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Gerard P.J. Moran, *Father Patrick Lavelle: The Rise and Fall of an Irish Nationalist, 1825-1886* (Ph. D. thesis, 1992)

This is a study of Father Patrick Lavelle, one of the most radical members of the post-Famine Irish Catholic Church. Lavelle, who came from a comfortable tenant-farming background in Mayo, pursued his clerical studies in Maynooth and from an early stage displayed an aggressive and uncompromising manner. His confrontations with John Miley at the Irish College, Paris; Bishop Thomas Plunket in Partry, Cardinal Paul Cullen, John O'Connor Power and others gained him a reputation as a pugnacious and zealous opponent. However, the more gentler side of his nature was revealed when he met Sir Arthur Guinness in Cong in the 1870s.

While Lavelle is commonly regarded as a tenacious radical, it is often overlooked that he laboured relentlessly for his poor, oppressed parishioners of Partry against the twin dangers of Evangelicalism and famine. His pastoral duties were similar to those of other clerics in the west of Ireland and highlight the importance of the priest in the survival of their congregations.

Lavelle's fame is normally associated with the Fenian movement, in which he defended the right of Irish people to rebel against tyrannical government. This policy brought him into conflict with Paul Cullen who continuously endeavoured to have Lavelle suspended by the Vatican. Lavelle argued that the Fenian organisation had never been specifically named by the Church. He was able to pursue his radical course in Britain and Ireland because of John MacHale's protection. It is argued that Lavelle espoused militant nationalism because of the demise of constitutional nationalism, a position adopted by many other Irishmen. Once it became clear that the Fenians could not deliver on the national question, Lavelle and others reverted to parliamentary agitation and the Home Rule party. During this period Lavelle's fame declined, symbolising the clergy's fading power in Irish politics in the 1870s and the rise of the Catholic urban middle classes. Nevertheless, Lavelle has to be regarded as the link between the radical pre-Famine Irish Church and the socially aware clerics of the post-Land League Church.

Fr Patrick Lavelle: The Rise and Fall  
of an Irish Nationalist, 1825 - 1886

Gerard Patrick Joseph Moran, M.A., H. Dip. in Ed.

A thesis submitted for the degree of Ph D.

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**Department of Theology,**

**University of Durham.**

**September, 1992.**

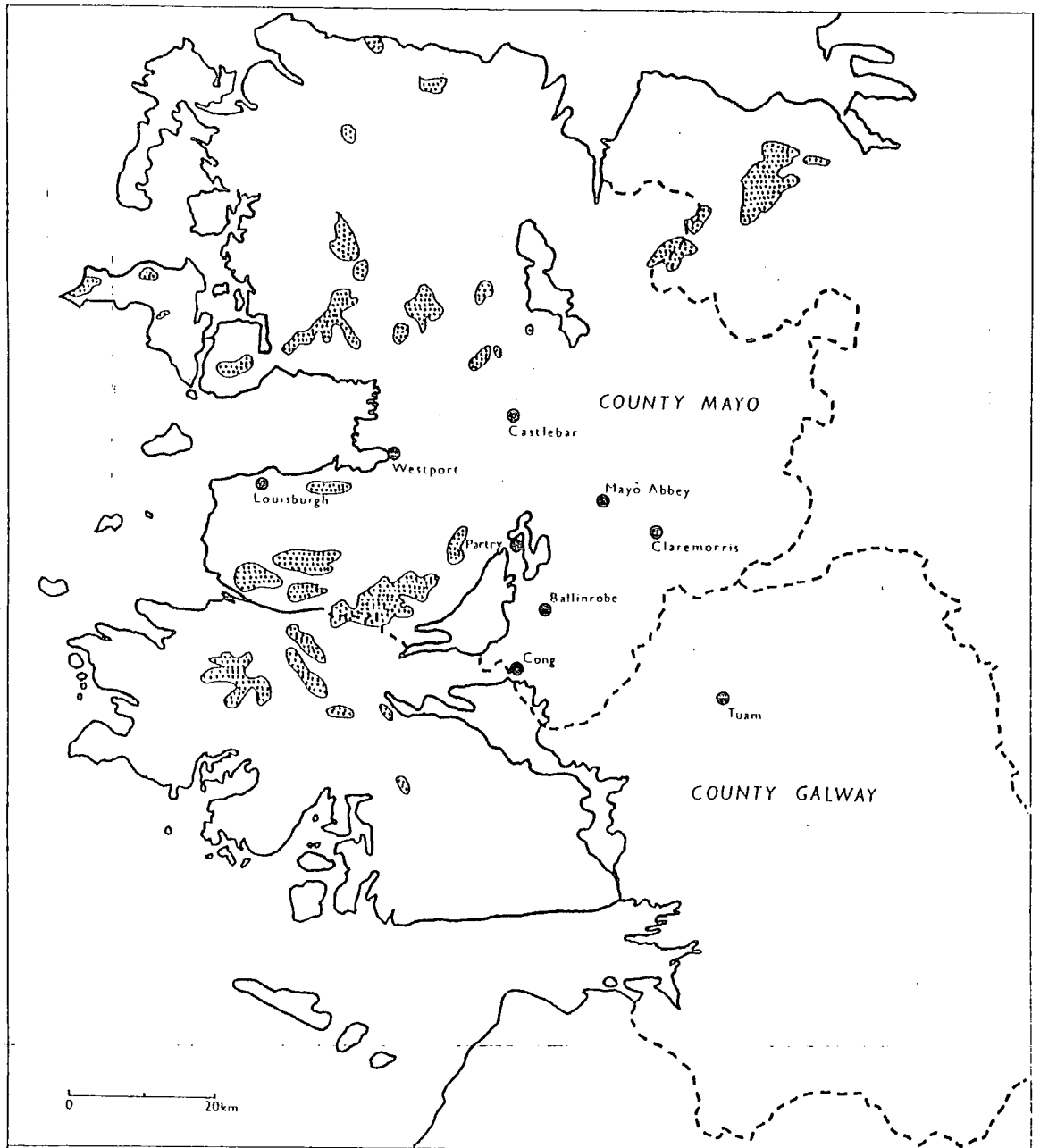
## CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	i
Introduction.....	1
1. <u>From Mullagh to Maynooth, 1825-1854.</u> "The Early Career of Patrick Lavelle".....	5
Notes.....	8
2. <u>Lavelle and the Irish College, Paris,1854-1858.</u> "The making of a rebel"	
(a) Lavelle's appointment to the Irish College, Paris.....	9
(b) Lavelle and the approaching storm at the Irish College, 1854-1858.....	13
(c) Lavelle's expulsion from France, March 1858.....	21
Notes.....	25
3. <u>Lavelle and the Protestant Crusade in Partry, 1858-61</u> "The emergence of the patriot priest of Partry"	
(a) Lavelle and the Evangelicals Crusade in Partry.....	28
(b) The Evictions, 1860-61.....	54
Notes.....	7
4. <u>Lavelle and the Fenians, Part 1, 1861-65.</u> "Defending the right to revolt"	
(a) Lavelle and the MacManus funeral, 1861.....	81
(b) Conflict and confrontation, 1862-65.....	87
Notes.....	141
5. <u>Lavelle and the Fenians, Part 2, 1865-1870.</u>	
(a) The road to rebellion, 1865-1868.....	152
(b) The drift towards constitutional nationalism, 1868-70.....	166
Notes.....	183
6. <u>Lavelle and Partry, 1861-69.</u>	
(a) Life in Partry after the evictions.....	189
(b) Landlord-tenant relations in Partry, 1868-9.....	206
(c) The Land Act of 1870.....	220
Notes.....	226
7. <u>Lavelle and the Political Situation, 1870-86.</u>	
(a) Lavelle and the Home Rule movement, 1870-74.....	231
(b) The 1874 general election.....	251
(c) Lavelle's political demise, 1874-86.....	261
Notes.....	270



8. Lavelle and the Land Question, 1870-86.

(a) Lavelle and Sir Arthus Guinness's estate.....	276
(b) Lavelle and the Land League.....	280
Notes.....	299
Conclusion.....	302
Bibliography.....	308

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Father Patrick Lavelle at Cong Abbey in the 1870s  
(Photo courtesy of Wynne Collection, Castlebar).

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It is the most pleasant of obligations to thank those who have helped me with this great work, which has occupied a large part of my time over the last five years. I am most grateful to the many institutions and their staffs that have facilitated me. I would like to thank The National Library of Ireland, the Manuscript Department of Trinity College, Dublin; The National Archives; Dublin City Archives; The Dublin Diocesan Archives; The Irish College, Paris; The Valuation Office, Dublin; Mayo County Library and Galway County Library for making my research work a most enjoyable affair. To the many people who have offered suggestion, provided assistance and listened to my obsession with Father Patrick Lavelle over the years I would like to thank them for their endurance and patience. I must especially mention David Sheehy, Prof J.S. Donnelly, Prof Emmet Larkin, Marcus Bourke, Bernedette Cunningham, Prof Gearoid O' Tuathaigh, Father Jarlath Waldron, Jarlath Duffy, Liam Bane, Dr W.E. Vaughan and Dr Emmet O'Connor. A special word of gratitude must go to Dr Raymond Gillespie, Prof Gary Ownes, Martin O'Hare and Chris Day for reading chapters of the thesis and making valuable suggestions. I must also thank my former principal and colleague in C.B.S. James' St., Bro Sean Tobin, for his help over the years. I am in the main indebted to my supervisor, Dr Sheridan Gilley, for having the patience and tolerance to direct me along the right path. It was his suggestion which first directed me to this topic. No research student could ask more of his supervisor. My greatest debt is to my wife, Clodagh, and two very special little men, Eoghan and Cian, for having the understanding and love to make the sacrifices to allow me to complete this work. This is as much their work as it is my own.

## Abbreviations

A.D.A.	Ardagh Diocesan Archives.
C.S.O., R.P.	Chief Secretary's Office, Registered Papers.
D.D.A.	Dublin Diocesan Archives.
D.C.A.	Dublin City Archives.
I.C.P.A.	Irish College, Paris, Archives.
I.H.S.	Irish Historical Studies.
N.A.	National Archives.
N.L.I.	National Library of Ireland.
T.C.D.	Trinity College, Dublin.

## INTRODUCTION

The political history of nineteenth century Ireland is often interpreted through the careers of the charismatic, larger-than-life personalities who dominated national affairs. The biographies of Daniel O'Connell, Paul Cullen, Isaac Butt, Michael Davitt and Charles Stewart Parnell might even be said to form the history of Ireland in the nineteenth century. As a consequence, the careers of many of their prominent, but less well-known, contemporaries have existed in their shadow. Nowhere is this more evident than in the life of Father Patrick Lavelle, 'The Patriot Priest of Partry', who played a pivotal role in Irish affairs between 1854 and 1880.

Lavelle's political career spanned a period of dramatic change in Ireland, especially for the Catholic Church. The Church was moving from Gallicanism to Ultramontanism and its leadership from Archbishop John MacHale of Tuam to Cardinal Paul Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin. It was a period that Prof Emmet Larkin has described as the 'consolidation of the Catholic Church in Ireland', with the centralised cohesive power of the Irish bishops ending the fragmented and divisive approach so evident before the Great Famine.(1) This development was to smother the individualist approach to social and political issues of radical clerics such as Father Lavelle.

Lavelle's rise to prominence occurred just after the Great Famine, in a period that saw major political, social and economic changes. Studies of better-known Irish figures have typically concentrated on one or more areas, such as political or ecclesiastical affairs, at the expense of other subjects. By contrast, Lavelle's career affords a unique opportunity to explore social, political, religious, military and local issues, because his life touched all of these. He was also one of the few figures in nineteenth century Ireland who won national fame by his local achievements. His activities in Partry between 1858 and 1861 gained him



a reputation that transcended his locality.

For too long, scholars of Irish history have attempted to apply their conclusions about national figures to the local or regional level. Sometimes this has distorted a true understanding of events. A case in point is the Land War of 1879-'82. Until recently Irish historians have examined this episode through the careers of Michael Davitt and Charles Stewart Parnell; it is only now that local studies have begun to reveal the shortcomings of this approach.(2) Thus, studies of people like Lavelle are as important to an understanding of national affairs as they are to localities, and the examination of local and regional history is being increasingly accepted as readily as its more illustrious national counterpart. It is no longer frowned upon as the domain of local individuals who have little to contribute to the national historical debate. Fortunately, some scholars have begun to marry local studies with other historical disciplines and have produced a richness of materials that is of benefit to all historians.(3)

There are many more Patrick Lavelles who remain to be discovered in nineteenth century Irish history. If this examination of Lavelle does nothing more than divert people's attention to the contributions of other local individuals like Father John Kenyon of Templeberry, Co Tipperary, James Daly of Castlebar and Matthew Harris of Ballinasloe, it will have succeeded in its objective.(4)

While research into the lives of people like Lavelle is important, it is not without its problems, the greatest being the paucity of primary source material. Unfortunately Lavelle left no private papers, although in 1872 he claimed that he possessed over 2,000 private letters written over the previous two decades.(5) As they have not been discovered one can only assume that Lavelle followed the example of many of his clerical contemporaries and ordered the destruction of his private papers after he died. This was often done to ensure that no incriminating evidence existed which could be used against the writer after his death.

The lack of private papers can be overcome with a little imagination and dedication. Fortunately Lavelle was a prolific letter-writer to newspapers between 1858 and 1880 and these published letters are available. While time and effort are needed to uncover such letters, they do compensate for the lack of private papers. Such material is important because it indicates Lavelle's changing views. Other major sources available for an analysis of Lavelle's life are the private papers of his contemporaries, such as Paul Cullen and George Henry Moore. The richest information is from Lavelle's enemies, and it can provide a one-sided account. It is therefore necessary to complement these sources with Lavelle's own letters to the newspapers which give us at least the public face of the man.

Notes:

1. Emmet Larkin, The Consolidation of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1860-1870 (Chapel Hill, 1987).
2. These studies include Paul Bew, Land and the National Question in Ireland, 1858-1882 (Dublin, 1978); Samuel Clark, The Social Origins of the Irish Land War (Princeton 1979); W.E. Feingold, The Revolt of the Tenantry: The Transformation of Local Government in Ireland, 1872-1886 (Boston, 1984); Idem, "Land League Power: The Tralee Poor-Law Election of 1881", in Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly (eds.), Irish Peasants: Violence and Political Unrest, 1780-1914 (Manchester & Wisconsin, 1983), pp.285-310. On a more local level see Thomas Nelson, The Land War in County Kildare, Maynooth Historical Series, no.3, (Maynooth 1985).
3. On the importance of local history see Raymond Gillespie and Gerard Moran, "Writing Local History", in Raymond Gillespie and Gerard Moran (eds.), 'A Various Country': Essays in Mayo History, 1500-1900 (Westport, 1987), pp.11-23.
4. There are pen pictures of these individuals in D. J. Hickey & J.E. Doherty (eds.), A Directory of Irish History since 1800 (Dublin, 1980); for Kenyon see pp.277-8; Daly see p.113; Harris see p.218.
5. See Copy of the Evidence taken at the Trial of the Galway County Election Petition, H.C. 1872 (241-1V), xlvi, p.800, q.27,345.

CHAPTER 1  
FROM MULLAGH TO MAYNOOTH

The Early Years of Patrick Lavelle, 1825-1854

Patrick Lavelle was born in 1825 at Mullagh, a townland close to Croagh Patrick and between the towns of Westport and Louisburgh. The Lavelle family had lived in Mullagh for four generations.(1) Patrick was the eldest child of Francis Lavelle and Mary MacManus, and had two brothers, Thomas and Francis, and two sisters. His father held a twenty-five acre holding from Sir Roger Palmer and was regarded locally as an industrious farmer. The family was not totally dependent on land, but it is impossible to ascertain Francis Lavelle's other sources of income.(2) The family was fortunate that their uncle, Patrick Lavelle, was proprietor of the Freeman's Journal, the largest Irish newspaper. He was its first Catholic owner and when he sold the paper in 1841 to a group of supporters of Repeal, he made a substantial profit. He financed the education of the male members of Francis Lavelle's family.(3)

Because of the lack of a formal school system in the west of Ireland before the Great Famine, Patrick and his brothers probably received their early education at a local 'hedge school'. These schools taught the 3Rs, as well as Latin and Greek, subjects necessary for students aspiring to the priesthood. In 1840, at the age of 15, Patrick entered St. Jarlath's College, Tuam as a boarder and studied there for the next four years. Here he was taught the classics, science, French and Irish. One of Lavelle's professors was Father John MacEivilly, later Bishop of Galway in 1856 and Archbishop of Tuam in 1881. MacEivilly, born in Louisburgh only a few miles from Lavelle, would, ironically, become one of his bitterest critics between 1861 and 1886, and wholly disapproved of his support of Fenianism. A fellow student of Lavelle's was Ulick Bourke from Castlebar, one of those who inspired the preservation of the Irish language in the 1870s and 1880s.



After leaving St. Jarlath's in 1844 Lavelle was admitted to Maynooth, and on 9 November graduated from the Theology class.(4) He entered the seminary at a time of a growing demand for priests in Ireland. Priests were especially needed in the diocese of Tuam where there was only one cleric for every 4,199 people, against a national average of one to every 2,985. When he entered Maynooth there were 438 students.(5) Most, like Lavelle, came from the middle-class Irish tenant farmer stock. As most aspiring clerics had to fund their own studies in Maynooth, the priesthood was outside the reach of most young Irishmen. Under the government's annual grant, Maynooth provided 250 free places for students, but this was never enough to meet the demand for positions or the need for priests. This resulted in overcrowded conditions in Maynooth and very poor sleeping quarters for the students. It cost £70 to maintain a student at Maynooth during his first year, and £33 for each year thereafter.(6) Often more than one family member went on for the Church, like Patrick's youngest brother, Francis, who entered the missionary college All Hallows in 1860 with a view to ordination for the diocese of Melbourne.(7)

His period at Maynooth also coincided with the Great Famine, so he never witnessed at first hand its full ravages to his native Mayo. His later writings in support of Irish independence never referred to the Famine, as they did of his first hand experiences of distress, proselytism and evictions.(8)

Lavelle's years at Maynooth coincided with a major debate on Gallicanism within the College. Supporters of Gallicanism favoured a loose central discipline which would allow the Church to develop distinctive national characteristics, among them the expression of independent opinions on political issues. The debate became more vocal with the appointment of Paul Cullen as Archbishop of Armagh in 1849, and his Ultramontane views - that Papal authority should prevail over the whole Church - increased these tensions.(9) Lavelle was probably one of the last students to come under the Gallican domination in Maynooth, but it influenced him for the rest of his life. His evidence to the

Maynooth Commission in October 1853, when he was 28 years old and a senior Dunboyne student, demonstrated the importance of Gallicanism in his training. His testimony dealt mainly with the type of teaching the students received and their attitude to it. He was questioned on the mode of instruction on moral theology, the Church's treatment of heretics and his training for pastoral duties in Ireland. When asked if the Professor of Dogmatic Theology had impressed upon the students the allegiance they owed to Queen Victoria, Lavelle said no. This and other snippets of evidence indicate that Lavelle willingly upheld the College's Gallican tradition, as most revealingly he accepted the first article of Napoleon's Organic Articles which stated that the Pope possessed no temporal power.(10)

Lavelle was known to have quarrelled with his peers and superiors on many issues.(11) Nevertheless, his academic brilliance was noted by his elevation to the Dunboyne establishment in October 1851. Twenty of the College's best scholars were selected to pursue further studies, which lasted three years. They were generally regarded as superior to most ordinary clerics, both in talent and in their knowledge of theology. They were trained with a view to becoming professors in seminaries or parish priests.(12) Thus Lavelle was groomed from an early stage for high office in the Church. The pinnacle of his early academic career, his ordination, took place on 21 June 1853. He remained in Maynooth as a Dunboyne student until the summer of 1854. In October Lavelle was appointed Professor of Philosophy at the Irish College in Paris by the Irish Board of Bishops, but did not take up the position until December.

From his early years Lavelle attained a position of authority in the Irish Church as an academic or as a cleric in his home diocese. He also, however, displayed the polemical attributes which were to earn him an unenviable reputation in the Church, and prevented his promotion to higher office. The Irish Church was undergoing a great change, as Paul Cullen asserted his own authoritative control, and there was little room for any cleric who refused to conform to this change.

### Early Years.

1. Patrick Lavelle, The Irish Landlord since the Revolution (Dublin, 1870), p.395; There is some dispute regarding the year of his birth. The only official document on his birth is on his death certificate in November 1886, which gave his age as 59, thus putting the year at 1827. However, documentation in Maynooth states it was 1825 and his evidence to the Maynooth commission in 1853 confirms this year.
2. Griffiths Valuation, Barony of Murrisk, Parish of Oughaval, p.81. For example the family employed servants which was not normal in the region for somebody in their position, see Lavelle, op. cit., p. 395
3. John O'Donovan, Ordinance Survey Letters, County Mayo, vol. 3 pt.2, (Dublin, 1838), p.241, ref.496; Stephen J. M. Browne, The Press in Ireland: A Survey and a Guide (New York, 1971), Patrick Lavelle was the first Catholic proprietor of the Freeman's Journal, which was the leading nationalist newspaper in the country. He was also one of the first Catholics to enter Trinity College, Dublin, where he had a distinguished academic career. There is no indication to show where he secured the money to finance these studies. In 1841 he sold the newspaper to a group of Daniel O'Connell's supporters, headed by Sir John Grey.
4. P.J. Hamill, "Maynooth Students and Ordinations, 1795-1895", in the Irish Ecclesiastical Record, cx no.2 (Sept. 1968), p.178; While Hamill's list cites him as having matriculated from the Theology class, Lavelle told the Maynooth Commission it was from the Rhetoric class, see Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Management and Government of the College of Maynooth, pt.ii, minutes of Evidence, and Answers, H.C. 1854-5 [1896 1], xxii, p.271. This is also the conclusion of Tomas O'Fiaich, "The Patriot Priest of Partry: Patrick Lavelle, 1825-1886", in Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society xxxv (1976), p.129.
5. Donal A. Kerr, Peel, Priests and Politics: Sir Robert Peel's Administration and the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1841-46 (Oxford, 1982) pp. 33, 51; S.J.Connolly, Priests and People in pre-Famine Ireland, 1780-1845 (Dublin and New York, 1982), p.35.
6. Ambrose Macaulay, Patrick Dorrian, Bishop of Down and Connor, 1865-1885 (Dublin, 1987), p.17; One of the best analyses of the social backgrounds of the Irish clergy prior to the Great Famine is to be found in Kerr, op. cit., pp. 239-48.
7. Kevin Condon, The Missionary College of All Hallows, 1842-1891 (Dublin, 1968), p.317.
8. The best accounts of the Famine in Mayo and the role of the local clergy is to be found in David Sheehy, "Archbishop Murray of Dublin and the Great Famine in Mayo", in Cathair na Mart, xi (1991), pp. 118-128; See also Christine Kinealy, "The Administration of the Poor Law in Mayo, 1838-1898", in Cathair na Mart, vi (1986), pp. 98-110.
9. For the problems of Gallicanism in this period see, P.J. Corish, "Gallicanism at Maynooth: Archbishop Cullen and the Royal Visitation of 1853", in Art Cosgrove and Donal McCartney (eds.) Studies in Irish History (Dublin, 1979), pp.176-89.
10. Her Majesty's Commissioners...inquiry into.....the College of Maynooth, pp. 274, 275, q.70.
11. E.D. D'Alton, A History of the Archdiocese of Tuam, vol. ii (Dublin, 1928), p.118. According to Tomas O'Fiaich, 'Patriot Priest of Partry', p. 130 this evidence was probably based on personal recollections of clerics who knew Lavelle in Maynooth, and were interviewed by D'Alton. Unfortunately Lavelle was dead at this time, but his reputation as a trouble maker still existed.
12. See J. Healy, A Centenary History of Maynooth College (Dublin, 1985), pp. 301, 308.

## CHAPTER 2

### LAVELLE AND THE IRISH COLLEGE, PARIS, 1854-1858

#### The making of a rebel

##### (a) Lavelle's appointment to the Irish College, Paris.

Patrick Lavelle's arrival at the Irish College in Paris in December, 1854 coincided with one of the most turbulent periods in its history. While his critics maintained that Lavelle initiated this period of rebellion and militancy, the College's problems were evident before this. To understand the difficulties which Lavelle encountered after his appointment it is necessary to examine these problems between 1848 and 1854.

The Irish College had been an important centre for the education of priests for the Irish mission from its establishment in 1578, but its significance had begun to decline with the opening of the national seminary at Maynooth in 1795(1). Throughout the nineteenth century, the College was a problem for the Irish hierarchy. In 1828, new statutes were introduced allowing the Archbishop of Paris control of the College, while internal discipline remained with the Irish bishops. Internal discipline was a considerable problem, given the radical ideals that emanated from Paris after the 1848 revolution and which were absorbed by the students, who were prepared to go directly to the bishops with their grievances over the heads of the College authorities. Throughout the 1850s, they demanded what they regarded as their rights: the improvement of their diet; an end to the crowded state of their apartments and the right to question their superiors.(2) They had absorbed the revolutionary ethos of the day: chanting the Marseillaise, shouting 'Vive la Republique', planting a tree of liberty and attacking soldiers from the windows of the College.(3) When Paul Cullen visited the College in 1850, he said of the students that "poor Ireland has much to fear from its future ministers" and "The students are old rough

fellows and have great pretensions, continually talking about their rights and ready to question the superior's authority."(4) This was due to the faction fights and rioting among the students themselves. While only a minority of students were engaged in such activities, they coerced the majority into signing their petitions against the Rector, John Miley, to the Irish Board of Bishops. Miley was not a good disciplinarian and his intemperate, irrational manner only exacerbated the tensions when a solid, cool-thinking approach was required.(5) No proper discipline existed in the College, and incidents were magnified as no ordered system existed for dealing with them.

The College was also beset with financial difficulties due to declining interest rates and low rental incomes from the former Irish Colleges at Bordeaux and Nantes. This forced John Miley to pay many of the bills from his own resources. In order to cut down this increasing deficit, which averaged £4,000 per annum, Miley took control of the College's finances and refused to pay certain bills, and only paid others when bills were produced before the goods were even ordered.

Miley's endeavours to reduce his costs brought him into conflict with his staff. He refused to work with other staff members and his preference for an autocratic rule within the College was the fundamental reason for the continuous disputes with his professors and the Irish Board of Bishops. Miley was indignant that many bishops blamed him for the College's financial and disciplinary difficulties. The Irish board failed to assist with the College's monetary difficulties, and indeed worsened the position by Lavelle's appointment as Professor of Irish in 1856 at an annual sum of 400 francs and by the provision of additional apparatus for the philosophy class.(6)

The Rector and the Irish board also clashed over the 1849 statutes which restricted Miley's authority. The statutes reorganised the College, dividing the administration among three groups - the Rector, who dealt with the day-to-day running of the College, the Irish Board of Bishops, who made its appointments, and the French Minister for Public

Instruction, who nominated the administrator at an annual salary of 3,000 francs. The Irish hierarchy accepted the principle of French secular participation in the running and guardianship of the College.(7) Miley found it difficult work with the new statutes for they took away his individual right to govern. Nevertheless, they allowed the French authorities to deal with occurrences like those in 1848. This power permitted them to act swiftly to any disturbances, such as that caused by Lavelle and his colleague, Father John Rice, in March 1858.

As the Irish board had ultimate control over the Rector, divisions developed between them. Miley wanted to administer the rules as he interpreted them without recourse to any other body. In his endeavours to control the College, he was prepared to defy openly the resolutions of the Irish bishops. So acrimonious were the feuds between them, including one over Lavelle's appointment, that the board threatened to recall him.(8) The board's records show it disapproved of the Rector's impeachment of the validity or propriety of its acts when announced to him by its secretary, Dr John Derry, Bishop of Clonfert. Miley's refusal to accept Lavelle's appointment on the grounds that it had not been properly conducted only exacerbated the continuing struggle with the board, and was perceived as a display of open defiance.

Lavelle's appointment to the post of Professor of Philosophy was the origin of the problem that eventually brought the Irish College to its knees and highlighted two important issues: the continuing struggle between Miley and the Irish bishops, and the bitterness between two most pugnacious characters, Lavelle and Miley, over the next four years. Miley was not prepared to accept the appointment because only six of the twelve member board attended the meeting that appointed Lavelle. The real motive behind Miley's opposition was his hope to have his own nominee, Father John Harold, appointed to the vacant position. Miley assigned Harold to the post on a temporary basis, but was positive he would be able to make the placement permanent.

The decision to appoint Lavelle had been taken at the October meeting of the Irish board, but Miley was not officially informed; he only heard of it through his opponents on the staff of the College. This proved to him that his adversaries on the Irish board were gaining the upper hand. It shows up one of Miley's characteristics: that of viewing everything round him as support or opposition to his rule.

Lavelle was not allowed take up his position when he arrived at the College on 3 December 1854, on the grounds that the Rector had not received official notification from the Irish board.(9) On his arrival in Paris, Miley told him that there was no accommodation available at the College, that he had not received any communication from Derry on the appointment, and that he would not recognise his position until he received satisfactory documents. Miley was determined to bar Lavelle's entry maintaining that there was an irregularity in the appointment. Lavelle's attitude did not help. He failed to inform the Rector of his plans and of the date when he intended coming to the College. Lavelle's failure to contact Miley was due to a reluctance to accept the post without direct instructions from his ordinary, the Archbishop of Tuam, who apparently had not been aware of his candidacy for the position. At the same time, his failure to communicate with Miley from the time of his appointment on 20 October up to his arrival in Paris on 3 December shows his lack of commitment to his new position. It also suggests a lack of concern about the students' studies and about Miley's difficulties in ensuring that he had a professor to teach those students, as can be noted in his letter to Miley upon his arrival in Paris.(10)

Lavelle wrote to Derry telling him of the situation, and on 15 December the Bishop of Clonfert wrote to Miley informing him of the appointment and expressing strong disapproval of the Rector's challenge to its validity. Lavelle was forced to spend three weeks in the nearby Hotel de Lille d'Albaon where one of his aunts was in permanent residence.(11) It was not until the end of the month that Lavelle was allowed to take up officially his duties in the College.

(b) Lavelle and the approaching storm at the Irish College, Paris, 1854-1858

By the time of Lavelle's appointment to the College, the staff were divided between those who supported Miley (primarily from the diocese of Dublin), and those who opposed him (mainly from those Irish dioceses which were anti-Cullen). As new professors arrived on the staff, concerted efforts were made by Miley's opponents to win them over and to get them to demonstrate overtly their opposition to the Rector. It was difficult for any new staff member to remain neutral.

Much of the trouble centred on Miley's feeling of persecution and his inability as an administrator. He regarded Lavelle, and nearly every other member of staff at different stages, as instigators of the College's difficulties. His correspondence with Cullen indicates that the continuous pressure upon him by Lavelle and others contributed to his poor mental and physical health. While Lavelle's arrival may have been the straw that broke the camel's back, he alone was not responsible for the state of anarchy in the College in the 1850s.

Throughout Lavelle's stay the students became pawns in the struggle between Miley and the staff. Unceasing attempts were made by Lavelle and the Rector to get the students to support their respective points of view. One priest, Father J. Lucy of Cape Clear, claimed that when he was a student at the College, Miley made him write to Cullen against his will protesting against Lavelle and the other professors.(12) At the same time a continuous undercurrent of student militancy was evident. The extent of the problem became apparent in March 1858 when the students demonstrated their support for Lavelle after Miley had refused him entry into the College. While only a small number of students, mainly from the archdiocese of Tuam, were actively involved in these events, it would appear they coerced their peers into following their line. In many instances it was Lavelle who instigated these rebellions, using his influence as a teacher to ensure that the students he



taught were hostile to the Rector. On a number of occasions Lavelle intimated at his lectures that they, the students, were not being properly treated by Miley. He alleged that 1,000 francs, or £40, a year had been set aside by the Irish bishops for the maintenance of each student and this was not being properly spent. This resulted in the students complaining about the quality of wine they received and refusing to drink it.(13)

Students who showed a friendliness towards Miley earned Lavelle's wrath. One student refused in 1855 to be dictated to by his peers over one of their petitions to the bishops. Initially Lavelle reviled him for disobedience, but when he spoke to Miley on the issue, he was verbally abused and condemned by Lavelle in front of his fellow students. Even when the student apologised to Lavelle he had to endure a full hour's lecture for having spoken to the Rector. This was followed with a threat to get him expelled.(14) Such displays resulted in Miley becoming a refuge for those parties abused by Lavelle and other members of his faction.

While Lavelle's appointment was the first episode in the Lavelle-Miley conflict, it was the professor's decision to seek financial compensation from the Irish board in June 1855 which began a long confrontation between the two men. At the board meeting on 28 June 1855 Lavelle issued a submission detailing Miley's treatment of him upon his arrival at the College. He asked for his hotel expenses for three weeks in December to be paid. Miley was ordered to pay over this money along with the wages due to him for this period.(15) In doing this Lavelle was prepared to go over the head of his immediate superiors and straight to the highest authority. He was probably aware that his approaches to Miley for this compensation would meet with a negative response. His decision to involve the Irish board only exacerbated the problem. Once again the board members had admonished Miley for his actions, and Lavelle appeared to have won the first battle in the war.

Lavelle's work load was subsequently increased. The Irish board now appointed him to teach two Irish language classes a week to students from Irish-speaking dioceses in

addition to his other teaching duties.(16) This post carried an additional salary of £16 a year which created further acrimony between the two men, for the Irish board never informed Miley where the extra revenue was to come from to meet the expense. Miley was only told the following November to secure the money from the Minister for Public Instruction and if he refused, from the Walsh fund. Lavelle regarded Miley's refusal to hand over the money to him in the intervening months as a further affront. He thus used it as an excuse to exacerbate the already fragile relationship with the Rector. The Irish board at their meeting of 22 October 1856 were informed that Lavelle had not received his salary and they once more decided in favour of Lavelle, providing him with another psychological victory over his adversary.(17) The board realised that there were gathering storm clouds at the College and called on the two men to settle their differences, telling Lavelle to show due respect for Miley's authority. Their failure to bring about a final solution to the problems of the College at this stage was primarily due to the internal problems which divided the bishops, such as Ultramontaniam and clerical participation in politics.

During the academic year 1856-7 the conflict between the two men became more intense and gained much attention in Ireland. Miley was now taking more notice of Lavelle's activities, and in particular his claims that he had a mission to carry out against Miley and to drive him from the College. News of the troubles in the College now became public knowledge, through a number of anonymous letters to the newspapers.(18) Given Lavelle's prolific letter-writing exploits to the newspapers between 1858 and 1874, it is reasonable to assume that he was responsible, as the letters tended to show Miley up in a bad light.

These events and his further actions in 1857-8 were the first indications of what became Lavelle's hallmark: a total disregard for the authority and structures that were becoming an intrinsic part of the Irish Church under Cullen. At a time when the political and clerical actions of priests were under threat from the newly-emerging, centralised episcopal authority, Lavelle's individualism was to bring him into conflict with his episcopal

superiors. While Lavelle became the principal thorn in the Rector's side, it was Miley's impression that he had become the tool of Thomas MacHale, a nephew of Archbishop John MacHale and Professor of Theology, and was easily manipulated by others to carry out their evil deeds. While Lavelle was part of the opposing faction, up to 1857 there is little to distinguish him from the other professors who opposed Miley. While Miley attributed Lavelle's rise to the exertions of MacHale, it is clear that by March 1857 Lavelle had commenced his all-out 'war' against Miley. Throughout his life Lavelle was to be driven on by crises. This was pointed out by Miley in his letters to Cullen and Archbishop MacHale: "Mr Lavelle is quite reckless of consequences..." and he wrote "Mr. L's temper is very violent. When excited he deals volubly in low outrageous abuse mingled with threats of violence and personal outrage."(19) On occasions he resorted to violence, once hitting Miley on the chin. There was substance to Miley's accusations about Lavelle's recklessness. His fits of anger were common. This often resulted in him physically assaulting his adversaries. Undoubtedly Lavelle did not have a cool disposition, and he made up for his lack of height with a fiery temper and tremendous resilience.

Why did Lavelle begin his campaign against Miley during the spring of 1857? The Rector at this point was in poor health, having to receive medical attention for bronchitis and a fever. Certainly, Lavelle's activities between March and June 1857 did not help matters and would seem to have been spurred on by a desire to gain the upper hand.

Between March and June 1857 Lavelle tried to obstruct the Rector as he read his breviary in the courtyard of the College, he took over Miley's position in the choir during mass, he slammed doors in the Rector's face, and insulted him in front of others. He was generally abusive to Miley, and made his life very uncomfortable. It would have been better for the sake of peace in the College if Miley had ignored these annoyances, as he was advised to do by Cullen. Some of the incidents were probably exaggerated by Miley to discredit Lavelle. Perhaps the most disturbing aspect was that Lavelle very often carried them out in front of the students and domestic staff. He did not seem to mind who witnessed his

assaults. Perhaps he carried out his feats before the students in order to incite them to mutiny on his behalf.

While Miley had never been an admirer of Archbishop John MacHale, he sought his aid in his dispute with Lavelle, regarding it as a last resort. In his letter to MacHale on 21 May 1857, Miley described Lavelle's continuing scheming with extracts from his diary. While the letter was phrased in a more diplomatic form than his correspondence with Cullen, he nevertheless pulled no punches, insisting that it was Lavelle who was the cause of the College's problems. He wrote: "He [Lavelle] exerts himself in a way to vilify and revile me and turn me into ridicule not only in the presence of the priests but also of the students." (20)

The letter was designed to portray Lavelle as the aggressor and Miley as the innocent party. It did not, however, have the desired effect as MacHale never replied, not even acknowledging its receipt. Lavelle also continued to carry on his actions against the Rector as boldly as ever. MacHale was not prepared to help Miley, and his failure to bring Lavelle to task suggests that he supported his priest. The continuing crisis in Paris was giving MacHale some crumbs of satisfaction in his dispute with Cullen, which overall was going the latter's way. MacHale was also to assist Lavelle in the 1860s when he was once more making life very difficult for Cullen over the question of Lavelle's support for Fenianism.

Both Lavelle and Miley were being given vital information about their opponents by their respective archbishops, as appears in Lavelle's first letter to Cullen on 8 June 1857, where he answered each of the allegations that Miley had made to MacHale. At the same time Miley was aware of Lavelle's charges against him through Cullen. There was obviously little common ground between the two men, but Cullen in his reply to Lavelle called on him to apologise to the Rector and accept his authority on all issues. Each man tried to convince Cullen that he was showing restraint in the face of severe provocation and that his opponent was acting in opposition to the well-being of the College. Lavelle took the line

that Miley was not a suitable leader, since he failed to co-operate with the teaching staff and win their confidence. He certainly was not very far wrong when he maintained, "Dr Miley has got the unenviable art of making all about him unhappy.'<sup>(21)</sup> He also wrote, "The unhappy college has been the theatre of our unbroken quarrel between him on one side and professors and directors on the other. He has all the power. This he exercises for his own exclusive interest."<sup>(22)</sup>

In brushing aside Miley's claims against him, Lavelle made his own allegations that the financial difficulties of the College were the direct result of the Rector's spending on expensive equipment for his own rooms. He accused him of hiring a car at 25 francs a day to bring him to the country house and back. He stated that Miley had refused him the money owed to him for equipment, that he had not repaired the broken windows in his room and had forced him to leave his quarters because the chimney was not cleaned. Miley's failure to pay him his money also formed the basis of Lavelle's second letter to Cullen on 10 July 1857, just as the College was about to break up for the holidays.<sup>(23)</sup> Lavelle did not receive this salary until 3 November 1857 after he had complained once more to the Irish board.<sup>(24)</sup> The money was only paid over after the Irish board sent Miley a critical note.

The staff hoped that the closing of the College for holidays at the end of June would help clear the air between the two men and usher in a period of peace, but this was not to be. Throughout the academic year 1857-8 the College went from one scandal to another, without any authority being able to install order. Lavelle had only returned to the College when he put up an inflammatory placard within view of all of the students which was clearly designed to inflame Miley. He then informed Miley that the "war" of the previous year was nothing to what he would encounter for the present year.<sup>(25)</sup> Miley complained to Cullen that events in the College were being deliberately orchestrated to show him up in a bad light. MacHale's intransigent support of Lavelle convinced Miley that nothing could be gained from that source for the good of the College. The only assistance that would

bring peace to the College would be through the help of the other two archbishops, Leahy of Cashel and Dixon of Armagh.

In order to achieve this, and because the College's problems were becoming public knowledge through the newspapers, Cullen tried to take the matter in hand at the June meeting of the Irish board. He wanted Lavelle expelled from the College, and after he had shown Lavelle's letter of 10 June to him, most of the bishops agreed. However, their attitude changed when they learned that the Rector had not carried out the board's earlier instructions to pay the Irish salary to Lavelle and had failed to forward the College's accounts to them.(26)

By the start of 1858 the College was in complete turmoil and its discipline in chaos. Lavelle and other members of the faction continued their assault on Miley with an intensity that made it obvious to everyone inside and outside the College that it was on the verge of collapse. While the issue of salary payments continued, a more worrying aspect in the campaign was Lavelle's veiled allegation that Miley was involved in a homosexual affair with a Mr O'Reilly. These claims naturally disturbed Miley, and he threatened Lavelle with legal action if he ever repeated them.(27) Miley was also having to contend with Lavelle's continuing childish pranks. No sooner had Lavelle returned to the College after the Christmas holidays than he proceeded to the Rector's private rooms and removed pieces of furniture, maintaining they were his. A further source of irritation were the loud railway whistles with which Lavelle and a colleague, Father John Rice, greeted Miley.(28) While Miley was prepared to suffer these humiliations he felt the most important point for the re-establishment of order was that Lavelle should cease to occupy the Rector's position in the chapel and return to his own place.(29) At least then the students would be unable to witness the open acts of hostility between the Rector and his professors.

