarian agitation which he construes as inevitably negative. Escouflaire is convinced that the Irish are lacking in moral fibre

---

156 L. Paul-Dubois, p. 522.
157 L. Paul-Dubois, p. 512.
158 R. Escouflaire, *La Demagogie irlandaise: 1906-1909* (Paris and Brussels, 1909).

and decries their 'sentimental' attitude to their problems.[159] He takes issue with the whole notion of Irish Home Rule, considering it to be inevitable that the Irish need the British to regulate their affairs. The backwardness of the '*celtes*', their superstition and ready recourse to violence are summed up by Escouflaire with the comment:

> I know of no other civilised country where superstition reaches such dreadful consequences.[160]

The hard and simplistic judgement arrived at by Escouflaire, after listing all the real and supposed defects of the Irish people, is that:

> Ireland must learn that all these reforms are indispensable, vital, in fact. They can be summed up in one word: work, and real work, serious or even hard since I do not wish to grace the often surprising waste of effort that the Irish reserve for purely political struggles with the name of work.[161]

Escouflaire was to write again in 1917 on Ireland, providing an analysis of the 1916 Rising which will be discussed later, but he maintained his virulent and polemic attack on the Irish race. His books stand out as unique commentaries on the Irish and the Irish question in French.

The earliest commentary on the events in Ireland in 1916 is to be found in Edouard Guyot's book *L'Angleterre: sa politique intérieure.*[162] Guyot was interested in socialism in England and its place in English society. The book is essentially a political history of nineteenth-century England, which concentrates on the means by which the British establishment faced the issues of internal politics. He highlights the evolution of political parties since the end of the eighteenth century and particular areas that he maintains are of importance to the British Government during the nineteenth century. He identifies these as the 'problems' of the workers, agrarian questions and the constitutional crisis of 1909-1911, the tax problem and problems of imperialism, and finally, the Irish question.

---

[159] *La Demagogie irlandaise,* p. 241.

[160] Je ne sache pas de pays civilisé où la superstition atteigne de plus effoyables conséquences.*La Demagogie irlandaise,* p. 223.

[161] L'Irlande doit se convaincre que toutes ces réformes lui sont indispensables, vitales. Elles peuvent se résumer en un mot: travail, et travail vrai, sérieux ou pénible, car je ne veux pas décorer de ce nom la dépense d'activité souvent surprenante que l'Irlandais réserve pour les luttes purement politiques.*La Demagogie irlandaise*, p. 343.

[162] Published by Delagrave in Paris in 1917 with a preface by Guyot's friend H.G. Wells. Wells was one of several British writers whose work was well known in France and who worked to cement Franco-British relationships during the Great War. Thomas Nelson of London published their 'Continental Library' from offices in the Rue St Jacques, Paris, comprising literature in English in cheap paperback editions for sale in France. Their market was soldiers on leave and the anglophone

Guyot's final chapter, *Le Problème irlandais*, gives a concise history of nineteenth-century Ireland. Inevitably, he feels obliged to set the scene with a brief account of the English 'conquest' of Ireland from the time of Henry VIII to 1800. Although brief, this effectively picks out key moments in the evolution of the relationship between Ireland and the English, later British, Government.[163] Guyot, writing as a turn-of-the-century historian, notes the impossibility of achieving co-operation between the various racial groups in the country. He suggests that Henry VIII dreamed of 'making Celts and Anglo-Saxons collaborate, of joining the Englishry and the Irishry in the government of the island.'[164] However, the religious traditions in Ireland were too strong for him and rendered the project impossible. Guyot speaks positively of the 1611 plantation of Ulster which he sees as a 'wise exploitation' of the region through a 'colonising wave'.[165] Cromwell's visitation and the wars of the 1688-1691 are seen as the start of the two and a half centuries of suffering for Ireland which are likened to the torture of Tantalus. Guyot states that in 1688 'the country took up arms against England' but after initial success 'the English completed their conquest.'[166]

Guyot takes the reader through the facts of the Penal Laws, the Irish parliament's brief period of supremacy in the land, the 1798 rebellion and the imposition of the Act of Union. He is critical of the Act, describing it as producing a 'hybrid regime.' He feels that the 100 Irish MPs had no real role at Westminster. Too few to be feared and having no affinity with either Whigs or Tories, they would only have influence if there were a small majority and their votes were needed to ensure a government's survival. This was not in itself a denial of parliamentary justice, since the representation of Irish voters was more than adequate. What was unjust, according to Guyot, was the illogicality of the form of administration of Ireland under the Union. Instead of arranging for the government of Ireland to be carried out by Ministers of the crown and their officials Ireland was treated like a British possession. He saw as unjust, the installation of a Viceroy in Dublin and the administration of Ireland by a Chief Secretary answerable to a Parliament where Irish members counted only as one

---

French.

[163] E. Guyot, *L'Angleterre: sa politique intérieure* (Paris, 1917), pp. 258-267.

[164] 'de faire collaborer Celtes et Anglo-Saxons, d'associer l'Englishry et L'Irishry au gouvernement de l'île'. Guyot, p. 259.

[165] Ibid.

sixth of the total.[167]

The notion of the denial of parliamentary justice which implies that the previous arrangement was laudable is not a view shared by modern historians. The Irish Parliament at the end of the eighteenth century was a corrupt collection of interest groups in the pay of powerful individuals and open to British government interference. Alvin Jackson points out that the leading lights of College Green such as Castlereagh, Grattan and Foster soon found new seats and renewed prominence at Westminster. He also points to the fact that the colonial-style executive condemned by Guyot preserved a degree of autonomy after the Union.[168] This may be so but it does not detract from the kernel of Guyot's argument that the imposition of a special governance for Ireland after the Union meant that the country was not subject to the same administrative regime as the rest of the United Kingdom. Therefore, potential political trouble would be stored up in the years to come. Guyot also reminds his readers of Pitt's inability to keep his promise of Catholic emancipation as part of the package of the Act of Union. He correctly lays the responsibility for this at the door of George III, '*le plus bigot des rois*', quoting the King's letter in 1800 to the Home Secretary, the Duke of Portland, where he states that to agree to Catholic Emancipation would be a betrayal of his coronation oath thereby causing him to lose his right to the Crown.[169] He was probably supported in this view by Lord Clare, a convinced Unionist and defender of the Protestant ascendancy, but the fact remains that Pitt lost this argument and resigned.

There follows a succinct and clear account of political life in Ireland in the nineteenth century. Guyot recounts O'Connell's campaign for Catholic emancipation, talks of the relatively enlightened administration under Chief Secretary Drummond and then the onslaught of the Great Famine. He briefly deals with population growth, the practice of subdivision of holdings, and supports a Malthusian view of immediate pre-famine Ireland with too many people living in poverty on minuscule holdings that were open to crop failure. Nevertheless, Guyot concludes by blaming the British administration for the effects of the Famine:

The misfortunes of Ireland were therefore due, not as some would have us

---

166 Guyot, p. 262.
167 Guyot, p. 266.
168 A. Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998: politics and war* (Oxford, 1999), p. 27.
169 Guyot, p. 267.

> believe, to the idleness and improvidence of the Irish peasantry but to the conditions of life which their English conquerors had imposed on them.[170]

Here Guyot nails his colours to the mast. This conclusion leaps out at us with the use of the phrase worthy of John Mitchell, 'English conquerors.' Despite this, Guyot generally remains restrained in his analysis. He praises the attempts by various administrations to deal with the land question in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The 1881 Forster Land Act is described as 'brave and generous.'[171] The nearer he gets to 1914 the more instructive his text becomes. His strength is his ability to place events in Ireland into a broader context by a phrase or two. Describing the beginning of the Irish Parliamentary Party's agitation for Home Rule following the Liberal election victory of 1906, Guyot reminds us that the recently defeated Boer Republics that very year had been granted self-government within the Dominion of the Union of South Africa, proving that liberty engenders loyalty.[172] Thus we are given a chance to see the Irish Question as part of a broader picture. His analysis of the Unionist counter-argument on strategic grounds adds to this view:

> In case of war an attempted uprising in Ireland would be much more perilous for Great Britain than the revolt of any of her overseas possessions.[173]

It is impossible to know if this was written with the knowledge of the events of 1916 but the fact that no comment is made would suggest that it was not. Be that as it may, Guyot provides his readers with a masterly description of the various political moves, and their general context, that preceded the Royal Assent in 1914 to the third Home Rule Bill. There are some omissions, such as the 1912 signing of the Solemn League and Covenant by thousands of Northern Unionists and the 1914 Howth gun-running for the Nationalist Irish Volunteers. The analysis of the reasons for the political stance, during the Curragh incident, of the officer corps of the British Army in favour of the Unionists is made clearer than that in many modern histories of the period:

---

[170] Les malheurs de l'Irlande étaient donc imputables, non pas, comme certains voulaient le faire croire, à la paresse et à l'insouciance du paysan irlandais, mais aux conditions de vie que ses conquérants anglais lui avaient imposées. Guyot, p. 273.

[171] Guyot, p. 281.

[172] Guyot, p. 300.

[173] En cas de guerre une tentative de soulèvement de l'Irlande serait autrement périlleuse pour la Grande-Bretagne que la révolte de n'importe laquelle de ses possessions d'outre-mer. Ibid.

> Although the purchase of ranks had been suppressed by Gladstone in 1871, a deep ditch separated, at the beginning of 1914, the British army from democracy. Here again we can state that English ideas had evolved more rapidly than her institutions.[174]

Guyot has used both French and British sources. He quotes from J.R. Green and from Préssensé amongst others.[175] He has produced a unique view of Ireland set in its context as an integral part of the British Isles and contributed to the understanding of his readers of England's Irish question. It is fascinating that this book was published in the third year of the Great War and that critical analysis of the politics of France's ally towards Ireland should appear at this time. It is also remarkable that it should appear in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising, when most readers would view Ireland as a liability to the allied war effort rather than an unfortunate component of the United Kingdom.

Not all the works on Ireland published after 1916 were as scholarly as Guyot's. After the Rising, the British Government represented the events of Easter week in Dublin as a German plot to stir up disaffection in Ireland. The popular view in France was similar and was clearly expressed in the French press, as we shall see. Yet, it is remarkable that most of the French writers on Ireland even after the Rising did not follow this line. However, one, R. Escouflaire, who published *L'Irlande ennemie.....?* in Paris in 1918 provides a clear anti-republican interpretation of the events of 1916. It was translated into English and published in New York in 1920 as *Ireland, an enemy of the Allies?*

Like other French commentators, Escouflaire sees the Irish as a race apart since he opens his preface with a direct if unidentified quote from Macaulay who describes the Irish as:

> [...] an ardent and impetuous race, easily moved to tears or to laughter, to fury or to love. Alone among the nations of Northern Europe they had the susceptibility, the vivacity, the natural turn for acting, and rhetoric, which are indigenous on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.[176]

---

[174] Bien que l'achat des grades ait été supprimé par Gladstone en 1871, un fossé sépare, au début de l'année 1914, l'armée anglaise de la démocratie. Ici encore on constate que les idées de l'Angleterre ont évolué plus vite que ses institutions. Guyot, p. 317.

[175] Guyot, pp. 108, 260, 267 and 275.

[176] [...] une race ardente et impétueuse, aisément portée aux larmes et au rire, à la furie ou à l'amour. Seule parmi les nations de l'Europe du Nord, elle possède la susceptibilité, la vivacité, un don naturel de comédie ou de rhétorique, qu'on trouve surtout sur les rives de la Méditerrranée. R. Escouflaire, *L'Irlande ennemie.....?* (Paris, 1918). Préface p. 7.

The imperialist stall is set out at the outset. Escouflaire aligns himself squarely with the Unionist position right from the start of his polemic:

> To justify its rebellions and its treason, Ireland describes itself as oppressed. But today, English oppression of Ireland is a fairy tale, even a crude fable.[177]

Escouflaire's Ireland here is inhabited by Catholics and Nationalists, precisely those Irish who, he maintains, exhibit childish characteristics of emotionality, proof that they are capable of playing on an observer's emotions and are in need of firm government. He suggests that Patrick Pearse, leader of the Dublin Rising, was well aware of this and realised that the Rising would fail as a military enterprise but that the moral effect before the whole world would be immense, and form a glorious chapter in Irish history.[178] Escouflaire asserts that Pearse asked his rebels to:

> [...] shoot us in the back when our fate was in the balance at Verdun, and when our soldiers were writing in their blood at Vaux and Douaumont the most heroic page in the history of France.[179]

Vivid words, indeed, but they clearly express the burden of the whole book. The Irish had risen in insurrection against the Government of France's wartime ally and therefore had sabotaged the war effort not only of Britain but of France itself. How does Escouflaire develop his argument? Like most of the other books on Ireland at the time, the first part is taken up with a review of the history of Ireland. In this case, Chapters Two to Six take the reader from the mythical Irish past, as the Isle of Saints, with its 'swarms' of bards and 'innumerable' monks, down to the 1916 Rising.[180] The last two chapters are entitled The 'Insurrection and its Consequences' and 'Conclusions and Forecasts.' Throughout Escouflaire's story of Ireland, we are constantly reminded of the deficiencies of the Irish. Describing the country in Elizabethan times he states that:

> For all practical purposes Ireland was half civilised compared to the nations which she affected to despise so heartily.[181]

---

[177] L'Irlande, pour justifier ses révoltes et ses trahisons, se dit opprimée. Or aujourd'hui l'oppression de l'Irlande par l'Angleterre est une fable, et même une fable grossière. *L'Irlande ennemie,* p. 7.

[178] *L'Irlande ennemie,* p. 8.

[179] [...] nous tirer dans le dos au moment où notre sort se jouait à Verdun, où les poilus de Vaux et de Douaumont écrivaient de leur sang la page la plus héroïque de l'Histoire de France. Ibid.

[180] *L'Irlande ennemie*, p. 10.

[181] L'Irlande était bel et bien à demi sauvage, par rapport aux nations qu'elle affecte de tant mépriser. *L'Irlande ennemie,* p. 60.

However, this half-civilised people resisted excise restrictions imposed during the seventeenth century. Irish wool was traded in France for Bordeaux wine which was then sold on to England and became known as 'Irish Wine.' Escouflaire asserts that the dubious legitimacy of this activity led to a moral decline and remarks that Ireland became once more a lawless country.[182]

Where British laws clearly bore down on the majority of the population, like the eighteenth-century anti-Catholic Penal Laws for example, Escouflaire, after describing these laws as 'hateful,' suggests that:

> We must judge men and their deeds by the age and the circumstances wherein they live and [...] not condemn the Englishman alone, for having struck too severely after such provocation.[183]

The conclusion, according to Escouflaire, is that in Ireland 'revolt is continuous and endemic.'[184] From this he has little difficulty in suggesting that, since the beginning of the Great War and Redmond's exhortation to the Irish Volunteers to join the British army and fight for the freedom of small nations, 'the whole of Ireland turned its back on Mr Redmond, repudiated his declarations, and adopted the new formula of *sinn fein.*'[185] This is to suggest that Sinn Féin as a movement was much more effective than actually was the case. It was not until after the Rising that Sinn Féin became shorthand for any group seeking Irish independence. The motor for the Rising was a cabal within the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Connolly's ideologically leftist Irish Citizen Army. To suggest that the Rising had widespread support is generally accepted as incorrect. That there was opposition to conscription being imposed in Ireland is true and this was exploited by the advanced Nationalists after the Rising. Escouflaire suggests that the Government figures in 1915 for recruitment as a percentage of the male population of military age in the 'Nationalist' provinces of Leinster, Munster and Connacht, 15.7%, 10.4% and 4.4% respectively, apparently prove Nationalist Irish disaffection.[186] He sets these figures against loyal Ulster's 29.5%. This ignores the influence of the UVF, which provided a solid base of Volunteers in Ulster, while no such organisation existed in the other three provinces.

---

[182] *L'Irlande ennemie,* p. 74.

[183] Il faut juger les faits et les gens d'après l'âge et le milieu où on les trouve et [...] il ne faut pas damner l'Anglais tout seul pour avoir riposté durement à tant de provocations. *L'Irlande ennemie,* p. 77.

[184] Comme la rébellion irlandaise est continue, endémique [...] *L'Irlande ennemie,* p. 79.

[185] Toute l'Irlande a lâché Mr Redmond, répudié ses déclarations et repris à son compte la formule nouvelle de *sinn fein. L'Irlande ennemie,* p. 190.

There the Irish Volunteers were not as high a proportion of the male population of military age and, despite Redmond's 1914 commitment, there was less social incentive to enlist. The government's figures published on the 13th November 1916, covering the year 1915, also suggest that 40% of the cohort was physically below par, which tells us much about the public health of the Irish population.[187] As Escouflaire suggests, there was a degree of actual opposition to enlistment amongst many Nationalist Volunteers but this is not the principal reason for the discrepancy between the enlistment figures in the four provinces. It is worth remembering that the whole British military effort was based on recruited Volunteers and by 1915 enthusiasm for rallying to the colours both in Ireland and Britain was faltering under the onslaught of high casualty lists.[188] Such was the seriousness of the problem that conscription was introduced in Britain in 1916 but not in Ireland, where the issue rumbled on until the end of the war.

In Chapter Eight, entitled 'The Insurrection and its Consequences' Escouflaire presents an account of the Rising which is calculated to persuade the reader to dismiss the participants as mere criminal rebels. They are accused of shooting unarmed passers-by and causing the destruction of the city centre. They are blamed for permitting the looting that took place in the first two days of the Rising and for the violence and disorder that ensued. Escouflaire makes much of the 'German Plot' theory describing rumours of a German landing, an Irish-American landing in Wexford, the fall of Verdun and the surrender of France and the blockade of Ireland by German submarines. It is entirely possible that these rumours did circulate but there is little record of them. The German plot theory was fully developed in the press although there was a delay since the Rising caused a breakdown in the publication of the daily Dublin press in Easter week 1916.[189] Escouflaire draws attention to the phrase in the Proclamation of the Republic 'supported by the exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe...' as proof of the links between the rebels and Berlin. He suggests finally that, while in Berlin, Casement had gained German support for Ireland's presence at the peace negotiation in exchange for a Rising during the siege of Verdun. The author remarks acidly that it is up to the Allies to ensure that

---

[186] *L'Irlande ennemie,* p. 199.
[187] Goblet, *L'Irlande dans la crise universelle* (2nd ed., Paris, 1920), p. 85.
[188] D. G. Boyce, *Ireland 1828-1923: from ascendancy to democracy* (Oxford, 1992), p. 88.
[189] J. J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985: politics and society* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 29.

this does not happen.[190] He dismisses the campaign for clemency which built up during the period of the trials and executions of the leaders of the Rising in early May by contrasting the limited response of the British authorities to what might have been the response of the Germans in similar circumstances.[191] He makes the interesting point that the Nationalists in Parliament weakened their cause:

> By persistently demanding mercy for traitors and indulgence for rebels, [they] did not seem to recognise that they were compromising themselves. They would soon have to realise it: contrary to their expectations it was not they who were to recover their lost prestige, it was the rebels whose audacity increased and whose halo shone still more brightly, for their influence increased in an amazing way in 1917.[192]

The polemic draws to a close with the proposition that the Irish question will remain for many years given the intractability of the Ulster problem. Some form of Home Rule will be tried in future years but Escouflaire foresees partition and strategic safeguards for the Empire, a solution which will satisfy no-one. In the short term, he enjoins his readers not to forget that Ireland [Nationalist Ireland] stabbed Britain, and therefore also her ally France, in the back in 1916. He also reminds his readers that German intellectuals like Kuno Meyer recognised this fact in April 1917 by promising German gratitude for Ireland's hostility to England during the war:

> The German professor spoke the truth and we have neither to rejoice over the matter nor to thank Ireland: she tried to stab us in the back and it would be intoerable if she were to profit thereby.[193]

Escouflaire is unique in that he takes an anti-Nationalist view of Ireland without supporting the Unionist position. Written quickly in late 1917, his polemic, for this is what it is, expresses a view in support of the official British line on the Rising. This was put out in the French press, as we shall see, echoing the British communiqués which followed the events of Easter 1916. It is remarkable that Escouflaire should have felt so strongly that there was even a slight possibility that Ireland might be given

---

190 *L'Irlande ennemie,* p. 211.

191 *L'Irlande ennemie,* pp. 213-214.

192 En demandant ainsi avec persistence la grâce des traitres et l'indulgence pour les rebelles, [ils] n'ont pas l'air de se douter qu'ils se compromettent. Ils ne vont pas tarder à s'en apercevoir: contrairement àleur attente ce n'est pas eux qui regagnent un prestige perdu, ce sont les rebelles qui redoublent d'audace et font reluire un peu ples leur auréole, car l'influence grandit singulièrement en 1917.*L'Irlande ennemie,* pp. 222-223.

193 Le professeur boche a dit vrai, et nous n'avons ni à nous en réjouir, ni à en remercier l'Irlande: elle a essayé de nous poignarder dans le dos et il serait intolérable qu'elle en tirât profit. *L'Irlande ennemie,* p. 271.

a seat at an eventual peace conference under German sponsorship. This reveals something of the unease felt in France in the final year of the war and the unexpected nature of the final German collapse in the autumn of 1918. Perhaps Escouflaire tells us more about France than he does about Ireland.

In 1918 the Breton, Louis Tréguiz, writing under the *nom de plume* of Yann Goblet, published his *L'Irlande dans la crise universelle*. This was the first of the serious post-Rising analyses of the Irish question. The first edition ended in 1917 just before the discussions of the Irish Convention of 1917. The second edition was almost twice as long, running to 462 pages, taking the reader to the end of 1920. Given the evolution of the situation in Ireland between 1917 and 1920, the second edition is a better source. Goblet's work is very interesting in that it is a real attempt to provide a serious work of reference for the political evolution of Ireland since 1914 in the context of the European crisis. It is an attempt to give an analysis of the Anglo-Irish crisis before its ultimate resolution by the Treaty of 1921 and the subsequent Irish Civil War. Its quality rests on its remarkable impartiality and sound research and Goblet is a worthy successor to Guyot and Paul-Dubois.[194]

Goblet provides us with a very brief account of the origins of the English presence in Ireland, referring to the Papal blessing given to Henry II when he wished to establish his overlordship on the western shore of St George's Channel:

> [...] fate decreed that the only Englishman to wear the Papal crown should be so placed to authorise the King of England to take possession of Ireland. Thus a rich, civilised, we would say today intellectual, but undisciplined and quasi-anarchic country officially became an empty land for the benefit of bold adventurers.[195]

The subsequent years of English rule are dealt with very briefly although he presents a short account of the principal political currents or groups in the country who contributed to the events in Ireland since 1910. These include the Gaelic revival, Arthur Griffith's Sinn Féin movement, Redmond's reunited Irish Parliamentary Party, the Socialists and the Ulster Unionist with their Ulster Volunteer Force. Goblet sums up the development of national political awareness in Ireland before the Great War,

---

[194] Goblet relies heavily on depositions to the 1916 Harding Commission published in *The Irish Times*, perceptive reading of the Irish and British press, and works and pamphlets on the Rising.

[195] Le sort voulut que le seul Anglais qui ait jamais porté la tiare se trouvât à point nommé sur le trône romain, pour autoriser le roi d'Angleterre à prendre possession de l'Irlande. Ainsi un pays riche, civilisé, nous dirions aujourd'hui intellectuel, mais indiscipliné et quasi-anarchique, devint officiellement terre

stating:

> Now the Irish people, while remaining faithful to the political ideal of Home Rule, were pursuing the realisation of a Gaelic intellectual ideal; even more novel was their conception of a better economic life, immediately realisable by the continued daily efforts by every Irishman. The Gael [...] was now interested more in the development of his celtic identity and material and social betterment rather than the rhetoric of political meetings.[196]

As with other French writers, Goblet is explicit in his definition of the Irish as a race separate from the Anglo-Saxon British. Despite his poor understanding of the position of the northern Orangemen, he clearly sets out the development of Ulster Loyalism. He describes their organised opposition to Home Rule and the drift towards at least civil disobedience, and at most, civil war, in Ulster in 1914 as the Home Rule Bill moves towards Royal Assent. The fact that the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant in 1912 had been treated by the Dublin Nationalist press as the activity of 'Farcical comedians'[197] does not distract Goblet from pointing out that by the Spring of 1914, the UVF had an estimated strength of 110,000 men amongst which were mounted sections, motor-cyclists and ambulances. Arms for 80,000 were available. Physical force, thanks to Ulster Orangism, was abroad in the land again.[198]

Goblet deals in some detail with the Irish response to the outbreak of the Great War. He makes clear the similarity between the Nationalist response as articulated by Redmond in the Commons in September 1914, that 'for the first time for more than a hundred years her [Ireland's] interests are the same as those of the British Empire' and that in Ulster, where the *Ulster Guardian* spoke of 'thousands joining the colours.' These were of course official views, the reality being more complex, but Goblet states that the Irish people 'wished to be represented amongst the armies of liberty and conquer with them her own freedom.'[199] Goblet arrives at an estimate from all sources

---

vacante pour le bénéfice d'audacieux aventuriers. Goblet, p. 6.

[196] Maintenant le peuple d'Irlande, tout en restant fidèle à l'idéal politique du Home Rule, poursuivaiet la réalisation d'un idéal intellectuelle gaélique; chose plus nouvelle encore, il concevait une vie économique meilleure. Immédiatement réalisable par la persévérant effort quotidien de chacun des Irlandais. Le Gaél ... s'intéressait désormais davantage au développement de son intellectualité celtique et aux améliorations économiques et sociales qu'au ráimés des réunions publiques. Goblet, pp. 42 - 43.

[197] *Freeman's Journal,* 05/10/1912, quoted in Goblet, p. 40.

[198] Goblet, p. 54.

[199] [...] le peuple irlandais, voulut être représenté parmi les troupes de la liberté et conquérir avec elles sa propre libération. Goblet, p. 69.

of more than 300,000 Irishmen who served in the Great War in the British army.[200] He then draws heavily on M. MacDonagh's book *The Irish at the front* (London, 1916) for his next chapter in which he gives details of the various theatres of war where the Irish served.[201]

The next sections of his book deal in much detail with the events between late 1915 and 1917 when Lloyd-George called the Irish Convention. Goblet suggests that there was a small fifth column of Germans in Ireland - shopkeepers, waiters and hotel staff before the Great War.[202] He also suggests that German professors were visiting Ireland as language experts and supporting Irish cultural groups. This most probably refers to such as Kuno Meyer who, while professor at the University of Liverpool, frequently visited Ireland. This support for the notion of the German Plot is not unexpected - so widely was it believed at the time and given Goblet's reliance on British sources. Yet, it does seem curious given his understanding of the evolution and development of the Sinn Féin party following the Rising. He tracks the electoral replacement of the Irish Parliamentary Party under Redmond by Sinn Féin in the series of by-elections in 1917 and 1918 and the gradual loss of credibility of the Redmondites. The increasing irrelevance to many in Ireland of whatever measures were debated in the Commons, because of the policy of abstention of Sinn Féin and the refusal of Redmond to join the governing coalition, forms the background to the events in Ireland itself. He deals carefully with the rumours of a [second] German Plot of 1918, seeing them correctly as a government ploy to move to ordering conscription in Ireland. The arrest of the Sinn Féin leaders on the 18th May was seen as paving the way to conscription since no evidence of the German Plot had been forthcoming. Conscription was shelved and replaced by a less than successful recruiting campaign ending in October 1918. The British lost the argument and were unable to move to conscription, diminish sympathy for Ireland amongst the Allies, who now included the Americans, and swing Irish voters away from Sinn Féin and back to the Irish Parliamentary Party.[203]

At the election of December 1918, Sinn Féin was ready and Goblet recounts in detail the results of this preparation. His conclusion is that the extraordinary

---

200 Goblet, p. 86.
201 Goblet, pp. 95-115. Passim.
202 Goblet, p. 135.
203 Goblet, p. 288.

circumstance of the complete demolition of a party which had represented in large measure the non-Unionist population for some fifty years was not just the result of effective campaigning. Goblet sees this event as a change in Nationalist Ireland's political personnel rather than a change in political views. He maintains that it was precisely because the Nationalists had not modified their views that the Irish Parliamentary Party was defeated. Dissatisfaction with the positions adopted by that party since 1914 was the major factor in Sinn Féin's 1918 landslide according to Goblet. Now it was clear how the Irish Nationalists would present their agenda.[204]

The last section of the book sets out conclusions in the light of the 'Universal Crisis' of his title. Beginning with a summary of the interior transformation of the country indicating how emigration had fallen and the national wealth had increased, Goblet gives a detailed account of the events after the meeting of the first Dáil in January 1919. He recognised the significance of this meeting as a seizure of the right to self-determination and removing the moral right of the British Government to aspire to govern Ireland.

Goblet discusses the gradual recognition of Ireland's national identity amongst the nations of the world. This is seen as a gradual triumph of the propaganda of Sinn Féin in America and in Europe which successfully overcame British efforts to the contrary. The particular endeavours of the Dáil to gain American recognition at the Paris peace talks are recounted. The book closes with an analysis of the events of 1920 in Ireland entitled the 'New Irish Question.' There is a brief account of the British campaign of repression followed by Sinn Féin's policy. Goblet then presents the British government's view and concludes with the idea that British public opinion may gradually change the Government's policy. He quotes approvingly the comment in *The Manchester Guardian* of 6th August 1920 that the events in Ireland are yet another example of bad government in Ireland, while *The Times* of the 1st January 1921 commented that the Government was combating militant Sinn Féin by suspending hopes essentially founded on conciliatory methods. Goblet warns that even if this is the case, this time the Irish will not give up.[205]

The strength of the book is the firm base on which Goblet rests his account. He has credible detail and attempts to be even-handed but, in the end, cannot be distracted

---

[204] Goblet, p. 328.
[205] Goblet, p. 452.

from a pro-Nationalist stance. However, the terrible weakness of the book is the date of its completion. Goblet finished it before the resolution of events by the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921. Had Goblet waited another year or turned his second edition into another volume covering the period 1917 to 1921 he might have produced a classic text of Irish history. As it is, *La Crise universelle* is only a partial success. Goblet started by attempting to analyse the place of Ireland in the European crisis of 1914 and finished by nearly writing a definitive history of Irish independence.

Catholic voices in France were not silent on the Irish question. A pamphlet, written by Father Xavier Moisant, published in Paris in 1920, sets out the history of Ulster. Moisant takes the line that Ulster was an integral part of Ireland and that the desire of the Protestant majority there to secede [sic] and remain within the United Kingdom was provoked by outside, English, ideology:

> Ulster Unionism is not a local product, nor did it grow spontaeously. Even the plantations were not sufficient to anglicise part of Ulster. England frequently had to intervene to prevent a union between the planters and the [indigenous] Irish and, by dividing them, to maintain her domination.[206]

He stresses the negative and schismatic nature of Unionist protest pointing out that they reject and break away from a United Ireland while being prepared to reject and break from British rule if their privileges are not defended by the British Government.[207] Given that the Protestant Unionists are in a minority in all Ireland they do not have the right to obstruct the national will according to Moisant and it is clear that he is heavily in favour of the notion of a united and independent Ireland. Here we see the Michelet notion of unity of the national ideal being applied to Ireland.

In another pamphlet Moisant examines the English reaction to the 'Irish Question'.[208] He sets out to explore the variety of English responses to Ireland and the Irish. Moisant attempts to show that the official response to Irish rebellion is to crush it, as an attack on the English, or British, imperialist and Unionist body politic. Such a rebellion is understandable and therefore, in a certain sense, excusable in this case. He suggests that there are also some English voices that claim that Irish

---

[206] L'unionism ulstérien n'est pas d'origine locale, ni de formation spontanée. Les 'plantations' même n'ont pas suffi à angliciser une partie de l'Ulster. L'Angleterre dut fréquemment intervenir pour empêcher l'union de se faire entre ses colons et les Irlandais et pour assurer, par la division, sa domination. X. Moisant, *La Volonté de l'Ulster* (Paris, 1920), p. 65.

[207] *La Volonté de l'Ulster*, p.66.

[208] X. Moisant, *Pour Comprendre l'Irlande: l'effort anglais* (Paris, 1920).

rebellions are justified since Ireland is a nation and any revolt against a 'foreign' power is therefore justifiable. The pamphlet is an examination of this analysis and concludes by stating that there is a variety of opinion on Ireland in English society. Moisant feels that this enables French observers to continue to respect a people who have been a recent '*allié fraternel*' [fraternal ally] which is an interesting and subtle conclusion.[209]

As the Irish Civil War ended in the spring of 1923, French interest in Ireland waned. Ireland had been wracked with violence since early 1919 and the months since August 1922 had been particularly traumatic, especially in the South of the country. The war of independence and the subsequent civil war had not ravaged the country as had the trenches of the western front but the sporadic destruction of the country's infrastructure had left the Government with a huge bill and families across the land were coming to terms with the results of the divisions caused by the Civil War.

It was at this time that a most original work on Ireland appeared. This was Simone Téry's *En Irlande* published in Paris in 1923. The book is unique for several reasons. It is a combination of interviews carried out during visits to Ireland and pieces written back home in France. Simone Téry, daughter of Gustave Téry, founder editor of *L'Œeuvre* reported on Ireland for that paper from 1919 onwards.[210] She was the only female French journalist to visit Ireland and write a book on her experiences there. She has provided us with a particularly perceptive account of her time in the country which is unique in its attempt to leave the reader with an understanding of the personal reality of the individuals she interviewed. Clearly, Téry had excellent English and appreciated the nuances of verbal expression of her interviewees. Furthermore, she had a profound understanding of the situation in which they found themselves and the empathy that she displayed towards them gives them a life which comes down to the reader in a way that is rare indeed. Only later biographies of principal players by such as Béaslaí and Ryan give such a feel for their subjects.[211] By showing us the human face of the Irish experience, Téry has left a unique view of the people of the

---

[209] *Pour Comprendre l'Irlande: l'effort anglais,* p. 54.

[210] Biographical note published online by the Faculté de Lettres of the University of Geneva http://www.unige.ch/lettres/istge/memoires/werlen/STery.html. See also note on Gustave Téry in R. De Livois, *Histoire de la presse française, Tome 2: de 1881 à nos jours* (Lausanne, 1965), p. 403.

[211] For good examples, see the early biographies of Michael Collins such as P. Béaslaí, *Michael Collins: soldier and statesman* (Dublin and Cork, 1937), and D. Ryan, *The Invisible army* (London, 1932).

time. That this book is so difficult to find is a pity, given its quality.

Téry limits the customary review of Irish history to less than two pages and the bulk of the book is a series of articles on the period in her title.[212] She concentrates on events and leaders of the new Irish Free State but does not forget about the new British province of Northern Ireland, devoting a chapter to events there in September 1921. Her style is fluid, journalistic, with occasional evocative phrases such as 'in the midst of the smoking ruins we see peace at last.'[213] Yet, her interviews with such as General [sic] Michael Brennan, Free State Commander in Chief Richard Mulcahy, the Lord Mayor of Belfast Sir William Coates, and the Northern Ireland Minister of Finance Horace Pollock, give us a resource which has an unusual degree of vividness.

Simone Téry gives as her reason for writing her book the fact that by 1923, Ireland had slipped out of the French public consciousness. As she puts it in her first chapter:

> Ireland was on the agenda three years ago at the time of the heroic death of the Lord Mayor of Cork, Terence MacSwiney: a man who let himself die on hunger strike, who, for seventy-four days awaited a death which did not wish to come. We do not see this every day. Also, to talk of Ireland had the advantage of exasperating our good friends the English: a double pleasure. But now, three years later we are tired of watching events. Do not talk of Ireland in France.[214]

Despite the popular style, Téry has put her finger on an essential truth about the French view of Ireland in the early 1920s. The end of the Civil War coincided with other more worrying developments in Europe, some, as in Italy, very close to the borders of France. Ireland just slipped below the horizon and Téry is well aware of this.

Her account starts in 1914 with the Ulster Crisis and the outbreak of the Great War. She discusses the 1916 Rising, its crushing and the main leaders all 'readier to hold a pen than a rifle.'[215] Téry then recounts the main events following the executions, the shift in public support for Sinn Féin leading to the election of 1918,

---

[212] S. Téry, *En Irlande: de la guerre d'indépendance à la guerre civile 1914-1923* (Paris, 1923), pp. 11-12.

[213] 'au milieu des ruines fumantes nous voyons enfin la paix.' Téry, p. 9.

[214] L'Irlande était à l'ordre du jour il y a trois ans, au moment de la mort héroïque du lord-maire de Cork, Terence MacSwiney: un homme qui se laisse mourir de faim, qui, pendant soixante-quatorze jours, attend une mort qui ne veut pas venir, cela ne se voit pas tous les jours. Et puis, parler de l'Irlande, cela avait le don d'exaspérer nos bons amis les Anglais: double plaisir. Mais aujourd'hui, après trois ans, on est fatigué d'admirer. Ne parlez pas de l'Irlande en France. Téry, pp. 7 - 8.

the victory of Sinn Féin and the first Dáil's declaration of independence. The development of the Anglo-Irish War is related with particular mention of the Black and Tan terror, the sack of Cork and the deaths of MacSwiney and Kevin Barry. Téry takes us behind the shadows to meet leaders of the independence struggle. She defines them as intellectuals, a very positive attribute to French readers, who have never been engaged in politics. Certainly, this is rather wide of the mark when applied to Arthur Griffith who had been engaged in political activity for over two decades. Yet, her essential premise still holds, namely that these were educated intelligent people who turned from other things to devote themselves to the struggle for Irish independence.

Her interview at the Mansion House with Desmond FitzGerald, Dáil Minister of Information, reveals the style of the young members of the Government of the Second Dáil. FitzGerald meets Mademoiselle Téry but realising that they cannot talk easily there invites her to his house for lunch and they take the tram together. After boasting light-heartedly that his family is Norman with Italian origins, perhaps as far back as Aeneas, FitzGerald proceeds to charm Téry over lunch with conversation in fluent French on France and its literature. She manages to get him to talk about his imprisonment and he forgets to finish his lunch. He talks about the punishment regime of bread and water laughing that one doesn't need much in prison since all there is to do is sleep. Téry is impressed, commenting that England will have difficulty in overcoming men like this.[216]

Simone Téry is less successful with Robert Barton, Dáil Minister of Economic Affairs, who is reluctant to be interviewed. However, she persists and gains a short interview with him which reveals little. Téry attempts to find out what led Barton to work for Irish independence but he asserts that personalities are not important and slips out of the door laughing that at least Téry will be able to report how he escaped from her.[217]

We are then given an account of her journey in Michael Brennan's car from Dublin to Limerick and beyond. Michael Brennan was a member of the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood [IRB], close associate of Michael Collins and imprisoned by the British. Released in early 1919, he became Commandant of the

---

[215] Téry, p. 23.
[216] Téry, p. 63.
[217] Téry, p. 66.

East Clare Brigade of the Irish Republican Army [IRA]. He played a leading role in the Anglo-Irish War in Connacht and West Munster. An effective and aggressive guerrilla leader, he was strongly pro-Treaty and was appointed Free State Army General Officer Commanding, Limerick region, during the Civil War. Later [1937] he was Chief of Staff of the Irish Army.[218] Brennan takes Téry behind the lines held during the truce in the summer of 1921. Her account of Brennan's charm and easy rapport with the people met on the way is a classic portrait of a guerrilla leader. He describes the hit and run tactics of the IRA Flying Columns and remarks that the anger of the English at these tactics could be settled if they were to hand over some artillery and then see how they got on in face-to-face combat.[219] Brennan uses Simone Téry to face down four policemen who ask for his papers:

> 'I have the right to use this car during the truce. In any case it is being used to carry a member of the French press' [...] and Mihall [sic] waved his hand towards me. The policeman muttered something and the four shadows disappeared into the night.
> 'Not many policemen could boast of having seen you so close'.
> 'Quite a lot have but they have not generally lived to tell the tale'.[220]

Téry covers in detail the opening of the second Dáil in August 1921, stressing the democratic and ordered way in which the Provisional Government operates. She follows this with an account of a discussion with Erskine Childers on the differences between the Irish and English views of the situation [September 1921]. She ends with a prescient comment by Childers:

> We seek nothing, we ask only to be left alone. What we want is our freedom.... We shall fight until we are given our freedom, to the end ....[221]

Téry apparently gives us an insight here to Childers' republican intransigence which was to lead to his eventual execution by the Free State Government. She has dated the chapter 2nd September 1921 and the remark seems to be entirely in character, so the suspicion that it is a piece of edited hindsight can be discounted.

---

[218] S. O'Mahoney, *Frongoch: University of revolution* (Killiney, Co. Dublin, 1987), p. 27.

[219] Téry, p. 80.

[220] - Jai le droit de me servir de cette voiture pendant la trève. D'ailleurs elle transporte en ce moment un représentant de la presse française. [...] and Mihall [sic]me désigne de la main. Le policeman bredouille quelques mots et les quatre ombres disparaissent dans la nuit.- Il n'y a pas beaucoup de policemen qui pourront se vanter de vous avoir vu comme celui-là!- Il n'y en a pas mal qui m'ont vu de près. Mais ceux-là n'ont généralement pas pu se vanter. Téry, p.84.

[221] Nous ne réclamons rien, nous demandons seulement qu'on nous laisse tranquilles. Ce que nous voulons c'est notre liberté. [...] Nous combattrons jusqu'à ce qu'on donne notre liberté, jusqu'au bout. Téry, p. 101.

By this point, it is clear that most of the book is a panegyric to the struggle for independence and its leaders. The poverty and the misery of the Irish population is ignored. The struggle is described as led by writers, poets and 'intellectuals,' and the ordinary people are shown as cheerfully resilient. One of the key images is the description of the *ceili* in an unidentified village in the West where Téry sees the IRA '[...] Volunteers and village girls dancing joyfully to the sound of a violin in a smoke-filled room.'[222]

When Simone Téry visits Belfast, the tone changes. Here the truce of mid-1921 has not taken effect. The city is dark and menacing. Sad and foggy Dublin seems a paradise of light and gaiety beside sinister Belfast.[223] Quizzing her driver about the troubles in the city Téry asks who is responsible:

> 'Ah! Well ...' and my driver turned a suspicious eye on me. 'Some say that it is one lot and others say that it is another. It's difficult to know'.
> Listening to the driver one realises that here a careless word can cost dear.[224]

After discovering that in Belfast the popular identification of the opposing groups is Protestant or Catholic, rather than Unionists, Orangemen, Sinn-feiners or Republicans Téry attempts to interview the Lord Mayor, Sir William Coates. This is not a great success and is worth quoting almost in full:

> 'Am I speaking to the Lord Mayor [...]?'
> 'What do you want from me?'
> The Lord-Mayor is not very welcoming.[...]
> 'I am here to find out about the situation in Ireland. Could you give me some information?'
> 'No'.
> 'How is it that Belfast, the only city which recognises British authority, is also the only one where the truce is not respected?'
> 'It is not up to me to explain that to you'.
> 'What, according to you, is the origin of these disturbances and what is being done to stamp them out?'
> 'I have nothing to say to you'.
> 'Don't you want to say anything to me?'
> 'Not a word.'[225]

---

[222] [...] ces volontaires et ces jeunes filles du village, dansant joyeusement au son du violon dans une salle enfumée. Téry, p. 86.

[223] Téry, p. 107.

[224] - Ah! Voilà ... et mon cocher me regarde d'un œil soupçonneux. Y en a qui disent que c'est les uns, y en a qui disent que c'est les autres. C'est difficile de savoir ... À entendre le cocher, on se rend compte qu'ici une parole étourdie peut coûter cher. Téry, p. 108.

[225] - Est-ce au lord-maire que j'ai l'honneur de [...]? - Qu'est-ce que vous me voulez? Il n'est pas très aimable, le lord-maire ... - Je viens m'informer des choses d'Irlande. Pourriez-vous me donner quelques

Little progress is made either when Téry interviews Mr Pollock, Minister of Finance in Northern Ireland. Pollock is more polite than the Lord Mayor but, in the end, not more forthcoming. He suggests that Ireland is a rich country and that the tumbledown houses in the villages are the fault of the Sinn-Feiners and that the barefoot children prefer not to wear shoes. The Minister insists that the people just put all their money in the bank rather than spend it on children's shoes. He also insists that business is booming, denies that the streets are full of the unemployed when commerce grinding to a halt. Téry is appalled and comments:

> If it is enough to deny evil to remove it, Pollock is the man and never has a minister so cheerfully presided over the ruin of his country.[226]

On asking the Minister to put forward the Unionist position Téry is told that it is difficult to explain. She responds by pointing out that the Sinn Féin position seems easy enough to understand. This is ignored and Pollock adds that the Unionists have no time for the opinions of foreigners. He is shocked that Téry has met the murderer de Valera and that she cannot see that the southerners are just spoilt children. The minister asks to review her notes since journalists often embroider the truth. Téry agrees to this and then comments that no satire can be more eloquent than reality.[227]

Major biographical essays on de Valera, Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins follow. These are not based on specific interviews but draw on a variety of sources. Nevertheless, they do present a unique picture of these key individuals. It is interesting that the view of Arthur Griffith in particular is very sympathetic and reflects the fond view of him which is to be found in Maude Gonne MacBride's autobiography. This book is well known for its frequent chronological inaccuracies, but her portrayal of Griffith is borne out by Téry.[228] Unusually, Téry includes presentations of the personalities of Kevin O'Higgins and General Richard Mulcahy. The reputations of these key figures of the early years of the Irish Free State suffer from a reluctance of biographers to devote time to them. Their ruthless prosecution of the Civil War and

---

renseignements? - Non. - Comment se fait-il que Belfast, la seule grande ville qui reconnaisse l'autorité britannique, soit aussi la seule où la trêve ne soit pas respectée? - Ce n'est pas à moi à vous l'expliquer. - Quelle est, d'après vous, l'origine des émeutes, et que fait-on pour les enrayer? - Je n'ai rien à vous dire. - Vous ne voulez rien me dire? - Pas un mot. Téry, p. 113.

[226] S'il suffit de nier le mal pour le supprimer, M. Pollock est l'homme qu'il faut, et jamais on ne vit ministre plus allègrement présider à la ruine de son pays. Téry, p. 119.

[227] Téry, pp. 120 - 121.

[228] See M. Gonne MacBride, *A Servant of the Queen* (London, 1938), and Téry, pp. 152 - 168.

their role in the Government which set the course of the Free State may well be a principal reason. In any case, neither have attracted the interest of biographers on the scale of *de Valera* and Collins. O'Higgins was to pay for his ruthlessness with his life in a Dublin suburban street one Sunday morning in July 1927. Despite her enthusiasm for the more charismatic leaders, Téry does recognise the essential place that these two men held in the Ireland of the 1920s.[229]

Simone Téry concludes her book with an account of events of the Civil War after the death of Collins on 22nd August 1922. She accurately notes the increase in bitterness of the conflict with the Republican strategy of destruction being met with increasing Government pressure on them.[230] Her view is that the Government is justified in taking the steps that it does, even to the execution of Erskine Childers. She gives a fascinating account of the hearing in the High Court for the writ of *habeas corpus* brought by Childers after his death sentence. She describes the atmosphere in a room in Kings Inns: the sense of boredom which permeates the tragic assembly as the long legal arguments unfold; the prisoner waiting without any illusions for the final judgement. Finally, Simone Téry reflects on the strength of mind of the Republicans sentenced to death and the fact that their readiness for any sacrifice suggests that they have no doubt as to the justice of their cause. All that is left is the aftermath of the bitterness of a war of brothers.

The books on Ireland published in France between 1905 and 1930 have a different quality to those of the previous decade discussed in the previous chapter. First, they are all written against a different background of Franco-British relations with the advent of the Entente Cordiale. This has implications for the perception of Ireland in France and events in Ireland drove some French historians and journalists to seek to explain the Irish question. The results of their work make up the material that has been discussed in this chapter. Ireland still tempts journalists to metamorphose into historians and this is a process which was in full flood in the 1920s. Reference has already been made to Piaras Béaslaí. Amongst the French writers, Simone Téry and Joseph Kessel both worked as journalists in Ireland. Kessel was a young Argentinian-born Russian immigrant to France, fresh from military service in the Far-East, where he had worked as Vladivostok's station-master. He had some experience

---

229 Téry, pp. 215 - 232. *passim*
230 Téry, p. 234. ff

of journalism on the quirky *Journal des Débats.* Simone Téry was the daughter of the crusty editor of *l'Oeuvre*, Gustave Téry, who had a reputation for settling his differences with opponents on the duelling field. She wrote her collection of dispatches from Ireland as a history yet she never claimed as a result to be a historian. A modern equivalent would be perhaps David McKittrick, Northern Ireland correspondent of the *Independent* and the *Irish Times* who, coincidentally, has also occasionally written for *Le Monde* between 1973 and the present. McKittrick is no historian but his *Despatches from Belfast* (Belfast, 1989) is a valuable aid to understanding and appreciating the personal and social impact of the recent Troubles in Northern Ireland. Téry's work is similarly useful in understanding and appreciating events in Ireland between 1919 and 1922. It is not explicitly a history but is nonetheless valuable for the insights which add that detail, colour and atmosphere which may be lacking in a formal history. Kessel, in Ireland in 1920, was also reporting for a Paris paper but he was not tempted to publish his collected observations until 1956. This somewhat reduces their validity as a document of source. Furthermore, it becomes evident that he was accompanied by Desmond FitzGerald when he interviewed Erskine Childers, for example. It is not specifically stated but FitzGerald certainly acted as his interpreter in this case. Téry thus has the edge. Yet, despite the late publication date of this memoir it is worth noting Kessel's response to the 1916 Rising:

> I remembered the indignation which, in the fire of war, had inspired in me this rebellion, supported and armed by Germany. I remembered also how much I had hoped that it be rapidly crushed, since it threatened what was above all a just and holy cause for me. But could a more just and holier cause exist for Irish patriots than that of liberating their land? Did they not have the right, the duty even, of striking their ancient and pitiless and ancient enemy at the moment he was at his most vulnerable? [231]

Kessel succinctly presents the dilemma of the French observers of the Anglo-Irish War. Most started from a position of incomprehension of the strength of the ideology of Irish republican Nationalism which had lit the fuse of the Rising and the

---

[231] Je me rappelais l'indignation que, dans le feu de la guerre, m'avait inspirée cette rébellion soutenue et armée par l'Allemagne, et combien j'en avais souhaité l'écrasement rapide, car elle menaçait alors une cause entre toutes juste et sacrée pour moi, et qui continuait de l'être. Mais pouvait-il en exister une plus juste et plus sacrée pour les patriotes d'Irlande que de libérer leur pays? Et n'avaient-ils pas eu le droit, le devoir même, de frapper l'impitoyable et séculaire ennemi à l'instant où il était le plus vulnerable? J. Kessel, *Témoin parmi les hommes* (Paris, 1956). p. 57.

later Anglo-Irish War. This ideology was seen as having provoked the rebels to strike a blow for the enemy in the middle of the Great War, a knife in the back for the great ally and thus a knife in the back of France itself. Yet, the longer they stayed in Ireland, the more interviews Desmond FitzGerald was able to provide with members of the Dáil's Provisional Government and the more they saw evidence of the activities of the Black and Tans then the more they became convinced of the Republican cause. Yet, as Kessel makes clear in the above quotation, the question still remains. This is what the writers examined so far in this chapter seek to address. Escouflaire finds the easiest answer, since he does not feel that there is any justification for the Rising and Irish separatism, but the others take a more sophisticated and, it should be said, open-minded, approach.

There is no doubt that fiction formed part of the process of developing French understanding of Ireland and the Irish during the period between the death of Parnell in 1891 and the end of the Irish Civil War in 1923. Between 1905 and 1930 four authors produced work with Irish characters or set in Ireland itself. They are André Maurois [Emile Herzog], Pierre Benoît, Joseph Kessel and Maurice Constantin-Weyer. All were widely read in France during the first half of the twentieth century and were highly regarded in later years. However, with possibly one exception, their works with Irish elements are not the works for which they are remembered today. The Irish presence in their work during the 1920s, the first decade of Irish independence, can be considered as a result of their attempts to address the Irish question through fiction. In different ways, these writers tracked the evolution of the Irish reality over the decades in question against the background of the horror of the Great War and the new realities of the troubled 1920s. A sub-theme in much of the work is the relationship between the French cultural domain and Ireland, usually personalised by including key French characters who establish a form of Franco-Irish dialogue. Interestingly, the only writer not to do this was Joseph Kessel who was the only one of these authors to have carried out journalistic assignments in Ireland itself.

The Great War brought the Irish to France in large numbers in the khaki of the British army. In *Les Discours du Docteur O'Grady* (1922) the anglophile historian André Maurois has given us the wonderful characters of the English taciturn romantic, General Bramble, and his garrulous Irish colleague Doctor O'Grady who has a gentle wit. The character of French liaison officer, Aurelle, reflects André Maurois' own

military role during the War. These characters first appeared in Maurois' earlier book, *Les Silences du Colonel Bramble* (1918). The format is a collection of anecdotes, such as might have been exchanged amongst the leather armchairs of an English gentlemen's club.

In *Les Discours*, Doctor O'Grady's main function is to facilitate the explanation of the obscure functioning of the British mind to the French liaison officer and to the reader. An example of this is the first tale in *Les Discours.* The British military staff had requisitioned a château as a new headquarters, despite the protestations of the *châtelaine*. Some refurbishment was deemed necessary to achieve full military efficiency so, a new water supply, flowerbeds and a tennis court were installed. The *châtelaine* continued to protest. The French liaison officer, Aurelle, tried to smooth things over without much success and carried her complaints to General Bramble who could not see what all the fuss was about. O'Grady learning later that the lady had unwillingly exchanged her liberty and her house for a germ-free water supply, some sweet peas and a now, faultless, tennis court remarked that: 'there was nothing that the British Government would not do for the welfare of the natives.'[232]

From time to time Maurois allows O'Grady a pithy observation about the English such as his comment that:

> 'What's more, Romans of high birth had this in common with the English, that they could not understand that all peoples were not Romans'.[233]

But, in general terms, the book is a continuation of the *Silences*, an idiosyncratic account of basically civilised men attempting to make sense of the horrendous absurdity of total war. This absurdity is compounded by the characteristics of the English officers. A delightful series of chapters takes us through the attempts to integrate Portuguese soldiers into the allied war effort. General Bramble's second in command, Colonel Parker, comes to see Aurelle who has the 'flu and, after expressing satisfaction that the invalid is recovering, explains that he has to leave for Brittany to organise the quarters and training for the Portuguese division:

'I have been told to bring an interpreter. I thought of you'.

---

[232] - Il n'est rien, dit le docteur gravement, que le gouvernement anglais ne soit prêt à faire pour le bien des indigènes. A. Maurois, *Les Discours du Docteur O'Grady* (Paris, 1922). p. 10.

[233] - De plus, ces Romains de bonne naissance avaient ceci de commun avec les Anglais, qu'ils ne pouvaient comprendre que tous les peuples fe fussent pas Romains. *Les Discours,* p. 165.

> 'But', said Aurelle, 'I don't speak Portuguese'.
> 'No matter', said the Colonel, 'you are an interpreter aren't you? What more do you want?'[234]

What of O'Grady's Irishness? There are few direct references beyond the bare information that O'Grady is Irish not English. However, one evening while awaiting a possible air raid, O'Grady, Parker and Aurelle are on the terrace of the château and O'Grady laments the fine weather which will bring the enemy airmen, remarking:

> 'Nothing is more contrary to the idea of a benevolent divinity'.
> 'Doctor, you are an unbeliever', said Aurelle.
> 'No', said the Doctor, 'I am Irish, and respect the bitter wisdom of Catholicism. But I admit that to me this universe seems completely amoral. Shells and decorations fall by pure chance on the just and the undeserving [...] the Gods hold back and submit to destiny'.[235]

There follows a long discussion of destiny and the madness of placing searchlights near potential targets. An enemy plane roars overhead and O'Grady exclaims:

> 'My God! we are for it'.
> (Meanwhile birdsong can be heard in counterpoint to the noise of the aircraft.)
> 'Listen', says Colonel Parker, 'listen ... a nightingale'.[236]

Here Maurois is attempting to show that the wisdom of Doctor O'Grady, his view of the world and the fact of the madness of the war entitle him to feel fear. Parker, the Englishman seems oblivious to this. This can be taken two ways, either Parker represents an extreme of bravery and ability to survive due, in part, to his education and national culture while O'Grady is less fortunate. Or perhaps, O'Grady's Irishness allows him a more human response. What is clear is that Maurois does see him as different from his English colleagues and succeeds in portraying him as such without diminishing the respect that he has for the English officers with whom Aurelle, or Maurois himself, served. With the *Silences* and the *Discours*, Maurois has left a delightful picture of the British officer class attempting to civilise the War on the western front. Yet, he does indicate that there is a difference between O'Grady, the

---

[234] - On me dit d'emmener un interprète. J'ai pensé à vous. - Mais, dit Aurelle, je ne sais pas le portugais. - Qu'est-ce que cela fait, dit le colonel, vous êtes interprète, n'est-ce pas? *Les Discours* p. 62.

[235] - Rien n'est plus contraire à l'idée d'une divinité honnête. - Docteur, dit Aurelle, vous êtes un mécréant. - Non, dit le docteur, je suis Irlandais, et respecte l'amère sagesse du catholicism. Mais cet univers, je l'avoue, me paraît tout à fait amoral. Les obus et les décorations tombent au hasard, sur le juste et l'injuste ... les Dieux s'abstiennent et se soumettent au Destin. *Les Discours,* p. 108.

[236] - *My God !* dit le docteur, *we are for it.* .... - Ecoutez, dit le colonel Parker, écoutez ... le rossignol. *Les Discours.* p. 115.

Irishman, and his fellow British officers. This difference was well known to his readership by the time of the book's publication in 1922 when Ireland had been partitioned, the self-governing Free State was in being and Civil War had broken out.

The fight for Irish independence and the Irish Civil War were widely reported in the French press and this developing and different view of Ireland provoked a response from writers in France. The moral dilemmas facing participants in events in Ireland became of interest and this led to an examination of the Irish as a race apart from the English. As we have seen, books about Ireland were in the form of travelogues or were political or historical works seeking to explain the extraordinary set of events in what was seen as Britain's back yard. These events did give rise to some imaginative literature. The most popular was *La Chaussée des Géants* [The Giant's Causeway] by Pierre Benoît, published in 1922.

Benoît had created a specifically Irish character in his earlier work *Le Lac Salé* [The Salt Lake], published in 1921. This was set in mid-nineteenth century Utah at the time of the territory's occupation by white settlers. In 1858 the Mormons evacuated Salt Lake City in the face of the imminent arrival of Federal troops and the book opens with this political tension as background.[237] The story is a battle between good and evil personified respectively, by the Jesuit, Father d'Exilles and Pastor Gwinett who fight for the soul of a young rich widow, Mrs Annabel Lee also known as Miss Annabel O'Brien. Annabel is courted by a young army officer, Lieutenant Rutledge who finds an ineffective ally in the Jesuit. However, Annabel is seduced by the attentions of Pastor Gwinett and, while accepting that he is a closet Mormon, realises too late that he has married her for her money and that she is only one of several wives. Benoît gives Annabel an Irish background, rendering her more exotic, explaining her wealth and giving us a portrayal of an Irish female migrant in the New World.

