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# KEEPING AN EYE ON YOUGHAL: *The Freeman's Journal* and the Plan of Campaign in East Cork, 1886–92

Felix M. Larkin

THE *SKIBBEREEN EAGLE* FAMOUSLY declared in 1898 that it would be keeping an eye on the Tsar of Russia (Potter, 2011: 49, 55–6). A decade or so earlier, Youghal was very much in the eye of the press – and, indeed, in the eye of the storm – during the Plan of Campaign, the second phase of the Land War in Ireland. The tenants on the nearby Ponsonby estate were the first to adopt the Plan of Campaign in November 1886 in order to secure lower rents (Donnelly, 1975: 334, 355–360). The struggle that ensued dragged on inconclusively until it was overtaken by the Parnell spilt in the 1890s, and the Ponsonby tenants – like so many others elsewhere in the country – were then left high and dry, with no alternative but to settle on terms that fell far short of what they sought (Geary, 1986: 4). The *Freeman's Journal* was the main nationalist daily newspaper in Ireland at that time,<sup>1</sup> and it kept its eye closely on developments in and around Youghal as it covered the Plan of Campaign throughout the country – often in remarkable detail. What I want to do in this paper is briefly to outline the *Freeman's* coverage of the events in Youghal, and to place its coverage of those events in the wider context of Irish political journalism in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In 1886, when the Plan of Campaign began, the *Freeman's Journal* was the property of Edmund Dwyer Gray MP – who had inherited the newspaper on the death of his father, Sir John Gray, in 1875. It already had a long and chequered history, having been founded in Dublin in 1763 to support the ‘patriot’ opposition in the Irish parliament in College Green. Sir John Gray acquired the paper in 1841, and he is best remembered today for his work as a member of Dublin Corporation in bringing the Vartry water supply to the city, for which achievement a statue of him was erected on O'Connell Street, Dublin. A medical doctor and a Protestant, he supported repeal of the Act of Union, and later the Irish Tenant League movement and Church of Ireland disestablishment. He sat as MP for Kilkenny from 1865 until his death, and he had begun to ally himself with Isaac Butt's Home Rule Party in the last year of his life.

The Grays *père et fils* made the *Freeman's Journal* an important newspaper. The repeal in the 1850s of the oppressive duty on advertisements and later on the newspapers themselves opened the way for a great expansion of the newspaper market, and Sir John Gray exploited this opportunity – growing the circulation of the *Freeman* from between 2,000 and 3,000 copies per day to approximately 10,000. Under his son, Edmund Dwyer Gray, the *Freeman's* production capacity was further

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<sup>1</sup> For an overview of the history of the *Freeman's Journal*, see Larkin (2006).

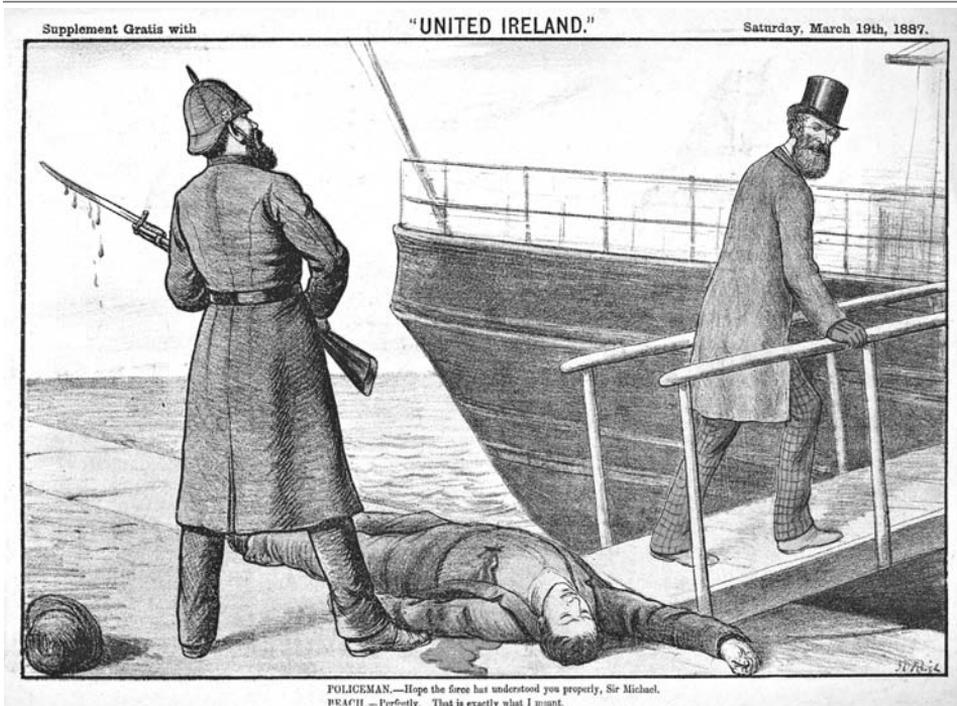
increased, its circulation again grew threefold – to 30,000 copies per day – and it became extremely profitable. So successful was it that in 1887 – at the height of the Plan of Campaign – Edmund converted the *Freeman* into a public company, while retaining control for himself. William O'Brien, who was the *Freeman's* star reporter in the late 1870s and early 1880s, later wrote of Edmund Dwyer Gray that he was 'the most enterprising newspaperman Ireland ever produced' (O'Brien, 1905: 182–3).