The Cullen correspondence in February and March 1858 indicates that a reconciliation between Lavelle and Miley was out of the question. Lavelle wrote two letters in February

maintaining that there was little likelihood of a solution, even though he himself insisted that he had been moderate in his dealings with the Rector. He said of Miley that, "His treatment of me has been such as no other superior living would have recourse to against a hard working professor."(30)

Miley's letters stated that the College was on the verge of collapse and would have to be closed by Easter if immediate remedial measures were not undertaken against Lavelle.(31) The servants were also having to endure similar treatment from Lavelle, who often complained that they did not put enough oil in his lamp. On the night of 11 March they were greatly incensed when Lavelle and Rice carried a large vessel of waste into Miley's room and distributed the contents all over the room. The servants took Miley's side in the dispute, informing the Rector that Lavelle should be instantly dismissed because of his unpriestly antics. This explains why the servants were only too happy to keep Lavelle and Rice outside the College gates when the crisis reached its climax on 24 March, 1858. During Lavelle's libel actions against a number of newspapers in 1860 and 1861, the principal witnesses for his opponents were servants from the College in Paris in 1858.(32)

(c) Lavelle's expulsion from France, March 1858

By March 1858 the situation had reached a crisis. Miley had now drawn up plans to deal with Lavelle, to the extent of having a replacement, Padre Fulgiurgioda, a Franciscan from Turin, ready to carry out his duties.(33)

On the morning of Wednesday, 24 March, as Lavelle and Rice returned to the College after saying Mass in nearby convents, they were refused entry to the College, on Miley's express instructions. Confrontation followed, Lavelle tried to force his way into the College and was physically restrained by the servants. He was then handed a letter from Miley which stated his employment had been ended and that to avoid a repetition of the scandals he had orchestrated in the College, he would not be allowed to re-enter it to collect his belongings, but could get them through a third party. The letter also contained his salary.(34)

Lavelle refused to give in, and going to the back of the College, both he and Rice gained entry into a house on the pretext they were searching for an item they had lost. Borrowing a ladder from the owner, they climbed over the back-wall and into the College grounds. Once inside, a core group of 15 to 20 of the students expressed their support for the two professors, demanding the dismissal of those servants who barred their professors. That night they refused to eat the meal prepared for them and forced their peers to become involved, and to sign a petition to the Irish board which was critical of Miley.(35)

It was then that Miley sent for the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Marlot, who told the Rector to call in the French authorities. Lavelle refused their initial request to leave the College, maintaining that as his bishop had nominated him to his position he would only leave when MacHale told him to. Eventually the representative from the Ministry of Public Instruction, Mr Jourdain, persuaded Lavelle and Rice to depart by threatening that the police would use force to remove them. At 7.30 both professors left for a nearby hotel



accompanied by four policemen.(36)

By going over the wall and entering the College Lavelle once more displayed his impetuosity. He only succeeded in consolidating the opposition against him from Miley, the servants, the Archbishop of Paris and the police. Whatever opportunity he had up to this of a reconciliation with Miley and of remaining on at the College, it now appeared to the French authorities that the allegations against him were true.

As the French authorities were entirely behind Miley, Lavelle and Rice were unable to get any satisfaction in France. Without success, they sought the aid of the Archbishop of Paris, the British ambassador in Paris, Lord Cowley, and the Emperor Napoleon himself. While in the process of putting forward their case, the two professors received an order from the French authorities on 7 April to leave the country by 18 April, just when the French government commission appointed to enquire into the expulsions was about to begin its deliberations.(37) Lavelle contended he had done nothing wrong and was prepared to defend himself against the accusations regardless of where it be. Both he and Rice sent letters to Cullen, the Archbishop of Paris, the Irish board and all the Irish bishops. A letter was also published in The Nation which had Lavelle's trademark.(38) Lavelle left France hurriedly, under threat of six months' imprisonment if he returned.

While the French authorities had refused to allow Lavelle to defend himself, the Irish board of bishops granted him this privilege, an indication that from the very outset they had not accepted that Lavelle and Rice were entirely responsible for the events in the College. While both professors attended the Irish board meeting on 29 April in Dublin, the case was deferred until the June meeting. They were annoyed that Miley had expelled the professors without the prior approval of the Irish bishops and that he had not given them adequate notification of their dismissal.(39) Some felt that Lavelle was not entirely responsible for the crisis at the College and that the Rector had not treated him fairly.

Lavelle arrived in Ireland from France in late April 1858, and it was not long before he was appointed by John MacHale to be Administrator of the rural parish of Mayo Abbey, between Castlebar and Claremorris. From here he continued his campaign to clear his name, appearing in Dublin on a number of occasions during the month of May, and also writing to Cullen seeking a copy of the letter forwarded to him by the French Minister for Public Instruction concerning his expulsion.(40) The Dixon report in July, which inquired into events in the College, vindicated him, and this was supported in October by the Irish board. While the bishops' findings meant that Lavelle was entitled to return to his post in Paris, it was felt it would benefit the College if he could be redeployed elsewhere.(41) By this time Lavelle had moved on to the next phase in his career: his confrontation with the Church of Ireland Bishop of Tuam, Thomas Plunket, and the Evangelicals in Partry.

Miley was the major loser in the Paris affair. It has been generally assumed that Lavelle's ejection from France was a proof of his guilt in the events of March 1858. Dixon and the Irish board of bishops were, however, clearly opposed to Miley's actions in the whole affair. At their meeting in October 1858 the Irish board accepted the resignations of the two professors rather than their expulsion and acknowledged that they had been efficient in the discharge of their duties at the College.(42) A further humiliation for Miley was the decision to close down the College and give it over to the charge of the Vincentian Order in October 1858. Cullen was eventually forced to recall him to Dublin on the grounds that his presence was no longer good for the College and that the Vincentians were on the verge of resigning if he remained.(43) Miley's return to become parish priest of Bray in August 1859 "finally brought to an end one of the most vexatious, not to say divisive problems that had plagued the Irish church for more than a decade."(44)

The incident also alerted Paul Cullen to Lavelle's capacity for mischief. According to Thomas MacHale, the personal rivalry between Lavelle and Cullen was a direct consequence of the situation at the Irish College in the 1850s, as Lavelle was of the opinion that the source for his troubles was not Miley but Cullen himself.(45)

From the point of view of the Irish Church, the events in Paris in the 1850s also show that Cullen's position in the Church was not as dominant as has been hitherto regarded, for he was unable to give Miley the assistance he so badly needed and eventually had to recall him to Ireland to save his own face. The troubles were a microcosm of the divisions within the Irish Church. The bishops' failure to solve the difficulties in the College illustrates the extent of the split within the Church itself.

1. By the beginning of the nineteenth century one-third of the Irish clergy were educated in the Irish colleges in France, and one-half of these were products of the Paris college, Patrick Boyle, "The Irish College in Paris, 1578-1908", in The Catholic University Bulletin, xv (Dec. 1909), pp.750. For a history of the college itself up to 1908 see Patrick Boyle, The Irish College in Paris, 1578-1901 (Dublin, 1901)
2. Irish College, Paris, archives (I.C.P.A.), 180, Proceedings of the Board of Trustees of the Irish College at Paris, 1848-'95, meetings of 22 June 1853 and 19 Oct. 1854; D.D.A., Cullen Papers, Miley Correspondence, Cullen to Miley, dated 5 June 1853 & 2 Feb. 1855.; See also Emmet Larkin, The Making of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1850-1860 (Chapel Hill, 1980), p.14;
3. Fearghas O'Fearghail, 'A Stormy Decade in the Irish College, Paris, 1849-'59' in Liam Swords (ed.), The Irish-French Connection, 1578-1978 (Paris, 1978), pp. 108-110; Cullen Papers, Miley Correspondence, 1850-61, Miley to Cullen, College Report of 1855.
4. Larkin, Making of Roman Catholic Church, p.14; O'Fearghail, op. cit., p.110.
5. See Sheridan Gilley, "The Catholic Church and Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Ireland", in Yonah Alexander and Alan O'Day (eds.) Terrorism in Ireland (London, 1984), p.128.
6. Cullen Papers, Miley Correspondence, 1850-'61 Miley to Cullen, dated 11 Nov. 1856; I.C.P.A., Proceedings of Board Meetings of 22 Oct. 1856.
7. The Administration of the Irish Foundations in France (Paris, 1872), p.11; Desmond Bowen, Paul Cardinal Cullen and the Shaping of Modern Irish Catholicism (Dublin, 1983), p.259.
8. Cullen Papers, Miley Correspondence, Miley to Cullen, dated 27 Oct. 1854, 12 Nov. 1854; Miley may have adopted this attitude because Haly was noted for keeping away from contentious issues, See Donal A. Kerr, Peel. Priests and Politics (Oxford, 1983), p.13.
9. Ibid. Miley to Cullen, dated 4 Dec. 1854;
10. Ibid. Copy of letter to Minister of Public Instruction, undated, (probably late 1854); College Report dated 22 June, 1857; Miley to Cullen, 11 Oct. 1855; P.J. Corish, Irish College, Rome; Kirby Papers, calandered in Archivium Hibernicum, xxxi (1973), Miley to Kirby, no.1520, dated, 24 Dec. 1856.
11. Ibid., Miley to Cullen, dated 13 Dec. 1855, 9 Jul. & 22 Oct. 1856; Cullen to Miley, 6 Oct. 1856.
12. Ibid., Irish College, Correspondence, Paris, 1851-'83, J. Lucy to Cullen, dated 21 May, 1858
13. Ibid., Miley Correspondence, 1850-'61, Miley to Cullen, dated 3 Mar. 1858 and letter from unsigned philosophy student undated; Rogers to Miley, 17 Jul. 1857; Miley to Lavelle, 16 Mar. 1858.
14. Ibid. Miley to Cullen, 9 Jun., 1855, 9 Jul. 1855, 11 Oct 1855.
15. I.C.P.A., 180, Proceedings of the Board of Trustees of the Irish College at Paris, 1849-'95, meeting of 28 Jun. 1855; T.C.D., MS 1710 (38), Thomas Larcom Papers; Evening Packet, 24 Jul. 1861.
16. I.C.P.A., Meeting of 18 Oct. 1855; Cullen Papers, Miley Correspondence, Cullen to Miley, dated 21 Oct. 1855, Miley to Cullen, 11 Nov. 1858; Tomas O'Fiaich, "The Patriot Priest of Partry: Fr. Patrick Lavelle, 1825-1886", in the Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society, xxxv (1876), p.132.
17. Cullen Papers, Miley Correspondence, 1850-'61, Miley to Cullen, dated 24 Feb. 1858.

18. Ibid., Miley to Cullen, dated 15 Jan. & 28 Mar. 1856.
19. Ibid., Miley to Cullen, dated 19 Mar. 1857; Draft of letter from Miley to MacHale, Apr. 1857.
20. Ibid., Miley to MacHale, dated 21 May, 1857.
21. Ibid., Lavelle to Cullen, dated 8 Jun., 1857.
22. Ibid., Lavelle to Cullen, dated 18 Feb., 1858.
23. Ibid., Lavelle to Cullen, dated 10 July, 1857.
24. Proceedings of the Board of Trustees of the Irish College, Paris, 1849-'95, meeting of 21 Oct. 1857.
25. Cullen Papers, Miley Correspondence, 1850-'61, Miley to Cullen, dated 25 & 14 Oct. 1857.
26. Ibid., Cullen to Miley, 21 May, 4 Jul, 1857; Larkin, Making of the Roman Catholic Church, p.397; T O'Fiaich, Patriot Priest of Partry, p.133.
27. Cullen Papers, Irish College, Paris, Correspondence, 1851-'83, Lavelle to Cullen, 22 Feb. 1858.
28. Ibid., Miley Correspondence, 1850-'61, Miley to Cullen, 15 Feb. & 16 Mar. 1858; Larcom Papers, MS 1710 (38); Evening Packet, 24 Jul. 1861.
29. Cullen Papers, Miley to Cullen, 3 Mar. 1858.
30. Ibid., Irish College, Paris, Correspondence, 1851-'83, Lavelle to Cullen, dated 18 Feb. 1858.
31. Ibid., Miley Correspondence, 1850-'61, Miley to Cullen, dated 22 & 24 Feb. 1858.
32. This was the case in the Lavelle v Lord Oranmore and Browne libel case in July 1861, See Larcom Papers, MS 1710 (38); Dublin Daily Express, 25 Jul. 1861, p.4; Gerard P. Moran, The Mayo Evictions of 1860: Fr Patrick Lavelle and the 'War' in Partry (Westport, 1986), pp. 76-87.
33. Cullen Papers, Miley Correspondence, Miley to Cullen, dated, 19 Mar. 1858.
34. Ibid., Irish College Paris, Correspondence, 1851-'83, Miley to Lavelle, dated 24 Mar, 1858; I.C.P.A., 70R, O'Boyle's Notes on Irish Priests in France; O'Fiaich, Patriot Priest of Partry, p.134; O'Fearghail, op. cit., pp. 115-6; Larcom Papers, MS 1710 (38), Daily Express, 25 Jul. 1861, p.4
35. Cullen Papers, Irish College, Paris, Correspondence, 1851-'83, Fr. J Whelan to Cullen, dated 30 Mar. 1858; Miley Correspondence, 1850-61, Miley to Cullen, dated 9 Apr. 1858.
36. Cullen Papers, Miley Correspondence, 1850-'61; Miley to Cullen, dated 24 Mar. 1858; J. Whelan to Cullen, 30 Mar. 1858; I.C.P.A., 70R, O'Boyle's Notes on Irish Priests in France; Larcom Papers, MS 1710 (38); Evening Packet, 24 Jul. 1861.
37. I.C.P.A., 180, Proceedings of the Board of Trustees of the Irish College, Paris, 1849-'95, meeting of 20 Apr. 1858.
38. Nation, 29 May, 1858, p.621; I.C.P.A., 70R, O'Boyle's Notes on Irish Priests in France.
39. Cullen Papers, Miley Correspondence, 1858-'61, dated 12 & 21 Apr. 1858.
40. Ibid., Cullen to Miley, dated 29 Apr. 1858.
41. Larcom Papers, MS 1710, (38), Daily Express, 25 Jul. 1861, p.4.
42. See I.C.P.A., 180, Proceedings of the Board of Trustees of the Irish College at Paris, 1849-'95, meeting of 20 Oct. 1858.
43. Ibid., meeting of 23 June, 1859; Larkin, Making of Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, p.460; Cullen

Papers, Miley Correspondence, Cullen to Miley, dated 28 June, 1859.

44. Larkin, Making of Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, p.461.

45. I.C.P.A., 8e, Thomas MacHale Papers, 1868, Notes on History of Irish Church in Nineteenth Century by MacHale.

## CHAPTER 3

### LAVELLE AND THE PROTESTANT CRUSADE IN PARTRY,

1858-1861

#### **The emergence of the 'Patriot priest of Partry'**

##### (a) Lavelle and the Evangelical Crusade in Partry

Lavelle's tenacity and determination were not to be wasted at Mayo Abbey and in October 1858 he was transferred to a similar position in Ballovey, or Partry, as it was more commonly known. This parish was then in the grip of Church of Ireland Evangelicals who were trying to convert the indigenous Catholic population to Protestantism. To understand Lavelle's future activities in Partry it is necessary to survey briefly the activities of the Evangelical movement in Ireland and in Partry before Lavelle's arrival.

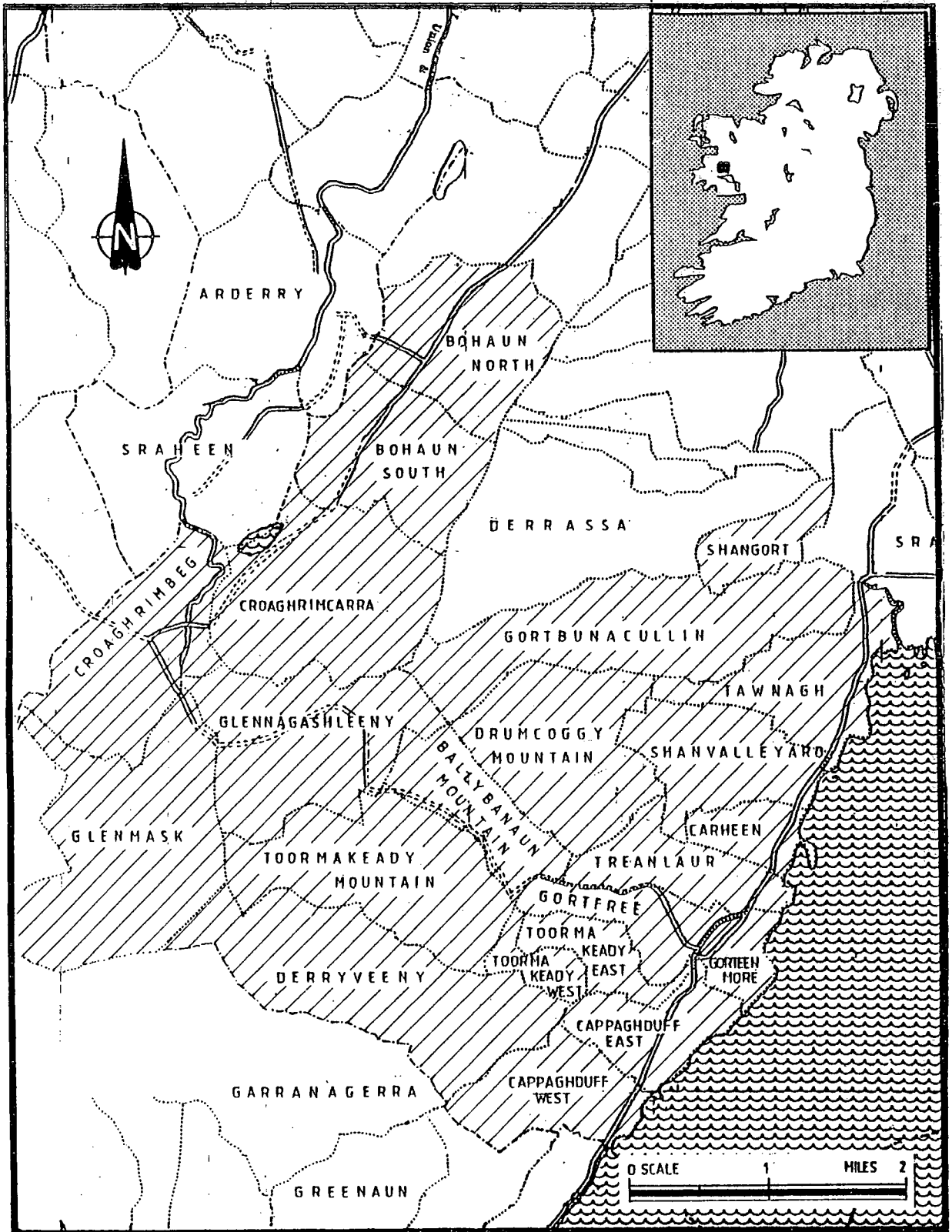
Between 1818 and 1850 a number of voluntary societies established a Protestant Revival, or as it was to become more commonly known, "The Second Reformation" in Ireland. Some Church of Ireland bishops, like Power le Poer Trench in Tuam in 1819, wholeheartedly espoused the Evangelical crusade, the aim of which was to convert non-Protestants to 'Christianity' and to promote a more 'Evangelical' faith amongst Protestants through the more extensive use of the Bible. Their over-zealous approach even brought them into conflict with the more orthodox bishops in the Church of Ireland. The Evangelicals concentrated most of their resources on the poorer regions of the south and west, which were mainly Irish-speaking. They set out to convert the local populations by printing the Bible in Irish and by providing Irish-speaking Scripture Readers. Many willing recruits were won in these areas because of the failure of the Catholic bishops to cater for the spiritual needs of their congregations.(1) The Evangelical societies financed their activities through subscriptions solicited from English sympathisers. Stories of

Evangelical missionaries harassed by Catholic bishops in the west of Ireland helped increase subscriptions. The most radical of the Evangelical societies was the Irish Church Missions Society to Roman Catholics, founded in London on 29 March 1847 by Alexander Dallas, a rector from Wonston, Hampshire. It was the most important Evangelical society in post-Famine Ireland, employing 697 people and expending over £30,000 in 1856. Its activities were mainly confined to the North Connemara region, especially around Clifden, to South Mayo, around Lough Mask and Achill. Here it earned the unflinching support of the local Church of Ireland bishop, Lord Thomas Plunket, eldest son of Lord Conyngham, who was also the principal landowner in Partry.(2)

The parish of Ballovev is situated on the western shore of Lough Mask, about four miles from Ballinrobe and extending up to the border with County Galway. The population of 3,073 lived on small holdings on the side of the Partry Mountains, eking out a subsistence existence from the poor, boggy soil. The annual rents averaged £5. During the Great Famine the principal landowner, George Henry Moore, MP, got into financial difficulties because of his attempts to provide relief for his tenants and their inability to pay their rents. As most Irish landowners depended exclusively on the rents from their estates as income, Moore, like many of his peers, was forced to sell the Ballybannon, or Partry, portion of his property. The 6,000 acres was purchased in 1854 in the Landed Estates Court for £5,900 by Lord Thomas Plunket.(3)

While Plunket was a tenant at Tourmakeady Lodge since 1832, in 1852 he added to the estate when he purchased part of Sir Robert Blosse's Partry property. With the addition of the Moore estate he owned a total property of 10,349 acres. The 203 tenants paid an annual rent of £2,000. Long before these purchases, Plunket indicated he would promote the Evangelical cause in the region, which met the criteria under which the Evangelical societies could hope to succeed: a large population subsisting on very small holdings and constantly facing famine. By 1854 Plunket had installed the Evangelical movement in the region. In 1851 he appointed as first resident rector in the parish, Rev Hamilton





THE PLUNKET' PROPERTY IN PARTRY.

Townsend, also a dedicated supporter of the Irish Church Missions Society. This was followed by the introduction of Scripture Readers into the region, the purchase of three schools, which became church mission schools, one of them controlled by Plunket's sister, the Hon Catherine Plunket. A new church was opened in the parish in September 1853. Plunket was helped in his work in Partry by his nephew, W.C. Plunket, also a champion of the cause. One recent observer of Plunket has concluded, "that Thomas Plunket became as fanatical a Protestant as either Nangle or Dallas", two of the leading personalities in the Evangelical crusade in Ireland.(4)

The question of proselytism within the educational system was contentious throughout the nineteenth century. As has been demonstrated by Thomas McGrath, the Evangelical usurpation of the school system was widespread in pre-Famine Tipperary, and made the Catholic clergy extremely cautious of those educational establishments set up by landlords on their estates for their tenants.(5) With the establishment of the poor law system in the early 1840s, the Evangelicals turned their attention to the workhouses where there were easy pickings among the largely destitute inmates.(6) The attention of the proselytising societies only turned to the educational system in the 1850s because of the decline of poverty in Ireland and the consequent decrease in the numbers entering the workhouses. As education in Tuam remained in a poor state due to insufficient funds for the building and maintenance of Catholic schools, it was inevitable that many of MacHale's flock in areas like Partry should become an easy prey for the proselytisers.(7)

The parish priest of Partry, Father Peter Ward, was a pugnacious individual who, in 1852, in an *effort* to highlight the proselytising attempts on his parishioners, had burned a copy of the Bible issued by the Scripture Readers.(8) The Evangelicals were gaining the upper hand over Ward, as in the increased number attending the schools, 58 of the 124 pupils were Catholics. In December 1854, Fr Ward, wrote to the Weekly Telegraph that the Scripture Readers and 'jumpers', a term used to denote Catholics who had converted to Protestantism, were attempting to proselytise the indigenous population and that 21

families, comprising 104 people, had been evicted because of their refusal to convert.(9) Ward also complained to his bishop, John MacHale, that the schools operated by Plunket and the Church Missions Society were proselytising the children and were unsuitable for the education of Catholics. It was alleged that the Scripture Readers taught Scripture to the children, but the parents would not withdraw them for fear of being evicted from their holdings.(10)

While Ward's health deteriorated under the increasing tensions with the Evangelicals, his transfer from Partry was also warranted by the enemies he had made amongst the local Catholic gentry, especially George Henry Moore, over the leasing of land.(11) A cleric of tenacity and ability was required in Partry and, Father Patrick Lavelle filled the bill.

Lavelle faced the problem that the local parents genuinely believed they would be ejected from their holdings if they did not send their children to Plunket's schools.(12) One of the estate rules stated:

It has ever been, and still is, Lord Plunket's earnest desire, that all his tenants should send their children to this school, and he will, therefore, take every opportunity of impressing strongly upon their minds his own wishes in this matter, as well as the advantages which their children are afforded by the school in question. At the same time it has not been, nor will it ever be, Lord Plunket's intention to compel any parent, who conscientiously disapproves of this school, to send their children thither upon pain of eviction.(13)

Herein lay the central issue during Lavelle's stay in Partry, the meaning of the phrase "earnest desire". Tenant society after the Great Famine felt that the landlord's desire was synonymous with compulsion and coercion. Agents, Scripture Readers and even the Bishop's daughters went among the people urging them to send their children to these schools or face the consequences.

Against this backdrop Lavelle opened his assault on Plunket and the Evangelicals. He had to perform the dual task of attacking the Evangelicals and assuming the leadership of

his parishioners through a combination of threats and gentle persuasion. He needed to secure total control of his parishioners, for if he was going to succeed in his campaign against the Scripture Readers, he wanted no dissenting voices in his flock. Throughout the whole confrontation Lavelle showed that he was prepared to use every means at his disposal to achieve his aim. His most powerful weapon was the pulpit. Sunday after Sunday, beginning on 20 October, 1858, he attacked those people who continued to send their children to the schools, declaring that they could not still receive the sacraments. If they persisted he would not allow them to come to his chapel. According to Lavelle's account his flock then flung themselves on the floor of the church, and raising their heads and eyes to heaven, they promised to take their children out of the schools.(14) Nevertheless, a few families continued to send their children to the schools. The Decrees of the Synod of Tuam of 1858 had outlawed the use of the altar to attack individuals by name, but this did not deter Lavelle.(15) The Levys and other families were condemned from the pulpit because they refused to follow Lavelle's instructions and withdraw their children. Where families refused to comply with Lavelle's demands, he visited them and used every form of persuasion and threat to secure their agreement.(16) While Lavelle reported those cases of tenants returning to the Catholic Church, he never stated that he intimidated the wavering few to return to the fold. Given the wrath and power of the priests within the local community and the open hostility of their neighbours, most parishioners took the more pragmatic step and withdrew their children from the schools. Under such circumstances it can be seen why one of Lavelle's opponents said of him in 1861, "He admired the ability of Father Lavelle: he admired his audacity and he admired his success..."(17)

In these early days in Partry, Lavelle did not accuse Plunket outright of being a 'war-mongering' bigot, as this would only have antagonised Catholics and moderate Protestant supporters. Rather he addressed a number of letters to Bishop Plunket describing the methods used to force the tenants to send their children to the schools:

I hope it is only the work of the hungry audacious mouthing, ranting parson of the skulking Bible-spellers and ignorant Jumper-teachers; all of whom traffic on religion and live on the ruin of souls. But should the "notice to quit" appear, then his Lordship's actions is made manifest, and then I hereby "give notice" that I first, shall reveal to an astonished public the harrowing details of the dark but fruitless doing of the hypocrites and soul traders here...(18)

Lavelle was here ensuring that Plunket could never maintain that he was unaware of events on his estate. He was also displaying a code of morality, for while he had been informed of Plunket's proselytising activities and was aware of the encounters with Father Ward, he still felt duty bound to write to the landlord, calling on him to desist. Before long his moralistic approach to the problem had altered and he believed that a radical polemical stand was the only solution to the proselytising question. Much of this was due to Bishop Plunket's decision not to correspond with Lavelle.

Lavelle followed up his letters to Plunket with one addressed to the Irish Church Missions Society. It was made public to the Mayo Telegraph on 15 December 1858, and stated:

The tenants have *en masse*, finally and forever withdrawn their children. They have nobly braved the threatened horrors of extermination rather than any longer sacrifice their little ones to the Molock of the Souper school... A more uncongenial soil for Souperism than that of Partry does not exist. I would be curious to know the amount of money disbursed by the society in this district for the last few years. But whatever it may be, a more unproductive outlay never was yet made. For the hundreds and thousands expended there is absolutely nothing to show...(19)

Evangelical success was dependent on showing their English subscribers the increasing numbers of children enrolled in their schools. Lavelle stated that all of the tenants had withdrawn their children from the schools except one, and that the amount of money expended had not achieved any results. He also showed great pleasure in describing how John Hannigan had returned to the Catholic faith with his wife and five children, and was once more a happy man. Lavelle's tactics were to try and dissuade those subscribing to the funds of the Irish Church Missions Society on the grounds that they were wasting their money. He thereby hoped to starve the schools in Partry of the finances they needed to survive.

His attacks on the Irish Church Missions Society and his letters to Plunket forced the Evangelicals to reply, if only to assure their supporters that Lavelle had not gained the initiative from them. It was the bishop's nephew and chaplain, W.C. Plunket, who replied and between December 1858 and March 1859 a public debate ensued in the newspapers about the situation in Partry. What the correspondence showed up was the irascibility of both Lavelle and Bishop Plunket, and in particular the over-zealous approach adopted by the Evangelicals. In his opening letter on 28 December 1858 W.C. Plunket queried the Catholic Church's claim to work miracles. He said:

Do you lay claim to such a power? This is the question, with a view to which this letter has been written. You can easily answer it if you will. Do you assume to yourself this gift of working miracles? - And if, as I take for granted, you at once disclaim such a notion, is it not, I further ask, a wrong thing upon your part to allow so false and foolish an impression to go abroad among your parishioners without at once correcting the report?(20)

Lavelle's reply differentiated between ordinary Protestants and the Evangelicals. He said:

I believe they (Protestants) are Christian. I believe the principle of "Judge not and ye shall not be judged" is a good quote. I do not believe the Protestant doctrine to be anti-Christian. I believe many of them to be false. My belief is they were not anti-Christian, but they are not all in their entirety the doctrines of Christ.(21)

Lavelle did not wish to alienate moderate Protestant opinion. He was aware that many of their co-religionists opposed the methods of the Evangelicals and hoped to use this to his advantage. By portraying himself as a moderate in religious affairs, he hoped to win their support. Yet the more zealous Catholics and Protestants became, the more acrimonious and fanatical was the bitterness between them.(22) The Evangelical crusade polarised the whole region. Lavelle published his letters to W.C. Plunket in the Mayo Telegraph, Tuam Herald, the Nation and the Catholic Telegraph, all staunch nationalist and Catholic newspapers. Plunket confined his correspondence to the Mayo Constitution, the principal Conservative and Protestant newspaper in Connacht. At no time did either Lavelle or

Plunket send their letters directly to each other.

Lavelle seemed to get the better of the debate. When Plunket stated that his uncle did not evict people for not sending their children to the schools, Lavelle showed that Pat Coyne, John Coyne, Pat Kelly, Pat Boyle and Tom Boyle had been driven out of their employment by Bishop Plunket for exactly that reason. It was a point Plunket never answered. In his onslaught on the Evangelical movement, Lavelle was always quick to highlight the virtues of the Church of Ireland. He said, "In the ranks of the parsons are to be found highly respectable men; but in the region of Partry I must say they are not unlike angels' visits - 'few and far' between."(23)

He constantly challenged Plunket to produce the names of those tenants who had converted to Protestantism or who continued to send their children to the schools. It was a challenge that was never taken up. Indeed by March 1859 Plunket had discontinued the correspondence as it was making little impact. One editorial summed up Lavelle's success, "...the highly gifted clergyman who has, like a faithful shepherd, placed himself between his flock and the wolves...Their souls are too valuable a commodity to be sacrificed without a struggle."(24)

Lavelle had adopted a more concerted approach to the whole problem than his predecessor, Father Ward. From the outset he manipulated the newspapers for his own benefit and for that of the tenants. Ward had only used the newspapers to solicit subscriptions, as when evictions had occurred in December 1854, but no-one had been aware of the dangers that the schools controlled by the Irish Church Missions Society then posed. At the same time Ward's opponents had been able to show him up in a most unfavourable light by alluding to such incidents as the bible-burning issue.

Lavelle, on the other hand, was a prolific contributor to the newspapers, often publishing up to three letters a week. Within a short time most Catholic/nationalist newspapers were

carrying letters from those journals to which Lavelle had originally written. Indeed the failure of certain newspapers to adopt a specific line on the situation in Partry was regarded as an indication of their attitude to the national question. The affairs in Partry and Lavelle's messages were being conveyed to a very wide audience indeed, compounding Plunket's difficulties, especially in getting funds in England. Lavelle had the advantage that most of the nationalist newspapers were sympathetic to his cause and were prepared to allow him access to their readers whenever he needed them. Whenever the Evangelicals made claims about the situation in Partry, Lavelle was able to give the public his version of events. He immediately reported how the Evangelicals ridiculed an old woman named Murray for wearing a scapular round her neck.(25) There was also the added advantage that everyone was fully aware of the great sacrifices Lavelle was making on behalf of his parishioners and the need for funds. Lavelle was fortunate in that the late 1850s and 1860s saw an increase in the number of newspapers being published, especially those espousing the nationalist cause. The national school education system established 30 years earlier was producing an educated, literate laity who were coming to rely increasingly on the newspapers for information.(26) Ironically this educational development had been opposed by his own bishop, John MacHale.

Lavelle was also aided in Partry by developments within the newspaper industry which saw national newspapers like the Nation take a greater interest in local events at the expense of international affairs. Thus events in Partry came before the public long before their significance had disappeared through the passage of time. The incidents in Partry also received greater exposure because they were unusual at the end of the 1850s, unlike the massive clearances that had occurred on a daily basis ten years before. The newspapers also published letters of support to Lavelle from leading Irish nationalists, often without the consent of the authors, as in the case of William Smith O'Brien.(27) This had the effect of making all nationalists look at the Partry crisis as a microcosm of the conflict between English and Ireland. It was also an invaluable method of appealing to other nationalists for badly needed funds.



Lavelle used newspapers to full effect. By painting a picture of people persecuted for their religion, he recalled to Catholics the dark days of persecution of the Penal Laws. In one instance he wrote of how a group of bailiffs and a posse of police had entered the house where he and his curate were hearing confession at a station mass, thereby making Catholics more conscious of their religion and encouraging them to send funds.(28) Unfortunately this only polarised Irishmen into distinct cultural and social camps, with Protestants identified with an English ethos and Catholics with an Irish one. 7

The plight of the children was also used as an excuse to write to the newspapers, as in June 1859 when he stated in the Mayo Telegraph:

...when the faith of the "little children" of our Redeemer, and, of their children for ages to come, is at stake, the task, no matter how ungrateful, is one which the Priest - the maligned "Irish Priest" - will ever cheerfully undertake, and preservingly accomplish.(29)

Lavelle's emotive descriptions of parents having to hand over their children to the Scripture Readers, and their attempts to conceal them under beds, proved much more powerful than any account of tenants being dismissed from Plunket's employment or being evicted. Lavelle argued that the children had become pawns in the tenants' struggle to retain their holdings. It was an angle that the Evangelicals were never able to counteract successfully, for it even pulled at the emotions of moderate Church of Ireland members. Lavelle wrote:

Fathers and mothers of Ireland, Protestants as well as Roman Catholics, I put it to you: how would you regard the man who would dare to wrest from you the child of your bosom to bring it up in a creed which you also disbelieve - to make it outrage every tenet the most sacred and every practice the holy of that faith dearer to you than life? How would Lord Plunket himself bear to have his daughters, in their more tender years, dragged off before his eyes to be taught by priest, monk or nun, that he (their father) was only "a minister of Antichrist" and that his "religion was damnable and idolatrous"?(30)

From these opening exchanges at the end of 1858 and early 1859 there was little doubt but that the crux of the conflict was - whether the landlords or the clergy were to have ultimate control of the people? The tenants became pawns in a fight where they could only be the losers. They had to make a choice between using the schools or keeping their religion. Ultimately the issue boiled down to who had the greater power - the landlords or the clergy. While the advantages lay with Plunket before 1858, with Lavelle's arrival it reverted to the clergy.

Lavelle initiated his campaign against the Scripture Readers on 4 November 1858, only four weeks after his arrival in Partry. He convened a crowd of 100 people who succeeded in preventing the Scripture Readers from taking the children to the schools. He was charged with unlawful assembly before the Ballinrobe Petty Sessions for this act and was found guilty.(31) However, he succeeded in his objective of pointing out the suspect quality of some of the Scripture Readers and proved in his counter-charge that one of them, Michael McGarry, carried a gun and had threatened to kill him. Over the next few months there were other direct confrontations between Lavelle and the Scripture Readers. A certain Bartholomew Donnelly was attacked and assaulted by a crowd led by Lavelle, and Michael

McDonagh, a Scripture Reader, had his house burned down while he and his family were asleep. Their neighbours failed to come to their aid.

The most tempestuous of Lavelle's counter-attacks were now waged against the personnel of the Evangelical movement and he often went beyond the limits of the law. In the atmosphere that prevailed in Partry, both sides were prepared to take the law into their own hands as they attacked and assailed their adversaries. Lavelle quickly realised that the Scripture Readers were the weak link in the Evangelical structure and were a group that he urgently needed to defeat. As they were the people at the forefront of the Evangelical crusade, it was they who secured the converts. They were generally badly trained, ill-mannered and of suspect character. It was their polemical attitude to the Catholic Church that resulted in many members of the Church of Ireland opposing them. They could not resist attacking the priests, mass, purgatory and other aspects of the Catholic faith and this made them appear as unlawful thugs in the eyes of many Catholics. In one of Lavelle's many encounters with them they described him as 'the minister of Antichrist'.<sup>(32)</sup> Lavelle's plan was to attack this group whenever possible and expose them as a confrontational group who were prepared to break the law, both alienating moderate Protestant opinion and uniting all Catholics behind Lavelle. If there was any one single issue which united Irish Catholics in the 1850s, it was their total detestation of the proselytising societies.

Lavelle's main weapon against the Scripture Readers and the tenants who continued to send their children to the schools was intimidation. At Cappaduff on 4 November 1858 and 4 January 1859, he assembled a large crowd who threatened the tenants into withholding their children and at the same time forced the Scripture Readers to leave without the children.<sup>(33)</sup> There was little the police could do as mob rule prevailed. On both of these occasions the incidents had explosive possibilities and the slightest provocation on either side could have provoked a full scale riot and the loss of life. Nevertheless, Lavelle showed he was in total control of the situation as he directed the

people: "Boys don't break the peace - let them break it first, and then we'll pitch into them, or will be into them."

At the same time Lavelle showed he was liable to lose his temper with friend and foe alike as had happened in Paris. When a Scripture Reader escaped from a mob which Lavelle was leading in Partry he became so incensed that he took his wrath out on some members of his own flock. They had to seek safety by wading into Lough Mask. Lavelle regretted these outbursts and stated that circumstances had driven him thus far.(34)

Throughout his time in Partry Lavelle was regarded as a god among his people. The Scripture Reader, Michael McGarry, had to implore the officials at the petty sessions in January 1859 to provide him with protection back to Partry as he feared the wrath of the rabble on his way home. On another occasion John Charles and three other Protestants were given a police escort back to Partry after a mob had twice attacked them in Ballinrobe.(35) It was only during Lavelle's absences from the region, as in September - October 1860 when he was in Britain collecting funds, that there was a respite from this lawlessness. When he returned to Partry on 21 October 1861 after a tour of England and Scotland he was greeted with bonfires and ringing of church bells.(36) His presence was the spark which ignited the fire.

The level of tension in the region as a result of Lavelle's crusade against the Scripture Readers became so acute that the Mayo Constitution stated:

The priest in that quarter seems to have begun a war of extermination upon the Protestant inhabitants. Since the Abbé Lavelle made his appearance the excitement has[sic] increased. To preach a sword not peace, appears to be the mission of the priesthood.(37)

What infuriated the Evangelicals most was that the courts appeared to discharge the summons against Lavelle and his supporters. The most severe sanction levied on Lavelle was being bound over to appear at Castlebar Assizes.(38)

Lavelle regarded the situation in Partry as one of war and consequently was prepared to use all his options, working outside the parameters of the law, or at best barely remaining within its limits. He was assisted by the constabulary's failure to swear positively to his motives when he assembled the people to prevent the Scripture Readers from taking the children to Plunket's schools.(39) Undoubtedly Lavelle's presence in the parish had disastrous implications for law and order in the region. The tenants looked to their parish priest rather than to the authorities to decide what was legal and what was not. Lavelle's very appearance in Ballinrobe at a court session brought the people to a frenzy bordering on hysteria. The correspondent of the Mayo Constitution reported from the petty sessions:

Indeed, I never saw such a number of this meritorious force brought together before unless where an election for a Member of Parliament was taking place.(40)

Given the level of lawlessness in the region, the Ballinrobe Petty Sessions court came to dominate the columns of all national and local newspapers. In most cases there were differences in the witnesses' evidence, so that it proved virtually impossible to administer justice. Often the Partry affairs took up to five hours to adjudicate, and invariably Lavelle was directly or indirectly linked to the proceedings. Frequently the local press, in particular the Mayo Telegraph and the Mayo Constitution, devoted up to a full page to the court cases. The position became so acute that the authorities transferred many of the Partry cases to the Claremorris Quarter Sessions in October 1859. However, this only transferred the lawlessness from Ballinrobe to Claremorris and the Protestants had to be given police protection over longer distances.(41)

The lawlessness in the region had many of the characteristics of Ribbonism, which were agrarian secret societies found in pre-Famine Ireland. For a time the police in Partry considered the insubordination to be agrarian-based rather than stemming from religious motivation. Many of those involved in the scenes of intimidation were reputed to be from

outside the parish, mainly from County Galway.(42) This had the effect of minimising detection through local informers and in Partry the majority of the more serious crimes remained unsolved. Once an offence had been committed, the indigenous population was determined not to co-operate with the authorities. The murder of Alexander Harvison in Partry, Murray in Derryveagh in 1861 and the attempted murders in Ballycohey, County Tipperary in 1868 conform with R.E. Beames' conclusions about Tipperary in the 1840s: that crime was caused by changes in the terms of land holding. In these incidents new estate rules were introduced which saw a deterioration in the tenants' conditions and directly attributed to the murders.(43)

Within Partry the slightest incident was blown out of all proportion, especially when the Plunkets and Lavelle were in conflict. Lavelle's removal of stones from premises owned by Catherine Plunket resulted in letters to the newspapers and court cases for larceny.(44) Lavelle had bought the old house from a tenant to use the stones for a new school building. Catherine Plunket implied that Lavelle had no respect for the rights of property, while Lavelle argued that it was a perfect example of the Plunkets' uncompromising attitude towards the Partry population. All of the Plunket's attempts to undermine Lavelle's position were unsuccessful. The endeavours of Plunket's agent, John Martin, in September 1859, to state that the bishop was not the source of the problem proved to be a disaster.(45) Lavelle destroyed this approach when he said:

Let the government, or the press, or the legislature appoint a commission, or let any individual who chooses come down amongst us and examine carefully into the facts, and if my statements be not borne out, I shall allow myself to be branded forever a liar...if, my statements are so 'unwarrantable' has not the 'bishop' a clear legal remedy?(46)

As lawlessness continued in Partry, Lavelle was blamed for not bringing the mob under control. He was given no credit when he intervened directly to save a number of Evangelicals from being attacked and assaulted. These few cases were played down by the Protestant newspapers who considered Lavelle to be the principal obstacle to the

maintenance of law and order. The fact that Lavelle was prepared to pay the fines for those convicted of assault and to go bail for others only strengthened the Evangelicals' hatred of him.