Benoît has Father d'Exilles lay out Annabel's pedigree during a long conversation with the young American officer. However Benoît's grasp of Irish history is weak. He has Annabel's father involved with the Whiteboy secret society during the 'Famine of 1842' and executed for his activities. Annabel is brought to the States by her father's friend Colonel Lee who sees to the completion of her education

---

[237] Pierre Benoît, *Le Lac Salé* (Paris, 1921). pp. 16 - 19.

in an Ursuline convent in St Louis where Father d'Exilles first meets her.[238] Lee later marries Annabel and then proceeds to make a fortune in the mines of Utah. On his death she has to come to Salt Lake City to claim her inheritance with the help of Father d'Exilles.[239]

For the student of Irish history, Benoît does rather set the teeth on edge. There was no nationwide famine in 1842, the Great Famine began in 1845 and although there was a rising in 1848, Whiteboyism played little part in it and no-one was executed by the British in the aftermath. These inaccuracies do not detract from the tale but reveal that Benoit is probably using a reading of the events surrounding the 1798 rebellion, transposed to the early 1840s, to create a wave of misfortune which has washed Annabel up on the shores of the Great Salt Lake. Later in the story, Father d'Exilles has failed in his quest to protect Annabel from the evil Gwinett and she is drawing up a list of her wealth at Gwinett's request. This includes:

> Kildare Castle, near Maynooth, in Ireland. [...] Or rather a large property with a wing to the left burnt down by Cromwell's men and which had never been rebuilt, as much from lack of funds as from a desire to maintain the hate and the memory.
> 'That country does have a singular way of managing property', said Gwinett.[240]

Gwinett begins to calculate how much Annabel O'Brien's lands are worth but she points out that since her father was executed as a rebel his goods were confiscated. He then suggests that she might compose a contrite letter of obeisance to Queen Victoria which might provoke the return of her confiscated property. Her response is that this would compromise her honour as Catholic, Irish and an O'Brien. She ironically adds that her property would be certainly returned to her and that she would be 'offered the hand of some Protestant Baron from Ulster or elsewhere.'[241] Gwinett does not pursue the matter.

Finally, Gwinett calculates that Annabel has an income of $8,700 per year. Annabel then indicates that her late husband required her to continue to make annual payments of $4,000 to the Whiteboy association, the Irish revolutionary movement to

---

[238] *Le Lac Salé, p.* 52.
[239] *Le Lac Salé, p.* 58.
[240] - Le château, dites-vous? dit Gwinett.- Le château de Kildare, près de Maynooth, en Irlande. Un château, c'est beaucoup dire. Plutôt une grande bâtisse, avec l'aile gauche incendiée par les soldats de Cromwell. et qu'on n'a jamais rebâtie, autant par manque d'argent que pour garder la haine et le souvenir.- Ce pays a une façon singulière de comprendre la gestion des propriétés, dit Gwinett. *Le Lac Salé,* p. 168.

which her father and her husband belonged.[242] Gwinett is shocked and tells her a tale of a bomb set off by the Whiteboys in London's Soho square in the late 1840s which killed women and children. This convinces Annabel to ignore her father's wishes. Benoît has here let his imagination run free and invented Irish terrorism in Britain twenty years before the Fenians.

No further references are made to Annabel's origins and she marries Gwinett, fails to escape his total control and ends her life as a shrivelled old woman in a hospice in Salt Lake City. Benoît has fashioned a moral tale where the forces of evil are identified explicitly with the early Church of the Latter Day Saints and, shadowy in the background, political violence in early nineteenth-century Ireland. He was to build on the Irish subject matter in *La Chaussée des Géants* but without the profound examination of the human condition that he attempts in *Le Lac Salé*. Where the latter book is interesting is in the placing of a major character, of Irish origin, on the new frontier of the Far West, precisely where many Irish-born were to be found at the time.

Benoît's Irish novel, *La Chaussée des Géants*, is set at the time of the 1916 Rising. It has the Benoît trademark of a strong, enigmatic and fascinating woman as a principal character. It purports to be a historical novel but the story is more fanciful than an accurate record of the historical events depicted. François Gérard, a young Frenchman of equivocal morality, finds himself involved in the Irish Republican Brotherhood's preparations for the Easter Rising. The main action of the story takes place in the framework of an international commission whose task is to observe the Irish Rising and to confirm that it is a struggle for independence and not a German-inspired military diversion. The narrator, Gérard, is the French representative and the commission is lodged in Co. Kerry at Dunmore Castle near Tralee. This is the property of the Earl of Antrim's daughter, Antiope. Widow of the Earl of Kendale, Antiope progressively distracts François and his obsession with her forms one of the main themes of the book. The preparations for the Rising, the events of Easter week in Dublin and the aftermath form the other main theme. The whole is a fantasy exploiting melodramatically the participation in the Rising of well-known individuals and interweaving the story of the relationship between François and Antiope. Ireland the exotic, with its tormented history is, in effect, one of the main characters in the

---

241 *Le Lac Salé, p.* 173.
242 *Le Lac Salé, p.* 178.

book. This is clear from the introduction of this 'character' in chapter three:

> Erin, Erin, holy land of giants and saints. Erin, the isle of the golden harp, grey rocks on pale sand, of soft blue skies, green fields, brown torrents and black bogs. Ah, Erin! brave holy men in search of new lands sailed from your coasts. [...] Patrick and Columba placed upon you the seal of Catholicism. You have remained faithful to it, Erin, at what cost of spilt blood, no one can ever say! Yet, glorious land, you have never ceased to unite the strict splendours of Latin hymns with the dark beauty of Northern myths [...][243]

Despite the exuberance of this sort of language, the story takes the reader through many of the real events leading up to the Rising. Benoît, despite not having English, is well informed about Irish events. He alludes to the review by Eoin MacNeill in Dublin's College Green of the Irish Volunteers on 17th March 1916.[244] This was an event which temporarily halted the trams and which was watched by the police who had no orders to interfere. In retrospect, this event is often cited as an example of the incompetence of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Augustine Birrell. Benoît reminds the reader of the smuggling of arms to the Protestants in the North in 1914 and has a character remark a little bitterly:

> A century ago though, we expected foreign arms (here in Kerry). Hoche was bringing them and they were French muskets.[245]

Improbably, Sir Roger Casement makes an appearance and the reader is made privy to the moment when the Earl of Antrim, who has been revealed as the *eminence grise* of the Rising, tells him that he must sacrifice himself for the cause:

> - I know that what I demand of you is terrible, said the Earl, your death, death in a black hood on the end of the hangman's rope instead of death with one's eyes turned to the sky, a beautiful warrior's death.[246]

During Easter week 1916 Gérard finds himself in Dublin during the British

---

[243] Erin, Erin, terre sacré des géants et les saintes. Erin, île à la harpe d'or., aux rochers gris sur la sable pâle, au ciel bleu velouté, aux prairies vertes, aux torrents bruns, aux marais noirs. Ah! de tes côtes, Erin, Irlande bien-aimée sont partis les grands imrams aventureux, en quête de terres nouvelles. [...] Patrick et Columban t'ont imprimé le sceau catholique. Tu lui es restée fidèle, Erin, qui pourra jamais dire au prix de quel sang versé! Et pourtant jamais, terre glorieuse, tu n'as cessé d'unir aux splendeurs strictes des hymnes latins la sombre beauté des mythes du Nord. P. Benoît, *La Chaussée des Géants* (Paris, 1922), p. 65.

[244] *La Chaussée des Géants,* p. 174.

[245] Il y a une siècle, pourtant, nous avons accueilli des armes étrangères. C'était Hoche qui nous les apportait, et c'était des fusils français. *La Chaussée des Géants,* p. 175.

[246] - Je sais que ce que j'exige de toi est terrible, dit le comte: la mort, la mort sous la voile noir, au bout de la corde infâme, au lieu de la mort, les yeux au ciel, des beau lutteurs. *La Chaussée des Géants,*p. 229.

bombardment:

> For a second we leant on the parapet of the bridge. Flames lit our faces. I noticed my companion's face shrivelled with surprise and horror. I felt his hand seize mine.
> 'Ypres!' he whispered hoarsely, 'it's Ypres on the Liffey!'
> A bullet ricocheting just beside us, recalled us to reality.[247]

The story concludes with the revelation that Antiope is not who she appears but the little girl Edith Stewart whom Gérard met as a child. Stewart is now in Portland serving a life sentence, with Countess Markeivicz, and the sight of a British navy vessel offshore is a symbol of the fact that the Giant's Causeway has yet to see the invader leave Ireland.

Benoît's melodrama maintains the exoticism of Ireland as a location. Like much of his work the book is very atmospheric and has enjoyed some repute as an unusual thriller. It has something of the feeling of Liam O'Flaherty's writing in, for example, *The Informer.* Considering that Benoît did not read English, he researched well. By the time he was writing this book, there were a good number of sources available to him in French. The pro-Republican, or anti-British, tone of the book suggests that Benoît was well acquainted with the work of Grousset, Paul-Dubois, Goblet, and reports of journalists such as Ludovic Naudeau. Like Kessel, Benoît was seduced by the fight for Irish freedom but he did not seek to create 'Irish' characters. No attempt is made to emulate Irish whimsy or to replicate hiberno-English speech patterns as can be seen in Maurois. Unlike Maurois, Benoît has nothing to say in favour of the English. He was pro-Irish and saw the struggle for independence as a playing out of Irish history, providing a fanciful background for his tale of adventure, set in that mysterious Atlantic island.

In *Un Homme se penche sur son passé* [*A Man leans on his past*], Maurice Constantin-Weyer takes us to the early twentieth-century North-American frontier world of a horse trader and fur trapper of French Canadian origin. He is aware that his way of life is disappearing as a result of the settlement of the Far West of the States and Canada.[248] Constantin-Weyer's tale is a reflective, yet action-packed piece with

---

[247] Une seconde nous nous accoudâmes au parapet du pont. Les flammes éclairaient nos visages. J'aperçus celui de mon compagnon, soudain tout contracté de surprise et d'horreur. Je sentis sa main qui saisissait la mienne.-Ypres! murmura-t-il d'une voix rauque, c'est Ypres sur la Liffey. *La Chaussée des Géants,* p. 265.

[248] M. Constatin-Weyer, *Un Homme se penche sur son passé* (Paris, 1928), p. 23.

echoes of Fenimore Cooper. The author selects a family of Irish settlers in Canada, as positive secondary characters in the tale. They are contrasted favourably with other Breton and Scots settlers and are symbols of the inevitable but unattractive new future. The principal character marries the daughter of these settlers and, although his married life is not to be a happy one, at the time of the wedding he makes the remark that 'the French and the Irish have the same celtic blood.'[249] The Priest who marries them is a Father MacMahon, a recognisable name for French readers, of course. He even reminds those present that 'French blood flowed in Ireland with that of the sons of Erin.'[250] Thus the link between Ireland and France of a shared history is made explicit. The book is interesting in that, for the first time in the twentieth century, a real attempt is made in a French novel to contrast Irish characters with characters from other backgrounds. The hospitality of the Irish settlers and their success in the New World are made clear. Yet the main character nearly meets his death at the hands of another Irish character. His Irish bride abandons him, running away with his potential killer, taking their child with her and the last part of the story is taken up with his pursuit of them. Again, we have Irish characters occupying a key role on a new frontier as in the work of a writer of a previous generation, Jules Verne.[251]

The final writer is Joseph Kessel who wrote the short story *Mary de Cork*, the first part of the small collection published as *Les Cœurs purs* in 1927. It was inspired by Kessel's meeting with Mary MacSwiney, sister of the Lord Mayor of Cork who died in Brixton Jail in October 1920. Kessel was in Ireland as a special correspondent for *Le Temps*. He was struck by Miss MacSwiney's steely resolve and commitment to the republican cause. His story has a principal character who puts her commitment to fighting for the Republic in the Irish Civil War above her love for her husband and young son, even though her husband will die as a result. Fine descriptions of wartime Cork City, of autumn dampness and gloom, enhance this short but gripping tale. Like many French people, Kessel was deeply affected both by the death of Terence MacSwiney and by his sister's steadfastness. This story is his unashamed salute to her.

All four of these writers had considerable importance in the first half of the twentieth century. Benoît's *Atlantide* (1919) was the first paperback issued by

---

249 M. Constatin-Weyer, p. 160.
250 Ibid.
251 See, *Les Enfants du Capitaine Grant*, Vol II (Paris 1930, Edition Hachette).

Gallimard's *Livre de Poche* collection and Maurois' *Ariel* [in translation] was the first Penguin book. Both are still in print. Kessel went on to achieve an international reputation and Constantin-Weyer's *Un homme se penche sur son passée* won the Prix Goncourt in 1928. All four were given the national accolade of election to the *Académie Française.* Nowadays, they may be out of fashion, but they do reflect the evolution of the French view of the Irish in the early-twentieth century.

Chapter 3

La Presse Française de la Troisième République

The Modernisation of Mass Journalism in France

In order to trace the development of a notion of Ireland in the French consciousness between 1891 and 1923 literary sources provide an unexpectedly rich vein as we have seen. However, a further resource is to be found in the French press of the period. The daily and periodic press published in France provide an account of the Irish revolution which varied from the authoritative through to the speculative and the frankly confusing. Newspapers are an unusual source for historians and this is perhaps because study of the press demands a critical approach which crosses the boundary between historical and literary studies. On the historical side there is the doubt that material written in the press cannot be considered a reputable historical source, given the variety of reasons for its writing. Newspapers had many objectives and did not always attempt to provide a detached record of events. The personal ambition of owners or editors, their political agendas, creative expression, entertainment and diversion are all elements of newspapers, particularly in the period of this study. In historiography, journalism, particularly in the daily press, is often banished to the realms of popular culture and therefore becomes doubly suspect to the traditional academic historian. Yet newspapers open a particular window onto the times in which they are published. At the very least, they provide an entry to the actual discourse that was taking place in the public sphere as events occurred.

It is impossible to use popular methods, such as column inches, to quantifying the coverage, since many newspapers are only available on microfilm. This renders impossible accurate measurement. Comment can only be made on the value of the piece or its position in the paper. Is it a major report or just a news item 'lifted' from an English paper, is it on the foreign page or has it made the front page? Evaluation of the material, therefore, is qualitative in the first instance and only incidentally quantitative. While some work on the press tends to emphasise the question of quantity in terms of column inches this is to miss the point. Frequency of report, no matter how short, and the quality and origin of those reports is of the real essence of the value of press coverage to the researcher. Reading these columns nearly a century later can provide clues to the nature of the discourse. At most, they provide perceptive analysis and a weighting to an argument that was considered important at the time and might be forgotten by later historians. Occasionally, shafts of great perception can beam from their columns, perception impossible to appreciate fully at the time but which has been subsequently proved to be of particular value.

In the British Isles, effective and serious work by historians on the press is relatively rare. Yet James Mill writing in the *Westminster Review* of 1824 noted:

> It is indeed a subject of wonder that periodical publications should have existed so long [...] without having become subject to a regular and systematic course of criticism.[252]

Lyn Pykett, who uses this reference, goes on to suggest that even in our own time there is a reluctance by historical researchers working on the Victorian period to avail themselves of the resource represented by newspapers and periodicals. In probing the French awareness or otherwise of Irish matters in the period of this study it is essential to look at the reporting of events in Ireland in the French press and periodicals. Not only do these publications give a notion of the discourse on Ireland, such as it was, that was taking place in France, they also provide an insight into the popular perception of relationship between the United Kingdom and France and reveal the effectiveness of the propaganda of the Irish independence movement. We should not forget that this movement drew a deal of its intellectual justification from French revolutionary ideals of a century before and that many of its leaders looked to the great republics of the United States and France as sources of moral and political support. Many of the leaders of the independence movement were well versed in French literature and we have already seen that Dáil Minister of Propaganda, Desmond FitzGerald was fluent in French. Furthermore, serious French writers on political matters also used periodicals such as *Revue des Deux Mondes* as a means of transmission of their thoughts on developments in Ireland. Herein lies the rationale behind the major part of this study.

In order to concentrate on the developments in Ireland, principal events have been selected and a general review of coverage of those events has been undertaken. A selective array of sources has been chosen which reflect the generality of national coverage in France of Irish events at the time they took place. No attempt has been made to research all the occurrences of coverage in France of any particular Irish event. This is because of the magnitude of the task that this would represent and because of the practice of 'lifting' news items from mass circulation dailies by the editors of local papers that would result in duplication of material. This practice was

---

[252] Quoted by L. Pykett, *'Reading the Periodical Press: Text and context'* in L. Brake, A. Jones, and L. Madden (eds.), *Investigating Victorian journalism* (Basingstoke, 1990). p. 3.

general since small regional papers were unable to maintain foreign correspondents even in major capitals like London. Their readership was regionally based and presumed to be less interested in events in Ireland or any other far away country for that matter. This presumption is still evident in the French provinces even today where regional newspapers have a tendency to highlight local and national news and give limited space to international coverage.

Another factor has exerted influence on the choice of newspapers used for this study. This is the circulation profile of the papers concerned. As has been suggested, there is a strong tradition of regional or local papers in France and even today there are few papers which can be regarded as constituting a national press. However, in the first two decades of the twentieth century some of the Paris press had some of the highest circulation figures in the world.[253] In comparing the present profile of the British and French press we must remember that most French newspapers date from the post liberation re-establishment of republican government in 1944-1945. In Britain there is a historical continuity of titles, although some have evolved politically so that they are now very different to what they were between 1890 and 1930. In France the situation is more complex.

There is some evidence that French newspapers in this period were far from being impartial observers of events.[254] While censorship was not in force, except for the years of the Great War, there is no doubt that political influence was normal. This is scarcely surprising since so many French papers had deep political roots which had been polarised during the Dreyfus affair. Papers like *Le Figaro* and *L'Humanité* were relatively honest about their political standpoints but the mass dailies profited from bribes and interference from various quarters without making this clear to their readership.[255] The French press was perceived as failing to inform the public effectively about the progress of the military effort. This structural moral equivocacy met its nemesis with the invasion of 1940 and the continuing publication of the right-wing press under the Vichy regime. The present-day titles struggle to convince the French readership of their validity even 60 years later and it is the Paris press founded

---

[253] For example, *Le Petit Parisien* in 1914 printed more than 1.5 million copies daily. P. Albert and F. Terrou, p. 70.

[254] P. Albert and F. Terrou, p. 84, W. Refern, *Writing on the move:Albert Londres and investigative journalism* (Bern, 2004), p. 189.

[255] W. Refern, p. 187.

after 1945 which is of the highest quality [the dailies *Le Monde* and *Libération,* and the weeklies *Le Nouvel Observateur, Le Point* and *L'Express* for example]. In France, as Balzac put it in 1843:

> 'The press, like a woman, is admirable and sublime when it tells an untruth, [...] it deploys the geatest effort in this struggle and the public, like a stupid husband, always falls for it. If the press did not exist there would be a need not to have it invented'.[256]

Before 1940 many of the popular Paris papers can be considered to have been national papers much as was the case in Britain. Examples would be *Le Petit Parisien* and *Le Figaro*. After the defeat of 1940, many papers, particularly on the left, ceased publication. Paris, the centre of French newspaper publication, was under direct enemy occupation. The major French papers moved South to the unoccupied Vichy zone. Some like *Le Matin, Le Petit Parisien* and *L'Oeuvre* resurfaced in Paris as collaborationist papers. National papers like *Le Figaro, Le Jour, Echo de Paris* and regional papers such as *Le Progrès* in Lyon, continued under Vichy but were suppressed following the Nazi invasion of the South in 1942.[257] Resistance saw the birth of new titles such as *Combat* and the reappearance of older ones like *l'Humanité* which were published clandestinely first as cyclostyled news sheets and later as printed newspapers .[258]

Clearly, such a traumatic historical experience had a great effect on the French press, with the result that there is a profound difference between the press today in France and the French press in the period under examination. The French press between 1890 and 1914 enjoyed a far greater measure of public confidence and support and therefore exercised an influence of which modern French newspaper proprietors and editors can only dream. Consequently, its value as an historical resource is far higher than one might suppose from a brief inspection of the modern French press.

French reporting on Ireland was always driven by political events in that country and increased in quantity and depth with the development of the post-

---

[256] 'La presse, comme une femme, est admirable et sublime quand elle avance un mensonge, [...] elle deploie les plus grandes qualités dans cette lutte où le public, aussi bête qu'un mari, succombe toujours. Si la presse n'existait pas, il faudait ne pas l'inventer'. H. de Balzac, *Monographie de la presse parisienne* (Paris, 1943 [1843]), p. 193.

[257] P. Albert, and F. Terrou, *Histoire de la presse* (Paris, 1968). pp. 107-109.

[258] P. Albert, and F. Terrou, p. 110.

Victorian relationship between France and Britain under the *Entente Cordiale*. There were five main moments when events in Ireland were considered as worth reporting in some detail or when events in Ireland reached a moment of crisis. These were the Ulster Crisis of 1910-1914, the 1916 Rising, the Anglo-Irish War following the 1918 general election, the Anglo-Irish treaty and the Irish Civil War. These are the key stages on the road to Independence for the Irish Free State and the establishment of the Province of Northern Ireland. They provide the basis for the review of the French press which follows and the identification of the discourse on Irish identity and statehood which develops in French writing and the press. Within this discourse lie elements of the various political agendas of the different newspapers and those who wrote on Ireland. In addition to the clear divisions between journals of the right and of the left, there are varying elements of anglophobia which surface from time to time. Yet what is interesting is that, while many French journalists in the post 1918 period were persuaded of the validity of the argument for Irish independence, this view did not automatically lead to outbursts of anglophobia but to a critique of the British government's policy, which is not the same thing. Most writers had a profound respect for the political institutions of the United Kingdom and/or for the part played by France's ally in achieving the victory of 1918.

A close reading of the French press is rewarding in that we can see how reporters with less political baggage than their British counterparts moved to a recognition of the separate national identity of Ireland. We see how they wrestled with the problem of suggesting a formula for Irish political identity which might encompass the whole island and include the largely Protestant North-East. We see that they ultimately failed, like every one else, to come up with a solution. By late 1922 Northern Ireland begins to drop out of sight eclipsed by the mystery of the Civil War in the South. It was not to reappear until 1969 when once again French reporters were on the streets of Irish cities.

Preoccupations with the world beyond their frontiers moved public interest away from Ireland by 1923 and the country slid off the French newspaper pages. As we have seen, Ireland provides the inspiration for a number of writers during the decade but can hardly be considered to be in the forefront of the French consciousness. This situation was to remain broadly until the late sixties and the onset of the Northern Irish Troubles when, once more, French journalists attempted to

explain events in Ireland.

A key issue in the coverage of Irish events in the first three decades of the twentieth century is the moment when French readers realised that a new country had joined the European nations. One of the first actions of the Dáil on January 21st 1919 was to address the 'free nations of the world' in Irish, French and English inviting 'every free nation to support the Irish Republic by recognising Ireland's national status.'[259] Despite this grand gesture, a year was to elapse before the French began to perceive that Ireland's self-proclaimed independent status was not going to be surrendered. The French press generally took the view that the death of the Lord Mayor of Cork, Terence MacSwiney, played a key role in this defence of the notion of independence. This becomes clear as the reports of his hunger strike and death are read. That his sacrifice should have such an effect in France highlights the difference in view from their British colleagues that French journalists held. Thus, from late 1920, Irish separation in some form becomes perceived as a *fait accompli* and the only question which remains is how this is to be achieved and what the exact configuration will be.

The three decades between 1891 and 1923 saw the development of newspapers as consumer goods. The cost of newspapers in relative terms was falling thanks to new industrial mass-production methods and the rising disposable income of working people. By 1914 the latest rotary presses were able to print 50,000 copies of a 24-page newspaper every hour.[260] Literacy was increasing and was consolidated by the compulsory elementary schooling, which had such an important role in the formation of citizens of the Third French Republic.[261] The market increased and by 1918, for example, *Le Petit Parisien* was boasting just below its title that it had the world's greatest circulation. Certainly, it was France's largest. On the eve of the Great War it had a circulation of 1.55 million.[262] Not for nothing has the period 1871-1914 been called the 'golden age of the French Press'.[263]

This said, most French newspapers particularly those in the provinces and those representing specific political viewpoints had relatively small circulation figures

---

[259] D. McArdle, *The Irish Republic* (London, 1937). p. 254.
[260] P. Albert and F. Terrou, p. 57.
[261] A system of free compulsory secular state education was finally established in France by the two laws of 1881 and 1882 which were the work of Jules Ferry. Ambrosi, p. 23.
[262] R Manévy, *La Presse de la Troisième République* (Paris, 1955). p. 127.

compared with the popular Paris dailies. Nevertheless a wide spectrum of opinion was represented by the French press alongside the mass-circulation press. It is not therefore surprising that it was far from unusual for political reputations to be made through journalism - Clemonceau, Millerand and Jean-Jaurès for example. As we have seen, the Swiss author, Edouard Rod, in his book based on Parnell's career used the route of a career in journalism to propel his main character into politics.[264]

While the press under the second Empire had been increasingly censored, ultimately becoming a vehicle for the transmission of the government's ideals, what was remarkable during the Third Republic was the increasing degree of press freedom. This was not immediately evident since, during the period of the presidencies of Thiers and MacMahon, there was only a slight modification of government controls.[265] Although stamp duty was removed from newspapers on the 5th September 1870, the day after the Empire collapsed, the National Assembly adopted a modified version of the 1852 decree controlling the press. This stipulated that all political papers and all news sheets that appeared more than once a week had to deposit a large sum with the authorities as surety of their compliance with the law.[266]

MacMahon's presidency was marked by increasing pressure on the press particularly that of the left. In June 1873, Gambetta gleefully read out to his fellow deputies a circular which had been acquired by the Republicans. This was in the context of a debate on the banning of a local radical newspaper *Le Corsaire* in the department of the Yonne.[267] The circular gives a good idea of how the Minister of the Interior sought the help of the Prefects to control the press:

> Send me urgently a report on the press in your *département*. The time has come to re-assert authority and influence in this regard which the policy of affecting indifferent neutrality has destroyed. Let me know which papers are conservative or likely to become so whatever their financial situation the price that they might demand to well-meaning assistance from the administration, the names of their editors in chief, their presumed opinions and origins. We are going to organise a news bulletin made up of wired news and signed articles which will be regularly sent to you and which you will distribute according to the confidence that you have in the various papers [in your *département*]. [268]

---

263 P. Albert and F. Terrou, p. 66.
264 E. Rod, *La vie privée de Michel Teissier* (Paris, 1893).
265 Presidency of Thiers 1871-1873 and of MacMahon 1873-1879.
266 R. Manévy, p. 24.
267 R. Manévy, pp. 24 -25.
268 Envoyez-moi d'urgence un rapport sur la presse dans votre département L'heure est venue de

Clearly, the Government intended to influence directly the provincial press by subvention or pressure.

The screw was turned a little more in late 1875 but the political crisis in May 1877, which eventually led to the resignation of MacMahon, signalled the end of pressure on the press. although the final months of the regime were marked by some 2,227 judgements against newspapers or their contributors. Some 424 were for '*offense au President de la République,*' one for a cartoon showing MacMahon on a horse with the caption 'I say, what an intelligent looking horse!' [269]

The more radical Republican-dominated *Chambre des Deputés,* elected following MacMahon's departure, established a new set of laws governing the French press. Although they were comprehensive, their effect was to free up the whole area of publishing. Rules against abuse of common law remained and an obligation for the editor of any periodical to be of French nationality and in possession of full civil rights was stated. Although the crime of offence to the Head of State was retained all other prohibitions were removed. In practice, the French press was now as free as any in the world.[270]

Reserve powers of censorship were still held by the Government but were used very lightly. Most subsequent restrictions were part of general action taken against violent political groups [for example, in 1893 after the bombing in the Palais-Bourbon and a year later after the assassination of President Sadi Carnot.][271] Implied in the legislation was a degree of self censorship. During the Great War, the press exercised effective self-censorship in support of the national policy of the *Union Sacré.* Reading papers of the period, one is struck by how seldom a column or picture space is left blank - indicating the work of [or the fear of] the censor. This indicates the degree of self-censorship at a sub-editorial level which resulted in newspapers which gave the

---

reprendre de ce coté l'autorité et l'influence qu'une affectation de neutralité indifférente avait détruites. Dites-moi les journaux conservateurs ou susceptibles de le devenir, quelle que soit, d'ailleurs, la nuance à laquelle ils appartiennent, leur situation financière et le prix qu'ils pourraient attacher au concours bienveillant de l'administration, le nom de leurs rédacteurs en chef, leurs opinions présumées et leurs antécédents. Nous allons organiser un bulletin de nouvelles télégraphiques et autographiques qui vous sera régulièrement adressé et dont vous mesurerez la communication au degré de confiance que les divers journaux vous inspireront. R. Manévy, p. 25.

269 '*Le cheval a l'air intelligent, ma foi*!' R. Manévy, p. 27.

270 R. Manévy, pp. 27-35.

271 D. Brogan, *The Development of modern France 1830-1939* (London, Revised Edition, 1967). p.302.

general impression that there was full editorial control and that no external or government agency had interfered with the news.

Given this atmosphere of freedom it is hardly surprising that the French press expanded greatly during the period. There was a coincidence of factors that contributed to this, quite apart from the post 1881 liberalisation of controls. These include a rising literacy rate, aggressive marketing, particularly in Paris, what Manévy has described as *La conquête du lecteur* and finally, the development of mechanical mass-production printing methods.[272]

These methods enabled the larger circulation papers to run very profitably. The annual editorial costs of the *Le Petit Journal* in 1891 with a circulation of a million were FF. 705,000 as against those of *Le Figaro*, circulation 80,000, which were FF. 750,000. Total annual costs were respectively FF. 10.3 million and around FF. 4 million but the popular *Le Petit Journal* sold over ten times as many copies as the more up-market *Le Figaro*. Thus the bigger undertaking was clearly more cost efficient, so important in a city where there were more than 50 daily papers.[273]

In 1891, papers varied in price. Those aimed at the bourgeoisie [*Le Figaro* priced at 15c in Paris and 20c in the provinces] tended to maintain their price level while the popular mass-circulation dailies, led by *Le Petit Journal,* sold for *un sou*, [5c] the smallest coin in circulation. When a paper went down-market in search of greater sales it had also to move to a lower price band. An example of this was *Le Matin* which although selling at only 10c was stagnating in the 1890s. By halving its price to *un sou* in 1896 its circulation shot up and by 1914 it was one of the four principal Paris dailies.[274]

The process of '*la conquête du lecteur'* was continued by the bigger papers who established attractive news rooms, visible and open to the public, attracted tabloid advertising from the new department stores and ran popular serials. In 1922, for example, the newly Communist *l'Humanité* was still following this format. It carried tabloid publicity for the *Louvre* department store, regular block advertisements

---

[272] , 'The conquest of the reader' The first chapter in R. Manévy's *Histoire de la presse de la 3e république* has this title.

[273] R. Manévy, p.12.

[274] These were *Le Petit Journal, Le Petit Parisien, Le Matin* and *Le Journal* which together sold more than 4 million copies daily. Albert and Terrou, p. 71.

for *Mercier* champagne and ran a serialisation of Jack London's *Iron Heel*.[275]

A further development was a change in the pagination style. Even the popular dailies were broadsheet papers in the last years of the nineteenth century but by 1914, while not yet tabloid, they had developed a more open pagination with headlines and sub-headings and an increasing use of images and cartoons. Foreign news, which had not been of great import at the start of the period and still not often making front page headlines, occupied a good proportion of the output of the popular press. This reflected a greater interest in French overseas policy as the colonial adventures of the 1890s unfolded, an increasing awareness of France's place in Europe and that events beyond her borders could have an effect on the country. How much this material was of real interest to the ordinary reader is impossible to say but there is no doubt that the editors and sub-editors did feel that it was part of their paper's duty to inform and, to some extent, instruct their readership. Clearly, the political views of certain papers meant that foreign news was considered vital and the experience of the Great War fuelled an interest in what went on abroad. Yet, how instructive a barrage of isolated foreign news items really was is open to some discussion as will be shown below.

The French provincial press developed on local lines. The viability of some papers was marginal and it was common for relatively important towns such as *sous-préfectures* only to have papers which appeared once or twice a week. But the technology which allowed cost-effective printing continued to spread, even if it was only in the form of motorisation of a simple rotary press, and in 1874 there were some 179 provincial dailies. By 1914 there were over 250 provincial dailies using the same wired news sources as the Paris press. The railway enabled regional editions of the Paris papers to be on sale in provincial cities on the evening of publication day and the telegraph enabled news to be transmitted across the country. It is worth noting that at the same period, the Irish provincial press was comparatively much more successful with 130 provincial papers in 1891 for a population a fraction of that of France.[276]

In addition to the newspapers there were weekly reviews - more expensive and aimed at the bourgeoisie. Magazines like *L'Illustration* had been a feature of middle-class French life for many years and the development of rotary litho presses enabled

---

[275] *L'Humanité*, 09/1922.

[276] M-L Legg, *Newspapers and nationalism: the Irish provincial press 1850 -1892* (Dublin, 1999). p. 125.

high quality reproduction of the pictures which were essential to these publications. They also provided a forum for long, occasionally serialised, pieces on some aspect of international events. There were also quarterlies or fortnightly cultural magazines which informed and discussed at a high intellectual level. The classic example is, of course, *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

The blossoming of the press in the first decades of the Third Republic is a reflection of the process of modernisation and democratisation of French society. It enables an insight to be gained into the notions and preoccupations of the French - especially at a popular level and reveals much about how the ordinary citizen perceived the world. In the second part of this study, reference to newspaper items in the French press about Ireland will reveal certain of the resonances described above in Chapter One and throw light on the French view of the establishment of Ireland as a national entity. The review of the French press in the following chapters tracks the evolution of the principal moments of the re-definition of the nineteenth-century 'Irish question' in the years from 1910 to 1923. It aims to reveal the extent to which events in Ireland were reported in France and the view there of the troubled times that the country experienced. It shows that, although the journalism was often of a high quality, it was not always disinterested. Nevertheless a unique view is afforded us of how journalists from a nation with an historical affinity with Ireland but a relatively disinterested view of the country, recorded and presented the events as they saw them at the time.

Chapter 4

L'Irlande et la Crise Anglaise I : Le Home Rule

The Third Home Rule Bill and the Ulster Crisis

The source material for this Chapter is found in the French press on a day-to-day basis and is initially mainly in the form of reporting and discussion of the innovations of Lloyd George as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Asquith Liberal Government. These were not perceived as direct moves towards the granting of Irish Home Rule but, rather, as the social policies of a newly elected Government with a radical agenda. There was a perception that the Liberal landslide of 1905 would not be repeated, given the strong cohesive Conservative and Unionist opposition. Home Rule began to be dimly perceived as an eventual outcome of the constitutional innovation which was needed in order to guarantee the passing of the social and fiscal legislation envisaged by the Government. As has been suggested previously in Chapter One, the 1905 election had not just altered the composition of the House of Commons in the Liberals' favour but as time went on, it became clear that the reunited parliamentary bloc of Irish Nationalist MPs could well be essential if and when the Liberals lost their overwhelming majority. It took time for the full implications to sink in. Unionist opposition was not immediately identified as a discrete political force and the full analysis of this opposition in lengthy commentaries had to await the immediate post-1916 period. Even then the Unionist position was set out in opposition to a possibly misguided Nationalist line. Only one writer, Escouflaire, in his *Ireland, the enemy...?*, Paris, (1918) aligns itself squarely with the Unionist position right from the second sentence of its preface.[277] Escouflaire's Ireland is Catholic and Nationalist and his views have been dealt with in some detail in a previous chapter, but it is worth repeating here that his book is unique in the genre.

Towards the end of the first decade of the twentieth century foreign news in the French press originated in many other theatres besides Ireland. These included the Balkans, Italy's conflict with Turkey, crises in North Africa and the Anglo-German naval arms race. In *Le Figaro*, there was a column almost every day called *Figaro à Londres* which reported and commented on political and, sometimes, social events in Britain. This column was often the work of Jean de Coudurier, the London correspondent, who clearly had access to the thinking of the Liberals at the highest level. His column was informative and gently idiosyncratic, in that his views on certain of the members of the British political establishment were clearly voiced.

---

[277] See full quotation on p. 59 above.

scene over the period of the Ulster crisis. It was reinforced by occasional longer pieces of explanation and analysis or long interviews with British establishment figures who held a particular view.

There are several questions implicit in this area of reporting. These are:

- How serious was the Unionist problem considered to be?
- How much was the political problem of Ulster merely seen as an Irish problem?
- How important was it seen as being when compared to other projected radical legislation?
- How much was the problem considered a function of Nationalist aspirations rather than legitimate Unionist concerns?

These questions arise because at the outset of the Ulster Crisis it is fair to say that the French readers of the press had little idea of its constitutional potential. Consequently, the intensity of the questions increased as time went on. What started as a peripheral item on the margins of the Liberals' social and financial reform programme, gradually became a central constitutional issue at the heart of the British State. Questions began to arise about the loyalty of senior army officers and thousands of volunteer militiamen, led by senior politicians, began drilling with smuggled arms in various provinces of the Kingdom. As British writers took sides, their French colleagues had the problem of informing their readers of this extraordinary set of developments at the heart of France's closest and most powerful ally.

The Conservative and Unionist party was in power for a decade after 1894 and, as a result, opportunities for spectacular Nationalist politics *à la mode de* Parnell were few indeed. This apparent dullness on the political scene seems in retrospect to have redirected energy into a literary and cultural movement that aimed to regenerate Ireland by the revival of the Irish language, Gaelic Culture and the creation of a new national cultural identity. In reality, the two phenomena were not connected. Those opposed to this new cultural nationalism were the Irish Unionists. In large measure these Unionists were Protestants: members of the Church of Ireland; Presbyterians; Methodists; making up a quarter of the population of Ireland. These Irish Protestants were a scattered minority in most of the country, comprising some 10% of the population in the three provinces of Leinster, Munster and Connacht. In the northern province of Ulster, however, Protestants were in a majority. They comprised 57% of the province as a whole, but in the six North-Eastern counties, Antrim, Armagh,

Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone, they were in a larger majority, with some 66% of the population. Amongst them the Presbyterians were the largest single Protestant denomination. This was to give a particular characteristic to Irish Unionism in that its broadest support and most effective political voice was to be heard in the North East - in the most industrialised area of the country. Unionism and industrial Ulster became almost synonymous. Although there was considerable Unionist support elsewhere in the country, it was based on rural land-owning interests with connections to the Conservative Establishment in Britain. The Unionist political will had been successfully mobilised in the 1880s to defeat, with Conservative support, Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill of 1886. In 1893, the Conservative and Unionist majority in the Lords ensured the defeat of the second Home Rule Bill, despite a favourable majority in the Commons.[278]

Yet it was in the early years of the twentieth century that the two political entities in Ireland began to form effective political bodies. There were two major developments. In the Nationalist community the damage caused by the split in the Parliamentary party with the fall of Parnell was largely healed under the leadership of John Redmond in 1900. The Unionists were now clearly divided into Ulster Unionists and Southern Unionists but the Ulster Unionist Council formed in 1904-1905, which centralised Unionist forces in the Province, determined policy and formalised links with British Conservative interests.[279] It was in 1906 that a decade of Conservative rule came to an end when the Liberal party was returned with a programme of fiscal and social reform. The Liberals gained 377 seats which meant an overall majority of 84.[280] Irish Home Rule was not high on the new government's agenda but the fiscal crisis of 1909 when the Lords opposed the budget was to change this. The delaying power of the Conservative and Unionist majority in the Lords, which had already almost destroyed Liberal legislation on Land Reform in 1907, could no longer be tolerated by an elected Liberal Government. As steps were taken to address this issue so the support of the Irish Parliamentary Party became crucial, given the loss of an overall majority by the Liberals after the January 1910 election. Although this election was fought on the principle of the right of an elected Government with a working

---

278 P. Buckland, *A History of Northern Ireland* (Dublin, 1981), pp. 8 - 10.
279 P. Buckland, p. 10.
280 R. Ensor, *England 1870 - 1914* (Oxford, 1936), p. 386.

majority in the Commons to have its budget proposals accepted by Parliament, the result was to move Irish Home Rule to the centre of the political stage.

To see how the French press reported the Irish scene during 1910 it is instructive to follow the reports in *Le Figaro*. From the outset it is clear that the Irish contribution to the debate in British politics is followed in some detail. It is with the election of January 1910 that coverage by the French press begins to be of interest. Right at the start of the year *Le Figaro* published an interview with Sir Charles Dilke. A radical politician, he was generally on the left of the political spectrum. His parliamentary career had been broken by a sensational divorce case which drove him out of politics for a dozen years, but he had been the Member for the Forest of Dean since 1892. The interview was titled as '*Une Conversation*' and is one of the first articles of its kind in the French press, although the format had been in use in England for some time.[281] The article in *Le Figaro* addressed the interest in France for the probable curtailing of the powers of the Lords after the election if the Liberals won. The French were not at this stage concerned by the implications for Home Rule but more by the radical agenda of the Liberals.

Commenting on the interest in the French press in the fate of the Lords, Dilke tells *Le Figaro* that France is an essentially conservative country despite being a Republic and that even many French socialists are essentially conservative. What is happening in England is not so extraordinary, he continues, but simply the Liberal desire to have the Lords recognise the supremacy of the Commons in budgetary matters. He then refers back to Magna Carta when he suggests that it was when the French Royal House of Plantagenet ruled England, that the rights of the Commons were first asserted. He also points out that Finance Bills are granted Royal assent with a different formula, in Norman French, to other Bills: 'The King thanks his good subjects and so wishes it'.[282] The phrase 'his good subjects' recognises the origins of the Finance Bill in the Commons whereas any other bill would be given the assent '*Le Roy le veult*' with no reference to the Commons. Thus Dilke claims that the long tradition of Commons' supremacy in budgetary matters has its roots in French rule of England.

---

[281] Maurice Leudit, '*Une Conversation avec Sir Charles Dilke*', *Le Figaro,* 01/01/1910. This was a rare example of an interview by a journalist, an unusual form of reportage at the time.

[282] 'Le Roy remercie ses bons sujets et ainsi le veult'.

He then turns to criticise various specific articles where the authors claim that the 'English Crisis' is potentially as serious as the Revolution of 1789 and dismisses this as nonsense. He suggests that this is more a question of discussion of the introduction of taxes on the rich, like Harcourt's death duties back in 1894. Here we can see a topic which would concern French voters. France's long tradition of few direct taxes was jealously guarded by the bourgeoisie and the upper classes even under the Third Republic. A radical Government under Clemenceau in 1910 did little to change this but there was always the possibility. Income tax was still over the French horizon, only voted in 1914 and brought in to force in 1916![283] This was what lay behind the fierce attacks from the French right on the Liberal assault on the Lords. It was seen as a social revolution which might indirectly threaten the low tax fabric of the Third Republic and open the gates to the advance of socialism, which was perceived as the greatest threat of all. Finally, Dilke was asked to comment on the possible outcome of the election and the possible consequences on the Anglo-German naval arms race. He suggests that the Liberals will win with a reduced majority and states clearly that Liberal naval rearmament policy is identical to that of the Conservative and Unionist party. Both parties will make whatever sacrifices are needed to continue this policy, he adds.

In this way, French fears, aroused by the constitutional crisis across the Channel, were highlighted. Vocal public opinion in France is revealed as being largely on the right, anti-radical and certainly anti-socialist. Clemenceau's plans for income tax had just been defeated in 1909. Aristide Briand's administration was still seen as being too radical and still the noise from the right, of which this article is an example, continued. On the 7th January, discussions between London and Berlin over the possibility of an agreement to limit the naval arms race were reported. The comment was made that if these two powerful nations could come to some agreement this would be in France's best interests. Readers were reminded however, that reasoned opinion in Britain held that conflict with Germany was inevitable. In a perverse way this was intended to reassure French readers that these talks were no danger to the Anglo-French *Entente*.[284] This is the nub of the French view of the *Entente*. It existed to oppose Germany and any threat to it, whether from outside or, more importantly for

---

283 A. and C. Ambrosi, p. 57.
284 *Le Figaro,* 07/01/1910.

our purposes, from within, was unacceptable. The constitutional crisis in Britain over the Lords and later Irish Home Rule were perceived as possible threats.

Home Rule appeared as a topic some days later when Asquith's East Fife speech was reported.[285] He placed Home Rule far down the agenda, since the main concern of the new Parliament would be to address the issues of tariff reform and the constitutional paradox which permitted the non-elected Lords, to veto the wishes of the people. He added that once this paradox was resolved, the Liberal Government in the new Parliament would be free to grant a measure of self-government to Ireland, on condition that the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament was completely maintained. This news item is reported without comment, but is the first note of the Home Rule crisis which would be precipitated in the coming years.

While the results of the January 1910 General Election were coming in, a long process in those days, another fierce blast headed 'The Rights of the Lords' was carried *à la une,* on the front page, in *Le Figaro.*[286] Lloyd-George's budget was described as being 'inspired by the most dangerous of socialist doctrines'.[287] This article was signed by the 'Comte de Castellane, *député*.'

The general theme of the article was the absolute right of the Lords to veto Finance Bills, and a number of constitutional points were made. These centred on the fact that legislation under the British constitution was enacted by the Crown in Parliament which meant both houses. De Castellane suggested that the Bill of Rights which defined this relationship protected the people against excesses, not only of the Crown, but also of either of the Houses of Parliament. The Lords, therefore, had not just the right but the duty to oppose the 1909 Finance Bill. Not only that, but the Lords had moved to protect the institutions of the country, institutions which give it its strength and reliability and which could only be protected by Conservative policies. Finally, the conclusion was that a strong and solid Britain [*Angleterre*] was a necessity for stability in the world. A Britain weakened by the action of internal socialism would not be up to this role. Once again, we see concern from the right for the stability of France's closest partner in the anti-German *Entente*. Any tampering with the constitution in London would weaken British resolve to support France in her

---

285 *Le Figaro,* 20/01/1910.
286 *Le Figaro,* 22/01/1910.
287 'inspiré par les doctrines socialistes les plus dangereuses,' *Le Figaro,* 22/01/1910.

opposition to Germany and in her increasing desire for revenge for the defeat of 1871. This view was to be transferred to criticism of Irish Home Rule for precisely the same reasons.

Editorial comment by Raymond Recouly in the same issue was headed 'Bravo, John Bull!' which celebrated the fact that, with two thirds of the election results in, it was clear that the two main parties were neck and neck. The probability of Asquith returning to power, but only with Irish support, was set out as weakening his position in the face of the two great problems that faced the new Government: the clash with the Lords and the question of tariff reform, meaning the ending of free trade. Recouly foresaw difficulty with the Lords since the undertaking to pass the Finance Bill had been given in the event of an English majority in the Commons, something that Asquith would not have. His need for Irish support would mean further elections before long. Finally, electoral progress made by the opposition was put down to popular concern that the Navy was not in such good hands under Asquith. This would ensure further maintenance of the naval building programme seen as vital to the Entente, hence the headline.

During the remainder of January 1910, updates on the progress of the election count and the day to day modifications in the balance of the parties were given.[288] A series of images of the electoral process appeared in *L'Illustration,* ranging from a good sketch of the inside of Manchester Town Hall to a drawing of a disabled elector being taken to vote in a wheelbarrow.[289] The first serious comment on the final result appeared in the column *Figaro à Londres* on the 3rd February. It is interesting to note that in those more relaxed times Asquith was on holiday in Cannes, without immediate plans to return to London. By the 28th., it was reported that Asquith would most probably retain the premiership and with a reduced majority but that this would depend on support from the Labour and the Redmondite Irish Nationalists. However, just with support from Labour he would still have a majority, as long as he convinced the Irish not to vote with the Conservatives. This support should ensure the passage of the Finance Bill and the problem of the veto of the Lords would be addressed by a Parliamentary Commission.[290]

---

288 *Le Figaro*, 25/01/1910 and 27/01/1910.
289 *L'Illustration,* 22/01/1910.
290 *Le Figaro,* 28/01/1910.

The relationship between the Labour group and the Government was detailed, with the Labour position on the reform of the Lords, their dissatisfaction with Winston Churchill as President of the Board of Trade, the problem of the unemployed and the legalisation of Trade Union financial support for Labour MPs outlined.[291] Ramsay MacDonald was setting out his stall and, given the situation in the new House of Commons, he had every hope of success.

Despite the re-election of John Redmond as leader and his protestations to the contrary, the division amongst the Irish Nationalist MPs had also been noted.[292] The correspondent of *Le Figaro* made clear that the 1909 Finance Bill was not to everyone's taste amongst the Irish MPs[293]. Of the 83 Home Rulers returned, 71 were Redmondites, 8 were supporters of William O'Brien, and strongly against the provisions of the Finance Bill, as it affected brewing interests in Ireland, and 3 were Independent Nationalists.[294] The views of the Irish MPs were carefully analysed in the middle of February. In a short item on the 15th, the dilemma of the Irish is pithily stated. The Irish wished for the Lords to be faced down and then the issue of the Budget resolved. The former action they supported enthusiastically, the latter much less so.[295] Asquith was seen as being trusted by John Redmond but this was not necessarily the case for the other Irish MPs. There was discussion of the financial situation of the smaller parties after the election, particularly Labour who allegedly had not even 'a farthing' in their coffers. A new election would divide the Irish, wipe out Labour and result in a Tory landslide. However, the London correspondent, J. Coudurier, comes to the conclusion that much depends on Asquith himself to ensure the successful support of the minor parties. The Prime Minister's problem is that one false move could put him in minority and bring about the result of new elections.[296]

This situation was realised and reported towards the end of February as Austen Chamberlain's amendment to the Finance Bill on tariff reform was debated and voted upon. Coudurier gave a detailed analysis of the voting breakdown giving the divisions amongst the Irish and the attitude of the Labour party. The figures were tight. Absentees entered into the calculations, as did those recently appointed to ministerial

---

[291] *Le Figaro,* 03/02/1910.
[292] *Le Figaro,* 12/02/1910.
[293] *Le Figaro,* 28/01/1910.
[294] A. O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921* (Manchester, 1998). p. 231.
[295] *Le Figaro,* 15/02/1910.

rank and who therefore needed to stand for re-election, with the result that the Government defeated the amendment by 31 votes.[297]

As an addendum to this report, the Irish Nationalist *Freeman's Journal* was quoted as explaining that Nationalist abstentions on this vote were due to concerns that new elections might concentrate on Tariff Reform rather than removal of the Lords' power of veto. If the Government were not to pursue energetically the question of the veto, then the Irish MPs would oppose them vigorously.[298]

Further detail on the future of Irish votes was given the next day when an unattributed '*conversation*' was held with an anonymous Unionist. He asserted that despite the brinkmanship of the Tariff vote, the Irish would not let the Government fall intentionally since there was nothing for them in the Unionist camp. However, there was always the possibility that, for some local reason, members might not have supported the Government and so inadvertently would provoke a defeat.[299] Over the next weeks occasional references appeared to the apparent indecision of the Irish in the face of the dilemma of whether to support the Government's Finance Bill, leading up to the second reading which was passed by 351 to 246 votes.[300]

In March and April three reports on the attitude of the Irish MPs to the reform of the House of Lords appeared. In March, Redmond's speech in Newcastle where he predicted an early election was noted.[301] In early April, the question of Irish support for the Budget was raised again.[302] By April 6th, the reluctance of the Irish to bring the Government down was noted.[303] A week later rumours that William O'Brien [anti-budget Nationalist] had extracted a promise from Lloyd-George that concessions would be made to the Irish in return for their support were reported with their denial. The conclusion of the piece was that nobody was ready for a new election yet and so the Government was safe for the time being.[304]

This period of 1910 saw the renewal of the government's attempts to limit the powers of the House of Lords. Three resolutions were being debated in the Commons

---

296 *Le Figaro*, 18/02/1910.
297 *Le Figaro*, 25/02/1910.
298 *Le Figaro*, 25/02/1910.
299 *Le Figaro*, 26/02/1910
300 *Le Figaro*, 18/03/1910, 06/04/1910, 12/04/1910 and 15/04/1910.
301 *Le Figaro*, 18/03/1910.
302 *Le Figaro*, 02/04/1910.
303 *Le Figaro*, 06/04/1910.
304 *Le Figaro*, 12/04/1910.

which contained the elements of the government's proposals for reform. Briefly, these resolutions stopped the Lords from amending or rejecting a Finance Bill, so defined by the Speaker, and only delaying other legislation for up to 25 months. On the third occasion, any bill would become law, without the assent of the Upper House if not amended by the Lords. Parliament's maximum duration was to be reduced to five years. These resolutions were passed in April and incorporated into the Parliament Bill which received its first reading in the Commons. The 1910 Finance Bill was passed rapidly using the guillotine and it was then passed by the Lords, receiving the Royal Assent on the 29th April. [305]

In late April a particularly Irish parliamentary event took place. This was T. P. O'Connor's attempt to cancel Sir David Anderson's pension, given as 22,500 Francs [about £2,000] and it was reported in some detail.[306] Anderson had admitted being involved in supplying documents to *The Times* in 1887, in an attempt to blacken Parnell's reputation. He had been castigated by all sides of the House but T.P. O'Connor was out for blood, especially when the Conservative ex-attorney general, Campbell, suggested that the authenticity of the famous Parnell letter printed in *The Times* might still be proved. The debate closed without a vote on the pension and Sir David Anderson remained solvent.

On 6th May 1910, normal political life was interrupted unexpectedly by the sudden death of King Edward VII and a short parliamentary recess ensued. In subsequent weeks, dispatches from England were concerned with his death, his funeral and the new King and Queen. One of the oddest manifestations of this was a long article in *Le Figaro* by Pierre Loti, the anglophobe Breton writer, who described at some length his meeting Queen Alexandra. He was clearly deeply impressed by her charismatic presence and the sycophantic tone of the piece was exceptional, even by the standards of the time.[307]

In June, the reform of the Lords reappeared as a new item with the short announcement that there was to be a parliamentary commission to study the matter and that it would include John Redmond.[308] No explanation of the implication that the Irish members were seen as crucial to passing any proposed reforms through the

---

[305] K.W.W. Aikin, *The last years of Liberal England 1900-1914* (London and Glasgow, 1972). p. 66.
[306] *Le Figaro,* 22/04/1910.
[307] *Le Figaro,* 20/05/1910.
[308] *Le Figaro,* 14/06/1910.

Commons was offered. In any case, parliamentary business was almost at a complete halt given the recent death of the King and the coming summer recess. In this atmosphere, the presentation and details of the Budget on 1st July were reported with little comment beyond a restatement of the opposition of Irish voters to excise duties on whiskey. The resultant opposition would be delayed until the Autumn session.[309] From this moment, news from or about Ireland was limited to the reporting of *faits divers*, items such as a railway accident in Roscrea station, which injured over 100 people and the destruction of Menlough Castle in Co. Galway, by fire which caused two deaths.[310]

A form of parliamentary truce lasted until November while the cross-party Parliamentary Commission on constitutional reform met. This failed principally because of Unionist objections to the probability of the granting of Irish Home Rule and not for any other great divergences between the different participants. Initial political skirmishes were reported. These included Redmond's fiery speech in Buffalo while on his American fund-raising tour, where he predicted an election early in the New Year.[311] Coudurier introduced the readers of *Le Figaro* to J. L. Garvin, editor of *The Observer*. He was described as a fervent Conservative who, while opposing the Lloyd-George budget, was now in favour of establishing common ground between the Unionists and the Liberals to defend the Union and the Empire. He envisaged an agreement with the Home Rulers to create a federal model for Ireland which would enable administrative decentralisation and local government while maintaining the unity of the Empire so as to withstand any external attacks.[312] Coudurier wondered if this was the way to solve the Irish Question. What is clear is that, for the first time, the Unionist view that Home Rule threatened the unity of the Empire was spelled out for French readers.

The impasse was resolved by George V's decision to agree to Asquith's demand that, if necessary, he would support the elected Government. To this effect, the King agreed to a dissolution on 16th November.[313] Coudurier in *Le Figaro* noted that the electorate would be asked by the Liberals to decide once and for all if their

---

309 *Le Figaro*, 01/07/1910.
310 *Le Figaro*, 20/07/1910 and 27/07/1910.
311 *Le Figaro*, 29/09/1910.
312 *Le Figaro*, 20/10/1910.
313 K.W.W. Aikin, p. 68.

elected representatives were to be constantly held in check by a handful of aristocrats acting in the interests of their class and or party. He went on to note that although much was likely to change in 'Old England' with a fresh election around the Christmas period, at least the traditional Christmas pudding was likely to survive.[314] This must be hyperbole, given the general French distaste for the dish. The following day the detail of a possible difference of opinion between Asquith and the King on the dissolution of Parliament was discussed against the background of the Lords' veto and with the Home Rule Bill just off stage. Coudurier felt that the probable outcome would be a six month delay of the dissolution. However, on the 19th *Le Figaro* reported that Parliament would be dissolved on the 28th November, the last possible date to allow an election before Christmas 1910.[315]

Over the next weeks the reports from England were concerned with the Lords' debates on the Parliament Bill, Asquith's attitude to Labour's demands for salaries for MPs, miners strikes in Wales and the activities of the 'suffragettes'. In the Lords, Irish Home Rule was identified by the Government as being an essential element in establishing an accord with the United States and maintaining good relations with the self-governing Dominions. The Lords' power of veto and not Irish Home Rule was given as the reason for the dissolution, despite the failure of the bi-partisan conference on the issue.[316] Coudurier kept Home Rule in the minds of his readers, amongst all the other issues which bubbled to the surface of *La Crise anglaise* in the final months of 1910.