Edmund Dwyer Gray, like his father, was also active in politics – and was first elected to parliament in 1877. But for Charles Stewart Parnell, his exact contemporary, he might have led the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) at Westminster. To protect his own political prospects, Gray strongly opposed Parnell's rise within the party. He threw the weight of the *Freeman* unsuccessfully against Parnell's candidate in the decisive Ennis by-election of 1879, and he later smeared Parnell by accusing him of having called certain colleagues in the party 'papist rats' (Lyons, 1977: 93–5). When, after the 1880 general election, Parnell was elected party leader, Gray was one of eighteen MPs who voted against him – out of a total of forty-three. Thereafter, however, he largely supported Parnell's leadership – partly because he accepted that Parnell was now invincible, but also because in 1881 Parnell established his own newspaper, the weekly *United Ireland*, with the aforementioned William O'Brien as editor. The threat that *United Ireland* might be turned into a daily publication to rival the *Freeman* copper-fastened the latter's loyalty to Parnell. By 1886, the *Freeman* was generally regarded as the unofficial organ of the IPP.

The Plan of Campaign was announced in the *United Ireland* newspaper on 23 October 1886. Simply stated, it proposed that landlords should be asked to reduce rents voluntarily to a level that reflected the fall in agricultural incomes in Ireland at that time; where they refused to do so, the tenants were then to offer rents which they considered fair; if these were not accepted, the rents would be withheld and the amount of the 'fair' rents paid into an estate fund to assist tenants who might be evicted for defaulting on their rent. Further financial support, if required, was promised from the National League – the constituency-level organisation of the IPP. The thinking behind this strategy was, to quote a sympathetic editorial in the *Freeman's Journal*, to force landlords 'to take a fair share of the losses entailed by bad seasons and low prices' (*Freeman's Journal*, 3 December 1886). When the Ponsonby tenants adopted the Plan of Campaign, the *Freeman* carried a short report as follows: 'Over two hundred tenants on the Ponsonby estate met today at Killeagh [near Youghal] to consider their position with regard to their landlord ... They decided to place their rents, less 35 per cent, in the hands of a trustee and to act up to the principles laid down in the Plan of Campaign' (*Freeman's Journal*, 16 November 1886). The identity of the trustee was not revealed, so as to frustrate any legal action to sequester the funds – but it was widely believed, though never proven, that the trustee was the parish priest of Youghal, Fr Daniel Keller (Larkin, 1978: 69).

Fr Keller, described by the *Freeman* as 'a type of the revered and beloved saggarth aroon' (*Freeman's Journal*, 21 March 1887), found himself at the centre of the first and most dramatic – and, therefore, most newsworthy – episode in the Plan of Campaign on the Ponsonby estate. In March 1887, a little more than three months into the Plan, he was summoned to appear as a witness in a Dublin court which was seeking to identify the whereabouts of the Ponsonby estate fund. When he failed to appear, a warrant was issued for his arrest. The prospect of Fr Keller's arrest

Figure 1



prompted a demonstration in Youghal which, sadly, had fatal consequences. The *Freeman* gave the following account of the tragedy in its issue of 9 March 1887:

The police have drawn blood at Youghal ... Last evening, a reinforcement of police arrived in the town, and it is alleged that the officer in charge of the contingent, by ordering his men to fix bayonets, although they had not been assailed, provoked the bloody riot that followed. The crowd foolishly took up the challenge, and in the fierce fight that ensued a young man was stabbed to death. Such is the history of this lamentable occurrence, in which we see only too clearly the sowing of seed that will produce an evil crop (*Freeman's Journal*, 9 March 1887).