While the conflict was in essence religious, aspects of it highlighted the problems of landlord-tenant relations. As Plunket's attempts to curtail Lavelle's activities floundered in the courts, the bishop moved against the most vulnerable part of Lavelle's attack, the tenants themselves. He now used his power as a landlord, which up to Gladstone's Land Act of 1870 was supreme, to evict his tenants on charges other than the non-payment of rent.(47) In March 1859, a set of rules was drawn up which stated that tenants who interfered with other people on the estate were evicted and a system was inaugurated whereby tenants would be issued with a notice to quit every six months.(48) The latter rule was introduced to ensure that the tenants behaved themselves, with the landlord now invested with the power to have them removed immediately. Other landlords employed this system to keep their tenants in check, the most notable being the Earl of Leitrim.(49) Plunket's tenants were also summoned to court for breaking estate rules, such as the burning of land.(50) This was a common agricultural practice on many estates in order to manure the land and it was opposed by most landowners. Other misdemeanours, like damage to property and the cutting of turf, carried summons and contributed to the overall state of lawlessness in Partry.(51)

By far the most contentious issue was the impounding of the tenants' stock found trespassing on Plunket's unfenced property. The stock could be released after the tenants had paid fines but these were often beyond their resources. The main motive behind the initiation of these penalties was to prevent the tenants from supporting Lavelle. As Lavelle declared about Plunket:

Does Bishop Plunket or Miss Plunket, or their wretched minions consider that the soil was created for them alone - or that because - "The Kingdom of Heaven is preserved for the poor in spirit": the rich alone have a right to live on the earth. Or does the Bishop remember that there is a curse - a deep, lasting,

deadly curse - suspended over the oppressor's head, and is sure to fall with a fearful vengeance, as he who first pronounced it is infallibly true?(52)

In all of these cases Lavelle orchestrated the tenants' defence, and if they were convicted, paid their fines. As the Plunkets had instituted an agrarian dimension to the case, Lavelle ensured that they endured as much inconvenience as possible. On one occasion he ordered that Plunket and his sister attend the petty sessions in person, as it was they who had taken an action against a number of tenants for burning land. It would thus be foolhardy and incorrect to view the conflict in Partry, as one rooted in the events of the 'Second Reformation'. Peripheral matters, such as tithes payments and agrarian issues, were often as important as the Plunkets' proselytising efforts.

Lavelle was revered or feared by his parishioners and the rumour of an attempt on his life caused alarm amongst the people. It was alleged that on 5 October 1859, a Protestant clergyman, Rev Richard Goodison of Aasleagh, had tried to shoot Lavelle. The incident illustrates the hostility that existed between Lavelle and the Evangelical clergymen in the region, and the uncompromising enmity between himself and members of the Irish Church Mission Society. Even a casual encounter on the road held the prospect of a row. The fact that Mr Goodison, who was visiting the area from an adjoining parish, felt it necessary to take two loaded pistols with him into Partry and that he was prepared to use them when confronting Lavelle, shows the state of heightened tension in which the Evangelicals lived in the region.(53) Goodison overreacted to Lavelle, but Lavelle ensured that the episode received maximum exposure in the press, helping to undermine further the credibility of the Evangelicals while exalting his own reputation.

The episode exacerbated the tensions in the region. Additional police were drafted into Partry, the constabulary having to fire at rioting crowds. Church of Ireland clergymen also had to demand protection when travelling to and from Ballinrobe.(54)

On 31 January 1860 one of Plunket's herdsmen, Alexander Harvison, a Protestant and



an innocuous individual who had never been involved in any altercation with Lavelle, was killed. While the murder had little to do with Lavelle directly, its significance for him lay in the subsequent events.(55) Officially the murder was regarded as an agrarian outrage, but in most people's minds the motive was sectarian. Such outrages against landlords or their associates were few between 1857 and 1878, and the murder shocked the country.(56)

The Protestant newspapers made Lavelle the scapegoat for Harvison's murder, maintaining that he had incited the population to such a fever that an employee of Plunket's was bound to lose his life. The Irish Times stated: 'Mr Lavelle has been for the last eighteen months constantly urging the people to "Banish the Protestants", and we can see the meaning of his teachings.'(57)

While the Evangelicals accused Catholics of the murder, Lavelle replied that it was the result of an internal dispute amongst the Protestants. According to Lavelle, large quantities of arms had been imported into the region in the weeks before the murder. While the importation of arms made sense given the fears of the Evangelicals, Lavelle did not explain the reason for divisions within the Protestant ranks. No police records or other information give any indication about the substance of this alleged friction. Lavelle argued that on a number of occasions the Evangelicals had tried to shoot him, thereby shifting the blame on to the Evangelicals. One of his parishioners, Edward Joyce, swore that he saw one of Harvison's companions and a fellow Protestant, Thomas Smith, leave the scene of the crime with a gun in his hand.(58) This was afterwards found to be untrue, though it shifted the suspicion of guilt from Lavelle and his parishioners on to the Protestant community in the immediate, critical weeks following the actual murder. Indeed Joyce only made his allegations against Smith when advised to do so by Lavelle.(59)

All this suggests that Joyce committed perjury, but Lavelle refused to wash his hands of him. Throughout Joyce's ordeal between July 1860 and 1864, during which four different juries failed to reach agreement that he had committed perjury, Lavelle stood solidly behind

him, and gave bail sureties for Joyce each time he required them. Lavelle defended his actions on the grounds that he believed Joyce to be innocent and by putting up his bail he was able to keep an eye on Joyce and ensure that he remained in the country.(60) This involvement with Joyce explains the continued apprehension that the Evangelicals felt towards Lavelle.

The Harvison murder was to have important consequences for Partry. It was only in Spring 1860 that the authorities took a more positive attitude to the issue of crime. While additional constabulary were sent to Partry in October 1859, a more resolute approach was adopted only after the murder. Extra police were drafted into the region and an additional £20 a month was charged on 21 townlands.(61) The district was also proclaimed under the provisions of the Crime and Outrage Act. These measures infuriated Lavelle and the rest of the inhabitants as the extra taxation remained until 1864, long after law and order had been restored.

Furthermore the authorities decided in March 1860 to revoke the right to carry arms from Lavelle and his brother, Francis, thereby laying the blame for the collapse in law and order in the region at his feet.(62) At the same time the authorities' decision created difficulties for Lavelle, for in the past members of the Irish Church Missions Society, such as Garry and Goodison, had threatened to shoot him. Given the level of tension after the murder these threats were formidable. However, the decision by Plunket and the tenants to come to an agreement in March 1860 was to bring a brief though important respite in the controversy.(63)

Lavelle's enemies were not confined to the Evangelical movement. He quickly learned that he would have to be as resolute with these as with Plunket and he brought three legal actions against some of Plunket's leading supporters. The first was against John Bole, proprietor of the Mayo Constitution. By the Spring of 1859 the balance of power rested with Lavelle. Most of the Catholic parents had withdrawn their children from the schools and the efforts of the Evangelicals were on the decline. In an attempt to mar Lavelle's increasing fame in Ireland, and to influence the moderate Protestant support for him, the Mayo Constitution published a series of articles between 3 May and 11 June 1859 to undermine his popularity and cast aspersions on his past. The first, under the heading "Father Lavelle - the would be Martyr", declared that Lavelle appeared determined to earn notoriety amongst his native mountains with a more profitable wreath than he had won in his St. Patrick's Day escapades in Paris. In outlining his activities at the Irish College in Paris, it stated: "...it appears this clerical firebrand is resolved on forcing himself before the public by a return to his dirty work, and the exhibition of his intolerance..."(64)

In each of the following six issues an editorial was addressed to Lavelle. The editorials christened him "The Mount Partry Ecclesiastic Abbé Lavelle" and alleged that his motives in this campaign were to secure money for himself. The most vicious attack came in a poem entitled "The Biography of Father Lavelle":

Would you know who the Abbé is and was,  
I'll show you his life, as it were in a glass;  
He's a pigmy by birth, with Frenchified face,  
A pugilist born, who can ne'er be at peace;  
Boasting and lying are paltry things,  
And begging epistles but venial sins,  
His only vocation,  
When among the French nation,  
Mimicking Priests and sacred things.

Forced into France from the halls of Maynooth,  
Scarcely half taught, raw, and uncouth,  
Choked with the fumes of pride and ambition,  
But devoid of all talent and real erudition,  
and oh! what nonsense, to fill up a chair,  
With such a little bloated bubble of air,  
Which, when it bursts,  
Will be worse than at first,

A nuisance at home and elsewhere.(65)

These attacks spurred Lavelle into action to silence his adversaries. If intimidation and threats failed to achieve the desired effect, he was prepared to use the legal system against them, even though he had shown in the past a readiness to disregard the law whenever it suited him.

Lavelle warned John Bole about libelling him after the sixth editorial had appeared on 14 June 1859. Lavelle said in his letter:

I could support to Doom's day this ribald virtuperation - I would even gladly see him exhaust on me his deep fund of familiar Billingsgate; but when he once outsteps the boundaries of mere vulgar, mercenary abuse, and dips his clumsy shaft in the gall of calumny, silence on my part would become a crime, and might by some be construed into a tacit admission of his slanderous imputations...this is a very serious charge on the character of any man, and above all a minister of religion, - so serious, indeed, that there seems only one way of rebutting it effectively, and that by the verdict of twelve men.(66)

This had the desired effect in stopping Bole's attacks and forced restraint for a year from the Mayo Constitution, but Lavelle issued a writ for libel for £1,000 against him, which was heard before Serjeant Howley on 27 July 1860 in Galway City. The court case contains valuable information about Lavelle's period in Paris and his crusade against the Partry Evangelicals. The trial was largely an expose of Lavelle's past rather than an investigation into whether he had been libelled or not by the Mayo Constitution. The Constitution expended large sums of money on the trial, probably in excess of £600. People were sent to Paris to get evidence and John Miley was brought to Galway to testify against Lavelle. The case also raised the level of fear in the region. Bole alleged from the outset that if the case were to be heard in Mayo, or even in Galway, the witnesses would be intimidated and the course of justice impeded.(67) If, on the other hand, the case had been heard in Dublin, Lavelle would have been unable to afford to bring witnesses from Partry for his defence. Despite Bole's attempts to have the case transferred to Dublin the trial took place in Galway.

While the Mayo Constitution insisted that the essence of the case was whether the press had the right to freedom of speech without recourse to the law, in most quarters it was viewed as a deliberate attempt to try and curtail Lavelle's activities in Partry. In the 1850s the press was kept in harness by sensitive libel laws. It was commonplace for the newspapers to be made the scapegoat for all varieties of problems and social maladies.(68) The jury in Galway failed to agree on a verdict after a three and a half hour consultation, but the result had the desired effect for Lavelle. It forced the Mayo Constitution to cease its personal attacks and to be still more cautious. The case also added to Lavelle's reputation as the champion of the poor of Partry, for it gave him a platform to highlight the situation in the parish. The Nation said: "...verdict or no verdict...It has rent the veil from a system of persecution the most mean, cruel, and tyrannous that ever strove to crush and debase a conquered people, or challenged the abhorrence of man and the justice of God."(69)

The verdict was achieved at a price. Both Lavelle and Bole had to meet their own legal expenses, which neither of them could afford, especially Lavelle. It also showed the polarisation of Irish society over the activities of the Evangelical societies. While Lavelle's contributors were mainly from exiles or small tenant farmers, Bole's supporters tended to be Protestants and landlords. Within four months over £600 had been contributed to the Mayo Constitution Defence Fund, the leading subscribers being Lord Plunket, Lord Oranmore and Browne and Sir Francis O'Donel.(70)

Lavelle's continuing newspaper correspondence had a dual purpose. It undermined Plunket's activities in Partry, but also appealed to Irishmen at home and abroad for badly needed funds. While Lavelle singled out Plunket's schools as the crux of the problem, he was unable to provide alternative schools without funding. The Third Order of St. Francis, an order used by John MacHale to counteract the activities of the proselytisers in his diocese and under his direct control, established a school in the parish in 1848, but it was unable to cater for all of the children in the parish requiring education.(71) Under these

circumstances, Lavelle tried to set up his own schools under the national school system and by February 1859 five were in existence.(72) MacHale gave some of the money for these schools and collections were held in Lecanvy, Westport, Castlebar and Ballinrobe, but Lavelle still had to appeal to the public for the rest.(73)

He realised the importance of establishing a fund for reasons other than the provision of schools. Money was needed for the legal defences and protection of the tenantry, many of whom were dragged before the courts each week on assault charges against the Scripture Readers. This money would also be used to pay the fines for those tenants convicted. Finance was also required for relief for the people from the perennial destitution. Given Plunket's indifference to the people's plight during the Great Famine, there was little likelihood of his providing relief for his tenants during times of distress.(74)

Lavelle's appeals struck the right chord in a Church that was united only on the issue of proselytism. He was courting the role of popular leadership. Like the clergy during the Penal Days or during the Great Famine, he was prepared to suffer in defence of his parishioners. He pointed out that he had been repeatedly brought before the courts to vindicate his people and that he was prepared to be imprisoned for them.(75) In his letters he continuously asked if he had to carry the burden on his own. This was a clever tactic as it implied that if Plunket and the Irish Church Missions Society were to be successful in Partry then the blame would rest with those who had not contributed to his fight. In this Lavelle had the wholehearted support of all nationalist newspapers in the country.(76)

One of his methods of securing funds was to target specific groups. He addressed his letters to "The Catholics of Mayo," "The Catholics of Ireland" or "The Liberal Protestants of Ireland," depending on which newspaper he was writing to:

Will you permit one man, who happened to pick up some money during the awful days of starvation, to turn into an engine of proselytising the land which this "price of souls" brought him...Come to Partry - come in God's name and visit one by one the tenants of Lord Plunket and judge for yourselves.(77)

Lavelle placed the onus on his fellow Catholics to save his parishioners, telling them that if they refused to assist him, the people of Partry would lose their children to proselytism. He wrote: "Parents of Mayo! Imagine yourselves at this moment the parents of Partry, and, in the name of religion and humanity, do now as would they be done by."(78)

These appeals brought funds from bishops, priests and prominent laymen, and led to the establishment of the Partry Defence Fund, chaired by Rev Michael Waldron, P.P. of Cong.(79) Many clerics subscribed because they considered Lavelle's fight as their own. While the Evangelicals might have seemed miles away in the remote mountains of Partry, to many priests Lavelle was carrying on their struggle. Many had first-hand experience of the 'Second Reformation' during the Great Famine and realised the dangers it could inflict on a parish. They saw Lavelle as their champion. As Rev Peter Conway of Headford declared at the Ballinrobe Petty Sessions: "...another, and another, and another would be found to step into his [Lavelle's] shoes and that were he [Mr Conway] in Mr Lavelle's place he would consider it his greatest."(80)

Despite the establishment of the Partry Defence Fund, Lavelle was constantly in need of money, making some Catholic priests wonder why more was not being done. This mood is reflected in a letter from Father Curley of Chicago:

Why is not Father Lavelle supported in his powerful exertions against the gigantic tyranny? Why is he allowed to fight the battle of the faithful and the very existence of the people singlehanded...Let every priest in Mayo make Father Lavelle's cause their own; it's as much theirs as Father Lavelle's. (81)

Lavelle's financial position was at its gravest after his unsuccessful litigation against John Bole and he had to make a lecture tour of England and Scotland to raise money. The first demonstration on his behalf was held at the Concert Hall, Lord Nelson St., Liverpool on 18 September 1860. A large crowd assembled and paid between 6d and 1/6 each. All the speeches on the tour were confined to the plight of his Partry parishioners. As in his letters

to the newspapers, Lavelle appealed to the emotions of his audiences, discoursing at great length about events since his arrival in Partry and how the tenants were forced to send their children to the schools.(82) These were issues that his audiences wanted to hear and Lavelle realised this. At the Manchester meeting he said of the coming battle:

But if fall it will, I here pledge myself to fall before it (tremendous applause); and then I wish Lord Plunket joy of his bloody victory - thus will there be an end to landed tyranny in Ireland; and from my blood will rise up thousands to avenge it - not merely on the individual, but on the class of which he is the type.

He added:

Are we then in Ireland to tolerate these outrages any longer? Shall it be said that in this country boasting of religious liberty, one man can by law drive to ruin and death thousands, for not denying their faith?(hear, hear). The Irish landlord has more power than the Queen of England. She cannot put to death without a crime. The Irish landlord can legally execute, not indeed with the musket, or the gibbet, but equally certain with the crowbar and the "notice to quit", not merely an innocent man but an innocent man for the performance of the noblest virtue, devotion to faith, and fidelity to God.(Great Cheering).(83)

Lavelle found much support amongst the Irish communities in Britain. He was describing what they witnessed when they lived in Ireland. As with his parishioners in Partry, Lavelle was able to whip his audiences into a frenzy. During his lectures he was repeatedly interrupted by loud cheering and applause. Many of those he spoke to had been evicted from their holdings in Ireland in the years immediately after the Great Famine and forced into exile. They had encountered bitterness and opposition to their Catholicism also in Britain. The Stockport Riots of 1852, when a Catholic church was attacked, and the anti-Catholic activities of the convert Irish bigot, William Murphy, in the English Midlands and Lancashire, made Lavelle a hero in the eyes of the Irish in Britain.(84) They were more than willing to contribute their few pence to his cause. Committees were also established in those English cities with large Irish communities to assist with money. The lack of similar organisations in the west of Ireland supported the view that Lavelle's fame tended to be greater among the Irish in Britain than in Ireland itself.

Lavelle's absence from Partry involved a certain risk. Relations between Plunket and his tenants were reaching crisis point, as the threat of eviction hung over fifteen families.



There was the possibility that Plunket would embark on the evictions while Lavelle was out of the country and thus undermine all his work in Partry. The other worry was of a further deterioration in lawlessness in his absence. While Lavelle had sometimes incited the tenants to go beyond the limits of the law, it was never in such a way that could undermine public confidence in their cause. Lavelle's absence from the parish at this critical juncture shows his desperate financial position. Unfortunately it was not to be long before another flashpoint would ignite.

### (b) The Evictions

From a very early stage Plunket made it clear that he was prepared to invoke his powers as a landlord to control his tenants. By February 1860 the region was bracing itself for the eviction of sixty families. While Plunket argued that evictions were necessary to carry out the stripping of the land, there was little doubt that he was exacting retribution for the tenants' refusal to send their children to the schools. The stripping - the dividing up of the land for reallocation - occurred on three townlands - Shangort, Gurteenacullen and Derryveeney. These were also the most vocal centres of opposition to Plunket's schools and were most active in supporting Lavelle.(85)

Plunket claimed the evictions were not sectarian, but Lavelle contested this. While Plunket described his activities as agrarian management, Lavelle was not deceived. In his letters to the newspapers Lavelle argued that Plunket was using his powers as a landlord to gain supremacy over the tenants and he was caustic in his attack on the system that permitted this: "Is it not a cruel law that enables him to banish and ruin them for ever - to drive many of them to death for the very thing which ought to raise them in the estimation of an honourable man..."(86)

Lavelle widened the debate from its narrow religious angle and at the same time broadened the popular base to which he could appeal. He brought to the fore the hitherto neglected area of landlord-tenant relations which became more prominent in the 1860s in Ireland, proving his capacity to pursue and discredit Plunket at all times, as "the cleverest and most unscrupulous priest in Ireland."(87)

He was prepared to write and plead with anyone who could exert influence over Plunket to prevent the threatened evictions, as in his three letters to the Secretary of State for Ireland, the Rt Hon E.W. Cardwell. Again he described all the main events of the Partry affair and said:

Thus, Sir, you may pretty well understand the position of things in my unfortunate parish. They are not of my making. I found them so on my appointment; and my first care was, if possible to create a more Christian state of feeling and things than heretofore existed.(88)

By Spring 1860, it appeared that the situation in Partry had reached a total impasse. Certainly this is how the authorities in Dublin perceived the situation and in early March a troop of cavalry was dispatched from Dublin to Ballinrobe to assist in the evictions.(89) Catastrophe was only prevented by the intervention of Archbishop John MacHale, who sent Father Patrick Conway, P.P. Headford, to negotiate a compromise between the two parties. Under the agreement, which became known as the "Castlebar Settlement", Plunket promised to leave the tenants alone, while Lavelle consented to drop his assault charges against Rev Richard Goodison. The tenants issued an address to Plunket stating it never had been their intention to interfere with his rights as a landlord.(90)

MacHale's intervention suggests that he felt that Lavelle was too tenacious and unbending. If Lavelle had carried out the negotiations, there would have been little likelihood of a settlement. What was required was a negotiator whom the tenants trusted. The most obvious person was one who had gained their confidence in the past and Father Conway met this criterion, having been curate during Ward's reign. The "Castlebar Settlement" also produced an expectation that peace would return to the region. While each side maintained that its own magnanimity had produced the agreement, it was a solution that was heartily greeted throughout Ireland.(91) However, it was no more than the calm before the storm.

Indeed, the underlying points of contention soon re-emerged as Lavelle and Plunket interpreted the "Castlebar Settlement" differently. Plunket argued that it gave him freedom to eject fifteen tenants who had caused trouble on the estate, but Lavelle alleged that under the agreement no-one was to be evicted. In a letter written in October 1860, just weeks before the actual evictions took place, Lavelle stated:

...I withdrew the defences on the distinct assurance conveyed to me and the tenants by Father Conway that they were not to be disturbed...can any man imagine that I would, for a moment consent to a settlement which would leave the people in just as bad a condition as would an unfavourable issue? Much less would I, after such a ridiculous statement, give up my case against Mr Goodison.(92)

Lavelle felt betrayed by Plunket's tactics and now launched a full assault on him. In his sermons each Sunday, he incited his parishioners to a confrontation with the bishop. He was also prepared to take the attack directly to the members of the Irish Church Missions Society who he felt were responsible for Plunket's course of action. At the end of October Lavelle met Townsend on the road and getting in front of the clergyman's car maintained it was the minister's intention to drive it over him.(93) The action was intended to create tension between the Evangelicals and the local inhabitants.

These incidents did not go unnoticed by the authorities. Each Sunday members of the constabulary were sent to hear Lavelle's sermons and to make notes for Dublin Castle. Dublin hoped that if they were aware of what he was telling his parishioners, they could pre-empt his plans and minimise the level of crime in the area. Eleven extra constabulary were placed in Partry because of increased fears for the safety of Protestants.(94)

In his early sermons Lavelle condemned the continuing system of impounding sheep and cattle. He advised the tenants not to allow their stock to trespass, but if the livestock were to be impounded they should do everything in their power to secure their release. By July the sermons had become more robust, as it became known that the fifteen families were to be evicted in November. Lavelle stated that if Plunket evicted a single tenant he would restart the war and the tenants would defend themselves as best they could.

The libel case against Bole further exacerbated an already volatile situation, a point which Desmond Bowen has highlighted.(95) At a time when both Lavelle and Plunket were attempting to dominate the region, they were prepared to bend any agreements to their own

purpose. While Plunket had agreed to the "Castlebar Settlement", it was only on his terms. The single most important issue concerning him was that the public should be aware of the advantage he had gained over Lavelle.

Given the manner in which Plunket moved to evict his 'troublesome' tenants it is easy to appreciate Lavelle's anger. Moreover, it gave him emotive material to stir up audiences in England and Scotland, where he was then seeking funds to defray his legal costs. Certainly when he returned to Partry on 21 October he was a man filled with fury and his sermons to his parishioners bordered on sedition. There were times when he gave the impression of being wholly helpless at the approaching evictions. This showed itself in an annoyance at the timidity of his flock. In his sermon on 28 October he said: "If I was married and had children, but thank God I am not, I would die for them and any person who would turn me out for religion's sake I would stand a ball to be put through me first."(96)

Plunket continued to claim that the tenants, who now numbered fourteen, were being evicted because they had disobeyed estate rules. Lavelle, however, went through each case to show that the real motive was their association with him, and their opposition to Plunket. Plunket decided not to evict any tenants who had withdrawn their children from the schools, fearing adverse public criticism. Lavelle asked why seven people were being ejected, allegedly for burning their lands, when there were thirty other tenants going unpunished for the same act.(97) Lavelle stressed Plunket's religious bigotry, claiming that the evictions were a new episode in the endemic religious war that had plagued the region since 1852, rather than a simple exercise of landlord might. Nevertheless, Plunket's greatest embarrassment was that his conduct showed up the landlord's ultimate power to use the law to settle personal scores. Once the landlord had got a decree to evict, nothing could stop him if he was determined to carry out his threat. Once everything was legally in order, the courts could not intervene and the government was obliged to give assistance for the protection of the sub-sheriff in carrying out the eviction. The situation was summed up

in the Nation:

It is a most important case. The principle involved in it - the principle that a landlord in Ireland may take the law into his own hands, and act the part of jury, judge, and executioner over all such persons as 'rent land' from him... If a tenant with his whole family may be ejected from his holding or a son of his "assaulted" one of those provoking blackguards called, in proselytising parlance, "Scripture reader", why may he not be ejected for all other offence known to the law or disagreeable to his landlord?(98)

Plunket carried out his eviction threat on 21 November 1860 and over the following three days a total of fourteen families, sixty-eight people, were ejected from their holdings by a large force of police and military.(99) The authorities had taken Lavelle's threats seriously and two companies of soldiers and one hundred constabulary were drafted into the area. According to those newspapers hostile to Lavelle on the first two days of the evictions the tenantry seemed to wait for Lavelle to perform some major miracle to save them and their holdings, and saw him passive for the first time in the whole campaign.(100) Lavelle was practical enough to realise nothing could be done at once to influence the course of events at that particular moment. While he was infuriated by the evictions he had told them on the Sunday before the action: "...I now advise you to keep quiet and you will be better off."(101) It was also alleged by these same sources that in the days immediately before the evictions Lavelle visited the Catholic constabulary and Plunket's workmen and tried to intimidate them against carrying out the evictions. As it turned out nearly all of those involved in the eviction party came from outside Partry.

In the days immediately after the eviction, Lavelle's opponents were triumphant. The Dublin Daily Express declared:

Whatever suffering was endured may fairly be set down as due to Mr Lavelle's agitation. It was he who stimulated the people to resistance to their landlord, and they have their own pastor to thank for the demolition of their houses and the quenching of their hearths.(102)

It also implied, erroneously as time was to show, that the people were not prepared to have

anything to do with Lavelle in the future because he had tricked them.

Plunket's argument that the evictions had taken place to strip the land had little credibility.(103) All of those who were evicted had been involved with Lavelle in some way or other, and this was the real motive. They included Edward Joyce who had been tried for perjury, Martin Lally who had been arrested for the Harvison murder but afterwards released, and John Boyle who had provided Lavelle with a cart to take away the stones from Catherine Plunket's property.(104) It was generally accepted that their crime was their close connection with Lavelle's crusade. This was accepted even by staunch supporters of landlord values like the London Times. In an editorial critical of Plunket's actions it said:

...we do think a Bishop ought not to be sending his myrmidons over the country, armed with picks and crowbars, to pull down houses and turn people out of doors in this dreary month of November. It is all legal, no doubt, but it does not look well.(105)

The actual power of the Irish landlord over his tenants became one of the most important issues of the evictions. The activities of landlords such as Plunket, John George Adair in Derryveagh and William Scully in Ballycohey in 1868 were uncommon practices in the 1860s. When landlords evicted their tenants it was primarily for the non-payment of rent. Even during the distress of 1860-3, landowners did not adopt a cavalier attitude towards their tenants. Those landowners who evicted for motives other than the non-payment of rent were not condoned by their peers who believed that these actions damaged the reputation of landlords in general.(106) Plunket's actions in Partry opened up the debate over the power enjoyed by Irish landlords. The position was summed up in an editorial in the Freeman's Journal:

Bishop Plunket has a legal right to the resumption of his property; but there is a higher right, which a Christian Bishop should not have rejected - the moral right of those poor creatures to live and die where they draw their first breath, and with which all humble but heartfelt associates were connected...It is an unfair warfare when weakness has to contend with strength, and poverty with wealth.(107)

Lavelle also took up this theme on the Sunday following the evictions and said: "...it is the best thing for the tenants of Ireland that ever happened as it will be the means of getting them good laws, and saving them from the tyranny of such landlords."(108)

By now Lavelle had concluded that Plunket the landlord was a greater threat than Plunket the proselytiser, for he was using his landlord powers to intimidate his tenants to achieve his goals. Lavelle gradually realised that the landlords' control over their tenants was the kernel of all Irish problems and needed to be redressed immediately. His confrontation with Plunket and the Evangelicals formed the basis for his agrarian policy in the 1860s.

Plunket's greatest problem was that those supporters who came to his defence only exacerbated his difficulties and made Lavelle appear the innocent party in the whole affair. Plunket's agent, John Falkiner, wrote to the London Times defending his employer's actions on the ground that the evictions were necessary to rid the estate of a lawless combination. In a rather feeble claim to generosity on Plunket's part, he alleged that Plunket had waited until November to evict the tenants so that they could harvest their crops.(109) This only gave Lavelle more ammunition to embarrass Plunket. He asked why had the landlord maintained a year earlier that evictions were necessary to strip the land. Was it not a fact that he was prepared to use any excuse to evict them? In arguing that Plunket had acted as judge and jury he said:

True, indeed, one of the tenants - one out of seventy human beings evicted - was charged with perjury, but not convicted. While a jury of his countrymen supposes him innocent, will a Bishop of a Christian Church punish him, his wife, and family, as guilty?(110)

The incident showed the major weakness in the Plunket camp throughout the whole campaign - its failure to co-ordinate its approach in its defence. Its very supporters created difficulties when they acted on their own initiative to criticise Lavelle, giving him further opportunities to attack Plunket and to embarrass him before the public.



Plunket's supporters justified the evictions on the grounds that Lavelle was behaving like a landlord and that those evicted were involved in criminal activities. Lavelle quickly dispensed with these arguments, stating that only three of the sixty-eight people evicted had ever been summoned before the courts.(111) The one motive that the Evangelicals refused to admit - that of religion - was the one that refused to die.

Plunket's problems were compounded when Bishop Felix Dupanloup of Orleans, a leading Catholic churchman, decided to preach a sermon on poverty in Ireland at the Church of St. Roch in Paris. Plunket became the architect of his own difficulties, as prior to the sermon, he had written to the British ambassador in Paris, Lord Cowley, asking him to ensure that Dupanloup did not refer to Partry.(112) Dupanloup maintained that the topic for his sermon had not been decided and it had not been his intention to devote his sermon to the situation in Partry.(113) This caused Plunket major embarrassment, as it turned the attention of the French people to the state of affairs on his property and to Lavelle's defence of his parishioners. While the French may have been ignorant about the situation in Partry before 1861, this was not the case after Plunket's letter to Lord Cowley appeared in the newspapers.(114) The episode also brought Lavelle an important financial windfall as over £100 was collected for him at Dupanloup's sermon.

Lavelle was not intimidated by the evictions. Indeed they served to re-awaken the radical, intemperate characteristics in him which he had displayed upon his arrival in Partry in October 1858. On the Sundays following the evictions he continued his tirade against the Scripture Readers, telling his parishioners to use every means at their disposal, pitchfork or pistol, to hunt the Evangelicals out of their homes. He also let it be known that he wanted to defeat Plunket at all costs: "I promise you that I will have him in a way that the dogs will not smell him."(115)

The events also gave Lavelle further cause to reprimand the Freeman's Journal, the main

nationalist newspaper in the country:

Do you, or do you not, approve of Lord Plunket's proceedings in Partry, as revealed at the trial in Galway? I think I have a right to ask that question, considering the manner in which the Freeman has treated the whole "hideous scandal" from the commencement. It never published a word of the terrible revelations in Galway by the poor people. It refused the insertion of my letters to the Bishops of Ireland, recapitulating that evidence, and other important matters of fact. It has never uttered one syllable of censure, itself, on the kidnapping, child-hunting prosecutions and persecutions practised "by the man of God".(116)

For Lavelle, one was either in favour of or against his crusade. The situation was black or white in his eyes and one could not remain neutral. When the Freeman's Journal did not support him in the manner he wanted he identified it with those newspapers that had espoused Plunket. The result was that the Freeman's Journal, the newspaper that Lavelle's uncle had once owned, carried few of his letters and reported tersely on his activities in the 1860s.

Lavelle's radicalism was also apparent in his adopting a strategy similar to the Land League's tactics against the landlords. He tried to ensure that no one within the region occupied those holdings from which the people had been evicted.(117) Eventually the only occupants to be found for the land were converts from other parishes. Another aspect of this social ostracism was Lavelle's insistence that the people should not undertake any work for the Evangelicals, indicating his control over his parishioners, who did not lose confidence in him as had been alleged by his opponents.

Lavelle also continued his correspondence to the newspapers about the situation in Partry, to collect money for the evicted, whose suffering he vividly described:

One man threw a few sticks up against a wall, throwing some scraws over them, and thus made a shift to shelter a wife and four weak, sickly children. The snow, and sleet, and rain, and storms, came one night last week, the shed fell in upon the wretched creatures, and they merely escaped with their lives.(118)

Lavelle described these scenes to raise £300 for the purchase of land, administration and the building of homes for the dispossessed. Some holdings had been acquired before the evictions, such as those of Thomas Goulding and Bryan Scanlan at Treanlaur.(119)

Plunket was widely criticised for behaving like an uncaring landowning despot. Lavelle realised, however, that the religious issue would reap him greater financial rewards. Thus in a letter to the bishops of Ireland, dated 14 January 1861, he confined his argument to religion. Once more this long appeal concentrated on the history of the Partry affair and Plunket's efforts to proselytise the local tenantry.(120) As he wrote in another of his letters to the bishops:

Would I not be justly considered a "dumb dog" if while I saw the wolf strangling the sheep "I barked not". I have merely done my duty...I was poverty against wealth, weakness against power and influence, natural and moral right against human law...(121)

As Lavelle was in the front line of action in the struggle for religion, the bishops had little alternative but to espouse his calls for financial help. Aid even came from those bishops who had been critical of him during his days at the Irish College in Paris. The level of support can be noted from John MacHale's letter:

Among the many instances of suffering for conscience sake with which the poor tenantry of Ireland are so familiar on the part of oppressive and bigoted proprietors, there are few which exhibit more heroic endurance on the part of the people or convey more salutary lessons to the legislature and the government than those which the late Galway trial has revealed.(122)

The bishops' assistance would not have been as forthcoming if Lavelle had appealed to them solely on the grounds of the landlords' supreme power over their tenants. Lavelle thereby showed his ability to manipulate sectional interest groups, as in his alternative use of the agrarian argument whenever he was dealing with those interested in landlord-tenant relations.

Up to August 1861 Lavelle's exertions against Plunket - the establishment of alternative schools in Partry and other expenses - had set the priest back £1,445, of which £1,200 was subscribed to him from well-wishers in England.(123) Two important conclusions can be drawn from these figures. Fighting and defeating the Evangelicals were not cheap and sizeable funds were required from outside Partry. The struggle had to be projected onto the national stage, to raise money from Britain and from within Ireland itself.

It had been anticipated that the fruitless attempts to secure financial redress from the libel action against John Bole would deter Lavelle from any further litigation. Those who thought this underestimated the priest's tenacity. His next assault was on the proprietor of the Dublin Daily Express, James Robinson, for an article published in the newspaper but written by Lord Oranmore and Browne. The Dublin Daily Express was the leading Conservative voice in Ireland at the time and had been generally sympathetic to Bishop Plunket's position. The letter in question stated that Lavelle "reigns lord paramount over the district...he hounds on the excited peasantry against the Protestant missionaries who dare to cross his path..."(124) Lavelle was infuriated by another article on 3 February 1861, which implied that his exhortations were responsible for Harvison's murder. He refused to accept the newspaper's published retraction two days later and its offer of £5 in compensation. The libel case was heard in Galway in March 1861 and the paper admitted that Lavelle had been attacked, but maintained that every public person, including Lavelle, was open to criticism for his public conduct. Nevertheless, the jury found for Lavelle and awarded him £15 in compensation.

His next libel action was against Lord Oranmore and Browne. Lavelle argued that the peer had libelled him in a letter written to the London Times which they refused to print, but which was afterwards published in the Dublin Daily Express. It alleged that Lavelle had acted improperly, disobediently and disgracefully towards John Miley while at the Irish College in Paris. Shortly after the letter was published in January 1861 Lavelle stated: "...I promise him I shall let him see that the best way for him to defend the poor is not to

libel the priests."(125) It was a case that the Dublin Castle authorities wanted Lavelle to lose and it gave his opponent official information on the Harvison murder and other issues in Partry. The Castle authorities were known to fund pro-British newspapers as propaganda weapons in a period of growing nationalist fervour.(126) They were even prepared to bring to Ireland some of the French employees who had observed the confrontations between Lavelle and Miley. Their attitude to Lavelle is best summed up by the Morning Herald which stated:

...this man of law, and right, and justice, who smells a libel in every comment, and rushed into a court with a £2,000 claim on what even his own countrymen and neighbours have pronounced a sixpenny grievance, is the very person who counselled a bishop to ponder on the awful malediction concerning Judas Iscariot, branding him also in the same letter with such epithets as "oppressor, exterminator, man of blood, and landlord murderer."(127)

While the jury agreed that Lavelle had been libelled, he did not come out of the case very well. It was generally shown that he was the source of the trouble in Partry. While he claimed £2,000 in damages his reward was a paltry 6d.(128)

But Lavelle's resort to law against the Evangelicals was not for financial benefit. His failure to make any such gain bears this out. He was prepared to have his name blackened over the events in Partry in his quest to stifle all opposition to him. Lavelle regarded his legal costs as a necessary method of ending assistance for the Evangelical crusade and at the same time ensuring that its supporters did not get the upper hand. Certainly the financial reward of his libel actions did not warrant his proceeding with them, but they were necessary to his control of the situation in Partry.

Once more Lavelle's letter writing gives us an insight into his use of propaganda. Given the extent of his newspaper correspondence, there was a danger that the public would become bored with the events in Partry. In fact, the letters were published at critical times in the campaign - as when Goodison threatened to shoot Lavelle, the Harvison murder, the threatened eviction of the tenants in March 1860 and when the tenants were ejected from

their holdings. Thus, over-exposure did not work against Lavelle. Rather the public were reminded of the significance of the whole affair at key moments, in a manner which demonstrated his tactical advantages in his battle with Plunket.

Plunket's objective in carrying out the evictions was to punish Lavelle's supporters and to demolish the priest's power in the region; it had the reverse effect. Plunket's actions pushed Lavelle's popularity to its height and his own to an all-time low. By putting the tenants out of their holdings, Plunket had turned Lavelle into a symbol of resistance for Irish tenants, encouraging Irish people in Ireland, Britain and North America to support him. The evictions also added credence to Lavelle's allegations about Plunket's proselytising campaign. Even those who expressed doubts about Lavelle's activities in the past now viewed him in a more favourable light. One of the broadsheet ballads of the period, "In Praise of Father Lavelle" declared:

It was decreed and long foreseen and prophesied[sic] by Columkill,  
And surmised by all true divines that the lord would send us such a man,  
In the time of difficulty and persecution in Ballinrobe you will find.  
Or in Dunmalady a most brilliant star may the Lord reward him for what he's done.

There was Alexander and noble Pompey and Hannible[sic] of Carthage  
plain,  
And King Phillips[sic] of Macedon and Bonapart that conquered Spain,  
They were recorded great men, bloodshed and slaughter was their aim,  
But he relieved them from starvation Father Lavelle it is his name.

All over England his name is mentioned and among the nobles of Whitehall,  
Its what they mention in their intention to make him cardinal,  
All over Rome he has endeavoured both late and early to labour like St. Paul,  
Bishop M'Hale he has declared that he is the favourite among them all.(129)

Yet throughout this period tenants, such as Ellen Walsh, were pawns in the conflict. Lavelle, in one of his many outward fits of temper, physically attacked her on 24 August 1861. After much persuasion from Plunket and his supporters she agreed to take legal action for assault, the only case the Evangelicals could take. However they failed in their aim as Walsh withdrew her charges after some persuasion from Lavelle.(130)

The case demonstrates Lavelle's power of persuasion over his flock. It also shows the

authority of the priest in general. Walsh felt it better to forsake the promised protection of the authorities than endure Lavelle's wrath. Again the authorities found it difficult to enforce the rule of law. When a victim refused to bring charges against the perpetrators of crime there was little they could do. It showed up the Evangelicals' defeat by Lavelle.