In a more reflective piece in the series *Lettres d'Angleterre*, Coudurier looks at the question of Home Rule and its relative importance to the electoral campaign. The first paragraph read:

> In spite of denials and indignant protestations of members of the Government it is becoming more and more obvious that the Liberals are in the hands of the Irish Nationalists and of Mr Redmond. These know very well that if the general election is postponed until next July their party will suffer a lamentable defeat at the hands of Mr O'Brien and his increasing number of supporters, partisans of good sense, seeking an amicable understanding with England.[317]

---

[314] *Le Figaro,* 16/11/1910.
[315] *Le Figaro,* 19/11/1910.
[316] *Le Figaro,* 25/11/1910.
[317] Malgré tous les démentis et les protestations indignées des membres du gouvernement, il devient de plus en plus évident que les libéraux sont entre les mains des nationalistes irlandais et de M. Redmond. Ceux-ci savent très bien que si les élections générales sont remises au mois de juillet, leur parti sera

The potentiality of William O'Brien's faction may have been overstated but it is clear that in his conversations with his contacts in the British establishment Coudurier had formed the opinion that there were many who would have preferred O'Brien's brand of Irish politics to that of Redmond. There was clearly a feeling that Redmond had a political position which would be destructive of Imperial unity and would enable Asquith to continue with his expensive social policies. Home Rule had little to recommend it against the generality of British politics. Coudurier went on to suggest that Redmond's chance of gaining Home Rule could be lost if the election were delayed, even by a few months. The importance of Home Rule would then diminish as Ireland and the Irish gradually benefited from the measures introduced by the Conservatives and by the Liberals themselves. He suggested that agrarian reform was having its effect as Irish tenants increasingly gained property rights to their holdings. He also suggested that the social security provided by the old-age pension had a disproportionate effect in Ireland where the money went much further than in urban England. He also suggests widespread abuse of claims for old-age pensions. The result of all this was an increasing public indifference to Home Rule and accounted for the enthusiasm for the elections manifested by Mr Redmond which he maintained should be held before 'the imminent reconciliation between the Irish and the Anglo-Saxon tyrants who have done their best over the last twenty years or so to repair the mistakes made in Ireland by their ancestors.'[318] Coudurier betrayed here a degree of wishful thinking closer to the Unionist position and in line with the conservative views of *Le Figaro*. While Coudurier saw reform of the Lords, or at least a tempering of their power of veto over legislation originated in the Commons, as a positive step, he was less convinced that Irish Home Rule was to be desired. A slow evolution of the relationship between Ireland and England, leading to a general improvement in Irish political, social and economic life was felt to be preferable to the unknown consequences of some degree of self-government.

As the electoral campaign developed, Coudurier reported in some detail the Unionist views on Ireland. Balfour's speech at the Albert Hall on 29th November was

---

battu lamentablement par M.O'Brien et ses partisans, les amis du bon sens et de l'entente amicale avec l'Angleterre, dont le nombre va grandissant de jour en jour. *Le Figaro,* 26/11/1910.

[318] ... la réconciliation imminente des Irlandais et des tyrans anglo-saxons,qui, depuis une vingtaine d'années, font tous leurs efforts pour réparer les fautes commises en Irlande par leurs ancêtres. Ibid.

quoted at some length, ending with his admonition not 'to trust the puppets whose strings are being pulled by the Irish.' Throughout the month of December, reports continued about the electoral campaign. As results arrived piecemeal, so *Le Figaro* relayed the situation to its readers. By the middle of the month it was clear that there would not be any great change and the comment of the *Times* that the elections were 'a bore for everyone' was quoted under the headline *Beaucoup de bruit pour rien* [Much ado about nothing].[319] A few days before Christmas, it was over and *Le Figaro* reported that the final results were exactly what the paper had predicted on the second day of the polls. Redmond's seats were given as 74 and O'Brien's 10. At this stage Unionists were included with the Conservative total of 272 seats.[320] The date for the start of the new session, 6th February 1911, was given, with a reminder of Asquith's probable need to create more than 500 Liberal peers in order to ensure the passage of the Parliament Act. The correspondent concluded by wondering how appropriate it would then be to have a House of Lords, with more than 1000 members, subservient to the wishes of the Commons with its 670 members. The question was unanswered.

The year closed with two pieces on individual British politicians. The first was another interview with Sir Charles Dilke, recently re-elected as a Liberal MP. Dilke's regular Yuletide visits to Paris provided something of a Christmas cracker for the readers of *Le Figaro*. As might be expected, Dilke expressed the view that Redmond would be happy to support the Liberal administration given that he was an astute parliamentarian.[321] The second article dealt with the prickly relationship between Lloyd George and the French press corps in London. *Le Figaro* commented acidly that he was obviously too busy with the work generated by his high office that he had not had the time to read what was written about him.[322]

As the new year of 1911 dawned, news from England was dominated by reports of the Sidney Street Siege and the steady trickle of election results. The final result of the second election of 1910 was very similar to the first, with the two major parties gaining 272 seats, Labour 42 and the Irish Nationalists 84. In late January 1911 news reports about Irish matters began to appear. The Orangemen [*Les Orangistes*] are introduced in a report on the various rumours that were circulating in January in

---

319 *Le Figaro*, 14/12/1910.
320 *Le Figaro*, 21/12/1910.
321 *Le Figaro*, 28/12/1910.
322 *Le Figaro*, 31/12/1910.

the British press about Orangemen arming themselves against the possibility of a Home Rule Bill. The correspondent discounts these reports as mere rumour following the 'serious' investigation of the *Daily Mail* which concluded that all was calm in Ulster.[323] Nevertheless, Home Rule was now on the agenda and, in February, during the debate on the speech from the throne, Asquith remarked in the Commons that everyone knew that once the question of the Lords had been settled then the Liberal programme, which included Home Rule for Ireland, would be carried out since Liberals were not in the habit of going back on their word.[324] The truth was that his political position meant that he would not be allowed to go back on his word.

In his mid-January *Figaro* column *'Lettres d'Angleterre'* Coudurier tells his readers that the Liberals with their Irish Nationalist and Labour allies are masters of the political situation and that both the Parliament Bill and Irish Home Rule were the two principal elements of the new government's programme.[325] There follows discussion of the possibility of the creation of 500 Liberal Peers to ensure the Parliament Bill's passage in the Lords. Coudurier gives a well-informed analysis of the issue of Home Rule. He indicates that Asquith has not shown his full hand and has spoken of 'Imperial supremacy' and that, if Asquith were to move to legislation granting modified Home Rule, Conservative opposition would be only formal and that the resultant solution of the 'Irish question' would be greeted by a sigh of relief across the land.[326] This is interesting, given Coudurier's close relations with Imperialist Liberal elements in the British establishment. It is clear that at this moment in early 1911 there was no inkling of the massive opposition to the legislation which was to develop in the months and years to come. In fact, the first time that an Irish Unionist is mentioned it is to report the rather unparliamentary offer made to the Speaker by Captain James Craig. Towards the end of an all-night sitting when Redmond's supporters were raising spurious points of order, Craig announced that he and his Unionist colleagues would be willing to throw the irritating Irish Nationalists out of the Chamber if the Speaker just gave the word. This caused much general merriment and had the result that the Irish Nationalists fell silent.[327]

---

323 *Le Figaro*, 22/01/1911.
324 *Le Figaro*, 16/02/1911.
325 *Le Figaro*, 18/02/1911.
326 Ibid.
327 *Le Figaro*, 11/03/1911.

Captain Craig's intervention marks the appearance of the Unionist voice in the French press of the time. For the moment this was to be a rare event since, in the three months that followed, news from or about Ireland failed to make the pages of newspapers in France. In mid July, Coudurier reported in some detail from London on the reception and dinner offered to the King and Queen at 10 Downing Street by Asquith.[328] The glittering assembly was treated to a performance of G. B. Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island.* It appeared that the cheerful satire in the play amused the Royal guests greatly and their laughter was loyally echoed throughout the assembly. Coudurier comments on the irony of such defenders of the Empire as Churchill, Lloyd-George and Asquith, being present at such an event and, being obliged to enjoy the ironic text of Shaw's play, given the uninhibited amusement of their sovereign.

This light-hearted report gives no hint of the crisis that was about to engulf the British parliamentary system nor of the unrest that was troubling industrial areas of the United Kingdom. By the end of the month the question of the veto of the Lords was preoccupying the London correspondents of *Le Figaro.* In September, Ireland returned to the columns with reports of railway strikes. As the third reading of the Parliament Bill got under way, Asquith's attempt to address the Commons on the 24th July was reported. The opposition's attempts to shout him down and Sir Edward Carson [identified merely as *un député de l'opposition*] vainly trying to get the debate suspended, are described in full. The crisis was shown to have supreme national importance since the King was obliged to delay his attendance at the Goodwood race meeting.[329] Coudurier painted a vivid picture of the Asquith Government in close combat with the opposition over the question of the power of the Lords. While Ireland and Home Rule was not yet to the fore, there was mention of Redmond as '*le dictateur*' which suggests a degree of manipulation on the part of the Irish parliamentary leader. Despite the wishes of Tory leader Arthur Balfour, machinations amongst Tory Lords were reported and the nub of their argument was made clear. They presented themselves as protectors of the people against the dictatorship of the Prime Minister and the Commons and took the line that the creation of new Peers would be a revolutionary act. Things got to such a pass that the King had to give up

---

[328] *Le Figaro,* 10/07/1911.
[329] *Le Figaro,* 25/07/1911.

any idea of attending Goodwood.[330]

As the month of August began, the parliamentary crisis was still the main topic of reports from London, but some details of industrial unrest in the provinces began to creep in. The dockers' strike had the support of 30,000 men and was by now official, although it was described as really only a consequence of the action of some hotheads.[331] Sir Edward Carson returned to the columns on the 9th August and was reported as suggesting that Redmond and the Irish Nationalists were behind the whole affair of the Parliament Act and were to be congratulated for having brought the great Liberal party to its knees. They were, therefore, blackmailing Mr Asquith. Uproar followed. After the Speaker had restored order and had ruled that 'blackmail' was actually 'parliamentary language' Carson continued by suggesting that with this bill the Government would impose Home Rule without consulting the electorate and that he hoped that this pressure would be resisted with force.[332]

After reporting the debate in the Lords, Coudurier concluded that the rebel Tories would have to live with the results of their opposition to the bill. The Government would carry it one way or the other and if a number of Liberal Peers had to be created to get it through the Lords, then Irish Home Rule would be a fact within the year. If the Bill passed without these new Peers, then opponents of Home Rule would gain at least several years before it could become law. Furthermore, the unity of the party would be damaged, making future electoral success problematic in the medium term.[333] We get a sense of the perceptive and analytical skill of Coudurier who, while often sending reports which were not easy to follow for his readership, had the ability from time to time, to pull them together and to provide a clear and succinct analysis of the major questions of British political life. In this case, he set out clearly the reasons for the Opposition's decision to reject further resistance to the Parliament Bill and highlighted the medium term gain of further time to oppose Irish Home Rule.

With the end of the domination of the news from Britain by parliamentary matters, industrial unrest became the main topic. The Irish transport strike was reported in some detail with an explanation of the effects on cross-channel trade and, in particular, on the food produced in Ireland for the British market which was rotting

---

330 *Le Figaro*, 27/07/1911.
331 *Le Figaro*, 04/08/1911.
332 *Le Figaro*, 09/08/1911.
333 Ibid.

in railway sidings. There is even the suggestion of famine in some of the more remote small Irish towns. This is clearly an exaggeration. *Le Figaro* and its readers naturally saw all strikes as unnecessary, so there was little sympathy for the strikers and every effort was made to highlight the evil effects of industrial action.[334] A further article the following day continued in the same vein but is of interest in that it described the co-operative creameries organised by Sir Horace Plunkett in the rural South. After describing them in approving tones, *Le Figaro* talked of the tonnes of dairy produce rotting around them because of the railway strike.[335] Further brief reports were printed in the following days. A two-line entry on the 24th noted an '*antihome-ruliste*' meeting with 100,000 attendees at Belfast, presided over by Lord Erne. Various unidentified MPs spoke but Coudurier states that Mr [F.] E. Smith was unable to attend.[336] He had previously been identified to the readers of *Le Figaro* as a leading opponent of Home Rule during the reports on the debate surrounding the Parliament Act.

After the end of September 1911, news from Ireland almost disappeared from the pages of *Le Figaro* for two months. A brief reference to the views of Irish politicians surfaced in a report on the debate on foreign affairs in the Commons in November. Coudurier told his readers that:

> [...] the most hostile and disagreeable questions about the *Entente Cordiale* came from Mr Dillon, the Irish Nationalist MP. It is not the first time that I have to inform you of the distinctly francophobe attitude of Irish politicians. Why can that be?[337]

Here we see the right-of-centre view in France in 1911 that the Irish question had a potential for diminishing the usefulness of the United Kingdom as an ally of France. As has been made clear earlier, the notion of Irish Home Rule was regarded with great suspicion across the Channel, precisely because it was seen as weakening the solidity of the Empire by installing a division at its heart. Although there was no suggestion that France was on the point of war with Germany in 1911, there is no doubt that the *Entente Cordiale* was perceived as a crucial element of France's foreign policy.

---

334 *Le Figaro*, 21/09/1911.
335 *Le Figaro*, 22/09/1911.
336 *Le Figaro*, 24/09/1911.
337 [...] les questions les plus hostiles à l'entente cordiale et le plus désagréables ont été formulées par M. Dillon, nationaliste irlandais. Ce n'est du reste pas la première fois que j'ai à vous signaler l'attitude nettement francophobe des politiciens irlandais. Quelle peut bien en être la cause? *Le Figaro*, 11/11/1911.

Without it, France would be less able to consider *la revanche* and the realisation of long-term objective of regaining the lost eastern provinces of Alsace-Lorraine. While no form of anglophobia is to be found in the columns of *Le Figaro*, we should remember that positive relations with the United Kingdom in 1911 were a relatively new phenomenon. The French popular press had gleefully reported opposition to Britain's involvement in the Boer Wars[338] and, while J. Couturier is clearly at ease reporting from London, for many of his readers the United Kingdom was a marginally untrustworthy ally. That a MP, from a party that existed to alter the political status quo, should apparently be questioning the *Entente* fuelled this slight feeling of unease.

As 1912 dawned, some new vocabulary began to enter the reports from London. In addition to the well used phrase 'Home Rule' the term *les Orangistes* now reappears, for the first time for a year, in apposition to *les Homerulistes*. The word '*Orangiste*' as an adjective began to be used as shorthand for a Belfast or Irish Unionist. The first report of 1912 to deal with events in Belfast described the difficulty facing Winston Churchill as the date for his imminent speech there approached. As a result of the 'lively effervescence' provoked by the coming event, the city council had refused to allow the meeting to proceed in the Ulster Hall rented from them.[339] Another hall was found, but the threat of disorder was allegedly great enough to provoke the Government to send three infantry regiments and two cavalry squadrons to Belfast, just in case.

A report on the actual speech by Churchill in Belfast introduced the readers of *Le Figaro* to the city:

> Belfast, the rich and industrious city in the North of Ireland, is the capital of the Irish Protestants, citizens of Ulster, the violent Orangemen. They feel themselves to be a minority in this Catholic Ireland and see with fury the day coming when Ireland, under Home Rule would no longer be governed by Protestant England.[340]

The report continued by stating that the Belfast Orangemen were convinced that a 'Catholic' Government in Dublin would damage their interests and even oppress them

---

[338] see, for example, *Le Petit Journal, Supplément Illustré* 31/12/1899, which has a coloured engraving of an anti-Boer War demonstration in College Green, Dublin on its cover. DMP officers are struggling with a remarkably well-dressed 'mob' brandishing a flag of the Boer Republic.

[339] *Le Figaro,* 27/01/1912.

[340] Belfast, la riche et industrieuse cité du nord de l'Irlande, est la capitale des protestants irlandais, des citoyens de l'Ulster, des violents hommes de l'Orange. Ceux-ci se sentent en minorité dans cette Irlande catholique, voient arriver avec fureur le jour ou l'Irlande, rendue autonome, cesserait d'être

on religious grounds. As a result, they were determined to prevent the Home Rule vote by any means, including the most violent and even revolutionary methods.

April 1912 finds the problem of Home Rule in the news again with reports of the Orange demonstration in Belfast attended by Bonar Law, Sir Edward Carson and others. More than 100,000 Unionists gathered to hear them speak in the Botanic Gardens. A fuller report of the protest rally followed the next day and Coudurier wondered if civil war might result from the Bill which had so few real partisans outside the ranks of the Irish Nationalists.[341] In his initial report, Coudurier considered the whole matter a foregone conclusion, since the actual parliamentary majority would pass the Home Rule Bill in due course regardless of what was said for or against the idea. He described the situation as a 'disagreeable reality' for the Unionists, 'slightly agreeable' for the majority of the Liberals and 'less agreeable' for the Irish MP s than they would like people to think. For the country at large, by which he means England, the general attitude was one of indifference. This last, he suggested was the principal ace that the Government had up its sleeve.[342]

Armed with this card, the Government presented the Home Rule Bill to the Commons the following day. Coudurier gave a long and detailed report of the sitting of the Commons at which Asquith presented the Bill and which included an account of the main proposals for the working of Home Rule. Towards the end of his speech Asquith accused Bonar Law of plotting treason. This was denied by the leader of the opposition, to which the Prime Minister retorted to the effect that, he could say that in Ulster, but would he dare deny it in the Commons? The proposal for the bill was attacked by Sir Edward Carson, welcomed by Ramsay MacDonald and John Redmond while William O'Brien reserved judgement. Mr Bonar Law was to reply at the next sitting.[343] Interestingly, *Le Figaro* did not print a report of the official Unionist reply but the subject of the Home Rule debate reappeared in its columns on the 16th with Coudurier's report of Mr Balfour's speech. He gives Balfour's main points attacking the principle, the legitimacy and the usefulness of Home Rule. Criticism of the whole notion of federation, at a time when nations and empires, were tending towards consolidation was noted, with the final crucial comment that, if Ireland is a nation,

---

gouvernée par l'Angleterre protestante. *Le Figaro,* 09/02/1912.

[341] *Le Figaro,* 11/04/1912.

[342] *Le Figaro,* 10/04/1912.

[343] *Le Figaro,* 12/04/1912.

then the Government is not bestowing adequate privileges, but if she is not, then Home Rule is too great a privilege.[344]

The Easter recess and the loss of the *Titanic* delayed the next report from London on the progress or otherwise of Home Rule. *Le Figaro* carried columns of news and comment about the maritime disaster for several days.[345] When the news content of *Le Figaro* returned to normal, Coudurier talked of a *torpeur* which he felt had settled over the British legislature. He felt that even the Home Rule Bill, despite some fiery eloquence and head-to-head confrontations, scarcely disturbed the languorous atmosphere and the proposal to disestablish the Anglican church in Wales totally failed to galvanise the Chamber.[346]

Coudurier put this *torpeur* down to a legislative fatigue which had overcome Parliament after the many sittings over recent times and the tensions of two elections in the space of one year. Futhermore, he saw that that the opposition was not moved to protest too loudly at the radical programme of the Liberals given that, under the Parliament Act, the Lords still had the ability to delay legislation for up to three years. The calculation was that, by that time, as far as Home Rule was concerned, Asquith's administration would have fallen and an incoming Conservative and Unionist Government would be able to bury Home Rule once and for all. Nevertheless, Coudurier reminded his readers that Asquith was a wily and accomplished politician and had managed to steer the ship of state amongst some dangerous reefs. Even so, he felt that, although Asquith had guaranteed the support of Irish and Welsh MPs, he might have overreached himself.[347] These conclusions remind us of Coudurier's natural tendency to the Liberal imperial view. It is interesting to note that the Unionist voice that he chose to report was not yet that of the hard-toned Bonar Law but still that of the more mellifluous, quasi-aristocratic, Arthur Balfour.

When he did report on a Bonar Law speech, it was a month later and he chose to highlight the imperialist sentiments expressed at a Primrose League rally in the Albert Hall where Bonar Law spoke of the defence of the British Isles being reinforced, on the return of a Conservative administration, by the support of sister

---

344 *Le Figaro,* 16/04/1912.

345 see *Le Figaro,* 16/04/1912 to 22/04/1912. *L'Illustration,* 20/04/1912 also provided maps and photos and a selection of portraits of some of the famous survivors and victims.

346 *Le Figaro,* 27/04/1912.

347 Ibid.

nations spread across the world: a United Kingdom at the centre of a United Empire. This was just what French readers of *Le Figaro* wanted to hear. England may not have been quite a 'sister nation' but the French needed her to be a strong ally.[348]

June 1912 saw the return of Irish Home Rule to the columns of *Le Figaro* with further discussion of the bill at second reading. Despite the inevitability of the passage of the bill in the Commons, Coudurier mused on the damage that it would do to the Liberal cause and the possibility of the eventual victory of the Conservative and Unionists at the next election.[349] The following day Carson's speech was reported in some detail. This marks the moment when the French readership of *Le Figaro* was made aware of the depth of feeling amongst Ulster Unionists and that there was the overt threat there of armed resistance to the implementation of Home Rule. This was the moment when Carson stated that absolute opposition to the Bill on the part of Ulster Loyalists [*les Orangistes de l'Ulster*] had the support, with all their strength and all their authority, of the [Conservative and] Unionist party. Carson took full responsibility for whatever resistance that Ulster could organise. 'You may crush Ulster with troops but you will not thus resolve the question of Ireland', thundered Carson.[350] Redmond's intervention was in more conciliatory tones, renewing his intention to persuade the Ulster people of the benefits of Home Rule for the whole of Ireland. He suggested that South Africa had given an example of reconciliation to be emulated and that the whole English-speaking world was waiting impatiently for the Bill to become law. The bill passed its second reading with 368 against 272 votes.[351]

'Ulster resistance' was the heading of a short report from London dated August 15th 1912. Coudurier cites the *Dundee Advertiser,* an unusual pleasure for his readers, to the effect that Unionist leaders were noisily promoting the cause of Ulster and the Government was watching their words and actions. It would appear that the Unionists could have been preparing illegal opposition to the bill, but the Government would act with vigour against those who engaged in such activity regardless of their standing in society. Coudurier gave his readers this material without comment since

---

348 *Le Figaro,* 11/05/1912.
349 *Le Figaro,* 10/06/1912.
350 'Vous pouvez écraser l'Ulster avec des troupes, mais vous ne résoudrez pas ainsi les questions irlandaises'. *Le Figaro,* 11/06/1912.
351 Ibid.

the text said all that was required.[352] In September, the anti-Home Rule campaign was reported from London with the news that Unionists had provoked serious disturbances in Belfast involving the pillaging of shops and houses and culminating in sectarian riots put down with difficulty by the police. These incidents were described as a mere foretaste of what was to be expected when the Home Rule Bill became law. Unionist leaders had published the text of their 'Covenant' which they were to submit for signature by 'Irish Protestants'. With this document they pledged to struggle to the end and by whatever means necessary to prevent the triumph of Home Rule.[353] This piece was followed on the 29th by a long report of the climax of the anti-Home Rule agitation in Ulster. The signing of the Covenant in the Ulster Hall by Carson and other Unionist leaders was reported, as was their view that it would become a sort of great charter for Irish loyalism. Coudurier made the comment that, without wishing to exaggerate the importance of the anti-Home Rule demonstrations, there was a need to keep a close eye on them. He reminded his readers that the Conservative party had given its full approval to the frankly revolutionary, in the French sense, drift of the Loyalists who had declared themselves ready to resist with arms the imposition of Home Rule by the British Parliament. Coudurier stated that he could neither blame nor approve of the activities of the Ulster Protestants so strongly opposed to rule by a largely Catholic Parliament in Dublin, but remarked on the result being one that we could see, but not comprehend, Orangemen preparing for civil war while shouting 'God save the King!' and 'God save England!'[354]

He continued his analysis by discussing the sectarian divide in Ulster. He remarked that the respective religious denominations were followed with a degree of fanaticism more suited to the seventeenth century and incomprehensible to the masses in English cities who were well known for their indifference to matters of the soul. In Ulster, religious passions informed all aspects of politics and in this lay their danger. He added that the Government was watching this agitation with ceaseless and increasing anxiety. How would Asquith resolve this problem? Would he adopt some sort of federal solution within Ireland - in effect partition as hinted at by Churchill in

---

[352] *Le Figaro,* 16/08/1912.

[353] *Le Figaro,* 20/09/1912. This is a rather broad interpretation of the phrase in the Covenant: 'using all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a home rule parliament in Ireland'. However, the spirit of the Covenant was well conveyed.

[354] *Le Figaro,* 29/09/1912.

Dundee? What was clear is that some years would have to pass before any such solution could be arrived at since the disadvantages for the moment outweighed the advantages.[355]

Once more we have an example of Coudurier's ability to sum up in a few lines the essence of a British political problem for his readers. He does this without suggesting an answer and thereby risking offence to his British friends. As events transpired, he proved to be remarkably accurate in his long-term view, although it is clear that he could have had no idea of the terrible events that those years would bring, not just for Ireland but for France and Europe as a whole.

With the signing of the Covenant, the Ulster Unionist public declared their support of their leaders and gave notice to the outside world that they would resist the imposition of Home Rule and thereby would risk direct conflict with the British Parliament. One could be forgiven for thinking that *Le Figaro* would consequently watch and report developments in the North of Ireland in the months to follow. Curiously, this is not the case. News from England ignored completely any events in Ireland. The inference that could be drawn is that the British Government influenced the content of *Le Figaro*. This is not impossible, but what is more likely is that the Covenant was seen as the high point of newsworthy Ulster Unionist activity.

---

[355] Ibid.

Chapter 5
L'Irlande et la Crise Anglaise II : mutinerie ou trahison?

The Ulster Crisis 1912-1914

The dearth of news from Ireland was general across the range of the French press. In *L'Humanité,* for example, for the period July to December 1912, there were five reports from Ireland. The first concerned Protestant workers at Harland and Wolff who refused to work with Catholics with the result that 400 Catholic workers lost their jobs.[356] A fortnight later, the discovery of bomb making materials during the arrest of Irish suffragettes was reported without comment.[357] Under the heading 'Declarations of Mr Bonnar [sic] Law' *L'Humanité* reported Bonar Law's speech at the Unionist rally at Blenheim Palace presided over by the Duke of Malborough. This was indicated as being a meeting of English Unionists, although the main issues were the proposals for Ulster resistance to Irish Home Rule.[358] The remaining reports from Ireland concerned accidents. A train packed with holidaymakers had been derailed in Co. Cork and twenty people were injured.[359] The other report was from Belfast where the death of an aviator was reported with the additional information that he was the 202nd victim of the new activity of flying.[360] These two incidents are examples of the particular news obsessions of *L'Humanité* at that time - railway accidents and the dangers of flying. *L'Humanité* meticulously reported the latter, often noting several aviation accidents in one day. Clearly, French workers were being encouraged to keep their feet firmly on the ground.

Home Rule returned to *L'Humanité* in January 1913 with the reporting of the passing of the bill in the Commons with a majority of 110. The very brief report went on to state that the bill would get its second reading in the Lords the following week.[361] The only other report the papers carried about Ireland until September is a short item about demonstrators breaking windows in the Vice-Regal Lodge in Dublin. This is headed '*L'Agitation Suffragiste en Angleterre'* [sic] and the Lodge is referred to as the '*Château de Dublin*'.[362] This inaccuracy results from the practice of lifting copy or news from other British or French papers without any real knowledge of the subject, a practice which was common amongst papers like *L'Humanité* which did not have dedicated foreign correspondents. What interested the paper, apart from rail and

---

356 *L'Humanité,* 04/07/1912.
357 *L'Humanité,* 20/07/1912.
358 *L'Humanité,* 29/07/1912. *L'Humanité* consistently failed to spell Bonar Law's name accurately.
359 *L'Humanité,* 07/08/1912.
360 *L'Humanité,* 22/09/1912.
361 *L'Humanité,* 17/01/1913.
362 *L'Humanité,* 29/01/1913.

aeroplane accidents, was news of worker's grievances and the demonstrations and strikes that accompanied them. This explains its sudden interest in events in Ireland in September 1913.

The Dublin transport strike followed by the lock-out provoked relatively good coverage in the paper in the autumn of 1913. In addition to reports from Henri Bricoux, its London correspondent, *L'Humanité* used the *Sunday Freeman* and other British papers for the basis of a front page article, with a photo of a crowd outside Liberty Hall, which explained the motives of the transport strikers. The central role of '*citoyen*' [sic] James Larkin was made clear. The reaction of the authorities in arresting him and other leaders was described and the violence with which the police broke up meetings was attested by reference to various reports in the British press.[363]

The next day, the events in Dublin were still on the front page with a photo of James Larkin addressing an open-air meeting in Beresford Place, outside Liberty Hall.[364] Again *L'Humanité* treated its readership to a round-up of the British press under the headline '*Les Massacres de Dublin.*' Jean Jaurès, as the paper's director, set the Dublin disturbances clearly in the context of the class struggle. William Martin Murphy was identified as the main culprit and his capitalist credentials were established by listing his interests as owner of railway companies, hotels, shops and the *Irish Independent*. He was also described as having railway interests in Uganda and Argentina. He was president of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce [1912-1913] and leader of the Dublin Employers Federation throughout the 1913 lock-out.[365] Murphy was easily portrayed to the readers of *L'Humanité* as the *bête noire* of the Dublin troubles of 1913. The whole affair was laid at Murphy's door as a result of his determination to crush the Irish Transport Union and Larkin's high-profile leadership was seen as defending the liberty of the workers.[366] A photo of members of the Dublin Metropolitan Police marching in formation carrying long staves appears without comment the next day. The collapse of a building in Church Street, Dublin causing 10 deaths was reported in detail although there was no suggestion that this has anything to do with the disturbances in the city.[367]

---

363 *L'Humanité,* 02/09/1913.
364 *L'Humanité,* 03/09/1913.
365 R. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (Harmondsworth, 1988), p. 443.
366 *L'Humanité,* 03/09/1913.
367 *L'Humanité,* 04/09/1913.

On the international news page, reports of open-air meetings held in O'Connell Street, Dublin and London's Trafalgar Square were given two columns. These were organised by the Trades Union and the Labour Party and were to protest at the heavy-handed behaviour of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. Messages of support from such as Ramsay MacDonald were read out in Dublin and a collection was held in London for the 'starving and brutalised' comrades in Dublin.[368] The following day, news appeared of the employers' decision to institute a lock-out of Transport Union members and to sack immediately any workers who refused to carry out 'legal and reasonable instructions'. News of the arrival in Dublin of a delegation from the TUC to enquire into the situation was also given.[369] The following day a photo of the funeral of James Nolan, allegedly killed by the police during a demonstration in Dublin, was carried with a short news item suggesting that 40,000 Dubliners were present on the streets, led by the Lord Mayor and Keir Hardie. Again, readers were reminded that this was a protest against the 'misdemeanours of the Cossacks of capitalism'.[370] After his return to England, Keir Hardie's article in the *Labour Leader* was quoted at length with the conclusion that the lines were drawn in Dublin for a struggle.[371]

A further report the following day gave little new information beyond the fact that the Dublin employers were determined to carry out their threat to lock out Union members. There was discussion of the death of an artist named Duval, who had jumped into the river and had been pulled out by the police. Officially it was suicide but *L'Humanité* suggested that many thought that the police were actually to blame.[372] This is the last specifically Irish report on industrial action in the United Kingdom because strikes in England now dominated the headlines. Elsewhere on the same page, the visit of opponents of Home Rule to Balmoral was reported. After meeting with Lord Lansdowne, Bonar Law was reported to have had a long private audience with the King. According to *L'Humanité* the Tories were attempting to achieve the engagement of the King in the Home Rule controversy in favour of preserving the *status quo* and were also moving towards a tactic of proposing amendments to the bill,

---

368 Ibid.
369 *L'Humanité,* 05/09/1913.
370 *L'Humanité,* 06/09/1913.
371 *L'Humanité,* 14/09/1913.
372 *L'Humanité,* 15/09/1913.

now in the Lords which would have had the effect of weakening its provisions and therefore destroying the bill in practice. The report ended with the confident assertion that the bill would eventually pass since noisy Tory and Imperialist opposition had also threatened the Great Reform Bill back in 1832 which had passed nevertheless.[373] An article of analysis, signed Francis de Pressensé, gave an account of industrial relations in the United Kingdom during the previous few years. He suggested that the situation in Dublin was moving inevitably to industrial civil war, given the attitude and the actions of the employers who had refused to continue discussions with the Unions. He commented that the culturally individualistic British workers had found a useful tool in the recent development of mass syndicalism and were now using this to achieve their just aims.[374] Further reports of violent clashes between workers and the police in Dublin were carried two days later.[375] The establishment by the Lord Mayor of Dublin of a fund for the families of workers unemployed because of the situation was reported accompanied by a photo on the front page of the Dublin police charging the crowd.[376]

Inspired no doubt by the industrial strife gripping Ireland's capital *L'Humanité* began to give space to the resistance to Home Rule in a more systematic manner. A short report of a meeting of the Ulster Unionist Council appeared which indicated that this body was preparing a plan to establish a Provisional Government in the province in the event of Home Rule being put in place. No further details were given beyond the fact that over 500 delegates attended.[377] However, the following day Henri Bricoux wrote an article on the front page which gave more details of the preparations for a Provisional Government. The headline 'Ulster against Home Rule: 60,000 Volunteers ready to do battle' was accompanied by a photo of Sir Edward Carson and General Richardson inspecting a parade of UVF Volunteers.[378] This was the first pictorial representation of the leadership of the Ulster Unionists in armed rebellion mode. Carson was laid low with influenza shortly after this photo was taken and *L'Humanité* reported that Lord Londonderry had assumed the leadership of the 'Provisional Government'. In addition the subscriptions for a hardship fund for the

---

373 Ibid.
374 *L'Humanité*, 20/09/1913.
375 *L'Humanité*, 22/09/1913.
376 *L'Humanité*, 23/09/1913.
377 *L'Humanité*, 25/09/1913.

possible victims of the resistance to Home Rule had been opened with large contributions from the leadership.[379] Meanwhile, a shipment of 300 tonnes of foodstuffs collected by English workers had been sent to Dublin and Sir George Asquith, who had been given the job of leading an inquiry into the Dublin industrial troubles, had arrived there.[380]

The weekend of the 27th September saw a large parade and review of the UVF as part of the celebrations of the first anniversary of 'Ulster Day' and the signing of the Covenant. No trouble was reported and the large plain-clothes police presence was not needed.[381] The Asquith commission started its work in Dublin with submissions from the Union side while the Employers requested an adjournment. The hardship fund for the workers was reported to have reached 68,000 Francs.[382] This was in contrast to the 920,000 Francs *L'Humanité* had reported on 26th September to have been collected in Ulster, although it makes no comment on this fact.

As suddenly as coverage from Ireland had started in *L'Humanité* it stopped at the end of September 1913. No further reports form Ireland appeared. Events such as the formation of the Irish Citizen Army [ICA] in Dublin in November or of the Irish Volunteers in the same month failed to make the French press. This is surprising in the former case since the ICA had a socialist base and was directed by James Connolly. The truth is that Connolly, regarded in retrospect as the embodiment of socialism in Ireland during these years, was far less newsworthy than the mercurial, noisy and high-profile James Larkin although the latter's actual effect on political developments was arguably less long-lasting.

It was January 1914 when Ireland reappeared on the pages of *L'Humanité.* A rather confused report about the Government commission of inquiry into the strike appeared on the 5th January. The main thrust of the report was that the employers were now attempting to get any workers they took on to agree not to take part in sympathy strikes, a weapon they believed to be particularly favoured by Larkin's followers. Henri Bricoux concluded by suggesting that this was not calculated to

---

[378] *L'Humanité,* 26/09/1913.
[379] Ibid.
[380] *L'Humanité,* 27/09/1913.
[381] *L'Humanité,* 28/09/1913.
[382] *L'Humanité,* 30/09/1913.

improve matters.[383] On the 9th January, an interview with Ben Tillet was published.[384] In it he reviewed the history of the Dublin strike, outlined the support that the British workers were offering their Dublin comrades and concluded by remarking that James Larkin had 'all the qualities and *the defects* [my italics] necessary to direct the Dublin strike. He is the right man in the right place'.[385]

The continuation of the Commons debate on the Home Rule was reported with Carson's remark that the people of Ulster would hold to the last in their resistance to Home Rule unless some grounds for agreement were found. The report added that 50,000 Irish-Americans in Philadelphia were resolved to fight to ensure the application of Home Rule. What form this combat would actually have taken was not specified however.[386] On the 21st February evidence, if that is indeed the word, of further support for Home Rule appeared in the columns of *L'Humanité*. The paper picked up a report from a Welsh publication of Keir Hardie's experience with a spiritual medium who had contacted, amongst others, the shades of Parnell and Robert Burns and had relayed their unanimous exhortation to vote for Home Rule.[387]

L'Humanité regained its composure with continuing reports on the Home Rule debate and the attempts by the Unionists to provoke an election which they felt sure that they would win. In general terms, the Government held firm to its intention to see the Bill through but *L'Humanité* noted indications which appeared in the *Westminster Gazette* to the effect that a temporary opt-out of Home Rule would be permitted to Ulster. This would not be allowed to become permanent but there was every hope that the Nationalists would accept this modification.[388] In a short but thoughtful report the parliamentary struggle against Home Rule was seen by the Conservative and Unionist party as part of a general campaign attacking the Liberal Government and the Parliament Act which had weakened the Upper House and therefore the whole legislature. *L'Humanité* hinted that votes in the Lords to defeat the Home Rule Bill

---

[383] *L'Humanité,* 05/01/1914.

[384] The Trade Unionist, Ben Tillett, had made his name in the 1889 Dock Strike and as a leading member of the Dockers Union was a critic of right-wing Labour MPs. He wrote to *The Observer* on 03/05/1911 suggesting that if rightwing Tories supported the Liberals then the latter would be revealed for the enemies of Labour that they really were. A. M. Gollin, *The Observer and J. L. Garvin: a study in great editorship* (London, 1960), pp. 328-330.

[385] Larkin a toutes les qualités et tous les défauts nécessaires pour diriger la grève de Dublin. Il est *the right man in the right place* ... Ibid.

[386] *L'Humanité,* 12/02/1914.

[387] *L'Humanité,* 21/02/1914. The Welsh publication was *The Pioneer* of Merthyr.

[388] *L'Humanité,* 25/02/1914 and 05/03/1914.

might be bought by the government's opponents.[389] This report is misleading in that it leaves the reader with the impression that the Lords can still halt the progress of the Home Rule Bill even if the amendments to it were still passed in the Commons. This was not the case, but all is made clear on the 10th March when the front page carried a report of the Commons debate, complete with a picture of Mr Asquith. Details of the Ulster opt-out clauses, allowing each county to vote for exclusion from Home Rule, were given. Interventions by various party leaders are reported. The conclusion reached was that agreement on Home Rule in the Commons might not be impossible.[390]

Churchill's speech on Home Rule in St George's Hall, Bradford, provided the next instance for a report on the crisis in *L'Humanité.* The main elements of his speech were reproduced as was his insistence that it was time for the matter to be finally settled. He warned against any action which might be construed as illegal. That this was aimed at the Conservative and Unionist party was made explicit. They would have to use only constitutional means to oppose the Home Rule Bill. While he and his party had to understand the anxieties of the Ulster Unionists (*les Ulstériens*) Churchill reminded his audience that the Liberal party sought by this bill to calm old hatreds in Ireland without arousing new ones. He accused Sir Edward Carson of doing the latter without achieving the former, and even of preparing civil war. He closed by stressing the necessity of this Bill for the future good of the country and that good order must prevail, since the United Kingdom must not go down the same path as Mexico.[391]

In the report of this speech, as in reports of others, it is revealing to see what was selected for the French readership. Here we have reported a major speech on the current issue by Winston Churchill. The elements selected had the purpose of informing but also of providing a sense of his political thinking. This speech created a sensation in the British press and can be seen as a strong challenge to the Ulster Unionists.[392] The reference to Mexico was followed by the remark that if the civil and parliamentary systems were to be challenged by force then 'let us go forward together and put these grave matters to the proof'.[393] There is no doubt that the belligerence of

---

389 *L'Humanité,* 07/03/1914.
390 *L'Humanité,* 10/03/1914.
391 *L'Humanité,* 15/03/1914. The Mexican revolution was in progress at this time.
392 A. T. Q. Stewart, *The Ulster Crisis* (London, 1967), p.142.
393 Ibid.

Churchill's speech was not fully transmitted to the French readership although they were left in no doubt that it was a key event. The following day almost the same space was devoted to a speech at Bradford by Joseph Devlin which, while being much milder in tone, strongly defended the government's stand against the Unionist opposition to the Bill. According to the report, Devlin took the line that the opposition to Home Rule was an expression of greater opposition to the Parliament Act and that Unionist machinations were a way of forcing new elections.[394] This analysis followed the government's general view of the situation. He exhorted the Government to defend British democracy with calm and confidence and to mobilise all the resources at its disposal for the battle which would decide its continuing existence.[395] This was hardly the call to arms of the evening before. Churchill had expressed the determination of the Cabinet while Devlin sought to distance his party from such sabre-rattling. Unfortunately, *L'Humanité* did not attempt to make this distinction.

L'Humanité carried a short report the following day on the debate in the Commons. This provided some evidence of the tougher line that that the Government was prepared to take. In a noisy chamber the Prime Minister's speech produced an impression of remarkable strength.[396] The report ended with a piece of pure Asquith. To Bonar Law's request that he should reply to the twenty-six questions put to him by the Unionist opposition Asquith answered that if the opponents of Home Rule were to form their proposals in a more precise manner then he would be happy to do so. One can imagine even at ninety years distance the fury that this reply generated on the opposition benches.

While the debate proceeded in Parliament both sides were making initial moves of a more military nature in Belfast. Stewart tells in some detail of the withdrawal of troops and their redeployment to Holywood. Other detachments of troops were ordered to Omagh, Enniskillen, Armagh, Newry and Dundalk. Sir Neville Macready, considered an expert in situations where the military had to support the civil power, was appointed GOC Belfast and Churchill as First Lord busied himself with the deployment of naval forces in Belfast Lough and Kingstown. Craig was similarly deploying his men and the Unionists were steeling themselves for the arrests

---

394 *L'Humanité,* 16/03/1914.
395 Ibid.
396 *L'Humanité,* 17/03/1914.

that they felt were soon to come.[397]

L'Humanité carried a long report on the debate on the 19th March in the Commons which gives a good idea of the lively nature of the exchanges. It faithfully reported Carson's famous departure from the Commons declaring that he was off to Ulster. The reporter noted that the Ulster 'Provisional Government' intended to hold a series of meetings at which Carson would speak. In addition, Bricoux discounted the rumours of the imminent arrests of Unionist leaders.[398] The atmosphere in Belfast itself was briefly described under the heading '*L'effervescence dans l'Ulster*' with the debate in the Commons being followed avidly and every edition of the evening papers being quickly sold. Sandwich men were on the street with slogans urging men to sign up to defend Ulster. A further report told the readership of *L'Humanité* that Volunteers on bicycles had been sent to all parts of the Province with sealed orders for the mobilisation of the UVF and other organisations.[399] The stage was set for the final acts of the drama.

On the 21st March, under the headline 'The English [sic] Government takes military measures against Ulster', a report appeared outlining the movements indicated above with the additional information that guards had been doubled at military sites across Ireland.[400] The arrival of Sir Edward Carson in Belfast was also reported with the comment that his driver had had to force his way through the ranks of the crowd who had come to welcome him. Such was the joy at his arrival that several revolvers were fired into the air but, in general, the situation remained calm.[401] Stewart makes no mention of this exuberant waste of ammunition but talks rather of the tension of the moment given the considerable police presence.[402] Hidden in one single sentence near the end of the newspaper report, was the event which Stewart, rather histrionically, describes as the blunder which altered the course of British history, namely the Curragh 'mutiny'. After stating that the 16th Lancers have been ordered North, *L'Humanité* remarked that 'The majority of officers resigned or will resign so as to withdraw from carrying out the given order'.[403]

---

397 A. T. Q. Stewart, *The Ulster Crisis,* pp. 144-154, Passim.
398 *L'Humanité*, 20/03/1914.
399 Ibid.
400 'Le Gouvernement Anglais prend contre l'Ulster des mesures militaires' *L'Humanité*, 21/03/1914.
401 Ibid.
402 A. T. Q. Stewart, *The Ulster Crisis,* p. 154.
403 'La grande majorité des officiers a démissioné ou va démissioner afin de se soustraire à l'ordre

The 22nd saw a long report in *L'Humanité* in which the seriousness of the crisis was spelled out. There are some unintentionally comic touches showing that the copywriters at *L'Humanité* had a limited knowledge of British institutions. The report was apparently telephoned from London by a special correspondent and the result was that Buckingham Palace became 'Birmingham Palace' and Sir John French was designated as having the rank of 'Feld-maréchal'. These slips apart, the atmosphere of crisis was admirably conveyed. Comings and goings at the Palace were blended with government meetings and a report of Lloyd-George's speech at Huddersfield where he remarked that obedience to the law of the land was not optional and that Carson should be aware of this fact. The 100,000 men of the UVF should be employed in more useful tasks than backing or provoking a civil war.[404] Further details of developments were printed, gleaned mainly from the news agency *Havas* which meant, in practice, the British press. The effect of the refusal of the Curragh officers to accept their orders was that the order to move North was withdrawn. In addition, details of a show of anti-Home Rule feeling by a regiment in quarters in Belfast, as reported in the Unionist *Pall Mall Gazette*, was given, along with the fact that troop trains were being readied to bring reinforcements to Glasgow and other ports for shipment to Ireland.[405]

The reports from Ireland continued although with some optimism that the crisis could be resolved, given that Carson's orders to the UVF to remain calm had been obeyed. *L'Humanité* talked of the Government having a view which is '*optimiste*'. This was despite further details of the Curragh 'mutiny' seeping out, notably, the resignation of General Gough. As to whether there might be some incident which could give rise to a clash between the UVF and the Army, *L'Humanité* relayed the opinion of *Reynold's News* that if this were to happen, it would be because of some young Ulster hotheads and not because of Ulster Unionist orders. *L'Humanité* drew the conclusion that the Government was seeking to avoid forcing Carson and his colleagues into a corner where they might take treasonable action.[406]

On the 24th March a further long report about the Ulster crisis appeared. This is interesting since it followed the questions in the Commons on the subject of the

---

donné'. *L'Humanité*, Ibid.

[404] *L'Humanité*, 21/03/1914.

[405] Ibid.

[406] *L'Humanité*, 23/03/1914.

Curragh 'mutiny'. The opposition, with Bonar Law in the vanguard, sought clarification, as one might expect, and it became clear that Asquith had done some work behind the scenes over the weekend.[407] Stewart remarks that Asquith had realised that 'his Ministers were going beyond the measures he had sanctioned' and undertook some damage limitation.[408] He suggests that Asquith had not been fully aware of what was happening because of pressure of work. This is perhaps difficult to believe but there is no doubt that he had a more stressful time than usual in the Commons on that particular day. Lord Morley, the leader of the Liberal Lords, had a far easier task, given the near-empty chamber. Even Asquith's usual ally, Ramsay MacDonald, gave a bleak assessment of the situation and, while his attack on the officers who refused to move against Ulster can be seen as supporting Asquith, he noted the past willingness of these same officers to carry out the orders of the Liberal Government against striking workers. *L'Humanité*, thus reminds its readers that the Liberals, while probably preferable to the Conservative and Unionist party, are no friends of British and Irish workers.[409]

After the alarms and excursions of the previous few days, *L'Humanité* saw fit to provide an article of reflection and summary of the whole Home Rule issue on the 25th March. This appeared under the heading 'English conservatives use the army to combat Home Rule' and a photo of Lieutenant-General Paget, C.in C. Ireland.[410] After two paragraphs setting out the brief history of Ulster and of attempts to gain Home Rule in Ireland the steps taken by the Government in the previous few days were outlined. The Conservatives were blamed for inciting Ulster opposition to Home Rule. The Province was described as being 'peopled by English immigrants'. The article went on to point out that, while the Government had denied that officers at the Curragh had resigned, the pro-government press had reported this as a fact. Although the Government was embarrassed by this discrepancy of accounts of the incident, it was as nothing to the increasing embarrassment on the Conservative side at the lengths to which their Ulster colleagues had gone. *L'Humanité* felt that the Conservative opposition would recognise that they might have gone too far in their desire to fight government policy and that they would not risk the loss of many senior

---

407 *L'Humanité*, 24/03/1914.
408 A. T. Q. Stewart, *The Ulster Crisis,* p.163.
409 *L'Humanité*, 24/03/1914.
410 *L'Humanité*, 25/03/1914.

army officers in pursuit of their aims. In any case, concluded the article, this all gave food for thought to the working class who saw the words 'law' and 'order' being challenged by those who normally had recourse to them.[411] The issue of the class origins and the relative wealth of the British officer class was further developed in the report from the Commons on the international page on the same day. Their allowances of between FF. 10,000 and FF. 25,000 [£500-£1,100 approximately] were noted, as was their willingness to intervene against strikers demonstrating for higher wages and better conditions.

If *l'Humanité* thought that this was going to be the last word on the matter it was mistaken. The continuing exchanges in the Commons ensured that a long account of them appeared on the 26th March. The main elements were a discussion of the role of senior officers at the highest level in plans to militarise Ulster. Asquith maintained that the Government had no desire to constrain or to provoke Ulster and reminded the House that there were provisions in the Bill for an opt-out for Ulster counties. Nevertheless, he could not accept that the Government could be held at the mercy of senior military officers. Below the main article, disorders involving pistol shots in Belfast were briefly reported.[412]

The crisis made the front page with a photo of Colonel John Seely, Minister of War, whose resignation was not accepted by Asquith. The report suggested that despite this, it was becoming clear that he was having to taking responsibility for the whole Curragh 'mutiny' misunderstanding.[413] This report was accompanied on the front page by photos of the UVF camp at Craigavon, home of Sir James Craig. How the UVF had totally taken over the building causing his children to be boarded out, was described in vivid detail in Lady Spender's diary of 20th March and quoted by Stewart.[414] *L'Humanité* concluded that, while Asquith's cabinet might have been weakened by the whole crisis, the affair had not evolved to the advantage of the opponents of Home Rule.[415]

The Government's attempts at damage limitation continued to be reported. On the international page, the first story was headlined as the reported resignations of the

---

411 Ibid.
412 *L'Humanité*, 26/03/1914.
413 *L'Humanité*, 27/03/1914.
414 A. T. Q. Stewart, *The Ulster Crisis,* p.158.
415 *L'Humanité*, 27/03/1914.

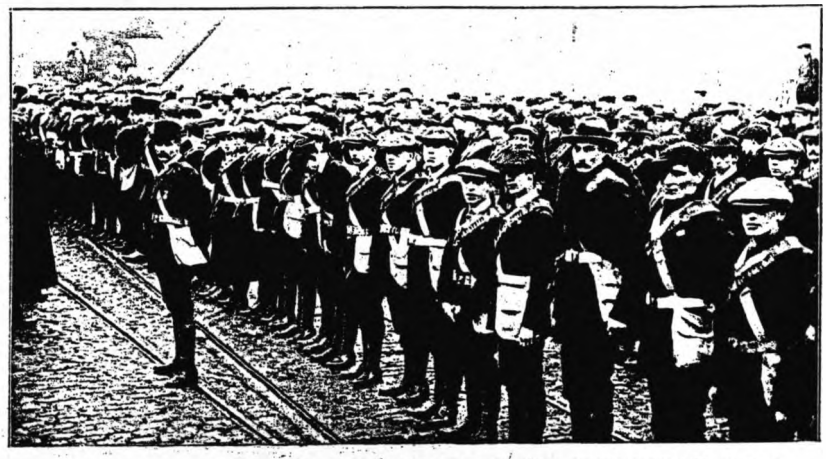
Chief of the General Staff, Field Marshal French and Lieutenant-General Ewart. In fact, the text of the report dealt largely with exchanges in the Commons between Charles Beresford and Winston Churchill who asserted that naval officers would obey orders given to them.[416] A question to Lloyd George about rumours that the generals had resigned was avoided by the announcement that Asquith would make a statement later in the day. When pressed as to where Asquith was exactly, the Chancellor was forced to admit that the Prime Minister was seeing the King at the palace. The Government announced that these reports were unconfirmed rumours, since there had been a meeting of the General Staff that morning. The correspondent of *L'Humanité* noted that it was more than likely that these resignations would be confirmed which would explain the presence of the Prime Minister at the Palace.[417] These reports give us a view of the seriousness of the crisis from the French point of view. While the goings-on in the northern part of Ireland were of interest but not of real concern to the readers of *L'Humanité* in the Spring of 1914, the apparent clash of wills between the British Government and their leading generals was of deep concern. First, although at this point in that fateful year there was no indication in any of the papers that relations between the European powers were about to lead to war, these were dangerous times. The *Entente* with the United Kingdom was the cornerstone of French foreign and defence policy and even on the internationalist left this was recognised. To see the Government of France's most powerful ally at odds with its military chiefs was worrying in the extreme. Consequently, it is not surprising that *L'Humanité* carried a clear news agency report of Asquith's announcement that, in future, British officers would obey orders given to them. The three main points of a new order of the day issued to the armed forces were printed to make this clear. A photo of a grim-looking Field Marshal French accompanied this report. It ended with a single sentence repeating Asquith's assertion that there were no plans to send troops into Ulster.[418]

On the international page on the same day there was a longer report of the Government's statements in the Commons and also a *Havas* news agency report that senior officers had left the Curragh for London. No further explanation was given beyond the remark by Asquith that there had been a degree of misunderstanding

---

[416] *L'Humanité*, 27/03/1914.
[417] Ibid.
[418] *L'Humanité*, 28/03/1914.

Page from *L'Illustration* 28/03/1914, The UVF on parade, Carson's arrival in Belfast, UVF members depositing their arms and equipment. The map indicates the Protestant majority area (shaded) in the North-East.



Les volontaires orangistes de Belfast attendent, pour lui rendre les honneurs, l'arrivée du grand chef unioniste sir Edward Carson.

L'ULSTER CONTRE LE « HOME RULE »

Nous avons exposé en détail, dans notre numéro du 4 octobre, la « question de l'Ulster » et les raisons invoquées par les protestants de cette province irlandaise, les orangistes, pour s'insurger et résister, le cas échéant par les armes, à la loi dite de *Home rule*, qui rendrait à l'Irlande le Parlement dont elle jouit jusqu'en 1802, et l'autonomie politique.

L'imminence probable du vote, pour la troisième et dernière fois, par le Parlement britannique, du *Home rule*, et donc de sa mise en vigueur, a porté à son état aigu une crise inquiétante.

D'une part, le gouvernement du roi a donné des ordres pour que les troupes en garnison dans le sud de l'Irlande aillent renforcer les *effectifs* de l'Ulster; la police de cette province a pareillement reçu des renforts; enfin, des navires de guerre ont été envoyés croiser en vue du littoral septentrional de l'île, prêts à une démonstration. La première de ces mesures a provoqué la démission d'un général et d'une centaine d'officiers qui refusaient d'avoir à se battre contre les volontaires constitués dans les conditions que nous avons exposées. Ces démissions ont été retirées dès qu'on a donné à leurs signataires l'assurance que leur rôle se bornerait à un service de police.

D'autre part, sir Edward Carson, le président du « Conseil unioniste », l'âme de la résistance, est revenu précipitamment en Irlande. Le vendredi 20 mars, il débarquait à Belfast. A son arrivée en ville, deux cents volontaires du régiment de Belfast-Ouest lui rendaient les honneurs. Puis, tandis que cette garde s'en allait déposer ses armes et ses munitions, sir Edward gagnait la résidence de Craigavon.

La carte que nous reproduisons, d'après notre confrère Ludovic Naudeau, du *Journal*, qui a étudié sur place la question, montre, de façon frappante, la proportion des forces de résistance comparées au reste de la population de l'Irlande, qui, depuis plus d'un siècle, réclame qu'on lui rende son gouvernement autonome: sur 4.381.951 habitants, l'île compte 73,9 % de catholiques, partisans du *Home rule*, et 26,1 % de protestants. Ceux-ci sont surtout fixés dans la partie de l'Ulster indiquée ici en grisé foncé; ils y représentent la majorité, mais non la totalité de la population: 720.624 contre 316.400 catholiques. D'autres essaiment dans le reste de l'Ulster et dans les trois autres provinces. Cette répartition des croyances, des races, se traduit par l'envoi au Parlement, sur 101 députés irlandais, de 85 *home rulers* et de 16 orangistes.

Tous les efforts du gouvernement britannique — comme d'ailleurs des chefs sages de l'opposition — s'appliquent désormais à éviter une collision.

Sur la province de l'Ulster se détache en grisé foncé la partie de territoire habitée par la majorité protestante rebelle à l'exercice d'un gouvernement autonome.

Sir Edward Carson, le chef de la résistance à la loi britannique, entouré par ses fidèles à son arrivée à Belfast.

L'heure du repas après l'heure de garde : les volontaires de l'Ulster se dépouillent de leurs armes et de leur équipement.