The comment about 'the sowing of seed that will produce an evil crop' is a reference to the fact that, only a few days earlier, the chief secretary for Ireland, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, had threatened in the House of Commons that public meetings in Ireland would be broken up by 'something worse than raps of batons' (Hansard, 1887: col. 1182; Curtis, 1963: 170–1). He resigned as chief secretary shortly afterwards, and was succeeded by Arthur Balfour – a much more substantial political figure, and later prime minister. This sequence of events occasioned a very bitter cartoon in the *United Ireland* newspaper, published on 19 March 1887 (Figure 1). It shows the departing Hicks Beach, and makes the same point that the *Freeman's Journal* had made in the passage just quoted – but with much greater force. The caption reads: 'Policeman –

Hope the force has understood you properly, Sir Michael; Hicks Beach – Perfectly, that is exactly what I meant.’

The deceased was a young fisherman named Patrick Hanlon, and on 10 March the *Freeman* reported that ‘the excitement in Youghal has calmed down and today there is very little evidence of the disturbance of the previous day ... Crowds of people visited the Mall House where the body of the man Hanlon was laid out’ (*Freeman’s Journal*, 10 March 1887). The *Freeman* later covered the inquest on Hanlon, which lasted several days and recorded a verdict of wilful murder against both the officer in charge, District Inspector Somerville, and the constable who had actually stabbed Hanlon (*Freeman’s Journal*, 23 March 1887). They subsequently stood trial for murder, but were acquitted.

Fr Keller was eventually arrested on 18 March and conveyed to Dublin. The *Freeman* commented:

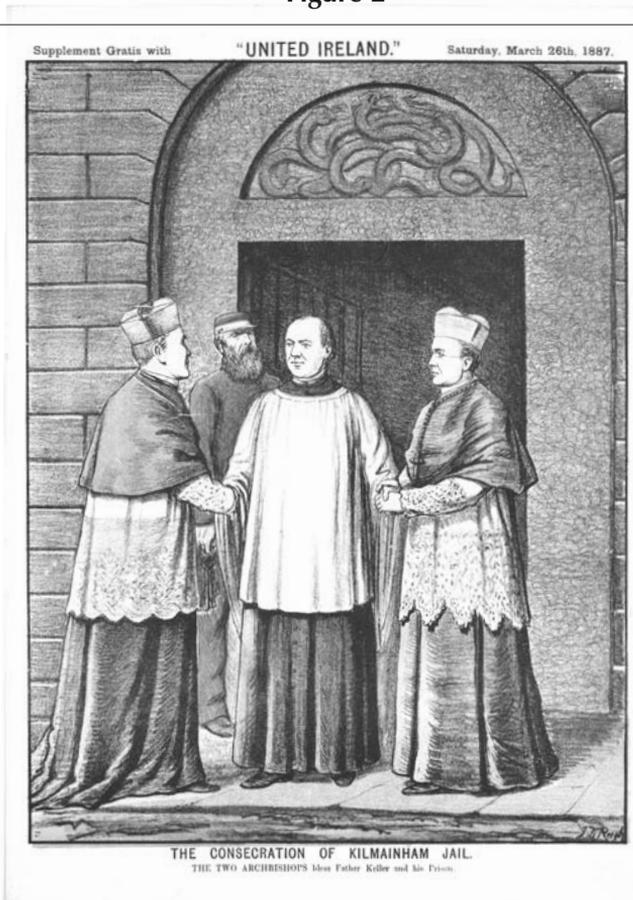
Notwithstanding the sensation which was created in Youghal when the news spread, the people showed admirable restraint, and in the face of provocation which might well try the temper of the most peaceable community, refrained from any acts that would give their watchful enemies a pretext for further slaughter. They crowded the streets though which their venerated pastor passed, kneeling in the footways ... In Cork and all along the route to Dublin, similar demonstrations of esteem and respect for the reverend prisoner occurred (*Freeman’s Journal*, 19 March 1887).