The evictions and the 'war' in Partry made him a national celebrity and more of a household name than many of the bishops and politicians in Ireland. His endeavours on behalf of the poor resulted in many invitations to address gatherings and demonstrations throughout the country. He addressed meetings in Castlebar, Ballinrobe, Galway and Dublin on issues such as the national education question, sympathy with the Pope's position in Italy against the encroachments by Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel and the demonstration to initiate a national petition for the restoration of a parliament in Dublin.(131) Lavelle spoke at great length at all these meetings on the situation in Partry. Partry had made him a national hero and his tie to his parish would not be broken. When the Pope had difficulties in Rome from an irreligious mob, there were those who equated his problems with Lavelle's.(132)

At the same time his enemies monitored every word he spoke and wrote. The Mail's hostility was typical of that of many English newspapers: "The 'Priest of Partry' is a household word, familiar to all readers, as signifying not a man but a myth, or leprechaun, who was always crying out the miseries of his people, and whose tears always turned to gold."(133)

It was also not surprising that the English press was very critical of Lavelle's remarks at the National Petition meeting at the Rotunda, Dublin on 4 December 1860. Lavelle said that progress would only be accomplished by word and work and that mere reason would never get justice from an English parliament: "If justice they deny to a suppliant nation's cry, we shall wring it from their fears."(134) While he maintained that the hereditary bondsmen would have to strike the blows, the whole direction of his speech was taken out of context

by the Conservative newspapers. On its own it appeared that Lavelle advocated physical force, but the main thrust of his speech was that the Irish demanded legislative independence from England. If the English did not grant this the Irish would have to turn to other means, such as physical force, to attain their aims.

The positive aspect of the evictions for Lavelle was, therefore, that it publicized the situation in Partry and his own desperate financial position. Many Englishmen subscribed to the Partry Fund, including W.H. Wilberforce, secretary of the Catholic Defence Association, and the Countess Dowager of Clare.(135) For the first time since the early 1850s, English Catholics and the Irish in Britain were inspired to fight together for their Catholicism. At the same time moral and financial support was forthcoming from influential Irish nationalists, such as John Mitchel, who saw in Lavelle the embodiment of Irish opposition to England.(136)

The need for funds became even more acute in late Spring 1861 when the potato failure resulted in the people tottering on the edge of ruin. Lavelle was once more forced to appeal for help after he had secured £400 worth of meal on credit, in part because the Lavelle-Plunket conflict meant the failure of any co-ordinated effort for the relief of distress in the parish.(137) While the years 1860-3 were one of the worst periods of distress in post-Famine Ireland, the difficulties were successfully overcome through the united efforts of all people in parishes throughout Ireland.(138) Catholic and Protestant clergymen joined forces to collect aid for their beleaguered communities. However, the polarised state of affairs in Partry forced Lavelle to carry on the campaign alone for funds for the relief of distress.

The whole affair consumed Lavelle, who continued to write long accounts of the situation in the parish, revealing any new incidents that would discredit Plunket, such as when he evicted John Prendergast and his family on 22 April 1861.(139) Lavelle was helped in his task of broadcasting the continuing difficulties in Partry by the evictions on John George



Adair's Derryveagh estate in the summer of 1861, when the landlord ejected 47 families. These events revived the lagging interest in Partry, showing up once again the arbitrary powers of Irish landlords over their tenants. The Derryveagh affair was prompted by the displacement of tenants by sheep, while the underlying motive in Partry was religious. The one arena Lavelle had failed to use for his cause was the House of Commons itself. The Partry evictions occurred at a time when parliament was in recess and the incident had lost its significance by the time it had reconvened. The Derryveagh evictions resurrected the whole question of the Irish land laws and Lavelle was able to take advantage of the concern to get the Partry affair debated in parliament. In May 1861, Mr Patrick McMahon, MP for Co Wexford, opened a debate on the events on the Plunket estate.(140) Lavelle saw the publicity that could be gained from the case and travelled to London the night before the debate and held a major demonstration at Hanover Square. This was well attended by Irish MPs and leading Irish Catholics. Lavelle made use of the occasion to ensure that people throughout Britain and Ireland continued to be aware of what was happening in Partry and of the general state of landlord-tenant relations in Ireland.(141) As the Nation pointed out, it was both Plunket and the law that needed exposing, especially the laws supported by parliament which gave landowners such power.(142) While the bill enquiring into the events at Partry was defeated by 66 votes to 15, Lavelle had the satisfaction of ensuring that the affairs in Partry remained firmly on the public agenda. One can thus understand the accolades which the nationalist press like the Dundalk Democrat applied to him:

Father Lavelle seems to be endowed with wonderful physical as well as mental powers. What would not the soupers give to have him removed? He is ever on the alert to counteract their mischief. He writes to confound them, preaches to expose their frauds, collects money to sustain the evicted of his flock; today he is in Dublin on some important mission, to-morrow will witness him one hundred miles from the metropolis, engaged in some useful labour. He does not permit the grass to grow under his feet. He has been a blessing to Partry - to the entire of Connaught - and the manner in which he toils for the poor, and exposes fraud, hypocrisy, and tyranny, points him out as a great priest, and one who has conferred honour on the archdiocese of Tuam.(143)

Lavelle became markedly more nationalistic in his outlook as a result of the events in Partry. While there is no evidence of his shift towards an advanced nationalist approach

before the evictions in November 1860, it certainly is in evidence in November. In a speech at the Rotunda in June 1861, at which Father W.H. Anderson read a translation of Bishop Dupanloup's Paris sermon, Lavelle clearly indicated the direction of his political philosophy. He said:

We are all Nationalists.(great cheering) We have all one end in view, - the liberation of our dear, suffering, bleeding country (tremendous cheering and waving of hats). Do you know my creed at this moment? I know I am looked upon by the magistrates of the land and by the powers that be, as a firebrand (hear, hear and laughter). Well, I proclaim this - Give me Jew, Turk, Heathen - give me anything for twelve months, - but send away the English tyranny (Loud and long continuing cheering. (144)

To the Nation he wrote:

I am, sir, "discontented". There is no man in Italian soil more discontented with foreign rule beyond the Alps, than I am with English rule in Ireland. I am "disaffected" - to the very heart's core "disaffected" - against the policy pursued by the enemies of my bleeding country, to squeeze still more the last drop of her life-blood out. I look to one side, and see sheep and oxen, on which my Lord Carlisle seems to look with such ecstasies, bursting with fatness, and hauled up by ship-sides to be eaten by Englishmen beyond the Channel.(145)

Why did Lavelle now adopt this advanced nationalist position? It would appear that he now felt that there was little likelihood of an English parliament redressing the needs of Irish tenants. The only way the tenants' grievances could be resolved was within a free Ireland. As constitutional nationalism was in total disarray in Ireland after the debacle of the late 1850s, its militant counterpart seemed the only way of achieving this independence. Again, the main body of Lavelle's support was drawn from militant nationalists in Britain and the United States, and with widespread distress in his parish he needed their funds to feed the people. Nevertheless while Lavelle's advanced nationalism was only criticised in November 1861 during his involvement in the Terence Bellew MacManus funeral, there were definite signs of a move in this direction six months earlier and his experiences in Partry were fundamental to this.

This new radicalism also manifested itself in his dealings with Plunket and the Evangelicals. The latter made several unsuccessful efforts to curtail Lavelle's national

fame. On 4 June 1861, Evangelicals held a meeting in Dublin after the Dupanloup sermon and unsuccessfully attempted to impress upon their supporters that they were in full control of the situation in Partry.(146) At the same time there were attacks on Lavelle's chapel when all of the glass was broken. It was generally assumed that the culprits were frustrated Evangelicals. Their actions only spurred Lavelle on; in his sermon on 25 August 1861 he incited the congregation to a frenzy and got them to attack Plunket's pound which had recently been erected against the outer wall of Lavelle's church. One of the constables who attended the mass said of the sermon: "He said the pound was put near the chapel to have the noise of cattle and geese heard distinctly, and that it was put there for annoyance and offence. I heard the threatening speeches."(147) Then the congregation, led by Lavelle and his brother, Francis, a seminarian in All Hallow's College, Dublin, led the people out and knocked down the pound. While Lavelle was brought before the courts on three occasions for the offence, he was never convicted because of the magistrates' inability to reach a decision as to whether a riot had ensued or not.

The magistrates' failure to reach a judgement shows the extent to which Lavelle's activities had polarised the communities in the region. Even the operation of justice was now affected. The ten magistrates were divided on religious lines over Lavelle's guilt. This difficulty was not confined to this particular case and was evident in other lawsuits involving the Partry protagonists. Nationally there was no division between Catholic and Protestant judges over religion, although Evangelicals and Catholics both defended the notion that religious differences affected legal decisions.(148)

The collapse of Evangelicalism in Partry was not brought about by the reaction to the evictions themselves or by the subsequent bad publicity which Plunket received. The manner in which the Protestants attacked Lavelle's chapel and held meetings in Dublin to bolster their cause is an indication of this. The 1861 population census gave the first detailed survey of religious affiliations and their distribution and showed that the 'Second Reformation' had made no tangible gains among the indigenous population. There were

fewer Protestants in the diocese of Tuam than in 1834 when the previous survey had been undertaken. To many of the English subscribers, the census indicated that their funds had not brought about the massive conversions that had been expected.(149)

Nevertheless, Lavelle's contribution to the downfall of the 'Second Reformation' must not be underestimated. His crusade against the Irish Church Mission Society was the last major confrontation between Catholics and Protestants during the 'Second Reformation', and manifested the increased power of the Catholic Church to counteract the Evangelical threat in any part of Ireland.

Lavelle also ended the notion of using Partry as a refuge for converts from other regions or from within the parish itself. In the past colonies like Achill and to a lesser extent Partry, were developed to give sanctuary for converts who were ostracised by their former friends and neighbours. Once the Catholic Church got its resources together these colonies were no longer safe havens. After the evictions in November 1860 Lavelle warned any person about taking over the land. Throughout his term in Partry he provided those converts in the parish with an alternative, to return to the Catholic faith. For most who wished to retain their Protestant religion their only choice was to leave for North America.(150)

His endeavours in Partry portray a hardworking cleric who upheld the interests of his parishioners whether they be spiritual or temporal. In this respect he gained a reputation in Ireland and among the Irish abroad as a tough and resolute pastor who was dedicated to his parishioners. While the hierarchy remembered his tenacity and ruthlessness at the Irish College in Paris, all Irishmen recognised these traits during his Partry exploits. In this, Partry catapulted Lavelle on to the national scene. Despite his shortcomings, he was the right person for Partry, to oppose the Evangelicals' endeavours, even though his fame made the hierarchy, and especially Paul Cullen, anxious about his increasing involvement with militant nationalism.

### Chapter 3

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6. For examples of proselytising within the workhouses see Helen Burke, The Poor Law in Nineteenth Century Ireland (West Sussex, 1987), pp.87-93; J.A. Robins, "Religious Issues in the Early Workhouses", in Studies, lvii (Spring 1968), pp.54-65; Correspondence between the Board of Guardians of the Ballinrobe Union and the Poor Law Commissioners of Ireland, relative to the conduct of the Rev. Mr Hardiman, Roman Catholic chaplain of the said Union, H.C.1852 [154], xlvi; Bowen, Souperism, pp.43-4
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8. O'Neill, Sidelights on Souperism, p.58; Mayo Constitution, 18 Jan. 1859, p.2.
9. Weekly Telegraph, 23 Dec. 1854 p.4; Bowen, Souperism, p.164; D'Alton, Archdiocese of Tuam, vol. ii, pp. 69-70
10. O'Reilly, Bernard, John MacHale, Archbishop of Tuam, vol. ii (New York, 1890), pp. 413-4.
11. N.L.I., MS 892(461), G.H. Moore Papers; D'Alton, op. cit., p.69.
12. See Mayo Telegraph, 19 Jan. 1859, p.4.
13. Mayo Constitution, 22 Mar. 1859, p.3; 'Lex', op. cit., p.16. See also the evidence of Sarah

Prendergast at the court proceedings in the Lavelle v Bole libel case. She maintained that she had been evicted when she refused to give her children over to Catherine Plunket for the schools, See Nation, 4 Aug. 1860, p.774.

14. Mayo Constitution, 7 Aug. 1860, p.1.
15. D'Alton, op. cit., p.60; O'Reilly, op. cit., p.479.
16. See Nation, 4 Aug. 1860, p.774; Mayo Constitution, 7 Aug. 1860, p.1.
17. These comments came from Mr Whiteside, QC, see T.C.D., MS 1710(38), Thomas Larcom Papers, Evening Packet, 24 July 1861.
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19. Ibid.,
20. Mayo Constitution, 28 Dec. 1858, p.3
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22. McNamee, op. cit., p.49.
23. Mayo Telegraph, 16 Feb. 1859, p.3; Catholic Telegraph, 26 Feb. 1859, p.7.
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30. Catholic Telegraph, 14 May 1859, p.8. See also Mayo Telegraph, 7 Sept. 1859, p.3, 21 Sept. 1859, p.3; Nation, 17 Sept. 1859, p.45.
31. Mayo Constitution, 11 Jan. 1859, p.3; Mayo Telegraph, 12 Jan. 1859.
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33. See Mayo Telegraph, 26 Jan. 1859, p.4; Mayo Constitution, 25 Jan. 1859, p.3.
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36. N.A., C.S.O.,R.P., 1861/7273, letter of John Ward, dated 21 Oct. 1860.
37. Dublin Daily Express, 18 Aug. 1859, p.3; Mayo Constitution, 23 Aug. 1859, p.2, 30 Aug. 1859,

- p.3, 2 Aug. 1859, p.3.
38. Mayo Constitution, 30 Aug. 1859, p.2
  39. See evidence of Constable Heard at Ballinrobe Petty Sessions, Mayo Telegraph, 19 Jan. 1859, p.4; also its proceedings in Mayo Constitution, 25 Jan. 1859, p.3.
  40. Mayo Constitution, 25 Jan. 1859, p.3.
  41. Dublin Daily Express, 21 Oct. 1859, p.4; Mayo Constitution, 25 Oct. 1859, p.3; Mayo Telegraph, 26 Oct. 1859, p.3; T.C.D., MS 1710(38), Larcom Papers.
  42. See Paul Bew, Land and the National Question in Ireland, 1858-1882 (Dublin, 1978), pp.36-7; W.E. Vaughan, Sin, Sheep and Scotsmen: John George Adair and the Derryveagh Evictions, 1860 (Belfast, 1983), p.33; Charles Townshend, Political Violence in Ireland: Government and Resistance since 1848 (New York, 1983), p.17.
  43. See W. Stuart Trench, The Realities of Irish Life (London, 1966), p.139. On the issue of changing agrarian terms leading to murder see M.R. Beames, "Rural Conflict in Pre-Famine Ireland: Peasant Assassinations in Tipperary, 1837-47", in C.H.E. Philpin (ed.), Nationalism and Popular Protest in Ireland (New York, 1987), pp.164-183; Paschal Grosget, Ireland's Disease: The English in Ireland, 1887 (rep. Belfast, 1986), p.125; Townshend, op. cit., pp9, 23, 137-8. See also the situation in Westmeath during the outbreaks of crime, Andrew C. Murray, "The Politics of Nationalism in Westmeath, 1868-1892" (University of Manchester, Ph D thesis, 1984), p.68; A.C. Murray, "Agrarian Violence and Nationalism in Nineteenth Century Ireland: The Myth of Ribbonism", in Irish Economic and Social History, xiii (1986), pp.60-2. The extent of the problem can be seen by the comments of one peer in the House of Lords in February 1860: "...in some districts, the whole population sympathised with the criminal rather than the police"; Hansard, vol.156 [28 Feb. 1860], col.1917.
  44. Mayo Telegraph, 15 June 1859, p.3; Nation, 4 Aug. 1860, p.774.
  45. Catholic Telegraph, 10 Sept. 1859, p.7.
  46. Freeman's Journal, 15 Sept. 1859, p.3.
  47. The other examples of tenants being evicted for issues other than the non-payment of rent occurred on the estate of John George Adair in Derryveagh, County Donegal. See Vaughan, Derryveagh Evictions; Liam Dolan, Land War and Evictions in Derryveagh, 1840-65 (Dundalk, 1980).
  48. Lex, op.cit., pp.16-17; Mayo Constitution, 22 Mar. 1859, p.3; D'Alton, op. cit., p.71.
  49. See Liam Dolan, The Third Earl of Leitrim (Fanad, 1982), pp.28-9.
  50. See Mayo Constitution, 20 Sept. 1859, p.4; Nation, 24 Sept. 1859, p.35.
  51. N.A., C.S.O.,R.P., 1861/7273, police letters dated 21 & 22 Feb. 1860.
  52. T.C.D., MS1710(38), Larcom Papers, dated 16 Mar. 1860; Nation, 24 Sept. 1859, p.554; Mayo Telegraph, 31 Aug. 1859, p.3.
  53. See Dublin Daily Express, 11 Oct. 1859, p.3.
  54. Freeman's Journal, 13 Oct. 1859, p.4; Catholic Telegraph, 15 Oct. 1859, p.3.
  55. For details of the murder see Moran, Mayo Evictions, pp.63-70.
  56. On this point see Vaughan, Derryveagh, p.34.

57. Irish Times, 3 & 4 Feb. 1860. See also Dublin Daily Express, 3 Feb. 1860, p.3; for its accusations regarding Lavelle's influence in the murder. The attitude of Bishop Plunket to the murder can be found in T.C.D., MS 1710(38), Larcom Papers, Plunket to Larcom, dated 3 Feb. 1860.
58. Tuam Herald, 16 Feb. 1860, p.2; C.S.O.,R.P., 1861/7272, letter dated 14 Mar. 1861.
59. Dublin Daily Express, 18 Feb. 1860, p.3.
60. Mayo Constitution, 19 Mar. 1861, p.2.
61. C.S.O.,R.P., 1861/7272; Dublin Daily Express, 10 Feb. 1860, p.2, 27 Feb. 1860, p.2; Mayo Constitution, 14 Feb. 1860, p.2. See also T.C.D., MS 1710(38), Larcom Papers, letter from Bishop Plunket to Larcom; letter from W.C. Smith to Larcom, dated June 1861.
62. C.S.O.,R.P., 1861/7272, police letter dated 5 Mar. 1860.
63. For a note on the decline in lawlessness in Partry in these months see C.S.O.,R.P., 1861/7272, letter of George Abbot to Sir Henry J. Brownrigg, dated 30 May 1860.
64. Mayo Constitution, 3 May 1859, p.3. See also 5 Jun. 1860, p.3; 31 Jul. 1860.
65. Ibid., 7 Jun. 1859, p.3.
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67. Mayo Constitution, 6 Mar. 1860, p.3.
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69. Nation, 4 Aug. 1860, p.777.
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71. See D'Alton, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 18; Keenan, op. cit., p.148; Moore, op. cit., p.146; Michael MacCarthy, Priests and People in Ireland (Dublin, 1903), p.263.
72. Lex, op. cit., p.12.
73. Mayo Telegraph, 18 May 1859, p.3.
74. See Nation, 21 May 1859, p.604; Mayo Telegraph, 15 May 1859. For Plunket's role in providing relief during the Great Famine see Bowen, Souperism, pp.157-8.
75. Freeman's Journal, 12 Aug. 1859, p.3.
76. See Nation, 27 Aug. 1859, p.825; Mayo Telegraph, 31 Aug. 1859, p.4.
77. Mayo Telegraph, 9 Nov. 1859, p.3. For similar emotive appeals see Freeman's Journal, 17 Nov. 1859, p.3; Tuam Herald, 14 Nov. 1859; Catholic Telegraph, 3 Dec. 1859, p.5. For the effects of these appeals on Irish Catholics see N.L.I., MS 3041, O'Neill Daunt Papers, journal dated 27 Nov. 1859.
78. Mayo Telegraph, 7 Dec. 1859, p.3.
79. See N.L.I., MS 8045 (1), O'Neill Daunt Papers, Daunt to Archbishop MacHale, dated 10 Sept. 1859; Freeman's Journal, 21 Dec. 1859, p.4.
80. Mayo Telegraph, 19 Jan. 1859, p.4.
81. Nation, 13 Aug. 1859, p.790.



82. Freeman's Journal, 20 Sept. 1860, p.3; Mayo Telegraph, 26 Sept. 1860, p.3.
83. Tuam Herald, 29 Sept. 1860, p.4.
84. For the Stockport riots see Pauline Millard, "The Stockport Riots of 1852: A Study of Anti-Catholic and Anti-Irish Sentiment", in Roger Swift & Sheridan Gilley (eds.), The Irish in the Victorian City (Kent, 1985), pp.207-224. For the Murphy riots see Patrick Quinlivan, and Paul Rose, The Fenians in England, 1865-72 (London, 1982), pp.33-43; T.W. Healy, Letters and Leaders of my Day, vol. i (London, 1928) pp.23-5. William Barry describes how he went to hear Lavelle's speech in Kensington and described Lavelle as "a dark, short man, who spoke with fiery eloquence and won our hearts...", William Barry, Memories and Opinions (London and New York, 1927), pp.20-21.
85. For the stripping of the Plunket property see Valuation Office, Co Mayo., District of Cappaduff, pp6-9.
86. Freeman's Journal, 21 Jan. 1860, p.3; Nation, 24 Jan. 1860, p.327; Tuam Herald, 21 Jan. 1860, p.3.
87. This allegation was made by Andrew Tait, the Irish Church Missions Society superintendent in the Lough Mask area, Bowen Protestant Crusade, pp.244-5.
88. Freeman's Journal, 3 Feb. 1860, p.3; Mayo Telegraph, 8 Feb. 1860, p.4. See also Nation, 18 Feb. 1860, p.391.
89. Freeman's Journal, 5 Mar. 1860, p.2; Catholic Telegraph, 10 Mar. 1860, p.7; Tuam Herald, 10 Mar. 1860, p.3; Hansard, vol. 157 [12 Mar. 1860], cols 338-9; T.C.D., MS 1710 (38), Larcom Papers, letter dated 8 Dec. 1860.
90. Mayo Constitution, 13 Mar. 1860, p.2; Freeman's Journal, 14 Mar. 1860, p.3; Tuam Herald, 17 Mar. 1860, p.3; Dublin Daily Express, 15 Mar. 1860, p.2.
- 91 The attitude of W.J. O'Neill Daunt summed up this feeling: "His lordship has been induced to relent...Deo gratias." N.L.I., MS 3041, O'Neill Daunt Papers, diary dated 17 Apr. 1860' W.J. O'Neill Daunt, A Life Spent for Ireland (London, 1896), p.162.
- 92 Freeman's Journal, 27 Oct. 1860, p.3. For attitude of Plunket and Lavelle to agreement's terms see N.A., C.S.O.,R.P., 1861/7272, letter of Constable McGarry dated 7 Jun. 1860. As Fr Conway was then in America collecting funds for his new church in Headford he was unable to say who had the correct interpretation.
- 93 N.A., C.S.O.,R.P., 1861/7272, letter from John Wade, dated 31 Oct. 1860.
- 94 Ibid., see letters dated 23, 25, & 26 Oct. 1860.
- 95 Bowen, Souperism, pp.166-7. See also Lex, op. cit., p.5.
- 96 N.A., C.S.O.,R.P., 1861/7272, letter from Edward O'Brien, 15 Nov. 1860; see also letter from James Connor, dated 5 Nov. 1860.
- 97 Freeman's Journal, 17 Oct. 1860, p.3.
- 98 Nation, 27 Oct. 1860, p.137. This point is aptly put by W.E.Vaughan when he said "...the crown could pardon a murder, but could not prevent an eviction," Vaughan, Derryveagh, p.24.
- 99 A detailed account of the evictions themselves can be found in Moran, Mayo Evictions, pp.88-94; Gerard Moran, "The Partry Evictions of 1860", in Mayomen's Association Yearbook, 1985 (Dublin, 1985), pp.40-41. The fifteenth family, that of John Prendergast, was not evicted until June 1861.
- 100 See Dublin Daily Express, 23 Nov. 1860 , p.2, 24 Nov. 1860, p.2; Mayo Constitution, 27 Nov.

- 1860, p.2.
- 101 N.A., C.S.O.,R.P., 1861/7272, letter from James McGarry, dated 18 Nov. 1860.
- 102 Dublin Daily Express, 24 Nov. 1860, p.2. See also T.C.D., MS1710, (38), Larcom Papers; Evening Packet, 24 Nov. 1860.
- 103 Dublin Daily Express, 23 Nov. 1860, p.2.
- 104 See Patrick Lavelle, The Landlord since the Revolution (Dublin, 1870), pp.530-1; Moran, Mayo Evictions, pp.133-4
- 105 Reprinted in Nation 1 Dec. 1860, p.213; Mayo Constitution, 4 Dec. 1860, p.4.
- 106 See E.D. Steele, Irish Land and British Politics: Tenant Right and Nationality, 1865-1870 (Cambridge, 1970) p.72; Vaughan, John George Adair and Derryveagh, p.36; Moran, Mayo Evictions, pp.95.
- 107 Freeman's Journal 24 Nov. 1860, p.2.
- 108 N.A., C.S.O.,R.P., 1861/7272, letter of James Conner, dated 25 Nov. 1860.
- 109 Reprinted in Catholic Telegraph, 8 Dec. 1860, p.4.
- 110 Nation, 15 Dec. 1860, p.253; Catholic Telegraph, 15 Dec. 1860, p.3; Tuam Herald, 15 Dec. 1860, p.3.
- 111 See Lavelle's letter to Morning Post reprinted in Catholic Telegraph, 4 May 1861, p.6.
- 112 Nation, 30 Mar. 1861; T.C.D., MS1710 (38), Larcom Papers; Evening Packet, 27 Mar. 1861. See also Bowen, Souperism, p.136; Tomas O'Fiaich, "The Patriot Priest of Partry, Patrick Lavelle, 1825-1886" in the Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society, xxxv (1976), p.36; Moran, Mayo Evictions, pp.101-2. See also Hansard, vol.164 [5 Jul.1861], cols. 419-20.
- 113 Dublin Daily Express, 27 Mar 1861, p.3; Nation, 30 Mar. 1861, p.485; T.C.D., MS1710 (38), Larcom Papers, 27 Mar. 1861.
- 114 See Rev. Abbe Perraud, Ireland Under English Rule (Dublin, 1864), pp.127-133; Corish, Irish Catholic Experience, pp.223-4.
- 115 N.A., C.S.O.,R.P., 1861/7272, letter from James Clark, dated 7 Apr. 1861. See also letter from James Connor, dated 26 Apr. 1861 in which Lavelle said: "...if I got the best parish in the diocese, if I got a thousand a year. I shall not leave this until I break his heart..."
- 116 T.C.D., MS1710 (38), Larcom Papers; Nation, 27 Apr. 1861, p.558.
- 117 C.S.O.,R.P., 1861/7272, dated 25 Nov. 1860, letters of James Connor, dated 25 Nov. 1860, 17 Dec. 1860, 18 Mar. 1861.
- 118 Freeman's Journal, 5 Jan. 1861; Mayo Telegraph, 10 Jan. 1861, p.3; Tuam Herald, 12 Jan. 1861, p.4.
- 119 Valuation Office, Co. Mayo, District of Ballinrobe, 1858-1934, Traenlaur.
- 120 Nation, 26 Jan. 1861, p.348; T.C.D., MS1710 (38), Larcom Papers, Catholic Telegraph, 2 Feb. 1861, p.7.
- 121 Mayo Telegraph, 20 Feb. 1861.

- 122 Catholic Telegraph, 18 Aug. 1860, p.4; Dublin Daily Express, 22 Apr. 1860, p.5.
- 123 Ibid., 17 Aug. 1861; T.C.D., MS1710 (38) Larcom Papers,
- 124 Dublin Daily Express, 21 Mar. 1861; T.C.D., MS 1710(38), Larcom Papers; Freeman's Journal, 21 Mar. 1861, p.7. See also Dublin Daily Express, 15 Feb. 1861, p.5.
- 125 Mayo Telegraph, 30 Jan. 1861, p.3; Mayo Constitution, 5 Feb. 1861, p.3.
- 126 See letters of Henry Whileside, Kilkenny, to Thomas Larcom, T.C.D., MS 1710(38), Larcom Papers, dated 23 & 24 Jul. 1861, see also letter of George H. Lindsay to Larsom, dated 25 Jun. 1861; Martin, op. cit., pp.57-8.
- 127 T.C.D., MS 1710(38), Larcom Papers; Dublin Daily Express, 30 Jul. 1861, p.3.
- 128 T.C.D., MS 1710(38), Larcom Papers; Dublin Daily Express, 26 Jul. 1861, p.4.
- 129 N.L.I., Ballad Broadsheets, L-O, no.240.
- 130 T.C.D., MS 1710 (38), Larcom Papers; Mail, 12 Sept. 1861; Dublin Daily Express, 19 Sept. 1861, p.4.
- 131 The Voice of the West, The Great Catholic Demonstration (Dublin, 1860), pp.63-9; Freeman's Journal, 9 Feb. 1860, p.3; Irish Times, 10 Feb. 1860, p.2; Tuam Herald, 11 Aug. 1860.
- 132 See Freeman's Journal, 29 Sept. 1860. At a meeting in Ballinrobe to express sympathy with the Pope's predicament, a resolution along these lines was proposed by Patrick Monaghan.
- 133 T.C.D., MS1710 (38), Larcom Papers, Mail, 6 Jan. 1860.
- 134 Nation, 8 Dec. 1860, p.231.
- 135 Freeman's Journal, 11 Jan. 1861, p.3; Tuam Herald, 19 Jan. 1861, p.4; Tuam Herald, 2 Feb. 1861, p.3; N.L.I., MS 447(3203) William Smith O'Brien Papers, letter from Archbishop John Mitchel to O'Brien, dated 27 Dec. 1860.
- 136 Mayo Telegraph, 17 Apr. 1861, p.3.
- 137 Ibid., 15 May 1861, p.1.
- 138 See J.S. Donnelly, "The Irish Agricultural Depression of 1859-1864", in Irish Economic and Social History Journal, iii (1976). Examples of the difficulties in the west can be found for Erris in N.L.I., MS 7783, Larcom Papers. See also Moran, Mayo Evictions, pp.116-8.
- 139 Nation, 1 Jun 1861, p.638; 8 Jun. 1861, p.647.
- 140 Hansard, vol.164, [5 Jul. 1861], col.413.
- 141 Freeman's Journal, 5 Jul. 1861, p.4; Tuam Herald, 6 July 1861, p.3.
- 142 Nation, 15 Jun. 1861, p.664.
- 143 Reprinted in Nation, 1 Jun 1861, p.639.
- 144 T.C.D., MS 1710(38), Larcom Papers; Dublin Daily Express, 4 Jun. 1861, p.8.
- 145 Nation, 8 Jun. 1861, p.647.

- 146 See Dublin Daily Express, 5 Jun. 1861, p.8.
- 147 C.S.O., R.P., 1861/7272, police letter of August 1861.
- 148 T.C.D., MS 1710(38), Larcom Papers. Mail, 12 Sept. 1861.
- 149 See Bowen, Souperism, pp.148, 234-52; O'Neill, Sidelights on Souperism, pp.60-63.
150. N.A., C.S.O., R.P., 1861/7273. For the difficulties of converts in Ireland see Bowen, Souperism, p.205; W.C. Plunket, The Church and the Census in Ireland (London, 1865), pp.15-16; Moran, Mayo Evictions, pp.125-27.

## CHAPTER 4

### LAVELLE AND THE FENIAN MOVEMENT, PART 1, 1861-5

#### (a) Lavelle and the Terence Bellew MacManus Funeral, 1861

The demise of the Irish Independent Party in the late 1850s created a void in constitutional nationalist politics which was filled by the militant nationalists who were to dominate politics throughout the 1860s. The Irish Republican Brotherhood, or as it was more commonly known, the Fenians, was founded in March 1858 by two Young Ireland activists, John O'Mahony and James Stephens. It quickly made recruits among the Irish emigrants in the United States, having as its objective the armed overthrow of British rule in Ireland. It administered a secret oath when enlisting members in Ireland, which brought it into conflict with the Catholic Church.(1) The movement remained largely unknown until 1861. However the Terence Bellew MacManus funeral in November of that year brought it to national prominence and reconfirmed Lavelle's fame.

Terence Bellew MacManus had been transported to Van Dieman's Land after his involvement in the 1848 Young Ireland rebellion, but escaped to the United States in 1856 with John Mitchel and Thomas Francis Meagher. The rest of his life was spent in poverty in San Francisco and his death, on 15 January 1861, went largely unnoticed in Ireland.(2) This all changed when Irish nationalists in the United States decided to exhume his body and rebury it in Dublin. At the funeral proceedings in New York the local bishop, Dr John Hughes, appeared to defend Fenianism by stating that the Church had declared when it was lawful to resist and overthrow a tyrannical government.(3) When the body arrived in Cobh it was received by the Bishop of Cloyne, Dr William Keane.

A funeral committee was set up to organise the burial in Ireland and its operations is indicative of the internal wranglings then current among nationalists. The moderate

nationalists' failure to secure control of the funeral committee signified the declining fortunes of constitutional nationalism and the emergence of their militant rivals. The Fenians saw control of the MacManus committee as a means to further their message. For constitutional nationalists it was a celebration of times past, such as the 1848 rebellion. MacManus had refused to identify himself with the Fenian movement in the United States up to the time of his death.(4) James Stephens, the Fenian leader in Ireland, was more concerned with the propaganda to be won for the organisation by a major procession in Dublin than with MacManus's political affiliations. These events polarised the political situation in Ireland for the rest of the decade, as is evident from the bitter exchanges between Lavelle and A.M. Sullivan in May over the former's involvement at the funeral. Sullivan at first declined to publish Lavelle's letter on the issue and added his own commentary when he eventually published it. Relations between the two deteriorated over the next five years, although there was little difference between them in terms of ideology. Nationalists like Sullivan accepted the use of physical force, but only under certain conditions, specifically, an assurance that a rebellion would be successful.(5) Unfortunately Sullivan became an easy target for Fenian aggression because he was opposed to the movement and it was suspected that he was responsible for the arrest of the Phoenix Society leaders in 1859.(6)

In early October the MacManus funeral committee wrote to Archbishop Paul Cullen, asking permission for a public funeral service for MacManus in the city.(7) While Cullen deplored MacManus's revolutionary past, he was prepared to allow the body to lie in the Pro-Cathedral provided that there was no political demonstration. His disagreement was not with MacManus but with the Fenians who were trying to make political capital out of the affair. Cullen felt that the decision to exhume the body and to rebury it in Ireland had been taken by a group of "lunatics" attempting to revive the revolutionary spirit.(8) Had he agreed to the Fenians' wishes at this early stage he could have been accused of giving tacit approval to their campaign, so he refused to let his clergy take any part in the funeral proceedings. While Dublin priests accepted this directive, it did not inhibit Lavelle. A



REV. JOHN KENYON.

letter written later from 'A Catholic Priest', which had all the characteristics of Lavelle's prose, said:

There is no ecclesiastical law, general or particular, to deprive Fenians of Christian burial. If there be, quote it; show it. Nor shall there be till the Church enslaves, or forbids patriotism, or puts her ban on freedom. The Church and our Irish forefathers suffered together from English tyranny and injustice, and their sufferings endeared them to each other, till the priest was put, in great measure, for the Church herself in the affections of the Irish people.(9)

Lavelle addressed a letter dated 5 November to the secretary of the funeral committee, E.J. Ryan, enclosing a £1 subscription from Canon Ulick Bourke, Father Peter Geraghty and himself and added:

Good God! MacManus denied a momentary resting place in any church in Ireland, though those whose fathers built those churches would shed the last drop of their blood to honour his memory! Oh! why not have brought those sacred remains to the Fane of Jarlath, that there the accents of ten of thousands of voices might mingle with the noble pronouncements of patriotic Cloyne, in honouring the man who died a martyr to his country's love...(10)

On 9 November 1861 it was rumoured that Lavelle was going to play a prominent role at the funeral proceedings.

The funeral procession went through Dublin to the Mechanics Institute on 10 November, where the body lay in state. Up to 150,000 Dubliners lined the streets of the city to pay their respects. Behind the funeral coach walked Lavelle, accompanied by Martin A. O'Brennan, proprietor of the Connaught Patriot. The proceedings were remarkable in that there was no crime and disturbance, since most of those present turned up out of curiosity and to pay their respects to the dead man's past.(11) Most had little direct involvement with the Fenian movement. More recruits, however, joined the organisation in the three months after the funeral than in the previous two years.(12)

While no Dublin cleric attended because of Cullen's directive, eight priests besides Lavelle were present, including Frs D.T. Ashe, P. Courtney and John Keynon. This puzzled many Irish Catholics. If the clergy were prohibited from taking part in the funeral proceedings, to the extent that the chaplain of Glasnevin cemetery refused to say the funeral



prayers, then why did Lavelle and the other priests attend? The divergent attitudes to Fenianism among the bishops must be attributed to their failure to achieve any co-ordinated approach towards the movement which was still a covert organisation. The funeral's implications caught them wholly unawares.

Thomas Nelson Underwood, a Presbyterian Fenian from Strabane, invited Lavelle to perform the graveside ceremonies when he discovered at the last moment that Cullen had prohibited the cemetery chaplain from attending.(13) Lavelle stated later that he was asked to participate because he was known and trusted by both the constitutional and militant nationalists on the committee.(14) According to Tomas O'Fiaich, the funeral committee had not planned on Lavelle's speech, deciding on an American, Col M.D. Smith, to give the oration. At the graveside Lavelle stated that it was a day to be remembered by the people of Ireland:

...the day of Ireland's regeneration is fast approaching. Yesterday, that sarcophagus was the symbol of Erin's grave. To-morrow it will be her resurrection. We will not be oppressed forever. The iron hoof of the intruder, the stranger, the spoliator, and the tyrant, will not for ever tread upon our necks. There is hope for Ireland - yes, strong hope, speedy hope; and I pray you all to return to your homes with this hope, abiding your good time, sure and soon to come, when the ruffian tyrant must cease his oppression, and the patient sufferer will be repayed for years of endurance by centuries of happiness for him and his country.(15)

Afterwards he insisted he was only expressing his feelings and he would do so again whenever called upon.(16) During his speech Lavelle became annoyed as the audience refused to remain quiet, continually applauding his more revolutionary remarks.(17) While Lavelle stressed he had not intended speaking at the funeral he felt privileged to do so. He claimed that he was only giving the deceased a burial in accordance with the ordinances of his Church. Circumstances which he himself had not contemplated, served to capture the limelight for him. He intended attending the funeral in a private capacity, as had the other clerics. Cullen's dictates in refusing his own clergy the right to carry out the most basic rights of a Catholic, brought Lavelle to national attention. In a letter a year later, Lavelle stated that a majority of the Dublin priests would have attended the funeral but for

Cullen's interference and that he was trying to divide the priests and people.(18)

Lavelle's involvement, which was more radical than that of the other clerics present, forced the bishops to adopt a more united approach to Fenianism. Lavelle replied that there was no law that required a Catholic to secure permission to pray. "On the contrary, it teaches the duty of prayer as being essential to man's salvation."(19) This infuriated the bishops: Archbishop Dixon's letter to Cullen after Lavelle's article in support of the funeral appeared in the newspapers, asking, "Will nobody stop Lavelle?"(20)

Lavelle's actions enraged Paul Cullen, who contemplated getting him suspended. The first expression of Cullen's annoyance appeared on 12 November in a letter to Dr Gillooly of Elphin. "Have you seen Father Lavelle's address?" he wrote, "It was posted up in every corner of Dublin to the great scandal of the faithful."(21) Cullen was more concerned with Lavelle's involvement than with any other issue. He had broken the directive against the clergy's participation at the funeral and he had thus directly challenged Cullen's authority. Because of this defiance, Cullen moved against all secret societies and revolutionary movements in Ireland. His views were expressed in a pastoral letter maintaining that the rise of the revolutionary movement threatened religion.(22) The MacManus funeral was the first indication of division between the clergy and militant nationalists. This was important to Lavelle, for both he and Cullen had defined their positions. A period of intense and acrimonious confrontation now ensued.

His high profile at the funeral quickly brought Lavelle support from the Fenians. He was already a national celebrity because of his Partry exploits and he viewed his association with the revolutionary movement as being of potential benefit. The Fenians initiated a fund known as 'Patrick's Pence' which was used to relieve distress in Partry. Lavelle justified his association with them by maintaining that he had received little help from anyone between 1858 and 1862.(23) Many leading American Fenians, like John O'Mahony, were constantly in contact with Lavelle on issues other than funds for the poor.(24) This opened

up new supplies of money and over the next twelve months large sums came from Britain and the United States. This helped Lavelle overcome his debts arising from litigation. To the Fenians abroad, Lavelle was the symbol of Irish resistance to British injustice, whether in his opposition to the British government or in his attacks on landlordism.

Cullen's overreaction to Lavelle's involvement in the MacManus funeral endeared him further to the advanced nationalists. Throughout November and December 1861, Cullen pressed the Vatican to take action. Rome's failure to act effectively after the MacManus incident only created further difficulties.(25) Lavelle had been allowed to act unrestrained and he became the sharpest thorn in Cullen's side during the remainder of his leadership of the Irish Church.