PRÉPARATIFS D'INSURRECTION EN IRLANDE

between the Government and senior officers in the army about the political objectives of the Government. This had been resolved to their mutual satisfaction and Sir John French had been present when the new order of the day had been drafted and sent out.[419] Asquith clearly felt that a line could now be drawn under the whole unfortunate affair and *L'Humanité* reported the next day that he and his Ministers had left for the country and that this indicated that the political situation in London was less tense.[420] This may well have been the case but, in pursuance of their goal of bringing the Government down, the Conservatives planned further political attacks in the week to come. The affair had also brought to light the class-identity of officers in the Army and the radical press was reported in *L'Humanité* to be demanding a more meritocratic basis for the appointment of military officers.[421]

The Conservative attack on the Government materialised a few days later and was reported in some detail. While setting out the probable terms of this conflict, the allegation by the Tories to the effect that Churchill and Lloyd George had behaved like naughty children, getting up to mischief behind Asquith's back, was carried in *L'Humanité*. [422] On the 1st of April, *L'Humanité* carried a long article discussing the question of the political background to the British political crisis. This was couched in partisan political terms for the readership, suggesting that Asquith's Government had most of the French press ranged against it. While not suggesting that Asquith was left-wing, it suggested that the forces opposing him at home or abroad were the representatives of the forces of reaction. The writer suggested that, in Britain, the Conservative opposition was attempting to involve the King, seen as naturally inclined towards them as representatives of the upper classes, in constitutional debate. The British people had to be aware of the dangers of this, given the recent developments amongst the senior military who could have assumed that their attitude to Ulster might have the support of the Palace. This, was of course, speculation on the part of *L'Humanité.* The fact remains, however, that Minister of War Seely had been called to the Palace. To us it appears bizarre that the Monarch should interview a Minister other than the Prime Minister and *L'Humanité* also saw it as odd. The Labour member Mr J. Ward, is quoted in English in the article remarking 'We have

---

419 Ibid.
420 *L'Humanité*, 29/03/1914.
421 Ibid.
422 *L'Humanité*, 30/03/1914.

now to decide whether the people have to make the law in the country without the interference form either King or army'.[423]

This had overtones that the French readers of the article would have understood. The French army was going through a period of readjustment. Its role in society was being re-examined under the tutelage of the Minister of War, Millerand, who sought to move the army into a more central position in French society. Parades, military band concerts and press campaigns were being organised.[424] In 1911, Jean Jaurès himself had published a critique of the French Army's structure, suggesting a reform which would be based on people's militias.[425] The class-origins of the officers in the French army was also an issue for him. On the same day, a report on the parliamentary session appeared where the Home Rule Bill was being discussed yet again. The Government expressed its satisfaction that the question of Ulster was being resolved without recourse to arms but Sir Edward Grey warned that if a Provisional Government were declared in Ulster at any time, it would be defeated by military action.[426]

The ripples of the Curragh 'mutiny' were clearly becoming weaker the further they moved from the central events and *L'Humanité* noted that in the Commons the positions for and against Home Rule seem to be set firm. Any further discussion seemed only to be skirmishing.[427] It went on to report the main points of John Dillon's remarks in the Commons on the 1st April where he had broadly supported the Government's position and stressed that Irish Nationalists had agreed to many concessions, notably the six-year exclusion period, as a contribution to the peaceful resolution of the crisis. He remarked that the activities of the Ulster Unionists were only tolerated by the Tories because they could be used as a weapon to attack the Government. This irritated the opposition, but the point went home.[428]

The notion of a federal solution to the Irish question was not mentioned by *L'Humanité* but did appear in *Le Figaro,* with Balfour's dismissal of the notion that the United Kingdom could transform itself into a federal state. In Ireland, it was thought that some degree of federalism might avoid a civil war. The idea of an inter-

---

423 *L'Humanité*, 01/04/1914.
424 A. and C. Ambrosi, *La France 1870-1986* (Paris, 1986), p. 35.
425 Ibid.
426 *L'Humanité*, 01/04/1914.
427 *L'Humanité*, 02/04/1914.

party conference to discuss the Irish problem to take place in the period between the second and third readings of the Home Rule Bill was seen as a positive move.[429]

A few days later, a huge Unionist march and demonstration in London, with a flag-waving Carson at his most vehement, was reported. Other speakers included Austen Chamberlain and Mr Balfour. The arrival of suffragettes in the middle of the afternoon in Hyde Park and their collision with the assembled Unionists caused the demonstration to end in noisy chaos.[430] This was almost the final act in the drama since the bill to grant Home Rule passed its second reading, under the terms of the Parliament Act, on the 6th April, by 365 to 272 votes. The third reading was seen as a foregone conclusion and so, as a result, it would receive the Royal Assent even if rejected by the Lords. *L'Humanité* noted that, even with the abstention of O'Brien's Nationalists, the Bill had received enough non-Irish votes to pass, so there was no possibility of it being argued that it was in any way unconstitutional.[431] A report followed of wild scenes of public rejoicing in Dublin and, confusingly for the paper's readership, in Belfast. It seems that on hearing the news of the passing of the Bill, northern Nationalists sang 'Rule Britannia' and 'God Save Ireland' along the Grosvenor Road, separating the Nationalist Falls Road area from Loyalist Sandy Row, in Belfast. This is the only time that northern Nationalists emerged from the shadows of the *Orangistes* in reports in *L'Humanité*.[432]

At this point it becomes clear that Ireland is no longer of interest to Jean Jaurès and his readership. No pick-up was made of the landing of arms by Major Crawford at Larne only a matter of weeks later on the night of 24/25th April. The arming of the UVF was not reported nor were developments in the attitude of Unionists to exclusion. *Le Figaro*, on the other hand, did report the Larne gun-running in some detail. Jean Coudurier, raised the issues of legality of the activity and made the point that, had the gun-running been organised in the South by the Irish Volunteers, then any British Government would have reacted strongly. Coudurier suggested that that all the Government was prepared to do was shrug its shoulders. For months the Loyalists [*les orangistes*] had been allowed to organise, drill and prepare for armed conflict.

---

428 Ibid.
429 *Le Figaro,* 03/04/1914.
430 *L'Humanité*, 05/04/1914.
431 *Le Figaro,* 07/04/1914 and *L'Humanité*, 08/04/1914.
432 *L'Humanité*, 09/04/1914.

Now it was too late to do much to deal with them. All sections of opinion agreed that the army would have had no problem in overcoming the Loyalists if it came to it but the political cost would be high.[433] The article went on to suggest that the UVF could not maintain the state of readiness for more than a short time which meant that some resolution one way or another would have to be arrived at. Thus, Asquith's Government was under pressure and some action would have to be taken. This would weaken the Government and, even if some years of opt-out were to be granted, the moment would come when the Government would have to deal energetically with the Ulster Loyalists. Coudurier mused that the organisation of these 'perfectly English' Loyalists was quite extraordinary. Their organisation and their resources were exceptional in that they had obtained arms from Germany, much as any ironmonger obtains his goods. They just had to pay out the money [FF. 2.5million] and the goods had been delivered. Nevertheless, they could never win militarily and, in the face of artillery and naval guns, they would succumb, but at what a price? We know now, of course, that with this remark Coudurier was giving his readers a preview of Dublin in 1916; something he and they could not know.[434]

A week later Coudurier told his readers that there were moves afoot within the Government and the Unionist opposition to seek some kind of understanding on the question of Ulster. Quoting anonymous sources in both parties, he reported that though this was the case, there was little room for compromise since the areas on which concessions might be given were very restricted on both sides. There was however no time to lose since the Bill was to go to the Lords on the 9th May.[435] A further article the following day suggested that the Ulster question was draining the energy of the Government and the opposition and both were keenly aware that their respective electorates might also be tiring of the whole business. The physical effects on Ministers was noted and Coudurier concluded by commenting that the physical and moral resistance of Mr Asquith was quite extraordinary.[436]

Le Figaro was silent on the issue of Home Rule until early July, when the Lords debated amendments to the Bill. Following the line that there had been some meeting of minds between opposition and Government, the tone of the respective

---

433 *Le Figaro,* 28/04/1914.
434 Ibid.
435 *Le Figaro,* 02/05/1914.
436 *Le Figaro,* 03/05/1914.

leaders in the Lords, Lords Lansdowne and Morley, was described as conciliatory but the short article was less than clear as to the actual situation.[437] There was little sign of conciliatory remarks at the meeting of the Ulster Unionist Council which was reported the next day. The text was clearly taken from Loyalist press releases and a communiqué read to the press by Captain Craig who promised that Carson would arrive that day, escorted by 400 UVF men with fixed bayonets. Coudurier made the remark that rather than being just a party conference the meeting had all the trappings of a meeting of a Provisional Government.[438]

The activity in the South to support Home Rule was generally ignored in the French press, but *Le Figaro* referred to the increasing numbers joining the Nationalist Irish Volunteers. As the summer advanced, the centre of the crisis shifted slowly but steadily from Westminster to Ireland. There was concern in both political camps about the degree of control that the leadership could exert on their foot-soldiers in training in Ireland. The arming of the UVF raised the temperature. Ulster's military culture found expression in the groups of disciplined UVF men who were to be seen everywhere. In the rest of Ireland the presence of the Volunteers was less evident, but they were preparing and training for conflict. Coudurier wondered if the warm weather might provide the spark. He concluded by suggesting that there was something of the comic opera about the whole business but this should not have detracted from the serious intent of those involved and that the Irish question was a 'burning' one.[439] The meeting of the Ulster Unionist Council was duly reported with Carson being given the right to decide at what point the call to arms for the 'defence' of Ulster should be made. Carson's conclusion that Ulster desired peace but not at the price of capitulation was noted. This was a more elegant wording of the normal cry of 'No surrender'. The business community, who had previously supported the anti-Home Rule movement, was now having second thoughts as it saw the UVF in the streets. Coudurier suggested that they might well be beginning to put pressure on the political leaders to arrive at some form of compromise so as to avoid costly disorder in the Province.[440]

---

[437] *Le Figaro,* 02/07/1914.
[438] *Le Figaro*, 03/07/1914.
[439] *Le Figaro,* 06/07/1914.
[440] *Le Figaro,* 07/07/1914. This report appeared beside an analysis of the probable effects of the assassination of Archduke Franz-Ferdinand in Sarajevo.

In mid-July 1914, the Lords' requirement that the whole of Ulster be excluded from the terms of the Home Rule Bill, also brought the Home Rule issue back onto the pages of *L'Humanité*, in addition to those of *Le Figaro*.[441] On the 13th a report headed *Situation critique en Irlande* described the discussions in the Lords of the Amending Bill, which would enable the exclusion of Ulster from Home Rule. Carson's review of 2000 armed members of the UVF at Larne was described as an attempt to intimidate the Commons who were yet to discuss this Bill. Carson is quoted as stating in his speech to the UVF that 'if we cannot have peace with honour [...] then we must have war with honour'. Walter Long, who had recently been in the running for Conservative party leader, speaking at a smaller review in Ballymena, was quoted as exhorting his listeners to support Sir Edward Carson 'who is acting against a Government which has ceased to be a government'.[442] The report ended by noting that police reinforcements had been rushed to the North of Ireland to deal with '*des collisions*' between Loyalists and Nationalists. The last report in *L'Humanité* from Ireland was an imprecise account of the Bachelor's Walk shooting in Dublin when troops fired on the crowd, following the landing of arms for the Irish Volunteers at Howth. *L'Humanité's* final comment was 'We legitimately fear the consequences which such an act of madness can provoke'.[443]

From this point on *L'Humanité* was preoccupied with the assassination of its director Jean Jaurès on the 31st July and the outbreak of the Great War a few days later. *Le Figaro* continued to follow developments in Ulster and on the 21st reported the intervention of the King and the Buckingham Palace conference. Noting that he had delayed his departure for the naval review at Spithead, *Le Figaro* recounted how he had decided to bring the political leaders into discussions as a truly last resort.[444] On another page, Coudurier treated his readers to an uncharacteristic mixed metaphor, remarking that the political atmosphere in London was 'saturated with electricity'. However, there was some hope in that there had been talks between Asquith, Bonar Law and Carson and there would be further debate in the Commons the following week. Coudurier warned his readers not to expect too much beyond the conclusion

---

441 *Le Figaro and L'Humanité,* 13/07/1914.
442 *Le Figaro and L'Humanité,* 13/07/1914.
443 On envisage avec une crainte légitime les conséquences qu'un acte aussi fou pourrait provoquer. *L'Humanité,* 27/07/1914.
444 *Le Figaro,* 19/07/1914.

that events were moving towards what he ominously called 'the psychological moment'.[445]

On the 22nd. July, the opening of the Buckingham Palace conference, chaired by the Speaker, was reported in some detail. The ceremony was held in front of the press and *Le Figaro* prints the King's speech in full.[446] The following day, some of the reactions of the British press to this speech were reported including the Liberal press who were affronted by the remark that the 'cry of civil war is on the lips of my most moderate and self-possessed of my people'. George V was held to have sided with the Ulster Unionists, while the Unionist press lauded the 'patriot King'.[447] The following day the failure of the conference was reported without any explanation of how that failure had come about.[448] This report seems to have been a little premature, or the result of careless sub-editing, since, on another page, *Le Figaro* reported another meeting of the conference. Of more interest was the additional news included that a sergeant in the British army had appeared in court in Dublin accused of stealing five rifles for the UVF. Asked if this sort of theft was common, a witness, another sergeant, could not confirm or deny the fact. No comment was made by the correspondent but in reality, little was needed.[449] The next report in *Le Figaro* also had the subject of illegal arms but this time it concerned the Bachelor's Walk incident. It was brief but accurate in that it reported the stoning of the troops by the crowd which resulted in the fatal shootings. No explanation beyond the fact that the arms had been imported 'secretly' by Nationalists was offered.[450] The anger of the southern Irish at these events was reported when two incidents were described to the readers of *Le Figaro.* In Dublin, a squad of soldiers was chased into a tram and besieged by a mob who were only dispersed with difficulty by the police. Also, in Thurles, manoeuvres by the Irish Volunteers concluded with the 1,500 participants kneeling bareheaded to say prayers for the souls of the victims of Bachelor's Walk.[451] The report added that there was now a movement in the South to establish a Provisional Irish Government in the event that Home Rule was not adopted. No further details

---

445 *Le Figaro,* 19/07/1914.
446 *Le Figaro,* 22/07/1914.
447 *Le Figaro,* 23/07/1914.
448 *Le Figaro,* 24/07/1914.
449 Ibid.
450 *Le Figaro,* 28/07/1914.
451 *Le Figaro,* 29/07/1914.

were offered. A final twist to the Howth affair was the reported seizure by the police of 2,500 rifles and 170,000 rounds. This was totally inaccurate, since Erskine Childers landed only about half this number of weapons. His yacht was just not big enough to carry so many.[452] The event had provoked some gunfire and individual soldiers had been manhandled by the crowd.[453]

With the outbreak of the Great War a week later, *Le Figaro* had other material to offer its readers from London. In September, though, a short report appeared of F. E. Smith's declaration that the UVF was in full support of the struggle against the common enemy and that the Government represented the unity of the Empire. *Le Figaro* drew a line under the Ulster question by remarking that no further discussion of Home Rule would take place until the 'sword be sheathed'.[454]

There is no doubt that the reports from Ireland or London over the four years of the Ulster Crisis levered the Irish question out of history books with a limited following and forced it into the consciousness of the French newspaper readership. This process began with the notion of Irish Home Rule being introduced as one of the of the elements of the ruling Liberal party's legislative proposals. It ended with speculation on the eve of the outbreak of the Great War, as to the likelihood of Ireland being consumed by civil war and the British Empire being shaken at its very core. The readership of the various papers became well informed about the armed resistance to constitutional change which appeared to be developing in the United Kingdom in 1914. This information had been entirely gleaned from the British press since no French journalists had been sent to Ireland. The Irish political problem was seen initially as essentially a British political issue and quite reasonably, therefore, French journalists saw the resolution of this issue as centred on London and not on Dublin or Belfast. They felt that the answer would emerge at the centre of political power and not on the periphery. This was normal practice, given the lack of foreign correspondents as we understand them today and in the period before the invention of the roving reporter as a product of the Great War. Nevertheless, reports about Ireland, however they might have been obtained, appeared regularly in the columns of French papers.

---

[452] C. Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland: government and resistance since 1848* (Oxford, 1983), p. 260.
[453] *Le Figaro,* 30/07/1914.
[454] *Le Figaro,* 18/09/1914.

The frequency of these reports is a crude but direct method of assessing the perception of the seriousness or the urgency of the Irish question at the time. We should remember that, for all the sabre-rattling that was going on at that time on the international scene and within the confines of the island of Ireland, the principal element was the degree of potentiality of any particular event. This explains the abrupt arrival of the Great War in August 1914 when the potential of various separate events in the Balkans suddenly constituted a critical mass whose instability resulted in war in Europe. The situation in Ireland was analogous. As the date for the Royal Assent to the Home Rule Bill approached, during that hot July of 1914, there was a failure to recognise the danger of the compounding of key elements of the crisis:
the Loyalists and their UVF; the Nationalists and the Irish Volunteers; the British army's equivocal attitude to possible peace-keeping in Ireland. The backdrop was the impending battle between the Government and their opponents at the next general election, which the opposition felt that they were likely to win. The possible outcome was civil conflict in Ulster, where there were a lot of arms and rounds to put in them. It had been noted by French journalists that the discipline of the UVF had kept this potential in check so far, but there was an implicit fear that this control might not hold. By reading the items on Ireland in the last spring of peace in 1914, we get a clear indication that the Home Rule crisis was seen as important, precisely because of its potential for provoking inconceivable violence within the well-governed, orderly and powerful ally of France.

Ulster entered the passive vocabulary of the French newspaper reader in 1910. On a linguistic note it is interesting that English names or mildly gallicised forms of them were generally used. The French for Ulster, *l'Ultonie*, never appears, while neologisms like *les Orangistes* abound and *les Home-Ruleistes* appeared at least once. Generally, personal names are correctly used although the spelling of Bonar Law gave some trouble to *L'Humanité* for some months. All the correspondents had problems with the correct usage of the titles of Knights of the Realm but otherwise it was always clear who was who. The geography of Ireland was never explained: there was never any attempt to show the relative geographic locations of Dublin or Belfast and other places were mentioned with no clarification. This can be interpreted as disinterest but, in truth, it reflects the general vagueness of reports from abroad in the French press at the time. After the Great War, when sketch maps began to become

common, more geographic information was given to support reports from abroad.

The Ulster Crisis was seen as a British constitutional problem until 1912, when reports in *Le Figaro* showed that the problem was essentially Irish. *L'Humanité,* on the other hand, never moved far from its practice of constitutional analysis. It always returned to the general implications of any event reported. This can be explained by the paper's overt anti-capitalist stance. The Ulster Crisis remained essentially a capitalist problem and was reported as such.

The radical agenda of Asquith's Government was seen as having been usurped by Home Rule after the second General Election of 1910 which confirmed the crucial place of the Irish Parliamentary Party in the government's majority. The Government was perceived as having lost its radical momentum so, in relative terms, Home Rule ended up as the most important item on the government's agenda.

The concerns of the Ulster Protestants were adequately explained to the French readership of both papers and the general Conservative view was accepted that Home Rule would weaken the constitutional homogeneity of the United Kingdom and ultimately the Empire. However, there was amazement at the stand by Ulster Protestants and implicit disapproval of the moves towards armed resistance which they seemed to be taking. On the Home Rule side there was qualified support for the constitutional progress towards the Nationalist aim, while some concerns were expressed about what the results of the eventual granting of Irish Home Rule would actually be. These tended to echo the Tory concerns about the Empire. Yet there was no serious analysis of the Nationalist position and the divisions within Irish Nationalism were largely ignored. No attempt was made to explain the growth of the Irish Volunteers in early 1914 or to suggest that there was a physical force element to the Irish Nationalist movement. Even the divisions between William O'Brien and John Redmond were not discussed in any detail after the beginning of 1911. Irish Nationalism was simply defined as support for Irish Home Rule. The reporting only differed in emphasis on the possible result. *Le Figaro* felt that anything that weakened the Empire could not be good for France in the long run, while *L'Humanité* seemed less concerned and less interested in Nationalist aspirations anyway. This is intriguing given the eventual involvement of James Connolly with the Easter Rising, but at the time his views were much closer to those of Jean Jaurès, socialist, pacifist and internationalist. In fact, it was just after Easter 1916 when Ireland returned to the

pages of the French press and then, of course, it was Nationalist armed rebellion rather than the threat of Unionist revolt which was reported.

Chapter 6

Les Journées Sanglantes de Dublin en 1916

The 1916 Easter Rising and its aftermath

At the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 the French press, unlike the British or American press, was at the height of its expansion. The Third Republic up to 1914 had seen the growth of unprecedented press freedom in France and there were some fifty dailies in Paris in early 1914, forty of which presented news as propaganda for a particular political point of view[455]. Their combined circulation had reached nearly 10 million, a figure which has not been significantly surpassed since. The circulation of the four *grands* of the Parisian press [*Le Matin, Le Petit Parisien, Le Petit Journal* and *Le Journal*] was the greatest in the world.[456] The press of the Third Republic had been vigorous and had exercised considerable political influence. It had ensured that the various crises of the Third Republic had assumed national characteristics with the result that by 1914 newspapers were part of every sector of French life and enjoyed a commensurate influence. Great public debates had been conducted in the medium. French newspapers had never been so fully read by so many.

President Poincaré made a call for national unity in the face of the enemy at the outbreak of War. The result was *L'Union Sacrée,* political and moral unity for the war effort which secured widespread patriotic support.[457] Although nearly all the press swung behind the *Union Sacrée* and displayed solidarity with the national will to resist the enemy, censorship was put in place in the run up to hostilities. Thus, political news censorship in France was actually a combination of self-censorship and imposed Government control, a control which the Government felt was secondary to the self-censorship implied by a paper's support for the *Union Sacrée*. Censorship was criticised on all sides. The journalists felt it was too severe, the politicians felt it was biased and the military thought that it was insufficient. But, all in all, the combination of the appeal to patriotism and the application of censorship was remarkably effective.[458] Morale was maintained and the public successfully kept in the dark about the military defeats, diplomatic disasters, the economic effects and the sheer awfulness of twentieth-century warfare. It fulfilled its essential anaesthetic role of preventing a country, whose nerves were at breaking point, from fully experiencing the brutal realities of the times and this was proved by the fact that the essential was

---

455 R. Manévy, p. 142.
456 R. de Livois, *Histoire de la presse française: de 1881 à nos jours* (Lausanne, 1965), p. 373.
457 A. Cobban, *A History of Modern France Vol 3* (Harmondsworth, 1955), p. 108.
458 C. Bellanger (ed.), p. 413.

that '*les civils ont tenu*' [the home front has held].[459] In addition, the French press in the period reflected the French government's political attitudes to the United Kingdom to a remarkable degree. France and its press remained faithful allies of the British despite occasional disagreements

The weakness of the French papers was that, although they had enjoyed thirty years of unprecedented liberty of expression, this freedom had done nothing to protect them from economic pressures. They never matched the number of pages of the larger British papers. Their overseas news gathering systems were weak and their advertising revenues were pitiful, despite the huge daily sales of certain popular Paris papers.

The first effect of this endemic weakness was the disappearance of certain titles like *L'Aurore*, which reappeared after the War, and many Parisian and provincial small-circulation papers. Such advertising revenues as they had dropped rapidly, mainly because of the withdrawal of advertising by the financial sector. The miserable wartime adverts for Treasury bonds were no substitute for what had been a lucrative source of income before the War. Nor was an increase in personal advertisements, mainly provoked by the dislocation of populations in the battle zone, an adequate replacement.[460] Unlike the British press, where, during the war, circulation rose and techniques and style evolved, the French press stagnated, due largely to the dual censorship regime and difficulties of distribution in a country which was itself a theatre of war. French newspapers also suffered staffing difficulties as the war progressed. The accounts of the degree of this problem vary but it is clear that, particularly after 1916, when typography ceased to be a reserved occupation, many editorial offices were struggling with a depleted workforce.[461] Also, distribution problems increased for the Parisian press and the major regional papers as the railway system suffered wartime pressures.

Stocks of newsprint were good at the outbreak of war and most paper mills were not affected by the invasion. Nevertheless, the number of pages was reduced by about 50%. But, by the end of 1915, the raw material for newsprint production was becoming rare and expensive. The average cost of newsprint in 1914 was FF0.313 per

---

459 C. Bellanger (ed.), p. 413 and P. Renouvin, 'L'opinion publique et la guerre 14-18' dans *Revue d'histoire diplomatique* (octobre-décembre 1970), Passim.

460 R. Manévy, p. 148.

461 R de Livois, p. 142 and C. Bellanger (ed.), p. 410.

Kg but, by 1916, it had more than doubled to FF 0.695 per Kg.[462] The result was that by April 1916, the majority of the French Press were limiting themselves to publishing editions of only four pages. Yet, the total tonnage of paper used continued to rise despite these measures, thanks to the increase in the number of editions published each day[463]. The telegraph was controlled from 30th July 1914 and long distance telephone calls forbidden.[464] With the proclaiming of the state of siege on the 9th August, the 1849 law came into force, by which the military was given the power to suspend any publication.[465] A *Bureau de Presse* was set up in the War Ministry, charged with the supervision of information and the Government made clear that it counted on the *bon vouloir patriotique* [patriotic goodwill] of the press to refrain from publishing any war news without consulting the *Bureau.* The result was that from the start of hostilities, no real news was given out.[466] When, on the 29th August, a report was published indicating that the German advance on the front running from the Somme to the Vosges, seemed to have slowed, there was an outcry since this was the first that the population outside the affected *départements* knew of the German invasion of the national territory. As a result, information was subsequently supplied in more detail although the news was still managed with care.[467]

In the period up to Easter 1916, the French war had broadly two phases. The first was the initial German attack which pushed the French forces back to the Marne in the first weeks of the war and which was then repulsed by the French advance to the Aisne. The second phase then set in, with a broad stabilisation of the western front from the sea to the Vosges. French military strategy was essentially defensive and, as such, very successful but this strategy meant the maintainance of military effort without the possibility of a great morale-raising victory. In 1916, plans were laid for a largely co-ordinated series of attacks on the Central Powers by the Allies. The British would attack at the Somme, the French at Verdun, the Russians in Galicia and the Italians in the Veneto. The fortress of Verdun had been tenaciously defended since 1914 and had become a symbol of the French nation's resistance to aggression. Pétain,

---

462 F. Amaury, *Histoire du plus grand quotidien de la IIIe république: Le Petit Parisien 1876-1944* (Paris, 1972), p. 432.
463 Ibid.
464 C. Bellanger (ed.), p. 409.
465 Ibid.
466 Ibid.
467 C. Bellanger (Ed), p. 410.

and later Nivelle, both followed a policy of frequently changing the units defending Verdun so that ultimately over three-quarters of the French infantry battalions in the army actually participated in this national blood sacrifice.[468]

With the exception of the pacifist left, French censorship did not completely stifle the variety of political expression. Nor did it prevent the increasing gap between the war policies of the belligerent governments and the war-weariness of their peoples. Although international events were reported where they had a bearing on the war, it was unusual to have internal events in the United Kingdom reported in detail, apart from key Commons debates. So, one could reasonably expect the reporting of the events of Easter week in Dublin to be minimal. In fact, this was not the case. Despite the need to balance constraints on reporting allied military troop dispositions with the need to report events relevant to the war affecting France's closest co-belligerent within the censorship paradigm, the development of the Irish story in 1916 was clearly good copy. Not unexpectedly, there was no mention of the fact that two British divisions were tied up in Ireland as a result.[469]

A final aspect of the background to the reporting of the 1916 Rising was the element of anglophobia which was part of the journalistic scene. While relations between units of the French and British armies who found themselves fighting side by side were generally good, there was a level of distrust of the British by their French allies which was expressed in several ways. From the moment on the Marne in 1914, when Joffre had had to beg Field Marshal French '*au nom de la France*' to agree to participate in the allied counter attack, the British had been viewed equivocally.[470] Even on the British side, the role of the British Expeditionary Force [BEF] at the Marne was seen in different ways. Some chroniclers feel that the small BEF played a key role at the Marne while others hold the opposite view.[471] It is therefore not surprising that the potential hesitation by the British High Command in 1914 had been noted by the French. In addition, there was the generally anti-British tone of the reports in the American press from French sources. By early 1916 the British military

---

[468] M. Ferro, *La grande guerre 1914-1918* (Paris, 1969), p. 143 and R. Wolfson and J. Laver, *Years of change: Europe 1890-1945* (London, 1996), pp. 190-191.

[469] M. Ferro, p. 184.

[470] M. Ferro, p. 101.

[471] J-B. Duroselle, 'Les ententes cordiales,' in F. Bédarida, F Crouzet and D Johnson, (ed.), *De Guillame le conquérant au marché commun: dix siècles d'histoire franco-britannique* (Paris, 1979), p. 318.

were concerned in particular about the reports of anti-British speeches in America by the young politician and journalist, André Tardieu. They began to take steps to counter this by establishing a press liaison office in Amiens.[472] Its purpose was to counteract French misconceptions about the scale of the efforts of the British forces on the front where the plans for the battle of the Somme were being laid. Newspaper reporting of the Rising was felt to have fed these misconceptions although, as we shall see, this was more a case of British paranoia. The executions of fifteen rebel leaders in Dublin and Cork between the 3rd and the 12th May were generally felt to have provoked indignation at home and bad publicity for Britain abroad.[473] The French press initially reported the courts martial of the various leaders without adverse comment, although the American press had been loud in its condemnation of the executions and this was later reported in France.

News coverage of the Rising was limited even in the British press, since in Dublin during the week of the Rising only the *Irish Times* was actually published and distribution attempted. Although on the spot, it was unable or unwilling to provide an account of events as they happened and, on the 27th April, it described the inability of the public to move safely around the city centre as mere 'enforced domesticity'.[474] When the majority of papers in Ireland reappeared in the first week of May, the Unionist *Daily Express* led the general acceptance of the Government's view, that the Rising was German-inspired and a prelude to invasion. The rightist papers, both Unionist and Nationalist, added the ingredient of socialist inspiration to the Rising, unlikely though that might have been if the Germans really were behind the enterprise. Clearly, nobody at the time had an accurate picture of the events, or of the different immediate reactions to the Rising by the various elements in the population of Dublin.[475] In this light, the French newspapers, seem initially to have been remarkably inventive in their reporting. It also explains why, if any reporting was to be carried out, they would have to rely heavily at least in the early stages, on the copy to be found in the British press. The Rising was thus initially seen through a British prism.

First accounts in the popular press appeared on Wednesday 26th April under the general heading [in *Le Petit Journal*] of *'Attaques Allemandes contre l'Angleterre*

---

472 N. Lytton, *The Press and the general staff* (London, 1920), p. 56.
473 C. Duff, *Six days to shake an empire* (London, 1966), p. 187.
474 J. J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and society* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 29.
475 J. J. Lee, p. 30.

A TOUS LES COUPS L'ON PERD

(Dessin de Luc-Cyl)

Ou le jeu à surprise

Cartoon from *Le Petit Journal* 05/05/1916 showing Germany being hit in the face by a punch-ball labelled Asquith after having kicked the pad marked Dublin.

- *Un Mauvais coup Boche en Irlande, basé sur la trahison, il échoue'*.[476] Essentially, this was a report of the British Admiralty communiqué, linking the failed German attempt to land arms on the coast of Co. Kerry to Berlin's desire to provoke a Rising. The pre-war division in Ireland between the Unionists and the Nationalists was given as the basis of the German plan. This had been scotched, according to *Le Petit Parisien*, by Irish '*loyauté envers l'Angleterre'* [loyalty to England] since the outbreak of war.[477] The arrest of Casement was also noted as a further disappointment for the Germans.

The first French note of the Easter Rising is contained in a report of the response by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Augustine Birrell, to a question in the Commons.[478] He stated that the Rising had broken out on Monday and that five areas of the city were under rebel control. He added that troops had been moved in from the Curragh camp in Co Kildare and that the Rising had been subdued [*maitrisé*]. Other incidents reported under the same title were the dropping of 70 bombs in a Zeppelin raid on East Anglia and the brief shelling of Lowestoft by units of the German navy.

This was the final feeble manifestation of what had been a major plan hatched in Berlin which was intended to link German logistic support for a Rising in Ireland with a serious attack on the English east coast. This would have had the effect of forcing the withdrawal of many British troops from the western front to counter a possible landing and restore order in Ireland.[479] By April 1916 however, the initial German enthusiasm for this plan had waned.

Other papers also carried similar reports: *Le Petit Parisien* - '*Un Navire Allemand Tente De Débarquer Des Armes En Irlande'* [German ship attempts arms landing in Ireland] and '*En Irlande, Tentative Allemande'* in *Le Figaro* [Ireland, Germans attempt coup]. Taking three Parisian papers as examples of the reporting of the events of Easter week in Dublin, a common pattern emerges. Broadly, it took forty-eight hours to publish in France the news of the Easter Rising. This was because most sources were in London, adding twenty-four hours to the delay. These three papers had differences of emphasis. *Le Petit Journal* gave the simplest accounts but the most frequent. Its presentational style was superficially similar to that of its main

---

476 'Germans Raid England -Hun Coup In Ireland. Treasonable Base Ensures Failure'.
477 *Le Petit Parisien,* 29/04/1916
478 *Le Petit Journal,* 26/04/1916
479 M. Girodias, *The black diaries of Roger Casement* (Paris and USA, 1959), p. 405.

competitor *Le Petit Parisien* with a main heading, sometimes across two columns, and then a series of smaller sub-headings over perhaps no more than one or two sentences of text. The front page carried the main news content while page three had the heading *Dernière heure* [latest news] which added to, updated or expanded items on the first page. This was also the format for the other papers although the page headings could vary.

Overall in 1916, *Le Petit Journal* carried the most pieces [65 reports] about the Rising and Ireland. The totals for *Le Petit Parisien* and *Le Figaro* were 60 and 23 respectively. *Le Petit Journal* carried 13 illustrations including 3 maps and 2 cartoons while *Le Petit Parisien* carried 13 illustrations including 2 maps, a Dublin city plan and one in-depth article. *Le Figaro* did not often indulge in frivolities like illustrations, although John Redmond, leader of the Irish Nationalists in the House of Commons, was honoured by a photo.

The first thing that strikes one when reading these papers is the variety of terminology for what was happening in Dublin. *Le Petit Journal* has the widest variety using six different terms - *désordres, émeute* (twice) *révolte, combat dans les rues, insurrection,* and *rébellion* [respectively, disorders, uprising, revolt, street battles, insurrection and rebellion]. We should add to this list the translation of Redmond's manifesto of 11th May where he renounces *l'agitation folle et stérile* [the insane and sterile agitation]. The use by *Le Petit Journal* of increasingly powerful epithets as the days went by, indicates a perception of the events of Easter week as being more serious than perhaps the British authorities wished to accept. Similarly, the language of the pacification is revealing. Phrases used included - *l'ordre est rétablie, repression, état de siège, rebelles cernés par les troupes, l'émeute enrayée, l'écrasement de la révolte, pacification* [order established, repression, martial law, rebels surrounded by troops, the uprising rooted out, the revolt crushed, pacification], most of which underline the serious effort required to regain control of what was one of the United Kingdom's major cities.

The sudden disappearance of Irish matters from *Le Petit Journal* in late June indicates at the very least that the sub-editorial staff were aware of the likelihood of pressure from the censors at the *Bureau de la Presse* and at most that such pressure had been applied directly. *Le Petit Journal* would not assert its independence by printing empty columns if it could help it. Paper was too hard to come by. In any case

it was firmly behind the war effort and *L'Union Sacrée.* This is the most likely explanation since this is the period when the allied summer offensive was in preparation. The French Government could not, at this particular time, have its popular press full of references to *insurrection* and *rébellion* in its closest ally's back-yard. The use of *émeute,* with its overtones of disorganised spontaneity, was much more acceptable.

This theory is reinforced by the fact that *Le Petit Parisien* and *Le Figaro* had already more or less dropped the story with the first executions of the leaders in early May. *Le Figaro* rounded off its coverage by reassuring everyone on the 4th May with its two headers: *Dublin a repris son aspect normal* and *Le calme en province* [Dublin Back To Normal, Provinces Quiet]. This begs the question of how the first could be true after the British naval bombardment of Lower Sackville [O'Connell] Street and Liberty Hall in Beresford Place, but the intention is clear enough. However, both these papers did make more effort than the *Le Petit Journal* to provide some initial analysis and the article in *Le Figaro* on 30/04/1916 is particularly interesting and will be discussed later.

This point touches on a central dilemma of the British Government. After martial law had been declared it also delegated to some degree the political management of the events to the military. What this means is that the Government was forced to admit that the Rising was no longer 'a street riot on a grand scale' [*une émeute*] to use Townshend's phrase and had to give Maxwell full powers.[480] His job was to quell the affair and punish the participants as quickly as possible and this he did. His methods, military repression followed by courts martial and rapid executions, not just of the avowed leaders, but of others including sick and wounded prisoners, threw the whole affair into a higher relief than the Government felt comfortable with. It also provoked a negative public response from Ireland, Britain and America which also worked to elevate the events of Easter week to the status of a major event.

Looking at the Rising 'story' found in these papers there are broadly two principal themes with a third sub-theme common to both. All three themes were closely interwoven as the story developed chronologically. The 'story' begins with Sir Roger Casement's landing on Banna strand in Co. Kerry and his arrest on Good Friday, 21st April 1916. The clearest way of examining the first theme is by tracking a

selection of the headlines in *Le Petit Journal* in the week following the Rising. The coverage begins under the header *Un Mauvais Coup Boche en Irlande* [A low blow by the Hun in Ireland] and the piece indicates that the Rising was inspired or instigated by the Germans.[481]

Harder news followed under the header *Le Pirate s'est fait sauter* [the pirate ship blew itself up] which referred to the scuttling of the *Libau,* perhaps better known as the *Aud,* in Cobh harbour.[482] This was the German auxiliary cruiser which had sailed for Ireland from Germany as a gun-runner in late March 1916. She was disguised as a Norwegian merchant ship while having a German naval crew under the command of Captain Karl Spindler.[483] This initiative was part of the support negotiated by Casement in Berlin for Irish resistance to British rule, although he was not privy to the final plans for the actual Easter Rising. The result was, of course, that these arms were lost to the Irish Volunteers.

This is followed by the header *L'Allemagne avait promis un débarquement de troupes* [Germany had promised a military landing] and the report made the point that the Rising was a military failure precisely because the German troops had not materialised.[484] A newspaper report of an event which did not happen is hardly news, rather, it is propaganda, but the importance of this item is as an indication of the strategic vulnerability of Ireland, at least at first sight. It also suggests that the report owes its origins to British newspaper reports which were based on the idea of German organisation which lay behind the Irish Rising.

A major element in the story of Easter 1916 as reported in the French press was the arrest, trial and execution of Sir Roger Casement. This gained immediate importance to French sub-editors because it presented them with a name of note on which to hang the whole story of the Rising. This technique of personalisation is common to all newspaper reporting. Personalities are seen as intrinsically more interesting to the reader than depersonalised events. Casement provides the key to the puzzle of the Easter Rising in the French press.

Casement was a professional diplomat of Anglo-Irish origin who had made his

---

480 C. Townshend, 'The suppression of the Easter Rising' in *Bullán, Vol. 1, No.1,* p. 30.
481 *Le Petit Journal,* 26/04/1916.
482 *Le Petit Journal,* 27/04/1916.
483 The story of the voyage of the *Libau/Aud* was made available to French readers in 1929 by the publication of Spindler's account. See K. Spindler, *Le vaisseau fantôme* (Paris, 1929), passim.

reputation by revealing colonial excesses in the Belgian Congo and the enslavement of native Americans by planters in Brazil and Peru.[485] Before the outbreak of war he had become convinced of the justice of the Irish Nationalist cause and in 1914 was fund-raising in America. He then went to Germany in the Autumn of 1914 in the hope of arranging military support for a Rising in Ireland. He was partially successful in that a shipment of arms was sent from Germany in April 1916 although, as we have seen, the ship was captured soon after entering Irish waters and scuttled by its crew as it was being escorted into Cobh.[486] He himself was landed on the coast of Co. Kerry from a U-boat and promptly arrested. Escorted through Dublin at Easter weekend 1916, he was taken to London, tried for treason, found guilty and hanged in early August. [487]

In any analysis of the French coverage of the deaths of these Irish Nationalists in the hands of the British, the issue of personalisation in those reports is crucial. The subtle interplay of factions and extra-parliamentary groups which constituted the run-up to the 1916 Rising was never explained to the French readership. It was not explained to the British either, since the news media in both countries insisted that the Rising was the result of a German plot. However, there were attempts at analysis and explanation in France after the events.[488]

The method for the French was through identification of certain key individuals. Little space was given to the fifteen leaders who were shot. Their names meant nothing to the ordinary reader. On the other hand, Casement's arrest, trial and execution received considerable coverage. There are a variety of reasons for this. First, he seemed to embody the premise of German involvement. Secondly, he was relatively upper class and at least a 'gentleman'. Such an individual was understood to embody the cultural norms of 'Englishness' as portrayed by popular writers in France such as Jules Verne and André Maurois.[489] Thirdly, Casement had an international reputation as a campaigner against colonial excesses in the Belgian Congo and in South America and these activities had been covered in the French press in earlier

---

[484] *Le Petit Journal,* 01/05/1916.

[485] See *L'Humanité* 29/07/1912 'Contre les atrocités au Pérou',

[486] See *Le Vaisseau fantôme*, (Paris, 1929), Passim.

[487] R. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*, (London, 1989), p. 471 and R. Doerries, *Prelude to the Easter Rising*, (London and Portland, 2000), pp. 3-24

[488] See: *Le Petit Parisien*, 1/05/1916, Y. Goblet, *L'Irlande dans la crise iniverselle 1914-1920*, (Paris, 1921), and *L'Irlande ennemie...?*

[489] Several of Jules Verne's principal characters are rather eccentric unflappable English gentlemen, for example, Phileas Fogg in *Around the World in 80 Days* and Ferguson in *Five weeks in a Balloon* .

years.[490] A final factor was that it took the British far longer to dispose of him than the other fifteen leaders of the Rising, who were all court-martialled and shot within ten days of their surrender. This gave more opportunity for lengthy coverage and analysis of Casement. To this last must be added the intrinsic interest in the chances and conduct of a man on trial for his life - something which always made for good copy in France. The death penalty in France was still carried out according to the words of the sentence 'on a public square'[491] although at times of day and with security measures in place to ensure that few, if any, of the general public would be able to observe the grisly process.[492]

To return to the events of April 1916, the news of Sir Roger Casement's arrest on landing from a German submarine was headed *Sans moi, dit Casement, la Rebellion n'existe plus* [Casement: Without me there is no Rising] and French readers were shown that Casement was linked with the events in Dublin as the presumed leader of the rebels.[493] This cemented the idea in readers' minds that the German High Command was behind the Easter Rising. The cunning of the enemy was immediately rendered less menacing by the next report of incompetence by what were described as 'German agents'. The header was *Les Complices* [the accomplices].[494] This report covered the incident at Killorglin where three Irish Volunteers, who had intended to contact and liaise with the German arms ship, were drowned when their car ran into the sea. *Des Officiers allemands parmi les morts?* [German officers among the rebel dead?] headed a note of the rumour in Dublin of actual German military involvement and served to reinforce the idea of German inspiration for the Rising.[495] The ineffective management and execution of the whole affair was described up under the heading *La Main de l'Allemagne* [The hand of Germany].[496]

Finally, this first theme of the German plot was summed up by the report headed *La Part prise par l'Allemagne* [Germany's Role] with the general conclusion that the results of what could be called the 'German effect' on the Rising were shown to be minimal, thanks to German incompetence. The inference is that eventually

---

490 See note 483 above.

491 the formula was quoted by Albert Camus at the end of section 4 of his book *L'Étranger* (Paris, 1957), and ends '(vous aurez) la tête tranchée sur une place publique au nom du peuple français.'

492 see description of the execution of Landru at Versailles in *L'Humanité,* 20/02/1922

493 *Le Petit Journal,* 28/04/1916.

494 Ibid.

495 *Le Petit Parisien,* 03/05/1916.

Germany will be defeated by the allies.[497] *Le Petit Journal* thus manages to put the best possible gloss, from its readers' point of view, on the sorry events in Ireland.

The second theme is that of the Rising itself. This can be clearly identified in a sequence of headlines from the *Le Petit Parisien.* The first report was headed *Une Émeute éclate à Dublin. Elle est aussitôt maitrisée* [A riotous disturbance breaks out in Dublin. It is immediately overcome].[498] The events in Dublin were described as a local difficulty. They were limited to Dublin itself and the Government was rapidly in full control of the city. The fact that the disturbances were limited to Dublin was reinforced under the heading *Les Troubles de Dublin n'ont pas gagné d'autres villes* [Dublin troubles have not reached other cities].[499] It is interesting to note that the '*émeute'* had become '*troubles*' and later a '*rebellion'*. In early May a report appeared headed *Les Dessous de la Rebellion Irlandaise* [What lay behind the Irish rebellion] which sought to tie in German Celtic scholars with the Rising.[500] In particular, it accused Professor Zimmer and Professor Kuno Meyer. Despite this, the main conclusion of this report was that the British war effort had not been affected since the whole business was on such a small scale that the British garrison in Ireland had no difficulty in dealing with the problem.

After the Rising, its implications were discussed, superficially at least. *Le Petit Parisien* reported that the vast majority of the Irish at home and overseas condemned the Rising, therefore the Irish units in the army who are fighting alongside the French are totally loyal. This was headed *Les Irlandais du dehors expriment leur réprobation* [Overseas Irish show their anger].[501] This was reinforced by the next heading *Le Pape invite le clergé à prêcher le calme* [Pope calls on clergy to preach calm] over a report of Papal intervention in Ireland and assurances to Asquith that the Irish hierarchy would work for the re-establishment of normality. The end of the Rising was signalled by the heading *Les Forteresses des émeutiers tombent une à une aux mains des troupes régulières* [Rebel strongholds fall one by one to regular troops].[502] The destruction of Dublin city centre and the rigours of martial law were described as the

---

496 *Le Petit Parisien,* 01/05/1916
497 *Le Petit Journal,* 02/05/1916.
498 *Le Petit Parisien,* 26/04/1916.
499 Ibid.
500 *Le Petit Parisien,* 01/05/1916.
501 *Le Petit Parisien,* 29/04/1916.
502 *Le Petit Parisien,* 01/05/1916.

inevitable result of the military repression of the Rising.

A further theme, common to all the papers examined, is that of personalisation through the imagined or actual role of Sir Roger Casement. This has already been discussed. What does emerge from the pages of the French newspapers is the fact that the names of the leadership of the Rising, the members of the Provisional Government of the proclaimed Irish Republic, were completely unknown to those outside. This may be surprising to students of the 1916 Easter Rising and its aftermath. Only three of the fourteen leaders executed in Dublin were named in the French papers, since the details of the courts martial and the sentences were of little import to the French.[503] It fell to Sir Roger Casement to figure as the personality at the centre of the whole story of the Rising.[504] His landing and arrest were intertwined with reports about the events in Dublin. He was not unknown to readers of the French press since reports of his pre-war exploits had appeared in various papers at the time. It was his social status as Knight of the Realm and establishment figure, yet apparently guilty of treasonable activities in Berlin, which gripped the imagination of readers in 1916. Here was a deeply flawed and tragic individual who clearly faced the death penalty for high treason. The story of the final act of his life intrigued the French readership. He was described variously in French newspapers as; 'unique,' 'a traitor', 'a sad character', 'a coward' and 'the organiser of the underhand action against Ireland'.[505] What was of interest to the readers of the French press was the personality involved. Casement's bearing and social class rendered his situation even more fascinating for the readers. However, the Belgian press reserved the unique epithet *'congophobe'* for him as an expression of loyal bitterness.[506] Whatever description was appropriate, he made good copy and provided a means to explain, however inaccurately, the strange events in Dublin.

---

[503] These were Pearse, Clarke and MacDonagh whose sentence and execution were reported under the title: Trois chefs de la révolte irlandaise sont condamnés à mort et fusillés. [Three chiefs of the Irish revolt sentenced to death and shot] *Le Petit Parisien,* 04/05/1916. Another name that was discussed was that of 'La Comtesse Markievitch' [sic] who was linked to Jim Larkin, through her friendship with his daughter Delia and not through her political leanings. See *Le Petit Parisien,* 02/05/1916.

[504] Celui qui organisa le mauvais coup en Irlande, [The man behind the Rising.] *Le Petit Journal,* 26/04/1916.

[505] 'singulier personnage',' traitre',' triste personnage', 'lâche', and 'celui qui organisa le mauvais coup contre l'Irlande'.

[506] The Belgian newspaper, *XX siècle,* published in Le Havre, [the Belgian government in exile was installed at Sainte Adresse, a suburb to the North-West of the town,] attacked Casement using this new word to imply that he was in the pay of the Germans even while in the Congo in 1903. Reported in *Le Petit Parisien*, 26/04/1916.

The 1916 Rising caught everyone unawares, outside a relatively small circle of revolutionaries, and it is, therefore, not surprising that the press in France was unable to present an original view on its political background. Casement's arrest, trial and execution, on the other hand, provided an opportunity for an explanation of the events in Dublin at Easter through the examination of Casement's activities and by concentrating on his personality with its presumed defects which led him to betray his country and her allies.[507] In effect, the human interest aspect of what, to most readers, would be a story of political developments of little intrinsic interest, provided a framework for some discussion of the political background. Where there is the possibility of demonisation of the individual then the copy can be even better. Furthermore, those of the readership who, at best, had ambivalent feelings towards Britain, and at worst were bluntly anglophobic, could enjoy the spectacle of the British Establishment convulsed by having to try one of its own on a charge of high treason.[508]

Yet, it must be stressed that the political motives that drove Casement were not given the airing in either the British or the French press that they might have gained had his trial been held in peacetime. Had that been the case, his crime would possibly not have had quite the same resonance. This said, the discussion of Casement's character is still in progress nearly a century later.[509] In the atmosphere of the second year of the Great War, Casement's actions and his arrest were inevitably going to lead to prosecution and conviction for high treason followed by execution. How could such a man have betrayed his country and, by extension, its wartime ally France? So, the press continued to feed the prejudices of their readers by the technique of personalisation; presenting the issues in terms of the personality of the chief protagonist of the story.

It is clear that it was felt that there was a need to explain the fact of a Rising in part of the United Kingdom to the French public. The line adopted from the outset was broadly London's official reaction to the events. This is not to say that what was being presented was pure propaganda, since that might imply that it was factually

---

[507] Interestingly enough there was no reference to his diaries which allegedy proved his homosexuality.

[508] *Le Petit Parisien,* 26/04/1916

[509] see Angus Mitchell, *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement* (London, 1997), and Roger Sawyer, *Roger Casement's Diaries, 1910 the Black and the White,* (London, 1997), for opposing views on Casement's character.

inaccurate. Rather, it was a set of beliefs and opinions favoured by London which provided an immediate and credible explanation of the events to French readers.

Three additional factors came into play. First, the fact that the Rising lasted as long as it did. At first sight, it might appear that the French press gave a hostage to fortune by suggesting that the Rising was over almost as soon as it began. Yet, the lack of hard news meant that French newsmen took Secretary Birrell's statement in the Commons on Tuesday 25th at face value. He was not contradicted by aggressive questioning by the opposition, so why not believe him?

Secondly, it soon became clear that the events in Dublin were mysteriously not affected by Sir Roger Casement's fate. Unknown to the Rising's actual leaders, who were locked in debate at Liberty Hall, he was taken through Dublin to take the boat for England on Easter Saturday morning, apparently preoccupied with the possibility of eventually getting a good night's sleep.[510] By Wednesday, he was imprisoned in the Tower of London and the development of the Rising was such that martial law had been declared in Dublin.

Thirdly, there is the fact that the French were reporting internal events in a neighbouring allied country. This ensured that the London administration was to be given, diplomatically, the benefit of the doubt. It took over a week before any analysis was attempted. When it came, it was carefully handled and there was little attempt to attribute responsibility to the British administration.

Given the lack of direct reports from Dublin it is not surprising that during Easter week 1916 there was a tendency to personalise the news by concentrating on the capture of Sir Roger Casement. In any case it was a good story. Here was a member of the British establishment with one of those exotic English titles, Sir Roger, who, until the beginning of April, was in the chancelleries of the enemy. He then travels by submarine to the West of Ireland and is landed in a little rubber boat, captured almost immediately, taken to London and lodged in the Tower in a traitor's cell. At the same time, the Germans send an armed merchantman to the West of Ireland and this is intercepted by the Royal Navy and scuttled.

Casement's potted biography under the title *Le Traître Casement* [Casement The Traitor] in the *Le Petit Parisien* described his diplomatic career as 'brilliant',

---

[510] M. Girodias, p. 423.

listing his consular postings to Mozambique, Congo, Haiti and Brazil.[511] His knighthood was elevated to a baronetcy and details of his pension [FF 10,500] were given. His involvement in the foundation of the Irish Volunteers, in response to the activities of Carson and his Ulster associates in 1912 was briefly but accurately stated. His wanderings in 1914 from Ireland to the USA and thence to Germany were indicated, stressing the point that he had 'refused to forget, like all the other Nationalist leaders, past misunderstandings and face the common enemy.'[512] His unsuccessful attempts to raise an Irish legion, particularly at Limburg POW camp were chronicled with the added fanciful detail that those who had booed his efforts were denied food and that seventy of them had died of hunger, thanks to the efforts of their evil captors [*bourreaux*]. A photo of Casement, taken in South America some years before, was provided on the first page.[513]

For the ordinary French reader, here was a brilliant and brave member of the British ruling class who had gone wrong. The fact that he had been honoured for specific activities in the Congo and Brazil was submerged by the 'brilliance' of his career, chiefly defined by the exotic places where he had been the British consul. Much of the information had been culled from the British press and the paper felt that he was a *singulier personnage,* although stressing his treason. We can only speculate what the response of the readers of the paper was to this information. Yet the elements that would appeal to them were his title, his class and his obvious treason, which would lead inevitably to the gallows. This was an excuse for open *schadenfreude*.

There is an additional factor which is the impersonal nature of the fairly static trench warfare which had developed by this time. There was a constant search for the individual in this mass warfare. This is evident in the reporting of the war in general. An example is the article in *L'Illustration* in August about the execution by the Germans of an English Merchant Navy captain who had rammed an attacking U-boat off the Dutch coast.[514] In a recent paper, Joanna Bourke has examined this theme with reference to the training of troops in hand to hand combat, specifically with the bayonet, in a war in which such combat was extremely rare. She suggests that images

---

511 *Le Petit Parisien,* 26/04/1916.

512 Au lieu d'oublier, comme tous les autres chefs nationalistes, les malentendus passés pour faire face à l'ennemi commun, ... Ibid.

513 B. Inglis, *Roger Casement* (London, 1973), p. 193.

514 *L'Illustration,* 05/08/1916

of such combat, which she calls the bayonet fantasy, dominated practically all the writing of the time.[515] Such a perception of the war was as a triumph of the individual over the anonymity of the reality. Casement filled a need for a name, a character and a story which, in addition, provided extra elements of the unexpected, the exotic and the flawed.

The other leaders of the Rising were presented to the French public, although not surprisingly with less journalistic zeal. Although their names are now engraved on the columns of the pantheon of Irish Nationalist martyrs, in April 1916 they were quite unknown to most people outside their immediate circle. Certainly, the French public had never heard of them. Short biographical articles about Pearse, Connolly and Countess Markievicz were printed, although there was some doubt about how to spell their names. But their time in the public eye was short and any further examination and analysis of their actions could have led the French press away from the line of the German plot, although this cannot be proven.

It seems that the only Irish 'agitator' who might have been recognised in France was James Larkin, whose left wing syndicalist activities in 1912 and 1913 in Dublin had been widely reported. In fact, *Le Petit Parisien* expressed surprise that he was not at the head of the rebels adding, rather disingenuously, that he was in a mental institution in White Plains in the USA. This was not true, although he was apparently depressed at the news of the Rising.[516]

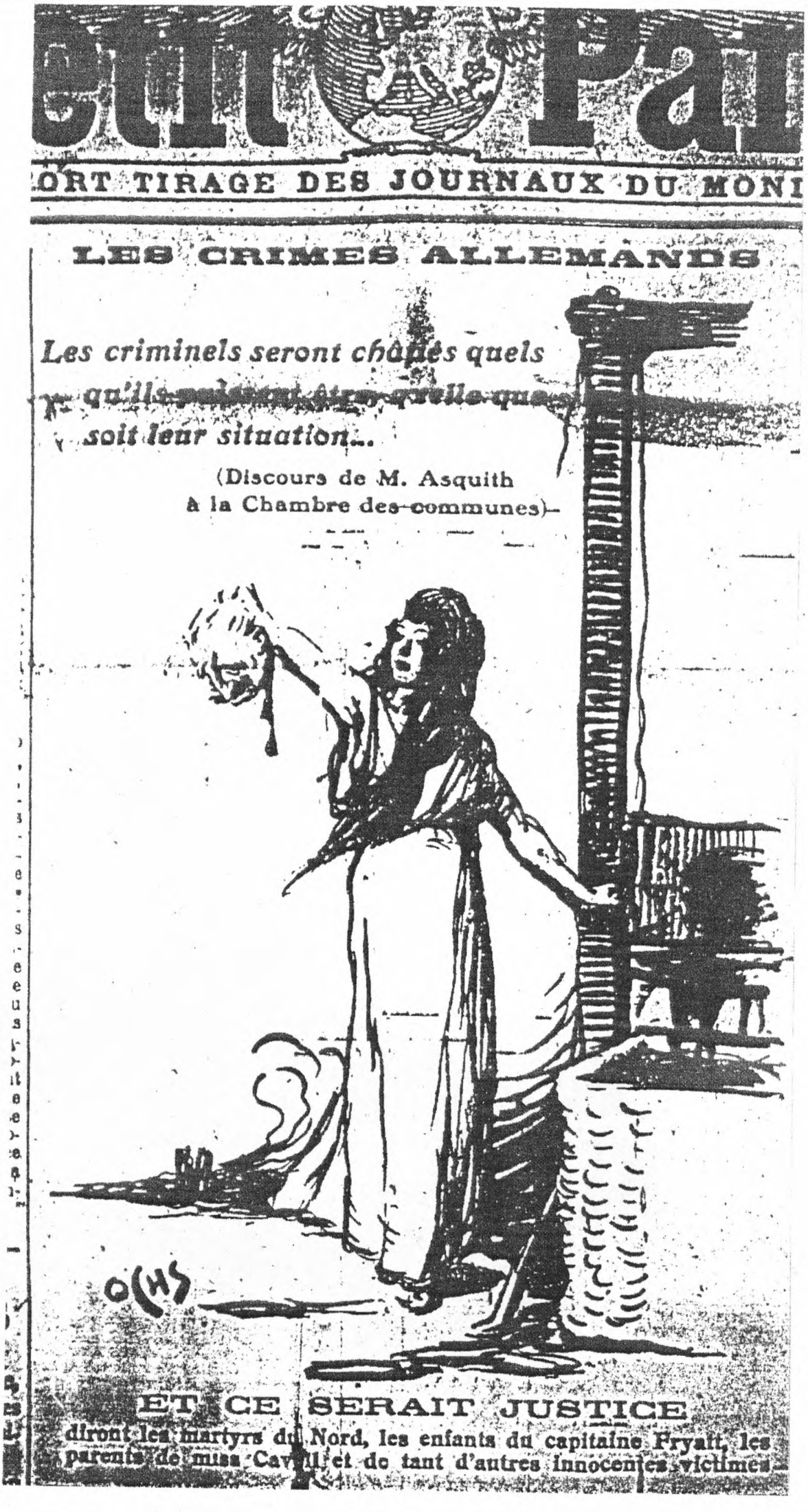
Two articles which sought to give a deeper explanation of the Irish situation appeared in *Le Figaro* in April. The first called *L'émeute de Dublin,* signed A. Fitz-Maurice, was a general tirade laying the responsibility for Irish problems on the Germans and their scheming over the last 15 years.[517] Fitz-Maurice suggested that ever since the Boer War, the Germans had been stirring up trouble for the British. During that war, they had had De Wet in their pay and now Casement. The writer considered that the Germans were insane to think that a Dublin Rising with Casement's connivance could succeed and, had blood not been spilt, then the whole thing would have been laughable. Sinn Féin were described as a small faction of illiterate peasants who had been active since 1913 and who had already demonstrated

---

515 J. Bourke, 'Irish tommies' in *Bullán Vol 3 No 2,* p. 21, Winter 1997/Spring 1998

516 E. Larkin, *James Larkin: Irish labour leader 1876-1947* (London, 1965), p. 192.

517 *Le Figaro,* 27/04/1916.



Front Page Cartoon from *Le Petit Parisien*, 04/08/1916, showing the Kaiser executed for War Crimes.

on the streets earlier in the spring of 1916.

What is interesting about this piece is that it takes Casement's activity more seriously than perhaps the British would have wished. It dismisses Sinn Féin but justifies any space given to them by the potential seriousness of the Casement plan. This must have been written as an initial reaction to the first news from Ireland. Had the Rising been squashed in the first two days then this interpretation would have had more validity.