Fr Keller appeared in court on the following day, 19 March 1887. Predictably, he declined to answer any questions and was promptly jailed for ‘contempt of court’ – his imprisonment to last until he purged his contempt by answering the questions. The *Freeman’s* response was: ‘Father Keller ... is in jail, and the question is what are they going to do with him? It will not bring Mr Ponsonby his rents’ (*Freeman’s Journal*, 21 March 1887). Emphasising that Fr Keller’s imprisonment was not only futile but counter-productive in view of its effect on public opinion, the *Freeman* also remarked that:

Fr. Keller carries with him into his cell the admiration and affection of the Irish race for the splendid part he has taken in this whole business. He has been nobly cheered on his way. Sustained by his own Bishop [of Cloyne], he was greeted en route to Dublin by the Archbishop of Cashel, and he was escorted to the prison gate ... by his Grace the Archbishop of Dublin (*Freeman’s Journal*, 21 March 1887).

The support shown to Fr Keller by the two Archbishops was vividly captured in a cartoon published with *United Ireland* on 26 March 1887 (Figure 2). It shows Fr Keller at the door of Kilmainham jail – and note that the artist, John D. Reigh, has faithfully depicted the very distinctive tympanum of entwined serpents above the door of the prison. He has, however, taken substantial artistic liberty by including Archbishop Croke of Cashel in the picture. Only Archbishop Walsh of Dublin actually accompanied Fr Keller to Kilmainham. The caption beneath the cartoon reads: ‘The consecration of Kilmainham Jail – the two archbishops bless Father Keller and

Figure 2



his prison'. A further mark of support from ecclesiastical authority in Ireland was forthcoming at Easter 1887 when Fr Keller, still languishing in jail, was appointed Canon – 'not only for his personal worth, but as a protest against the action of the Government for having subjected him to the indignity of imprisonment'; this is a quotation from the notice of his appointment that appeared in the *Freeman* on 8 April 1887.

Soon after Fr Keller was sent to jail, the *Freeman* explored in some detail the point of principle that his actions had raised. It was not a matter of Catholic moral teaching, not connected with the seal of confession. Fr Keller had not claimed that it was. On the contrary, as the *Freeman* stated on 22 March 1887:

The secret which Father Keller declined to deliver up was no sacramental secret at all; there was no question of sacrilege involved in its manifestation; it was a mere issue of natural justice between man and man ... The obligation of silence with regard to a secret deliberately entrusted on a mutual understanding that the communication is to be held inviolable has the same force and the same sanction that attach to solemn contracts (*Freeman's Journal*, 22 March 1887).

Similarly, the *Freeman* had earlier asserted that it was ‘in the observance of his fiduciary professional position [that Fr Keller] declines to give up in public court the secrets of his flock’ (*Freeman’s Journal*, 21 March 1887). This argument has contemporary resonance, for the same principle is sometimes invoked today – whether rightly or wrongly – in relation to the issue of the mandatory reporting of child abuse to civil authorities, and not only by clergy. In any event, Fr Keller remained a prisoner in Kilmainham for over two months, until the Court of Appeal in Dublin found at the end of May 1887 that there were, after all, no legal grounds for his detention. Welcoming his release, the *Freeman* declared that ‘the Canon’s liberation is one of the most striking incidents in the triumphant history of the Plan of Campaign’ (*Freeman’s Journal*, 23 May 1887).

To refer to the Plan at this time as ‘triumphant’ was wishful thinking: nowhere was it that. On the Ponsonby estate, the struggle was stalemated and there would be no significant developments there for another two years – not until early 1889, when a London-based syndicate headed by Arthur Hugh Smith Barry stepped in and bought the estate from its owner, Charles Talbot-Ponsonby, who was then on the point of settling with his tenants. The *Freeman* continued to keep a careful eye on Youghal in the interval before Smith Barry’s intervention, and there are two items from that period that are worth noting. The first is an account of a meeting of the Ponsonby tenants at the end of March 1888 held in defiance of a Government ban. To circumvent the ban, the meeting was rescheduled for daybreak – and the *Freeman’s* reporter travelled from Cork to attend.<sup>2</sup> He wrote as follows:

Youghal was neared at half-past five. The dawn was then lighting up the sky, and groups of tenants who had been apprised of the early assemblage were passed on the road. At half-past five, a meeting was held in the Mall House, Youghal, in the Assembly Room. There was a large gathering of the Ponsonby tenants, the hall door being kept by members of the local branch of the Gaelic Athletic Association in their jerseys, with camáns in hand. There was nobody, however, to interfere with the meeting. Two sleepy policemen came down and had a look at the building and then disappeared (*Freeman’s Journal*, 26 March 1888).