Most bishops concluded that John MacHale was unaware of Lavelle's actions, for if he had been, he could hardly have approved them, but MacHale may have permitted Lavelle's activities because they were an affront to Cullen.(26) Lavelle's greatest mistake was not to have sought MacHale's permission to go to Dublin or to be absent from his parish for fifteen days. He repeatedly acknowledged this point in later years and said MacHale had punished him.(27) It would have been more convenient for Cullen to have reached an understanding with MacHale and to have Lavelle quietly suspended. By involving his fellow bishops and the Vatican, Cullen forced MacHale into a corner and antagonised him. Cullen had repeatedly pursued this course in the 1850s. Tact rather than vigour was required, an attribute greatly lacking in Cullen's encounters with MacHale. Instead of dealing with Lavelle effectively, Cullen only succeeded in turning him into a symbol of resistance for use by MacHale and others in their disputes with the Archbishop of Dublin. It was also a sign of the growing power of Fenianism in the country.(28)

### (b) Conflict and confrontation, 1862-65

The opening months of 1862 showed that Lavelle's rhetoric at the MacManus funeral was not an isolated incident. His opponents were further alarmed over his lecture in Dublin on the rights of Catholics to revolt against unjust governments and his involvement with the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick.

Lavelle delivered his lecture, entitled "The Catholic Doctrine on the Right to Revolt", to a packed gathering at the Rotunda, Dublin, on 5 February 1862, primarily to solicit funds to alleviate distress in Partry. He was now lecturing throughout the country for money and £100 was collected at the Rotunda. The meeting was chaired by the Fenian sympathiser, Thomas Ryan. Lavelle said that the priest and patriot were not incompatible in an Irishman, and while he lived he would respond to his convictions as he saw best. The speech had three main themes: that all governments were of human origin; that the end of all such governments was the welfare of their people; and that the government forfeited its right to govern when it became tyrannical, so that resistance became a right and in certain circumstances a duty. He quoted saints and leading Catholic churchmen, like Cardinal Bellarmine, to argue that the Church supported the concept of the right to revolt.

In the right place, political power, considered in general, and without descending in particular to monarchy, aristocracy or democracy emanates immediately from God alone; for being necessarily annexed to the nature of man, it proceeded from Him, who has made that nature. Besides, that power is by natural law, since it does not depend upon man's consent, since they must have a government whether they wish it or not, under pain of desiring the destruction of the human race, which is against the inclination of nature...When the governing power loses its sight of the end, for which it was established and enthroned, when, instead of protecting the people, in advancing their moral and material happiness, that government becomes the scourge of the people, then he (the lecturer) would say that resistance, if it were likely to end in success, was not merely a right but a duty.(Hear, hear and great cheering).(29)

The attendance was comprised mainly of young Irishmen who espoused militant nationalism. Thus Lavelle was identified as a Fenian sympathiser.

The speech caught the bishops completely unawares. They, and Cullen in particular, had

been embarrassed by Lavelle's participation at the MacManus funeral, but it appeared an isolated transgression, and one best forgotten. Yet, Lavelle's Rotunda lecture demonstrated the gravity of the challenge confronting the bishops. The lecture was in favour of what most of the bishops of the Catholic Church in Ireland were trying to eliminate - radical nationalism among the clergy.

There was little difference between Lavelle's espousal of the Catholic right to revolt and Archbishop Hughes' speech at the MacManus funeral in New York. Both stated that any society that was unfairly governed had the right to take up arms and overthrow tyranny.(30) Some clerics argued that Lavelle was only following the example of those bishops who had attended the MacManus funeral in America.(31) The Irish bishops' difficulty was that this doctrine evolved as the Fenian movement was making rapid progress immediately after the MacManus funeral. Whereas Hughes's statements were confined to the actions of past patriots, Lavelle's calls were designed to bolster the militants of the 1860s. That a prominent cleric was supporting their objectives only buttressed their case.

The Catholic Church supported rebellion when it succeeded. If armed insurrection prevailed, it could maintain it was truly nationalist. When defeat occurred, as in 1848 and 1867, it had the benefit of hindsight to proclaim the foolishness of these ventures and the British authorities felt the bishops had a restraining influence over their flocks.

The bishops were also concerned over Lavelle's involvement with the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick. This had been established at the Rotunda, Dublin, on 17 March 1861. Its leaders were Thomas Neilson Underwood, a barrister from Strabane, Denis Holland, proprietor of the Irishman, Clinton Hoey, a newspaper editor, and Thomas Ryan. Its objectives included the union of all Irishmen to win independence and to celebrate the national feast of St. Patrick.(32) It tried to raise a constitutional movement out of the ashes of the Independent Irish Party of the 1850s, but it was merely a loose

collection of men with little in common except a vague attachment to the principle of nationality. It was closely identified with the Fenians, as many of its members expressed advanced nationalist sentiments and others held strongly anticlerical views. Ultimately it became the political wing of the Fenian movement. Its policies were not confined to the political views of the Fenians, as it was also interested in social matters such as the land question. James Stephens distrusted this type of nationalist, regarding them as fireside militants who only spoke about fighting. Overall its members restricted their activities to speech-making and wining and dining, but the extreme nationalist aura that surrounded their proceedings enabled the Fenians to gain recruits among its members.(33)

Lavelle first became associated with the movement in March 1862 when he attended one of its functions. He subsequently became a vice-president of the Brotherhood. The only other cleric identified with the Brotherhood was Rev Jeremiah Vaughan, P.P. of Doora and Kilryhtis in the diocese of Killaloe.(34) Many of the bishops feared that the laity might interpret Lavelle and Vaughan's involvement as the Church's recognition of the Brotherhood and give it respectability.

Lavelle's association with the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick brought him money. The Patrick's Pence Fund allowed the Brotherhood to involve itself in an issue of fundamental importance to Ireland and win it publicity. Meetings were held throughout Britain soliciting funds for the poor of Partry. Lavelle, Archbishop MacHale and Underwood formed the committee that distributed the money. While the sums collected by individual branches were small, reflecting the depressed state of the British economy, they were genuine gestures of support for the Partry poor and Lavelle's cause. Lavelle was regarded as a symbol of resistance, as noted in the address of the Radcliffe Cross branch of the Brotherhood: "Irishmen, we hope that you will rally round us in your might, and respond to the call of that illustrious and patriotic priest, Father Lavelle, who appeals to your sympathy knowing well that it not, nor never was, your national character to be selfish or ungrateful."(35)

Throughout 1862 the Irishman contained lists of subscribers to Lavelle's fund from the branches of the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick throughout Britain. This kept the Partry affair before the Irish population in Britain and Ireland. Most parishes in the west faced similar levels of distress and the exertions of the Brotherhood allowed Partry a more privileged position, as funds were sent there rather than to other areas that were equally destitute. In 1863, there was an unsuccessful appeal for subscriptions to counteract famine in other parts of the west, while Lavelle and Partry had become household names among the Irish in Britain and America.

Cullen faced a dilemma over societies like the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick. Legal constraints confined his condemnation of the Brotherhood, for it was not an oath-bound secret society. He indicated his sentiments to his clergy, but it was more difficult to express them to the laity, as some were already members. While Lavelle's actions and speeches were radical, the antics of other clerics like Frs Vaughan and John Keynon at the demonstration by the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick on 17 March, 1862 were mild, although Cullen was horrified by them.

Lavelle became more involved with the Brotherhood in Britain than in Ireland. He did not attend its St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Dublin in 1862, although he was advertised as the main speaker. Instead he was in Liverpool and over the next few weeks addressed meetings in Britain organised by the Brotherhood.(36) His participation with the British rather than the Irish movement is understandable - it was the best source of money. The absence of branches in the west of Ireland made it difficult for him play an active local role. He was confined to attending meetings of the central branch in Dublin, which fitted in with his trips to Britain; he did not travel to Dublin specifically for these meetings. Nevertheless his presence at them created much excitement.(37)

Why did Lavelle follow this course, which brought himself into direct conflict with

Cullen, the Irish bishops and constitutional nationalists? While his Partry experiences were important, he was also exasperated by the sad state of constitutional nationalism in the early 1860s. The divisions within the Independent Irish Party and the failure of the National Petition movement in 1861 to resurrect constitutional nationalism contributed to this apathy. There was a popular perception that the existing political organisations did not encompass the broad spectrum of nationalism and would never achieve their objectives.

Lavelle's attacks on the British government and his defence of the Catholic right to rebel coincided with widespread poverty and destitution in the country. Massive emigration occurred on a scale not witnessed since the early 1850s, with 60,000 leaving Ireland annually. The bishops privately criticised this, but Lavelle made his comments public. He wanted to create a more radical approach to the prevailing social conditions, and saw militant nationalism as a means of settling the underlying problems. In its early years Fenianism tended to be all things to all men. Tenant farmers hoped it would settle the land question, urban artisans looked on it as a trade union, nationalists saw it as the means of ending English rule in Ireland. The Fenians accepted that the land question and peasant proprietorship needed reform, but insisted that these could only be achieved once independence had been secured.(38)

Lavelle answered Cullen's pastoral letter condemning the Brotherhood of St. Patrick in a letter written on 29 April, after his return to Ireland when his brother, Francis, had died. This was the first of many conflicts between them over whether the Fenians and the Brotherhood were outlawed secret societies. Lavelle wrote:

Am I not, therefore, as a priest, who is engaged from morning till night administering sacraments, who, myself, approach the most sacred of all sacraments every day, am I not called upon to reply to his fearful imputation cast upon me, among others, from such a quarter as the Archbishop of Dublin? And I now, in the presence of God, who reads my soul solemnly, declare that the assertions of Dr Cullen are not true, in fact, as regards the Brotherhood of St. Patrick; that they are in no sense of the word a secret society; that they have no oaths, secret or otherwise; and that, therefore, they no more come under the censure of the Church than any pious guild in the city of Dublin...Dr Cullen states that the censures of the Church are fulminated against such societies as



that of the Brotherhood of St. Patrick - in other words, against open and public Associations bound by no oath or by no secret bond whatever. I say this is not the law - this is not the theology. To come under the censure of the Church in these matters, not alone must the society be what is called a secret society, but it must be held together by the forbidden bond of a secret oath.(39)

Lavelle promised to write further on the subject, ensuring Cullen and other members of the hierarchy maximum annoyance. The bishops, including some from Connacht, condemned his rhetoric, fearing that Lavelle's actions would seriously undermine their control over their clergy.(40) Cullen's Roman letters highlight this concern: "Catholics would not be so easily deluded but for Mr Lavelle and other priests who say that the Society will achieve freedom for Ireland: it is certain to weaken Catholics and ruin the faith. It is a misfortune for priests to mix in it."(41)

In May 1862 at its annual meeting, the Irish hierarchy, led by Cullen, reacted to Lavelle's letter of 3 May by demanding his resignation as vice-president of the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick.(42) While he reputedly resigned from the Brotherhood during the summer of 1862, at MacHale's prompting, he remained totally committed to its principles. On a number of occasions he defended the Brotherhood in a plain, blunt way, and said of himself: "But though not a Mark Anthony...I say my say as I think it."(43) When the English Catholic Tablet supported Cullen's line on the Brotherhood in September 1862, Lavelle denied that it was a secret or an oath-bound organisation adding: "We don't want separations, sir, except as the last extremity. We only want justice. We want liberty to live. We want the rights that the Almighty intended for our island when He planted the wide and stormy wave between you and her." Lavelle asked why the Tablet sided with Cullen when in the past it had described him as a Judas.(44)

Lavelle also defended the Brotherhood when Archbishop John Hughes of New York described it as a secret organisation. In his letter to Hughes, Lavelle wrote:

...I take the liberty of assuring your Grace, in the most solemn manner, on the word of a priest and of one who loves his country next to God...that the society thus represented to you is no more a 'secret' one, or anything in the remotest way bordering on a secret one, than any of the most legal and loyal under the

sun.(45)

While Lavelle had officially left the Brotherhood, he still wholeheartedly supported it and was as resolute against its opponents as he had been in 1862. His resignation from the Brotherhood must be queried, for in January 1863, Lavelle, Thomas Underwood and Thomas Ryan represented the Brotherhood in discussions with Rev Jeremiah Vaughan and others on nationalist unity.(46)

Lavelle's antics in 1861-2 annoyed Paul Cullen and were the origins of the confrontation which bedevilled the Irish Church for the rest of the decade. After Lavelle's early public exploits, Cullen urged the Roman authorities to force MacHale to recall his diocesan from Dublin.(47) From the outset MacHale protected Lavelle and used him for his own purposes. Cullen complained to MacHale on 9 November 1861 and 27 January 1862 about Lavelle's activities and asked that he be punished. He received no satisfaction.(48) As late as September 1862 MacHale stated explicitly that Lavelle would not be disciplined for defending the Fenians and the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick. He told Cullen that the articles he had received pertaining to Lavelle were incorrect.(49) Lavelle's public comments and letter-writing enraged Cullen more than his participation in the Brotherhood by their seditious and radical content. Other clerics, like Revs Vaughan and Keynon, spoke at Brotherhood demonstrations, but never incurred Cullen's wrath. Their speeches were not polemical, and they never threatened the Church's teachings on secret societies. Some prelates suspected that their clergy privately harboured strong Fenian sentiments, but it was difficult to get evidence to deal with them.(50) When Cullen corresponded with Rome about Lavelle's involvement with the Brotherhood, he never referred to the activities of other priests.(51) However, Lavelle's threat was averted in March 1862 when he began a lecture tour in Scotland.

Cullen was not the only person to come into conflict with Lavelle during 1862. He was also confronted by fellow clerics like Dean R.B. O'Brien, P.P. of Newcastle West and

Dean of the diocese of Limerick. O'Brien was a novelist and founded the Catholic Young Men's Society. Their dispute arose from Lavelle's lecture tour to Britain in February 1862. Two prominent Catholic Young Men's Society members in Liverpool, who were also clerics, helped organise the visit, and one of them presided over the meeting. The involvement of the Catholic Young Men's Society prompted O'Brien to attack the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick.(52) During February and March O'Brien opposed the Brotherhood, maintaining it extoled a creed of blasphemy and murder. He said its members used a secret oath and were thus excommunicated by the Church. O'Brien accused it of being devisive, fomenting divisions and curtailing the aspirations of constitutional nationalists.(53) His most caustic remarks were directed against Lavelle and in a scathing attack, he said:

I do not like, I confess, to come into contact with Mr Lavelle. He is so generally engaged in quarrels or law suits, that the persecuted gentleman must have enough to do. Besides, Mr Lavelle is a clergyman; and I think priests can find a sufficient number of adversaries without engaging in contests with one another.(54)

These were hard-hitting attacks on Lavelle. O'Brien stated that he had never contributed to the Partry appeal and intimated that most of Lavelle's difficulties were self-inflicted.

Lavelle attacked his adversary and defended the objectives of the Brotherhood. On 13 March 1862 he issued a blistering condemnation of O'Brien for his refusal to permit members of the Catholic Young Men's Society to join the Brotherhood. He was also incensed at O'Brien's disrespect for the Holy See. He said:

It is intolerable; but it is still more intolerable to behold the arrogance with which a few men constitute themselves the champions of Rome - and these men are the very worst enemies of Rome. They had put on their seal an act of political apostasy, which smashed to atoms a phalanx of fifty men, whose combined actions in Westminster Hall were worth 50,000 bayonets in Rome.(55)

In a further letter he stated:

...I cannot refrain from remarking that I think it entirely too much of any man or any set of men, to assume to themselves the sole prerogative of being the champions of "Rome". I venture to say I love Rome as much as any of those

who have her name forever on their lips, and that I would on tomorrow make as much a sacrifice for her honour and her independence as the man who charges me, among others, "with planting the standard of Patrick's Pence in the face of those who now, by Peter's Pence, endeavour to support the Holy See".(56)

Lavelle endeavoured to show that O'Brien's allegations were without foundation, being only half-truths and general gossip. Seizing on O'Brien's mistake that John Mitchel and John O'Mahony were members of the Brotherhood, Lavelle declared they never had been connected with the organisation. By answering all of O'Brien's accusations in great detail, *he* demonstrated to his own satisfaction that O'Brien was not making a coherent, logical case against the Brotherhood.(57)

When confronted by fellow clerics, like O'Brien, Lavelle played the extreme nationalist card. He compared the patriotic credentials of his opponents with his own, which won the support of the advanced and moderate nationalist groups. In one of his letters to O'Brien he said:"Young Men of Ireland, which will you have - the sneers and censures of Dr O'Brien or the testimony or praise of Dr MacHale - the ignorance of the Parish Priest of Newcastle West, or the full and intimate knowledge of the great Archbishop of Tuam."(58) He was asking Irish nationalists to choose between one of the most revered Irish patriots, John MacHale, and a priest whose nationalism was suspect. He implied that he represented MacHale's nationalism and whoever denied this insulted the Archbishop of Tuam.

Lavelle also recounted his deeds for the faith against the proselytisers, asking had O'Brien ever suffered like this. He endeavoured to reawaken public sympathy for himself, by reviving the Partry affair and highlighting his struggles for Catholicism. Partry was always there to be used to drum up support and to castigate his opponents.

The Lavelle-O'Brien confrontation must be assessed in the context of the two organisations that they represented. Both movements vied for support from the same source - the Catholic youth of Ireland. As nationalist fervour increased, Dean O'Brien

feared that his Catholic Young Men's Society would lose out. It was no doubt this that moved him to condemn the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick. It seemed from the letters of support which some of its members wrote during the MacManus funeral in November 1861 that the Brotherhood would eventually absorb the Catholic Young Men's Society.(59) O'Brien was trying to prevent any infiltration of his organisation by nationalists. Lavelle's position was to ensure that the Brotherhood won the battle for the youth of Ireland.

On 23 August 1862, Lavelle wrote to the Irishman about the Pope's condemnation of secret societies. He argued that he had to write because so much had been said over the previous few months. Lavelle said that there were four decrees written by the Popes, but only one of them - that of Leo XII in Quo graviora, in March 1825, - was of any concern. The first three dealt with the Freemasons and the Carbonari and did not apply to Ireland. Leo XII's decrees were issued against many categories of secret societies including the following: those who plotted against the Church and Christ and who advocated assassination, those who assailed the Church and her dogmas, those who called and broadcast the most impious and atheistical works, those whose rules and statutes proved their evil character, and those who carried on their sanctions through a secret oath.

It is ...simply untrue to assert that all secret societies are condemned by the Church. It is only, in the words of the Pope (Leo) himself, "all secret societies which propose to themselves against Church and State those things which we have mentioned above;" a most vital addendum; as must be seen, and which I trust has now been explained sufficiently.(60)

Two weeks later Lavelle wrote that he never wished to become involved in the morality of the secret societies which had been taken up in some quarters: "First - In all organisations there must be a certain amount of secrecy...Secrecy is the very life of diplomatic action."(61)

The papacy had condemned the Freemasons, the Carbonari, and the Universalitarians by name, and then, generally, all other secret societies "that, first proposed to themselves the destruction of the Church and lawful state", and secondly bound themselves by oath to this

horrid aim and the murder of an informing member. He said that Leo XII reserved to himself the sanction of excommunication for involvement in secret societies.

Cullen equated the Fenians with the movements of Mazzini and Garibaldi in Italy; Lavelle explicitly stated his contempt for these Italian freedom fighters. He did not tolerate Garibaldi because he solicited English support, and added: "Then, donkey-like he prates blasphemy in such fashion as to repel any man with the faintest sentiment of religion in his soul."(62)

MacHale persuaded Lavelle to write to Cullen in September 1862 and said that he, Lavelle, had not broken any rules, because the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick was not a secret society and that his only crime had been his failure to inform his superior of his involvement in a political association and in not securing his permission to do so. He added:

I beg to inform your Grace in the most distinct terms that nothing was farther from my thoughts than the utterance of a single word offensive to your Grace, or that the idea or inference in any remotest matter with the discipline of Your Grace's Diocese.(63)

While Lavelle apologised to Cullen for any personal insult caused in his letters, he continued to defend the Brotherhood. Cullen was unhappy with this apology for it allowed Lavelle the right to undermine clerical unanimity on political issues.

It is surprising that the government made no attempt to silence Lavelle. From the outset the spread of Fenianism alarmed the authorities. They compiled a list of suspected sympathisers and it included people vehemently opposed to Fenianism such as A.M. Sullivan and John Martin. Lavelle's name was added after his activities at the MacManus funeral and his speech on the Catholic right to rebel. When Lavelle was advertised to address a public meeting in Dublin on 17 March 1862, detectives were detailed to report on the proceedings and the authorities contemplated prosecuting him and others for their expected seditious speeches.(64) Lavelle did not attend the meeting as he was in England.

He nevertheless felt that his arrest was imminent and hoped for this. He said:

A little revival of the old priest-hunting would do us good in Ireland. The outrage offered to me is not personal - it is intended for the Irish priest who dares to love or show his love, for his people and his country. It is the work of a chivalrous Chief Secretary for Ireland - the same who deprived me of the power to carry arms...(65)

Lavelle was prepared to iron out his personal disputes in public rather than in private, as he did with Plunket, Cullen and John O'Connor Power. Long after he had disappeared from public attention he had the reputation of being a radical and a maverick. While he gained the advantage from making public his disputes with Plunket, the same cannot be said of his encounters with members of the Catholic Church, who were becoming more intolerant of Lavelle's sort of nonconformity.

He also differed with moderate nationalism during 1862, and most of the newspapers that espoused that viewpoint refused to publish his letters on Cullen and the national question. These included the Freeman's Journal, the Nation and the Catholic Telegraph, which had supported Lavelle during the Partry affair. While they published his letters on social issues, such as the evictions of the Quinn and Dermond families in 1862 and on agrarian legislation, they refused to entertain correspondence containing Lavelle's radical nationalist views. As Cullen vehemently opposed Lavelle, there was the danger that those who published his letters might be seen to be espousing his opinions. The moderate nationalist newspapers never published his letters defending the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick, or his dispute with Dean O'Brien. While the Nation published three of O'Brien's letters attacking Lavelle and the Brotherhood, it did not permit him the right of reply. This infuriated Lavelle and he wrote: "...this is a matter not of persons, but of priests and principles; each defending a certain course, and while you give one full scope, you pull up the other at the very start."(66)

Lavelle's disillusionment with the prevailing constitutional establishment and its leading

personalities was reflected in his refusal of an invitation to become involved with the O'Connell Monument Committee in 1862. This committee consisted of nationalists who espoused Cullen's political views, like the Rt Hon Denis Moylan. Lavelle said to the Committee:

Without meaning the slightest discourtesy to you or to your committee, I cannot refrain from expressing my deep distrust of the whole transaction. And, my lord and gentlemen, I must confess I shall not accept even a monument to O'Connell erected by Whigs and traitors to his political and social creed...If, then, you mean to honour our leader, present him to the world as he presented himself, not in any sectional character, but in his grand integrity - not as the Emancipator of yourselves, but as the champion of Irish rights and of the Irish people.(67)

This was not a criticism of O'Connell's political ideology. Throughout the 1860s and early 1870s Lavelle repeatedly quoted O'Connell in support of his aspirations for an independent Irish parliament. Lavelle objected that the members of the monument committee usurped O'Connell's name for their own designs, while distancing themselves from his political philosophy.

Lavelle continued the conflict with Cullen during the opening months of 1863, defending the Fenians in his articles. In a speech at the banquet to mark the blessing of Ballinrobe chapel in May 1863 he said he would undertake no greater battle than that of the people whose glorious day of regeneration and freedom he hoped would soon appear. Lavelle alleged that no pen could adequately describe their suffering and wrongs: "Their condition was worse than that of the negro. Let the priests and the people be together."(68)

Cullen was unsure how to handle the affair, although his fellow bishops' expression of support heartened him. Lavelle appeared to be permanently in Dublin or on route to Britain and MacHale never checked his movements.(69) The Roman correspondence for June-July 1863 indicate that the Vatican had then no plans to contain Lavelle.(70)

MacHale also refused to punish him for being absent from his pastoral duties. Lavelle made at least three journeys to Britain between 1862 and 1864, being absent for up to four



months on each occasion. Officially he was collecting funds for his parishioners and he required a holiday from the physical exhaustion of his pastoral duties. However, many of his speeches in Britain criticised Cullen and there is no evidence that MacHale sanctioned any of these excursions.

While one historian, Liam Bane, argues convincingly that MacHale's support for Lavelle caused Cullen problems, he fails to understand the Archbishop of Tuam's own actions in the 1860s. Although he was a constitutional nationalist at heart, he sympathised with the broad aims of Fenianism. In 1864, he forwarded for auction three autographed photographs of himself to the Fenian fair in Chicago. He also supported the campaigns to free the Manchester Fenians in 1867 and the Amnesty movement in 1869.(71)

Lavelle and MacHale had similar personalities. Both were ardent nationalists, zealous in their convictions and prepared to act independently. Lavelle greatly respected his superior, describing him as "the best living Irishman" and adding:

...he still maintains, as O'Connell did, that no patchwork legislature will ever, can ever remedy the deed - set wrongs of our country, and that without at least the legislative management of her own affairs, she must ever remain steeped in wretchedness and consequent discontent, as she is, ever even descending lower and lower in the abyss of misery and degradation.(72)

Other bishops in Connacht, like Laurence Gillooly of Elphin and John MacEvilly of Galway, disapproved of Lavelle's activities because of their personal disputes with MacHale.(73) MacEvilly provided Cullen with valuable information about Lavelle's activities and became Cullen's eyes and ears in Connacht. He was an important contributor to the attempts to neutralise Lavelle and reported his every action after the lecture on the Catholic Doctrine on the right of Revolution.(74) He hated Lavelle, maintaining that he was MacHale's mouthpiece, who used him to reveal his own true sentiments and attitudes. MacEvilly's evaluation of Lavelle is suspect, as he tended to exaggerate and to make situations blacker than they actually were.(75) Nevertheless, he supplied Cullen with

Lavelle's letters to the Connaught Patriot and the Mayo Telegraph, radical newspapers that criticised Cullen. Cullen then forwarded these articles to Rome to support his case. MacEvilly's hatred of Lavelle is evident from one of his letters to Cullen:

...Fr Lavelle is holding up to public scorn the acts of the bishops. The sooner some vigorous and decisive steps are taken to stop such things the better. The amount of mischief doing and the amount of contempt being brought on the authority of the H[oly] See and the Bishops in some quarters is very great.(76)

MacEvilly's correspondence contains an important account of Lavelle's movements in Tuam and within Connacht. He forwarded information to Cullen on the state of Lavelle's parish and on the Tuam clergy's attitude towards him. As he was a native of Louisburgh and his brother, Jeremiah, was a curate in Knock and Aughamore, MacEvilly was easily able to collect first-hand information about Lavelle. Clerics with grievances against MacHale, like Father Davis of Tuam, gave MacEvilly his facts, indicating that Lavelle did not enjoy the total backing among his peers in Tuam as has been generally assumed.(77)

Yet MacEvilly felt that other clerics in Tuam did protect Lavelle and in some instances supported his political views. The Irish scholar, Canon Ulick Bourke, was suspected because he had subscribed to some radical causes and had dined with Lavelle before he wrote his letter in defence of MacManus.(78)

Some bishops were convinced that Lavelle held some sway over MacHale which enabled him to escape punishment. It was suggested that Lavelle had letters belonging to MacHale and would publish them if his superior suspended him.(79) MacHale's opponents failed to comprehend the fundamental reasons why he protected Lavelle. They lacked true insight into MacHale's psychology, just as they failed to understand Lavelle.





PAUL CULLEN

Two of Lavelle's letters during July-August 1863 especially incensed Cullen. The first, in the Northern Whig, in July, declared that Cullen held no authority over him. He stated that he was never disobedient to those in authority, namely John MacHale and the Pope, and apologised if he had overstepped the limits of moderation in his conflicts with his opponents, maintaining that people like Cullen provoked him.(80)

The second letter, addressed to Thomas Mooney of the Irish Political Club in San Francisco, was scathing about Cullen and denounced him for terrorising other members of the Irish episcopate.

There is an incubus over him, my friend. The prophecy of Columbkillem seems to be coming out true to the letter - "A red-haired man shall be Bishop of Leinster, and he shall be the cause of great woe to the Gael". I cannot, of course, vouch for the authenticity of the prediction: but I have seen it in the rare little book, and copied it down. The majority of our holy and respected Irish prelates seem to be led blindly by this one man. They, of course, lead their priests; thus is the youth of Ireland fettered and log-chained; unless it rise up in apparent rebellion, against an authority which has ever <sup>been</sup> revered.(81)

Lavelle was more aware than many of his peers of what Cullen's policy of consolidation and unity was doing to the Irish Church. He realised that if the Irish Church was controlled from the top the bishops and clergy would regulate the laity the way Cullen wanted. Lavelle's letter was also targeted to a specific audience, the radical Irish in North America. His correspondence to them was more inflammatory in content, as they made valuable contributions to alleviate his acute financial distress.

When the bishops finally proceeded against Lavelle, it proved to be too little too late. On 4 August 1863, all of them except MacHale and John Derry, condemned the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick. They agreed that Lavelle's letter to the Irish in San Francisco was scandalous and demanded a public retraction.(82) This merely repeated their resolutions of May 1862 and illustrates the difficulties in getting concrete action against Lavelle. While MacHale was criticised for protecting his diocesan, both he and Lavelle seemed unconcerned by the censure. Lavelle retaliated by writing another letter on 8

August, reiterating his defence of the Brotherhood.

The bishops' helplessness in dealing with Lavelle can be noted in their correspondence to Rome in August, which looked to the Vatican to contain him.(83) Indeed Lavelle's activities were aided by the Vatican's clumsy approach. Despite Cullen's persistent appeals the Vatican procrastinated. Instead it delegated MacHale to carry out their instructions. On 24 September 1863 MacHale was told to suspend Lavelle from his duties, to get him publicly to retract the wicked things he had written, and to confine him to a monastery for a period.(84) The Vatican's failure to deal directly and positively must be attributed to the fact that there were people in Rome in the 1860s who, for private motives, were happy with the Fenian threat in Ireland since they were interested in the trouble it caused Britain. In the past English support for Italian nationalism had been a thorn in the Vatican's side.(85) While Cullen was constantly assured of the Pope's backing, the Fenians were never named as an outlawed organisation. Such a move would have crushed Lavelle. This gave Lavelle and MacHale the means to attack Cullen. Obviously the Pope did not comprehend the gravity of Lavelle's threat, and felt his actions in September 1863 would adequately deal with the problem.

There are a number of interesting points in the Vatican's response which was made through Cardinal Alessandro Barnabò, Prefect of Propaganda. Barnabò was unaware of the underlying factor central to the problem - the Cullen-MacHale conflict. In getting MacHale to carry out his orders, Barnabò failed to take cognisance of the Irish bishops' previous attempts to control Lavelle. His opponents perceived this only too well. Both Cullen and MacEivilly felt that MacHale's actions would only have a cosmetic effect. In this they were proved correct.(86)

The only point of the Vatican's directive that Lavelle adhered to was a public retraction in the newspapers, written on 16 October 1863, which appeared in the nationalist newspapers by the end of that month. He expressed regret for attending the MacManus funeral and for

his involvement with the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick without MacHale's permission, but he played down his participation at the MacManus funeral and with the Brotherhood. While apologising for having written letters which were too forceful he stated:

But seeing the wolf in the fold was I to be "a dumb dog" and not bark away the devouring monster? Judging so, perhaps, I went too far...Therefore, while I do sincerely regret any word or act or sentiment of mine that may have given offence, or disedification, I pray my political and religious opponents not to judge me harshly, but as they would themselves be judged, were they placed in my difficult station.

He added that he would submit all his writings and speeches for inspection in Rome.(87)

While the letter was an act of contrition and an attempt to appease his opponents, Lavelle did not apologise to Cullen, nor did MacHale suspend him, nor did he enter a monastery.

Some felt that the Papal directive would end the Lavelle affair, but it must be viewed in the overall context of his activities. Ten days before his 'retraction' Lavelle made another vicious attack on Cullen through the Tablet. He insisted that Cullen was 'a political Judas', responsible for the death of Frederick Lucas, one of the leading Independent Irish Party personalities of the 1850s, and that he had forced Charles Gavan Duffy into exile.

...it was those who "sided actively" against Lucas and Duffy that broke their heart, or made them "fly the country". It is notorious that Dr Cullen was the "bishop" who most "actively sided against" both...Surely, if I break a man's heart I am guilty of his murder, and if I make a man quit his country, I am the cause of his exile.(88)

Lavelle maintained that what he said was correct:

....I said a true thing in a wrong way because I did not say it with due respect...I must not ignore the want of respect, nay, the positive disrespect with which I have been treated by the champions of the opposite cause. These gentlemen seemed to imagine that a mere priest might be handled as a toy, but, at the same time, that even a priest must not breath against those placed higher than himself in the hierarchical scale.(89)

Lavelle's public retraction on 16 October was only to appease the Vatican and MacHale, for he remained hostile to and critical of Cullen. He had outmanoeuvred Cullen. The

Vatican was convinced that MacHale had carried out its instructions, but his opponents realised that he was still challenging Cullen's authority.(90) Cullen also felt that Lavelle had ridiculed him further and wrote:

F[ather] Lavelle has just turned it into ridicule - he has just written enough to show that he wished to humbug me. His letter since published in the Irishman...shows that he has changed or withdrawn nothing. However after stating that the Archb[ishop] is a new Judas etc. he adds that with gt. humility he submitted his important writings to the Holy See.(91)

By the end of 1863 Lavelle was in command of the situation. Cullen had to be constantly reassured by his fellow bishops, especially MacEvilly.(92) Any unsigned letters that appeared in the Connaught Patriot or any other radical newspapers, and which attacked Cullen, were automatically attributed to Lavelle. One letter in the Galway American on 12 December 1863, signed 'An Irish Priest', attacked the Catholic University, which was of great importance to Cullen, for being sectarian and argued that collections could be redirected to educate the poor.(93) The finger of suspicion pointed at Lavelle. He was one of a handful of clerics associated with this newspaper, which was notorious for its Fenian sympathies. The letter's theme, the education of the poor, was of interest to Lavelle, who felt that education, especially at the Catholic University, was monopolised by a few and had little relevance for the majority of Irish Catholics. He maintained that the money would be better diverted to poor schools throughout the country where it was needed most.(94)

It was easier to blame Lavelle for all such unsigned letters than to establish the actual authors. The only letter definitely attributed to Lavelle was published in the Irish People on 6 August 1864 under the name "An Irish Clergyman" and called on Cullen to produce the principle of theology in which a papal decree proscribed the Fenians. It listed four decrees against secret societies, but insisted none of these affected the Fenians.(95)

Lavelle's other major explosive row in 1863 was with the Catholic Telegraph over Fenianism. The Catholic Telegraph, founded by the Independent Irish Party MP, John

Sadleir, reflected Paul Cullen's political views. When Lavelle and Cullen collided over Fenianism in 1862, the Catholic Telegraph supported the Archbishop and launched a vicious attack on Lavelle on 23 May 1863.

The origins of the dispute was Lavelle's criticism of the Catholic Telegraph for refusing to report on endemic poverty and starvation. Complaining that the paper was too sympathetic to the government, he withdrew his subscription.(96) The letter was not published, but the paper began a series of attacks on Lavelle. This produced an antagonism between Lavelle and the paper equal in intensity to that between him and Cullen. Its editorial on 23 May 1863 said:

We have received an offensive and vindictive letter from the Rev Mr Lavelle, which we decline to publish. Our columns shall always be open to fair and proper controversy, but not to mean vituperation and insult. As it is obviously impossible for us to answer the Rev. Mr Lavelle in his own style, we have no choice but to exclude his communications.(97)

The Catholic Telegraph published some of Lavelle's correspondence, but this was reprinted from other journals and selected to show him up unfavourably. It reprinted his letter to the Dumbarton branch of the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick from the Glasgow Free Press, but the extract dealt with Lavelle's defence of the Brotherhood, while omitting his criticism of Cullen.(98) The Catholic Telegraph was implying that Lavelle was the first Irish cleric ever to challenge episcopal authority.

The Telegraph sought material from other newspapers that would embarrass Lavelle, the most damaging being Lavelle's association with Thomas Mooney, the San Francisco Fenian and newspaper editor. Mooney had once offered \$500 for the assassination of Major Brabazon, a Mayo landowner, who had unmercifully evicted tenants from his estate. Lavelle's correspondence with Mooney in the spring of 1863 damned him to the Telegraph, which ignored that the letter merely acknowledged £300 which Mooney and his associates had forwarded to Lavelle for the relief of distress. Lavelle's correspondence



displayed a certain naïveté, for the letter played up his patriotism to an Irish-American audience, in the hope that more money would be forthcoming. His wrote:

Our nation sleeps only. She is <sup>not</sup> dead. Her every son, in every clime under heaven, should daily sing and teach her youngest child to sing...As long as England can refuse, she never will grant the charter of the people's rights; and as long as we go in deputations and fling ourselves sackcloth and ashes at her feet, whining and craving a little bit of paper for a little bit of a school in Dublin...England is only right in treating us with contempt and cruelty.(99)

This was ammunition for the Catholic Telegraph against Lavelle.

The Catholic Telegraph also opened its editorial columns to correspondents who wished to attack Lavelle. One, "P.P.", said that Lavelle's exploits were serious, and it was time the Roman authorities stopped the scandal which Lavelle's speeches and epistles were spreading amongst the people.(100) The Telegraph's attacks infuriated Lavelle and in a letter to the paper, which it never published, he described it "as a semi-official organ of the alien tyrant. How an organ can be at once Catholic and 'Castle', I am puzzled to conceive."(101) Lavelle said that he had subscribed to the Catholic Telegraph when Michael Dwyer became proprietor because he believed it would pursue a nationalist course. He had become disillusioned, however, at the amount of time and space it devoted to the royal marriage. Its refusal to allow him to reply to allegations, while continuing its attacks, infuriated him.

The characteristics here which made Lavelle such a feared adversary include a caustic disposition and sharp retort, and a zeal in resurrecting incidents about opponents from years before. When the paper denounced Lavelle for criticising the Archbishop of Dublin, he recounted that Dwyer had read a resolution denouncing Cullen in January 1856 at a Tenant League meeting in Dublin.(102) This total recall gave Lavelle an edge over many of his opponents.

Dwyer was incensed at Lavelle's attacks and wrote to John MacHale on 12 June 1863 to have his diocesan's activities curtailed. He said he would not trade insults with Lavelle,

and while MacHale may have forgotten that Lavelle wore the cloth he [Dwyer] had not. Dwyer added, "He is shielded by the sacred robe of the priesthood." Lavelle's letter to Mooney and the San Francisco Irish upset him most because of its strong language and rabble-rousing tone. He was also infuriated by Lavelle's radical style and seditious speeches.(103) Dwyer was mistaken if he thought he would get satisfaction from MacHale. As Cullen and others had discovered, MacHale would not discipline his priest. The dispute between Lavelle and the Catholic Telegraph petered out by the end of 1863.

Lavelle reached the conclusion that large sections of the nationalist and Catholic press had misrepresented his political views after his lecture on the Catholic right to revolt. His suspicions were confirmed by the way that they allowed Dean O'Brien a free hand to attack him, yet refused him the right to reply. Nevertheless, Lavelle argued that churchmen from St. Thomas Aquinas down to Robert Bellarmine and Juan de Lugo had laid down the principles of the right to revolt:

In what other country is the deliberate and systematic effort made to extirpate the image of God from the soil, and replace it with the beasts of the field for the benefit of the mistress nation? Where else are the millions living in fear, and trembling at the beck of a few territorial despots...Where else has the foreigner destroyed the commerce and manufactures of his subject province? Where else are taxes collected to be carried away and expended in the dominant nation?(104)

Was he censured, he asked, because he was a priest fighting for the Irish people? He would continue to assail those newspapers who attacked criticism of resistance to English authority in Ireland.

While Lavelle's dispute with the Catholic Telegraph was extreme, it was less than his exchange with the Tuam Herald, which held moderate views and never reproached him in the manner of the Freeman's Journal and the Catholic Telegraph. But Lavelle was angered when the paper published his letter of October 1863, apologising to Cullen for his past deeds. Lavelle complained on 16 November about the publication as an unfriendly act, because in the past the Tuam Herald had not printed his letters.(105) It is difficult to

understand his attitude in this, but one can only surmise that he felt papers that did not openly support him were against him.

Lavelle also maintained that the Freeman's Journal refusal to publish his letters indicated its lack of patriotism. The differences between Lavelle and Sir John Gray, proprietor of the newspaper, began in 1860 when the Journal refused to carry Lavelle's letters on the situation in Partry. This was the theme of his attack in November 1863:

Though dubbed a knight, you rank as a man so low in my estimation, so thoroughly venal, so disgracefully inconsistent and treacherously false - in one word, so perfect a journalistic and political "Tartuffe", that the dominant feeling in my mind regarding you is one of unutterable contempt...To-day you are the warmest advocate of that garrison and its worst abominations.(106)

He also criticised Gray for being over-friendly with the Irish Chief Secretary, Sir Robert Peel.

It was unfortunate that the more credit-worthy newspapers refused to carry Lavelle's letters. While some of his writings were radical, others, like those on the land question and landlord-tenant relations, had direct public relevance. Agrarian issues, however, were generally neglected in the 1860s because of the Fenian preoccupation with the national question. Lavelle lost many valuable friends among the constitutional nationalists because he advocated revolutionary means to secure Irish freedom.

Lavelle was pragmatic about the national question. By the spring of 1863 he was convinced that Ireland needed an organisation with a broader base than the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick. He realised the limitations of the Brotherhood as it was criticised by friend and foe. Lavelle therefore backed John Martin's endeavours to establish a new movement which would encompass all Irishmen. He wrote to Martin on 5 September about his enthusiasm for the proposed movement:

Let all, then, who really love their country, join with you heart and soul in your patriotic movement. Above all, in Heaven's name, and as a first essential to union, let that blighting curse of sectarianism be banished out of doors. Let

Catholics and Protestants meet on the common platform of their wretched country, which stretches out her wasted hands imploring their joint and unanimous efforts for their deliverance.(107)

Martin wanted his organisation to have the general aim of self-government for Ireland, resembling Isaac Butt's Home Rule movement of the 1870s, involving Irishmen of every class and creed. Despite the lukewarm reception to the idea Martin established a provisional committee for the National League in January 1864, which included himself and The O'Donoghue, MP.(108) Martin, like Lavelle, was then in a political limbo; the Fenians felt he was not radical enough on the national question, while the state authorities dubbed him a revolutionary.(109) By the 1860s Irish politics had degenerated into a polarised condition in which moderate nationalists like Martin were unable to command popular support. The two extremes of Irish nationalism despised each other and under these conditions the moderates inevitably lost out. Constitutional nationalists like George Henry Moore only maintained their prominence by flirting with Fenianism. Only with the demise of Fenianism in the late 1860s did moderate nationalism reemerge.