On the 30th, another piece by the same writer was published in the *Figaro* under the header *Les Sinn Feiners.*[518] This article was more considered and critical of the British administration of Ireland. The writer felt that Chief Secretary Birrell and Prime Minister Asquith had been negligent in failing to maintain Irish internal security in the light of Redmondite Nationalist support for the war effort. As other writers have noted, they did have a habit of procrastination in the hope that any action would soon become irrelevant: part indeed of their 'tenor of governance which tended to a languorous mandarin assurance'.[519]

Fitz-Maurice alleges that Birrell spent too little time in the country that he was supposed to be governing and had allowed the advanced Nationalist movement to flourish unchecked. This said, the real instigators of the Rising were of course, the Germans who had 'duped' the young Volunteers into action. He continues to the effect that the real Irish will let this plot wither and die and allow Asquith to concentrate on conscripting enough soldiers to fight alongside the French and address the problem of the British defeat in Mesopotamia.

There is clear criticism of the British policy in Ireland and that their control of the country was only saved by the loyalty of the 'real Irish.' Here the sub-text is that, indirectly, the 'real Irish' may have also saved the entire war, since their loyalty enabled the British to concentrate on pulling their weight on the western front. This is particularly neat since the reputation of the Irish troops in the field, at Loos, near Lens, for example, was maintained while giving expression to the general feeling, already described above, that the British were not quite as committed to the defence of France as they might be.[520]

---

[518] *Le Figaro,* 30/04/1916.
[519] C. Townshend, p. 36 and C. Duff, p. 83.
[520] T. P. Dooley, *Irishmen or English Soldiers?* (Liverpool, 1995), pp. 179-180.

The *Académicien,* Gabriel Hanotaux, historian, politician and foreign affairs expert, contributed a piece in *Le Figaro* on the 28th which discussed the possible effects of the Rising on the diplomatic efforts to obtain America's entry into the war on the side of the Triple Entente.[521] He saw the events in Ireland as further proof of the underhand activities of the Germans before the war. Now several thousand young Irishmen had risked their honour and lives for the puppeteers of Berlin, just as fifteen years before in the Transvaal. Such a Rising in so secure a state as the United Kingdom, as a result of German plotting, shows that even the national integrity of America could be equally under threat. President Wilson should take note. '*Que Dublin l'avertisse!'* ['Let him be warned by Dublin!'], thunders Hanotaux, and he warns that foreign minister Zimmerman and military attaché, von Papen, later to be Hitler's ambassador to London, are up to no good in Washington.

This is an intriguing slant on the Rising and again shows that French policymakers took it very seriously. While seeking to minimise its effects in the popular press, occasional articles like this do reveal a higher level of political concern. As if to complement this article - or perhaps distract the casual reader from it - another under the title *Rocambole* by Alfred Capus, also an *Académicien* and joint editor of *Le Figaro*, appeared on the same page in the next column. This made light of the colossal and despicable German plan to dominate Europe, of which the Easter Rising was a small part. Capus finds the whole Irish business redolent of the *Exploits de Rocambole* one of the *romans-feuilleton* [popular serial novels] by the Second-Empire pulp-fiction writer, Ponson de Terrail. He continued by affirming that, naive though the German scheme might have been, it had its dangers and any partial success would be eventually negated by the need to dominate the USA as well. *Le Figaro* was clearly aiming its message at the White House and Capitol Hill.

Finally, a most interesting piece appeared in *Le Petit Parisien* by Charles Le Goffic, a poet and novelist from Lannion in Brittany.[522] Its full title was *Les dessous de la rébellion irlandaise où l'on voit à l'oeuvre les allemands Zimmer et Kuno Meyer* [The secret depths of the Irish rebellion where the Germans Zimmer and Kuno Meyer are at work.] It was illustrated by a photo of John Redmond, the acceptable face of Ireland's politics.

---

[521] *Le Figaro,* 28/04/1916.
[522] *Le Petit Parisien,* 01/05/1916.

The article opens with a 1899 quote from Professor Heinrich Zimmer about the powerful agitation in the 'Celtic fringe of the United Kingdom's rich overcoat' which, he suggests, will lead to a new European phenomenon of pan-celticism as important as the actual phenomena of pan-germanism and pan-slavism. Zimmer and his successor at Berlin, Kuno Meyer, were both philologists, specialising in the study of the Celtic languages and the article proceeds to charge them with being instrumental in forging the connection between German Imperial ambitions and the Easter Rising.

Pre-war German subversive activity was seen as complex and resourceful and Zimmer and Meyer attracted a 'naive clientèle of Irish students' to their courses thereby emulating the agents of the *Wilhelmstraße*. Le Goffic asks who would have suspected academic philologists of secret recruitment to the German cause. Nobody; so they were given a free hand. He continues by telling his readers that Meyer taught at Liverpool University for twenty-five years while being involved in the Gaelic revival. Cork and Dublin made him a freeman of their cities and once back in Berlin he corresponded with the leaders of Sinn Féin. In 1914 he went to America and is believed by many to have been instrumental in arranging for Casement to attempt to form an Irish Legion at Limburg. This is not correct. It was Richard Meyer, no relation to Kuno Meyer, who did so much to facilitate Casement's *entrée* to the Chancellery in Berlin in 1914.[523]

The article continues by outlining the failure of these academic undercover agents to realise that things were now much better in Ireland, as indicated by the French scholar Joseph Loth, *Professeur au Collège de France*. According to him, only Connacht now contained areas of extreme poverty. Even here, England, mindful of its debt towards the 300,000 Irish soldiers in its army, would surely not allow the scourge of famine to reappear.

Le Goffic, following L. Paul-Dubois, describes Sinn Féin, which, incidentally, he translates correctly as *nous-mêmes,* we ourselves, as a collection of retrogrades unworthy of consideration [*ramassés de déclassés*]. He then touches on the historical links between Ireland and France recalling the emotional accounts by French visitors of how even the poorest Irish peasants showed a genuine interest in the fortunes of

[523] B. Inglis, p. 280. Kuno Meyer certainly knew Casement, if only initially, through their shared friendship with Alice Stopford Green.

France in the war of 1870-1871.[524] Yet, he asserts, the Irish rebels, by shooting at the loyal English ally, are also firing on the French.

The final part of the article asks if there should be some French responsibility for this state of affairs given that France was once seen as 'the only sympathetic nation' by the Irish. Le Goffic is on dangerous ground here. He avoids trouble by wondering if France should have not left the field free to Zimmer and Meyer and should have done more to maintain that sympathy to Ireland and other small nations, thereby countering German influence. He feels that now, France must counter propaganda with propaganda, since the fire-ship lit on England's flank by the Kaiser burned brightly and the seduction of even a small misguided group of extreme Nationalists was too much.

Again, we can clearly see that, on reflection, the French took the events seriously and although the direct involvement of Zimmer and Meyer in the Rising was non existent, Zimmer died in 1910 and Meyer was in California, the influence of continental academics on the self-confidence of those promoting the Gaelic revival of the 1890s was considerable. Douglas Hyde in his famous address to the National Literary Society in Dublin on the necessity for de-anglicising Ireland in November 1892 refers to the interest shown in Celtic studies by such as Zimmer and also the French academic, Henri d'Arbois de Jubainville, who taught at the Sorbonne.[525] Although Hyde never spoke out for Home Rule or Irish independence, his movement, *an Conradh na Gaelige,* the Gaelic League, formally associated itself with the struggle for independence by declaring in 1915 that its activities had both a political and cultural significance.[526]

Le Goffic's thesis, that any student of these continental academics would return to Ireland fired up with a desire to resort to arms to gain her freedom, was exaggerated to say the least. It is also worth noting his omission of Henri d'Arbois de Jubainville. Biographers of J.M. Synge paint a picture of the Irish writer as a tweedy student in 1902 sitting, often as the only student present, in de Jubainville's lectures

---

[524] He refers to Louis Paul-Dubois and Philippe Daryl who recount the Irish sympathy for France in 1870.

[525] D. Hyde, 'The necessity for de-anglicising Ireland' in *The field day anthology of Irish writing,* S Deane, A Carpenter and J Williams (eds.) (Derry, 1991), p. 529.

[526] M. Nic Craith, 'The Symbolism of Language' in U Kockel (ed.), *Landscape, heritage and identity: case studies in Irish ethnography* (Liverpool, 1995), p. 35.

on Old Irish at the Sorbonne.[527] Synge, of course, is not remembered as a revolutionary, but then he died five years before the Rising. Le Goffic was correct, though, in implying that Irish Nationalists and intellectuals abroad did tend to know each other and corresponded from time to time. Casement knew and corresponded with Kuno Meyer.[528] Larkin met Meyer in America.[529] Synge knew Yeats and Maude Gonne and was encouraged by them.[530] Maude Gonne later married John MacBride another leader of the Rising, shot in May 1916. Yeats knew the Gore-Booth sisters, one of whom, Connie Markievicz, was with Connolly, once Larkin's deputy, in the Rising. The network was there but it was certainly not driven by German gown and dagger men. In fact, French academics and writers, such as Renan, Loti, de Jubainville and possibly even Le Goffic himself as a 'celtic' poet, could also be said to have had a degree of responsibility.

What all this does indicate is the success of British cultural propaganda. This notion of cultural colonialism is still a matter for debate but in imperial days there was a particular view of Ireland.[531] The imperialist view was that British rule in Ireland had been necessary, since the Irish could not govern themselves. This led to the implicit basis of French analysis at this time. We can see how Ireland was viewed through the, perhaps, distorting lens of its larger eastern island neighbour. Those French writers who had actually been there, from de Tocqueville and Baron de Mandat-Grancy down to Louis Paul-Dubois, gave so much space to descriptions of the quaint poverty-struck peasantry that, despite attempting analysis of the socio-political structure of the place, it was their exotic descriptions of the people and the country that impressed the reader. The French reporters in 1916 had done their homework and so it is not surprising that their view of the events of that year, as reported in the immediate aftermath of the Rising, should be dismissive of its actual Irish input. If these people could not govern themselves then surely they could not carry out a rebellion.

The French press reporters were sophisticated professionals, although they had little notion of the true nature of the small group of Socialists and advanced

---

527 D. Greene and E. Stephens, *J.M. Synge 1871-1909* (New York, 1959), p. 125.
528 B. Inglis, p. 302.
529 E. Larkin, p. 172.
530 D. Greene and E. Stephens, p. 67.
531 L. Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish culture* (Derry, 1995), p. 174 and Passim.

Nationalists who had jointly carried out the Rising. Nevertheless, they attempted to explain the rationale of the events from what information they had. The official British view of a German inspired *coup* was entirely credible at the time. They managed to convey subtle messages of criticism of the *allié loyal* without undermining the reputation of Irish troops in the field. But they were labouring under considerable difficulties. Even the British press only had a hazy idea of what was happening in Dublin before the Wednesday of Easter week. The Irish themselves, beyond the relatively narrow confines of the centre of Dublin, were more or less completely in the dark.[532] French reporters gained their information by scouring the British and American press and from the *Havas* news agency. They were limited by the demands in their papers for space for reports of the other events of the war and restricted by the self censorship which had evolved by then. Above all, they could not offend their ally, against whom the Irish had risen. Despite all this, they stuck with the story and inspection of the reportage reveals a surprising quality of coverage, given all the difficulties.

The political background to the events of April 1916 in Ireland was explained simply as a German plot without any rational involvement by an Irish political movement. This was the line that the British authorities had taken as soon as they had realised that a Rising was taking place in Dublin. It was reasonable, given that they had arrested Casement two days before it broke out.[533] The situation of total war demanded that the enemy be blamed for any such event and such was the wickedness of the '*Boche*' that they were surely the prime movers behind the events in Dublin. Certainly, the British were not prepared to admit to widespread political disaffection and it was not in the interests of the French to suggest that their ally's war commitment was anything but politically and militarily totally solid. Furthermore, the French were constantly seeking any further proof of their enemy's dastardly behaviour, so the theory of German machinations in Ireland, behind Britian's back, as it were, was accepted uncritically.[534]

It could be argued that, as there had been considerable press coverage of the

---

[532] F. Moffett, *I also am of Ireland* (London, 1985), p. 80.

[533] *The Morning Post*, 24/04/1916.

[534] Immediately after Casement's execution, the Germans obliged the French with the execution of the British Merchant Navy officer, Captain Fryatt, who had rammed a U-Boat instead of surrendering his North Sea Ferry. This event got more coverage in the French press than in such as the *Times*. See

activities of the Irish Volunteers and the Ulster crisis just before the outbreak of war, some attempt to link this with the Rising might have been made. However, Redmond, as leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party in the Commons, had proclaimed the duty of every Irishman to enlist in the greater struggle against tyranny and thousands of his Volunteers had responded positively to his call.[535] Khaki-clad, they were now in the ranks of the British ally fighting alongside their French comrades to drive the invader from French territory. There were significant numbers of Irish Volunteers in Ireland who were involved in training for unspecified future military activity and had not enlisted in the British army.[536] This fact was not covered in any detail in the French press. To do so would have impugned the reliability of the great ally whose 'tommies' were holding the line along the front beside the brave French *poilus*. The result was that, by the end of the week, the French reporters were able to convey, with some degree of comment, something of the tragic confusion, danger, death and destruction which marked *les journées sanglantes de Dublin* [Dublin's bloody days].

As the situation in Ireland quietened, as civil rule was re-established and the vast majority of the participants in the Rising imprisoned, the trial of Casement was eclipsed by the great battles on the Western front of July 1916. As was the custom in the French press no hint was given of the tremendous losses sustained by the Allies on the Somme and at Verdun. Reports were constant but invariably optimistic. Eventually, the lack of progress made in throwing back the invader became clear to any careful reader. As July wore on, no criticism of the noble ally could be levelled openly for this lack of progress, but it was the trial of Casement that subtly put England in the dock.

L'Illustration, 05/08/1916, 'Une Lacheté Allemand.'

[535] P. Travers, *Settlements and Divisions; Ireland 1870-1922*, (Dublin, 1988), p. 85.

[536] See M.-A. G. Valiulis, *Portrait of a revolutionary: General Richard Mulcahy and the founding of the Irish Free State*, (Blackrock, 1992). Passim.

Chapter 7

Les Vêpres Irlandaises

The Anglo-Irish War 1919-1921

The Armistice of the 11th November 1918 ended the Great War almost as suddenly as it had begun. Conscription had not yet been imposed in Ireland and now there was no need for it. The years of the war had changed Ireland. Its population in common with that of the rest United Kingdom had been subject to what has been called an 'intensification of propagandistic discourse' since 1914.[537] One of the principal elements of this discourse was a degree of brutalisation and increase in aggression. In intellectual terms, this had the effect of bringing notions of sacrifice for 'the cause' of the defeat of the enemy, elevation of personal suffering to a quasi-religious state of near martyrdom and, most importantly, the abnegation of self, before the highest demands of patriotism. Wartime propaganda exploited ideals of nationalism and therefore it was not surprising that in Ireland those ideals which had taken root during the decade before the war in the fertile lazy-bed of the cultural and language revival should bloom in the heat of international conflict. Ben Novick discusses this notion and shows how an aggressive discourse developed in the Irish Nationalist press which as he puts it, 'spanned an entire spectrum of sacrifice'.[538] An intellectual and political climate was created in which advanced and not so advanced Nationalists could appropriately construct their emotional or more reasoned responses to the new situation with the onset of peace. Confined within his cell in Kilmainham in 1916 Pearse could only write of sacrifice. It was his final weapon. But his successors, such as Beaslai and Collins, suggested in October 1918 that the Irish Volunteers were '... the reality, the grim reality that England cannot get rid of.'[539] The tone had changed. English government of Ireland was now seen by many as the enemy and violence stood behind political idealism: a situation which was to endure in Ireland almost for the rest of the twentieth century.

The response of the French press to the events that we know as the Anglo-Irish War was very mixed. In general terms, the French press had little space for or interest in the events in Ireland during 1919. This is proof of the diplomatic success of the British Government in persuading its allies that the Irish question had nothing to do with the main business of moving from armistice to peace treaty at Versailles. It also indicates the heavy reliance of the French press on Reuter reports from London and

---

[537] B. Novick, *Conceiving revolution: Irish nationalist propaganda during the first world war.*(Dublin, 2001). p. 222.
[538] Ibid. pp. 222 - 243
[539] *An t-Oglach*, 29/10/1918, quoted in Novick, p. 243.

the lack of initial success of Sinn Féin's Paris bureau. However, by the middle of 1920 the situation in Ireland began to impinge on the public consciousness in France, fed by press coverage. As has already been indicated above, the catalyst for this awareness was the fast to the death of Terence MacSwiney in Brixton prison. Suddenly, a unique group of young and talented French journalists found themselves in Ireland. They were the generation of Albert Londres, the reporter credited with inventing French investigative journalism.[540] For the French, it is clear that there was an element of travelogue in all *grands reportages,* which our contemporary television images have made somewhat redundant.[541] Londres' work reflects this. He lived the report. He was on the spot and talked with those who mattered at the time. He sought his interviews, he bribed, he badgered and he cajoled. His persistence got his reports and he sent them back to Paris with impressions of the places visited interwoven with them. Of these young reporters the anglophobe, Henri Béraud, was Londres' drinking partner and came from the same area of the city of Lyons. His reports were atmospheric if perhaps too reliant on imagination. Béraud later wrote that a reporter would take holidays in the calm knowledge that his work was not that of a historian nor that of a prophet.[542] Others included Joseph Kessel, Ludovic Naudeau who had reported from Russia during the Bolshevik revolution and earlier the Russo-Japanese war and finally, Simone Téry. While Londres himself never reported from Ireland, his new techniques were used by these reporters who provided a short but brilliant series of reports from Ireland which was not to be equalled until the work of such as Mary Holland, Ed Moloney and David McKittrick appeared in the British press of the 1960s and 1970s. But, before this brilliant French journalistic spotlight was turned on Ireland, a period was to pass of about fourteen months of mundane reportage and general indifference to events across *la Mer d'Iroise*.

The general election of December 1918 resulted in an overwhelming victory for Sinn Féin mainly at the expense of the Irish Parliamentary Party [IPP] which practically disappeared from the scene. Labour stood aside, allowing the Nationalist tide to rise higher. The result was that 73 Westminster parliamentary seats were won

---

[540] W. Redfern, *Writing on the move: Albert Londres and investigative journalism* (Bern, 2004), Passim.

[541] Redfern, p. 195.

[542] Le reporteur a pris ses vacances avec sérénité, en homme qui ne confond point son ouvrage avec la tâche de l'historien et moins encore du prophète. H. Béraud, *Rendez-vous européens* (Paris, 1928), p.

by Sinn Féin and the party's abstentionist policy was eventually fulfilled by a sitting of the Dáil or Assembly of the Irish Republic in the Mansion House in Dublin on the 21st January 1919. On the same day two policemen were shot dead at Soloheadbeg in Tipperary during an attack on a cartload of gelignite by Irish Volunteers.[543] In retrospect, these are seen as the first shots in the Anglo-Irish War of 1919-1921. That these policemen should die on the same day as the first official sitting of Dáil Eireann was quite coincidental and any linkage between the two events is the result of *post facto* accounts and analysis.

The French press carried only brief reports from Ireland. In fact during the whole of 1919 very little news from Ireland made it to the newspapers there. By looking at the pages of *Le Petit Parisien,* still one of the largest circulation papers in France, we can get a feel for the general coverage of Ireland, such as it was. In January 1919 the demise of the Irish Parliamentary Party was reported with the comment that the six member rump of the party remaining in the Commons were considering resigning, so as to leave the field free for Sinn Féin and, that this would make Sinn Féin responsible for eventual events in Ireland.[544] Desultory reporting of events in Ireland followed. The arrest of Cathal Brugha in Thurles for unspecified offences was noted on the 6th January.[545] The first hint of preparations by Sinn Féin for a meeting of the Parliament of the Republic, Dáil Eireann, was given in a short report of the raid carried out on Sinn Féin headquarters by the Dublin Metropolitan Police on 11th January. The result was that the proposed texts of various public declarations were in the hands of the authorities.[546] What the report did not say was that key members of Sinn Féin were present but were not arrested.[547] Brief though this report was, it is

---

221.

[543] C. Townshend, *Ireland, the 20th century* (London, 1999), p. 87.

[544] En ce qui concerne les partis irlandais certains bruits sensationnelles circulent. On dit notamment qu'en raison de la défaite de leur leader John Dillon, le petit group de nationalistes irlandais, y compris le capitaine Redmond et Joe Devlin, songerait à démissionner en bloc afin de laisser le champ libre aux sinn-feiners. Ils estiment être trop peu nombreux pour pouvoir exercer une action utile et préfèrent laisser la pleine responsabilité des evenements qui sont susceptibles de se produire en Irlande aux représentants du Sinn Fein. *Le Petit Parisien* 02/01/1919.

[545] On annonce de Dublin que le sinn-feiner Cathal Burgess [sic], récemment élu député de Waterford a été arreté hier à Thurles sous une inculpation qui n'a pas encore été définie. *Le Petit Parisien* 06/01/1919.

[546] La police a fait une déscente au quartier general du Sinn Fein à Dublin le 11 [janvier] au matin; elle a saisi des documents importants dont les exemplaires de "messages que l'assemblée constituante irlandaise devait envoyer aux nations libres du monde" et même une déclaration de l'indépendance irlandaise que les sinn-feiners devaient publier. *Le Petit Parisien* 14/01/1919.

[547] These were: Seán T O'Kelly [O'Ceallaigh]; Harry Boland; Tom Kelly; James Burke; Frank

worth noting the choice of words used to describe the papers taken by the police. The phrase 'constituent assembly' is applied to the planned Dáil, a phrase which has revolutionary overtones for French readers since it was the name given to the assembly charged with drawing up a new constitution for France in 1789. Implicit in the use of this phrase is a dim recognition that Irish political independence was shortly to become reality in some way.

There was not long to wait. On the 22nd January, the report of the inaugural meeting of the first Dáil was carried. Apart from confusing the Mansion House with Dublin City Hall, the report was correct in its essentials. The meeting was called by Sinn Féin, it was obviously attended only by those who were at liberty to do so, standing orders were agreed and the nominations for delegates to the Paris Peace Conference were ratified. Liberty for those members who were in prison was demanded. Irish national independence was declared and a message to the nations of the world was read out in Irish by Cathal Brugha, in French by George Gavan Duffy and in English by Edward Duggan. All present then swore to work with all their strength for the liberation of their country. [548] The swearing of an oath of allegiance to the Irish Republic was not actually undertaken until the fifth Dáil session in October.[549]

One could wonder why the French press did not take the trouble to print the declaration of independence or even the message to the nations of the world, both of which were already conveniently in French. Relations with the British Government were still close and divergencies over the peace were still in the future. Since the British Government had banned the publication of these declarations in the British

---

Gallagher amongst others who were to be key players in the coming independence struggle. See A. Mitchell, *Revolutionary government in Ireland: Dail Eireann 1919-22* (Dublin, 1995), p. 12, for further comment on this event.

[548] L'assemblée constituante convoquée par le parti Sinn Fein s'est réunie cet apres-midi à l'hôtel de ville de Dublin [sic] dans la vaste salle dite "Salle Ronde". Des préparatifs avaient été faits pour y admettre le public et un millier d'invitations avaient été distribuées, particulièrement à la presse.L'ordre du jour comportait la fixation des règles de procédure qui suivra désormais l'assemblée, la ratification de la nomination des délégués de la Conférence de la Paix, une demande de mise en liberté pour les deputés Sinn Fein actuellement déportés ou emprisonnés en Angleterre, une déclaration de l'indépendance nationale et enfin un message faisant connaître aux nations libres du monde les revendications de l'Irlande.Ce fut Cathal Brugha, qui sur proposition du comte Plunkett, fut nommé président par les 29 députés Sinn Fein présents, les 44 autres étant incarcérés ou à l'étranger. La langue officielle fut naturellement l'irlandais. Toutefois, après 45 minutes de séance Duggan lut la traduction anglaise et Gavan Duffy le texte français de la déclaration de l'indépendance dont l'original avait été rédigé en irlandais. Tous les membres se levèrent alors et, après le président, jurèrent de se consacrer toutes leurs forces à la libération de leur pays. *Le Petit Parisien,* 22/01/1919.

press, the French press took the hint. In any case, editorial column space was still at a premium and there was little evidence that this was more than just political histrionics by the Irish. The French were just not yet as interested in events in Ireland as they would later become.

The year 1919 in Ireland was a time of preparation for the principal struggle to come. Despite the coincidence of the Soloheadbeg attack with the first session of the Dáil open guerrilla war did not immediately break out across the country. A recent analyst suggests that Soloheadbeg did not unleash widespread violence, given that there were no immediate incidents perpetrated by the IRA nor was there a sudden British response. Soloheadbeg was a watershed and a catalyst for eventual violent activity but this was not evident at the time.[550] The relative paucity of coverage in France reinforces this view. Soloheadbeg was not reported. The events in Dublin's Mansion House used up the available 'Irish' space at the time. *Le Figaro's* intermittent reports from Ireland were typical. A report from Belfast early in January told of incidents in the prison there where Republican prisoners had barricaded themselves in the Jail and had organised a band to play 'Irish airs'.[551] There was no comment on the first meeting of the Dáil but, the recognition by the Allies of Finland's independence from Russia, was reported.[552] *Le Figaro* occasionally reported industrial problems in Britain but did not return to Irish matters until September.

The spectacular escape of *de Valera* from Lincoln jail, aided by Collins and Boland, was a good news item and reported at relative length elsewhere in the French press, however. The essential of the story was accurately reported by *Le Petit Parisien,* for example, complete with details of false keys and the escape by car.[553] With that, however, a relative silence on matters Irish falls across the pages of the French press. Attacks on isolated police posts in Ireland did not make for weighty news reporting in a country more preoccupied with the negotiations at Versailles and

---

549 M. Comerford, *The First Dail* (Dublin, 1969), p. 61.

550 F. Costello, *The Irish revolution and its aftermath 1916-1923* (Dublin and Portland, 2003), p. 40.

551 *Le Figaro,* 02/01/1919.

552 *Le Figaro,* 31/01/1919.

553 On annonce que de Valera, le leader sinn fein incarceré dans la prison de Lincoln depuis le mois de mai 1918, s'est échappé hier soir avec deux autres sinn-feiners, Milroy et McGarry.On n'a encore aucun détail sur les circonstances de cette évasion. On pense toutefois que les fugitifs auront ouvert, à l'aide d'une fausse clef qu'un complice leur aurait jetée de l'exterieur, la porte de derrière de la prison, et qu'ils auront gagné une puissante automobile qu'on a vu arrêtée à environ 400 metres du lieu de détention. Les autorites policières, qui refusent de confirmer ou d'informer qu'il s'agit bien de [de]Valera, ont donné toutes instructions utiles aux villes de la côte pour empêcher tout départ

the tensions closer to her borders. There seemed to be no pattern in these sporadic attacks and there was no investigation of their motivation. The role of the Royal Irish Constablary [RIC] as information gatherers and the need for the IRA to increase its armoury at the RIC's expense was not examined until much later by commentators like Sylvain Briollay.[554]

Nevertheless, the Dáil pursued without delay its objective of having Ireland's claim to self-determination heard at the Versailles peace conference. To this end a Sinn Féin office in Paris was established to lobby the conference for recognition for the Dáil and the Republic[555]. This was, in effect, Ireland's first foreign diplomatic mission and was led by Sean T. O'Ceallaigh [later President of the Irish Free State in 1945] and was based in the Grand Hotel, Place de l'Opéra. On his arrival in February 1919, O'Ceallaigh wrote to all the delegations at the peace talks. He sought a meeting with President Wilson by leaving a letter at his hotel. It stated the Irish purpose in Paris and invited Wilson to Dublin for an official reception where he would be granted the freedom of the city. Wilson left for America on the 15th without replying to O'Ceallaigh.[556]

On the 19th O'Ceallaigh wrote to the secretary of the conference and to all the foreign delegates. On the 31st March he wrote to Clemenceau as president of the conference requesting Ireland's admission to the League of Nations, again without result. The Americans and the French refused to receive Ireland's official delegates and although O'Ceallaigh contacted all the Paris newspapers nothing came of his activity.[557] Despite O'Ceallaigh's efforts, the four leading nations at Versailles, so willing to recognise the revendications of smaller subject nations of the dismembered Austrian Empire, like Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and even of the Tsarist Empire, like the Baltic states and Finland, could not agree to allow the representatives of Ireland to appear before them. This was essentially because of British intervention.[558] O'Ceallaigh's enthusiasm is praiseworthy and his lack of success, with most diplomats choosing to ignore him, must have been unbelievably frustrating. He was

---

frauduleux du Royaume Uni. *Le Petit Parisien* 05/02/1919.

554 S. Briollay, *L'Irlande insurgée* (Paris, 1921), p. 43.

555 R. Fanning, M. Kennedy, D. Keogh and E. O'Halpin (eds.), *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy Vol.I* (Dublin, 1998), p. xi.

556 Y. Goblet, *L'Irlande dans la crise universelle 1914-1920* (Paris, 1921), pp. 402-403.

557 Ibid. and R. Fanning *et alia* (eds.), pp. 20-25 and 32.

558 E. Neeson, *Birth of a Republic* (Dublin, 1998), p. 207.

joined in April by George Gavan Duffy who, with his wife as representative of *Cumann na mBan,* supplemented O'Ceallaigh's activity. On the 21st June the Irish deposited a memorandum at the peace conference outlining Sinn Féin's view of Ireland's role in Europe and the World which would be a basis for the discussion of Ireland's demands at the moment when they might be considered. This was ignored, although rumours abounded amongst the journalists on the fringes of the conference.[559]

There were also practical difficulties. Money was always a problem since their activity in Paris was expensive. O'Ceallaigh wrote to Cathal Brugha in March 1919 requesting 'a few thousand pounds ... for the purpose of smoothing a passage to the great men here and of securing the ear of the press. You can get nothing whatsoever done otherwise.'[560]

As the Irish failed to gain international recognition through participation in the Versailles conference perhaps they might have spared a thought for another delegation which arrived unexpectedly in Paris. *Le Petit Parisien* reported the arrival of a delegation of Assyro-Chaldeans demanding the creation of a Christian state in Mesopotamia, a request which was equally unsuccessful in gaining a hearing.[561]

International recognition of Ireland's revendications was forthcoming elsewhere, however. The Second International Socialist Commission, based in Amsterdam, demanded unanimously in May 1919 that the principle of self determination should be immediately applied to Ireland.[562] Also, Yann Goblet suggests that the Vatican was distancing itself from its normal stance of supporting British power in Ireland. This became more explicit in 1920 with the beatification of Oliver Plunkett, the 17th-century martyred Archbishop of Armagh.[563] It would seem that Goblet was being unduly influenced by the views of the Irish Paris office. The Vatican observers at Versailles, Bonaventura Ceretti and Paschal Robinson, could not allow their personal sympathies for Sinn Féin to persuade them to risk meeting O'Ceallaigh. Only on 15th June, after the intercession of a third party, did Ceretti

---

559 Y.Goblet, p. 404.

560 Quoted in M. Kennedy, 'In spite of all impediments: the early years of the Irish diplomatic service' *History Ireland* (Vol.7 No.1, Spring 1999).

561 *Le Petit Parisien,* 18/03/1919.

562 Y. Goblet, p.373 and E. Neeson, *Birth of a Republic* p. 207.

563 Ibid.

finally meet O'Ceallaigh.[564]

Irish-American groups also lobbied the American Government and the American delegation on behalf of Sinn Féin without evident success. It has to be said that these activities were effectively kept to the margins by the main participants of the peace conference who were clearly persuaded that the victorious allies should not deviate from their single purpose of dealing with the defeated central powers. French policy was, in any case, informed by the subtle and well-respected ambassador in London, Paul Cambon, who felt that any support of Sinn Féin would ruin the relationship between London and Paris. This was in spite of reports filed by the French consul in Dublin, Monsieur Blanche, who had felt, in 1918, that the Irish crisis would have repercussions amongst Catholics in the Anglo-Saxon world.[565] Clemenceau followed the advice of his ambassador. With President Wilson avoiding any contact with Irish Nationalists, it was, therefore, not difficult for the British Government to maintain that the situation in Ireland was an internal matter and nothing to do with the Paris conference.

Nothing more was noted in the Paris papers about Irish matters until May 6th The main events of preoccupying the papers were the Armistice, the Peace Treaty negotiations, Bolshevism in Russia, Germany and Hungary and the serial killer Landru. Aviation provided a variety of fatal accidents, duly reported, and speculation about who would be first to make a successful air crossing of the Atlantic. Various dignitaries were now using planes: notably the Belgian monarchs and certain British Ministers such as J.H.Thomas. The visit of the Queen of Romania to Paris was also of great interest.

In May, the papers reported the arrival at Kingstown of a delegation of Irish-Americans on their way to Paris to lobby President Wilson. They were greeted enthusiastically by Sinn Féin supporters. Adverse comment in the British press was reported, as was the Sinn Féin delegation's in Paris feeling that this initiative might aid their efforts. Informed opinion, though, held that reports of declarations of

---

[564] D. Keogh, 'The Origins of the Irish foreign service in Europe 1919-1922' in *Etudes Irlandaises* (No. 7, Décembre 1982). This is a particularly useful account of the activities of Sinn Féin's Paris Office which sheds light on the details of the activity of the principals. It includes the story of the univited Irish delegation laying a wreath at the Arc de Triomphe by ex-Legionnaire Michael White.

[565] B. Ducret, 'La France et l'Irlande 1914-1923' *Etudes Irlandaises* (No 9, Décembre 1984).

imminent recognition of the Irish Republic by the conference, were exaggerated.[566]

Yet, despite an unpromising and largely ineffectual start, the Paris mission was to grow in effectiveness. A Foreign Affairs Committee in the Dáil was set up in August 1919 [which, ironically, given later events, included Terence MacSwiney].[567] Getting its members together in the prevailing situation in Ireland was difficult but it is clear from the Dáil report that the Republic's foreign representation was an essential element of the new State. By late 1919, with the Versailles treaty signed, the Irish delegation was settled into a role as a 'National' information office and full foreign delegation. However, the strain and frustration took its toll. By September O'Ceallaigh and Gavan Duffy were hardly on speaking terms and, although they patched up their differences, the damage to their long-term relationship was severe.

The intermittent news items about Ireland in this first year of the Anglo-Irish War mean that the French newspaper readership could develop very little notion of the increasing severity of events there. Ireland was described as a place where there was a degree of lawlessness and anti-government activity but there was no pattern to these events. Reports of police occupation of Dublin City Hall, the arrest of Constance Markievicz and continuing speculation as to the whereabouts of de Valera after his escape from Lincoln prison hardly amount to comprehensive coverage of the Irish crisis.[568]

By the beginning of 1920, it was clear that a form of uprising was in progress in Ireland. British propaganda tended to minimise it. Dublin Castle indicated that there had been 1,089 incidents between January 1919 and March 1920.[569] The Unionist *Irish Times* however was less inclined to ignore what was happening. It pointed out that there had been 7,755 police anti-Sinn Féin actions in the first nine months of 1919 with 2,294 of these in September alone.[570] In France, the Irish delegation sought to publicise the coercion that was being undertaken by the British and the effects that this was having on the population in Ireland. It was aided in this by the effective work of

---

[566] Le parti irlandais voit dans cette démarche l'indice d'un règlement de la question d'Irlande qui pourrait être propose à une date prochaine par M Lloyd-George. Il y a lieu de croire, néanmoins, que les declarations suivant lesquelles la république irlandaise serait à la veille d'être reconnue par la Conference de la paix sont exagerées. *Le Petit Parisien,* 06/05/1919.

[567] R. Fanning *et alia* (eds.), p. 41.

[568] *Le Petit Parisien,* 11/05/1919 and 15/06/1919. De Valera's arrest had been reported on the 7/02/1919.

[569] Report to Parliament (no 63, 1920), quoted in Y. Goblet, p. 422.

[570] *Irish Times,* 3/11/1919.

the Republican movement's own internal propaganda machine. This was carried out by the movement's civilian officials who understood that it was important to communicate the impression that Sinn Féin had popular support and could govern Ireland in addition to putting the best gloss on the attacks on British institutions there.[571] In November 1919 Sinn Féin began to publish a propaganda sheet *The Irish Bulletin* which appeared twice weekly for circulation in Ireland and was sent to sympathisers in the USA. The delegation in Paris used this material to produce its own translated version which was circulated to the main newspapers. In addition it arranged the translation of a collection of Erskine Childers' articles, which had appeared in the *Daily News* between 29/03/1920 and 5/08/1920. The publication of this pamphlet under the title *La Terreur militaire en Irlande* coincided with the agony of MacSwiney and had considerable impact, given Childers' reputation as author of *The Riddle of the Sands*.[572]

The Irish foreign propaganda effort began to bear fruit in 1920. France was a key element in this. Relations between France and Britain had begun to cool and the close wartime alliance was no more. The veteran ambassador Paul Cambon had been replaced by Monsieur Saint Aulaire who saw the Irish crisis in the context of leftist revolts across Europe.[573] There was a feeling in Paris that the 'Anglo-Saxon' powers had managed the Versailles peace to their own advantage and that America was retreating to some extent into its previous isolation while Britain was openly following its own agenda. France would have to do likewise and if that meant disagreeing with its former ally then so be it. At least it was in her interests to cultivate the smaller countries which had appeared on the map of Europe since 1918 and this would enable France to maintain the position of having fought and sacrificed so much for their liberation. By the late summer of 1920 Ireland was back on the foreign news pages of the French press almost daily. In addition, the range of papers which carried reports was wide indeed. This was something which had not been seen since May 1916.

A striking element of the 1920 reportage from Ireland, sparse though it might have been, was the element of photo-journalism which became more usual. Pictures

---

[571] F. Costello, p. 52.

[572] E. Childers, *La Terreur militaire en Irlande* (Paris, 1920). The *Riddle of the Sands* had been published in France in 1905 as *L'Enigme des sables.*

[573] B. Ducret, op cit.

had appeared in the papers reporting the events of Easter week, as we have seen, but the weekly *Le Monde Illustré* was the first publication in 1920 to bring large, high quality pictures of Ireland to French readers. On the 28th February, *Le Monde Illustré* presented a double page spread with four powerful photographic images of British soldiers in the streets of Dublin being watched by large crowds. These accompanied an article under the heading of *La Situation en Irlande* which is, even 84 years later, a concise and excellent summary of the crisis. The hesitation of the Government in applying Home Rule coupled with President Wilson's declaration of the rights of small nations to self-government were indicated as giving strength to Sinn Féin in its attempt to achieve independence. 'Sinn Féin' was accurately translated as *'Nous-mêmes'* and the initial meeting of the first Dáil was explained giving the result that 'two governments sit in Dublin: an official government and a government of insurrection side by side and in daily confrontation'.[574] The escape of Robert Barton 'from the dungeons of Mountjoy' and his re-arrest were described, as were the frequent attacks on the RIC, house searches and the failed attempt on the life of Field-Marshal French. The article suggested that wise moves could end all this with a formula that would transform the Irish Republic into a Dominion, with the Ulster counties being granted the option to join later. The Labour Party delegation sent from London to investigate the crisis was said to be in favour of this solution which mirrored the system of governance in Canada and Australia. The article concludes by noting that in the USA and in Germany, Sinn Féin has much support whereas in France the debt owed to the Irish armies and the warm feeling towards her held by so many Irish people drives the French people to hope for an armistice between citizens who fought for five years for a common ideal. *Le Monde Illustré* does not quite go as far as supporting Sinn Féin, but it does acknowledge the case for a reorganisation of Irish governance. The pictures back up this sentiment as they show tanks, armoured cars, Crossley tenders and battle-dressed soldiers in the crowded streets of Dublin. The sub-text is that something must be done, and soon. On the 24th April, *Le Monde Illustré* printed a half page photo of a tank and soldiers facing a crowd, some of whom are waving tricolours, outside Mountjoy Prison. This is a week into the hunger strike by Sinn Féin activists imprisoned there. The photo reveals a fairly relaxed relationship

[574] Ainsi, deux gouvernements siègent à Dublin: un gouvernement officiel et un gouvernement insurrectionnel vivant côte à côte et s'affrontant tous les jours. *Le Monde Illustré* 28/02/1920.

between the military and the crowd. Three of the soldiers are clearly having a cigarette break and are being watched with some degree of envy by those in the crowd nearest to them. However, they are in full battle-dress with rifles and fixed bayonets standing close to the tank The weather is clearly rather grim since the ground is wet and they and the crowd are wearing overcoats. A short caption explains the photo under the heading *L'Agitation en Irlande*.[575]

The same heading is to be found in *L'Illustration* of the 24th April which carried a large photo of a bareheaded crowd reciting the Rosary at the barbed-wire barricade before Mountjoy Jail. A short and rather haphazard piece accompanied the photo giving a bare outline of events over the previous months and the fact of the release of 68 detainees from Mountjoy. Photos of four of the hunger strikers in hospital, Byrne, Maunsel, Flynn and O'Reilly, complete the report.[576]

A week later, Mayday 1920, has *Le Monde Illustré* photo-reporting a march by striking railwaymen in Dublin, demanding the release of the Mountjoy hunger strikers and led by a woman carrying the tricolour. The report highlights a perceived modification of military policy. Sir Nevil Macready, the new C in C, released the Mountjoy hunger strikers, possibly as a first move towards some form of settlement. However, troops fired on a crowd at Miltown Malbay wounding nine and killing three. French readers were left to deduce from this that there was yet some way to go before a solution to '*l'agitation*' could be found. A further photo showed one of the prisoners being stretchered into hospital from an ambulance under the watchful gaze of a large crowd.[577]

L'Illustration of the 10th July carried a fairly detailed report of the capture of General Lucas while on a fishing trip on the River Blackwater on the Cork/Tipperary border. The detail of the communiqué from the IRA requesting clean underwear for the General added to the story. Trouble in the streets of Derry and the statistic that 34 policemen have been killed in the first six months of the year is also reported as is the refusal of railwaymen to move military trains or trains with uniformed soldiers on board. The final comment is that in Ireland there is nothing but anarchy and waste. Little analysis is attempted at this stage by *L'Illustration*.[578]

---

575 *Le Monde Illustré*, 24/04/1920.
576 *L'Illustration*, 24/04/1920.
577 *Le Monde Illustré*, 01/05/1920.
578 *L'Illustration*, 10/07/1920.

Coverage in the press was still spasmodic as there was not yet a clear view on events in Ireland. The Anglo-Irish War was reported not as a war but as a series of disturbances in Ireland with little attempt to tie these events together. The notion of uprising or even of civil war is hinted at but only *Le Monde Illustré* approached the crisis with any real, if brief, attempt at analysis. This was soon to change with an event which was not reported in France. This was the arrest of the Lord Mayor of Cork, Terence MacSwiney during a British army swoop on the City Hall on the 12th August where he was meeting with various leading members of the Cork IRA. MacSwiney remained the only member of the group to be detained for trial by the British in Cork. On the 16th they released all the others who included, amongst others, Séan O'Hegarty, Michael Leahy and Liam Lynch. MacSwiney was tried and convicted for possession of a police code cipher, and for having in his possession documents 'likely to cause disaffection to his Majesty'. These were copies of a speech he had made which was in the public domain and a resolution of the City council proclaiming allegiance to the Dáil. However, he had decided that a hunger strike was to be his response to his arrest and any charge put to him.[579]

It does seem that the British were after MacSwiney and that the rather minor offences of which they were able to convict him fell far short of what they would have really liked. Nevertheless he was sentenced by a military court to two years in jail. There were questions in the Commons and even J. L. Garvin's *Observer* queried the point of the arrest, given what the police were up to in Ireland anyway. To arrest and imprison a Lord Mayor was not to be taken lightly and, right from the start, there were serious voices raised in Britain to question this. But Lloyd-George followed the advice given by Dublin Castle and MacSwiney was not released but taken to Brixton prison to serve his sentence.[580] *The Observer's* article in late August was picked up by the French press and it is from about the date of its appearance that items about MacSwiney began to be published in French newspapers.[581]

Earlier in August, *Le Monde Illustré* had returned to events in Ireland under the title *La Question d'Irlande*. This time the soldiers photographed on patrol were in the city centre of Belfast with arms at the ready and fixed bayonets; others were

---

[579] F. Costello, *Enduring the most: the life and death of Terence MacSwiney* (Dingle, 1995), p. 141.
[580] F. Costello, op cit p. 144.
[581] *The Observer,* 28/08/1920.

guarding a barbed-wire road block in Wolf Street. A wrecked and presumably looted off-licence was also shown as evidence of battles between Unionists and Nationalists. The main burden of the text was the deterioration of government control in Ireland and the fact that events have nothing to do with any 'German plot' which was used to explain similar activity during the Great War but to the fact that 'the Irish independent Republic, even if not recognised by right exists in fact'.[582] Included in the report was the story of the capture and subsequent escape of General Lucas. The Lucas affair was a positive publicity coup for Sinn Féin and the IRA and caused deep embarrassment to the British Government, by showing the Republicans to have a degree of good sense and chivalry. The report closes with the remark that it is up to the British Government to resolve this crisis.

Other papers continued to carry small items from Ireland. *Le Figaro* on the 4th August talked of the coercive legislation passed to pacify Ireland. The suspension of jury trials in proclaimed counties and their replacement by courts martial was noted, as was the provision for the serving of longer sentences in English prisons. This was, according to *Le Figaro*, to avoid the sort of demonstrations which had accompanied the hunger strikes in Ireland.[583] This set the scene for the MacSwiney tragedy. True to form, *Le Figaro* concentrated on relaying the political news from London where the Government of Ireland Act received its second reading despite the protests of J. Devlin M.P. who left the Commons followed by the other IPP members, most of the Labour M.P.s and some independent Liberals.[584] However, it is *Le Figaro* which, at the end of a report of ambushes at Anascoul in Co. Kerry and Ballyvourney, Co. Cork, mentions that the Lord Mayor of Cork is on hunger strike and is already weak. This was the start of a story which was to run and run. On the 23rd the headline of the report from Ireland read 'The condition of the Lord Mayor of Cork'.[585]

It is worth examining the elements of the story which make it so exceptional and explain the extraordinary coverage it received in France. It focused French perceptions of what was going on in Ireland. There were five principal reasons for this. First, the single-minded dedication of a citizen of recognisable status to the

---

[582] La République indépendant d'Irlande si elle n'est pas reconnue en droit, existe en fait. *Le Monde Illustré,* 07/08/1920

[583] *Le Figaro,* 04/08/1920.

[584] *Le Figaro,* 06/08/1920 and 07/08/1920.

[585] *Le Figaro,* 24/08/1920

republican cause, a single-mindedness that was renewed every day by his repeated refusal to take sustenance thereby throwing the cause itself into sharp relief. Secondly, his commitment was supported by and, in a way, closely linked to his personal Catholic faith, despite the strictures of that faith against suicide and the visits by such as Monsignor Mannix, Archbishop of Melbourne, who ostensibly tried to persuade MacSwiney of this.[586] He was presented as a Catholic prisoner in Protestant England, holding out against an unreasonable Protestant Government. Thirdly, Sinn Féin managed the reports of his agony with great skill. His sister, Mary, played a key role in this as did the Irish in their London and Paris offices. Fourthly, MacSwiney embodied the Sinn Féin struggle which was perceived as militarily hopeless, leading to anarchy and a waste, and so enabled the French newsmen to personalise that struggle which until then had rather defied definition. MacSwiney's name was pronounceable, he was a citizen of some status so clearly not just a bandit. Finally, he was in Brixton prison in London. This suited the French reporters since they could access the source material for their reports easily. It is a moot point whether, had he been imprisoned in Mountjoy, Maryborough or Cork, the French coverage would have been so comprehensive. In any case, the result was that French opinion began to solidify in favour of the Nationalist struggle and the British Government seemed powerless to win the propaganda war.

As an early example of the sort of coverage that his protest generated, *L'Illustration* returned to Ireland on the 6th September with a half-page photo of a crowd of children on their knees outside the church at Inchcore praying for Terence MacSwiney. An article headed *La Tragédie Irlandaise* follows. On close inspection, the fact that the photograph could have been arranged by a judicious distribution of pennies does not, however, diminish the point. Ireland was back in the news and what was going on in Ireland was more than just a little local difficulty in Britain's back yard. As has been indicated above and as Bernard Ducret states in his article in *Etudes Irlandaises*, the French press established a presence in Ireland and articles and reports began to flow back to Paris. In addition, Ducret reminds us that the period 1919-1922 saw the publication of a number of pamphlets and books on Irish matters, mostly favourable to the Nationalist cause; hardly an avalanche but certainly significant in

[586] *Le Figaro*, 24/08/1920

relative terms.[587]

In addition to the special reporters in Ireland, the Irish delegation in the Grand Hotel was a key source of information. We see this in the phraseology of some of the French reports of MacSwiney's death which replicate almost word for word the Sinn Féin press releases[588]. The French Government found this so embarrassing that they expelled Gavan Duffy for his activity which they deemed too extreme. Duffy himself, though, saw the hand of the British embassy behind the move.[589] The Irish also managed this situation well and succeeded in presenting Duffy's expulsion as the removal of a diplomat, thereby gaining a degree of *de facto* recognition for the Dáil Government.

Although the main Irish story in the French papers in the second half of 1920 was the MacSwiney affair with, for example, 37 entries in *Le Figaro* during his hunger strike of 74 days, a dozen or so other events in Ireland were reported.[590] These included the resolution of the special TUC meeting called in July to debate the Irish crisis which voted for a resolution calling for a general strike to force the Government to withdraw its troops from Ireland. This was carried by 2.7 million to 1.6 votes showing that the Trades Union movement was far from united.[591] Other reports covered violent disturbances in Belfast resulting in 14 deaths with a Catholic club at Dromore destroyed. Throughout the Province [of Ulster] Nationalists continued their efforts to multiply the cases of resignation from the RIC.[592] While this report is easy to understand in retrospect, for French readers the reports at the time give a notion of general mayhem in Ulster. The activities of the Nationalists and Unionists are not clearly identified. The implication is that Sinn Féin was totally responsible. The other event reported is the arrival in Ireland of Mgr. Mannix, [ostensibly to see his mother], and his immediate departure thence, courtesy of the Royal Navy. Arriving from America, he was obliged to leave the White Star liner *Baltic* at Queenstown and was

---

587 B.Ducret, op cit. These include works by Y. Goblet (Louis Tréguiz), Fr. Xavier Moisant and Sylvain Briollay. See bibliography.

588 R. Fanning *et alia* (eds.), p. 38 where Sinn Féin material is reported as having been passed to Yves Goblet who was preparing a major work on Irish Independence.

589 B.Ducret, op cit. R. Fanning *et alia* (eds.), p. 86, *L'Humanité,* 04/09/1920 and *Le Figaro,* 05/09/1920.

590 See *Le Figaro* between 24/08/1920 and 27/10/1920 for short but frequent reports on MacSwiney.

591 *Le Figaro,* 14/07/1920.

592 Les Sinn Feiners font toujours leurs efforts pour multiplier les cas de démission dans la police irlandaise. *Le Figaro,* 26/07/1920.

transported to Penzance on a destroyer.[593] *Le Monde Illustré* devoted a whole page to the incident, with some glee, it has to be said. A large photo of the Archbishop climbing the harbour steps at Penzance was accompanied by another of the barricaded dock gates at Liverpool under police guard. Liverpool was the *Baltic's* destination so this was presumably done to cover the possibility of failure by the Royal Navy. The short article gave the facts of the incident and quoted the ironic comment by the Archbishop that, since Jutland, the British Navy had not had such a victory; capturing one man on an liner without loss.[594] The tone of the whole report is definitely ironic and although the question of the political motives of Mgr. Mannix in wishing to travel to Ireland was raised, it is clear that the reporter enjoyed the rather foolish spectacle of the British Navy being sent to arrest a Catholic Archbishop on the high seas. What is particularly interesting is the question posed at the end of the article whether the British Government can prevent an *Irish citizen* [my italics] from going to his native land.[595] Here we have one of the first moments in a mainstream French news publication when Irish nationality is identified as being different from that of the generic *anglais* or *britannique*. The viewpoint was indeed evolving.

Reporting from Ireland became easier in that political issues could now be hung on the personality at the centre of the news and this technique is used with more frequency as the names FitzGerald, de Valera, Griffith and Collins become better known. MacSwiney's response to his arrest was seen as far more important than the alleged crime for which he was arrested. Essentially, he was perceived as a victim from the outset and this coloured the reports in the French press. As his hunger-strike progressed and the *Dáil's* publicity machine swung into gear then the reports became more detailed and MacSwiney became better known to the French public. As he weakened, sympathy for him grew and this is reflected in the reports. The analysis of the implications of his death and the longer term aims of Sinn Féin varied depending on the newspaper. *Le Figaro* on the 26th October 1920 noted that:

> We in France would be wrong to support closely, or even from afar, the campaign that Sinn Féin will doubtless undertake. It is a question of the internal affairs of those who stood beside us on the battlefield when the fate of our country was in the balance. Let us not forget that it was Sinn

---

593 *Le Figaro,* 11/08/1920.

594 *Le Monde Illustré* 21/08/1920.

595 ... savoir si le gouvernement anglais peut empêcher un citoyen irlandais de se rendre au milieu de ses concitoyens? Ibid.

> Féin, with Sir Casement [sic] who felt it should ally itself with Germany in the middle of the war. If the plot had succeeded and had Wilhelm II's troops landed in Ireland, England would have succumbed bringing France down with her. .... The integrity of the United Kingdom, like the security of France, is required to ensure peace in the world.[596]

In contrast, *L'Humanité* of the same date carried a photo of MacSwiney and his wife on the front page with an article criticising the attitude of the Liberals and the Conservatives to Ireland since 1916 and laying the blame for the continuance of the Nationalist struggle on the British Government. Labour's support for Sinn Féin was approvingly reported but the conclusion was that the death of MacSwiney would signal the opening of a new chapter in Ireland's bloody history. Comments by the *Daily News*, the *Times* and the *Daily Chronicle* were summarised showing a variety of response in the British press which could be seen to justify *L'Humanité's* stance.[597]

Reading these reports, the pattern of management of the MacSwiney story to Sinn Féin's advantage emerges. There is little doubt, as has been suggested above, that Mary MacSwiney was a prime mover in this. While in late August her brother's condition is described as 'hopeless' as he loses consciousness, a fortnight later he is conscious even though he has had a bad night.[598] On the 13th October *Le Figaro* repeated without comment a report in the *Evening News* that stated that MacSwiney had taken some fruit juice and frequent sips of wine and spirits.[599] This is clearly scurrilous, even though MacSwiney took 74 days to die. This was a length of time approached by only one of the 1981 hungerstrikers, Kieran Doherty.[600] No further comment was made by *Le Figaro* and the issue did not surface again elsewhere in the French press.

When the inevitable happened, the public outpouring of grief for MacSwiney

---

[596] En France on aurait tort de s'associer de près ou de loin à la campagne que les sinn-feiners ne vont pas manquer d'entreprendre. Il s'agit là des affaires intérieures de ceux qui étaient à nos côtes sur les champs de bataille quand le sort de notre patrie se jouait. N'oublions pas que Sinn-fein a cru devoir, avec sir Casement, s'allier à l'Allemagne en plein guerre. Si le complôt avait abouti à un débarquement des troupes de Guillaume II en Irlande, l'Angleterre succombait et la France avec elle. ... L'intégrité du Royaume-Uni, comme la sécurité de la France, est nécessaire à la paix du monde. *Le Figaro,* 26/10/1920

[597] *L'Humanité,* 26/10/1920.

[598] *Le Figaro,* 30/081920 and 15/09/1920.

[599] *Le Figaro,* 13/10/1920.

[600] P. O'Malley, *Biting at the grave: the Irish hungerstrikers and the politics of despair* (Belfast, 1990), p.xiii. Many of the 1981 hungerstrikers had been in prison for a number of years before starting their protest. Prison food in the Maze was poor so their fitness levels would have been certainly lower than MacSwiney's even though he had been under some strain immediately prior to his arrest.

and his elevation to martyrdom in Ireland was too good to miss for the French press. Correspondents were dispatched and articles were supported by powerful images captured by their photographers or bought from the British press. The crass handling by the British authorities of the arrangements for transporting his coffin to Ireland was reported in detail and the issue of his Catholicity moved to the fore.[601] The papers read by the Catholic middle class in France presented the fact that this was a moment when a Catholic martyr had been made, albeit unintentionally, by the English. This clearly had resonances in France as the canonisation of St Joan of Arc had been completed in April.[602] *L'Illustration*, in particular, printed under the heading *La République irlandaise*, a long article by Maurice Bourgeois. He was a respected commentator who had been sent to Ireland by the French Ministry of Education to provide an analysis of events there for the National War Library and Museum.[603] This was the first time that any real analysis of the Irish crisis and Sinn Féin's demands had been aired in this paper. It was accompanied by a photo of MacSwiney's death mask.[604] Other photos of ceremonies in St George's RC Cathedral in Southwark on the 28th October were printed, as was a photo of the coffin, guarded by Police Auxiliaries, being unloaded from a tugboat in Cork harbour. Finally, there was a photo of the lying in state at Cork City Hall. Maurice Bourgeois gives details of the origins of the Irish struggle and the evolution of the Dáil and the IRA. The working of the 'state within a state' that Sinn Féin had established was explained with descriptions of the efficacy of the IRA's policing activities and the Sinn Féin courts backed by the support of much of the population. The success of fund-raising by subscriptions to Irish Republic 5% bonds in Ireland itself, in America, in Britain and even in France, is detailed. Finally, Bourgeois addresses the issue of relations between Sinn Féin and Germany. Here the source of his information becomes clear. He puts out the Sinn Féin line that while the Irish opposed England during the war they never wavered from their deep affection for France and nothing which would have harmed France would have been undertaken by them. Casement's arrival on a German U-boot was expressly to inform his compatriots that there was no material help to be expected from the

---

601 See particularly *L'Illustration* and *Le Monde Illustré,* 06/11/1920.

602 This had set off some anglophobic vibrations although, of course, the English reformation was some two centuries in the future at the time of her martyrdom.

603 *Le Monde Illustré,* 27/11/1920.