The meeting was addressed by William O’Brien, editor of the *United Ireland* newspaper, who had become an MP in 1883 and was now one of Parnell’s principal lieutenants. He was the most prominent of the leaders of the Plan of Campaign. Notwithstanding the successful rearrangement of the meeting, O’Brien attempted to stage the banned public meeting in the afternoon as originally planned. The result was a bloody riot, in which the crowd was batoned by the police and the officer in charge, Captain Plunkett, received a blow to the head from which he died some months later (O’Brien, 1976: 62).

The second item worthy of note in the *Freeman* at this time is a very detailed report on the Plan of Campaign on the Ponsonby estate, one of a series of such

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<sup>2</sup> The *Freeman’s* reporter may have been James Murray, who in 1887–8 covered the trial of Dr Philip Cross of Shandy Hall, near Coachford, Co. Cork, and his subsequent execution for the murder of his first wife (Sheridan, 2010: 388).

reports on estates where the Plan was still in operation – an account of ‘work-in-progress’, so to speak. These reports would seem to have been prepared to help counteract the impact of the condemnation of the Plan of Campaign by the Pope in April 1888 – in other words, to justify the continuation of the Plan in the face of Vatican opposition. The report on the Ponsonby estate appeared on 21 May 1888, and it paints a vivid picture of ‘a derelict estate’:

The vast stretch of country covered by the Ponsonby estate – almost ten miles in extent – has now all the appearances of a plague spot. No agricultural operations are visible, the blue smoke curls not from the chimneys of the houses and cabins; there are no lowing cattle in the fields. No cheery peasants with kind salutations are to be met with on the roads ... You are surrounded here with evicted farms [and] the occupants of other farms are under sentence ... The lands are lying idle and running into fallow. If the tenants expend their labour and money on the lands, the fruits thereof shall not be reaped by them. During May of last year [1887], a large number of their neighbours were evicted and, of course, the landlord had the reaping of the harvest (*Freeman's Journal*, 21 May 1888).

The *Freeman* had covered those evictions in May 1887. They took place over three days and were attended by Canon Keller, then just released from Kilmainham jail – and the *Freeman's* reporter advised that he was ‘looking very well after his imprisonment’ (*Freeman's Journal*, 26 May 1887). No further evictions occurred on the Ponsonby estate until after its sale to the syndicate headed by Smith Barry.

The *Freeman* published the news of the sale of the Ponsonby estate – a scoop for the newspaper – on 6 March 1889. As was later stated by the *Freeman*, Mr Talbot-Ponsonby had been ‘brought by the logic of events to the very verge of a fair settlement with his tenants’ by the end of 1888 (*Freeman's Journal*, 7 June 1889). The government and his fellow Cork landlords, led by Smith Barry, viewed with alarm the possibility that the Plan of Campaign would thus chalk up a victory on the Ponsonby estate (Donnelly, 1975: 355), and they conspired to throw Talbot-Ponsonby a lifeline. The sale was merely a temporary expedient in order to frustrate the proposed settlement. The syndicate that bought Talbot-Ponsonby out comprised, according to the *Freeman*, ‘English lords and English plutocrats ready to give their thousands of pounds ... to carry on the “devil's work” amongst the homes of Cork’ (*Freeman's Journal*, 9 September 1889). Arthur Balfour, the chief secretary, had actively encouraged the formation of the syndicate, and may even have inspired it – though he denied any knowledge of it in the House of Commons (Curtis, 1963: 250–2; Geary, 1986: 112). Smith Barry was the front man, and the motivation for his involvement was simply self-interest – he feared that any settlement on the Ponsonby estate on terms considered unfavourable to the landlord would depreciate land values throughout the south of Ireland. He owned some 22,000 acres in Co. Cork and Co. Tipperary, as well as over 5,000 acres in Cheshire and Huntingdon (d'Alton, 2009: 318–9).