Lavelle supported the National League at the outset, telling the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick, "...my advice is join, and all, the new organisation; merge yourselves in that, wheresoever you are. By acting thus, you will prove yourselves truly nationalist. By acting otherwise you will be only playing the card of the enemy and perpetuating discord."(110) He called Martin an "unbending, loyal, devoted Irish patriot..." His failure to join either the National League or the Fenians indicated his pragmatic approach towards the national question. He wished to keep his options open, but showed that constitutional nationalism had an important role to play in securing Irish independence. Lavelle saw major faults in the National League. Martin directed his appeals to the middle class - the shopkeepers and large farmers. But Lavelle felt this group had little enthusiasm for Repeal. He also realised that the single-issue approach of Repeal was a mistake. Tenant-right legislation and other grievances needed to be incorporated into the lay nationalist movement to ensure success.(111) From the outset the National League was doomed to

failure because it failed to attract the young and articulate. Instead this sector turned to the Fenian movement and the National League continued with the support of the groups that had espoused Repeal but whose methods the new generation had now rejected.(112)

The only other constitutional movement open to Lavelle was the National Association, founded by Paul Cullen in 1864 to counteract the drift towards Fenianism.(113) This organisation gave opponents of Fenianism an outlet to express their constitutional sentiments at a time when there was no alternative to militant nationalism. It failed because it did not make the land question a priority, especially after the severe distress of 1860-3. The land question might have united all strands of nationalist opinion, but it was made subservient to the issues of education and church establishment. This is surprising as the clergy were to the forefront of local relief operations during the years of distress.(114)

Lavelle was even more scathing of the National Association than of the National League. He claimed it was national in name only, being merely a front for the Whigs. He said of its leadership, "In very truth, it was originally hatched as a pure Whig egg, intended as an instrument of political support to the Whigs, and expecting in return nothing more than a 'charter' for the so-called Catholic University."(115)

He belittled its unsuccessful policy of petitioning parliament on land, church and education issues. He implied that such parliamentary agitation would initiate little change and that these grievances would be redressed by an Irish parliament or through military activities. In this he was proved correct, for it was Fenianism that resolved Church Disestablishment and the land question. Catholic Emancipation was the only notable Irish demand settled before the Great Famine and it was won not by petitions, but by extra-parliamentary agitation. Lavelle remained convinced that a solution to Irish problems and independence would only be achieved through military action. The death of John B. Dillon, a prominent member of the National Association, in September 1866 prompted Lavelle to say:

The people have definitely turned their back to "praying and petitioning" a proud foreign, hostile authority. They have been at it too long. O'Connell spent his life at it and left it where it began. Grattan and Flood, Swift and Molyneux, Keogh and Moore and all their hosts, were praying and petitioning until they were hoarse, and contempt and derision was their reward. The Volunteers petitioned in another way, and their prayer was heard.(116)

Lavelle opposed the National Association because of its membership rather than its policies. He personally disliked Canon James Redmond of Arklow, as well as Cullen and Sir John Gray, declaring that if the tenants pursued Gray's position on the land question they would be worse off.

The Vatican moved against Lavelle after it had received from Cullen letters which Lavelle had written to the newspapers during October and November. In December 1863 the Secretary of Propaganda ordered MacHale to suspend Lavelle.(117) This directive placed Lavelle and MacHale in a dilemma, for they could not circumvent the Pope's instructions as they had the previous August. Lavelle therefore set out for Rome before Christmas to argue his case in person with the Vatican authorities.(118) The journey was made at MacHale's instigation. MacHale gave Lavelle letters of introduction to Dom Bernard Smith, a former vice-rector of the Irish College in Rome, and Mgr George Talbot, private chamberlain to the Pope, in Rome. Lavelle stayed at the Hotel Minerve, MacHale's normal residence when in Rome.

Lavelle was unpunctual, as he had been on his appointment to the Irish College in Paris in October 1854; he did not appear at the Propaganda office until 13 January, a point greatly frowned upon by the authorities.(119) During his six weeks in Rome he criticised Cullen and the enslaved condition of the Irish priests.(120) When he met Cardinal Barnabò, the Prefect of Propaganda, and Mgr Annibale Capalti, the Secretary, they reproached him for his past conduct. Lavelle acknowledged his errors and promised to write a full public retraction. This was forwarded to the Pope on 25 January. He confessed that his public writings could be interpreted as causing scandal, especially his involvement at the

MacManus funeral and with the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick. Lavelle had to be persuaded to make the retraction, and it was written in French. He left it in the room he occupied during the latter part of his stay at the Convent of the Passionists. It was found by the superior on 6 February, two days after Lavelle's departure. The document was forwarded to Cardinal Barnabò at Propaganda who inadvertently mislaid it until Lavelle's public retraction appeared in the Irish newspapers in early March.(121) Lavelle admitted writing offensive remarks about some bishops. In begging the Pope's pardon, he promised to avoid writing on political affairs to the newspapers in future, and to cease his association with the Brotherhood. His suspension was then lifted.(122) The Roman authorities felt that Lavelle had completed his penance, and that he would not revert to his former ways. Cullen received a copy of the retraction, in case Lavelle modified his version for the newspapers. Although unhappy about the recantation, Cullen remain silent.

The bishops had achieved one objective. The Vatican had publicly reprimanded Lavelle. The bishops wanted the matter made public as otherwise it would, "only encourage every outrageous rebel to act as he pleases with the hope of being easily pardoned."(123) Unity was in the course of being installed from the top echelons of the Irish Church down to the laity. It was important that conformity should be maintained and that those who stepped out of line should be publicly renounced.

Lavelle felt he had travelled to Rome to vindicate his position, not to answer charges laid by Cullen. Soon after his return to Ireland he said:

...I felt called upon to proceed at Christmas last to vindicate my character from foul and treacherous accusations preferred against me, for my public conduct by men in Ireland who are so enamoured of English misrule against us that they would gladly witness the full operation of a "seven years famine" (which, of course, would never touch either them or theirs), in preference to Ireland's liberation by those means which have ever made nations free.(124)

Lavelle appeared in Tuam on 12 February and was not overawed by his Roman experiences. He returned triumphantly to Partry amidst general rejoicing and the advanced

nationalists were ecstatic. The Connaught Patriot insisted that Lavelle had outmanoeuvred Cullen in Rome, thus greatly confusing the bishops.(125) Lavelle showed his casual approach to the affair by not issuing his public retraction immediately, delaying its publication to confuse the bishops. This was successful, because as time passed Cullen became more anxious and the feeling prevailed that Lavelle was by-passing the Pope's instructions.(126)

Lavelle published his retraction in the Connaught Patriot on 5 March, three weeks after his return home. It was subsequently reprinted by most nationalist newspapers. A letter addressed to the people of Ireland accompanied the recantation. He said that he had received total kindness and consideration in Rome. Even Cardinal Barnabò and Mgr Capalti showed him the utmost courtesy. Lavelle then answered the eight charges against him, which ranged from being the cause of the quarrels in the Irish College in Paris, and having written offensively against Cullen, to being a member of the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick. He denied that he had ever left his parish to propagate a political party, he had only been absent, with his archbishop's permission, to collect funds for the temporal and spiritual needs of his parishioners. Lavelle denied that MacManus was a heretic or that he had preached at his funeral. Confessing that he had attended the funeral without MacHale's permission, he maintained that eight other clerics had also been present and had never been admonished. While he had been a member of the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick, he had resigned in 1862 when his superior criticised him for not securing his sanction. Lavelle still argued that the Brotherhood was not a secret, oath-bound society and that everybody knew its aims. He acknowledged the accusation that on one occasion he had threatened to rise up against the landlords, but had frequently apologised for it since. England did not deserve the allegiance of Ireland, but Lavelle discounted an armed resistance because it would fail and added, "I am no revolutionist; I am nothing of a Mazzini; I anathematise the Carbonari - but I bless the sword and the scythe of the Poles, and I long for the freedom of my country."



Most of Lavelle's letter was devoted to Cullen's charges. He accused him of being the cause of the "complete ruin that has for the last few years over taken my unhappy country, and is now at its climax". Outlining the history of the Tenant Right movement of the 1850s, he insisted that Cullen was responsible for its demise when he withdrew clerical participation in 1854. He said:

But let me frankly speak out; the fact is, Dr Cullen wants to rule the Church of Ireland. There must be no voice, no policy there but his, and this in the face of bishops who have borne the weight of the day and the heat, who have been fighting Ireland's unequal battle during forty years of pastoral stewardship, with fidelity, dignity, genius, patriotism, honour, and perseverance ...Such are the men whom Dr Cullen would now supplant and displace, and that by a policy which finds favour only with the selfish and corrupt few...since Dr Cullen took to himself the helm of Irish politics and the Irish Church, both the Church and the nation has been drifting to an unseen abyss.

Asking for the Pope's forgiveness, he said that it was his misfortune that he had offended Cullen.(127)

Overall the letter was full of self pity about his mission in Partry. He played down his role on the first seven charges, but on the important issue of Cullen, Lavelle refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing and asked the Pope for some recognition for his toils and services. This annoyed Cullen and ensured that the hostility between them continued.

Lavelle had published his letters in the Connaught Patriot throughout 1863 and 1864 and he was now demonstrating to his supporters that he was being forced into the retraction. The newspaper incensed Cullen and most other Irish bishops by reflecting Lavelle's radical political views and endorsing his attitudes on most issues. While Lavelle had promised not to write letters on political matters to the radical newspapers, his first act was to forward his recantation to one of these papers. It showed defiance of Papal authority and implied that he would have to be more cautious in expressing his political views in future. The letter was addressed to the people of Ireland, suggesting that he was seeking the people's judgement rather than through the authorities in Rome. It also ran counter to Cullen's pastoral against Fenianism and the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick.(128)

There were slight differences between the retraction published in the newspapers and that forwarded to the Pope, the most glaring being the attack on Cullen. The other change concerned the date, which merely said January 1864.

The reaction of Cullen and the bishops was one of total disbelief. Those bishops who differed from Cullen, like David Moriarty of Kerry, regarded Lavelle's manifesto as a scandalous public abuse, and as a continuation of his attacks. They did not believe that Rome could permit such an address. Cullen believed that "It is a most wicked document, in which he renews all his former outrages and endeavours to defend himself." He felt that Lavelle had prepared the letter after returning from Rome, and conceded that it was a most skilful work.(129) All acknowledged that Lavelle had circumvented the Pope's instruction and that if he were to be left unpunished, no other authority would contain him.

The letter, therefore, reopened the debate on who controlled the Irish Church. Understandably, those who opposed Cullen supported Lavelle. The Fenian newspaper, the Irish People, declared that Cullen was not the Catholic Church:

War may be sometimes a great evil, but it is sometimes a great good. And war is absolutely necessary to raise Ireland from her fallen state. There are material and well enough amongst us for this, if properly worked. But a morbid horror of blood seems to have fastened upon some of our priests. They seem to think it better to have the country drained of its inhabitants than that lives should be lost in a just war.(130)

The advanced nationalists regarded Lavelle's letter and his attack on Cullen as the single most important development in Ireland in the early 1860s. It was suggested that the retraction should be published as a pamphlet and sold throughout Ireland. A testimonial for Lavelle was also mentioned, for he was now hailed as the new Frederick Lucas of Ireland.(131) Lucas had travelled to Rome in 1854 and unsuccessfully implored the Pope to allow the Irish priests to participate again in political affairs. It was maintained that Lavelle, like Lucas, was more familiar with conditions in the country than Cullen.(132)

Lavelle's retraction angered the Vatican. Once Lavelle had appeared in Rome and had agreed to carry out its instructions, the Papacy was prepared to forget his former activities. However, in renegeing on this promise, he confirmed Cullen's allegations against him. The authorities rightly accused him of altering for publication the declaration he had made in Rome. They also stated that his political affiliations were creating further scandal, contrary to his promise.(133) Propaganda sent a letter to him on 1 April, but it was mistakenly addressed to Francis Lavelle.(134) Pope Pius IX then ordered MacHale to deal with Lavelle.

The letter dated 18 April, 1864, which Paul Cullen made public in July, went on to say:

Disagreeable and indeed painful, it is for us to learn that the Priest, Patrick Lavelle, after his departure from our city, and his arrival in your country, did not return to the right path, as he had promised, but, by his condemnable mode of acting, has since fallen into a worse way. For after he had departed hence, he did not hesitate to commit to print his retraction so mutilated and curtailed, that in many places it widely differs from what he had with his own hand written in Rome; nor even did he dread to connect, with his retraction, a petition (supplicem libellum), as if it had been presented to us, while we have never received any such petition, which petition he published with the wicked purpose of sustaining by singular boldness his own action and inflicting upon our venerable brethren, the Irish Prelates - particularly upon the Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin - the greatest injuries, and wounding and damaging their reputations...It is to be added that he did not silence from encouraging some societies under new names even those which have been condemned by many of our venerable brethren in Ireland - (particularly by the Archbishops) - as pernicious and adverse to the Catholic faith. And what is most to be regretted, Venerable Brother, is that the same priest, Lavelle, boasted that he has committed such acts, relying on your authority and patronage, you, who should in the discharge of your sacred office, have most severely reproved and punished him, and have prevented by all means so great a scandal.

The Pope ordered MacHale to suspend Lavelle from all parochial duties, from celebrating mass and from every other exercise of the sacred ministry until otherwise ordered by the Holy See.(135)

Cullen was mistaken if he thought that this Papal suspension would finally stop Lavelle. As in the past, the Papacy failed to appreciate MacHale's protection of his subordinate. According to John MacEvilly, Lavelle's curate, Father Peter Geraghty, was to deliver the

suspension, but before his arrival in Partry Lavelle had left, apparently tipped off by MacHale.(136) The extent of MacHale's protection of Lavelle was apparent once again. MacHale had only to summon Lavelle to Tuam and to issue the Papal suspension. Instead, MacHale exacerbated the problem by failing to implement the Pope's instructions.(137) Lavelle's whereabouts remained a mystery until he appeared in Glasgow in mid-May.

Most bishops prayed that the suspension would herald his demise, but Cullen knew how slippery Lavelle was, as he wrote to Tobias Kirby in Rome between the Autumn of 1863 and October 1864. In a letter to Kirby on 20 October, 1863, Cullen said that he believed that nothing had been done about Lavelle and that while MacHale would publicly suspend him he would privately restore him.(138)

Whenever Cullen and the Vatican attacked Lavelle he took refuge in Britain, travelling there on at least three occasions between 1862 and 1864. It would have helped Cullen if Lavelle had confined his activities to Ireland. His visits to Britain, his radical rhetoric at meetings and his letter-writing to the local newspapers, especially in Scotland, added a further geographical dimension to the case. The apparent complicity of some Scottish priests in Lavelle's cause exacerbated the problem. Britain was of strategic importance to Lavelle as it was away from Cullen's influence, yet near enough as a base to continue his attacks on him. While there he defended the Catholic right to revolt. The British cities with their large Irish communities were ideal places from which to attack Cullen. They also supplied Lavelle with badly needed funds.

Lavelle addressed a number of meetings in Glasgow between 1862 and 1864. According to Dr James Lynch, coadjutor bishop of the Western District of Scotland, which included Glasgow, Lavelle was more influential among the Fenians of that city than the Church.(139) He selected topics that were strongly nationalistic, such as the Penal Laws.(140) He often related these themes to contemporary events in Ireland. Lavelle argued that all of the Penal Laws had not been repealed as was normally assumed. In

Glasgow in June 1863 he criticised Cullen for condemning the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick.(141)

His most controversial visit to Britain was in March 1864. Officially, he was to acknowledge a £140 collection for the poor of Partry, but he became a party to the internal problems of the Church in Glasgow.(142) The bishop, John Murdoch, and some of his clergy were having difficulties with the Irish community and the Irish-born priests, led by a former seminarian and proprietor of the Glasgow Free Press, Augustus Keane. Lavelle was soliciting funds for his parishioners and once he associated himself with Murdoch's enemies he was condemned by the bishop. Murdoch's letter of 16 May 1864, was read in all the city's churches. It said:

The Rev P. Lavelle, whose former visits to Glasgow were productive of no little mischief, is once more in town. Last week he wrote to me to request that I would give my sanction to the delivery of a public lecture by him. My reply then was that I neither gave nor withheld my sanction, and that I wished simply to ignore his presence in Glasgow. In consequence, however, of an authentic document received to-day, I have intimated to him that I positively and distinctly refuse my sanction, as I find that his Bishop, the Most Rev Dr MacHale, has been commanded by His Holiness the Pope to suspend him without any delay from saying Mass, or exercising any other sacerdotal functions, until the Holy See thinks fit to remove the suspension.

In the document His Holiness charges the Rev Mr Lavelle with having, in the first place, after his return from Rome, published a garbled and mutilated statement of the retraction which he had made there, and signed with his own name; and having in the second place, circulated through the newspaper a memorial which he declared he had presented to His Holiness, but which His Holiness had never received; and in the third place, the Rev Mr Lavelle is charged with favouring, defending, and publicly encouraging societies condemned by the Venerable Hierarchy of Ireland.

I consider it my duty to make known the above facts to all the Catholics under my charge, and to admonish and caution them not to countenance the man who is thus solemnly condemned and punished by the Head of the Catholic Church on earth.

The Rev Mr Lavelle alleges that he wishes to pay a debt incurred in procuring provisions for his poor people. To this I say, let his Bishop look to the discharge of his debts, as I have had to do again and again, and as other Bishops have to do in somewhat similar cases. You will read this note to the faithful who assemble in your church in the evenings for the May devotions.(143)

Lavelle could no longer attack Cullen from Glasgow as he had done between 1862 and 1864.

Cullen was now prepared to use the hierarchy outside of Ireland to crush him. Cullen's letter with the Pope's circular let Murdoch out of an invidious position. Lavelle had sought his permission to address an assembly in that city. Murdoch wanted to refuse him because his previous visits had only worsened the tensions within the local Catholic population. However, Lavelle insisted that his objective was to collect funds for his parishioners. Murdoch's outright refusal would have been regarded as an insult to a people suffering for their faith. Consequently, Cullen's intervention came for Murdoch at an opportune time.

Lavelle replied that he was unaware of the Pope's decision to suspend him:

If my bishop has received such a document, no doubt he will act upon it as in duty bound, and if such be canonically communicated to me I shall equally discharge my duty, and bow with implicit submission to the will of the supreme head of the Catholic Church on earth. Supposing the existence of such a document, I can account for its non-communication to me only by the fact of my absence from home.

He maintained that he had left his parish because of the strain brought about by his unremitting labours and the domestic problems caused by the deaths of his brother and father.(144) Lavelle was unperturbed by Murdoch's refusal to allow him to speak, and addressed meetings in Glasgow in May, June, August and September. Under canon law Lavelle had to secure the permission of the local bishops in those centres where he wished to speak, but again, he indicated his readiness to ignore directives from bishops.

Even more disturbing was the radical tone of his speeches. On 8 August, 1864 he delivered a lecture at the City Hall, Glasgow, in aid of the Glasgow Free Press Defence Fund. All of the speakers present were noted opponents of Murdoch. Lavelle launched a vicious attack on the Glasgow clergy, especially the non-Irish-born clerics, arguing that they had not contributed to the cause of religion as he had to in Partry.(145) In September he returned to the principle of the "Catholic Right to Revolt", stating that the country belonged to the people and that they were the root and source of all power. Kings or rulers were the repositories of this power, and if it was abused, it could be removed from them.(146) Thus Lavelle was sticking rigidly to his position. However, just as he had

become a pawn in the continuing quarrels within the Irish Church between MacHale and Cullen, he now assumed a similar position in the vexed problems of the Catholic Church in Scotland. The issue was complicated, for it occurred at the very time that the Pope had suspended him.

The divisions in the Scottish Church were fully detailed by the Catholic Telegraph between 27 August and 8 October, which attacked Lavelle and his involvement in the affair. These charges hoped to expose Lavelle's defiance of authority, even that of the Pope:

If he loses his country, he does so disordinately. By his teaching he disseminates amongst Irish Catholics disloyalty to the state, and thus disposes the Imperial Parliament to remedy Irish grievances, and hurries on his countrymen to a hopeless rebellion against the pastors of the church...he ought to be considered as one of Ireland's worst and most dangerous enemies.

Cullen and his supporters were mistaken if they thought the suspension would control Lavelle. During the following two months, he was at his most dangerous and his tone was more radical, attacking Cullen as he addressed the Irish communities in England and Scotland. While Lavelle did not correspond with the newspapers on political issues, the alternative proved more damaging, as his message was directly relayed to the people in his speeches. This brought him to the attention of the Irish radical nationalists in Britain, as noted from the address he received from the people of Paisley: "You fed the hungry, you clad the naked, and you found homes for the houseless, thus proving to the world that in your person is combined the faithful minister of God and the true priest of the people."(147)

Lavelle often addressed four or five meetings in the same town between May and September. When he arrived at Leeds railway station on 21 June 1864 he was mobbed by a large crowd of Irishmen. Similar scenes were repeated on 11 July when he returned to the city on a private trip. A hall had to be hired so that everybody could hear him.(148) Most emigrants regarded Lavelle and MacHale as symbols of patriotism and continually cheered their names when mentioned, while Cullen's name was hissed and drowned in

shouts of hatred as occurred at a London meeting on 17 August. The Connaught Patriot stated: "Dr Cullen sadly mistakes the temper of the times. With his eyes open, how does he, how can he be so blind to the most patent evidence of the senses? Will he not perceive at length that the people have begun to judge for themselves in all those temporal and political concerns?"(149)

The Lavelle demonstrations were occasions when the Irish in Britain could express their Irishness and show the wretched social conditions which they endured in Britain and Ireland. Often the speakers included Irish radicals like Augustus Keane in Glasgow and Clinton Hoey, who were revered within their districts but were generally distrusted by the community at large. They signified the threat to the Church from such radical groups for control of the Irish communities in Britain.(150)

As when he visited England and Scotland during the Partry affair, Lavelle tailored his speeches for his audiences. By concentrating on evictions and clearances, and by suggesting seditiously that force might be necessary to save Ireland, he touched on issues of burning relevance for his listeners. This gave Cullen and others a weapon against him. His Dundee lecture in July 1864 highlighted this:

He entertained feelings of indignation at the treachery and cowardice practised on him in his absence, and contempt for all the powers that their spite and malice could bring to bear against him - (hear, hear, and cheers)...the cloth he now wore had been on his back for fifteen years, and he defied mankind to point out the slightest speck or stain on that spotless robe(loud cheers). He had spent several of these years - and he said it in no spirit of pride - in discharging duties which his enemies were not competent to discharge - (loud cheers) - soaring in the regions of moral, mental, and physical philosophy (cheers)...He had committed one crime, he confessed - one crime that seemed to be an unpardonable offence in the eyes of some people now-a-days. He had loved Ireland (renewed cheering). He had taught the Irish people that they should love Ireland, and he had then shown how they ought to love her (cheers)...He denied that he was a revolutionist in the sense in which the word was used against him; the only revolution he wished was to make Ireland great, glorious and free (loud cheering) - depriving no man of his just rights, but giving to the Irish people a portion at least of those rights of which they had been plundered.(151)

While Lavelle was in Britain, Pius IX ordered MacHale to suspend Lavelle "quovis loco



orbis terrarum" and the English bishops were informed of this situation.(152) Cullen published the Pope's circular, believing that he was acting for the good of religion. His main obsession was to crush Lavelle and his supporters, circulating his suspension to the Protestant press, such as the Dublin Daily Express, which had previously been bitterly opposed to both Lavelle and Cullen. Cullen envisaged that the publication would cause moderate nationalist opinion to desert Lavelle. The Irish were being asked to decide between their religion and their nationalism.

Lavelle's suspension tested the laity's loyalty to Rome for the second time since the Famine, the first being Cullen's decision to withdraw unilaterally the clergy's involvement in the constitutional nationalist movement in 1854. Some Irish nationalists placed their loyalty to their country above that to Rome, but they were mainly confined to Dublin and among the Irish in Britain. A more damaging split was averted by Lavelle's insistence that Cullen alone, and not the Irish bishops in general, was responsible for the nationalists' difficulties.

Members of the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick in Ireland and Britain rallied to Lavelle's support. While they had known of Cullen's hostility towards Lavelle in 1862 and 1863, it was only in July 1864 when he published the Pope's letter that they realised the extent of the problem. Meetings were held in Dublin during July and August and resolutions adopted which backed Lavelle. These stated that regardless of the directives from Cullen and the Pope, the Brotherhood accepted Lavelle as a priest and would receive the sacraments from him. In July 1864, the Committee of the Lavelle Sustainment Fund was established to provide him with support. Its leading figures were Thomas Ryan, John 'Amnesty' Nolan and James Carey, who won fame as a member of the Invincibles who assassinated Lord Frederick Cavendish in the Phoenix Park in 1882.(153)

The Lavelle Sustainment Committee held demonstrations in July and August to declare Lavelle the most patriotic cleric in Ireland. The committee provided the Fenians with the

opportunity to retaliate against Paul Cullen who, they considered, was doing immeasurable damage to the nationalist cause. A circular proposing a demonstration on Lavelle's behalf stated:

We appeal then, to all Irishmen who hate fraud, hypocrisy, and tyranny, especially to those who over the ashes of MacManus renewed, with Father Lavelle, the patriots vow, and those who saw them around the tomb of MacManus, their representatives to aid in giving their expression to the sympathy, admiration and esteem which all true Irishmen, should feel for the Rev Father Lavelle.(154)

A meeting at the Mechanics Institute on 23 August, was chaired by Thomas Ryan, who declared:

...while they differed with their bishop with regard to temporal and political matters, they at the same time deferred to his spiritual authority (hear, hear), and did not intend by their meeting to insult him as a dignitary of the Church (no, no). That meeting was not intended to cause a schism in the Church - by no means (no, no). At the same time they wished to show that they knew how to draw the line of demarcation, even with a bishop, when he exceeded the duty which had been allotted to him by God (hear, hear).(155)

Lavelle had become the cynosure of those advanced nationalists who wished to retain their Catholicism. Ryan wrote to Lavelle in September 1864:

...men who have always appreciated your noble efforts to relieve the destitution of your long suffering and persecuted flock, knowing at the same time that you never neglected your sacred duty as a faithful pastor, through all your and their trials and sufferings, and never have lost an opportunity to fortify them in their holy religion from the temptations and all allurements to barter the Faith for the perishable things of this world, and also to inspire them with the consoling thought that there is another and better world when they and you shall be rewarded...(156)

These demonstrations created more problems for Lavelle than they resolved. Many of his supporters were radicals and the meetings were interrupted by scuffles amongst rival groups, resulting in unpleasant scenes. One Fenian, Robert McEvatts, threatened to withhold his dues to unpatriotic bishops and clergy, except those like Lavelle and MacHale.(157) Lavelle was sometimes perplexed by the actions of his more extreme followers and was forced to distance himself publicly from their activities as on this occasion. He said: "The claims of clergymen on the support of their parishioners is founded on grounds transcending all political or social considerations."(158)

Lavelle realised that he could expose himself to further criticism from Cullen and his supporters, and could also lose the aid of some of his fellow clerics who sympathised with his political ideology, but who did not publicly express their sentiments, if the laity withheld their dues. As he was trying to reach an understanding with Rome about his reinstatement, practical considerations made him oppose such a proposal. Yet he still required the financial support of the advanced nationalists and he could not distance himself too much from them.

When the Vatican suspended Lavelle, it failed to resolve the fundamental problem: whether the Fenians were proscribed or not. Some bishops, like Moriarty of Kerry, felt that the failure to clear up this issue had disastrous consequences for the Church.(159) Lavelle showed that an individual cleric could exploit the ambiguity in the Church. Unless the bishops adopted a more concerted approach, they risked losing their control over sections of the clergy as well as the laity. In June 1864 the Vatican, at Cullen's promptings, condemned all secret societies which plotted against Church or state, quoting a decision from the Sacred College of the Inquisition from 1846.(160) However, the Fenians were again not specifically named in the rescript. Many leading churchmen wanted the ambiguity cleared up.(161) This issue was publicized again when Lavelle on 7 June reiterated his former claims that the Fenians were not proscribed and indeed eleven American bishops wrote to the Papacy in 1865 seeking clarification on the Fenian question.(162)

Cullen's failure to have the Fenians specifically condemned is difficult to understand, especially after he became a cardinal and the undisputed leader of the Irish Church in 1866. It was thought that he now had greater influence in Rome, but the necessary condemnation of the Fenians never materialised. Other issues, such as the Pope's difficulties in Rome with the new Italian state and the university question, were of greater importance. Moreover, by the time Cullen became a cardinal the Fenian question did not merit the same

urgency, as its support was declining after the arrest and imprisonment of its leaders in September 1865.

While the suspension stopped Lavelle from writing letters to the newspapers it was at a heavy price. He had become a martyr among advanced nationalists. His speeches to demonstrations in Britain between May and August were recorded in the Irish advanced nationalist newspapers, like the Connaught Patriot. He was also making additional converts in Britain.

The comparison of Lavelle to *Lord* Edward Fitzgerald, Robert Emmet and other illustrious Irishmen who had been persecuted for their patriotism, helped raise further funds for him. Lavelle realised that the persecuted patriot was the best role to play. He intimated that Cullen and his supporters were anti-Irish and opposed to her demand for independence. This was not a difficult case to make, as most nationalists had remained suspicious of Cullen's political motives from the mid-1850s. Lavelle was a pragmatist and realised the possibilities of this, as he wrote to John O'Mahony:

Among the priests of Ireland I have been alone with another (I don't wish to mention his name, lest he himself might not like it, for to be candid with you, there is now a danger in being a patriot priest in Ireland, as I have reason to know) in my public stand up by the people; therefore have I been selected as a victim, and I owe it to a special Providence that I have not been victimised with a vengeance.(163)

Once the suspension became public, advanced nationalists in Ireland, Britain and North America rallied to Lavelle's support. The Irish Canadian in Toronto concluded, "Father Lavelle suffers because he loves Ireland too much...and was too honest to conceal it".(164) The Connaught Patriot spoke on the issue each week and there was no doubting who it espoused. It argued that if Lavelle was to be subdued, this would effectively end the clergy's role in political affairs, and in highlighting social problems.(165) If Cullen succeeded, Ireland would be controlled by a Catholic conservative aristocracy only concerned about their own affairs. The Patriot felt that Cullen should be suspended for attacking "a zealous and deserving priest."(166)

Why did Lavelle return to Partry at the end of August 1864 after spending three months in

Britain? It was decided, probably on MacHale's advice, that he should reside in his parish until the Pope lifted the suspension.(167) MacHale was under pressure from the Vatican to deal with his diocesan and he felt he could remonstrate with Rome if it could be shown that the suspension had been implemented as instructed.(168) Lavelle's curate, Father Peter Geraghty, served him with the notice on 28 August 1864.(169) This suggests that Lavelle had not been suspended before this and that MacHale had not carried out Rome's instructions, despite his protestation to the contrary. The full rigours of the suspension were not implemented, for Lavelle continued to celebrate Mass at home and carried out some priestly functions. He visited and administered to the sick, heard confessions and performed baptisms.(170)

While MacHale issued Lavelle with the notice, he covertly initiated a campaign to get the suspension lifted. Before Lavelle's return to Partry, Fr Peter Reynolds, Parish Priest of Claremorris, organised a memorial to the Pope for the reinstatement of Lavelle to his priestly duties. This gained momentum in the closing weeks of November when 94 priests signed the petition and seven refused.(171) The memorial, dated 29 November, claimed that Cullen was a dictator and that Lavelle had been condemned on unreliable evidence. It stated that Cullen would be better advised to look after his own clergy and not interfere in the internal affairs of another diocese. It said that Lavelle had been handed over to his enemies and that he had performed good service in extirpating heresy and proselytism.(172) The memorial was more an attack on Cullen than a defence of Lavelle. MacHale's influence in the affair was obvious in the criticism of Cullen's control over the Catholic Church and the implication that the clergy did not agree with his political views.

Many signed out of fear, rather than to show support for Lavelle. Once MacHale had sanctioned the memorial, all undecided clerics added their names for the alternative was to incur his wrath. However, it would be incorrect to state that few priests backed Lavelle, as alleged by MacEvilly. In the past many of his colleagues had shown their espousal of radical nationalism by contributing to testimonials for the militant cause.

Lavelle had supporters in the other Connaught dioceses, for the petition was also circulated in Clonfert and Killala. The Rev Patrick Malone, P.P. of Belmullet, distributed the memorial in Killala diocese and it was rumoured that a Lavelle testimonial would be established.(173) The testimonial failed because so many of his fellow clerics would not openly support his activities, for fear of antagonising their bishops, who were so hostile to Lavelle that they would have opposed any attempt to collect money on his behalf. Nor did the memorial make any impact in Rome, as the authorities were well aware of Lavelle's ability to cause trouble. They now had first hand experience of his waywardness and decided that he would only be pardoned after he had repented for his transgressions.(174)

Lavelle showed contempt for the suspension and published at least two letters, and was suspected of being the author of others. In one, dated 27 October 1864, he returned to defending the rights of Catholic to revolt. His theories were no longer confined to Ireland, and took a more international approach, centring around the oppression by all unjust regimes. He opposed the rebellion of the Confederates' in the American Civil War:

The Southern planters, so far from being cruelly or at all oppressed, were themselves in reality the oppressors and the aggressors; and their present attitude of armed resistance to the almost inspired Constitution of the United States is the result not of foreign oppression and misgovernment, as in Poland and Ireland, but of disappointed ambition combined with thwarted schemes of extending the bounds of a system execrable before God and man.(175)

In this Lavelle again showed his contempt for Cullen. He resurrected the very issue that had began his confrontation with the archbishop. Though suspended, he was stating that he would not be silenced.

His radical nationalism also brought him into conflict with former nationalist colleagues. By May 1864 all the forces of Catholic and moderate nationalist Ireland appeared to be united against him, with A.M. Sullivan of the Nation as his most formidable opponent. They had a partial reconciliation during the Tralee by-election in March 1864, but their

fundamental differences remained. During April-May 1864 Sullivan publicly attacked Lavelle, maintaining that he owed him money. Lavelle replied in the Connaught Patriot because the Morning News, Sullivan's daily newspaper, refused to publish it. Lavelle was annoyed that Sullivan had vilified him and refused him the opportunity to reply to the accusations. While Lavelle was happy to end the dispute Sullivan had introduced other issues. Lavelle denied that he had written any nom-de-plume letters concerning their differences as Sullivan alleged. By comparing Sullivan to Paul Cullen, Lavelle turned moderate nationalist opinion against him. He wrote:

Instead of addressing himself to that issue, Mr. Sullivan "chivalrously" rakes up every private word and act that passed between us which he imagined might tend to damage me, and when I met even this base expedient, he refuses to publish my reply!!

Lavelle maintained that Sullivan was "running with the hare and hunting with the hounds". Sullivan's accusations that he owed him money angered him most, as Lavelle felt the affair was being personalised in a points-scoring exercise. He added:

In revealing confidences there is such an innate meanness that every man with honourable instincts recoils from the wretch who is guilty of the baseness... You even quote words of private letters which I have written to you. You refer to private conversations supposed never to be breathed again. You rake up private affairs with such little concern that henceforward I venture to predict there will be few found to extend to you their confidence.(176)

Lavelle condemned Sullivan for having prosecuted the editor of a rival newspaper, Richard Pigott of the Irishman, and for professing to be the friend of Fenianism while criticising it behind its back.(177) He concluded that Sullivan had incorrectly taken up his writings in an erroneous way and had drawn the wrong judgements. Lavelle's continuing difficulties with those nationalists who had so heartily espoused his cause during the Partry campaign meant he had increasingly relied on the more radical newspapers with low circulation to express his opinions. The Sullivan row was a manifestation of his ideological differences with constitutional nationalists over Fenianism. The Lavelle-Sullivan breach was not to be repaired until 1868.



The Lavelle-Cullen conflict of 1861-5 shows that most of the bishops were more hostile to the Fenian movement than those groups who would have been expected to oppose it, such as the Orange Order and the government. The bishops were antagonistic because the Fenians threatened their control over the laity. The government realised that the chances of a Fenian victory were greatly minimised because of the Church's opposition. Consequently it took a more muted approach to the Fenians in the early years. The bishops were the most effective opposition to the Fenians and many of its leaders were more hostile to the hierarchy than to the authorities. Throughout this period Cullen issued pastoral letters warning the people not to become involved with secret societies or dangerous brotherhoods, a clear reference to the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick. Anyone associating with them could not receive the sacraments.(178)

This was the first occasion in the modern period in which Catholicism was not openly identified with nationalism. In the past the Catholic Church had been synonymous with Irish nationalism and on most occasions, like O'Connell's Repeal movement, gave it leadership. Clerical leadership could instil a degree of moderation, but a lay leadership was an unknown quantity. While this might imply that Cullen was unpatriotic, as Lavelle constantly declared, this was not entirely true. Cullen was intensely Irish, but was inspired by a sense of the special relationship between the Irish and Catholicism.(179) The Catholic Church espoused rebellion when it had the chance of succeeding. If armed insurrection prevailed the Church could maintain it was truly nationalistic. When defeat occurred, as in 1848 and 1867, it had the benefit of hindsight to insist on the foolishness of these ventures and the British authorities felt that the bishops had a restraining influence over their flocks.

The clash between Lavelle and Cullen also offers an insight into the protagonists' personalities. Both were hardworking pastors who cared for their flock in different ways. Lavelle looked after his people's temporal needs, as when he tackled destitution and proselytism in Partry. Cullen felt that the pastoral concerns of the laity were more

important, though he was equally opposed to proselytism.(180)

Otherwise Lavelle and Cullen had little in common and represented contrasting stands within the Irish Church, not only in their clerical views, but also in their social and political outlooks, reflecting their different socio-economic backgrounds and pastoral training. While Cullen came from a large tenant-farmer background in Carlow, Lavelle's circumstances were much more humble. Their revolutionary experiences in continental Europe affected them differently. Cullen's years in Rome left him wholly opposed to secret societies and all revolutionary organisations, while Lavelle's stay in Paris in the 1850s helped shape his radical outlook. Lavelle's pastoral duties were among the poorest people in the country, while Cullen had no first hand knowledge of any Irish parish, having been appointed from Rector of the Irish College in Rome to be Archbishop of Armagh in 1849. This led Lavelle to say of Cullen:

Really this comes ill from a man who never knew hunger, or thirst, or the want of a sovereign, or the approach of a bailiff, or the horror of eviction; and once more, it is only the mercy of God that such teaching does not entirely alienate the Catholic Irish heart from the sanctuary whence it emanates.(181)

Lavelle correctly implied that he was more aware of the wishes and daily needs of the ordinary people than the head of the Irish Church.

Between 1861 and 1867 Cullen developed a fixation about Lavelle, as Miley and Plunket had done before. He regarded him as a danger to the Irish Church and the conflict with Lavelle contributed to his poor health.(182) Cullen welcomed every letter opposing Lavelle as a vindication of his position. However, he failed to realise that Lavelle was not influenced by such criticisms and that at times they only encouraged him. If Cullen had been less determined to crush Lavelle, the latter would probably have faded into oblivion rather than offering a rallying point for the anti-Cullen opposition. Lavelle's past antics demonstrated that the more one tried to control him the greater was his determination to continue.

Cullen constantly sought assistance from Rome, but had to do most of the work himself. Most of the Irish bishops failed to support him adequately in his calls for help from Rome.(183) Cullen, and to a lesser extent John MacEvilly, were the main correspondents to the Vatican. Scarcely a week passed that Cullen did not mention Lavelle's activities to Rome.

The Lavelle-Cullen dispute was part of an old quarrel about the political direction of the Irish Church. Lavelle's supporters regarded it as a case of whether the Irish clergy would be allowed to become involved in political affairs, while for others, the issue was the centralisation of the Catholic Church, with authority coming from the top. Ultimately the principle at stake was not a simple case of political direction but rather who controlled the Irish Church.

Lavelle symbolised Fenian activity within the Catholic Church. Cullen regarded with suspicion his friends like the Augustinian priest, Father James Anderson, during the 1868 general election in Dungarvan.(184) When the Rev Patrick Malone, P.P. of Belmullet, who had organised the clerical petition to Rome within Killala in favour of Lavelle, arrived in Glasgow in 1867 to speak on "The Right of Men to a Fatherland", the Catholic authorities in the city were shocked.(185) Malone's objective was to raise funds for his destitute parishioners. The coadjutor bishop of Glasgow, Dr James Lynch, urged Cullen to advise the bishop, Dr John Gray, against permitting Malone to speak in Glasgow. One can only deduce that Cullen saw only evil in all of Lavelle's activities and those of his associates.

Cullen felt that Lavelle's actions seriously undermined his attempts to achieve complete Catholic unity on all issues. He was not prepared to concede this principle, as he attempted to consolidate the Irish Church.(186) Political questions were by their nature divisive. Lavelle posed a threat to this uniformity and thus Cullen spent much time on the Lavelle affair. Lavelle was not the only nineteenth-century cleric to manifest radical

tendencies. His peers like Revs John Murphy in Wexford, John Keynon in Tipperary, James McFadden in Falcarragh, Robert O'Keeffe in Callan and Peter Daly in Galway displayed a militancy which resulted in confrontations with their superiors. But Lavelle differed from them in that he took on most of the whole episcopal body and refused to acknowledge their directives.