604 By the Irish sculptor Albert Power and now in the National Museum, Kildare Street, Dublin.

Kaiser and to stop the Rising. Only two of the 1916 leaders were pro-German [Joseph Plunkett and Sean MacDermott] and they were responsible for the 'regrettable' line in the 1916 Proclamation which alluded to [German] friends in Europe. There is no German gold financing Sinn-Féin and the recent [1918] rumours of a German Plot had by now been officially denied in the ex-Viceroy's memoirs.[605] Bourgeois comments that the Irish Republic is now a fact, not just an ideal. How this all went down with the readers of *L'Illustration* is impossible to discern, given the absence of letters to the Editor. What is clear though, even after a cursory perusal of the text, is that Bourgeois is rather forcefully transmitting a particular view of the Irish crisis in a publication which, until then, had not supported Irish Nationalism in any way. Bourgeois now tends towards the Sinn Féin party line. The commitment of the Paris information office was having its desired effect at last. On the same day a similar array of photos appeared in *Le Monde Illustré* with the title 'Ireland pays a pious and solemn homage to the independence hero Terence MacSwiney'.[606] The vocabulary used underlined the way that the event had assumed a quasi-religious dimension. The photo of Mgr. Mannix and other clergy reinforces this dimension. The final photo showed the hearse making its way through crowded streets of London with male bystanders removing their hats as a gesture of respect. This is precisely the scene described by a lady of 86 in Lambeth Town Hall, at a commemoration of MacSwiney's death in October 2000. She clearly remembered seeing the procession as a child of five and the silence of the crowds broken only by the sound of the horses hooves on the hard road surface. One can surmise that this was simply the well-mannered response of the public at the time, but it was not the last time that British public respect was shown to a republican funeral.[607] The short text accompanying the photos concludes with the statement: 'Thousands of Irishmen weep for the heroic MacSwiney and have sworn to revenge the martyrdom of the champion of their independence'.[608]

This period saw the start of considerable activity by the supplementary police enrolled to bolster the increasingly beleaguered RIC. The Government had decided to remove the army from as much 'policing' activity as possible and lower its profile in

---

[605] *L'Illustration,* 06/11/1920.

[606] *Le Monde Illustré,* 06/11/1920.

[607] In *IRIS,* October 1978, there is a photo of British soldiers saluting the funeral of Charlie Hughes, of D Coy., II Batt, Belfast PIRA in March 1971. He had been shot by the official IRA.

[608] Des milliers d'Irlandais pleurent l'héroique MacSwiney et se sont juré [sic] de venger le martyre du

Ireland. The new police manpower enabled this to happen. English RIC recruits, nicknamed the Black and Tans, had been increasing in numbers since late 1919 and they had been reinforced by Auxiliary police cadets recruited from recently de-mobbed army men from July.[609] These groups, particularly the latter, began to wage a war of revenge on the IRA. They burned property and summarily executed suspects which far from isolating the IRA turned the population further against British rule.

It is not surprising that the coverage of these events increased interest in the Irish crisis. The consensus was that the Sinn Féin struggle had progressed to such a pitch that legitimacy had to be accorded to its constant assertions that the assembly of Irish MPs that met in the Mansion House in January 1919 was the embodiment of an independent Irish state. Thus, one of the objectives of the Dáil's appeal to the nations of the world had been met in France, at any rate. The consensus amongst French commentators broke down when considering how best the British Government could extricate itself from Ireland. The policies adopted by the Government met a mixed response although the execution of those policies was almost universally condemned. This was certainly the case with regard to the activities of the Black and Tans and the Auxiliary Police cadets. An example of this was the three page article by Maurice Bourgeois carried in *Le Monde Illustré* on the 27th November 1920. This tracked the elements of Irish nationality, its unique language, its economic exploitation by England, held to be responsible for the massive emigration and demographic decline since 1841, and the history of failed rebellions against English rule since 1803. The national and cultural revival of the 1890s led Arthur Griffith to set out a blueprint for self-determination on the Hungarian model. Bougeois correctly suggests that this was not the mainspring of the development of Sinn Féin but rather the ineptitude [*maladresse*] of the British Government since 1914 in dealing with Irish affairs. The history of the actual struggle is reviewed with an analysis of the two elements of the independence movement. The vicissitudes of the early months of Dáil Eireann are described and the activities of the IRA are also discussed with less approval. The moves to create a machinery of Dáil Government are praised while the IRA's guerrilla war is dismissed as negative. The problem of Ulster is addressed rather

---

champion de leur indépendance. Ibid.

[609] R. Bennett, *The Black and Tans: the British special police in Ireland* (London, 1959), pp. 36 and77.

unconvincingly and, as in his earlier article in *L'Illustration,* Bourgeois deals with French reservations about Sinn Féin. He points out that the Ulster Unionists also did business with Germany in 1914 and imported arms illegally. England's hold on Ireland is for economic reasons after all and thus not ultimately justifiable. Sinn Féin will not give up and so de Valera and Arthur Griffith deserve to be supported. Griffith is quoted as stating that Sinn Féin is a national movement a kind of *sacred union* [my italics] of parties fighting for independence. This phrase struck a profound chord in the French reader's mind since *l'Union Sacré* was the description given to the unified national struggle in August 1914. The article closes with a facsimile of a note by Griffith which read,

> 'Ireland has always regarded France with friendship from old reasons of racial affinity and political sympathy. The restoration of commercial relations which existed in the 17th and 18th centuries would be greeted warmly by the Irish people'.[610]

If the text is a powerful vindication of Sinn Féin then it is supported by a strong choice of images. These include photos of ruined buildings in Mallow and Balbriggan, a shot of Griffith and de Valera striding statesmanlike down a street, a RIC barracks with loopholes and armoured windows, Mountjoy Prison and a facsimile of the proceedings of the first meeting of the Dáil.

To stress the growing international recognition of the Irish Republic there is also a facsimile of a bizarre and unique document. It is of the start of an address of encouragement to the Dáil offering material help, support and even Volunteers from D'Annunzio's occupation forces in Fiume (Rijeka). The last sentence states that it would not be the first time that Italians offered their lives for Irish freedom! We must remember that the Italian political situation was in flux at this time with the imminent collapse of the liberal regime and the increasing presence of Mussolini's fascists on the scene. There are some grounds for the belief that this message actually came from Mussolini himself but what is true is that Mussolini wrote a signed article praising MacSwiney's hunger strike in his newspaper.[611] This all has to be kept in proportion, since Mussolini was not yet quite the significant presence on the European scene that he was to become, but it does indicate the success Sean O'Ceallaigh was having in Europe in publicising the Sinn Féin view of the Irish crisis.

---

[610] *Le Monde Illustré*, 27/11/1920.

Maurice Bourgeois also provided a long piece in *Le Temps* on 29th October in which he reminds his readers that it would be wrong to link Sinn Féin with other 'social' movements elsewhere in Europe. By this he means bolshevism and spartakist troubles in Germany. He specifies that Sinn Féin is a Nationalist movement and that the English Government in Ireland is a foreign Government with no moral authority and which is rejected by the Irish population.[612] Clearly, this is the result of having had his visit to Ireland managed by the Sinn Féin propaganda department.

Joseph Kessel published 18 reports from Ireland in *La Liberté* between 9th September and 26th October 1920 over the pen name d'Hourec.[613] This series opens with a description of the scene outside Brixton Prison and an interview with Mary MacSwiney. This took place in Art O'Brien's London office and, while not very profound, is very atmospheric. Kessel is struck by the force of the Sinn Féin argument. He was also impressed by the inner strength of Mary MacSwiney displayed in the little smoke-filled office near Charing Cross, he described as, 'the London refuge of the Irish soul'.[614] Kessel is the first French journalist to formally interview individuals involved in the Irish crisis. One of these is General Macready, C in C Ireland. After a brief biographical note the interview is presented in direct speech. The General sets the tone by stating that he will not discuss politics nor will he give any details of the number or disposition of troops in Ireland but does continue to discuss the problem of maintaining order. Troops are there to support the police which is inadequate for the task. Sinn Féin has, in effect, declared war but the Government cannot and will not reply in like manner. The British Army must limit itself to preventing trouble.

Kessel asks about retaliatory raids for which Sinn Féin held the army responsible. Surprisingly perhaps, Macready agreed that there had been a few cases, three perhaps, but while everything is done to maintain discipline one can understand the reaction of men whose comrades have been gunned down in an ambush. In a situation of neither war nor peace, yet with his men ceaselessly under attack, what can he do? He has to apply civil justice with military courts since the civil courts no longer function. This is the case of Alderman MacSwiney. Macready suggests that he was found to have the key to a secret police cipher which meant that he had the lives

---

611 *Il Popolo d'Italia,* 29/08/1920.
612 *Le Temps,* 29/10/1920.
613 Kessel was not yet well enough established to have his byline in his own name.
614 [...] le refuge de l'âme irlandaise à Londres. *La Liberté,* 09/09/1920.

of policemen in his hands. His liberation would surely increase the number of attacks on the police. If there were to be a general revolt then the army would be ready. Peace might come if they were allowed to clean out the terrorists, most of whose names they already knew. If they could do this then Ireland would be peaceful again. Kessel concludes that, while he found the General personally courteous and even charming, the simplistic view of a complex problem was rather disturbing.[615] The interview with Macready presages some military attitudes in Northern Ireland half a century later.[616]

It was during this series of articles that Kessel recounted the public unmasking of a government spy by the Dáil administration. This event was staged by Desmond FitzGerald for a number of foreign journalists who were in Dublin at the time. The journalists were assembled in a room in Griffith's *Young Ireland* offices by FitzGerald. Arthur Griffith entered with a man he introduced as Frank Hardy who was offering his services to Sinn Féin as a double agent. Hardy spoke for some time to the assembly, under the impression that they were Republicans. He stated that he supported the Irish Nationalist cause and had already run a considerable risk in coming there. Griffith replied that this was not the case and that he had until 9 p.m. that night to leave Ireland since he was at best, an impostor and at worst, a spy. Then, with a laugh, Griffith introduced the various members of the group as the journalists that they were. Hardy crumpled and left to get the boat.[617]

Kessel also visited Belfast and described the tension in the city where 'Sinn Féin gets a bad press'. He experiences a moment of panic when he hears possible gunshots near Royal Avenue but it is apparently a false alarm. The military arrive anyway, armed to the teeth '... [an] anachronistic image of war which, in Ireland, pursues and obsesses everyone'.[618]

Finally, Kessel reports the death of MacSwiney. He closes his report with the comment that perhaps England has got rid of an enemy. 'On the contrary, [in Ireland]

---

615 *La Liberté,* 21/09/1920.

616 See for example K. Boyle, T. Hadden and D. Walsh, 'Abuse and failure in Security Policies' in *Fortnight,* No. 197, September 1983.

617 *La Liberté,* and *Le Petit Parisien,* 23/09/1920. Kessel retells this story in his collection *Témoin parmi les Hommes: le temps de L'espérance* (Paris, 1968), pp 89-91 and it appears also in H. Béraud, *Le Flaneur salarié* (Paris, 1927), pp 120-125. The incident is mentioned by Sir Ormonde Winter in his report on the Dublin police intelligence branch with some difference in the detail. This is reprinted in Hart, P.(ed.), *British intelligence in Ireland, 1920-1921: The final reports* (Cork, 2002). p. 79.

618 ... vision anachronique de guerre qui, en Irlande, poursuit et obsède tout le monde. *La Liberté,* 06/10/1920.

the dead are more dangerous than the living.[619] Kessel's relatively short stay in Ireland gave him the background material for his novella *Mary de Cork* discussed above.

In the autumn of 1920, the fact that there were a number of foreign journalists in Dublin and that Balbriggan was easy to reach from there, meant that the sack of the little town by Black and Tans was reported in detail in certain papers. The culprits were usually referred to as 'English troops' since the finer distinctions between Army, Black and Tans and Auxiliary cadets were usually lost on correspondents and would have meant little to their readers anyway. Reports appeared in *Le Petit Parisien* and *La Liberté* almost immediately, thanks to the presence of Messrs Kessel and Béraud.[620] Papers without correspondents on the spot, like *Le Figaro*, tended to ignore Balbriggan and concentrate on the slow development of events in Brixton. In November, a photo of a wrecked house in Balbriggan was included in the Maurice Bourgeois article in *Le Monde Illustré* mentioned above. Since the pattern of raids and reprisals across Ireland was not quite clear at this point, it took a little time for Balbriggan to be recognised as the icon of reprisal that it later became.

Once the funeral of MacSwiney was over the main news from Ireland was composed of reports of raids and reprisals from one side or the other. T. P. O'Connor's attempt to get the link between them debated in the Commons was reported in *Le Temps* along with reports of trouble in Co. Kerry and Co. Longford.[621] Further parliamentary news followed a few days later with a report for the passing of the Government of Ireland Act, referred to as Home Rule. Lloyd George pressed his opponents to state if it were possible for Ireland to have a Republic but no reply came, allowing the Prime Minister to conclude triumphantly that an Irish Republic was obviously not possible.[622]

Bloody Sunday in November 1920 was reported in some detail. The assassinations of eleven British military intelligence agents in the morning was factually reported but the attack on the crowd at Croke Park was described in *Le Temps* as a 'combat' implying that shooting came also from the crowd.[623] This was, of course, the official version of events. Mgr. Mannix was quoted as saying that only the

---

619 Au contraire, les morts sont plus dangereux que les vivants. *La Liberté,* 26/10/1920.
620 *La Liberté,* and *Le Petit Parisien,* 28/09/1920.
621 *Le Temps,* 06/11/1920.
622 *Le Temps,* 11/11/1920.
623 *Le Temps,* 23/11/1920.

withdrawal of the 'army of occupation' and the establishment of an Irish Republic would end the troubles in Ireland.[624] Intermittent reports of clashes in Ireland continued for the rest of the year and these also included reports of arrests of Edward Duggan, Eoin MacNeill and Arthur Griffith and the departure of the Labour Party Commission of Enquiry for Ireland.[625] Reading these papers, we can sense a feeling of 'rebellion fatigue' has set in. The situation is complex and seems to defy analysis. The British Government does not seem to be able to end the crisis and the Irish are clearly divided amongst themselves with Loyalists in the North and Sinn Féin apparently carrying on an indefinable struggle almost everywhere. The high emotion of the MacSwiney fast to the death and his funeral passed and, apart from a photo report of the transport of the coffins and London funeral of the officers killed on Bloody Sunday, there is little to catch the imagination of the French readership. This report nicely balances the articles which seemed to support Sinn Féin a month earlier.[626]

The new year, 1921, saw a serious attempt by *L'Illustration* to address the Irish issue. Like *Le Petit Parisien* and *La Liberté* it had sent an investigative journalist to describe what he found was happening in Ireland. Ludovic Naudeau had a reputation as a war correspondent. He had written on the 1905 Russo-Japanese War as a correspondent with the Russian Army. He was captured by the Japanese and later wrote of his experiences there in *En Prison sous la Terreur Russe* (1919). He was imprisoned and badly treated by the Bolsheviks 1918-1919 and wrote a further account of his Russian experiences in *Les Dessous du Chaos Russe* (1920). He went to Ireland at the end of 1920 for *L'Illustration*. The result of this visit was a series of articles entitled *Six semaines en Irlande* which appeared as four articles of unequal length illustrated with a variety of images, some culled from agency files, some photographs by the author and some reproductions of works of art by A. Heaton Cooper and Jack Yeats. The articles were published between February and April 1921.[627]

The structure of the series follows a broadly geographic form beginning with Dublin moving South, then West and finally to Ulster. Within this structure lies the examination and development of various themes arranged under the following

---

624 *Le Figaro,* 22/11/1920 and *Le Temps,* 23/11/1920.
625 *Le Temps,* 28/11/1920.
626 *Le Monde Illustré,* 04/12/1920.
627 *L'Illustration,* 26/02/1921, 05/03/1921, 19/03/1921, 02/04/1921.

headings:

1. Identity. This is a discussion of Irish 'otherness', the Irish Nationalist cause and the English position.

2. Ireland at war. The form of guerrilla war in the country is described with its main characteristics of attack and reprisal. This brings a return to the discussion of the theme of national identity with the question of whether Ireland is a rebel colony or a nation.

3. A debate on origins of the present situation. This takes the form of a reported discussion in Galway with a British officer and with an anonymous Sinn Féin sympathiser. What the Irish want is stated. What is on offer from Britain is stated. The possibilities of Partition or Home Rule are then aired.

4. Ulster. The differences arising from a history of more concentrated industrial development. Naudeau wonders if Taine's categories of race, milieu and moment could be applied to provide an analysis of this phenomenon. Are Ulster people different? Is the harsher Ulster climate conducive to entrepreneurial effort? How much is due to the coincidence of the development of industry in Victorian England?[628] He describes what he calls the Protestant Bloc and traces its historical origins to the Plantation. He describes its members as the descendants of the 'energetic auxiliaries of William of Orange'.[629] He outlines Orange fears of Home Rule. He then provides a tentative and rather facile conclusion which, while putting the complex Irish problem in some relief for the reader, remains without prescription, ending with the remark that we shall just have to wait and see.

Historical and political aspects are mentioned and, on occasion, discussed in some detail with reference to current events included: the seventeenth-century Ulster Plantation; the Boyne and Limerick; French connections with Ireland in the eighteenth century; various Nationalist leaders; the Easter Rising; Sinn Féin's ideals and methods with English responses to them; resistance to Home Rule. Original elements in the articles include some comments on the French view of the English military in Ireland.

---

4. [628] La *race* qui a procédé à ses créations? Le *milieu*? Son examen nous oblige à constater que le climat de l'Ulster, plus rude, moins lénitif que celui du Sud, prédispose davantage à l'effort. Le *moment*? Celui du développement économique de la Grande Bretagne sous Victoria. *L'Illustration,* 02/04/1921.In the introduction to Volume 1 of his *Histoire de la littérature anglaise* (Paris, 1864), Taine presents his notion that three principal forces determine the nature of a particular society. These are: race; milieu; moment; and are the origins of what he calls the general destiny of a nation. *Introduction,* pp. xxiii - xxxiv.

The contrast is noted between their recent activity in France, as France's ally, and now in Ireland.

This is the work of a good, well informed journalist and travel writer who tends to sympathise with the Catholic South while making a genuine attempt to describe sympathetically the Unionist North, or at least, Belfast, in particular. He stresses the fact that this development of the North East is based on strong economic links with Great Britain and that this is the economic base for the Unionist argument. He also outlines quite clearly the Unionist objections to living in a state where the Catholics would be the majority. He rather avoids the analysis of just how backward is the Southern economy but rather sets out how the English tax system bleeds it. Also, he describes the high degree of popular support of the Catholic population for Sinn Féin. This is something of an exaggeration.

The series is well written, sympathetic and well informed. It is a clear exposition of what Naudeau discovered during his journey in Ireland. It is slightly pro-Nationalist but constantly reminds the reader of the fact of the common values of the English and the French. We are reminded that *L'Illustration* was a publication for the conservative French reader by the assertion that colonial rule is fine if the colonised are non-white, while colonial rule over another white people is totally unacceptable. Naudeau asks 'can one treat a white people, a people which is intellectually the equal of the most civilised and has provided great men to several nations, in the same way one might correct berber tribesmen ...?'[630] Yet, in his conclusion he comes close to suggesting that the Empire's days are numbered. Given France's imperial position he could go no further. His interviews seem credible and reflect a variety of shades of opinion. Naudeau's detail is generally accurate. It seems that he has used Paul-Dubois' major work as a source although there are a few errors of note.[631] He seems to be unclear about the difference between the Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries but he is not alone in this, as has been suggested already. His descriptions of the detail of the war in the country are excellent and the inclusion of his own photographs in the illustrative material which accompanies the text adds to the feeling of authenticity.

---

5. [629] les énergiques auxiliaires de Guilliaume d'Orange, *L'Illustration,* 02/04/1921.

[630] Peut-on traiter un peuple blanc, un peuple qui intellectuellement est l'égal des plus civilisés et qui a fourni des grands hommes à plusieurs nations, comme on corrigerait une peuplade berbère ...? *L'Illustration*, 26/02/1921

[631] Paul-Dubois, L.

Overall, this is a valuable piece and is one of the more reasoned and substantial articles on the Irish question to appear in the French press at this time. Its apparent bias is largely corrected when one remembers, as Sylvain Briollay points out with fine irony, that *L'Illustration* has never been noted as particularly anglophobe or revolutionary in its content.[632]

With the special reporters home for Christmas 1920 and the Government of Ireland Act passed at Westminster, the consensus amongst the French press in early 1921 was that a settlement of the Irish crisis was only a matter of time. What is clear is that British counter measures carried out by the Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries were reported with opprobrium and the Sinn Féin publicity machine had clearly won the propaganda battle. After the newspaper coverage of the second half of 1920, Ireland had gained the *de facto* recognition of the French public as a nation apart and different from Britain. A slow realisation was developing that a Catholic nation had been hidden behind, and by, the Protestant island of Britain and, in as much as the ordinary French reader was concerned about such things, it was becoming clear that the Irish crisis was evidence of injustice on the part of the British Government. Relations with London had been cooling since the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. At a superficial level, the centenary of the death of Napoleon in May 1921 and the recent canonisation of Joan of Arc reminded Catholic readers of other times when the English had been the enemy.[633] France began to sense her isolation as liberal government in Italy crumbled with unknown consequences and it became increasingly clear that the British would not support France's hard line towards the defeated enemy. The steep rise in prices and worries about the spread of bolshevism and the effect on France's large socialist constituency caused Paris and its papers to look inwards. A government crisis resulted in Briand as Prime Minister under the new presidency of Alexandre Millerand who was something of a bogey for the left.[634] Domestic economics and politics thus filled the papers.

---

[632] Briollay, p. 95.

[633] For example, see *L'Illustration* 18/06/1921 for an illustrated report of the Napoleon centenary ceremony in St Helena held on the 5th May with British and French dignitaries present.

[634] A. Ambrosi, and C. Ambrosi, p. 189.

Chapter 8

Armistice en Irlande!

The Truce and the Treaty

In 1921 the news from Ireland continued to be mainly composed of accounts of clashes in the war between the IRA and British forces while peace feelers were beginning to be extended. In May, *Le Figaro* reported a article from *The Times* that suggested that Sinn Féin had asked for a truce.[635] Yet, a few days later *Le Figaro* noted attacks on private houses in London and Liverpool.[636] The paper points out that these are not random but targeted individuals with connections with the '*gendarmerie*' in Ireland, attempts to kill officers serving in the Tans and the Auxiliaries and took the form of shootings and petrol-bombings. In London, attacks were made against premises in Shepherd's Bush, Tooting, Catford, East Greenwich, Woolwich and Battersea. A number of people were hurt but there were no deaths. The attackers were described as in their twenties and wearing false moustaches. In Liverpool, the attacks were similar but there the attackers had motor vehicles.[637] The report concludes with the comment that 'many attacks all over Ireland have been reported'.[638] Two days later the same paper carried an interview with Monsignor Mannix, who was in Paris before returning to Australia.[639] This is interesting for the tone of the piece, in that it is openly sympathetic to Sinn Féin. Mgr. Mannix is presented as a fluent advocate of the Irish cause. He describes the recent elections as giving a clear mandate to de Valera to defend the Republic and to respond to Lloyd George whenever an offer to negotiate should come. When questioned on the position of Ulster, Mannix states the Sinn Féin position that Unionists have nothing to fear from an independent Ireland and that it is British policy which is dividing the country. The interviewer, Victor Bucaille, is impressed by this man whom he describes as one of Ireland's noblest sons who has caused the British Empire to tremble.[640] Ireland itself is described as 'martyred and oppressed', which shows the measure of the shift of public opinion in France, given the previously rather indifferent attitude of *Le Figaro* towards Irish independence. A report that Lloyd George has offered to meet de Valera unconditionally to seek to resolve the conflict was picked up from *The Freeman's Journal*. De Valera's reply that Irish independence must be recognised before any discussions take place

---

635 *Le Figaro*, 11/05/1921.
636 *Le Figaro*, 16/05/1921.
637 More details of the Liverpool activity were eventually available to interested French readers in Edward Brady's highly personal and idiosyncratic account of his involvement. See E. Brady, *Le secret service irlandais en Angleterre 1919-1921* (Paris, 1933), Passim.
638 'On signale également de nombreux attentats dans tout l'Irlande.' *Le Figaro*, 16/05/1921.
639 *Le Figaro*, 18/05/1921.

completes the report.[641]

The burning of the Dublin Customs House on Empire Day, 25th May 1921, was reported in some detail. The report was accompanied by a note of the burning of Liberty Hall in reprisal and the Government losses in the first four months of the year. These were: police, 109 killed and 224 wounded; army, 48 killed and 113 wounded, and were given without comment.[642] In June, the opening of the Belfast Parliament by the King brought *Le Figaro* back to Ireland. With the report that the King and Queen had left for Belfast came reports of an ambush in Moydrum in which Brigadier General Lambert was fatally wounded, more troops being sent to Ireland and rumours of peace moves by Sinn Féin.[643] This was the only hint given of preliminary negotiations for a truce at this time. The Parliamentary ceremony in Belfast was reported in some detail the following day in *Le Figaro* and a good summary of the King's speech was printed. The phrase *'mon peuple irlandais'* was printed in italics, most probably ironically, given the new pro-Sinn Féin stance of *Le Figaro* at this time.[644] Like *L'Illustration*, this was a paper that was not normally anglophobe or revolutionary but relations between Paris and London at this time were cool, if not actually icy, and *Le Figaro* reflected this. The main reason was the severe difference of opinion between the two Governments about Polish revendications in Silesia and the fact that fighting between Polish and German units had actually broken out. The French were solidly behind the Poles but Britain was less enthusiastic, which irritated the French to a considerable degree. Lloyd George had also made clear his view that the Anglo-American relationship was the cornerstone of British foreign policy and this also was an irritation to the French. This diplomatic friction had a bearing on the public's attitude towards Ireland. Lloyd George was seen in Paris as no longer the firm ally of France but an unreliable comrade who was politically weakened by his total dependence on the Conservative members of his coalition.

However, the front pages of many French papers in July carried the news of the Irish Truce. *Le Figaro*, for example, headed its report, 'L'Armistice en Irlande' and stated that it would be with relief that French readers would learn of the truce and

---

640 Victor Bucaille was probably Michael MacWhite (see below p. 218)
641 *Le Figaro*, 17/05/1921.
642 *Le Figaro*, 26/05/1921.
643 *Le Figaro*, 22/06/1921.
644 *Le Figaro*, 23/06/1921.

the probable end of a merciless civil war.[645] It went on:

> 'we hesitated to speak of this Irish question much as it was painful and worrying. Our English allies considered it an purely internal matter. Any outside intervention, even with the best of intentions, would have quite rightly angered them. We understood in France, that England could not allow a threat to be established at its gates; we did not speak of imperialism when the British army intervened, we did not invoke, no matter how hard the repression, the right of national self-determination.... Yet it was impossible not to admire the ferocious resolve of the Irish in their struggle for liberty'.[646]

The report continues in the same vein, noting the role of General Smuts and the presumed involvement of the King and concludes 'Let us hope that the bloodletting will end and that our Allies find peace again'.[647] This article clearly puts forward the attitude of much of the French press to the Anglo-Irish War and that of *Le Figaro* in particular. The final sentence is finely judged in that it does not indicate if 'Allies' means the British or *both* the British and the Irish. The latter reading is the more likely, given the tone of *Le Figaro*'s reporting in the previous weeks.

De Valera's first meeting with Lloyd George was announced two days later with the fact that the Truce is holding, despite IRA activity right up to the agreed date which resulted in the deaths of eight of the security forces and two civilians while *L'Humanité* adds that there were serious riots in Belfast where a strict curfew was in force.[648] With that, *Le Figaro* turned away from Ireland and other papers are left to report on the early negotiations. *L'Humanité* followed developments up to the general news black-out on the Treaty negotiations which came into effect in October and the illustrated papers and *Le Temps* also devoted some space to Anglo-Irish diplomatic activity. *Le Monde Illustré* had a splendid photo of the Royal procession in Belfast as the King and Queen moved through the city on their way to open the Northern Irish Parliament.[649]

---

645 *Le Figaro*, 10/07/1921.

646 On hésite à parler de cette question d'Irlande tant elle était inquiétante et douloureuse. Nos alliés anglais la considéraient come purement intérieure. Toute intervention, même dans les intentions les meilleures, les auraient à bon droit exaspérés. On a compris en France que l'Angleterre ne pouvait pas laisser s'établir une menace à sa porte; on n'a pas parlé d'impérialisme quand l'armée britannique est intervenue; on n'a pas invoqué, si dure qu'ait été la répression, ce droit des peuples à disposer d'eux mêmes [...] Pourtant il était impossible de ne pas admirer la résolution farouche des Irlandais luttant pour conquérir la liberté. Ibid.

647 'Souhaitons que l'effusion de sang prenne fin et que nos Alliés retrouvent la paix'. Ibid.

648 *Le Figaro* and *L'Humanité,* 12/07/1921.

649 *Le Monde Illustré,* 02/07/1921.

L'Illustration carried a biographical article on de Valera with a photo of the Irish delegation to Lloyd George. There is also a photo of the entrance to Downing Street, blocked off by a wooden palisade, with a crowd waiting to spot the Irish delegation as they leave. A tricolour is being waved to the left of the picture.[650]

From this point onwards, the most consistent, if not always the clearest, reporting of Irish matters is that in *L'Humanité*. While other papers returned to Ireland from time to time, it becomes clear that for most of them news from Ireland is not their principal concern. The arrival of the Irish delegation in London and the beginning of talks was reported, with some discussion of the willingness or otherwise of the Government to reach an agreement.[651] The following day, the talks continued and de Valera's enigmatic comment on leaving Downing Street, that the talks had gone as well as could be expected, was reported. The presence of Sir James Craig in London was held to be a good sign, while renewed violence in Belfast was noted.[652] Craig was correctly seen as an important presence in London although it was made clear that the talks were not tripartite in that Lloyd George saw Craig and de Valera separately. The next report concentrated on the implications of Craig's presence in London with members of his cabinet.[653] Then *L'Humanité,* headed its next report *'L'Ulster met en danger les pourparlers'* [Ulster puts talks in danger]. An account of the comings and goings in Downing Street follows, justifying the heading.[654] British proposals were reported on the 24th picked up from the *Daily Mail*.[655] These included dual governments in a partitioned Home Rule Ireland with tax-raising powers and the right to a territorial defence force. De Valera's Dublin homecoming was also reported. More details of the British offer were given later with details of de Valera's response and Lloyd George's reply.[656] De Valera's resistance to partition was explained in more detail the following day with discussion of the implications. An atmosphere of tension was reported.[657] The rejection at a sitting of the Dáil by de Valera of the British proposals was noted. A British 'no comment' was reported as being their response.[658]

---

650 *L'Illustration,* 23/07/1921.
651 *L'Humanité,* 15/07/1921.
652 *L'Humanité,* 16/07/1921.
653 *L'Humanité,* 18/07/1921.
654 *L'Humanité,* 19/07/1921.
655 *L'Humanité,* 24/07/1921.
656 *L'Humanité,* 15/08/1921.
657 *L'Humanité,* 16/08/1921.
658 *L'Humanité,* 18/08/1921.

The following day, on the front page, *L'Humanité* carried a photo of de Valera addressing a crowd by a fun-fair in Dublin and a reflective article inside the paper considered the Irish situation at the time.[659] The author, Paul Louis, commented that in Ireland, the class struggle was in abeyance while the national issue was being solved and that it was impossible to foresee the outcome of events.[660] Louis returned to this argument later with an article headed *L'heure décisive pour l'Irlande* [Ireland's moment of decision].[661] He gave a clear left-wing analysis pointing out that the British could not exclude a further outbreak of unrest in Ireland which would seriously damage their international standing. On the other hand, the Irish had every reason to be wary of British promises, since Parnell and Redmond had lost support when they had appeared to accept British undertakings at face value. This is a rather simple view of past events but fits with the anti-capitalist rather than anglophobe view of *L'Humanité* in 1921. Louis remarked that for the last forty years since the issue of Home Rule had been on the political agenda the Irish peasantry had been the victim of British policies which had sought to maintain sovereignty over Ireland for strategic reasons but also to protect the interests of the landlord class. Therefore it was clear that the national question was more important than the class struggle at the moment and this explained why the Irish Trades Union, both North and South, have supported Sinn Féin. However, if the Republicans were to be victorious then it would be more than likely, according to Louis, that the resultant Nationalist Government would not address the interests of the working and peasant classes. This would provoke further unrest of a different kind. It has to be said that Louis is remarkably prescient in identifying the conservative nature of the Irish Revolution. The eventual civil war was thought by *L'Humanité* to be the first stage of a further Irish Revolution, which explains the coverage given to it.

Over the next few days, short reports appear tracking the responses of the Dáil to the British proposals, the Sinn Féin *Ard Fheis* [Convention] and more trouble in Belfast.[662] Sinn Féin's considered response is given without discussion on the 27th with the remark that the British Government had little room for manoeuvre but still wished to continue the dialogue with the Irish. De Valera's re-election as *'Président'*

---

659 *L'Humanité,* 19/08/1921.
660 *L'Humanité,* 19/08/1921.
661 *L'Humanité,* 22/08/1921.
662 *L'Humanité,* 23/08/1921, 24/08/1921 and 25/08/1921.

of the Irish Republic was reported with plans to raise further national loans in the USA and Ireland.[663] The scene then shifted to Inverness. *L'Humanité* informed its readers that Lloyd George had called a cabinet meeting there at the end of the first week in September.[664] Over the next few days details of the battle of words between the British and the Irish appeared in *L'Humanité*.[665] Paul Louis commented on the situation in a repetitive vein on the 7th., re-stating Britain's choice between an accommodation and the resumption of military repression and Sinn Féin's option of some degree of compromise short of full republican independence or the consequences of British repression.[666] Lloyd George's formal invitation to Sinn Féin to talks appeared on the 9th with the proviso that the Dáil defer discussion of details of Ireland's future status until the conference itself. The Prime Minister added that he felt that the exchange of notes between London and Dublin had gone on long enough and he expected a positive response from Dublin. Despite the hard tone of this communiqué, *L'Humanité* reported the optimistic feeling in Sinn Féin quarters that a conference was imminent.[667] The anticipated positive Irish response was reported, as was Michael Collins' speech at Armagh demanding the release of internees held by the British.[668] The next report from Ireland in *L'Humanité* gave details of the Irish plenipotentiaries who would be attending the talks in Inverness [sic].[669] Further sharp exchanges between Lloyd George and de Valera were reported in full without comment.[670] On the 20th., Paul Louis commented in some detail on the previous days' exchanges.[671] He accused Lloyd George of behaving towards Ireland like a British Prime Minister of the 1820s and remarked that this boded ill for agreement since peace can only be really agreed between equals. The possibility of some kind of an Anglo-Irish federation was suggested as being the best possible framework for a solution. In this way, the relationship of dominant England to a subordinate Ireland could be avoided. As to the justice of the Irish cause, Louis referred his readers to Lloyd-George's 1918 statements justifying the rights of small nations and the

---

663 *L'Humanité*, 27/08/1921.
664 *L'Humanité*, 03/09/1921.
665 *L'Humanité*, 05/09/1921 and 06/09/1921.
666 *L'Humanité*, 07/09/1921.
667 *L'Humanité*, 09/09/1921.
668 *L'Humanité*, 12/09/1921.
669 *L'Humanité*, 15/09/1921.
670 *L'Humanité*, 17/09/1921, 18/09/1921, 19/09/1921 and 20/09/1921.
671 *L'Humanité*, 21/09/1921.

subsequent selective application of this principle at Versailles. Elsewhere, the British had crushed all national revolts against their rule as they proposed to do in Ireland, one way or another. Lloyd-George refused the Irish that which he had demanded for the Czechs, for reasons of state in their most brutal form.[672] The following day, the text of Lloyd-George's telegramme to the Irish was printed in which he refused the pre-conference recognition that they had demanded. After consideration, Sinn Féin accepted that there was nothing to be gained from further exchanges and so agreed to attend the conference in London. News items to this effect appeared in *L'Humanité* with the additional information that there had been violent incidents in Tipperary and that the representatives of some 100,000 Northern Irish had petitioned de Valera not to accept partition. The British delegates at the conference were listed and the news that there was to be a World Congress of the Irish Race in Paris in January 1922 also appeared.[673]

On the 3rd October, *L'Humanité* published a translation of an article which had appeared in *The Communist,* the official paper of the British Communist Party, on the party's view of the Irish situtation. The main theme and conclusion was that the Left in Ireland, should work to detach true revolutionaries from the 'opportunist' Labour Party and sieze control of the Unions so as to prepare to overthrow the bourgeois Irish state which was in formation.[674] Once again, we see the ground being prepared for *L'Humanité's* later support for the Republican side in the Civil War. The following week, the imminent opening of the Conference is announced with the probabilty that the 1,500 internees in the Curragh will be released.[675] On the 12th., a photo of the Irish delegation to the conference appeared on the front page. Collins was not present as his departure had been reportedly delayed for 'family reasons'. The same photograph, but of much better quality, also appeared in *Le Monde Illustré*.[676] Collins made the front page of *L'Humanité* the following day and was reported as remarking somewhat archly that, in order to stand up to the British Empire one must be optimistic - which we have done and may be called upon to do in the future.[677] On

---

[672] Ibid.

[673] *L'Humanité*, 01/10/1921 and 02/10/1921. The Irish delegates had been named on the 15th.

[674] *L'Humanité*, 03/10/1921.

[675] *L'Humanité*, 10/10/1921.

[676] *L'Humanité*, 12/10/1921 and *Le Monde Illustré*, 22/10/1921.

[677] Un homme a besoin d'être optimiste pour tenir tête à l'empire britannique. C'est ce que nous avons fait et que nous serons peut-être obligés de faire encore. *L'Humanité*, 13/10/1921. This remark sounds

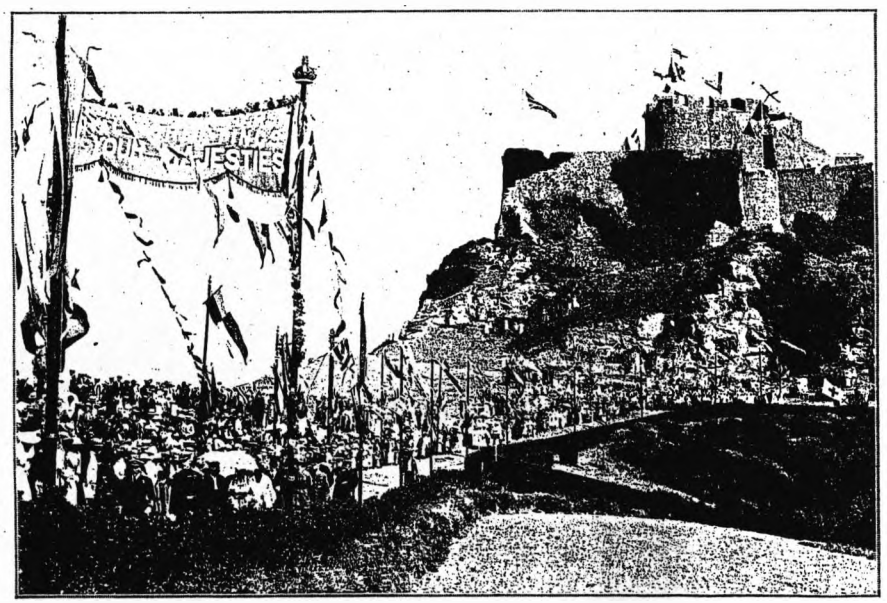
Page from *Le Monde Illustré* 23/07/1921, De Valera in London and the Royal progress in Jersey

M. de Valera est venu à Londres conférer avec M. Lloyd George ; on voit ici le Président de la République irlandaise, à la portière de sa voiture, entourée par la foule.

ANGLETERRE ET IRLANDE

L'Angleterre a gardé jalousement ses traditions féodales ; et de cette vigoureuse conception politique est née certainement sa grandeur. L'idée de la terre, véritable trait d'union moral entre le pouvoir militaire et religieux et les hommes, est une idée génératrice de force et de solidarité. Maintenu dans sa pureté, et symbolisé par l'hommage que Jersey vient de rendre au roi Georges V, un semblable régime donnait au royaume britannique de l'unité et de l'indissolubilité. C'est pour l'avoir méconnu en Irlande, que les gouvernants britanniques ont rompu le lien foncier entre la Couronne et ses Dominions. M. Lloyd George n'a pas compris le sens profond du régime féodal : la protection et la fidélité librement consenties de la part du vassal et du suzerain.

Le seigneur protège son tenant contre les attaques du dehors, le représente vis à vis des aubains. Ce sont là des principes généraux d'un féodalisme moderne, qui paraît bien demeurer la théorie du gouvernement royal. L'Irlande demande son indépendance commerciale, industrielle, locale ; elle ne refusera certainement pas le service d'ost à la Couronne, chargée de défendre ses Dominions par l'épée et par la parole. Contre M. Lloyd George antiféodaliste, s'est dressé le Roi, qui, fidèle suzerain, entend maintenir aux siens sa haute protection en échange de leur fidélité. L'ambassade du général Smuts, véritable avoué royal et l'hommage de Jersey, ce sont les deux symboles du renouveau féodal anglais.



Le Roi d'Angleterre, selon la séculaire tradition féodale, a reçu l'hommage de Jersey ; à cette occasion, une procession, partie du Château de Mont-Orgueil, a traversé l'île.

the 15th., a short and inconclusive report of the conference from Sinn Féin sources was published after which there was silence until December.[678] This was the result of the agreement on both sides that no communiqués should be issued during the deliberations.

Apart from *L'Humanité's* barrage of reports, very little had appeared in the Paris press in the run-up to the conference. It is worth noting, however, the coverage of the weekly *Le Monde Illustré.* The splendid photograph of the Royal progress through the streets of Belfast has already been mentioned, but a week later the magazine printed an excellent photo of a train which had been blown up by the IRA. It had been carrying the cavalry escort of the Royal party in Belfast, obviously after they had performed their duties, since the previous photo showed no lack of mounted troops.[679] A short article below the photo discusses the influence that the Irish struggle has had on the movement within the Empire for complete autonomy for the [White] Dominions and the possibility that General Smuts will be able to persuade the Irish to negotiate. On the 23rd October, there is an interesting page where the two faces of British rule within the British Isles themselves are cleverly contrasted. The top picture shows a cheerful de Valera in a car surrounded by well wishers in London while below there is a photo of the Royal progress across Jersey from the castle of Mont-Orgueil on the occasion of Jersey's hommage to the crown. A short text headed *Angleterre et Irlande* separates the two pictures but discusses how strong are the feudal links between people and crown as shown in Jersey and wonders if the Royalist General Smuts can persuade the Irish to accept a deal with the anti-feudal Lloyd-George. When the threads of the argument in the text are unpicked, we see that the magazine is offering a critique of the British system and of Lloyd-George himself and not advancing the Irish case. It is suggesting that had the Government fully understood the contract existing at the heart of British monarchy between the Sovereign [and his Government] and the people, then the Irish question would never have got to this pass. This is an original analysis and a subtle attack on Lloyd-George.[680]

Maurice Bourgeois provides a long article in *Le Monde Illustré* at the end of July which is a discussion of the new attitude of the British Government towards the

---

more like Desmond FitzGerald, Sinn Féin director of propaganda, than Collins himself.

[678] *L'Humanité*, 15/10/1921.

[679] *Le Monde Illustré*, 09/07/1921.

[680] *Le Monde Illustré*, 23/07/1921.

Irish Republic.[681] This is on the occasion of de Valera's visit to London for exploratory talks with Lloyd George. Readers are reminded that the views expressed by the author are his alone and do not necessarily represent the editorial line of the paper. Nevertheless, Bourgeois is no revolutionary.

He starts by stating that there is no such thing as the Irish question. Ireland's national identity is undeniable and therefore her right to freedom does not pose a 'question'. The Irish question is in fact an English question coming from the refusal to grant Irish independence - independence to a small nation as required by the Versailles Treaty, signed by Britain. The only reason Bourgeois can give is economic, that England fears losing the Irish market. He does not expand on this rather improbable idea but treats his readers to an Irish Nationalist analysis of 'seven centuries of Anglo-Irish conflict'. The *leit-motiv* of this is that the more the British coerced Ireland, the more the Irish resisted. As the Irish Republic is now in being and governs most of Ireland, Bourgeois argues that Lloyd George has little alternative but to negotiate. The text is accompanied by facsimiles of the 1916 Proclamation of the Republic in English and French, a picture of General Smuts, representing British good sense and willingness to seek an accommodation and a photo of the Dáil in public session. Lloyd George's volte-face and sudden decision to seek talks is set against Sinn Féin's constancy of position. Bourgeois outlines the personal qualities of the Irish leadership, although not without hyperbole. De Valera is described as a leader who takes note of his colleagues' opinions, which is not a view universally sustained by his later biographers. Griffith is identified as the brains [*cerveau*] of Sinn Féin, Collins is brave but modest, Barton and Childers are both distinguished British ex-officers and Desmond FitzGerald is described as 'our' colleague and friend.

Bourgeois finally suggests that Lloyd George must at least attempt to settle the Irish problem in order to be able to attend the disarmament conference in the United States, where there are 20 million Irish-Americans who could make life difficult for him. Britain needs to reinforce its alliance with America, according to Bourgeois, since he sees a weakening of the links between the mother country and her Dominions. In Ireland itself, the results of failure would be terrible indeed, since the only alternative to talks is outright military repression.

This is remarkably strong material for readers of the mildly conservative *Le*

---

681 *Le Monde Illustré*, 30/07/1921.

Monde Illustré. The close collaboration with FitzGerald is alluded to but French centre and centre-right impatience with Lloyd George in Downing Street is as much responsible for the tone of this article as unqualified support for Sinn Féin, the IRA and the Irish Republic. The following month, a large photograph of the Dáil in public session being addressed by de Valera appeared with a simple explanatory caption.[682] This was followed in September by an article headed *L'Angleterre est nerveuse* which discussed the range of political problems facing the Government of the United Kingdom. These included the arrest of London Labour councillors who had encouraged a rates strike, the Irish question and disturbances in Belfast.[683] While Lloyd George is photographed fishing with his daughter in Scotland, other pictures show the arrest of the municipal councillors. The report ends with an ironic comment cleverly hinting at a *perfide Albion* without actually using the phrase:

> We can understand that the Irish prefer liberty to the sweet iron-clad liberty of generous Albion. It is possible that fish may bite for Lloyd George but the Irish are only mildly tempted by the bait of the Welsh Premier.[684]

It is useful to us today to remember that the settlement of the Irish question was just one of a series of internal problems provoking bad publicity which faced Lloyd George's coalition in 1921. Social tensions and unemployment were a serious concern and the will to deal with Ireland, not for the first, nor the last time, was linked to the pressure on the Government from other internal problems.

Maurice Bourgeois provided a further article in *Le Monde Illustré*, in October which took the form of an interview [*une conversation*] with Sean T. O'Ceallaigh.[685] The article is not strictly an interview in that much of the material is provided by the writer. It is a stylistic device to aid readabilty, but occasional snatches of their conversation add verisimilitude. The article opens with an account of the involvement of O'Ceallaigh with Sinn Féin since its earliest days and his presence in Paris since the 4th February 1919 as envoy of the Dáil. On his return to Dublin, he had presided at meetings of the Dáil. He was now back in Paris as head of the Irish mission. Some

---

682 *Le Monde Illustré*, 27/08/1921.
683 *Le Monde Illustré*, 17/09/1921.
684 On comprend que les Irlandais préfèrent l'indépendance à la douce liberté de fer de la généreuse Albion. Il est possible que le poisson morde à la ligne de M. Lloyd George, mes les Irlandais sont eux médiocrement tentés par les appâts du Premier Gallois. Ibid.
685 *Le Monde Illustré*, 08/10/1921.

intriguing details emerge. Apparently, in mid 1921, he and his wife left Paris for London on the same train as Lloyd George. This meant that the French police provided a guard of an impressive number of *inspecteurs* to accompany the O'Ceallaighs to protect Lloyd George rather than the Irish delegate. As a result, the rail journey to Calais was somewhat cramped. O'Ceallaigh laughed this off and reminded Bourgeois that he and his colleagues in Paris were used to moving about the city accompanied by up to eight police officers at any one time. This was particularly the case when MacWhite, ex-foreign legionary and general secretary of the Paris mission went out.[686]

Bourgeois lists the differences that O'Ceallaigh found on his return to Dublin in the summer of 1921. Kingstown was now Dun Laoghaire, his formerly imprisoned colleagues were free and a general air of good humour prevailed now that the Truce was in place. Notes on de Valera, Griffith, Brugha and other Ministers of the Provisional Government follow. These include details of the exploits of Sean McKeon and Sean Moylan. Bourgeois credits Moylan with the capture of General Lucas and recounts the story, claiming that it has not yet been told. It was, as we have seen, reported in some detail at the time.[687] The Truce enabled the IRA to continue training more openly and two photographs of Volunteers on parade and engaging in a signalling exercise - both obviously staged - accompany the text. There are facsimiles of the signatures of Constance Markievicz and Michael Collins which remind us of the interest in signatures of the famous that was current in France.[688]

The question of Ulster was raised and, according to O'Ceallaigh, the troubles in Belfast attracted the world's attention to this 'British bridge-head' in Ireland. Orangemen were acting under orders from their anti-Catholic lodges while real Ulstermen, like Lord Londonderry, felt that their future prosperity lay with a United Ireland. This might seem like wishful thinking but we must remember that at the time of writing the Treaty negotiations had not yet begun and the full power of the Unionist

---

[686] Michael MacWhite, Croix de Guerre, is reputed to have laid a wreath on behalf of the Irish delegation during the remembrance ceremony in Paris in November 1920. Dressed in his Foreign Legionnaire's uniform with all decorations displayed, no-one questioned his right to be there. This gesture borders on the prankish and was not reported by the press since they were unaware of it.

[687] *L'Illustration,* 10/07/1920.

[688] In the 1860s in France *L'Autographe,* a fortnightly magazine, was published consisting almost entirely of facsimilies of letters and signatures of the famous. Applicants for posts as *cadres* or executives in French companies are often asked to apply with a handwritten letter even today in addition to their CVs.

cabal in the governing British coalition and the effect of Sir James Craig, as the spectre at the feast, had yet to be revealed. O'Ceallaigh points out that Lloyd George cannot walk away from negotiations since he has to attempt to settle the Irish problem in order to be able to deal with other pressing problems at home and abroad. It is a question he adds of a discussion between equals of rights not of concessions. Peace can be found but it is up to Lloyd George. Bourgeois adds that this is the line taken by Darrell Figgis, Secretary General of the Commission of Enquiry into Irish Resources and Industry, speaking in Manchester in September 1921, when he set out the concept of a Commonwealth of equal nations as a future model for the British Empire.

The article closes with a personal note where Bourgeois states that if his readers should feel that he is too pro-Sinn Féin then they should realise that he has followed Irish affairs since 1913 and counts many Irish leaders amongst his friends. They should also note that many English intellectuals have similar opinions and have publicly voiced them and that he feels that Lloyd George himself may privately share them. At least he hopes that his articles in *Le Monde Illustré* might contribute to an open discussion of the Irish problem and that the English Prime Minister, who has had the courage to open a dialogue with Ireland, can put a definitive end to the bloodshed of the Anglo-Irish war.

Where Sinn Féin propaganda had been successful by 1921, as is clear in this and other reports, is in its skill in presenting the violence in Ireland as being driven by British actions. The constant problem of control of the IRA by the Dáil, which had been an issue right from the start in January 1919, was skilfully hidden from French journalists by the Dáil's propaganda department and, by the time that they began to talk with IRA men, British military and police violence provided plenty of copy.

If Maurice Bourgeois provided an example of an observer who was reporting as an investigative journalist, albeit with a bias to the Irish, the respectable fortnightly *Revue des Deux Mondes* was surely immune to such excesses. Since the 1880s, occasional articles on the Irish Question had appeared. Two historians, Auguste Filon and latterly Louis Paul-Dubois, had occasionally presented a measured and well-informed view on what was happening in Ireland.[689]

---

[689] See A. Filon, 'Le Parlement irlandais: Etude retrospective' in *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 01/07/1886 and 'Le 'Home Rule' irlandais: Histoire d'une constitution' in *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 13/08/1913. L. Paul-Dubois wrote two articles entitled 'Le Drame irlandaise I & II' in *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15/09/1921 and 01/10/1921. He was to follow these with a third episode which appeared on the

Louis Paul-Dubois' first article in *Revue des Deux Mondes* appeared in April 1902.[690] He then published his first history of Ireland (translated by Tom Kettle) in 1907.[691] This complemented the work of his father-in law, Hippolyte Taine, whose major work on English history and literature had been so influential over the previous forty years. In the autumn of 1921 Paul-Dubois published two long articles of explanation and anaysis of the Irish situation under the title *Le Drame Irlandais*. The first had the sub-title *Les Origines 1914-1918* and gave a well researched account of the events in Ireland during the war years.[692] The piece follows Taine's principles of race, milieu and moment in that it describes the qualities of the two communities, Catholic/Nationalist and Unionist/Protestant in Ireland and in Ulster in particular. In the South, Paul-Dubois sees the Protestant minority bowing to the inevitable rise of the Catholic majority but in the North the issue is very different. This is due to the Northern Protestant tradition which is infused with Scottish Prebyterianism and therefore resistant to 'fusion' with the Catholic minority there. Yet, he suggests that this tradition has become Irish in that what he calls its very 'nervous inflammability' is actually an Irish characteristic.[693] He contrasts the stolid Presbyterian Scots with their Ulster cousins. He feels that Orange anti-Nationalism is fuelled by Presbyterian anti-Catholicism which goes against modern interpretations of Orangeism as being a Church of Ireland phenomenon. Despite the late twentieth-century liberalism of many Irish Presbyterians, we should be aware of that strain of 'no-popery' which infused Presbyterianism until the 1960s and which is still expressed by adherents to various Free Presbyterian groups on both sides of the North Channel. An effect of this phenomenon, according to Paul-Dubois, is the difference in attitude of each community towards the other. Nationalist Ireland is seen as wishing to include the Unionists while Unionism seeks to remove Irish Nationalism from the political scene. The result of this determination to preserve the Union, at least in the Protestant North, was the re-awakening, after years of sleep, of physical force, or the threat of it, as a political weapon by the Ulster Protestants. Carson's 'rebel movement' of 1912-1914

15/04/1923. He also wrote two scholarly works on Irish History and politics for which see bibiography.

690 L. Paul-Dubois, 'Le Receuillement de l'Irlande' in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, (15/04/1902), pp. 765-802.

691 L. Paul-Dubois, *L'Irlande contemporaine et la question irlandais,* (Paris, 1907), translated as *Contemporary Ireland* (Dublin, 1908).

692 L. Paul-Dubois, 'Le Drame irlandais I: Les Origines 1914-1918' in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, (15/09/1921), pp. 365-394.

had links with Germany. Smuggled arms were bought there and Minister von Kühlmann had visited Unionists in Belfast. Some Unionists had publicly declared their preference for rule by the Kaiser over rule from Dublin and at least one German military advisor was involved in giving weapons training to the Ulster Volunteer Force.[694] This was a serious charge in French eyes, although perhaps its full force was not quite what it would have been in late 1914. Paul-Dubois describes the increase in tension in Ulster in early 1914 and notes the remarks of the American ambassador to Berlin that Germany was perhaps counting on the Ulster Unionists provoking a serious crisis in the Summer of 1914 which might distract England from intervention in a European war.[695]

The outbreak of the Great War changed everything. Redmond accepted the postponement of Home Rule and called for Irish support of the allied struggle. The Irish supplied over 200,000 Volunteers for the British army, an effort which was even praised by Kitchener himself in 1915.[696] Yet this commitment to the war effort was undermined by Tory determination to have Ulster excluded from eventual Home Rule and by what Paul-Dubois calls English suspicion of her Catholic Irish troops. He alleges that they were provided with Protestant officers or absorbed into essentially non-Irish regiments. Any formation of an Irish Corps was avoided.[697] Strangely, Paul-Dubois does not mention the formation of the 36th Ulster Division of largely Protestant soldiers, which could have lent weight to his argument.

In 1915, Asquith appointed several of the Unionist 'rebels' as senior Ministers in his cabinet. These included Carson, F.E. Smith, Walter Long and Bonar Law while Redmond was not offered the post that he could have desired - Chief Secretary for Ireland. Meanwhile no attempt was made to control or proscribe the Irish Volunteers and the minuscule, if sartorially striking, Irish Citizen Army, who were openly parading in uniform in Dublin and elsewhere and training in the countryside. This government inactivity allowed the growth of what Paul-Dubois calls 'the virus' of anti-British and anti-parliamentary sentiment which circumstances now caused to spread out from extremists to newer recruits. A rising was planned 'more or less

---

693 Ibid. p. 369.
694 Ibid. p. 372.
695 Ibid. p. 375.
696 Ibid. p. 377.
697 Ibid. p. 379.

secretly' and arms were obtained from Germany, although their shipment was intercepted by the Navy.[698] Ironically, Casement was landed in Kerry by a German submarine and promptly arrested as he attempted to forestall the Easter Rising.[699]

Asquith failed to exploit the popular condemnation of the Dublin rebels and instead of reacting as his predecessors had towards the defeated Boer leaders, executions and mass deportation and internment followed. He therefore lost an opportunity to swing popular Irish sentiment behind the Government. Instead, Irish sympathy swung behind the rebels as an innocent population felt that it had been obliged to share the punishment.[700]

In 1917, the Irish Convention failed to achieve agreement because the Ulster Unionists attended to obstruct rather than to negotiate and thereby marginalised the leaders of Nationalist opinion involved. It became clear that the Ulster policy suited London and that there was no possibility of Home Rule with power over taxation [Dominion Status].[701] This meant that, when the conscription crisis of 1918 erupted, the way was open for the electoral divergence, which resulted in the Sinn Féin landslide of December 1918. The IPP was finished as an electoral force; something which, Paul-Dubois reminds his readers, John Redmond fortunately did not live to see.[702]

The article concludes with the description of an Ireland scarred by refusal and rough treatment, blighted by the triumph of Orangeism, isolated, far from the centre, her sacrifice forgotten and emerging from the war as a defeated nation. Paul-Dubois suggests that had the Government handled matters more intelligently and resisted the Unionist faction then Ireland would have been a different and happier place.[703]

His second article entitled *Le Sinn Fein et la guerre Anglo-Irlandaise 1918-1921* is a development of the Irish story since the end of the Great War.[704] It is interesting to note this first use in French of the phrase *la guerre Anglo-Irlandaise* or Anglo-Irish War. While the events in Ireland up to this point [late 1921] had been variously described in the press as troubles, rebellion and even civil war, none had

---

698 Ibid. p. 381.
699 Ibid. p. 382.
700 Ibid. p. 383.
701 Ibid. p. 389.
702 Ibid. pp. 390-393.
703 Ibid. p. 394.
704 L. Paul-Dubois, 'Le Drame irlandais II: Le Sinn Fein et la guerre Anglo-Irlandaise 1918-1921' in

used the phrase Anglo-Irish War, which is now in general use. Paul-Dubois reminds his readers of the terrible and poignant events in Ireland which he describes as taking place 'just by us although hidden behind the British curtain'.[705] The long history of Irish rebellions from 1691 to 1919 is outlined; rebellions provoked by the impossibility of open war against the English in Ireland. Paul-Dubois repeats his analysis that forty years of parliamentary activity caused physical force to remain dormant but the recent failure of parliamentary activity to gain Home Rule has awakened rebellion in Ireland.[706] The evolution of Sinn Féin thinking is discussed from Griffith's original idea of a dual monarchy to the Republic of 1919 with the persistent and essential element of constructing an Ireland, in spite of the English and, without the English. Readers are reminded that this notion goes back as far as 1798 and Wolfe Tone, whose politics, Paul-Dubois feels, anticipated the later cry of Mazzini and Garibaldi *fuori i barbari.*[707]

The Great War saw and brought to Ireland the victory of violent extremism. This was not the victory of neo-fenianism allied to the strength of the working-class movement, which had attempted the sad Rising at Easter 1916, but the victory of Sinn Féin over Redmonite parliamentarism.[708] This victory resided in the formation of the first Dáil and the declaration of independence. Paul-Dubois takes his readers through the vicissitudes of the first Dáil and describes the activities of the Irish representatives in Paris who meet with international indifference, despite support from Irish-Americans.[709] This is followed by an account of British coercion over the same period giving what appears to be a tendentious description of raids, arrests, and deportations. He states that this process started the violence but when he moves to describe the IRA violence and the intimidation of the population where support was not freely given, we see that he is attempting a dispassionate account. The targets and the strategy of the IRA are described in some detail and he likens their unexpected and mysterious guerrilla to the resistance of the Vendée during the French Revolution.[710] Eventually, what becomes clear is Paul-Dubois' disgust at the violence which is endemic across

---

Revue des Deux Mondes, (01/10/1921), pp. 584-619.