It was immediately apparent to the *Freeman* that the syndicate's intervention significantly altered the balance of advantage in the struggle on the Ponsonby estate – that, in fact, it sealed the fate of the tenants. The *Freeman's* editorial on the day it broke the news did not mince its words:

The new phase of matters on the Ponsonby estate portends a veritable civil war ... There are four hundred tenants on the Ponsonby estate. Their eviction would extend over a half year at least. It would be effected by nothing else than a *corps d'armée*. When the clearances would be made, if they ever could be completed, it would require nothing short of an army of occupation to hold the estate; and if there was an attempt made to effect a plantation of strangers there, it is not too much to add that a permanent military and police division should be maintained on the spot (*Freeman's Journal*, 6 March 1889).

The *Freeman* was right to anticipate further evictions, but the intimation of civil disorder as a consequence was a false threat. The syndicate cleared the Ponsonby estate without provoking serious disorder. It was done in four stages – in June 1889, April 1890, September 1890 and October 1890 – and each batch of evictions received full coverage in the news columns of the *Freeman's Journal*. These evictions were condemned by the *Freeman* as ‘the work of an interloper’ – namely, Smith Barry (*Freeman's Journal*, 19 June 1889). Likewise, the *Freeman* covered and supported the actions of Smith Barry's tenants in Co. Tipperary who then joined the Plan of Campaign in solidarity with the Ponsonby tenants (Warwick-Haller, 1990: 116–23). An editorial published on 9 September 1889 is indicative of its attitude towards this escalation of the quarrel:

We are proud to know that we did not err in our estimate of what Tipperary men can do ... The spirit that was manifested in yesterday's meeting is that of men who go into battle resolved to win. They have counted the cost, they know the forces against them, and they see what risks they run. But they vow that they will not stand idly by and pay rents to a hostile landlord to be used by him in exterminating their brother Irishmen – tenants of an estate with which he had no business to meddle, men who did him no wrong and whom he coolly proposes to ruin ... Mr Smith Barry declared war on the Ponsonby tenants at the moment when they had all but concluded an honourable and permanent peace with their own landlord. He will [now] have to fight his own tenants, banded firmly man to man (*Freeman's Journal*, 9 September 1889).

Despite that fighting talk, the game was up – and the struggle on the Ponsonby estate was largely ignored by the *Freeman* after the final evictions were carried out in October 1890. However, the Plan of Campaign did not finally collapse there until February 1892, when over 100 tenants accepted the syndicate's terms for settlement (Donnelly, 1975: 376; Geary, 1986: 138–9). The terms were, in Canon Keller's view, ‘exorbitant’ (Donnelly, 1975: 376) – and in a letter to a meeting of evicted tenants in Cork which was quoted in the *Freeman* on 22 January 1892, he stated that ‘the cause of the present attitude of many landlords can only be attributed to the weakness of the tenants arising from division in the national ranks’ (*Freeman's Journal*, 22 January 1892). He was, of course, referring to the Parnell split precipitated by the verdict in the O'Shea divorce case in November 1890, less than a month after the last of the Ponsonby evictions.

The Parnell split also had huge implications for the *Freeman's Journal*. The story of its decline and fall begins with the split. Edmund Dwyer Gray had died at the early age of 42 in 1888, and the challenge of steering the *Freeman* through the crisis fell to his widow, Caroline – who was singularly ill-equipped for the task (Larkin, 2007: 121–