Cullen's problems with Lavelle emanated from his relationship with MacHale rather than with the priest himself. In the 1850s they had openly quarrelled over issues of education, politics and the Irish College in Paris. The question of Fenianism and the papal collection of 1860 compounded these disputes in the 1860s. MacHale felt that Cullen was an obstacle to the kind of Church which he wanted - an independent Irish Church with minimal interference from Rome.(187) MacHale saw in Lavelle an opportunity to embarrass Cullen. At the same time he shared a deep radical nationalism and any attempt to control Lavelle's overt political views would be an attempt to embarrass him. Thus he rarely punished Lavelle and did so only when compelled by Rome. His protection of his priest was one of his few major achievements over Cullen during their three decades of conflict, and it enhanced his reputation within nationalist circles. It was a dangerous position to adopt, for it was felt that once the Vatican had contained Lavelle, this would have disastrous consequences for MacHale.(188)

If Lavelle had been stationed in any diocese other than Tuam, he would have experienced a tighter discipline from his bishop, especially in political matters. Father Jeremiah Vaughan of Killaloe never achieved the same political heights as Lavelle and this must be attributed to his superior's negative attitude. Fr Kit Mullen, a curate in Turin (Taghmon) in the diocese of Meath, was the only cleric besides Lavelle to express public support for the Fenians. His bishop, Dr Thomas Nulty, severely reprimanded him for his 'crazed' political ideas and he was moved to the parish of Kilbeg, where he could do little damage. Nulty also warned him about his future conduct towards the Fenians.(189) The French liberal, the Abbé Félicité de Lamennais, had been driven from the Church by papal

condemnations of his defence of the right of revolution.(190) Archdeacon James Redmond of Arklow stated in no uncertain terms: "...I have always been convinced that the Dwarf [Lavelle] felt that he had a giant at his back who would hold him harmless in his antics".(191)

The government's attitude to Lavelle is also puzzling. Throughout this period it considered Lavelle's writings and speeches to be inflammatory. While he was never prosecuted, the government toyed with the idea of bringing him before the courts on at least two occasions: in 1862 after his lecture on the Catholic right to rebel and in 1867 when he spoke at a banquet in his honour in Dublin.(192) They feared that if he was prosecuted he would become a martyr for Irish nationalism. Generally the government was reluctant to prosecute people with high public profiles, fearing that they would become martyrs, and so did not pursue the editors of the Irishman and the Nation newspapers in 1863.(193) The authorities were also divided about the expediency of prosecuting clergymen, as in the case of Rev Jeremiah Vaughan in January 1868.(194) It suited the authorities that the bishops and Rome should deal with Lavelle. This was their reason for sending Cullen the notes that one of their special reporters had taken of Lavelle's speech to a Dublin meeting on 23 August 1864.(195)

The failure to prosecute Lavelle surprised Cullen. He would have supported the authorities in this action, if only because he was unable to control Lavelle himself.(196) However, the authorities felt that if Lavelle was left alone he would eventually disappear from prominence, as is evident from their decision not to prosecute him after his banquet speech in October 1867.(197) They had difficulties in getting court convictions. In 1862, the information supplied by the two constables who took the notes at the meeting conflicted, while in 1868 the sympathy endemic in Ireland after the Manchester executions made it difficult to get convictions against famous nationalists. Their refusal to arrest Lavelle denied him the fame which many lesser nationalists secured. John Martin's fame in the 1860s and 1870s can be attributed directly to his transportation to Van Dieman's Land

after his minor role in the Young Ireland rebellion in 1848. Lavelle's failure to sustain his high profile in the post-1860s period was partly due to the authorities reluctance to convict or imprison him.

While he was never prosecuted for his seditious rhetoric, the authorities regarded him as a radical with unlawful associations. In 1868, the Tory government sent an English Catholic agent, Mr Trelamney, to Lavelle in an attempt to establish a connection between the Catholic Church, the Liberal party and the Fenians. They hoped to discredit the Liberal party then on the verge of forming the next government in England. Nothing ever materialised from this plan.(198) Its significance was that the government remained suspicious of Lavelle's associations and radical image.

When Lavelle committed himself to militant nationalism, this helped to ensure that the clergy retained their authority over the people. His position was useful in retaining a contact between the militant nationalists and the Catholic Church.(199) To the thousands of Catholics who espoused Fenianism, clerics like Lavelle and John MacHale were heroes. Their identification with the Fenian cause helped people with anticlerical sentiments feel justified in staying within the Church. These Fenians sympathised with Lavelle and MacHale's brand of Catholicism and not with Cullen's. However, opponents of the Catholic Church used Lavelle's position to argue that the Church approved of Fenianism. They quoted Lavelle's letters espousing militant nationalism to suggest that most priests supported Fenianism.(200) It was difficult to answer these criticisms, as Lavelle's letters constantly appeared in the newspapers.

Lavelle supported the methods of revolutionary nationalism, in part because of his precarious financial position. Throughout 1862-3 the militant nationalists gave money to him and his parishioners. His difficulties manifested themselves in 1864, when he was unable to repay £100 he had borrowed in 1862 from a trader. The merchant's reluctance to pursue the case out of respect for the clergy saved him from litigation. Lavelle also owed

£200 for meal to a merchant in Galway and £50 to a Mr Devitt.(201) Paul Cullen felt that the advanced nationalists were giving Lavelle money and that the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick had paid his expenses to enable him to spend long periods in Dublin and to travel to Britain. Cullen gave the impression that he would have preferred to see Lavelle in financial difficulties rather than that Lavelle's parishioners should have had enough to live on. However, he incorrectly alleged that Lavelle's family was very poor and that he had sent his sister to boarding schools and got her married with money forwarded to him from American sympathisers.(202)

While Fenians, like J.F.X. O'Brien, opposed the clergy's political role, ironically they never challenged Lavelle's high political profile.(203) They failed to dissociate themselves from Lavelle's antics because he was a national figure who could further their cause. His activities and his theological background benefitted them. They used Lavelle's arguments to counteract the theological censures of noted ecclesiastics. Thus Lavelle was an important asset to the Fenian movement in its fight against the Church.

Lavelle became a useful vehicle for many Fenians, because he embodied their cause and political philosophy. They condemned the Papal and Cullenite attacks on Lavelle, and he gave a level of respectability to their movement. Nevertheless, they remained suspicious of him, because he advocated constitutional as well as revolutionary means to win Irish independence. Lavelle also involved himself in parliamentary affairs as at the Tralee by-election in 1864 when he told the electors to oppose Lord Palmerston's candidate, Thomas O'Hagan, a Catholic Whig, who was supported by the local clergy. He claimed that Palmerston had done nothing to alleviate Irish distress and asked the people to back the Tory candidate, Colonel Knox, proprietor of the Irish Times.

The man who now claims your votes, is not Thomas O'Hagan - is not the "Catholic" lawyer - is not the popular advocate. I pray you, I implore of you, banish the illusion. The question is between Ireland and England, between Palmerston and Pius IX. Here is you choice.(204)

Lavelle arrived in Tralee and urged the Catholic voters not to vote for any candidate after Knox's withdrawal. Addressing a large audience at the National Reading Rooms in Castle Street, he said:

A vital choice is now placed in your hands. The Pope of Rome and your own Ireland on the one hand, and Lord Palmerston and Whiggish misrule on the other. Will you accept?...Have the Whigs sent you Relief? (Cries of "Ah, no - they'd let us starve"). Did they not deny even the very existence of your misery? ("Yes" and groans). Will you return their placeman?(205)

Lavelle defended his involvement in the constitutional process, maintaining that every opportunity should be used as a means of publicizing Ireland's problems. His political philosophy was close to that of constitutional nationalists like John Martin and George Henry Moore, but as no middle ground existed in Irish politics the options were Fenianism or a poorly supported constitutional movement.

Some Fenians felt that Lavelle used the movement to secure funds for his parishioners. They questioned Lavelle's nationalism and intimated that his involvement in national affairs was for personal gain. Unfortunately his nationalism was questioned because he failed to respond to one single request - to contribute to the 1864 Chicago Fenian fair.(206) The critics failed to understand his increasing difficulties, facing censure from Rome and Cullen. He had to adopt a lower profile and avoid further confrontation. While he attempted to minimise this rift by an explanation to the Irish People on 12 March 1864, a breach emerged. He no longer communicated with the American leaders, like John O'Mahony and the funds from America virtually ceased.

Lavelle disagreed with many aspects of the Fenian movement. While accepting the principle of the Catholic right to rebel, he was pragmatic enough to realise that Fenianism was not capable of conducting a war against Britain.(207) Lavelle voiced his opinions on open rebellion, informing a meeting of Irish nationalists at Ormonde Stile, Co Tipperary:

We are no match to-day for the power of England; who knows how soon we



may! Direct the people's thoughts to this. Tell them to hope and pray, and watch for the hour when their oppressor will have both her hands engaged; and then, when backed by your brothers in exile - and who knows by whom else - we may step forward in the attitude, not of slavish mendicants begging for bread and shelter, but of nascent freemen, demanding back our country.(208)

England would have to be at war before a revolution could be contemplated and Lavelle wrote in December 1866, "England is this moment at peace with the world. Is this her "difficulty?" or is it not rather when both her hands are engaged, and she can be safely pierced through the heart, without the power of resistance?"(209) He accepted the old maxim that England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity. When the Fenians launched their offensive in March 1867 Lavelle was pessimistic about the outcome. The severity of the weather made him question the prospects of success. He felt that if it had occurred eighteen months earlier when the Irish-American officers were in the country, Ireland would have witnessed the end of British rule. He stated:

...the truth is that, though the people at home are seething with discontent and disaffection, they will not imperil, not merely their own lives, but the prospects of their country, to an untimely resistance, and all the resistance will be untimely until the foreign oppressor is herself engaged in a death struggle at home or abroad.(210)

Lavelle also opposed the Fenian's use of a secret pledge and many Fenians, like John O'Leary and John Devoy, shared Lavelle's reservations about the oath.(211) While the Irish movement was covert and oath-bound, its American counterpart used a written pledge and its activities were open. In June 1865 the New York Central Council of the Fenians passed a resolution condemning the secret oath, stating that it was detrimental to the organisation and defeated its objectives.(212) This duplicity created problems for the Irish bishops over their condemnation of secret societies. If the Church condemned the Fenians in Ireland because it was a secret-oath bound society the same could not apply to the American movement. This helped Lavelle in his claim that the Fenians were not a true oath-bound secret society.(213)

He also distanced himself from the official Fenian movement by not corresponding directly with its official newspaper, the Irish People, which was published between 1863

and 1865. Lavelle communicated on three occasions, in the form of replies to other correspondents to the Irish People, or letters that were reprinted from other newspapers.

Lavelle did nothing to encourage the men of Mayo to join the Fenians. Mayo was the least well-organised county in the country for Fenianism. This is surprising, as Lavelle's fame was greater in Mayo than in the rest of the country. This must be attributed to the Fenians' failure to make the land question a priority issue. Like the National League, they wanted all other questions subservient to the national question.

By 1865 there was a noticeable decline in Lavelle's support for Fenianism. While he still defended the movement his activities now were not considered to be damaging. The Vatican no longer saw him as a major threat, although Cullen continued to keep a watchful eye over his activities. The authorities had captured the Fenian leaders in 1865, removing the possibility of a successful armed struggle. The widespread distress and poverty so prevalent in the early 1860s disappeared and there was a downturn in emigration. The deprivation that had aided the spread of Fenianism had now disappeared, leading to a decline in support for the revolutionary movement.

## Chapter 6

1. For the background to the growth of the Fenian movement in the 1858-81 period see E.R.R. Green, "The Beginnings of Fenianism" in T.W. Moody (ed.), The Fenian Movement (Dublin, 1968), pp.11-20; Desmond Ryan, The Fenian Chief, A Biography of James Stephens (Dublin, 1967), pp. 87-104,156-180; R.V. Comerford, The Fenians in Context: Irish Politics and Society, 1848-1882 (Dublin & New Jersey, 1985), pp. 47-66; Leon O'Broin, Fenian Fever, An Anglo-Irish Dilemma (New York, 1971), pp. 1-8; Kevin B. Nolan, "The Fenians at Home", in T. Desmond Williams (ed.), Secret Societies in Ireland (Dublin, 1973), pp. 90-4.
2. Comerford, Fenians in Context, pp. 74-5.
3. See Thomas G. McAllister, Terence Bellew McManus, 1811-61 (Maynooth, 1972), 44; Tomas O'Fiaich, "The Clergy and Fenianism, 1860-70" in The Irish Ecclesiastical Record, civ (Feb. 1968), p.82; O'Fiaich, "'The Patriot Priest of Partry': Patrick Lavelle, 1825-1886" in Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society, xxxv (1976), p.138. See also Irishman, 2 Aug. 1862, p.43; Louis R. Bisceglia, "The Fenian Funeral of Terence Bellew McManus" in Eire-Ireland, xiv (Autumn 1979), pp. 54-6.
4. McAllister, op. cit., p.44; for the difficulties encountered between constitutional and militant nationalists on the MacManus committee see N.L.I., MS 447 (3250), W.S. O'Brien Papers, A.M. Sullivan to O'Brien, dated, 13 Oct. 1861; Moloney, John, "The National Brotherhood of St. Patrick and the Rise of Dublin Fenianism, 1858-1865" (University College, Galway, M.A. thesis, 1976), pp. 34-8; Thomas F. Martin, "A.M. Sullivan, 1829-1884" (University College, Cork, M.A. thesis, 1981), pp. 94-7; Desmond Ryan, The Phoenix Flame (London, 1937), pp. 84-5; Brendan O'Cathaigh, "Terence Bellew McManus: Fenian Precursor" in Irish Sword, xvi, no. 63 (1985), pp.105-9. R.V. Comerford, "Conspiring Brotherhoods and Contending Elites, 1857-63" in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), A New History of Ireland v: Ireland Under the Union, 1800-1870, pt 1 (Oxford, 1989), pp. 424-5; Bisceglia, op. cit., pp. 48, 58-9.
5. Nation, 2 Jan. 1864 stated 'should the time be propitious the Nation will urge the use of physical force'. See also Thomas F. Martin, "A.M. Sullivan", pp. 69-70.
6. See D. Ryan, Phoenix Flame, p.63.
7. See Cullen Papers, (Secretary's reports, 1861); J. Murray to E.J. Ryan, dated 16 & 18 Oct. 1861.
8. Peadar MacSuibhne, Paul Cullen and his Contemporaries, vol. iv (Naas, 1974), Cullen to Barnadó, dated 16 Nov. 1861.
9. Irish People, 17 Feb. 1866, p.3.
10. Tuam Herald, 9 Nov. 1861, p.3; O'Fiaich, Clergy and Fenianism, p.83; O'Fiaich, Patriot Priest of Partry, pp. 138-9; Emmet Larkin, The Consolidation of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1860-70 (Chapel Hill, 1987), pp.66-8
11. See A.M. Sullivan, New Ireland, vol. ii (London, 1877), p.105.
12. N.A., C.S.O.R.P., 1861/8414; 1877/3591.
13. See Dublin Daily Express, 13 Nov. 1861, p.2; Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, p.69; E.R. Norman, The Catholic Church and Ireland in the Age of Rebellion, 1859-1873 (London, 1965), p.97.
14. N.L.I., MS 7723, Larcom Papers; Nation, 3 May 1862; Irishman, 3 May 1862, p.658. For problems within the funeral committee right up to the day of the burial resulting in Lavelle being asked to preach the sermon see Bisceglia, op. cit., pp. 60-1.
15. Nation, 16 Nov. 1861, p.183.

16. N.L.I., MS 447 (3257), W.S. O'Brien Papers, Thoman N. Underwood to O'Brien, dated 1 Jan. 1862; O'Fiaich, Patriot Priest, p.139.
17. O'Fiaich, Clergy and Fenianism, p.85; O'Fiaich, Patriot Priest of Partry, p.139.
18. Irishman, 2 Aug. 1862, p.43.
19. MacSuibhne, Cullen and his Contemporaries, vol. iv, p.105, Cullen to Gillooly, 12 Nov. 1861.
20. Nation, 16 Nov. 1861, p.183.
21. See Dublin Daily Express, 12 Nov. 1861, p.2.
22. Cullen Papers, (Bishops, 1861), Dixon to Cullen, dated 7 Nov. 1861. These views were also held by Bishops Furlong of Ferns and McNally of Clogher, (Bishops 1861), dated 11 Nov. 1861 and 13 Nov. 1861. Furlong advised Cullen:  
     Might not your Grace make your disapprobation of Lavelle's conduct and assert your authority by forbidding him to celebrate Mass or perform any clerical function in the diocese of Dublin.  
     Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1861) Furlong to Cullen, dated 15 Nov. 1861.
23. See N.L.I., MS 7793, Larcom Papers, National Brotherhood of St Patrick; Nation, 3 May 1862, pp. 569-70.
24. See Irishman, 23 Aug. 1862, p.89.
25. See MacSuibhne, Cullen and his Contemporaries, vol. iv, pp. 107-8, Cullen to Kirby, dated 27 Nov. 1861; Cullen Papers, (Roman Correspondence, 1850-61), Kirby to Cullen, dated 10 Dec. 1861; (Holy See Correspondence, 1861-3), Barnab  to Cullen, dated, 30 Dec. 1861.
26. Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1861), Gillooly to Cullen, dated 16 Nov. 1861.
27. Ibid., (Holy See Correspondence, 1861-3), Barnab  to Cullen, dated 6 Feb. 1862; (Bishops 1861), MacHale to Cullen, dated 11 Nov. 1861.
28. O'Broin, op. cit., pp. 3-4.
29. N.L.I., MS 7723, Larcom Papers; Nation, 8 Feb. 1862, pp. 378-80; Irishman, 8 Feb. 1862, p.465; See also Dublin Daily Express, 5 Feb. 1862, p.3; Norman, op. cit., p.111; Sean Cannon, "Irish Episcopal Meetings, 1788-1882, A Juridico-Historical Study" in Annuaire Historiae Conciliorum, viii (1981), 2, p.795; P.J. Corish, "Political Problems, 1860-1878" in Corish (ed.), A History of Irish Catholicism, v (Dublin, 1963) p.9; Sheridan Gilley, "The Catholic Church and Revolution in Nineteenth Century Ireland" in Yonah Alexander and Alan O'Day (eds.), Terrorism in Ireland (London, 1984), p.133.
30. See Richard Pigott, Recollections of an Irish National Journalist (rep. Cork, 1979), p.112; O'Fiaich, Patriot priest, pp. 139-40.
31. See letter of Clericus in Connaught Patriot, 22 Oct. 1864.
32. John Moloney, "Brotherhood of St. Patrick and the rise of Dublin Fenianism", p.22; N.L.I., MS 447 (3257), William Smith O'Brien Papers, Thomas Neilson Underwood to O'Brien, dated 1 Jan. 1862; N.L.I., MS 7517, Larcom Papers, p.96; Cullen Papers, (Laity, Jan.-Jun. 1863), dated Apr. 1863; Comerford, Conspiring brotherhoods, p.424.
33. Brian Griffen, "The IRB in Connacht and Leinster, 1858-78" (St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, M.A. thesis, 1983), pp 7, 27; idem. "Social Aspects of Fenianism in Connacht and Leinster, 1858-70", in Eire-Ireland, xxi (Spring 1986), p.21.

34. Cannon, *op. cit.*, p.396.
35. Irishman, 14 Jun. 1862, p.603.
36. Ibid, 22 Mar. 1862, p.561.
37. See ibid, 20 Sept. 1862, p.157.
38. Pigott, Recollections of Irish National Journalist, p.133.
39. Cullen Papers, (Laity, Jan.-Jun. 1862), Newspaper cutting; Irishman, 3 May, 1862, pp 666-7.
40. Cullen Papers, (Political), George Butler (Limerick) to Cullen, dated 13 Mar. 1863?; Corish, Kirby Papers, Dixon to Kirby, dated 26 Jun. 1863, p.34.
41. MacSuibhne, Cullen and his Contemporaries, vol. iv, p.114, Cullen to Barnabò, dated 21 Mar. 1862.
42. O'Fiaich, Clergy and Fenianism, p.85; For problems of National Brotherhood of St. Patrick see N.L.I., MS 447 (3557), William Smith O'Brien Papers, Thomas Neilson Underwood to O'Brien, 1 Jan. 1862; Comerford, Fenians in Context, p.81; W.J. Lowe, "Lancashire Fenianism, 1864-71", in Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, cxxi (1977), p.162; P.Rose, The Manchester Martyrs: The Story of a Fenian Tragedy (London, 1970), p.43. Rose gives an account of all those charged in Manchester in 1867 and provides an indication of the social groups that espoused these movements in the 1860s. On the problems of Irish assimilation and integration in Britain see M.G. O'Tuathaigh, "The Irish in Nineteenth Century Britain: Problems of Integration", in Sheridan Gilley & Roger Swift (eds.), The Irish in the Victorian City (Kent, 1985), pp.13-37; An account of the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick in London can be found in Thomas Bell, "The Reverend David Bell", in The Clogher Record, iv (1968), pp. 259-70.
43. Irishman, 31 Oct. 1863, pp. 284-5; Connaught Patriot, 14 Nov. 1863, p.2.
44. Irishman, 26 Sept. 1863, p.196; Nation, 26 Sept. 1863, p.76.
45. Irishman, 3 Jan. 1863, p.397. For Hughes' letter condemning the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick see Galway Express, 3 Jan. 1863, p.3.
46. See Irishman, 13 Dec. 1862, p.341.
47. See Cullen Papers (Holy See Correspondence, 1861-3); Barnabò to Cullen, dated 20 Feb. 1862, 20 Mar. 1862; (Roman Correspondence, 1850-61), Kirby to Cullen, dated 8 Mar. 1862.
48. Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1862), MacHale to Cullen, dated 30 Jan. 1862; Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, p.69.
49. Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1862), MacHale to Cullen, dated 29 Sept. 1861.
50. See ibid., (Bishops 1865), Leahy to Cullen, dated 28 Sept. 1865.
51. Ibid., (Holy See Correspondence, 1861-3), Barnabò to Cullen, dated 4 Apr. 1862; 2 May 1862.
52. Irishman, 26 Apr. 1862, p.650; Galway American, 26 Apr. 1862, p.2.
53. Galway Vindicator, 29 Mar. 1862, p.4.
54. Nation, 29 Mar. 1862, p.423; N.L.I., MS 7723, Larcom Papers; Irishman, 22 Mar. 1862, p.561.
55. Irishman, 5 Apr. 1862, p.595.

56. N.L.I., MS 7723, Larcom Papers; Nation, 29 Mar. 1862, p.493; Irishman, 22 Mar. 1862, p.560.
57. Irishman, 26 Apr. 1862, p.650; Galway American, 26 Apr. 1862, p.2. See also Lavelle's attacks on O'Brien in the Irishman, 19 Apr. 1862, 26 Apr. 1862, p.650.
58. Irishman, 5 Apr. 1862.
59. Ibid., 19 Apr. 1862, p.625.
60. Irishman, 23 Aug. 1862, pp. 83-4.
61. Ibid., 13 Sept. 1862, p.132.
62. Irish People, 26 Oct. 1867, p.1.
63. Cullen Papers, (Laity, Jul.-Dec. 1862), Lavelle to Cullen, undated; Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, p.95. While the letter is undated there is some evidence to suggest that it occurred between his letter to the Irishman, 13 Sept. 1862 and a letter which Cullen received from John MacEvilly on the 'apology' on 2 Oct. 1862.
64. N.L.I., MS 7723, Larcom Papers, Letter to Larcom, dated 10 Mar. 1862. See also O'Faich, "The Clergy and Fenianism, 1860-70", in the Irish Ecclesiastical Record, cvi (Feb. 1868) p.100.
65. N.L.I., MS 7723, Larcom Papers; Nation, 29 Mar. 1862, p.693; Irishman, 22 Mar. 1862, p.561.
66. Irishman, 10 May. 1862, p.675.
67. Ibid., 13 Dec. 1862, p.342.
68. Tuam Herald, 30 May 1863, p.2.
69. Cullen's problems with Lavelle can be seen in Cullen Papers, (Kirby Correspondence), Cullen to Kirby, dated 21 Jun. 1863; (Roman Letters, 1850-68), Cullen to Propaganda, 21 Jun. 1863; (Holy See Correspondence, 1861-3), Barnab  to Cullen, dated 15 Jul. 1863; MacSuibhne, Cullen and his Contemporaries, vol. iv, p.147, Cullen to Kirby, dated 21 Jun. 1863; Corish, Kirby Papers, p.34, no.71.
70. Cullen Papers, (Roman Correspondence), Kirby to Cullen, dated 14 Jul. 1863, 18 Aug. 1863.
71. Norman, Catholic Church and Age of Rebellion, pp. 101-2; Cullen Papers, (Kirby Correspondence), Cullen to Kirby, dated 15 Apr. 1864; Corish, Kirby Papers, pp. 40-1.
72. Connaught Patriot, 24 Feb. 1866, p.3.
73. See Corish, Kirby Papers, p.31, Gillooly to Kirby, dated 26 Oct. 1862; N.L.I., MS 7622, Gillooly Papers, Pt.B, Cullen to Gillooly, dated 9 Apr. 1864. Part of MacEvilly's dispute with MacHale centred round the latter's support of Fr. Peter Daly, P.P. of Galway City, who was having major differences with his bishop. See J. Mitchel, "Rev. Peter Daly, (c1781-1868)", in Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society, xxxix (1983-4), pp. 27-115.
74. Liam Bane, "John MacEvilly" (University College, Galway, M.A. thesis, 1979), pp. 147-8; Also idem, "John MacHale and John MacEvilly: Conflict in the Nineteenth Century Catholic Hierarchy" in Archivium Hibernicum, xxxix, (1984), p.481.
75. Bane, "John MacEvilly", p.186.
76. Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1863), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 9 Oct. 1863; See also 18 Sept. 1863 in

which he said Lavelle was carrying out a "mad & criminal mission of evil". It was not surprising that MacEvilly felt that Lavelle hated him more than he did Cullen, MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 21 Oct. 1865.

77. Ibid., (Kirby Correspondence, 1863), Cullen to Kirby, dated 8 Oct. 1863. I have been unable to find anyone name Davis listed among the regular clergy for the diocese of Tuam in the Irish Catholic Directory for 1863. It would appear he was a close relation of Dean Burke of Westport, who MacHale had crossed swords with in the past.
78. Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1863), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 18 Oct. 1863.
79. Ibid., Cullen to Kirby, dated 6 Aug. 1864; Norman, op. cit., p.102; See also Cullen Papers, (Kirby Correspondence), Cullen to Kirby, 6 Aug. 1864; Corish, Kirby Papers, p.43, no. 151.
80. Reprinted in Connaught Patriot, 18 Jul. 1863, p.3; Also 1 Aug. 1863, p.1.
81. Catholic Telegraph, 25 Jul. 1863, p.4; Nation, 22 Aug. 1863, pp. 827-8; Connaught Patriot, 29 Aug. 1863, p.2; Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, pp. 109-110; O'Fiaich, "Patriot priest of Partry", p.141. Lavelle made a similar statement in Oct. 1866, see Irish People, 17 Nov. 1866, p.1.
82. Cullen Papers, (Kirby Correspondence, 1863), Cullen to Kirby, dated 11 Aug. 1863; Corish, Kirby Papers, p.35, no. 204; Cannon, op. cit., p.361; Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, pp. 237-8.
83. Cullen Papers, (Kirby Correspondence), Cullen to Kirby, dated 4 Sept. 1863; MacSuibhne, Cullen and his Contemporaries, vol. iv, p.151; Corish, Kirby Papers, p.35, no.227.
84. Cullen Papers, (Roman Letters, 1850-68), Kirby to Cullen, dated 2 Oct. 1863; Corish, Political Problems, pp. 13-4; Larkin, Consolidation of the Catholic Church, pp. 238-9.
85. Corish, "Cardinal Cullen and the National Association of Ireland", in Reportorium Novum, 3, no.1 (1963), p.18. After 1848 the Vatican had been suspicious of the term nationalism, not alone in Ireland but throughout Europe. This was for religious reasons and no account was taken of the strong Catholic nature of the movements, see Corish, "Cardinal Cullen and Archbishop MacHale" in the Irish Ecclesiastical Record, xci (June 1959), p.399.
86. Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1863), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 18 Oct. 1863; (Kirby Correspondence), Cullen to Kirby, 20 Oct. 1863; MacSuibhne, Cullen and his Contemporaries, vol. iv, p.155. The extent of the rift between MacHale and Cullen was perceived by a number of constitutional nationalist politicians like G. H. Moore and J. B. Dillon. Unsuccessful attempts were made to bring them together. See N.L.I. Ms 894 (728), George Henry Moore Papers, Moore to J.B. Dillon, dated 13 Feb. 1865 & 15 Feb. 1865.
87. Irishman, 31 Oct. 1863; Galway Vindicator, 28 Oct. 1863, p.3; Nation, 31 Oct. 1863; Catholic Telegraph, 31 Oct. 1863, p.7. See also Lavelle's letter on 7 Nov. in which he said:  
I am as much opposed to his Grace to-day as I have been from the commencement. I think that Ireland should belong solely to herself. I think as long as she is the bond slave of another nation, her children must follow her condition.
88. Reprinted in Irishman, 14 Oct. 1863, pp. 284-5; Connaught Patriot, 14 Nov. 1863, p.2.
89. Connaught Patriot, 14 Nov. 1863, p.1.
90. See Cullen Papers, (Roman Letters, 1850-68), Moran to Cullen, dated 7 Nov. 1864; (Bishops 1863), Furlong to Cullen, dated 3 Nov. 1863.
91. Ibid., (Kirby Correspondence), Cullen to Kirby, dated 2 Nov. 1863; See also Cullen to Kirby, dated 3 Nov. 1863; MacSuibhne, Cullen and his Contemporaries, vol. iv, p.166; Corish, Kirby Papers, p.36, no.282, Cullen to Kirby.

92. See Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1863), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 27 Dec. 1863.
93. Galway American, 12 Dec. 1863, p.6.
94. See Irishman, 15 Dec. 1865, p.397; Connaught Patriot, 22 Dec. 1866, p.3; Irish People, 5 Jan. 1867, p.1.
95. Irish People, 6 Aug. 1864, p.580.
96. This appeared in the Nation, 6 Jun. 1863, p.652; Connaught Patriot, 20 Jun. 1863, p.3.
97. Catholic Telegraph, 23 May 1863, p.4.
98. For the full text of the letter to the Glasgow Free Press, see Nation, 20 Jun. 1863, p.4.
99. Catholic Telegraph, 23 Jul. 1863, p.4; For a full account of the letter see Irishman, 13 Dec. 1862, p.339.
100. Catholic Telegraph, 27 Jun. 1863, p.4. See also letter from same correspondent, 1 Aug. 1863, p.1.
101. This was published in the Nation, 21 Mar. 1863, p.477.
102. Ibid., 22 Aug. 1863, p.827; Connaught Patriot, 29 Aug. 1863, p.2.
103. Nation, 27 Jun. 1863, p.701.
104. Catholic Telegraph, 13 Jun. 1863, p.4.
105. Nation, 25 Apr. 1863, p.556.
106. Tuam Herald, 21 Nov. 1863, p.2.
107. Nation, 7 Nov. 1863, pp. 171-2; Irishman, 7 Nov. 1863, p.295; Connaught Patriot, 7 Nov. 1863, p.3.
108. Nation, 5 Sept. 1863; Irishman, 5 Sept. 1863, p.150; Connaught Patriot, 12 Sept. 1863, p.2.
109. See P.A.S. Sallard, The Life and Letters of John Martin (Dublin, 1893), pp. 164-5; Norman, op. cit., p.138; Irishman, 23 Jan. 1864, p.472.
110. See Pigott, Recollections of Irish National Journalist, p.298. While Martin may have opposed the use of physical force methods, he was prepared to use them when they were likely to succeed - the philosophy which Lavelle shared. See N.L.I., MS 8047 (1), O'Neill Daunt Papers, Martin to Daunt, dated 18 Sept. 1865; MS 10,520, John Martin Papers, Martin to 'Eva' (Mary Kelly), dated 18 Sept. 1865.
111. Connaught Patriot, 12 Sept. 1863, p.2.
112. See Irishman, 21 Jan. 1866, p.61.
113. See Sallard, op. cit., p.182; N.L.I. MS 8047 (1), O'Neill Daunt Papers, dated, 13 Aug. (1865?).
114. Corish, Cullen and National Association, p.20.
115. Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, pp. 78-82.
116. Irish People, 9 Feb. 1867, p.1. See also 2 Mar. 1867, p.1.



117. Ibid., 13 Oct. 1866, p.1. See also Irishman, 5 May 1866, p.716.
118. Cullen Papers, (Roman Correspondence, 1850-68), Kirby to Cullen, dated 7 Dec. 1863; Corish, Kirby Papers, p.39, no.322; Corish, Political Problems, p.16; MacSuibhne, Cullen and his Contemporaries, vol. iv, pp. 159-60; (Kirby Correspondence), Cullen to Kirby, dated 11 Dec. 1863; N.L.I., MS 7622, Gillooly Papers, pt.B, Cullen to Gillooly, dated 12 Dec. 1863.
119. Cullen Papers, (Kirby Correspondence), Cullen to Kirby, 29 Dec. 1863; Corish, Kirby Papers, p.38, no.14; MacSuibhne, Cullen and his Contemporaries, vol. iv, p.165; Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, p.244.
120. Cullen Papers, (Roman Correspondence), Kirby to Cullen, dated 9 Jan. 1864.
121. Ibid., (Roman Letters, 1850-68), Moran to Cullen, dated 9 Jan. 1864.
122. Ibid., (Bishops 1864), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated Holy Saturday, 1864.
123. Ibid., (Holy See Correspondence, 1864-6), Barnabò to Cullen, dated 3 Feb. 1864; (Bishops 1864), Lavelle to Pope; Corish, Kirby Papers, Lavelle to Pope, dated 25 Jan. 1864, p.38, no.14; Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, pp. 244-5; N.L.I., Cashel Diocesan Archives, Calender of Dr. Leahy Papers, Special List 171, Lavelle to Leahy, 25 Jan. 1864.
124. Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1864). MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 7 Feb. 1864.
125. Connaught Patriot, 2 Apr. 1864, p.2.
126. Ibid., 13 Feb. 1864; Corish, Kirby Papers, dated 26 Feb.1864; See also Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, p.246.
127. Cullen Papers, (Kirby Correspondence 1864), Cullen to Kirby, dated 4 Mar. 1864; Corish, Kirby Papers, p.39, no.42; Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, pp. 245-6.
128. Connaught Patriot, 5 Mar. 1864; Irishman, 12 Mar. 1864, p.581; Catholic Telegraph, 12 Mar. 1864, p.4; Nation, 19 Mar. 1864, p.581, Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, pp. 246-50.
129. For Cullen's pastoral see Nation, 19 Mar. 1864, p.457. Also Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, pp. 252-3.
130. Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1864), Furlong to Cullen, dated 9 Mar. 1864; Corish, Kirby Papers, Cullen to Kirby, dated 18 Mar. 1864, p.39, no.54; Moriarty to Kirby, dated 11 Mar. 1864, p.39, no.52; N.L.I. MS 7622, pt. B, Gillooly Papers, Cullen to Gillooly, dated 17 Mar. 1864; Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, p.250.
131. Irish People, 14 May 1864, p.393.
132. Irishman, 26 Mar. 1864, p.612.
133. Connaught Patriot, 26 Mar. 1864.
134. Cullen Papers, (Holy See Correspondence, 1864-6), Barnabò to Cullen, dated 10 Mar. 1864; N.L.I., MS 7622, Gillooly Papers, pt. A, Kirby to Gillooly, dated 14 Mar. 1864.
135. Cullen Papers, (Moran Correspondence), Cullen to Moran, dated 8 Apr. 1864.
136. Connaught Patriot, 9 Jul. 1864, p.4; Galway Express, 16 Jul. 1864, p.3; Catholic Telegraph, 2 Jul. 1864, p.4; See also Cullen Papers, (Holy See Correspondence 1864-6), Barnabò to Cullen, dated 18 Apr. 1864; (Roman Correspondence 1850-68) Kirby to Cullen, dated 23 Apr. 1864; Moran to

- Cullen, dated 23 Apr. 1864; N.L.I., MS 7622, Gillooly Papers, pt.A, Cullen to Gillooly, dated 27 Apr. 1864; O'Fiaich, Patriot Priest of Partry, p.141; Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, p.256.
137. Cullen Papers, (Kirby Correspondence 1864), Cullen to Kirby, 13 May 1864; Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, p.261.
138. See Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1864), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 24 May, 1864.
139. McSuibhne, Cullen and his Contemporaries, iv, Cullen to Kirby, dated 20 Oct. 1863, p.155; See also Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1864), Dixon to Cullen, dated 7 May 1864.
140. See ibid., (Bishops 1867), J. Lynch to Cullen, dated 7 Feb. 1867.
141. Catholic Telegraph, 27 Sept. 1862, p.5; Irishman, 27 Sept. 1862, p.164.
142. See Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, pp. 107-8.
143. Catholic Telegraph, 28 Mar. 1864, p.5.
144. Connaught Patriot, 28 May 1864, p.2; Catholic Telegraph, 21 May 1864, p.4; Irishman, 28 May 1864, p.759; Irish People, 4 Jun. 1864, p.489.
145. Connaught Patriot, 28 Mar. 1864, p.2; Irishman, 28, May 1864, p.759; Irish People, 4 Jun. 1864, p.489.
146. Catholic Telegraph, 27 Aug. 1864, p.6. Such an attack was very unfair because Glasgow was one of the main cities in Britain where there was religious tension between Catholics and Protestants, See Tom Gallagher, "A Tale of Two Cities: Communal Strife in Glasgow and Liverpool before 1914", in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds.), The Irish in the Victorian City (Kent, 1985), pp. 106-130.
147. Irishman, 3 Sept. 1864, pp. 4-5.
148. Connaught Patriot, 2 Jul. 1864.
149. Ibid., 2 Jul. 1864, p.3; 23 Jul. 1864, p.3.
150. Ibid., 20 Aug. 1864, p.2.
151. See ibid.
152. Ibid., 9 Jul. 1864; See also, 30 Jul. 1864, 20 Aug. 1864; for his speeches in London attacking Cullen.
153. Cullen Papers, (Roman Correspondence 1850-68), Kirby to Cullen, dated 19 Jul. 1864; (Holy See Correspondence, 1864-6), Barnab  to Cullen, dated 27 Jul. 1864; (Roman Letters, 1850-68), Moran to Cullen, dated 30 Jul. 1864; Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, pp. 265-6.
154. Nation, 16 Jul. 1864, p.749; 23 Jul. 1864.
155. Connaught Patriot, 6 Aug. 1864, p.3.
156. Nation, 27 Aug. 1864, p.13; Irish People, 27 Aug. 1864; Galway Express, 27 Aug. 1864, p.3; Irishman, 27 Aug. 1864; Cullen Papers, (Laity 1864), copy of Supt. Daniel Ryan's report on Lavelle Sympathy Meeting, dated 24 Aug. 1864.
157. Connaught Patriot, 17 Sept. 1864.

158. Nation, 27 Aug. 1864, p.13; Galway Express, 27 Aug. 1864, p.3; Connaught Patriot, 17 Sept. 1864; Cullen Papers, (Laity 1864), Report of Supt. Daniel Ryan, dated 24. Aug. 1864.
159. Connaught Patriot, 10 Sept. 1864.
160. Corish, Kirby Papers, Moriarty to Kirby, dated 1 May 1864, p.41, no.93; Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, p.254.
161. Cannon, Irish Episcopal Meetings, p.397; Cullen Papers, (Holy See Correspondence, 1864-6), Barnabo to Cullen, dated 7 Jun. 1864, 30 Jul. 1864.
162. Cullen Papers, (Male Religious, 1865), Fr B. Fitzgerald, to Cullen, dated, 12 Mar. 1865. It can also be seen regarding the Bishop of Cloyne, William Keane, one of Cullen's staunchest allies on the education question. In late 1865 he quietly ordered his priests not to denounce the Fenians for fear they would lose control over the people; see Emmet Larkin, 'Church, State and Nation in Modern Ireland', in the Historical Dimensions of Irish Catholicism (Washington, 1984), pp. 107-8. See also Norman, op. cit., pp. 29,99.
163. Cannon, Irish Episiopal Meetings, p.398.
164. Connaught Patriot, 2 Apr. 1864, p.2. The other cleric was either Rev. Vaughan or Kit Mullin.
165. Reprinted in Connaught Patriot, 23 Jul. 1864.
166. See Connaught Patriot, 16 Jul. 1864, p.3. It was not surprising that Cullen was so annoyed with the Connaught Patriot. Its support for Lavelle was apparently based on the fact that it was saved from bankruptcy by MacHale, see Corish, Kirby Papers, MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 14 Jun. 1864, p.42, no.115.
167. Corish, Cullen and National Association, pp. 23-4.
168. Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, p.266.
169. Cullen Papers, (Roman Correspondence, 1850-68), Kirby to Cullen, dated 11 Aug. 1864.
170. Ibid., (Bishops 1864), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 10 Sept. 1864, 23 Sept. 1864; 10 Oct. 1864; (Kirby Correspondence), Cullen to Kirby, dated 9 Sept. 1864; Corish, Kirby Papers, pp. 43-4, no.16.
171. Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1864), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 10 Sept. 1864, 23 Sept. 1864, 10 Oct. 1864, 15 Dec. 1864.
172. Ibid., MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 11 Nov. 1864; Corish, Kirby Papers, MacEvilly to Kirby, dated, 4 Dec. 1864, p.45, no.24; MacEvilly to Cullen, undated; Corish, Kirby Papers, Cullen to Kirby, dated 8 Aug. 1864.
173. Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1864), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 11 Nov. 1864.
174. Ibid., Gillooly to Cullen, dated 8 Dec. 1864.
175. Connaught Patriot, 5 Nov. 1864, p.2.
176. Connaught Patriot, 14 May, 1864.
177. On the dispute between Sullivan and Richard Pigott of the Irishman, see Pigott, op. cit., pp. 139-41.
178. N.L.I., 7723, Larcom Papers, Freeman's Jopurnal, 28 Apr. 1862; See also his pastoral on secret societies, Irishman, 9 May 1863, p.675; Gilley, Catholic Church and Revolution, p.134.