[705] 'tout près de nous, derrière le rideau britannique' Ibid. p.584.

[706] Ibid. pp. 584-585.

[707] throw out the barbarians. Ibid. p. 587. This is one of the slogans of the *Risorgimento* where the Italian word *barbari* has a similar meaning to the English but with an extra sense of foreigness.

[708] Ibid. pp. 587-588.

[709] Ibid. pp. 590-592.

Ireland, whoever is responsible, and which is damaging Irish society. He sees violence and criminality becoming the law itself.[711] This conclusion leads him to examine the Government's policing arrangements in some detail. He accurately identifies the various forces and sets out their composition and purpose in a very clear manner. Here is no woolly confusion between 'Auxies' and 'Tans'.[712] Paul-Dubois explains the breakdown in discipline amongst the Auxiliary Police Cadets and its consequences. The degree of brutality that they show is made clear and that this brutality resulted in retaliatory violence, often where there was none before.[713] The growth of revulsion in England that their activity provoked is recounted and he repeats remarks by various observers that some Irish towns now look like Belgian towns after Great War battles.[714] He wryly comments that even Madame Despard, the sister of the Lord-Lieutenant, Field-Marshal French, has been recruited to the Sinn Féin cause because of the violent campaign of the British security forces.

The support for Sinn Féin and the IRA campaign is widespread. Most of Catholic Ireland gives tacit support at least and Paul-Dubois feels that, whatever the outcome, the campaign will not be denied in future years as the 1916 Rising was denied in the months that followed it or as, in France, the Paris Commune of 1871 was denied. Ireland has responsibility for the violence and the crimes of the IRA but Britain is the cause of them.[715] This moral judgement is typical of the author and in line with the style of French historiography since Michelet, where morality is an essential component of the justification for events. Paul-Dubois, as a third generation exponent, is interested in exploring this issue and thus we see his conclusion couched in moral terms. He suggests that only time and the achievement of Sinn Féin's objective will allow the memory of the violence used to gain it to be wiped from the national psyche. As a result, if Ireland gains her freedom it will be received with bloodstained hands and who can tell when the blood-lust will end?[716]

Both sides in the conflict attempt to justify their actions and to cover their worst excesses. Lloyd George justifies the behaviour of the British security forces by

---

710 Ibid. pp. 593-596.
711 Ibid. p. 598.
712 Ibid. pp. 599-601.
713 Ibid. p. 602. Paul-Dubois suggests that in Co. Waterford in 1920, burnings by the Auxiliaries stimulated IRA activity there where there had been none before.
714 Ibid. p. 605.
715 Ibid. p. 610.

blaming Sinn Féin and is pushed to continue allowing it by the ultras in the Tory party on whom he depends to stay in power. Yet, despite this, British public opinion began to comment critically on this policy from mid-1920 onwards. Voices of protest were raised by Liberals, Labour, English Catholics and even retired generals.[717] Paul-Dubois cites Garvin in *The Observer* in August 1920 to the effect that if illegality is the response to illegality then established order is destroyed.[718] Here he found an echo of his own view of the lack of morality in the situation and wonders what damage was being done to Irish civil society.

Summing up the results of the war, Paul-Dubois describes it as cruel but ultimately fought in vain, given that both sides lost and that politically nothing had been changed. England's military and political effort failed. Sinn Féin and the IRA only managed to hold out against the British Empire but that was in itself still quite an achievement, but at what a cost.[719] Their extremism split the country and strengthened Unionism in the North. Sectarian strife in the North East and Sinn Féin's boycott of the Unionist North will make reinforce partition and make a United Ireland almost impossible to achieve.[720] We know today just how correct he was in this.

Finally, Paul-Dubois sees the Treaty negotiations as a moral victory for Sinn Féin but wonders if the opportunity they present to all participants will be wasted. The English must be prepared to make sacrifices, Ulster must listen to Ireland's call for unity and the Irish must see that one can lose the possible by striving for the impossible. Can they all achieve in the Emerald Isle a work of peace and conciliation, thus happily ending *le drame irlandais*?[721]

These two articles in *Revue des Deux Mondes* mark the most serious response in French to the events of 1919-1921. They demonstrate a careful and well researched preparation and are written in a clear and unambiguous way. There is no sense that the writer is patronising the Irish and their peripheral little war nor is he taken in by their propaganda. Neither is he tempted to engage in anglophobia. He explores and understands the British position and reflects the divisions of opinion within the British public. He is a little shaky on the Ulster Protestants, ignoring completely the Church

---

716 Ibid. p. 611.
717 Ibid. p. 613.
718 Ibid. p. 615.
719 Ibid. p. 617.
720 Ibid. p. 618.

of Ireland roots of Orangeism, but does manage to convey the difference of the Ulster situation. Yet, Ireland to him means the 26 counties. He is not alone in this since, in France as we have seen, most reports share this view. He deplores the violence in the war, one suspects because he sees it as essentially a civil war and also because of the moral damage it will inflict on Irish society. He sees the collective experience as creating a dangerous moral economy where violence becomes acceptable as a political device - a device to serve political ends. As it was to turn out, he was quite right in this analysis. The rejection of the Treaty by nearly half the Dáil in 1922 was to lead to armed uprising against the new Irish Government. As we know, this spread into a small but bitter civil war fought over a form of words in the Dáil oath of allegiance and the perception that the Irish Republic was being betrayed by those who had accepted the deal struck with Lloyd George's Government. When it was over, the Irish political landscape was different indeed but the virus of political violence was not rooted out, just as Paul-Dubois feared.

With the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921 the daily papers in Paris returned suddenly to the Irish question. All reported the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty but the headline in *L'Humanité* summed up the general feeling with the concluding phrase '*mais demain ...?*'[722] The paper saw the Treaty as sealing the peace between the nations but felt that the people's struggle was about to begin. This was in line with the Communist view of world revolution at the time and helps to explain the detailed coverage of the Irish Civil War later in the year.[723] Sean O'Ceallaigh was accorded an interview with James de Coquet of *Le Figaro* on the front page, a remarkable change of attitude by that paper, in which he gave a pessimistic series of comments on the Treaty.[724] O'Ceallaigh explained what was meant by the term Free State but reiterated the view that the struggle had been for an independent Republic and that had not been achieved by the peace agreement. He felt that the majority of voters in Ireland would reject the Treaty and, sadly, that would mean the continuation of the struggle. England would never overcome the Irish and would eventually weaken before the Irish resistance. O'Ceallaigh added that the cost of the war, quoted at £1 million per week, would also bear on their calculations. The English would concede

---

721 Ibid. p. 619.
722 *L'Humanité*, 07/12/1921.
723 See Chapter 9.
724 *Le Figaro,* 07/12/1921.

the Republic and when that day came he hoped that the Irish Republic would bear witness to the sympathy shown to the Irish by France. Ever the diplomat, O'Ceallaigh made no comment about the unwillingness of the French Government to support the Irish cause in 1919.

More information was given on page three in the rubrique *Dernière Heure* which described the final evening of deliberations and the news that Belfast [the Unionist Government of Northern Ireland] was minded to accept the Treaty. This is revealing, since the Unionists had not been involved in the discussions but *Le Figaro* implies that they were in a position to exercise some form of veto on the agreement. While the text of the Treaty was not given, a translation of the member's oath of the Free State Parliament was printed verbatim, but without comment.[725]

Further brief reports appeared the following day with Northern Unionists reserving their position, while their Southern colleagues, according to Arthur Griffith, had indicated that they would co-operate with the Free State.[726] Little more was heard from *Le Figaro* apart from a report a few days later which indicated that de Valera was about to resign as Head of the Irish Government and that public opinion and the press were in favour of accepting the Treaty and its eventual ratification by the Dáil. The view, current in London, that de Valera's resignation was a precursor to ratification and that only a small minority of the Dáil would share his rejection of the terms of the agreement, was also reported.[727] With that, *Le Figaro* turned its attention elsewhere. Its rather desultory reporting of events in Ireland came to an end.

The signing of the Treaty was reported under the heading *L'État libre d'Irlande* in *Le Temps*, whose article gave a good indication of the general reaction of relief of the British press. The report came from London and began:

> *It's a long way to Tipperary*, as the song has it, but everything is fine if one ends up by getting there. After six-hundred years of argument and one hundred and twenty years of chronic hostility between subjugated Ireland and Great Britain, the [treaty of] peace was signed yesterday ...[728]

Details of the constitutional arrangements for the ratification of the Treaty by the

---

[725] Ibid.

[726] *Le Figaro,* 08/12/1921.

[727] *Le Figaro,* 11/12/1921.

[728] *It's a long way to Tipperary*, comme dit la chanson, mais tout va bien si l'on finit par arriver. Après six cents ans de querelles et cent vingt ans d'hostilités entre l'Irlande assujettie et la Grande-Bretagne, la paix a été signée hier .... *Le Temps,* 07/12/1921.

British Parliament followed and the rest of the report was taken up by a full translation of the clauses of the Treaty itself. This was the only French newspaper to provide this.

A further report from London the following day gave details of fears in Dublin of 'a certain opposition to the ratification of the agreement'.[729] de Valera was described as 'embarrassed' by being actually on a speaking tour, exhorting the Irish electorate to prepare for a renewed stuggle, at the precise moment when the Treaty was signed. Then, as the report progresses, it becomes clear that a schism was opening up in the Sinn Féin cabinet between the London plenipotentiaries and de Valera's faction. *Le Temps* suggests that this is over certain clauses which deal with the Governor General and certain financial clauses which would have the effect of making Ireland responsible for a proportion of the UK War Loan debt towards the USA. The position of the Ulster Government [sic] is described as reserved, with Sir James Craig declaring that his Government had not yet arrived at a view. The correspondent suggests that Craig's acceptance of the Treaty would imply that large areas of the six counties of Northern Ireland would pass to the Free State in exchange for a sliver of East Donegal. If this were the case, the correspondent concludes that one cannot envisage the fate of Ulster, implying that the remaining area would not be economically viable, as Unionists had always maintained. The report ends by noting the acceptance of the agreement by leading British Unionists such as Lord Birkenhead and Bonar Law and that Lord Middleton was seeking an agreement with Sinn Féin on Southern Unionist representation in the Dáil.

Telegrammes of congratulation arrived in London from the Pope,[730] and the French President [Millerand] to which the King graciously replied.[731] Meanwhile, in Dublin, the split between the pro- and anti-Treaty factions in the Irish Government was seen as a serious problem. De Valera's address to the Irish people was given in full and Art O'Brien's comments on the Treaty as being a stage on the way to full independence were noted. The Irish cabinet is expected, nevertheless, to give a majority recommendation to the Dáil in favour of ratification. This report failed to examine in detail the implications of the split in the Irish cabinet, insisting instead on the general atmosphere of relief in Ireland which was aided by the British

---

729 *Le Temps*, 08/12/1921.
730 Ibid.
731 *Le Temps*, 09/12/1921.

Government's release of Irish internees [described as *prisonniers politiques*]. Clearly, *Le Temps* did not feel the need to send a reporter all the way to Dublin and the London correspondent gleaned most of his information from the British and Irish press and from what emanated from the London office of Sinn Féin. By Christmas time 1921, Ireland was evidently no longer seen as very newsworthy or events in the British Isles were not seen as central to the interests of the French readership as *Le Temps* had judged them to be in late 1920. A report of the crucial Dáil vote in January was headed *Grande Bretagne - L'État libre d'Irlande* and briefly gave an account of the resignation of de Valera.[732] The ratification was taken as a foregone conclusion as a result. *Le Temps* had no more to say on the matter.

The right-wing press nevertheless, did provide two more reports of some substance on the events of December 1921. These appeared in *L'Illustration.* The first was an account based on London press reports and other sources by the special correspondent Ludovic Naudeau.[733] He gave an outline of the late-night acceptance of the Treaty terms by the Irish delegation, followed by an analysis of de Valera's position, based of reports of his speech at Limerick on the 5th December. The post-signing divergence between this position and that of the signatories was explained by quoting from the press-release of Art O'Brien in the London Sinn Féin office which stated that the threat of renewed cruel war had forced the hand of the signatories who had signed to avoid this. O'Brien added that the Treaty was no cause for Irish rejoicing as a result. Naudau then takes his readers back over events from the King's Belfast speech in June though the truce and de Valera's negotiations in London to the Treaty in December. Initial reports from London told of a majority opinion in Ireland in favour but Naudeau now informs his readers that his Irish sources indicate that de Valera is gaining more support for his view that the Treaty should not be ratified. Naudeau talks of *les femmes irlandaises* being against the Treaty by which he probably meant the female republican Deputies who bitterly opposed ratification to the end.

The article closes with short biographies of Arthur Griffith [biographical notes on de Valera had already appeared in *L'Illustration* of 23th July 1921] and of Michael

---

[732] *Le Temps* 10/01/1922.
[733] *L'Illustration,* 17/12/1921.

Collins who was described as 'this athlete of thirty-five'.[734] Naudeau's conclusion is original:

> If the voice of de Valera ardently expresses all that is irrepressible and indestructible in the great dream [...] of the Irish people, those of Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins reveal the profound fatigue of the present generation, its ardent desire for peace, its pressing need for repose, security and reconstruction.[735]

This would certainly have been an appropriate conclusion after the Civil War and has been generally accepted as a factor in Ireland's political atmosphere under Cosgrave's first administration. A narrower Nationalism took the place of the more generous elements of the tradition and limited the development of forward-looking or radical policies.[736] Yet, it is revealing to see how Naudeau sees this public battle-fatigue as an element in Irish politics developing at the end of 1921. The energy with which the Republicans held their position in the next six months and how Collins, and to some extent Griffith, attempted to ward off a rebellion against the Free State belies this analysis. Yet, we must remember that the effort probably hastened Griffith's sudden death in August 1922 and compounded the Free State's eventual national political fatigue in 1923.

On Christmas Eve, a short article appeared under a photo of Dublin parliamentarians which recounted the continuing debate in Dublin and the ground being gained by the anti-treaty faction.[737] The photo is misleading in that while being described as 'a group of Dublin Deputies' which it clearly was, it was taken well over a year before because Terence MacSwiney is standing in the second row. It certainly does not represent the Dáil in December 1921.

Finally, a week later *L'Illustration,* published a long article from a special correspondent in Dublin, who described the scene of the Dáil meetings in the National University.[738] The report is accompanied by three photographs of Arthur Griffith, de Valera and Commandant Hale (sic) [actually Sean Hales] arriving at University College for the Dáil session. Hales is shown arriving on a side car while in IRA

---

[734] Cet athlète de trente-cinq ans ..., showing how little was known about him outside Ireland. Ibid.

[735] Si la voix de M. De Valera exprime ardemment tout ce qu'il y a d'incoercible et d'inestructible dans le grand rêve [...] du peuple irlandais, celles de MM. Arthur Griffith et Michael Collins nous révèlent la grande lassitude de la génération actuelle, son ardent désir de paix, son pressant besoin de détente, de sécurité et de reconstruction. Ibid.

[736] M. Hopkinson, *Green against green: the Irish civil war* (Dublin, 1988), p. 275.

[737] *L'Illustration,* 24/12/1921.

uniform but wearing a Stetson hat and carrying a pipe and walking stick. Griffith and de Valera are more conventionally dressed in dark suits and winged collared shirts and ties. Noting that approximately fifty Deputies were against the Treaty and roughly the same number in favour, the correspondent points out that some twenty Deputies were still undecided. He gives a vivid account of the exchanges between speakers on either side of the argument who included Griffith, de Valera, Childers and Collins. He reports Robert Barton's dramatic intervention revealing how he and Gavan Duffy had been pushed into signing the Treaty despite their deeply felt republicanism. The correspondent continues his report on the gradual dissolution of Sinn Féin's *'Union Sacré'* which had brought them so much. The movement is now riven by a deep divide of political difference caused by the signing of the Treaty. Both factions share a desire for independence but the Republicans see the Treaty as a despicable compromise, while the moderates adopt a more pragmatic approach exhorting their colleagues to accept what they have obtained and to build on that to gain full independence. The report concludes with the Deputies leaving Dublin for Christmas and New Year and raises the question of what effect any discussions with their constituents might have on the eventual outcome of the debate.

The reporting of the Anglo-Irish war in the French press was varied but increasingly detailed and in some cases, very well-informed. The events in Ireland were amongst the first ever in France to be covered by special correspondents who were developing the technique of investigative journalism. Some of the reports are clumsy and clearly picked up from other [often London] papers. Yet others stand as superb essays which engage the reader even today with their style and detailed observation. A few respected names in twentieth-century French literature like Joseph Kessel cut their teeth on the Irish situation while others, like Henri Béraud, made their early investigative reporting reputations there. Ireland provided the proof to French editors that effective investigative reporting required the reporters to be on the spot: something of a new development when compared to the coverage of the Ulster crisis of 1910-1914 when there is no evidence that *Le Figaro's* reporter, Jean de Coudurier ever moved beyond Greater London. To be fair to him, however, the main political action of that crisis was effectively played out in Westminster, but nevertheless, the point is worth making.

---

[738] *L'Illustration,* 31/12/1921.

Not only do these reports track the events of the Anglo-Irish war for the French reader but they supply proof of the emergence of the idea of independent Ireland in the French view of Europe and the world. As the realisation dawned that the Great War had changed the map of Europe for ever and that Versailles was not an exercise in putting the world back into its pre-war shape, as had largely been done a century before at the Congress of Vienna, so Ireland emerged onto the scene where once it had been effectively shielded by what one columnist called the 'British curtain'.[739] France became aware of the nation of Ireland. The catalyst for this was the arrest, hunger-strike and death of the Lord Mayor of Cork, Terence MacSwiney in 1920. An additional factor was the careful news management of this event by Sinn Féin and the eventual success of the effort expended by those at the Paris office. The reports on the French press throw a clear, if indirect, light on the story of the earliest Irish foreign representation and the struggles of Sean T. O' Ceallaigh and George Gavan Duffy to have Ireland's voice heard there and further afield. The success of the Sinn Féin publicity machine, in the capable hands of Desmond FitzGerald in Dublin and Art O'Brien in London, can be judged by the generally supportive articles and news-items that had increasingly filled the space that French editors allocated to reports from or about Ireland.

[739] Paul-Dubois. See note 700.

Chapter 9

La Guerre des Frères

The Irish Civil War 1922-23

As January 1922 closed the Anglo-Irish Treaty had been ratified by both the Westminster and Dublin parliaments and the process of putting it into effect was getting underway. While the British Government had to deal with little real opposition to the Treaty, apart from that coming from some imperialist Tory die-hards, the situation in Ireland was very different. Sinn Féin was riven by the rejection of the Treaty by almost half its Deputies and activists in the country which included the IRA. De Valera led his supporters out of the Dáil in noisy dispute with former colleagues and comrades in arms who now supported the Treaty. Opposition then became extra-parliamentary and the debate took on more of the elements of a struggle for power with two factions of the IRA taking opposing positions in the background. Some units of the IRA remained neutral even after the outbreak of the Civil War.[740] Personalities played a great part in the argument and the consequent alignment of politicians and armed groups. On both sides, a significant number of supporters made their decision in the light of a preferred leader's known position.[741]

The pro-Treaty IRA formed the basis of the army of the Free State which also took in many ex-British soldiers of Irish origin. Led by Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins, the Dáil Government, now the Provisional Government of the Irish Free State, began the process of putting the machinery of government in place and of attempting to function legitimately. Elections to provide the State's first mandated Government were to be held but in the meantime there were many pressing problems. The existence of an extra-parliamentary opposition added to them. This opposition itself was initially fragmented and, by its nature, more dependent on the armed groups which supported it. That these armed groups forming the Republican IRA so easily moved out of the Dáil's control was a final result of the old problem of the Dáil's political control of the IRA. This had always been an issue during the Anglo-Irish war and the split was facilitated by the imprecision of the chain of command at that time.[742] Reports from Ireland in France in the first months of 1922, tell of discord in

---

[740] F. O'Donoghue, *No other law* (Dublin, 1954), p. 288. Florrie O'Donoghue claimed that there were 20,000 members of the Neutral IRA Association. He and others certainly attempted to mediate between the Free State and the Republicans in Munster.

[741] Many IRA men who supported the Treaty later claimed that they did so because they trusted Collins even if they did not understand or were not happy about the political course that he followed. O'Donoghue suggests that members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, which included Collins, took a pragmatic line towards the Treaty as a means to achieve and independent Republic. This view was not accepted by others in the IRA who saw the Treaty as betraying the *proclaimed* Republic.

[742] R.F. Foster, p. 511.

the Dáil and of disorder and criminality in the country. Nineteen deaths as a result of unspecified trouble in Belfast were reported with a police spokesman stating that there were about 7000 '*apaches*' in Belfast who would have to be disarmed before order could be restored.[743] The same report carries details of a major armed bank raid in Dublin. Rail strikes and continuing troubles in Belfast were reported as was the Free State's claim to Fermanagh and Tyrone.[744] Churchill's halting of the withdrawal of troops from Ireland, his promise to reinforce the Northern garrison and four more deaths in Belfast were reported under the heading *L'Irlande troublée*.[745] This set the tone for the next few months. Despite this, *L'Illustration* preferred to give almost a full page to report the opening of the World Irish Race Congress in the Hotel Continental in Paris in January 1922.[746] It was presided by the Duke of Tetuan, Juan O'Donnell, a descendant of the first Earl of Tyrconnel, who left Lough Swilly for Spain in 1607. The photograph clearly shows Eoin MacNeil, Sean T. O'Ceallaigh, de Valera, Douglas Hyde and a sartorially striking Lord Ashbourne in kilt and plaid, described as *un archaïque costume de son pays* [an ancient native costume].[747] In the picture, O'Ceallaigh is shown addressing the opening assembly which had delegates from Irish communities across the world. The report by Ludovic Naudeau is essentially a list of dignitaries present. He remarks that Don Juan O'Donnell has more the air of a Spanish Grandee than a Sinn Féin rebel, and that one has to have some knowledge of Ireland to grasp the character of an assembly where the picturesque is not in the least surprising. He concludes rather oddly, since after all this is January 1922, that the conference has given observers the best idea of the solidarity which unites the different branches of the Irish race. *L'Illustration* is giving its readers a piece of good news about Irish matters which was rare at that time. Yet, it is surprising that a correspondent of the reputation and quality of Ludovic Naudeau was responsible for the text.

What was really happening in Ireland did give food for thought to serious commentators. In his account of the events of this period of 1922, published a year later in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Louis Paul-Dubois gives a vivid description of the

---

743 *L'Humanité,* 07/01/1922.
744 *L'Humanité,* 14/01/1922 and 04/02/1922.
745 *L'Humanité,* 14/02/1922.
746 *L'Illustration*, 28/01/1922.
747 Ibid.

state of Ireland and the moral economy which sponsored criminality and violence:

> Yet violence does not disarm. Ordinary violence at first, criminality as a common right. The legacy of tragic times, of terror: a fanatical mob, of gunmen, adventurers or professional criminals, living off the country, from disorder and looting. English authority is no more and Irish authority is not yet established: spontaneous anarchy arises up in the interregnum. Armed raids by masked men on banks, shops, post offices, private houses; theft of cash, merchandise, precious objects, day by day car theft, trains and stations pillaged, farms and castles in flames, kidnappings and murders.[748]

This was the Ireland that the Provisional Government had inherited and this was an Ireland incubating civil war. For all its hyperbole and distortion for political ends *L'Humanité* paints a picture for its readers of what was indeed a most distressful country. For the Irish, how close this situation was to nationwide civil war is open to discussion.[749] But, it is clear that, when *L'Humanité* headed reports with phrases implying a degree of warfare, it was not mere exaggeration.[750] A reader observing events in Ireland through the columns of *L'Humanité* in the first part of 1922 would not have been surprised when he was told in late June that two factions of the IRA had joined battle.[751] The civil war had apparently been in existence for some months. It seems clear that its inevitability rather than its actuality had been haunting Ireland for that time but, when the Free State artillery opened up on the Four Courts, the point became irrelevantly academic.

The Irish Civil War was 'the continuance of a deep political disagreement by other means,' to misquote Carl von Clausewitz,[752] and is generally accepted to have been initiated by the bombardment of the Four Courts in the morning of the 28th June

---

[748] Or la violence ne se désarme pas. La violence banale d'abord, la criminalité dite de droit commun. Legs des temps tragiques, de la terreur: une tourbe d'énergumènes, de *gunmen*, d'aventuriers ou de professionels du crime, vit sur le pays de désordres et de dépouilles. L'autorité anglais n'est plus, l'autorité irlandaise n'est pas encore: l'anarchie spontanée se lève dans l'interrègne. *Raids* à main armée, figure masquée, sur les banques, les magasins, les bureaux de poste, les habitations privées; vols d'espèces, de marchandises, d'objets précieux; vols d'autos au jour la journée; pillage de trains, de gares; incendies de fermes, de châteaux; enlèvements, assassinats. L. Paul-Dubois, 'Le Drame irlandais III: L'Ultime Épreuve' in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, (15/04/1923), p. 810.

[749] Charles Townshend suggests that the highly localised outbreaks of violence were possibly more to do with traditional local disputes rather than deep felt responses to the Treaty. Townshend, C., *Political Violence in Ireland: Government and Resistance since 1848* (Oxford, 1983), p. 366, and Paul-Dubois comes close to making this point in his article in *Revue des Deux Mondes* of 15/09/1921 p. 367

[750] e.g. 'La Guerre Civile en Irlande', *L'Humanité,* 05/04/1922, 16/04/1922 and 18/04/1922

[751] *L'Humanité*, 28/06/1922. This report describes the arrest/kidnapping of Free State General J. J. 'Ginger' O'Connell by the Republican IRA. This was the final Republican action before the Free State Army bombarded the Four Courts.

[752] What he actually said was '[War is] the continuance of political commerce, a carrying out of the

1922. The Army of the Irish Free State was attempting to pick up where General Maxwell had left off in 1916 and blow the entrenched Republicans from their redoubt in the Courts which they had held since 14th April. On the European scale of things the Irish Civil War was not a particularly long drawn out or bloody affair - it ended on the 27th April 1923 having cost the lives of some 800 Free State soldiers, probably double that number of Republicans and at least a similar number of civilians. However, the social and political legacy of bitterness and division and the burden on the public finances of the new State were enormous. Ronan Fanning states that in 1923-1924 30% of all national expenditure was devoted to defence and a further 7% to compensation for property loss and personal injuries.[753] He goes on to state that these categories of expenditure continued to be amongst the five heaviest annual charges on the state's finances until 1929. The Irish Civil War buried the poetic notion that bloodshed had a cleansing effect on Irish nationalism and its highly regional nature reinforced the notion that Ireland was, as the *Kilkenny People* had warned on 15th April 1922, 'too small for Civil War'.[754]

Space allocated by French newspaper editors to this peripheral but bitter conflict was sparse but the most interesting coverage in the Paris dailies was carried by the leftist daily, *L'Humanité*. Therefore, this chapter will concentrate on analysing that paper's coverage while referring to other journals, as appropriate. Consequently, it is useful to examine the nature, political orientation and background of this particular newspaper which has just completed its centenary this year [2004].

L'Humanité was a paper which had a left-of-centre tradition and had fairly wide readership, in French terms. It was founded by the socialist leader, Jean Jaurès, and had recently made a significant shift to the left, becoming the principal French communist daily.[755] This change had been signalled at the Socialist party (SFIO) congress at Tours in the last week of December 1920 when the French socialists had divided over the question of adherence to the 3rd International. The communists took the paper with them and it thus became the organ of the French Section of the 3rd Socialist International. [SFIC] and specifically under the control of the French Communist Party [PCF]. The editorial staff and reporters, therefore, had a certain

---

same by other means.' C. von Clausewitz (trans J.J. Graham), *On war* (Ware, 1997), p. 22.

753 R. Fanning, *Independent Ireland* (Dublin, 1983), p. 39.

754 Quoted in M. Hopkinson, *Green against green: the Irish civil war* (Dublin, 1988), p. 274.

755 P.Albert and F Terrou, pp. 71 and 99.

first-hand experience of serious political division and it might not be too fanciful to suggest that this experience aided their treatment of the Irish situation.

In 1922, *L'Humanité* had a circulation of some 200,000[756] with a readership whose political roots were embedded in the events of the Paris *Commune* of 1871 and struggles for workers' rights under the Third Republic. This readership was based mainly in the industrial Paris suburbs and the under-developed rural areas, particularly the Massif Central, where extreme socialist views were held. Furthermore, it had a tradition of fairly wide coverage of foreign news and, although this coverage was eclectic, it constituted between twenty and twenty-five per-cent of the news content of the paper. Clearly, the international agenda of the socialist and communist movements, recent popular experience of war, an anti-colonialist stance and opposition to capitalist liberal democracy all meant that foreign news was important in ideological terms as well as for its own sake.

After the end of the Great War, France passed through a period of social change which had political repercussions. The wartime coalescence of most political parties into the *Union Sacré* was maintained at the elections of November 1919 by the political grouping known as *le Bloc National* or National Coalition which swept all before it. This success had been aided by a printers strike in the run-up to the poll which had led to the temporary appearance of a broadsheet, *La Presse de Paris,* brought out jointly by those press publishers who supported *le Bloc National.* On the left, *L'Humanité* was in competition with smaller political newspapers such as *La Feuille Commune,* but this caused little serious difficulty. However, under the new Government, the circulation and influence of *L'Humanité* was in inverse ratio to the strength of their political supporters in the Chamber of Deputies. It had the widest readership on the left although the communists had the smallest representation [ten seats] amongst the Deputies of that persuasion. Its circulation dropped dramatically in late 1923 but recovered during the following decade.

L'Humanité in 1922 cost 20 centimes and had four pages. The first had main news items, the second domestic, party news and arts reviews. Page three carried international news and a serial. The last page carried advertising for a remarkably bourgeois range of items such as quack remedies, champagne, ready made suits and

---

[756] J.Braunthal, *History of the International 1914-1943,* London 1967, p.195 although others suggest that this figure is too high. See C. Bellanger, *Histoire Générale de la Presse III* (Paris, 1972), p. 580.

garden sheds. This layout reflected the other popular dailies. In fact, it was a popular daily with a clear constituency, yet in many ways similar in layout to its competitors.

By 1923, *L'Humanité* had evolved into a hard-line filo-Soviet paper and remained so until the 1990s.[757] During this evolution its editorial line was often unclear, given that its managing editor, Marcel Cachin, had other preoccupations during the early 1920s.[758] He was defending himself against impeachment while seeking to preserve his position at the paper.[759] At the same time, a purge of editorial staff was being carried out in conformity with the principles of the Comintern. One of the symptoms of this process was a gradual eastward shifting of the geographical centre of gravity of foreign news reports as the eyes of the PCF turned increasingly towards Moscow. All this had the effect of lessening the coverage of Irish events by the spring of 1923. In fact, during March 1923 there were no reports from Ireland at all. Yet overall, when one looks at the degree to which Ireland was reported between 1922 and 1923 in *L'Humanité* one is struck by the frequency of reports on Ireland although longer and more analytical reports were rare. To give some idea of the degree of this coverage, it is worth noting that events in both Italy and Ireland were mentioned with similar frequency. Political developments in Italy at this time resulted in Mussolini's Fascist party gaining power and a dictatorship being established. The equal coverage given to Ireland gives some measure of the importance of Irish matters in the world view of *L'Humanité*.

A few news items were obtained from the French news agency *Havas,* some were picked up from British papers but the majority were telephoned anonymously from London by the *L'Humanité* correspondent. This conformed to normal news-gathering practice by the French press and as with other papers from time to time one is not always convinced of the presence of a correspondent on the spot. *L'Humanité* of course, had an interest in British political developments since this was the period when the Labour Party was moving to replace the Liberals as the alternative governing party. Although Lloyd George remained as Prime Minister until the winter of 1922, his party was terminally divided and would not form a Government again during the

---

[757] There was a break in publication during the Nazi occupation although it reappeared as a clandestine news sheet towards the end, emerging again in 1944.

[758] Marcel Cachin (1869-1958). Philosophy teacher, founder member of the PCF, deputy, then senator until 1958. R. de Livois, *Histoire de la Presse Française II* (Lausanne, 1965), p. 614.

[759] J. Fauvet, *Histoire du parti communiste français; 1917-1939* (Paris, 1964), pp. 60-61. Cachin was

rest of the century. Unemployment was beginning to be seen as a problem and Trade Union activity was high and, as we have seen, the 'bourgeois' British Government was in diplomatic conflict with the French Government over a number of issues, a situation, which the paper gleefully reported in detail. The Comintern was still operating the agenda of international revolution and Ireland was now a place apart, having negotiated and signed a treaty with the British after its own revolutionary experience. Thus, there was a genuine curiosity about Irish developments which were seen as having the potential for irritation of the principal imperialist government in Europe. If the national struggle in Ireland was to be followed by revolutionary activity in this new political entity within the British Empire then events there should be watched carefully. This is exemplified by the space given in January 1922, headed *La lutte des classes en Irlande* [Class struggle in Ireland], to the manifesto launched by the Executive Committee of the Irish Labour Party in support of a workers' Republic. It was linked with a report of a potential rail strike in Ireland.[760] *L'Humanité* sought to highlight issues that it believed would be crucial in Ireland without fully analysing the realities. There was high degree of wishful thinking in all this, as we now know but, at the time, and from the viewpoint of the *L'Humanité's* editorial team in *la rue La Fayette,* it all seemed reasonable enough.

Between January 1922 and the end of April 1923, *L'Humanité* carried 180 reports relating to events in Ireland in addition to daily reports on British matters. This represents an average of about one report every three days. On inspection of these reports it is clear that they fall into several categories or follow distinct themes. To some extent, these themes are accidental since, although *L'Humanité* did have a political agenda, it was not fixed but in process of evolution at this time.

First, the paper sought to inform its readership, without comment, of major events in Ireland. On the 8th January 1922 it stated that the Dáil had ratified the Anglo-Irish Treaty by 64 votes to 57, a report bought in from the *Havas* news agency.[761] The following day further details were given from the same source of public reaction in Ireland, principally of surprise at the size of the majority. No discussion of whether this surprise was at the closeness of the vote nor whether a

---

the great survivor - he remained in the directorate of *l'Humanité* until his death in 1958.

760 *L'Humanité,* 14/02/1922.

761 *L'Humanité* 08/01/1922.

greater majority had been expected. Scenes of 'indescribable enthusiasm' met Griffith and Collins as they appeared after the vote but de Valera was reported as having been close to tears as he left the session declaring, that the Republic, established by the [Irish] people could only be abolished by them.[762] As events progressed most reports were credited to the London correspondent who had [allegedly] telephoned them to the paper. Agency reports tended to be clear pick-ups from the British press and became relatively rare. However the announcement of the Collins-de Valera pact in May was strangely datelined Dublin, which suggests an agency report.[763] The same was true of the report of the meeting of the Convention [arising from the pact] where Collins and de Valera both addressed delegates.[764] This report is quite clearly an agency report, given its tone of indifferent neutrality. This can be contrasted with a later report from London outlining the excesses of police 'Specials' in Belfast who were alleged to have used machine guns in Catholic districts. Although the actual news might have been a pick-up, it is presented in normal *L'Humanité* style.[765]

The second category was 'industrial news', usually news of industrial disputes in Ireland drafted to suggest a greater economic or social impact than was actually the case. There was always a search for events which might signify the first cracks in the capitalist system in Ireland, so coverage of even minor disputes made the pages of *L'Humanité*. Often there was no follow up, so readers could not gain any indication of the actual implications of the dispute. An example is the report in May 1922, under the title *Des ouvriers irlandais prennent possession des usines* [Irish workers occupy factories], which stated that co-operative creameries in the West were being occupied and put under worker control early in 1922. *L'Humanité* added that the red flag was flying over them.[766] A similar item was the report of the occupation in February 1923 of two Cork corn mills by their workers. This action had followed a fortnight's strike. The workers had then proceeded to run the machinery normally, after hoisting the red flag above the mills.[767] There was no sequel to either of these items and readers were

---

[762] Ému jusqu'aux larmes, [*de Valera*] a déclaré que la République, établie par le peuple ne pouvait être abolie que par le peuple. *L'Humanité*, 09/01/1922.

[763] *L'Humanité*, 21/05/1922.

[764] *L'Humanité*, 24/05/1922.

[765] *L'Humanité*, 27/05/1922.

[766] *L'Humanité*, 15/05/1922.

[767] Cork: Les ouvriers de deux minoteries qui étaient en grève depuis 15 jours se sont emparés aujourd'hui de ces minoteries sur lesquelles ils ont aboré le drapeau rouge. Ils ont mis les machines en mouvement et commencent les travaux ordinaires de meunerie. *L'Humanité*, 05/02/1923.

left to wonder for how long the red flag actually flew above Irish creameries or corn mills.

Thirdly, there were reports which indicated the collapse of civil order. Again the sub-text was that this was probably due to revolt against a liberal capitalist government with its heel on the necks of the workers. The phrases 'class struggle, strike, situation and civil war' appear almost automatically in this context. They all appeared in headlines about Ireland in the month of February 1922, for example. Unfortunately, it soon became clear, even to the sub-editors of *L'Humanité,* that there actually *was* a break-down of civil order in Ireland. As we have seen, the pages of *L'Humanité* were not the only place where this was discussed. Linked to the break-down of civil order was the serious political disagreement over the Treaty and, by the end of February 1922, this was reflected in a fourth category of reporting which highlighted particular aspects of the complex Irish situation.

These included the reporting of sectarian and political divisions, as manifested by various violent events in Ireland and by pronouncements by various political leaders. Readers were told about a 'worker's' house being bombed in Belfast resulting in the death of the youngest of his three children.[768] The next day, the deaths of six people and a soldier in Belfast were reported under the title 'Terror in Belfast'.[769] *L'Humanité* headlined other reports of violent disorder in Ireland with the words 'guerre civile' on seven occasions, between January and July 1922 and also referred to 'blood flowing' in April. There was no distinction made between events in Northern Ireland and those in the South. Partition was not recognised by *L'Humanité*, since the editorial view was that, eventually, and possibly soon, Ireland would be one Republic. There was also difficulty with the concept that the island of Ireland could actually be partitioned with two jurisdictions. That such a relatively small geographical entity could have a frontier within it, was not easy for the French to imagine and *L'Humanité* therefore avoided presenting this geo-political element of the Irish problem to its readers. The word 'border' (*frontière*) appeared only once, when *L'Humanité* carried an account of the Pettigo incident where British and Irish troops clashed.[770] No explanation for the confrontation was given but notes on the materiel which the

---

[768] *L'Humanité*, 02/04/22.

[769] L'armée irlandaise divisée - La terreur à Belfast, *L'Humanité*, 03/04/22.

[770] ... le saillant de Pettigo se trouve maintenant entre les mains des troupes britanniques sur un longeur d'un mille à partir de la frontière ... *L'Humanité*, 06/06/1922.

British army had captured from the Free State troops ended the report.

After the outbreak of actual hostilities in late June 1922, *L'Humanité's* reporting had settled down to a pattern of regularly informing the readers of events of the conflict, as they occurred. Reports of comments by politicians had been dominated by pithy excerpts of various alleged remarks by de Valera. These were a form of sound bite, obviously at the time limited to newspaper reports. Examples of this practice included his remark that it was not true that 80% of the Irish people were in favour of the Treaty and that disorder would continue as long as Ireland did not gain full independence.[771] However, Sir James Craig's remark, that the most serious problem [for peace in Ireland] at the moment was the pact between Collins and de Valera, was quoted on the 24th May.[772] In June, *L'Humanité* faithfully reported a comment by Thomas Johnson, secretary of the Irish Labour Party, who declared that his principal criticism of the Dublin Government was, that there was too much talk of the future and that, the members of Dáil Eireann were not competent to deal with the question of unemployment and workers' living conditions.[773] This had something of a voice crying in the wilderness, given what else was happening at the time.

Finally, there was some attempt to explain the evolving political situation in Ireland by noting the various conferences and meetings which took place between political leaders.[774] The pacifist ideals of the left tended to lead the paper to attempt to show these as positive signs of the impending outbreak of peace. Named individuals were identified and on occasion longer explanatory pieces were printed about them. These tended to be supporters of the republican cause such as de Valera, Erskine Childers and Constance Markievicz.[775] Collins' death in August 1922 provoked a short biography.[776] James Larkin's possible return to Ireland was suggested in

---

[771] *L'Humanité,* 18/04/1922.

[772] *L'Humanité*, 24/05/1922.

[773] Les membres du Daily Eirean [sic] ne sont pas qualifiés pour règler la question du chômage et des habitations ouvrières. *L'Humanité*, 09/06/1922. It is intriguing to note that the copywriters of *L'Humanité* followed the normal French practice of making foreign nouns masculine and therefore write *du Dail* whereas Paul-Dubois uses *La Dail* since *Dáil* is feminine in Irish. This form is also used by Roger Chauviré, who taught French at the National University, in his article *L'Énigme d'un peuple* [The Enigma of a People] in *L'Illustration,* 05/08/1922.

[774] For example: Un accord entre les partis irlandais [Irish parties agree] *L'Humanité*, 23/02/1922; En Irlande [Collins *de Valera* meeting] 20/04/1922; Un accord entre les partis [Parties agree], 21/05/1922; L'accord Collins - *de Valera* [Collins and *de Valera* agreement] 23/05/1922; La Conférence irlandaise à Londres [Irish confer in London] 29/05/1922.

[775] *L'Humanité*, 09/12/1921, 24/11/1922, 14/04/1923 respectively.

[776] *L'Humanité*, 24/08/1922.

February 1923 and he was linked with the republican cause because he was reported as having spoken against the Treaty.[777] *L'Humanité* had already carefully sided with the anti-treaty Republicans in a signed article by Robert Pelletier in July 1922.[778] This had been reinforced by a clear statement of the political justification for this position, given towards the end of an article on the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson in July.[779] This stance became more explicit as time went on and was reinforced by the fact that the only pictures of Irish personalities printed during the period were of Republicans, Erskine Childers,[780] Countess Markievicz, [781] Jim Larkin[782] and Eamon de Valera.[783]

Putting the themes on one side and taking the key events between January 1922 and April 1923 as a guide, it is useful to look in a little more detail at the way in which *L'Humanité* attempted to explain to its readership what was happening politically in Ireland. Starting in January 1922, the Dáil ratification vote was reported although the fact that de Valera had resigned was noted.[784] On the 11th January, details of the new Provisional Government of the Free State were given and the walk-out of de Valera and his supporters was reported, but without comment. Thus, the fact that the Nationalists were now divided was reported although the implications of the split in the Sinn Féin ranks were completely missed. Over the next few weeks various reports from Ireland were carried but it was not until the 20th February that we read that M. De Valera is pursuing a 'vigorous' propaganda campaign against the Free State. The next day, news of the Sinn Féin *Ard Fheis* [*congrès*] and a significant excerpt of de Valera's address were carried. His claim that England could never have engineered the division between himself and Griffith, by now President of the Provisional Government, and his assertion that he would rather become a Unionist than accept the Treaty, were reported at some length. Griffith's and Collins' replies were briefly reported.[785]

---

[777] Jim Larkin arrivera en Irlande dans quelque jours. Il reprendra sans aucun doute son poste de président de l'Union des ouvriers généraux des transports. L'effet de sa presence sera considerable sur le mouvement travailliste en Irlande. On sait que Larkin s'est prononcé contre le traité anglo-irlandaise. *L'Humanité*, 12/02/1923.

[778] *L'Humanité* 07/07/1922.

[779] *L'Humanité* 30/07/1922. See note 793 below for the text.

[780] *L'Humanité* 26/11/1922 p.1.

[781] *L'Humanité* 14/04/1923 p.1.

[782] *L'Humanité* 25/04/1923. Larkin was seen by the Communist Party as aligned with the Republicans The paper now admitted that he had been detained by the US authorities.

[783] *L'Humanité,* 28/04/1923.

[784] *L'Humanité,* 08/01/1922.

[785] *L'Humanité,* 21/02/1922.

In the following weeks, although there were titles over items from Ireland such as 'War again in Ireland',[786] 'Ireland bleeds'[787] and 'A civil war in Ireland'[788] Again, this was the language of *L'Humanité*'s sub-editors attempting to show the cracks in the capitalist system rather than an accurate portrayal of the escalation of events. Nevertheless, we do already get a feel for the eventual position of the paper *vis à vis* the Republicans in that de Valera did get better coverage even at this early stage.

The occupation of the Four Courts by Republican forces in April was covered and the fact that this evoked memories of the 1916 rising is noted. [789] The failure of peace moves between the Provisional Government and de Valera in the run-up to the June election was reported.[790] However it would have taken an assiduous reader with a detailed map and some familiarity with the names of the various armed groups to construct a reasonable picture of what was actually happening in Ireland from the paper's reports. What the Paris railwayman sitting in his locomotive cab or the smallholder at his kitchen table somewhere in the *département* of the Creuse would have understood was that the Treaty had not brought peace to Ireland, North or South. They would have read that, despite the possibility of an agreement between de Valera and the Provisional Government, peace was threatened by the British who had lined the border with troops and had actually invaded the Free State at Pettigo on the Fermanagh-Donegal border.[791]

So it was with some relief that the elections of late June 1922 were reported and the enthusiasm of *L'Humanité* rather got the better of it with the headline 'Victory of the Labour Party in Ireland'.[792] The report gives the latest election results which confirm the 'victory' of the Irish Labour party with 15 candidates elected, as against 51 pro-treaty Sinn Féin, 31 anti-Treaty Sinn Féin and 13 others. This is not quite so unrealistic as it might seem since, in French terms, such a result for the party that *L'Humanité* supported, would have been a considerable improvement. At the time the PCF had only 10 seats in a far bigger chamber. Yet, as Foster points out, Labour had

---

786 La guerre reprend en Irlande, *L'Humanité* 07/03/1922.
787 L'Irlande sanglante, *L'Humanité* 25/03/1922.
788 Une guerre civile en Irlande, *L'Humanité* 29/03/1922.
789 *L'Humanité* 16/04/1922.
790 *L'Humanité* 01/05/1922.
791 *L'Humanité* 04/06/1922.
792 La victoire des Travaillistes en Irlande, *L'Humanité* 24/06/22.

done very well, gaining more actual votes than the anti-Treaty Republicans.[793]

The early events of the actual Civil War were covered if briefly: the bombardment of the Courts by the Free State forces;[794] the taking of Cork;[795] the death of Michael Collins [which made the front page on the 24th August]. This last report had a degree of analysis in that allusion was made to the importance for the Government of the loss of both Griffith [not previously reported] and Collins. Their roles were briefly reviewed and the final sentence 'It is not yet possible to foresee the consequences of this event' reflects informed opinion in the Irish and British press at the time.[796] The date of this report, the morning of the 24th., also suggests that, by August 1922, *L'Humanité* was well tuned into Irish events, since *The Times* of London had also only come out with the story on the 24th., although it had reported rumours of Collins' death the day before.[797]

The paper continued to chronicle the Civil War and the legal establishment of the Free State. At the end of July the editorial position was made explicit:

> We are with the Irish Republicans, despite their movement's all too clearly Nationalist character, because the [national] liberation from English domination is the pre-condition *sine qua non* of the liberation of the proletariat, because the Irish working class will only overcome its country's bourgeoisie when the latter is not sustained by English capitalism.[798]

It reported the new Cosgrave Government in September,[799] the Dáil's unanimous first reading of the acceptance of the constitution of the Free State[800] and the rumours surrounding possible peace negotiations brokered by a Capuchin friar in Cork.[801] Yet, its support for the Republicans was becoming increasingly evident. It picked up an interview with de Valera published in the *Manchester Evening News*, leading with the

---

793 R. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* p. 514.

794 *L'Humanité,* 29/06/22.

795 *L'Humanité,* 11/08/22.

796 On ne saurait prévoir les conséquences de cet événement, *L'Humanité* 24/8/22. For example: 'His death is a disaster for Ireland'. *Irish Times* 23/08/1922. Collins was shot at about 9-45 p.m. on the evening of the 22nd August 1922 just south of Bealnabláth, Co. Cork and news of this event did not reach the Free State Government in Dublin until some hours later.

797 *The Times,* 23/08/1922 and 24/08/1922.

798 Nous sommes avec les républicains irlandais, en dépit du caractère trop clairement nationaliste que peut avoir leur mouvement, parce que la libération de la domination anglaise est la condition *sine qua non* de la libération du prolétariat, parce que la classe ouvrière irlandaise n'arrivera a bout de la bourgeoisie de son pays que lorsqu'elle ne sera plus secondée par le capitalisme anglais. *L'Humanité,* 30/07/1922.

799 *L'Humanité,* 10/09/1922.

800 *L'Humanité,* 20/09/1922.

fact that he was in excellent health![802] More seriously, *L'Humanité*, described in some detail the composition of the 'Executive Government' of the Irish Republic which was the republican's risposte to the newly constitued Irish Free State:

> Mr de Valera has been designated head of state. The declaration stated that the parliament and the government of the [Irish] Republic met in secret session. Mr de Valera was elected president of the Republic and head of the executive. ... The declaration accused the Irish Government of having traitorously established a so-called Free State, with foreign help.[803]

In November, readers were quickly brought up to date with the trial of Erskine Childers. He is described as a 'courageous Englishman.'[804] *L'Humanité* was not alone in giving sympathetic coverage to Childers' predicament as has been indicated above.[805] One must remember that, in Paris at any rate, *L'Humanité's* readers would have either read or have a good idea what was in the other popular dailies. The image of the mildly aristocratic Englishman holding out against the odds in the Irish context was attractive to French readers of all political persuasions.[806] *L'Humanité* stood fast against the death penalty which it was to categorise as 'legal assassination' in the case of the serial killer Landru.[807] The sentence of death pronounced on the killers of Sir Henry Wilson had been reported at length in July 1922 complete with Dunn's declaration to the court, which he had not been allowed to read.[808] These reports combined *L'Humanité's* campaign against the death penalty with its position on Ireland. Childers was known as a writer and a convinced convert to the Irish cause. After the execution, news of which was carried on page 1, *L'Humanité* presented a biography of Childers concluding that 'one can only defer and feel small before such a man.'[809]

The ultimate result of the Irish Civil War was never in doubt. The Republicans

---

801 *L'Humanité,* 24/10/1922.

802 *L'Humanité,* 12/09/1922.

803 M.de Valera a été designé comme chef de la république. La déclaration dit que le parlement, et le gouvernement de la république se sont réunis en séssion secrète. M de Valera a été élu president de la république et chef de l'éxécutif ... La déclaration accuse le gouvernement irlandaise d'avoir traîtreusement, avec l'aide étrangère, établie un soi-disant état libre. *L'Humanité*, 28/10/1922.

804 *L'Humanité,* 20/11/1922. Childers was on trial for his life for carrying a small pistol when he was arrested by Free State forces.

805 R. Fanning *et alia* (ed.), pp. 515-516.

806 Compare French coverage of Casement's arrest and imprisonment [April-May 1916] with reports on Childers in *L'Humanité*. 21/11/22 and 24/11/22, *Mercure de France* 15/01/23 and Henri Béraud's article in *Le Flaneur salarié* (Paris,1927), p. 217 ff., for example.

807 Assassinat légal: Landru a été guillotiné hier matin à Versailles. *L'Humanité*, 20/02/1923.

808 *L'Humanité*, 20/07/1922 and 30/07/1922.

809 On ne peut que s'incliner et se sentir petit devant un pareil homme. *L'Humanité*, 24/11/1922.

were having increasing difficulty in conducting a long guerrilla campaign through the winter and early spring. It was just a question of how long they could continue. A long, well informed article in *L'Illustration* by Roger Chauviré in August 1922 had made this clear in its conclusion:

> As to the evolution of the military campaign against the republican rebels, there is only one possible result, their total defeat: the inequality of the two forces is too great.[810]

Despite this, the mixed feelings felt by many towards their opponents was expressed to Chauviré by Free State General O'Connell who had been held prisoner by the Republicans at the start of hostilities. Chauviré quotes him as remarking 'Shooting at them is one thing, but to pass sentence on them in a Court Martial - I would not like to have to do that'. Chauviré adds that one can sense the nuance in that comment.[811] This remark was made at the time of Cathal Brugha's death and before Childers' trial under martial law and execution.

After the summary execution of four republican leaders in December 1922, *L'Illustration* published a photo of members of Cumann na mBan carrying a symbolic bier to Glasnevin with a short report. *L'Humanité* stressed the revenge motif of this execution by the Government.[812] With this incident, the reputation of the Free State Government sank suddenly and not only in *L'Humanité.* As has been described above the Dáil had taken steps to achieve representation and recognition in Paris as early as January 1919. With the establishment of the Provisional Government of the Free State, the new Department of Foreign Affairs had representatives in Washington, Berlin, Rome and Geneva, where the Free State was manoeuvring to gain entry to the League of Nations. But the Paris office was the fulcrum of Dublin's foreign representation.[813] Regular reports were sent back to Dublin which give an indication of the importance of the Irish diplomatic presence in Paris.[814] Two examples are of

---

[810] Quant au développement de la campagne militaire contre les insurgés républicains, il ne peut avoir qu'une issue, leur déroute: l'inégalité des forces est trop grande. *L'Illustration* 05/08/1922.

[811] 'Tirer sur eux, passe encore; les juger en conseil de guerre, je n'aimerais pas cela.' On sent la nuance. Ibid.

[812] *L'Humanité*, 09/12/1922 (Représailles: Exécution de 4 républicains annoncée), 'les exécutions .... à titre de représailles pour le meurtre du député Hales' This was Séan Hales TD, brother of Tom Hales the West Cork republican IRA brigade commander, who had taken part in the fatal Collins ambush. M. Hopkinson p. 191.

[813] This team included Joe Walshe, Sean Murphy and Michael MacWhite who were later to be key Irish diplomats. Sean T. O'Ceallaigh declared against the Treaty and was no longer in post in Paris.

[814] R. Fanning *et alia* (ed.), Introduction, p. xi.

particular interest. The first is from Sean Murphy, 23rd May 1922, outlining ideas for methods of propaganda on behalf of the Free State in France:

> There are clubs and societies all over France in which good work could be done through lectures given by one of the local members. It would be fairly easy to get requests for slides and good general pamphlets from a good many of them. *La Jeunesse Catholique* alone, to take good example, could be made the vehicle for spreading the knowledge of Ireland.[815]

The second is also by Sean Murphy 21st December 1922 on the 'damage limitation' propaganda of the Free State in Paris later in 1922:

> The whole French press was thoroughly in favour of the Free State. .... Since Miss MacSwiney's arrest [not reported in *L'Humanité* but her hunger strike was followed closely.[816]] publicity has been given in the columns to Irregular activities. ... The trial and proposed execution of Childers have made some stir .... No papers have made any comments on the equity of the case. They have merely given it as a news item.[817]

These indicate an understanding of the need to put the new Irish State's case and the need to act effectively against negative reporting. They also suggest a less than total monitoring of the French press or at least, a propensity to ignore the 'non Catholic' elements in French society. In his article on these sources in *History Ireland* Dr Kennedy also implies that there was no support for the anti-Treaty side in the European press, something which is clearly not true.[818]

With the death of Liam Lynch in April 1923 the end was in sight. *L'Humanité,* which had rather lost interest in Ireland, returned to the topic. Fierce support for the Republicans was displayed. An article by Marcel Fourrier, based on an interview with L.H. Kerney, 'delegate of the Irish Republic,' denounced the hypocrisy of the British Government.[819] Countess Markievicz's arrest made the front page[820] and Alix Guillain supplied a long piece linking the Irish Civil War with the British by suggesting that the Irish Government was simply carrying out British Imperial policy.[821] This was the voice of the Comintern indeed. The end of hostilities made the front page with a photo of de Valera on 28th April. Yet, the fact that Republican arms had not been given up,

---

815 op cit, p. 463.
816 *L'Humanité*, 20/11/1922, 21/11/1922 and 29/11/1922.
817 R. Fanning *et alia* (ed.), pp. 514-515.
818 M.Kennedy, 'In spite of all impediments: the early years of the Irish diplomatic service,' *History Ireland,* Vol. 7, No. 1, (Spring 1999).
819 *L'Humanité*, 20/04/1922.
820 *L'Humanité*, 14/04/1922.
821 *L'Humanité,* 18/04/1923.

nor was there a formal surrender, had been already clearly reported.[822]

L'Humanité's coverage of the Irish Civil War reveals the expected political bias of the paper and reflects its own preoccupations at a time of change. The background of Irish industrial strife figured largely in its reports. January 1922 saw unemployment briefly reported.[823] Railway workers' and dockers' strikes in late January and early February made the headlines.[824] Political tensions dominated the news after that but in September the postal dispute in the South suddenly appeared in a report discussing whether there might be a postal strike in the North.[825] A further short report appeared on the 18th and on the 26th:

> Although the Irish postal strike has now entered its third week, there is no sign that the Government will negotiate. The Director-General of Posts continues to recruit 'blacklegs'. Ex-Black and Tans have been taken on. Postal workers are still determined to continue the struggle.[826]

This item does require something of a leap of faith to actually visualise retired 'Black and Tan' police auxiliaries taking the mail from door to door in Ireland. As it turned out, it seems that they were not needed since the strike collapsed a few days later.[827] A government engaged in overcoming armed rebellion was not to be defeated by postmen.