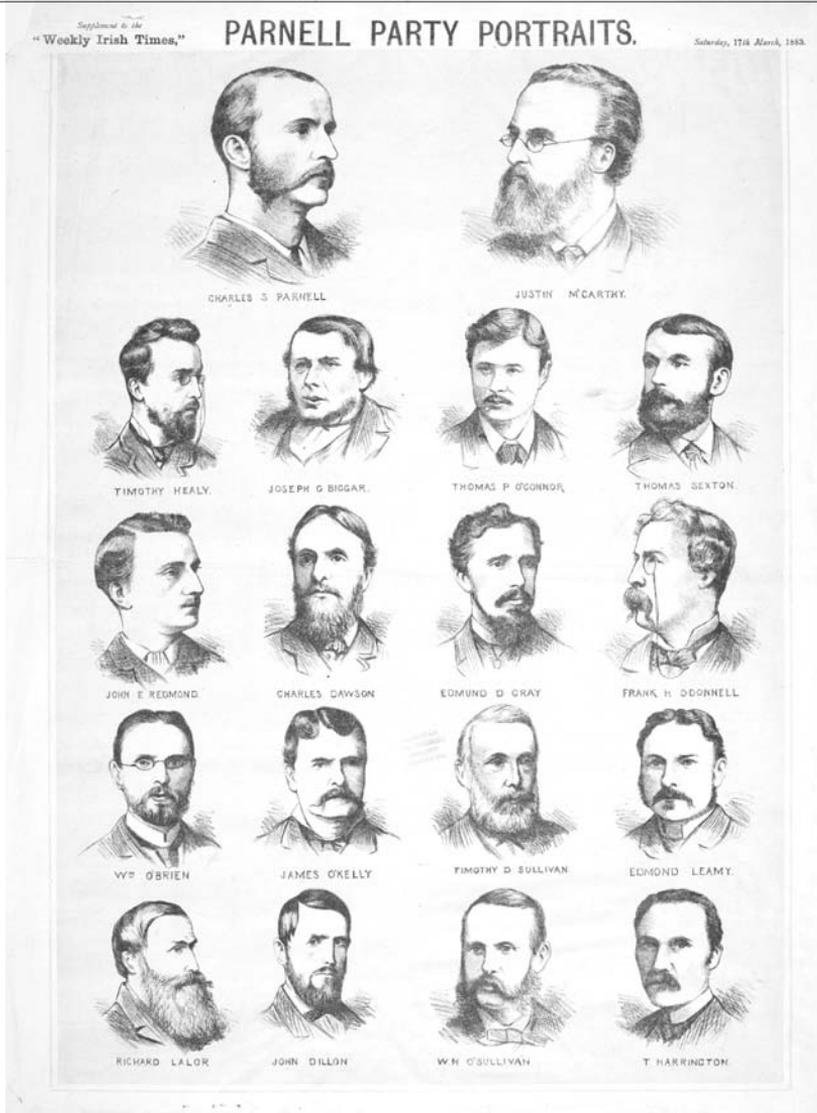
39). At the outset of the split, the *Freeman* came out strongly in support of Parnell. This continued the pro-Parnell policy that had served the interests of the newspaper well since 1881, but it caused a press war in Dublin. The anti-Parnellites launched a new daily newspaper, the *National Press*, to counter the *Freeman's* influence. The *Freeman* responded by changing sides in the split, and eventually it was merged with the *National Press* – though the *Freeman's* more venerable title was retained. That, however, did not settle the press war. When the *Freeman* defected to the anti-Parnellites, the pro-Parnell faction started its own newspaper, the *Irish Daily Independent*. It was later acquired by William Martin Murphy, and in 1905 he transformed it into the modern *Irish Independent*, at half the price of the *Freeman* – a halfpenny, instead of a penny – and with a more popular format and a less partisan editorial policy. Murphy's new *Independent* was modelled on Lord Northcliffe's *Daily Mail* – launched in London in 1896. Like the *Daily Mail*, it was an immediate success – and its success came at the expense of the *Freeman*. The *Freeman* soon began to incur heavy trading losses and only survived through subsidies paid from IPP funds. It was still the unofficial organ of the party – and the party leaders feared that, if it failed, they would be left without press support in Ireland. After the party's defeat in the 1918 general election, that no longer mattered – and in 1919 the *Freeman* was sold to a Dublin wine-merchant, Martin Fitzgerald, who gallantly kept it going for another five years (Larkin, 2006: 48–9). The last edition appeared on 19 December 1924.

In its valedictory editorial, the *Freeman* boasted of having been 'the organ of Catholic Emancipation, of Disestablishment, of the Land Revolution, of Educational Equality [and] of National Independence' and it added that these 'have one by one ceased to be aspirations and become realities' (*Freeman's Journal*, 19 December 1924). That is, of course, over-simplistic – an understandable flourish as the newspaper went under. It demonstrates, however, that modern notions of the independence of the press and the profession of journalism were not current in Ireland – or, indeed, elsewhere – in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Newspapers at that time tended to be unashamedly partisan, promoting the causes they espoused in reportage as well as in the editorial columns. The *Freeman's* coverage of the Plan of Campaign on the Ponsonby estate is a good example of this. Rather than keeping a professional distance, as we might expect a newspaper to do today, the *Freeman* was actively engaged in the events as they unfolded – not just an observer, but a participant in the struggle and in the politics that defined the struggle, lending its support to the tenants' efforts and to the leaders of the IPP who championed their efforts.

The IPP leaders expected such support from the *Freeman* – and they counted on it. They were acutely aware of the importance of newspapers in creating and moulding public opinion, a concept even more nebulous in those days than now. Public opinion was a significant factor in the strategy of the Plan of Campaign. The Plan's manifesto had stated that 'the fullest publicity should be given to evictions' (*United Ireland*, 23 October 1886), and accounts and pictures of evictions were used quite explicitly for propaganda purposes both at home and abroad (Curtis, 2011: 159–60). The *Freeman* was mindful of that, as evidenced by this comment on a rumour – a false rumour, as it transpired – of imminent evictions on the Ponsonby estate in September 1888:

Crowbar and battering ram, attended by an imposing force of police and military on the one hand and angry protest and vigorous resistance on the other,

Figure 3



with a winding up of trials and convictions under the Coercion Acts – these are the coming events, which the press representatives from all parts of the Empire will be called upon to witness and chronicle before the end of this month (*Freeman's Journal*, 10 September 1888).

Conversely, the government recognised that the widespread dissemination of news about evictions and related occurrences threatened to compromise its policy of upholding the rights of landlords against the challenge of the Plan of Campaign. There was very little the government could do to limit this threat. For instance, Arthur Balfour – who never missed a trick in his endeavours to defeat the Plan – once bemoaned the fact that ‘we cannot have all our evictions at the same time’,

explaining his thinking as follows: 'You do not provoke more rows by having eviction scenes simultaneously in five places than by having them in one! But if you have five acts in your tragedy, you will move your audience five times' (Curtis, 2011: 179).

One of the reasons why the IPP was so attuned to the value of publicity was that many of the party's MPs also had careers in journalism, as illustrated by a cartoon entitled 'Parnell Party Portraits' published with the *Weekly Irish Times* on 17 March 1883 (Figure 3). Almost two-thirds of the party's leaders shown in that cartoon were journalists or otherwise associated with newspapers. They are: William O'Brien, obviously; Edmund Dwyer Gray, owner of the *Freeman's Journal*; Justin McCarthy, deputy leader of the party; T.M. Healy, and Healy's uncle, T.D. Sullivan; and Timothy C. Harrington, Thomas Sexton, J.J. O'Kelly, T.P. O'Connor, Frank Hugh O'Donnell and Edmond Leamy. There were another twenty-five newspapermen who, though not in parliament in 1883, were at other times members of the IPP at Westminster (Larkin, forthcoming 2012) – of whom the most notable were William Martin Murphy, creator and owner of the modern *Irish Independent*, and Michael Davitt, whose main source of income for many years was freelance journalism.

Even in its final years of publication, when the Irish party had been superseded by Sinn Féin and the Land War in Ireland was but a distant memory, the *Freeman's Journal* did not forget the struggle on the Ponsonby estate. It had good reason to remember, since the *Freeman's* last editor – from 1916 to 1924 – was Patrick Hooper, son of Alderman John Hooper MP who had been editor of the *Cork Daily Herald* and, like Canon Keller of Youghal, was imprisoned for his activities during the Plan of Campaign in the late 1880s (Larkin, 2009: 783–4). Accordingly, when Canon Keller died in November 1922, he was given a handsome obituary in the *Freeman*. It briefly recounted the facts of his involvement in the Plan of Campaign on the Ponsonby estate, and went on to comment that the 'deceased deplored the present condition of the country' (*Freeman's Journal*, 9 November 1922). The country was then in the throes of the Civil War – a 'division in the national ranks' even greater and more long-lasting than the Parnell split.

## Note

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## AUTHOR

Felix M. Larkin is chairman of the Newspaper and Periodical History Forum of Ireland. A retired public servant, he has written extensively about the press in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ireland. His *Terroe and Discord: The Shemus Cartoons in the Freeman's Journal, 1920–1924*, was published in 2009.

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