Further strikes occured which were directly linked to the Civil War. In October, Dublin railway workers on the Great Southern and Western Railway struck. Their lines were particularly affected by war damage and so work patterns were severely disrupted. The company proposed reducing pay to account for days lost because of the War. This was not agreed to by the workers and so a strike ensued.[828]

---

[822] *L'Humanité*, 27/04/1923.

[823] *L'Humanité*, 20/01/1922.

[824] *L'Humanité*, 30/01/1922, 31/01/1922 and 01/02/1922 La Grève des cheminots irlandais & Les dockers de Dublin défendent leurs salaires.

[825] [...] les fonctionnaires des postes et télégraphes dans les 6 comtés du Nord, sont mécontents des bas salaires qu'ils touchent actuellement. Quant à la grève dans le sud elle se poursuit avec succès. Le gouvernement provisoire a échoué complêtement dans sa tentative d'organiser un service postal avec des volontaires..... *L'Humanité*, 12/09/1922

[826] Grève postale recrutement des jaunesBien que la grève des postiers irlandais soit entrée dans sa troisième semaine, il n'y a aucun signe que le gouvernement veuille négocier. Le directeur general des postes continue de recruter des 'jaunes'. D'anciens 'Black & Tans' ont été engagés. Les postiers sont toujours aussi resolus à poursuivre la lutte.*L'Humanité*, 26/09/1922.

[827] *L'Humanité*, 30/09/1922.

[828] Les employés du Great Southern and Western Railway, à Dublin, se sont mis en grève ce matin. Aucun train n'a quitté Dublin. ... Or, les lignes ayant été détruites pendant la guerre civile les ouvriers ont dû chômer deux ou trois jours par semaine, et la compagnie prétend payer seulement une semaine de cinq jours. Une conférence a eu lieu samedi sans amener de resultats. *L'Humanité*, 17/10/1922.

Railways were of military importance especially those of this particular company and other branch lines in Munster and East Connacht. Rail links between Dublin and the cities of Limerick and Cork were important if difficult to protect against guerrilla-style attacks. Railways also provided telephone and telegraph links in those days and these were open to attack as *L'Humanité* made clear.[829] But it was on trains themselves that attacks proved spectacular and damaging. These attacks on the transport infrastructure of the Free State have been identified elsewhere as a significant element of the Irish Civil War.[830] Reports of these attacks would interest particularly a significant section of the readership of *L'Humanité* who could be said to have a professional interest in such activity. Republican attacks on the transport infrastructure of the Free State were very much a twentieth-century development since they differed in concept from attacks on railways carried out previously by Irish insurgents. Previously, trains carrying military personnel or lines along which opposing military reinforcements could travel had been targeted.[831] During the Irish Civil War the aim was not only to impede the mobility of Free State forces but to provoke economic damage to the State in a spectacular manner. Two days after reporting the shelling of the Four Courts, *L'Humanité* was noting that railway lines had been cut in Kildare and between Limerick and Tipperary.[832] It also included news of the attack of the station of Foynes, although this was because it was occupied by Free State troops. Signal boxes at Dalkey and Kilkenny were destroyed, according to a report in early July.[833] Trains were not always destroyed, as is made clear in a report of the hold-up of a goods train near Church Hill in East Donegal, where the booty of tea, sugar, bread and shoes was appropriated to the republican cause.[834] The isolation of Dublin in railway terms, was completed, according to *L'Humanité,* with the destruction of a section of track and five bridges on the line to Belfast.[835] All this had been achieved within a fortnight of the opening of hostilites. Tracks can be relatively

---

829 *L'Humanité*, 07/11/1922.

830 See M. Hopkinson, pp.198 - 200.

831 See *Le Monde Illustré*, 09/07/1921 for item on an attack on military a transport train, E. Brady, *Le secret service irlandais en Angleterre 1919-1921* (Paris, 1933), p. 124 for IRA attempted blockage of a railway in The Wirral. The rebels in Dublin briefly occupied the stations on the 24th April 1916 but withdrew when it became clear that they would not be able to hold them without great loss. In 1867 Fenian volunteers travelled to Chester by train and had plans to sabotage the lines in Cheshire to prevent troops arriving during the planned raid on Chester Castle.

832 *L'Humanité,* 30/06/1922.

833 *L'Humanité,* 04/07/1922.

834 *L'Humanité,* 08/07/1922.

easily replaced but bridges are another matter, although they take more expertise and explosives to destroy. The strategy of the Republicans had clearly been effectively carried out in a relatively short time. The Republican stronghold of Cork was protected by further bridge-blowing on both rail and road routes into the city. The Free State was obliged to carry out its August attack on the city by sea, with Major-General Emmet Dalton's forces landing at Passage West. The Republicans had not properly taken this possibility into consideration and, although there was some stiff resistance, the Free State attack was successful. From this point, attacks on the rail system took the form of more random acts of sabotage, rather than conforming to a strategic plan. In Co. Kerry, a train was stopped near Tralee, the staff were disembarked and the train then sent driverless to crash into the station at Tralee, allegedly at 60 miles an hour. Much damage was done but there were no casualties.[836] Nobody was hurt either, when a train was stopped and burnt out near Liffey in December.[837] In Co. Kildare, three locomotives were hi-jacked and crashed into each other, effectively blocking the tracks completely.[838] Curiously, the destruction of Sligo station in January 1923 was not reported although the arrests of seven suspects [including five railwaymen] was noted.[839] The last railway report of the Civil War was of an incident at Brittas where a train was stopped, postbags removed, then the train was sent driverless towards Dublin. It hit a goods train causing a derailment before reaching the city.[840]

The Great Southern and Western Company reported that it alone had suffered widespread damage to its permanent way and had had 42 locomotives derailed, over 250 bridges destroyed and notable damage to signal boxes and other buildings in 1922.[841] The reports in *L'Humanité* of attacks on Irish railways are far from constituting an exhaustive coverage of the phenomenon but they constitute about ten percent of *all* the reports on Ireland, after January 1922, carried by the paper, which is a significant proportion of the whole coverage of the Irish Civil War.

As has been stated, *L'Humanité* reported the Irish Civil War from a particular political point of view. News from Ireland was clearly picked up from other papers at

---

[835] *L'Humanité,* 10/07/1922.
[836] *L'Humanité,* 17/08/1922.
[837] *L'Humanité,* 10/12/1922.
[838] *L'Humanité,* 13/12/1922.
[839] *L'Humanité,* 14/01/1923. The following day *L'Humanité,* reported that attacks on the rail network were increasing and that in Cork and Kerry 5,000 km [sic] of the network was at a standstill.
[840] *L'Humanité,* 11/04/1923.

home and abroad, often quite haphazardly. This meant that its reportage was faulty, in the sense that, it was incomplete, badly edited and gave little sense of continuity. Incidents were often not reported and then, when a political point was being made, comments on these events appeared a few days later, as if they had been covered previously. Readers were left to deduce what had happened. Yet, *L'Humanité* does also show a genuine desire to inform its readership of events in Ireland, to explain those events and articulate clear recognition that Ireland's identity and historical experience was separate from that of Britain.

In common with the practice of other mass publications, Britain was always referred to as '*l'Angleterre*' yet Ireland and Ulster were always specifically named.[842] Popular French perceptions of Ireland as '*pittoresque*' [quaint] and exotic were drastically modified by the events of the Civil War, as Roger Chauviré put it in *L'Illustration*:

> 'It is clear that the French, even those who read *l'Illustration* [...] do not understand Irish matters any more. And it is not surprising. This is a people who, six months ago, wrenched conditions from London which were generally considered better than any hoped for. Today, the only fruit of this success is civil war!'[843]

As the war came to an end in April 1923, then so did any attempt by the French press to seek to provide an explanation of the Irish enigma. For *L'Humanité* the republican struggle was seen as a people's struggle against overwhelming forces and with that, its readership could identify. The paper attempted to fit Ireland into the Leftist view of the developing pan-European class struggle. It was just *L'Humanité's* bad luck that the Irish Civil War resulted in the Free State Government's defeat not only of the Republicans but also of the Irish Left. It was left to the scholarly Louis Paul-Dubois to attempt a final analysis for his elite readership but the popular and daily press gave up any attempt to explain Ireland to their readerships in the spring of 1923.[844]

---

[841] M. Hopkinson, p. 199.

[842] The reporting of the political crisis of 1912-1914 had clearly inserted the Province's name into the French language.

[843] 'Il est clair que les Français, même les lecteurs de *L'Illustration* [...] ne comprennent plus rien aux affaires de l'Irlande. Et ce n'est pas miracle. Voilà des gens qui, il y a six mois, arrachaient à Londres des conditions, de l'avis général, inespérées, et le seul fruit qu'ils en tirent aujourd'hui, c'est la guerre civile!' *L'Illustration,* 05/08/1922.

[844] see L. Paul-Dubois, 'Le Drame irlandais III: L'Ultime Épreuve' in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, (15/04/1923), 'L'Irlande nouvelle' in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, (01/11/1926), and *The Irish struggle*

and its results (London, New York and Toronto, 1934).

Chapter 10

Conclusion

The period 1891 to 1923 was a time of crucial development and change both in France and Ireland when political change and warfare played a part in the subsequent self-definition of both. These two countries had mutual historical, cultural and political links, in some ways a shared experience; more important to the smaller than the larger, but significant, nevertheless. This study has explored the expression of the Irish experience during this period as an element in French literature and the French media and how this contributed to the evolution of the idea of Ireland within the French world view.

The source material has been the literature in French on Ireland, broadly of the years in question and a selective sample of the French national press in the years 1910-1923. Several issues arise from the study of this material. These include questions of the value of the sources chosen and problems with the material.

It would be illusory to suggest that there was an early circle of Irish studies in French academia in the period 1885 - 1900. Yet, it is evident that there is a small body of writing on Irish themes. There were two major novels in French in these years on Irish themes and more publications attempting to explain the enigma of Ireland. These works played a role in the definition of the country in France, as did articles in journals such as *Revue des Deux Mondes,* which provided the background to many a correspondent's knowledge of Ireland and fed into the daily press when events in Ireland required comment there. Tom Kettle's remark that the French have come nearest to understanding the Irish may be, and probably is, pure hyperbole but there is no doubt that genuine attempts were made in France to probe that secret. Thus, an initial feeling is given for the variety of response to the search for, to use M-F. Guyard's phrase, 'the French face of the unknown island.'[845]

The literature published in France between 1890 and 1930 on Ireland or using Irish characters, falls into two chronological sections. It can also be categorised into two further areas in that there is also a difference between what was written before and after 1905. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, writers on Ireland were attempting to explain aspects of a long-standing situation. The Union of Ireland with Britain was in its ninth decade and contentious social, political and economic issues were being addressed by the British Government with increasing degrees of success.

---

[845] 'le visage français de l'île inconnue', M-F Guyard, *La Grande-Bretagne dans le roman français* (Paris 1954), p. 47.

As a result, by the first decade of the twentieth century, it would no longer have been wildly optimistic to envisage the arrival of a generally accepted and effective method of governance for Ireland. The Union seemed to be more secure than it ever had been. Ireland's past problems might still be a source of inspiration for creative writers but Ireland in the present seemed peaceful and moving to prosperity. Jules Verne's Mick, in *P'tit Bonhomme*, was the personification of the success of modern Ireland while a poorer and troubled land had been the background to his earlier years. It might be tempting to see this story as an allegory for the evolution of Ireland under the Union. Mick's journey from extreme poverty to riches and self-realisation could be seen as representing the progress of Ireland under the Union. Of course, there is no place for separatist politics within this scenario which also reflects the actual situation in Ireland where, after the death of Parnell, such political activity seemed to give way to other preoccupations. Yet, issues of a cultural or economic nature seemed to rise in public perception and preoccupy writers on Ireland. De Mandat-Grancey's *Chez Paddy* was influential at the beginning of our period, giving an account of the country during the 1880s Land War and a detailed analysis of the issues involved. Edouard Rod takes us into the mind of Parnell with his allegorical *La Vie privée de Michel Teissier.* The novel tells us nothing about Ireland and provides no factual information on Parnell's character. Yet, and coincidentally, in as much as Parnell's personality was enigmatic to the point of almost total ambiguity, Rod, even allowing for artistic licence, gives us an insight into that enigma. The subject matter is totally in line with the second phase of Rod's literary preoccupations where he moved away from naturalism to psychological enquiry. As an outer satellite of Daudet's literary circle, he remained a *Dreyfusard* and continued his literary and critical work until this was cut short in 1910, by his relatively early death at the age of 52. It is interesting to imagine, for a moment, how he might have constructed a novel based on the dilemma of loyalties of an Orangeman in 1912-1914. As a mainstream Protestant himself, he had strong views on the extremes of evangelical Protestantism and praised Alphonse Daudet's *L'Évangéliste,* in which the author showed 'how religious feelings become revoltingly ignoble when bigots push them to extremes'.[846]

Hervé provided a detailed history of Ireland which informed the early period of

---

[846] [...] 'combien les sentiments réligieux deviennent ignobles et revoltants lorsque des êtres secs les poussent à l'excès.' C. Beuchat (ed.), *Histoire du naturalisme français* (Paris, 1949). p. 382.

this study and Lemire reminds us of the quality of the Irish loyalty to the Catholic faith over the years. Daryl [Grousset], de Coulanges and de Préssensé all explore aspects of the Irish situation but their analyses are not seeking to explain the development of an alternative to the Union. In all their work on Ireland at the end of the nineteenth century, French writers saw the country as essentially exotic if troubled and unfortunate. There was a search for definitions, for a measure of identification of the national or racial qualities of the Irish. This search was of the times when racial characteristics were deemed to have crucial importance. Imperialism, on both sides of the Channel, was at its height. France and the United Kingdom had been rivals in the Imperialist adventure coming eyeball to eyeball at Fashoda in 1898. It can be argued that the *Entente Cordiale*, often seen in retrospect as a merely an anti-German coalition, began as an attempt to avoid such dangerous misunderstandings in future. Certainly, the French right saw the *Entente* in this way.[847] The *Entente* meant that French eyes began to be turned across the Channel more frequently. Ireland, as part of the United Kingdom and therefore within the 'English' sphere of influence began to lose whatever degree of exoticism it might have had. No longer were any writers inspired by the place or the political situation there. Coincidentally with the *Entente*, Irish opposition to the Union found its chief means of expression through a reunited and reinvigorated Irish Parliamentary Party under the leadership of John Redmond. Irish politics seemed to be on a constitutional track in Westminster and rural unrest and outrage a thing of the past. Literary activity was inspired by newsworthy events and therefore it was to take the Third Home Rule Bill, Unionist resistance to it and later, Nationalist armed uprisings in the second decade of the century to provoke a further upsurge in French literary interest in Ireland.

The book that represents the moment of the change in writing in French on Ireland is Louis Paul-Dubois' *L'Irlande Contemporaire* which identifies the importance of Home Rule, as the renewed political issue in the new century. No longer are we treated to the nineteenth-century combination of travel writing, analysis of Irish local government and of the land-tenure system. We are presented instead with a serious attempt to engage with the historical reality of events in Ireland. Paul-Dubois provides a link, through Taine and Renan with the republican, nation-defining historian of France, Jules Michelet.

---

[847] J. Bainville, 'Les Adieux de M. Paul Cambon,' in *Action Française,* 25/12/1920.

Paul-Dubois' solid and well referenced work raises two main questions. First, what was the author's message to his readers? Clearly, the book is a sound introduction for French readers to the history of Ireland and a well argued analysis of Ireland's actual state. Yet it does seem clear that, on another level, it slides towards that category of French writing of the period which was critical of all things English. It is saved from crashing into the abyss of extreme anglophobia by adherence to Lamartine's observation that 'One can dislike the English, it is impossible not to admire them.'[848] It is also saved by the author's apparent conversion to a position of support for Home Rule from a natural propensity to see British governance as an effective and largely benign state of affairs. In his conclusion, he quotes Wolfe Tone: 'Not foreign government but foreign rule is Ireland's bane.'[849] Complete separation is not seen as possible and the Union is unsatisfactory, so the solution is 'a National Parliament with a Government responsible to that Parliament, the supremacy of the Empire in all Imperial affairs being recognised and assured.'[850] In this way the institution of the British Empire is not attacked, although the governance of the United Kingdom is examined and found wanting as far as Ireland is concerned.

Secondly, why did Tom Kettle undertake the quite onerous task of translating this particular book on Ireland in 1907? The answer is clear. Paul-Dubois had produced a scholarly work which squarely presented the view of Redmond's Nationalist Irish Parliamentary Party. Here is a detailed presentation of the constitutional Nationalist position in 1907, coupled with hard treatment of extreme Unionists. Kettle shared Paul-Dubois' attitudes towards the English, reserving the right to dislike them, but always respecting them, as he told his friend Oliver St John Gogarty, 'Make no mistake, the English have organisation!'[851] He saw the value of publishing Paul-Dubois' book in Ireland and in America. Works by such as de Préssensé, Hervé, de Mandat-Grancy or the Celtic scholar, so beloved of J.M. Synge, d'Arbois de Jubainville, were all less appropriate to Kettle's purposes. The reading in English of Paul-Dubois, provided the basis for the historical definition of the Irish Republic, and involuntarily the Free State, as found in the work of Dorothy McArdle,

---

848 'On peut ne pas aimer les Anglais, il est impossible de ne pas les estimer.' quoted in M-F. Guyard, frontespiece.

849 L. Paul-Dubois, p. 514.

850 Ibid p. 516.

851 O. St..J. Gogarty, *As I was going down Sackville Street* (Dublin, 1937 and 1994), p. 233.

for example, who thus might be categorised as the Irish Michelet.[852]

The events in Ireland in the decade or so which followed this publication provoked a response in France which can be categorised as a discourse on Irish national identity, its relationship with Britain and its place in the new post-war world. This discourse, affected by the shared experience of the Great War, is composed of a variety of voices and tones. These include the subtlety of André Maurois, the stridency of Escouflaire, the empathy of Simone Téry and the reasoned analysis of Goblet. Further insights into the quality of Irishness are provided by the fiction of Benoît, Constantin-Weyer and Kessel. The newspapers tracked, with varying assiduousness, the various Irish crises from 1910 to the outbreak of the Civil War. Jean Coudourier informed the readers of *Le Figaro* of the twists and turns of the Liberal policy on Ireland before the outbreak of the Great War and provided an insight into England's last great Liberal Government. The political background to the events of April 1916 in Ireland was explained simply as a German plot without any rational involvement by an Irish political movement. This was the line that the British authorities had taken as soon as they had realised that a Rising was taking place in Dublin. It was reasonable, given that they had arrested Casement two days before it broke out.[853] The situation of total war demanded that the enemy be blamed for any such event and such was the wickedness of the '*Boche*' that they had to be the prime movers behind the events in Dublin.

From the examination of the literature of this period several conclusions can be drawn. It seems that, as with press coverage, French interest in Irish matters was directly proportional to the level of civil disturbance and political violence in the country. This said, it would appear that even after the War of Independence, Ireland did not figure greatly on the French literary scene. Yet, the output might be categorised as reasonable when we consider the difference of scale between Ireland and France and that Ireland was not within the French sphere of influence.

After the Great War, Ireland provided inspiration for more specific characterisation in fiction in comparison to pre-war works, although this was still rare. The Irishness of André Maurois' Doctor O'Grady was rooted in his Catholic outlook and his original view of his British colleagues and did little to explain the Irish. Pierre

---

[852] See D. McArdle.
[853] *The Morning Post*, 24/04/1916.

Benoît in his dark *Le Lac Salé* or the rather fanciful *La Chaussée des Géants* and Joseph Kessel's *Mary de Cork* take us nearer to recognisably Irish characterisation.

The Irish of the new frontiers are remarkably consistent as characters in French fiction. Benoît and Constantin-Weyer both give clear and sympathetic pictures of the Irish at the edge, with oblique references to the political and economic factors that had propelled them there. With these pictures, these writers were creating a cliché of characterisation which was almost as strong as the later cinematographic images of the Irish in the Far West of John Ford's films.

The French press has been largely ignored by historians of this period of Irish history on both sides of the Channel. Consequently, it was appropriate to explore this resource. The essential, for the historian who uses newspapers as a source, is the event of publication, not the accuracy of the report or the motivation for it. In France, some work has been done on nineteenth-century reporting of O'Connell's activity and the publications during the 1890s of the Irish colony in Paris, a euphemism for assorted ex-Fenians, artistic and political friends of Maude Gonne and a number of other individuals.[854] Newspapers are not at the core of this work but, although they are used incidentally, they are important to it.

The newspapers examined in this study were principally *Le Figaro* and *L'Humanité* with *Le Temps, Le Petit Parisien, Le Petit Journal* and the weeklies *L'Illustration* and *Le Monde Illustré.* The first two represent the views broadly of the right and the left of the political spectrum. *Le Temps* had a small circulation and an eccentric editorial system. It had never achieved the place in French society that *The Times* had in Britain. *Le Petit Parisien* and *Le Petit Journal* were mass circulation dailies and the illustrated weeklies were the French equivalent of the *Illustrated London News* and aimed at the rising middle classes. Like French illustrated weekly papers today, they were fascinated by foreign royalty and *reportages* from the exotic fringes of the world.

The twentieth-century crises of 1910-1914, 1916 and 1919-1923 took place at a time when the press was evolving into the mass media that we have today. Therefore, it is logical to suppose that it would present a view of events in Ireland which is worth exploring. In fact, this period in France is referred to as the golden age

---

[854] See L. Colantonio, *Daniel O'Connell et la France* and J. Julienne, *The Irish Question in France from 1860-1890: Perceptions and Reactions.* passim

of the press, since the Paris press at the time was truly national and popular papers counted their circulation in millions.[855] It was clear that there was a need to see if, and how, Ireland's struggle for self definition was reported in the French press.

The first discovery was that Ireland was seen solely as an adjunct of England and, in the days before air travel, England was seen through the foggy filter of London. Any French writer who visited the UK arrived in London, via Dover or Newhaven. Ireland therefore was really the place beyond, the island behind the island, more a mythological concept than a place of reality. In political and cultural terms it did not exist beyond Britain, masked by the general ignorance of the French readership. This was, in 1910, a population which had little idea of reality beyond France and its Empire. Abroad was exotic, and although England was an understood and respected concept because of a shared history, competing imperial experience and the *Entente Cordiale*, Ireland defied understanding. Abroad, for the French, was usually hot, sandy and probably rather dusty. Ireland was none of these. Like the colonies, it was exotic, where exoticism had overtones of inferiority, but this was also confusing since it was European and linked apparently inextricably with England which, while different, was not inferior.

It was this link with Britain which in the form of 'The Irish Question' began the *Education Irlandaise* of the French newspaper readership. The radical programme of Asquith's Government depended on the support of Irish MP s and the issue of Home Rule rapidly became central to reports from England. Unionist opposition to this measure between 1912 and 1914 shifted the emphasis of the Irish Question to Ireland itself and the vocabulary of Home Rule, *Orangiste, Nationaliste, Sinn Fein,* became well known to French readers. Yet, it was a case of knowledge without much understanding.

With the Great War, the French gained a greater practical knowledge and some understanding of the different national groups within the United Kingdom. Propaganda books such as Hilaire Belloc's *A General Sketch of the European War* (1915) and Henry-D'Avray's *Chez les Anglais* (1916) provided uplifting descriptions of the contribution of the four nations of the United Kingdom to the great struggle. It was the Easter Rising that pulled Ireland onto the front pages again and the French accepted the British Government's line that it was a German Plot. Casement provided

[855] P. Albert and F. Terrou, p. 66.

a degree of *schadenfreude* in that it was clear that the English had a super-traitor amongst them in this upper-class baronet. The inexorable trial and execution was watched with satisfaction from across the Channel, as was the quick and bloody response to the Dublin Rising.

The French press reflected the anger of the British Establishment at the Easter Rising and then the refusal to take the First Dáil seriously in 1919. It was the development of the Anglo-Irish War, the single-minded sacrifice of MacSwiney and the careful propaganda of Sinn Féin which began to change the tone of reporting in the Paris dailies. This was reinforced by long articles in the illustrated weeklies and *Revue des Deux Mondes*. By the end of 1920 the middle classes were beginning to be convinced of a certain justice in the Irish cause. Hardly any voices were raised in favour of the Union or the Unionists. The notion of a Republic, *'unique et indivisible'* was a concept that the French could easily accept. With no presence in Paris and no skill at propaganda or public relations [as demonstrated by Simone Téry] the Unionists failed utterly to affect French opinion. As a consequence, the notion of Ireland which now developed in the French mind was that of a Catholic Free State and the implications, or even the fact of, partition were ignored.

After the War, the events in Ireland were reported sporadically until, with the arrest of MacSwiney and his fast to the death in Brixton Prison in 1920, it became clear that what was happening was very interesting. What had seemed to be outbursts of excessive criminality now assumed the form of a national struggle of some kind. For the first time reporters were dispatched to see for themselves. The reports that came back were astonishingly direct. Ireland had been badly ruled, if not to say repressed, by the English for generations. The Catholic population were downtrodden, riven with poverty and because of this had taken up arms. They were led by brave, young and often erudite men, many of whom had a good command of French, [which marked them out as being really *very* civilised] who had the support of almost the entire population. The British army were not attempting to put the revolt down but apparently, an ill-disciplined force of mercenaries was being used instead. The result was localised mayhem, in England's backyard. The freedom-fighters were admired, the Unionists ignored, or found to be totally unreasonable, and the British were felt to be unable to resolve the situation. A moral victory of Sinn Féin was seen as inevitable.

There were other factors at play in 1920. It should be remembered that

relations between France and Britain were under some strain at this time and therefore it becomes clearer that the question of Irish national identity was regarded less as an internal British problem but as an problem of Ireland's international status in the new post-war Europe. This is not to say that the French Government was considering aiding Sinn Féin's struggle, but that French opinion looked more benignly upon it. A second key factor is the effective propaganda campaign carried out in Paris by Sinn Féin. The Dáil office supplied press releases and other information to the French Government and press. It published leaflets and translations of pamphlets such as Erskine Childers' *La Terreur en Irlande* (1920) and a news sheet *Le Bulletin Irlandais* in Paris in 1921. These publications did not have a wide circulation but they did provide material for French writers who espoused the Irish cause like Xavier Moisant and Sylvain Briollay. Their work in turn was used by those who wrote more seriously on Ireland in the subsequent decade. Sinn Féin's efforts therefore bore fruit despite the poor circulation of their views at the time and have coloured the French historiography of Irish independence down to our own day.

There is also a recognition of the justification of the Anglo-Irish War as a War of Independence, at a time when other small European nations found expression of their right to exist. The Anglo-Irish Treaty was welcomed, but the deaths of Griffith and Collins were seen rightly as great losses to Ireland. There was also an examination of the reasons for the continuance of the fight for the Irish Republic in 1922, despite the Treaty. The Irish Civil War was observed sorrowfully by the French, understood by few, and failing to generate any great expression of support for the rebel Republicans, apart from in the pages of *L'Humanité*. The end of that conflict in 1923 marks the end of French interest in Ireland and Irish affairs for many years to come.

The French press brought a different view of the Irish independence struggle, but it was not a coherent or constant view. Ireland was small, distant and not of great importance to French readers, a far away country about which they knew little. But in amongst the mass of inconsequential and unexplained reports lie some profound observations and very thoughtful analysis. French newspaper reporting of Irish matters in the early decades of the twentieth century was rather like the little girl in the nursery rhyme; when it was good it was very very good, but when it was bad it was awful.

What does emerge is a discourse leading to a recognition in France of Ireland's separateness from Britain. Within this lies the major resonance for France in the Irish

struggle for self definition. As has been pointed out quite recently:

> Historically both Britain and France have defined themselves in terms of their relationship to each other. In the eighteenth century British nationhood depended on elements (prosperity, Protestantism and freedom) which were seen as un-French while in France, England (sic) was seen by such as Michelet as an inegalitarian un-France.[856]

Earlier historical resonances between Ireland and France during the previous two hundred years played their part in the French recognition of something of their own nationhood in Ireland. Michelet's Irish heirs articulating the ideas of the Irish Cultural Revival and Revolution, saw England as an industrial, commercial, urban and Protestant un-Ireland. If the Irish struggle for independence between 1891 and 1923 can be seen as a search for self-definition as a de-anglicised nation, an un-England, then this, the French could indeed understand.

---

[856] A Pitt, ' A changing anglo-saxon myth: its developments and function in French political thought ' in *French History*, xiv, no.2 (Jun. 2000), p. 153.

Sources and Bibliography

Primary Sources

1: Literary Works

Benoit, P., *Le Lac salé* (Paris, 1921).

Benoit, P., *La Chaussé des Géants* (Paris, 1922).

Béraud, H., *Le Flâneur salarié* (Paris, 1927).

Béraud, H., *Rendez-vous européens* (Paris, 1928).

Bourget, P., *Etudes et portraits: études anglaises* (Paris, 1903).

Childers, E., *La Terreur militaire en Irlande* (Paris, 1920).

Constantin-Weyer, M., *Un Homme se penche sur son passé* (Paris, 1928).

Daryl, P., (Grousset, P.), *La Vie partout. Les Anglais en Irlande, notes et impressions* (Paris, 1888) trans. as *Ireland's disease: the English in Ireland 1887* (London, 1887, reprinted Belfast, 1986).

de Latocnaye, Chev., *Promenade d'un Francais dans l'Irlande (orné de gravures en Tille Douce)* trans: J. Stevenson (Belfast, 1917 and (with introduction by J Gamble FRGS) 1984).

Dillon, H-L., (Marquise de La Tour du Pin) *Journal* trans. F Harcourt (London, 1979)

Duquet, A., *Irlande et France* (Paris 1872).

Flach, J., *Considérations sur l'histoire politique de l'Irlande: lecture faite à la séance annuelle de la société des études historiques* (Amiens, 1889).

Kessel, J., *Les Coeurs purs* (Paris, 1927).

Kessel, J., *Marchés d'esclaves* (Paris, 1984).

Kessel, J., *Témoin parmi les Hommes: le temps de l'espérance* (Paris, 1968)

Larkin, E., (ed. & trans.), *Alexis de Tocqueville's journey in Ireland July & August 1835* (Dublin, 1990).

Lemire, A., *De L'Irlande en Australie* (Lille, 1890).

Mandat-Grancey, Baron. E. de, *Chez Paddy* (Paris, 1887). trans. anon. as *Paddy at Home* (London, 1887).

Maurois, A., *Les Discours du Dr O'Grady* (Paris, 1922).

Maurois, A., *Les Silences du colonel Bramble* (Paris, 1921).

Molinari, G. de, *L'Irlande, le Canada, Jersey: lettres adressées au 'Journal des Débats'* (Paris, 1881).

Piché, E., *Réponse à 'Chez Paddy'. Pour l'Irlande* (Paris, 1887).

Renan, E., *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation? Conférence fait en Sorbonne 11/03/1882* (Paris,

1934).

Rod, E., *La Vie privée de Michel Teissier* (Paris, 1893).

Sorel, C., *Les nouvelles françaises où se trouvent divers effets de l'amour et de la fortune* (Paris, 1623).

Spindler, K., *Le vaisseau fantôme* (Paris, 1929) originally published as *Das geheimnisvolle Schiff* (Berlin, 1921).

Tate, L.(ed.), 'Franco-Irish correspondence; December 1688 - August 1691' in *Analecta Hibernica* no. 21 (Dublin, 1959).

Téry, S., *En Irlande: de la guerre d'indépendance à la guerre civile (1914-1923)* (Paris, 1923).

Téry, S., *L'Île des bardes* (Paris, 1925).

Verne, J., *Cinq semaines en ballon: voyage de découverts en Afrique par trois anglais* (Éditions Livre de Poche, Paris, 1996).

Verne, J., *Les enfants du Capitaine Grant* (Édition Hachette, Paris , 1930).

Verne, J., *P'tit Bonhomme* (Paris, 1893), trans. as *Foundling Mick* (London, 1895).

Verne, J., *Voyage à reculons en Angleterre et en Écosse* (Paris, 1989).

2: Historical Works or Commentaries

Briollay, S., *L'Irlande insurgée* (Paris, 1921).

Canis, J., *Les Massacres en Irlande* (Paris, 1881).

Davray, H-D., *Chez les Anglais pendant la grande guerre* (Paris, 1916).

de Coulanges, F., *The origin of property in land* (trans. M. Ashley) (London, 1891)

de Mandat-Grancey, Baron. E., *Chez Paddy* (Paris, 1887).

de Préssensé, F., *L'Irlande et l'Angleterre depuis l'Acte d'Union jusqu'à nos jours, 1800-1888* (Paris, 1889).

de Tocqueville, A., (Mayer, J.P., ed.), *Journeys to England and Ireland* (London, 1958).

Escouflaire, R. C., *La Démogagie irlandaise 1906 - 1909* (Brussels and Paris, 1909).

Escouflaire, R. C., *L'Irlande ennemie.....?* (Paris, 1918).

Ferré, E., *L'Irlande. La crise agraire et politique, ses causes, ses dangers, sa solution* (Paris, 1887).

Fournier, P., *La question agraire en Irlande* (Paris, 1882).

Goblet, Y. M., *L'Irlande dans la crise universelle 1914-1920* (Paris, 1921).

Guyot, E., *L'Angleterre: sa politique intérieure* (Paris, 1917).

Hervé, E., *La crise irlandaise depuis la fin du dix-huitième siècle jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris 1885).

Lemoine, J., *L'Irlande qu'on ne voit pas: les fenians et le fenianisme aux Etats-Unis* (Paris, 1893).

Michelet, J., *Sur les chemins de l'Europe : Angleterre, Flandre, Hollande, Suisse, Lombardie, Tyrol* (Paris, 1893).

Moisant, X., *La volonté de l'Ulster* (Paris, 1912).

Moisant, X., *Pour comprendre l'Irlande: l'effort anglais* (Paris, 1920).

Paul-Dubois, L., *L'Irlande contemporaine et la question irlandaise,* (Paris, 1907), trans. as *Contemporary Ireland* (Dublin, 1908).

Paul-Dubois, L., *The Irish struggle and its results* (London, New York & Toronto, 1934).

Perraud, A., *Ireland in 1862,* (Dublin, 1863). (*Etudes sur l'Irlande contemporaine,* Paris, 1862)

Roz, F., *Sous la couronne de l'Angleterre* (Paris, 1911).

Tasca, G., *Considerations sur les lois relatives a la propriéte rurale en Roumanie, Angleterre et Irlande,* (Paris, 1907, Thèse).

Warren, R. de, *L'Irlande et ses institutions politiques* (Paris, 1928).

3: Daily Newspapers

L'Aurore

L'Humanité

Le Figaro

L'Irlande Libre

La Liberté

Le Matin

L'Oeuvre

Le Petit Journal

Le Petit Parisien

Le Temps

4: Periodicals and Journals

Action Française

Bullán

Études Irlandaises

European Journal of Communication

French History

L'Illustration

History Ireland

Irish Historical Studies

The Irish Sword

Mercure de France

Le Monde Illustré

Revue des Deux Mondes

Revue Historique

Revue d'histoire diplomatique

5. Miscellaneous

L'Autographe

The Belfast Telegraph

The Daily Herald

The Freeman's Journal

Fortnight

IRIS

The Irish Independent

The Irish Times

The Manchester Guardian

The Morning Post

The Observer

An Phoblacht

Il Popolo d'Italia

The Times

General Bibliography

Adhémar, J. (ed.), *La Gravure* (Paris, 1990).

Aikin, K.W.W., *The Last Years of Liberal England 1900-1914* (London and Glasgow, 1972).

Albert, P. and Terrou, F., *Histoire de la presse* (Paris, 1968).

Amaury, F., *Histoire du plus grand quotidien de la IIIe république: Le Petit Parisien 1876-1944* (Paris, 1972).

Ambrosi, A. and Ambrosi, C., *La France 1870-1986* (Paris, 1986).

Andrews, C. S., *Dublin made me* (Dublin, 1979).

Ash, B., *The Lost Dictator: a biography of Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson* (London, 1968).

Augusteijn, J. (ed.), *The Irish revolution 1913-1923* (Basingstoke and New York, 2002).

Avice, A., *Mésentente cordiale: la politique séculaire de l'Angleterre* (Paris, 1964).

Barbou, A., *Le Général Boulanger* (Paris, nd.).

Beckett, J. C., *The making of modern Ireland 1603-1923* (London, 1981).

Brake, L., Jones, A. and Madden, L., (eds.) *Investigating Victorian journalism* (Basingstoke, 1990).

Breen, D., *My fight for Irish freedom*, (Dublin, 1964 and 1991).

Bainville, J., *L'Angleterre et l'Empire britannique* (Paris, 1938).

Bainville, J., *La Troisième République 1870-1935* (Paris, 1935).

Barry, T., *Guerrilla days in Ireland*, (Dublin, 1949 and 1991).

Béaslaí, P., *Michael Collins: soldier and statesman*, (Dublin and Cork, 1937).

Bell, P.M., *France and Britain 1900-1940: Entente and estrangement* (Harlow, 1996).

Bellanger, C., *Histoire de la presse, Tome 3: de 1871 à 1940* (Paris, 1972).

Belloc, H., *A General Sketch of the European war: the first phase* (Paris, 1915).

Bertaut, J., *Les Dessous de la 'troisième'* (Paris, 1959).

Best, G.(eds.), *The Permanent Revolution: the French revolution and its legacy 1789-1989* (London, 1989).

Beuchat, C. (ed.), *Histoire du naturalisme français* (Paris, 1949).

Bew, P., *Charles Stewart Parnell* (Dublin, 1980).

Bew, P., *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland 1890-1910,* (Oxford, 1987).

Blanc, O., *Les Espions de la Révolution et de l'Empire* (Paris, 1995).

Blake, F. M., *The Irish civil war and what it still means for the Irish people* (London, 1986).

Blake, R., *The Private Papers of Douglas Haig 1914 -1919* (London,1952).

Bourke, J., 'Irish tommies' in *Bullán, Vol 3, No 2. Winter 1997/Spring 1998*

Bowman, J., *De Valera and the Ulster question, 1917-1973* (Oxford, 1982).

Bowyer Bell, J., *The Gun in politics: an analysis of Irish political conflict, 1916-1986* (New Brunswick and Oxford, 1987).

Bowyer Bell, J., *The Secret Army* (Swords, 1979).

Boyce, D. G., *Nationalism in Ireland* (2nd edition., London, 1991).

Boyce D. G., *Englishmen and Irish troubles* (London, 1972).

Boyce D. G., *Nineteenth century Ireland: the search for stability* (Dublin, 1990).

Boyce D. G., *The Irish Question and British politics, 1868-1986* (Dublin, 1990).

Boyce D. G., *Nationalist revolutionaries in Ireland 1858-1928* (Oxford, 1987).

Boyce D. G. (ed.), *The Revolution in Ireland 1879-1923* (Basingstoke and London, 1988).

Boyce D. G. and O'Day, A. (eds.), *Parnell in perspective* (London, 1981).

Boyd, A., *The Rise of the Irish trade unions* (Dublin, 1972).

Brady, E., *Le Secret Service irlandais en Angleterre 1919-1921* (Paris, 1933).

Brake, L., Jones, A. and Madden, L.(eds.), *Investigating Victorian journalism* (Basingstoke, 1990).

Braunthal, J., *History of the International 1914-43* (London, 1967).

Brogan, D., *The Development of modern France 1830-1939* (revised ed., London, 1967).

Brubaker, R., *Citizenship and nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge Ma. and London, 1996).

Buckland, P., *James Craig* (Dublin, 1980).

Buckland, P., *The Factory of grievances: devolved government in Northern Ireland 1921-39* (Dublin and New York, 1979).

Buckland, P., *A History of Northern Ireland* (Dublin, 1983).

Buckland, P., *Irish Unionism One; Ulster Unionism and the origins of Northern Ireland 1886-1922* (Dublin, 1973).

Bull, P., *Land, politics and nationalism* (Dublin, 1996).

Carrothers, W., *Emigration from the British Isles* (reprint London, 1965, of orig. ed.,

London, 1929).

Chalaby, J. K., 'Journalism as an Anglo-American invention: a comparison of the development of French and Anglo-American journalism, 1830s-1920s' in *European Journal of Communication, Vol. 11, No. 3* (September, 1996).

Chapman, G., *The Third Republic of France: the first phase 1871-1894* (London and New York, 1965).

Chesneau, J., *Jules Verne: un regard sur le monde* (Paris, 2001).

Christiansen, R., *Paris Babylon: the story of the Paris Commune* (New York, 1994).

Clarke, K., *Revolutionary Woman: my fight for Ireland's freedom* (Dublin, 1991).

Cobban, A., *A History of modern France Vol 3:1871-1962* (revised ed., Harmondsworth, 1986).

Colantonio, L., *Daniel O'Connell et la France* (Unpublished doctoral paper, Paris-St Denis, 1995).

Collins, M., *The Path to freedom*, (Mercier, Cork, 1968).

Collins, P. (ed.), *Nationalism and unionism: conflict in Ireland 1885-1921* (Belfast, 1994).

Comerford, M., *The First Dail* (Dublin, 1969).

Coogan, T. P., *Michael Collins: a biography* (London, 1990).

Coogan, T. P., *de Valera: long fellow, long shadow* (London, 1993).

Coogan, T. P. and Morrison, G., *The Irish Civil War* (London, 2000).

Costello, F. J., *Enduring the most: the life and death of Terence MacSwiney* (Dingle, 1995).

Costello, F. J., *The Irish revolution and its aftermath 1916-1923* (Dublin and Portland, 2003).

Cronin, S., *Irish Nationalism: a history of its roots and ideology* (London, 1983).

Cronin, S., *The McGarrity papers* (Tralee, 1972).

Crossley, C., *French Historians and romanticism; Thierry, Giuzot, the Saint-Simonians, Quinet, Michelet* (London, 1993).

Cullen, L.M. and Furet, F. (eds.) *Irlande et France XVII-XX siècles: pour une histoire rurale comparée* (Ann Arbor and Paris, 1980).

Curran, J. M., *The Birth of the Irish Free State 1921-1923* (Alabama, 1980).

Curtis, E., *A History of Ireland* (London, 1936).

David, E., *Inside Asquith's cabinet: from the diaries of Charles Hobhouse* (London,

1977).

Davis, R. P., *Arthur Griffith and non-violent Sinn Féin* (Dublin, 1974).

Deane, S., *Strange Country: modernity and nationhood in Irish writing since 1790* (Oxford, 1997).

Dekiss, J-P., *Jules Verne l'enchanteur* (Paris, 1999).

de Préssensé, F., *L'Irlande et l'Angleterre depuis l'Acte d'Union jusqu'à nos jours, 1800-1888* (Paris, 1889).

de Traz, R., *Pierre Loti* (Paris, 1948).

Digeon, C., *La Crise allemande de la pensée française 1870-1914* (Paris, 1959).

Dillon, H-L., (Marquise de La Tour du Pin), *Journal* (trans. F. Harcourt) (London, 1979).

Dooley, T. P., *Irishmen or English soldiers?* (Liverpool, 1995).

Doerries, R. R., *Prelude to the Easter Rising: Sir Roger Casement in Imperial Germany* (London and Portland, 2000).

Ducatel, P., *Histoire de la IIIe république vue à travers l'imagerie populaire et la presse satirique, tome IV; la grande guerre* (Paris, 1978).

Dudley Edwards, O., *Eamon de Valera* (Cardiff, 1987).

Dudley Edwards, R., *Patrick Pearse: the triumph of failure* (Swords, 1990).

Duff, C., *Six days to shake an empire* (London, 1966).

Dunraven, Earl of, *The outlook in Ireland: the case for devolution and conciliation* (Dublin and London, 1907).

Duroselle, J-B., 'Les ententes cordiales', dans Bédarida, F., Crouzet, F and Johnson, D, (eds.), *De Guillaume le conquérant au marché commun: Dix siècles d'histoire franco-britannique* (Paris, 1979).

Dutton, D., *'His Majesty's Loyal opposition': the Unionist party in opposition* (Liverpool, 1992).

Dutton, D., *Statecraft and diplomacy in the twentieth century* (Liverpool, 1985).

Dwyer T. Ryle, *Big Fellow, long fellow: a joint biography of Collins and de Valera* (Dublin, 1998).

Dwyer, T. Ryle, *de Valera: the man and the myths* (Swords, 1991).

Dwyer, T. Ryle, *Michael Collins and the treaty: his differences with de Valera* (Cork, 1981).

Dwyer, T. Ryle, *Michael Collins: 'The man who won the war'* (Cork, 1990).

Elliott, M., *Partners in revolution: the United Irishmen and France* (New Haven and London, 1982).

Elliott, M., *Wolfe Tone: prophet of Irish independence* (New Haven and London, 1989).

Elliott, M.,(ed.), *The Long Road to peace in Northern Ireland* (Liverpool, 2002).

English, R., *Ernie O'Malley: IRA intellectual* (Oxford, 1998).

English, R. and O'Malley, C.(ed.), *Prisoners: the civil war letters of Ernie O'Malley* (Swords, 1991).

Ensor, R., *England 1870-1914* (Oxford 1936).

Faber, R., *French and English* (London, 1975).

Fanning, R., *Independent Ireland* (Dublin, 1983).

Fanning, R., Kennedy, M., Keogh, D. and O'Halpin, E.(eds.), *Documents on Irish foreign policy Vol.I 1919-1922* (Dublin, 1998).

Fanning, R., Kennedy, M., Keogh, D. and O'Halpin, E.(eds.), *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy Vol.II 1923-1926* (Dublin, 2000).

Farrell, M., *Northern Ireland: the orange state* (London, 1976).

Fauvet, J., *Histoire du parti communiste français; 1917-1939* (Paris, 1964).

Ferenczi, T., *L'invention du journalisme en France* (Paris, 1993).

Ferro, M., *La Grande guerre 1914-1918* (Paris, 1969).

Fitzpatrick, D., *The two Irelands 1912-1939* (Oxford, 1998).

Foley, T. and Ryder, S. (Eds.), *Ideology and Ireland in the nineteenth century* (Dublin, 1998).

Foster, R., *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (Harmondsworth, 1988).

Forester, M., *Michael Collins: the lost leader* (London, 1971).

Freiberg, J. W., *The French press: class, state and ideology* (New York, 1981).

Garvin, T., *The evolution of Irish nationalist politics* (Dublin, 1981).

Garvin, T., 'Great hatred, little room; social background and political sentiment among revolutionary activists in Ireland, 1890 - 1922' in Boyce, D.G., (ed.), *The revolution in Ireland, 1879 - 1923* (Basingstoke, 1988).

Garvin, T., *Nationalist revolutionaries in Ireland 1858-1928,* (Oxford, 1987).

Gibbons, L., *Transformations in Irish culture* (Derry, 1995).

Gildea, R., *The Third Republic from 1870 to 1914* (London and New York, 1988).

Girodias, M., *The Black Diaries of Roger Casement* (Paris and USA, 1959).

Gonne MacBride, M., *A Servant of the Queen; her own story* (Dublin, 1938).

Greaves, C. D., *Liam Mellows and the Irish revolution* (London, 1971).

Greene, D. H. and Stephens, E., *J. M. Synge* (New York, 1959).

Griffith, A., *The Resurrection of Hungary: a parallel for Ireland (3rd edn.)* (Dublin, 1918).

Griffith, R., *The use of abuse: the polemics of the Dreyfus affair and its aftermath* (Providence and Oxford, 1991).

Goldring, M., *Belfast: from loyalty to rebellion* (London, 1991).

Goldring, M., *Pleasant is the scholar's life: Irish intellectuals and the construction of the nation state* (London, 1993)

Gogarty, O. St.J., *As I was going down Sackville Street* (Dublin, 1994).

Gollin, A. M., *The Observer and J. L. Garvin: a study in great editorship* (London, 1960).

Gough, H. and Dickson, D., (eds.) *Ireland and the French Revolution* (Dublin, 1990).

Guyard, M-F., *La Grande-Bretagne dans le roman français* (Paris, 1954).

Halevy, E., *The Rule of democracy 1905-1914* (2nd Edn., London, 1952, two vols).

Hart, P. (ed.), *British intelligence in Ireland, 1920-1921: The final reports* (Cork, 2002).

Heslinga, M. W., *The Irish border as a cultural divide* (Assen, 1979).

Hoppen, K. T., *Ireland since 1800; conflict and conformity* (London, 1989).

Hopkinson, M., *Green against green: the Irish civil war* (Dublin, 1988).

Howard, M., *The Franco-Prussian war* (London and New York, 1961).

Hyde, D., 'The necessity for de-anglicising Ireland' in Deane, S., Carpenter, A. and Williams, J. (ed.), *The field day anthology of Irish writing* (Derry, 1991).

Inglis, B., *Roger Casement* (London, 1973).

Inglis, T., *Moral monopoly: the Catholic church in modern Irish society* (Dublin, 1987).

Jackson, A., *Ireland 1798-1998: politics and war* (Oxford, 1999).

Jerrold, D., *Britain and Europe 1900-1940* (London, 1941).

Joannon, P., *Histoire de l'Irlande* (Paris, 1973).

Julienne, J., *The Irish Question in France from 1860-1890: Perceptions and reactions* (Unpublished doctoral thesis, Paris, 1998).

Kedward, R., *The Dreyfus affair* (London, 1965).

Kee, R., *The Laurel and the ivy: the story of Charles Stewart Parnell and Irish nationalism* (London, 1993).

Kennedy, M., 'In spite of all impediments: the early years of the Irish diplomatic service' in *History Ireland* (Vol.7 No.1, Spring 1999)

Keogh, D., *Ireland and Europe 1919-1948* (Dublin, 1988).

Keogh, D., *The French disease: the Catholic Church and radicalism in Ireland 1790-1800* (Dublin, 1993).

Kiberd, D., (ed.), *1916 Rebellion handbook* (Dublin, 1998).

Kiely, D. M., *John Millington Synge: A Biography* (Dublin, 1994).

Kirwan, J., (ed.) *Rerum Novarum: encyclical letter of Pope Leo XIII on the condition of the working classes* (London, 1983).

Laborde, C., *Pluralist thought and the state in Britain and France 1900-25* (Basingstoke, 2000).

Laffan, M., *The Partition of Ireland 1911-1925* (Dundalk, 1983).

Larkin, E., *James Larkin: Irish labour leader 1876-1947* (London, 1965).

Lawlor, S., *Britain and Ireland 1914-1923* (Dublin, 1983).

Lee, J. J., *The Modernisation of Irish society 1848-1918* (Dublin, 1973).

Lee, J. J., *Ireland 1912-1985: politics and society* (Cambridge, 1989).

Le Roux, L. N., *Patrick. H. Pearse* (Dublin, 1933).

Lever, M., *Canards sanglantes: naissance du fait divers* (Paris, 1993).

Litton, H., *The Irish Civil War: an illustrated history* (Dublin, 1995).

Livois, R. de, *Histoire de la presse française* (Lausanne, 1965).

Lottman, H.R., *Jules Verne, an exploratory biography* (New York, 1997).

Lyons, F. S. L., *Ireland since the famine* (London, 1973).

Lyons, F. S. L., *The Fall of Parnell 1890-91* (London, 1960).

Lyons, F. S. L., 'Review of C.C. O'Brien, *Parnell and his party 1880-90'* in *Irish Historical Studies 11*, 1958-9, pp. 64-69.

Lytton, N., *The Press and the general staff* (London, 1920).

McArdle, D., *The Irish Republic* (London, 1937).

MacDonagh, M., *The Irish at the front* (London, 1916).

MacManus, S., *The Rocky road to Dublin* (Dublin, 1947).

Manévy, R., *La Presse de la troisième république* (Paris, 1955).

Martino, P. *Le Naturalisme français* (Paris, 1930).

Maume, P., *The Long Gestation: Irish nationalist life 1891-1918* (Dublin, 1999).

Maurois, A., *A History of England* (London, 1937).

Maurois, A., *A History of France* (revised edition, London, 1964).

Maurois, A., *Edouard VII et son temps* (Paris, 1933).

Miller, K., *Emigrants and exiles* (Oxford, 1985).

Mitchell, A, *Revolutionary government in Ireland: Dail Eireann 1919-22* (Dublin, 1995).

Mitchell, Angus, *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement (London,1997).*

Morgan, M. C., *Foreign affairs 1886-1914* (London, 1973).

Moffett, F., *I also am of Ireland* (London, 1985).

Moody, T. W. (ed.), *Nationality and the pursuit of national independence* (Belfast, 1978).

Muller, P., *Vive l'école républicaine: textes et discours fondateurs* (Paris, 1999).

Murphy, B., *Patrick Pearse and the lost republican ideal* (Dublin, 1991).

Neeson, E., *Birth of a republic: the republican thrust for liberty in Ireland* (Dublin, 1998).

Neeson, E., *The Civil War 1922-23* (Swords, 1989).

Newsome, D., *The Victorian world picture* (London, 1998).

Ni Craith, M., 'The Symbolism of Language' in U. Kockel (ed.), *Landscape, heritage and identity: case studies in Irish ethnography* (Liverpool, 1995).

Novick, B., *Conceiving revolution: Irish nationalist propaganda during the first world war* (Dublin, 2001).

O'Brien, C. C., *Parnell and his party* (Oxford, 1957).

O'Brien, C. C., *Passion and cunning and other essays* (London, 1988).

O'Brien, C. C., *States of Ireland* (St. Albans, 1974).

O'Brien, J. V., *William O'Brien and the course of Irish politics 1881-1918* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1976).

O'Broin, L., *Michael Collins* (Dublin, 1980).

O'Casey, S., *The Story of the Irish citizen army* (Dublin, 1919).

O'Connor, F., *The big fellow, Michael Collins and the Irish revolution* (Dublin,1937 and London 1965).

O'Day, A., *Irish Home rule 1867-1921* (Manchester and New York, 1998).

O'Day, A. and Stevenson, J. (eds.), *Irish Historical Documents since 1800* (Dublin,

1992).

O'Doherty, M. K., *My Parents and other rebels* (Dublin, 1999).

O'Donoghue, F., *No other law* (Dublin, 1954).

O'Faolain, S., *De Valera* (Harmondsworth, 1939).

O'Farrell, P., *The Irish in Australia* (Sydney, 1987).

O'Grada, C., *Ireland, before and after the Famine,* (Manchester, 1988),

O'Halloran, C., *Partition and the limits of Irish nationalism: an ideology under stress* (Dublin, 1988).

O'Hegarty, P.S., *The Victory of Sinn Féin* (Dublin, 1924).

O Lúing, S., *Kuno Meyer 1858-1919, a biography* (Dublin, 1991).

O'Mahoney P. and Delanty G., *Rethinking Irish history: nationalism, identity and ideology* (Basingstoke and London, 1998).

O'Mahoney, S., *Frongoch: university of revolution* (Killiny, 1987).

O'Malley, P., *Biting at the Grave: the Irish hungerstrikers and the politics of despair* (Belfast, 1990).

O'Malley, E., *On another man's wound* (1936) (Dublin, 1992).

O'Malley, E., *Raids and rallies* (Dublin, 1982).

O'Malley, E., *The Singing Flame* (1978) (Dublin, 1992).

O'Muirithe, D., *A Seat behind the coachman* (Dublin, 1972).

O'Sullivan, P. (ed.), *The Irish in the new communities,* (Leicester, 1992).

Pakenham, F., (Earl of Longford) *Peace by ordeal: The negotiation of the Anglo-Irish treaty* (London, 1935 and 1992).

Pakenham, F., (Earl of Longford) and O'Neill T. P., *Eamon de Valera* (London, 1970).

Perraud, A., *Etudes sur l'Irlande contemporaine,* (Paris, 1862).

Phillips, W. A., *The Revolution in Ireland 1906-1923* (London, 1926).

Pisani-Ferry, F., *Le Coup d'état manqué du 16 mai 1877* (Paris, 1965).

Pittock, M. G. H., *Inventing and resisting Britain: cultural identities in Britain and Ireland 1685-1789* (Basingstoke, 1997).

Redfern, W., *Writing on the move: Albert Londres and investigative journalism* (Berne, 2004).

Renouvin, P., 'L'opinion publique et la guerre 14-18' in *Revue d'histoire diplomatique,* octobre-décembre 1970.

Ricard, L. de Gérin, and Truc, L., *Histoire de l'action Française* (Paris, 1949).

Ryan, D., *Michael Collins (The invisible army 1932)* (London, 1968).

Sanguin, A-L., *Vidal de la Blache 1845-1918: un génie de la géographie* (Paris, 1993).

Scott-Baumann, M., *Years of expansion: Britain 1815-1914* (London, 1995).

Stewart, A.T. Q., *A Deeper Silence: The Hidden roots of the United Irish movement* (London, 1993).

Stewart, A. T. Q., *Edward Carson* (Dublin, 1981).

Stewart, A.T. Q., *The Summer Soldiers: the 1798 Rebellion in Antrim and Down* (London, 1995).

Stewart, A. T. Q., *The Ulster Crisis* (London, 1967).

Tabouis, G., *Albion perfide ou loyale de la guerre de cent ans à nos jours* (Paris, 1938).

Taine, H.A., *Histoire de la littérature anglaise* (Paris, 1864, 3 vols.).

Taine, H. A., *The Modern Regime* (London, 1891).

Taine, H. A., *Notes on England* (London, 1957 and 1995). (*Notes sur l'Angleterre*, Paris, 1874).

Taylor, R., *Michael Collins* (London, 1961).

Townshend, C., *Ireland, the 20th century* (London, 1999).

Townshend, C., *The British campaign in Ireland 1919-1921: the development of political and military policies* (Oxford, 1975).

Townshend, C., *Political Violence in Ireland: Government and Resistance since 1848* (Oxford, 1983).

Townshend, C., 'The suppression of the Easter Rising' in *Bullán, Vol 1, No 1,* p. 36, Spring 1994.

Valiulis, M-A. G., *Portrait of a revolutionary: General Richard Mulcahy and the founding of the Irish Free State* (Blackrock, 1992).

Vaughan, W. E., *Landlords and tenants in Ireland 1848-1904* (Dublin, 1984).

Vidal de la Blache, P., et Gallois, L., (dir.) *Géographie universelle, tome I: les îles britanniques* (Paris, 1927).

Weill, G., *Le Journal: origines, évolution et rôle de la presse périodique* (Paris, 1934).

White, T. de V., *Kevin O'Higgins* (1948) (Dublin, 1986).

Whyte, J.H., *Church and state in modern Ireland 1923-1979* (Dublin, 1984).

Wolfson, R. and Laver J., *Years of change: Europe 1890-1945* (London, 1996).

Younger, C., *Ireland's civil war* (London and Glasgow, 1970).

Younger, C., *A State of disunion* (London and Glasgow, 1972).

Zeldin, T., *France 1848-1945* (Oxford, 1973).

Zimmermann, G., *Songs of Irish rebellion, Irish political street ballads and rebel songs 1780-1900* (Genève, 1966 and Dublin, 2002).