179. P.J. Corish, "Cardinal Cullen and the National Association", pp. 23-4; Corish, "The Radical Face of Paul Cardinal Cullen", in P.J. Corish, (ed.), Radicals, Rebels and Establishments, Historical Studies, xv (Belfast, 1985) pp.175, 179; Norman, op. cit., p. 52.
180. Gilley, Catholic Church and Revolution, p.131.
181. Irish People, 12 Jan. 1867, p.1, In another letter Lavelle said:  
Here am I, simple, untitled, unhonoured...working day and night among these secluded and desolate mountains...What a contrast to the past life of his Eminence. Fondled by fortune from the first; never knowing an hour's anxiety or a moment's missionary toil; never, not even once, roused at dead of winter's night to trudge miles through mountain fastness administering sacraments and consolation to the dying and sick at heart - he is now flattered and lionized by the votaries of power..., Irish People, 16 Mar. 1867, p.1; For Cullen's background See Corish, Radical face of Paul Cullen, pp. 174-5.
182. See P.J. Corish, The Irish Catholic Experience: a Historical Survey (Dublin 1985), p.195.
183. Cullen Papers, (Roman Correspondence, 1850-63), Kirby to Cullen, dated 6 Aug. 1864.
184. For an account of the 1868 election in Dungarvin, see Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, pp. 612-617.
185. Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1867), J. Lynch to Cullen, dated 19 Nov. 1867, 16 Dec. 1867.
186. See Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, chpt. vi; Gilley Catholic Church and Revolution, p.135. See also N.L.I., MS 7622, Gillooly Papers, Cullen to Gillooly. Cullen wanted as many of the bishops as possible to sign an address to counteract Lavelle.
187. Liam Bane, "MacHale and MacEvilly", p.47; For MacHale's declining influence within the Irish Church in the 1860s and 1870s see Corish, Irish Catholic Experience, p.198.
188. Cullen Papers, (Roman Correspondence 1850-68), Moran to Cullen, dated 14 Jan. 1865.
189. Ibid., (Bishops 1867), Nulty to Cullen, dated 25 Nov. 1867; B. Griffen, "the IRB in Leinster and Connacht". Mullen had earned the wrath of Nulty when he attended a Fenian council meeting in Paris in the summer of 1867 organised by Gen. Roberts from the United States. See N.L.I., MS 11,188(13), Mayo Papers, memo to Irish government, Fenian council meeting, 18 Feb. 1868.
190. Sheridan Gilley, "The Catholic Church and Revolution" in D.G. Boyce (ed.), The Revolution in Ireland, 1879-1928 (Dublin 1988), p.158; See also a letter signed a "Munster Priest" which had strong radical views similar to Lavelle's, Irishman, 9 Apr. 1864, p.645.
191. Cullen Papers, (Archdeacon Redmond Correspondence, 1863), Redmond to Cullen 29 Oct. 1863.
192. N.L.I., MS 7583, Larcom Papers, dated Nov. 1862, N.A., Fenian Papers, F. Files 1866-74, (2014 R), dated 24 Mar. 1868. See especially N.L.I., 11,148 (19), Mayo Papers, letter of A. Brewster to Mayo, dated 31 Dec. 1867.198. N.L.I., MS 11,188 (9), Mayo Papers, letter of Thomas O'Hagan.
193. N.L.I., MS 11,188 (9), Mayo Papers, letter of Thomas O'Hagan.
194. Vaughan had written a letter to Archbishop John MacHale on the national question, which was regarded as seditious, see ibid., MS 11,189 (1), Mayo Papers, letter of 2 Jan. 1868.
195. See Corish, Kirby Papers, Cullen to Kirby, dated 28 Oct. 1867, pp 59-60, no.384.
196. Cullen Papers, (Laity 1864), Report of Supt. Daniel Ryan, dated 24 Aug. 1864.
197. See Hansard, 3rd series,, exc, [16 Mar 1868], cols. 1682-3.

198. O'Broin, Fenian Fever, pp. 240-242.
199. Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, p.85.
200. Protestants like John Thomas Waller of Castletown, Co. Limerick used Lavelle's speeches and those of other clerics, such as Frs. Vaughan and Quaid, to argue that the Irish clergy fermented the Fenian movement. See N.L.I., MS 11,188 (18), Mayo Papers; See also J. Dombrain to Mayo, MS 11,144 (Aug 1866) on the Roman Catholic religion and Fenian movement.
201. Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1964), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 29 Apr. 1864; (Moran Correspondence 1864-71), Cullen to Moran, dated 3 May, 1864.
202. Ibid., (Kirby Correspondence 1863), Cullen to Kirby, dated 18 Dec. 1863.
203. See T.D. Sullivan, Recollections of Troubled Times in Irish Politics (Dublin, 1905), pp 54-5; Corish, Cullen and National Association, pp 16-7; D. Nolan, "J.F.X. O'Brien, 1828-1905" (University College, Cork, M.A. thesis, 1971), pp. 45-9; R.V. Comerford, Charles J. Kickham (Dublin 1979), p.74.
204. Galway Vindicator, 16 May 1863, p.1; MacSuibhne, Cullen and his Contemporaries, vol. v, p.10, Cullen to Major O'Reilly, dated 12 May 1863.
205. Nation, 16 May 1863, p.604.
206. Irish People, 12 Mar. 1864, p.252.
207. Gilley, Catholic Church and Revolution in Nineteenth Century Ireland, p.133; This view of the Fenians' inability to wage war was shared by Isaac Butt, see N.L.I., MS 831, Isaac Butt Papers, Butt to A.M. Sullivan, dated 6 Sept. 1865.
208. Irishman, 10 Oct. 1863, p.230; Nation, 10 Oct. 1863, p.102.
209. Irish People, 29 Dec. 1866, p.1; See also 15 Dec. 1866, p.1.
210. Ibid., 4 May 1867, p.1; See also 6 Apr. 1867, p.1.
211. Ryan, Phoenix Flame, p.64.
212. Irishman, 22 Jul. 1865, p.53.
213. On the problems of the oath see Sean O'Luing, The Catalpa Rescue (Tralee, 1965), p.6.

## CHAPTER 5

### LAVELLE AND THE FENIAN MOVEMENT,

#### PART 2, 1865-70

##### (a) The road to rebellion, 1865-67

During 1865 Lavelle's relationship with the Catholic Church remained nebulous . He stayed away from controversy and did not correspond with Irish newspapers on political issues. While Rome and the Irish bishops considered him suspended, Lavelle acted as though the suspension was lifted and that he was allowed to resume his clerical duties. He continued to say Mass and appeared at religious functions throughout the diocese.(1) One possible explanation for this attitude was that John MacHale and John Derry, the Bishop of Clonfert, succeeded in getting Lavelle reinstated during their visit to Rome in May-June 1865. While the visit was officially called a trip relating to their diocesan duties, the Cullen correspondence suggest that they were attempting to have Lavelle's suspension lifted.(2) Lavelle wrote to Cardinal Barnabò on 26 April and the Pope on 27 May asking that his functions be restored, and achieved this with MacHale's help at the end of the month.(3) MacHale, however, only announced officially in November that Pius IX had lifted Lavelle's dismissal. This was after the C<sup>o</sup>gregation of Propaganda had been asked to clarify his position.(4) The advanced nationalists never publicly celebrated Lavelle's restoration as a victory over Cullen, but Lavelle was not prepared to re-enter a controversy which would have brought him into conflict with Rome. It is also probable that MacHale had no further dealings with Rome on the issue.

Between June and December it was rumoured that Lavelle was ministering to his flock and had been appointed parish priest of Partry.(5) While he was not promoted until 1866, this was another humiliation for his enemies who considered it to be a reward for

indiscipline and insubordination.

During these months, a number of nom-de-plume letters appeared in the newspapers that bore the stamp of Lavelle's radicalism, but it is difficult to ascertain their authorship. The only letter definitely attributed to him appeared in the Irishman on 21 October signed 'A Mayo Priest' calling on the friends of Martin O'Brennan, proprietor of the Connaught Patriot, to start a defence fund after O'Brennan's arrest in September.(6)

Meanwhile, Lavelle's radical letters to Irish-American journals continued unabated. Writing to his brother, Thomas, a leading New York Fenian, he intimated that the imprisoned Fenian leaders could expect no mercy from Britain and concluded: "...I can see only two objects all around me - two the most hateful to the manly heart - oppression and despotism on the one side; slavery and slavishness on the other."(7)

Lavelle openly resumed his letters to the Irish newspapers after his restoration in November. His subject matter was not contentious; none of the letters to the Irishman in February and March 1866 mentioned Cullen or Fenianism. Rather he concentrated on O'Connell's Repeal movement and attacked Sir John Gray of the Freeman's Journal.(8) Lavelle supported the demands for legislative independence, but realised that it would not happen overnight. While Ireland should accept all concessions, this should not be at the expense of Repeal. He was keeping his name before the public, but ensured that Cullen and Rome could not accuse him of promoting Fenianism through the newspapers. Radical rhetoric was no longer necessary, as the imprisonment of the Fenian leaders in September 1865 reduced the likelihood of a rising.

Cullen and a majority of the Irish bishops remained unconvinced that Lavelle had reformed. They opposed his appearances in their dioceses, fearing his popular appeal among their people. Lavelle was invited to speak at a number of public meetings outside of

Tuam, for example the charity sermon for the Sisters of Mercy poor fund in Ballina in November. Cullen's anxiety was well-founded as Lavelle turned the meeting into a political event. Though the sermon was centred on the Gospel reading of 'Give therefore, unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's,' Lavelle condemned the British government's tyranny and oppression in Ireland.(9)

Lavelle's attacks on Cullen began again in July 1866 when he commenced a weekly column in the New York Irish People. He criticised Cullen's pastoral for St. Laurence O'Toole's feast day as the "usual jog-trot style" because he had failed to refer to O'Toole's endeavours to help the Irish during the Norman invasion:

My very blood boils at the thought; and I solemnly declare I regard the Irishman, priest, prelate or laic, who would "fear to speak" of our nationality, much less who would anathematize it as something opposed to all laws, human and divine, as a greater criminal than the most active agent of our national enslavement.(10)

Lavelle declared that Cullen was unfair in his criticism of secret societies, as he did not distinguish between those named by Rome and those that were not. He attacked Cullen's pastorals of October 1865, January 1866, March 1866, and January 1867, which stated that no Fenian could be absolved until he resigned from the movement and promised not to rejoin it.(11) Lavelle said, "Is Cardinal Cullen "the church"? Was there ever before a fallible and fallacious cardinal? Is the history of the cardinalate the most edifying portion of that of the Church?" If Cullen continued to condemn the Fenians he would inform the people how a man could be a cardinal and yet say and perpetuate "foolish, false and wicked things".(12)

Lavelle was surprised when Cullen was made a cardinal in May 1866:

As in duty and all gratitude bound, Ireland is to forget her chains and rags, her hunger and thirst, her martyred dead and her live skeletons, her Habeas Corpus suspension and her tenant-right "withdrawal" acts, her unconvicted, untried, uncharged 320 children rotting in Mountjoy or Mount Sorrow prison cells - her Lubys, O'Learys, Kickhams, O'Donovans & Co., Pentonvilled, and



Portlanded, felonized and whipped, loaded with ignominy and assorted with miscreants - her wasted fields and her exiled children - in one word, the whole killing, murdering, withering weight of provincial thralldom - all this is our dead suffering Ireland to forget, that she may duly honor her greatest man, her greatest prelate, her greatest scholar, her purest patriot...(13)

Cullen was unconcerned about these attacks in the Irish People. He no longer complained to Rome about Lavelle's letters and probably felt that as the Irish People was a low circulation New York newspaper, it did not threaten the Church's authority. Nor did the American bishops feel endangered by Lavelle's column. He was exhorting Irish Americans to unite to secure Irish independence and advocated revolutionary methods to achieve this. These tactics had enraged Cullen a few years before, but the American hierarchy regarded Lavelle as less of a problem.

Lavelle also criticised other Church dignitaries because they condemned Fenianism. In early 1867 the head of the Catholic Church in England, Archbishop Henry Edward Manning, upset many Irishmen when he attacked the Fenians. Manning said, 'Show me an Irishman who has lost his faith and I will show you a Fenian. For every lax sceptical Irishman that you show me I will show you a Fenian in return.'(14)

Lavelle rebuked Manning in the Connaught Patriot, reiterating Daniel O'Connell's claims that the British government had no legal right to govern Ireland, invoking thereby the English Catholics' reverence for O'Connell and his 1829 agitation, which had enabled them to participate in politics. Lavelle's accounts of speeches by Irish patriots from Grattan to O'Connell, advocating an independent Irish parliament, implied that the Irish would resort to violence if the British government refused their demands. Repeating his defence of Fenianism he said, "...I say Fenianism is not condemned by the Church. The Head of the Church himself - and in spite of the combination opposed to him, long may he remain its head - has studiously and I think very wisely, abstained from condemning it." He then dwelt on the difference in nationality between himself and Manning: "Then, my Lord, you are not an English prelate. You are an Englishman (and a credit to your country), with

naturally the prejudices of a nation implanted in your heart. You love your country. You are proud of her greatness..."(15) Lavelle insisted there was an important distinction between being a Catholic and an Irish nationalist, which no English Catholic could comprehend.

Lavelle's letter must be attributed to the fresh support that Fenianism had attracted because of the anticipated rising. It was his first attack on a bishop in the Irish newspapers since 1864. He eventually published the letter as a pamphlet entitled Patriotism Vindicated: A reply to Archbishop Manning, apparently at his own expense. The Government authorities described it as a violent political pamphlet and confiscated copies in Kerry and Roscommon.(16)

Lavelle continued to defend Fenianism after the 1867 rebellion . In 1868 and 1869 he rejected the pastoral condemnations by Cullen, Moriarty and Bishop W.B. Ullathorne of Birmingham and their insistence that the Holy See had excommunicated the Fenians.(17) Not surprisingly, many English bishops were suspicious of Lavelle. When he travelled to the English midlands to raise funds for his schools in Partry, he did not receive the normal respect which Irish priests got from their English colleagues. While the Birmingham diocesan clergy allowed him into their parishes, they did not address the audiences with him and some denounced him. Nevertheless, his meetings were well attended, and many non-Catholics turned up to hear one of the Church's more famous clerics. While the laity supported Lavelle, he was unacceptable to the clergy because of his Fenian stand and his attacks on the local bishop. Ullathorne asked Manning to persuade the Vatican to act. The Irish and English Catholic criticisms of Lavelle in 1868 and 1869 reinforced opinion in Rome that he was a troublemaker.(18)

While Lavelle was curtailed in writing to the Irish newspapers, he eventually secured another means to propagate his political views. This was through the Irish People, an Irish-American newspaper which supported the Fenian leader, John O'Mahony. Lavelle's first

letter appeared on 3 March 1866, having been solicited by the editor, who hoped his fame would increase its circulation figures. Lavelle now expressed his views in the manner he had been unable to do through Irish newspapers. He wrote:

'Tis treason to love (Ireland), death to defend - if, according to the new morality preached up to us from the bench and desk, and elsewhere, it be guilt of darkest hue and deadliest character to aspire to the independence of an enslaved people...(19)

By July 1866, Lavelle was producing a weekly column in the paper. He wrote with passion on the Irish question and analysed European contemporary events, from the Austrian-Prussian War to the Pope's difficulties over the Temporal Power. He constantly criticised the landlords' policy, claiming that they behaved in an arbitrary manner towards their tenants. On a few occasions he returned to the subject which had gained him national fame - "Defending the Catholic Right to Rebel" - and pointed out again that the Papacy had never condemned the Fenians by name and that all Catholics had the right to revolt against an unjust regime. He wrote: "Well, not alone, is it lawful betimes, but, as the only remedy for national decay, the only cure for tyranny, it becomes a primary duty."(20)

Lavelle displayed a more liberal attitude to the role of women in the national question than most of his contemporaries, arguing that they could make a major contribution to the American organisation.(21) "Why then," he asked, "should not the Irish ladies at home and abroad seek, as best they may, to aid their countrymen in advancing the course of their country's speedy liberation?"(22) Lavelle would have been unable to broach this topic in the more conservative Irish newspapers.

While most Fenians had lost confidence in their leader, James Stephens, because of his failure to undertake the anticipated rising, Lavelle continued to respect him. He defended Stephen's reasons that an insurrection in late 1866 would have been a catastrophe(23) and argued that military action should only be undertaken when there was a definite chance of success.(24)

Lavelle also discussed the division within the Fenian movement in the United States. By 1864 it had split over the most effective way to achieve Irish freedom. John O'Mahony wanted a war against England from within Ireland, while the opposition, headed by Thomas Sweeney and William Roberts, considered it more beneficial to attack Canada.(25) The two factions devoted more energy to fighting each other than to the overthrow of British rule in Ireland. Lavelle blamed this split for the failure to win Irish independence. Each week he wrote about the division:

And when shall we have our country to ourselves again? When? Irish-Americans! - you who still refuse to unite - ask yourselves these questions: "How far does my present attitude diminish my country's chances and her hopes? How will my children hereafter view my conduct?". "Think well on't," then.(26)

He appealed over the heads of the American leaders to the ordinary members to stop the discord:

Why, then, are a few allowed then to trifle with the generous promptings of so many? Why are they permitted to create very despair of Irish Regeneration? Were they the paid emissaries of Dublin Castle they could not play its game more effectively than they do by perpetuating discord...Irish-Americans - In the name of your horror of slavery and your love of liberty, of past struggles and of your future hopes, in the name of IRISH RESURRECTION, fling away the disunionist from your midst. Force union on your leaders, or, even yourselves, no longer, profane the sacred name of "Patriot". Never, at any other period of our history, was union more needed amongst us than at the present time.(27)

At first Lavelle felt he could unite the two factions and remained neutral in the dispute. While commending the Roberts wing for ensuring that the American Fenians supported neither of the American political parties, he admonished them for their part in James Stephens' arrest in Boston in 1866.(28) As a correspondent for an O'Mahony newspaper it would have been presumed that he could have supported that faction. When he applauded John O'Neill's invasion of Canada, he was criticised by the Irish People.(29)

Lavelle hoped that events in Manchester in November 1867 would unite the American

factions. He now felt that the prospects of a successful rebellion in either Ireland or Canada were remote, but that the Irish should leave their options open and strike when the opportunity presented itself in either country. He tried to initiate a reconciliation and suggested that twelve people representing both sides should meet and discuss their differences. Realising the effect of the Manchester executions on nationalist Ireland, Lavelle hoped they would help reunify the rival groupings.(30) However, unity was eventually achieved when the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood held a meeting of reconciliation in England in March 1868.(31)

Being a pragmatist, Lavelle realised that the cause of Irish freedom would be ruined by division among Irish nationalists at home and abroad. His appeals for American unity can also be regarded as a call for a united approach between the constitutional and militant nationalists in Ireland. Such a coalition could be beneficial, as later became evident with the Amnesty movement during 1868-9.

Lavelle's contributions to the Irish People also enshrine his changing attitude to the 1867 Fenian rebellion. After the first battles in Kerry in February, he was enthusiastic, obviously regarding it as a prelude to better things. If sixty Fenians could achieve so much, he asked, "how would it be were every parish and every village in the land to simultaneously rise "up" and resolve to win or perish?" The most important aspect of the Kerry episode was the revelation of the necessity for unity of action throughout the country. The rebellion would not succeed if it were confined to isolated areas:

Prepare your resources; husband your strength; keep your own counsel; add daily to your means of doing the needful, and to your resolution of doing it. Be not daunted by delay or disheartened by failure. A nation 700 years in the womb of oppression cannot, Pallas-like, jump ready armed into existence. It is in this patient, toilsome wearing and weaving expectation and preparation that true patriotism is shown; because it is the purest aspiration of the heart guided by the brightest beams of the soul.(32)

Once the initial euphoria had passed, Lavelle became more pragmatic about the likelihood

of success. Through March and April, his correspondence dealt with the Rising and the Fenians' activities in England. The rebellion was a blunder, he wrote:

With the resources at hand it was simply impossible it could succeed; and therefore, in the words of the Frenchman, "it was a blunder - worse than a crime". I cannot see the use of a man knocking his head against the wall...For me, I have done my utmost to caution against a fiasco, as I knew, and every man knowing the state of the country and the relative resources of the adverse parties well knew, what should necessarily be the result of such a movement as the present...that while England is at peace with all the world, any attempt, and insurrection in Ireland must end in failure.(33)

Lavelle's views on armed rebellion had not altered. He maintained that it should only be used when there was a definite possibility of success, but so long as England remained at peace, the revolutionary option should be deferred.

Not that Lavelle opposed the concept of armed insurrection. He was embittered by the attitude of the Irish bishops, and a number of Irish prelates in England, America and Australia, to the rebellion and he feared for the future of the Irish Catholic Church. He claimed that there could be a breach between priests and people, as occurred in France in 1793, for which the bishops would be responsible.(34) His most ferocious attack was on the Bishop of Kerry, David Moriarty, who widely regarded in nationalist circles as a Whig and 'a *Castle* bishop.' While Moriarty had condemned the rising, his pastoral outraged most nationalists when he said, "...we must acknowledge that Eternity is not long enough to punish such miscreants."(35) Lavelle declared it the most "unchristian, blasphemous sentiments ever uttered by man or friend".(36)

Lavelle column in the Irish People was written during a period of radical change in Ireland. The 1867 rising, the Manchester executions and the Amnesty movement of 1869 are first hand evidence of Lavelle's changing political ideals as well as developments in Ireland. However, the column is repetitive and mundane.

Nevertheless the paper allowed Lavelle to act as a contact between Ireland and North

America. The Americans heard what they wanted and Lavelle often exaggerated incidents to impress them. He claimed that the landlords were worried about the situation in Ireland because the large graziers, a traditional ally of the landowners, were sympathetic to the Fenians.(37)

Yet while the Irish People permitted Lavelle to express his views in a candid manner and to attack opponents like Cullen and the Young Irelander, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, Lavelle was also a target for these people. McGee was now a Canadian parliamentarian whose views on the Irish revolutionary movement had undergone a reversal.(38) He criticised Lavelle's involvement in the MacManus funeral and implied that he was conning the Irish Americans out of their money.(39)

Between March and April 1867, Lavelle devoted little time to his column and often completed it only hours before the last post left for America. By this point the paper had served its purpose and Lavelle no longer needed it.(40) By the Autumn, Fenian activity in Britain had increased. Lavelle's letters grew shorter because of the demands on his time of lectures in London and Glasgow and banquets in Dublin. In May 1868, his association with the Irish People ceased. It was also alleged by a rival nationalist newspaper in New York, the Irish American, that the editor of the Irish People was writing the Lavelle correspondence.(41) Lavelle never wrote for the newspaper after this. His workload was increased by his involvement in constitutional politics and he was writing a book on the land question and attending meetings on the national question.

The highpoint of Lavelle's career during these years was the banquet held in his honour on 16 October 1867 at the Rotunda, which was attended by more than 160 people. Such functions were common in Ireland in the 1860s to acknowledge the contribution of prominent nationalists. The Lavelle banquet was organised by Thomas Ryan, Peter Gill, editor of the Tipperary Advocate and other advanced nationalists, who had been actively involved in the Lavelle Sustainment Committee in July 1864.

The Fenians intended to use the banquet as propaganda, which prompted many constitutional nationalists to stay away. George Henry Moore, John Martin, John O'Neill Daunt and other moderates sent apologies, but Moore's reply indicated his reservations about the Fenian-inspired function. His presence could have been construed by the bishops and others as an espousal of Fenian principles rather than as a mark of his friendship with Lavelle. As Moore was contemplating a return to parliamentary politics, it would not have been in his interests to come into conflict with the bishops. He informed the banquet:

I trust, however, that you and my countrymen generally have sufficient confidence in me to respect my reasons in coming to the conclusion that, under all the circumstances of my present position, it would not be advisable for me to avail myself of your kind invitation.(42)

Constitutional nationalists like Moore still hailed Lavelle as a patriot and a champion of oppression.

Lavelle's banquet speech incorporated all of Ireland's grievances, in particular her poverty since the Act of Union. She had only prospered when she had legislative independence between 1782 and 1800 and he advocated a return to that state. He did not openly recommend the use of violence, but reemphasised that the Catholic Church did not oppose armed rebellion on good grounds. He said, "The Church of God in her mercy and in her wisdom on the contrary I'd say bestows upon them her blessing." (43) Lavelle suggested that the situation resembled that of the Nine Years War (1594-1603) or under the Confederation of Kilkenny, when the Papacy supported Irish insurrections because of the danger to the Catholic faith. Any country that had got its way through terror, torture, fraud, force and corruption, like England, should be on her guard, for the subservient colony was entitled to revolt.

Lavelle's exhortation was restrained compared with many of the other speeches. Peter Gill told the audience to wait for the time when France and America would arrive in



Ireland, and 50,000 Irishmen would join them.(44) The event was as much an Anglophobic display as a testimony to Lavelle. Not surprisingly, the authorities contemplated prosecuting Lavelle and his friends.

The events in October-November 1867 in Manchester - the dramatic rescue of Thomas Kelly and Timothy Deasy followed by the trial and execution of the three "Manchester Martyrs" - helped to restore peace between the rival schools of Irish nationalism.(45) Lavelle was now becoming reconciled with his former nationalist associates, A.M. Sullivan and Sir John Gray. While the Nation had not published his letters on political issues before 1867, the new departure in Irish nationalism resulted in the paper reporting all of his activities in great detail.

At first Lavelle was ecstatic about the Kelly-Deasy rescue, because it seemed more like a wild romance than a stern tangible fact. He wrote, "It demonstrates to her [England's] horror the vitality and the vigor of the thing which she thought and boasted was dead. It shows her that there exists, now more than ever, an imperium in imperio, a power in her own bosom which threatens to prove her own death."(46) The executions aggrieved him. In the Irish People on 27 November, he wrote:

MURDERED!!! They have been strangled! They have been murdered!! Theirs is the last Irish blood crying to Heaven for vengeance. It has moistened English soil, but in the Reckoning Book it mingles with that ocean of the Irish life-current which has not ceased to flow during seven centuries, on the ensanguined altar of English rapacity, bloodthirstiness, pride and lust of power...Out of their ashes will spring up an army of their like. They died, only three; their death is worth three hundred thousand to the cause of Ireland...whenever my thoughts refer to that ghastly scene in front of the New Baily Prison, Manchester, my blood rushes in a torrent to my head, and I feel as if in my single strength I could tear asunder the monsters who thus outraged my country and humanity.(47)

This letter shows Lavelle's political astuteness, an attribute missing from the English government's handling of the affair. While condemning the executions from his own individual perspective, he acknowledged their power to revitalise the nationalist movement and to create an atmosphere in which constitutional and militant nationalists could work

together. If the opportunity were not immediately seized, it would not present itself again.

Lavelle did not participate in the post-Manchester commemorations, when all nationalists showed their solidarity, because of an injury to his left eye while trying to save the belongings of a neighbour whose house had caught fire. His doctors ordered complete rest, as they feared he would lose his sight.(48) A myth soon developed that Lavelle had dashed through the fire on a white horse. One of the events he was forced to miss was the monster meeting in Dublin on 8 December, which all leading nationalists attended. Lavelle, however, still took the opportunity to reiterate his opinion on the national question when he wrote to the organisers:

We are governed not by law but by force. We are governed as every conquered but not subdued province has ever been. But before the world and high heaven we protest. We re-demand, we re-vindicate to the thousand echoes our great un-suppliable right - the right of self government. God and nature intended us for that. Nor would we, as recently taunted, a self-governing people, become skull-breakers and cut throats.(49)

The rise in nationalist fervour meant that Lavelle's ideals were no longer regarded as those of a maverick and a rebel. Circumstances after the Manchester executions made them more acceptable to the broader spectrum of nationalism.

Lavelle reverted to seditious language against members of the hierarchy after the executions. He was angered when the bishops of Beverley and Liverpool declared it a crime for priests to assist in masses for the Manchester Martyrs. He argued that religion and patriotism were not incompatible pursuits. "It is not a crime," he declared, "to manifest that love [of one's country] in every possible way is not inconsistent with law and common prudence."(50)

A requiem mass was celebrated in Cong, Co Mayo on 17 December for the Manchester dead. The local clergy, led by Archdeacon Michael Waldron, organised the event and invited Lavelle to speak.(51) The church could not accommodate the crowd. At least eight

priests were present.(52) Lavelle gave a rousing speech declaring that Allen, Larkin and O'Brien had been executed for a cause they believed in and which all Irishmen espoused - Irish freedom.

No, brethren; they were not murderers. Their souls recoiled from murder, and this the whole transaction on which their faith was founded sufficiently and demonstratively proved. But they were martyrs to a sacred cause - not, merely, indeed, that particular cause to which they were supposed to be committed, but the great and undying cause, cherished by every Irish bosom from the rising to the setting sun - of their country's resurrection.(53)

He believed that most Irish people would not accept any partial and inadequate concession as part of the great indestructible right of Home Rule. The establishment of a native Irish parliament was the only remedy for the Irish problem. Lavelle called on the British government to hold a plebiscite on independence in Ireland, as it was then demanding for Italy.

A number of points emerge from Lavelle's speech. He enraged many bishops by bringing the national question on to the altar. Again he had tailored his words to suit the occasion. A radical address was expected as Cong was noted for its Fenian sympathisers, who appeared wearing green carpe at Mass in honour of the dead men.(54) But Lavelle's political ideology was also changing. His acceptance of a native Irish parliament declared his support for constitutional nationalism, something he had not exposed before.

Lavelle kept the Manchester Martyrs' memory alive long after the euphoria had disappeared. He made the anniversary an occasion for celebrating Irish nationalism and an inspiration to those who advocated armed resistance as an answer to the Irish question. New issues were emerging like agrarian demands and constitutional nationalism, which signalled the decline of militant nationalism. This was a road that Lavelle was also beginning to follow.

### (b) The drift towards constitutional nationalism

The unity produced by the Manchester executions showed itself in other ways between 1868 and 1870. During the 1868 general election, church disestablishment, land reform, the amnesty for the Fenian prisoners and the university question united all shades of nationalist opinion. It was the first occasion that many advanced nationalists, including Lavelle, participated in electoral politics and eventually resulted in their absorption into constitutional nationalism.

Several pointers show that Lavelle's involvement with constitutional nationalism was primarily due to his friendship with George Henry Moore. This had its origins in Moore's peripheral links with Fenianism, a connection similar to Lavelle's. It is now accepted that Moore communicated with the militant nationalist leaders like O'Donovan Rossa who regarded Moore as a prestigious ally. John Devoy in America believed in a close relationship between Fenians and constitutional nationalists, even if the latter never joined the movement.<sup>(55)</sup> Moore's association with Fenianism strengthened his contact with Lavelle, as they had little intercourse before this, except during the Partry evictions in 1860. Throughout the 1860s they differed on a number of issues, notably Lavelle's policy concerning the Partry schools.<sup>(56)</sup> Nevertheless, in the late 1860s they agreed on Fenianism. They did not oppose armed rebellion, providing it had a reasonable prospect of success. Lavelle admired Moore's political integrity and honesty, characteristics lacking in many Irish politicians in the 1850s and 1860s, particularly after the betrayal of Keogh and Sadleir. As they discussed Irish problems, Lavelle became more positive towards constitutional action. Cullen and Rome had failed to achieve such a transformation.

In the 1868 general election Lavelle was involved in constitutional nationalism in supporting Moore. The election brought the Catholic bishops and clergy to the electoral forefront for the first time since the 1852 general election. Church disestablishment was so important to the bishops that they ensured that the Irish Liberal representatives



George Henry Moore, Esq.

wholeheartedly backed Gladstone's policies.(57) In most of the non-Ulster constituencies, it was not the election that was important, but the nomination day, when the clergy selected and approved the popular candidates.

Lavelle attended the clerical meeting in Castlebar on 6 August and stated openly that George Henry Moore should contest the constituency regardless of what the convention decided. This showed a continuing contempt for the democratic and parliamentary process as Lavelle was not prepared to abide by the assembly's decision. As he said:

I think that considering the issue before the country, which is freedom for our people, that no matter what is the result, Mr Moore should stand. I say this as no admirer of Parliamentary agitation, nor as a believer in it, but I think we should put in a practical protest on the present occasion...Mr Moore should stand and have our support, in order, at all events, to show you are the independent voters.(58)

While Lavelle actively supported Moore in the election he was adamant that his views on the revolutionary cause remained unaltered.(59) While he attended the selection meeting in Castlebar, his attitude to constitutional politics was still a minority one among the clergy. Even John MacHale was prepared to use the parliamentary system to gain reforms for Ireland. Lavelle continued to espouse militant nationalism in the late 1860s because of the continuing fragmented political situation in the country. The Fenians still offered the hope of independence.

While retaining his contempt for parliamentary methods, Lavelle felt Moore was the only person who could exact concessions for Ireland from within parliament. At the Castlebar convention and during the election campaign, he indicated that the electoral process could improve landlord-tenant relations. The landlords' power base was within the House of Commons and any legislation it passed was binding upon them. Lavelle, who was then in confrontation with the National Land and Building Investment Company in Partry, felt the parliamentary system could end the tyranny of landlordism in Mayo.

His involvement in the 1868 election convinced many that he had become a constitutional nationalist. He campaigned for Moore in Ballinrobe, Cong, Castlebar and Claremorris. His speeches concentrated on the land issue, because it was a grievance that affected most people. At Claremorris, Lavelle criticised those landlords who were magistrates and used the law to look after their own interests. At the nomination meeting, and the subsequent victory banquet in Ballina, Lavelle, Moore and John MacHale condemned those landlords who rackrented tenants and demanded their votes.(60) The landlords faced constant attack, as a vulnerable group easily identified by the people, while issues like disestablishment and university education did not directly affect the people. Lavelle's radical rhetoric convinced many of his listeners that the election of another candidate, Valentine O'Connor Blake, would not be in the tenants' best interests:

Do you, now, in your heart believe that Valentine Blake would move one hand or foot for the removal of these monstrous grievances? (cries of "never", and groans). Do you believe that he goes into parliament seeking for his advancement or the advancement of his family, and forsaking the nation? (Cries of "We do" and groans).(61)

It appeared that Lavelle had turned his back on former militant nationalist allies. His apology to Richard Pigott for his inability to attend his banquet in Dublin in October 1868 seemed to reinforce this.(62) Pigott and his newspaper, the Irishman, had defended Lavelle throughout the 1860s and after the Connaught Patriot's suppression the Irishman was the principal outlet for his radical views. Lavelle wrote that he could not be present because of pastoral obligations, but he was canvassing for Moore throughout Mayo. His friendship with Moore was now a higher priority than his loyalty to those who had assisted him in the past.

While Lavelle differentiated between his opposition to parliamentary action and his support for Moore, he gradually accepted constitutional agitation. Some, like John Mitchel, considered Lavelle's electoral participation to be a sign that his nationalism was moderating. However, Lavelle still reasserted his opposition to parliamentary politics:

I am as firmly convinced to-day as I have been any day these fifteen years, that an English parliament will never legislate justly for Ireland. I am equally firm in my conviction, that the (sic) English treasury and other influences will render the formation of an "Irish Parliamentary party" an impossibility.(63).

He defended his role in the election on the ground that Moore would represent the wishes of his constituents, unlike other Irish parliamentarians.

Lavelle still cannot be classified a genuine constitutional nationalist, as his radical views on independence contrasted with those of many other nationalists. Nevertheless he was convinced now that an Irish parliament could be won through a programme similar to that implemented by the Hungarians against their Austrian masters. The Hungarian model was too extreme for many who favoured Home Rule. It involved the unilateral withdrawal of Irish MPs from Westminster and the convening of an Irish parliament at College Green, Dublin. Lavelle's proposals predated Arthur Griffith's Hungarian policy by 35 years.(64) Similar thoughts preoccupied Moore before his death. He felt Irish MPs were achieving little at Westminster. Moore travelled to Moorehall in April 1870 to consult with A.M. Sullivan and Lavelle on the formation of a new organisation which would unite all Irishmen, but he did not live to see his dream fulfilled. Consequently Lavelle's participation in the Home Government Association was as much a testimony to his friendship with Moore and to Moore's ideals, as it was to his own conversion to the parliamentary process.

The move towards constitutional nationalism in 1868 was not an isolated incident. Other advanced nationalists were beginning to make their peace with constitutional policies. Rejecting the parliamentary representation of local landlords, they turned to trusted nationalists whose loyalty to Ireland was above reproach. The Fenian movement, the Amnesty and land reform demonstrations promoted this group to a parliamentary platform. This created its own problems. There was no central organisation to assist them in contesting elections, in particular for those who had suffered for their country and who were acceptable as parliamentary representatives. Individual constituencies had to provide



an election fund to help such candidates. Often the electoral costs exceeded their resources. Greville-Nugent spent over £4,000 at the Longford by-election in 1869, while Viscount Castlereagh spent £14,000 in Down in 1878.(65) Only wealthy individuals could afford to contest elections and there were few such people within the nationalist movement.

Lavelle was the ideal candidate to lead the advanced nationalists in Mayo, who, often described as neo-Fenians, nominated him to contest the Mayo election in both 1868 and 1870.(66) John Forde proposed him in 1868, declaring: "...I have to propose a candidate that ninety-nine out of every hundred deem a fit and proper person." The leading members of the group in Mayo were Forde from Castlebar and Myles Jordan. The Mayo election was the first occasion on which the advanced nationalists indicated their readiness to use the electoral process, pre-dating O'Donovan Rossa's selection in Tipperary in 1869. Lavelle refused both nominations, but his attitude changed between 1868 and 1870.

In 1870, Lavelle was not as resolute in his espousal of revolutionary methods. His refusal of the nomination in 1868 and his succour for the Manchester Martyrs were the final stages of his support for a military solution and contrasts with his rhetoric at the meeting in 1870 which selected a successor for Moore. At the contest in 1868 he said:

God save Ireland (enthusiastic cheering). God rest the souls of Allen, Larkin and O'Brien, who, on this day twelvemonth were murdered in Manchester (loud manifestation of feeling). The first vote of George Henry Moore, in Parliament, will be to open the jails of England and release the political prisoners.(67)

By 1870 his attitude had mellowed and he said, "...it is not a fit or proper thing that Ireland should be represented and much less so misrepresented, there at all (hear, hear). Our country ought to represent herself at home...give us back the inestimable right of our country to manage her own affairs..."(68) When Moore died in April, Lavelle denied the Ballinrobe Chronicle's allegation that he used the phrase "God save Ireland" when giving the graveside oration.(69)

By 1870 Lavelle was prepared to stand for parliament provided that certain conditions were met, mainly the repeal of restrictions on Catholic priests becoming MPs. He would only seek election as an MP when an Irish parliament sat at College Green, Dublin. The Home Government Association was then in the process of formation and Lavelle considered this a major development in Irish politics. It influenced his declaration to the Mayo convention in 1870:

...thank God, a new epoch is fast dawning on our land (enthusiastic cheering). The words Protestant and Catholic are no longer dropping from the lips in bitterness and strife (applause). The northern and southern, the Connaughtman and the Leinsterman, are now going to cross hands from the four points and swear by the cross to work together, to do or die for national honour and independence.(70)

Lavelle's drift towards constitutional nationalism also appears in his involvement with the Amnesty Association, established under Isaac Butt, in November 1868, to campaign for the release of the Fenian prisoners. The organisation included Fenians and advanced nationalists, and was the first 'coalition' of advanced and constitutional nationalists, preceding the more publicised "new departures" of 1873 and 1878.(71) Eventually Amnesty symbolised all Irish grievances and not just Fenian principles in the strict ideological sense.

The Amnesty Association held 54 demonstrations, attended by over 600,000 people, throughout the country during the closing months of 1869. These meetings gave local people the opportunity to display their patriotism for the first time since the Tenant Right demonstrations of the early 1850s. While some meetings were impromptu, most were organised displays of nationalist fervour. The Fenians regarded them as a means of furthering their ideals in those areas where they were weak, especially Connacht and Leinster.(72)

Lavelle never became involved with the Amnesty movement to the extent that might have been anticipated. He attended a demonstration in Cork in March 1869 to welcome home

some of the released prisoners and his name was associated with four meetings, although he was not present at three of them - Dublin, Galway City and Youghal.(73) Lavelle's attendance would have brought him into conflict with the local bishop. His limited participation was afterwards attributed to his reluctance to seek the permission of the local bishops to address these demonstrations. Bishops were reticent about allowing him into their dioceses because of his past record. Lavelle realised this and stressed that his association with any Fenian organisation would have to be curtailed. He conveniently used the pretence of pastoral duties to excuse his non-attendance at the Amnesty meetings. Lavelle manipulated the occasion to suit himself, for censure by the local bishop or his pastoral duties could have been easily overcome.

His past political exploits were sufficient for him to be nominated to the executive committee of the new Amnesty Association, along with such personalities as Butt, John Martin, Richard Pigott and A.M. Sullivan. His association with this organisation brought him rewards, for six members of the committee were the driving force behind the formation of the Lavelle Indemnity Fund. Lavelle attended the Amnesty Society's last meeting in June 1869 and it adopted his resolution that the society be closed down and replaced by an Amnesty Association which would work for the release of the political prisoners.(74) He attended this meeting because he was in Dublin for his legal action against John Proudfoot of the National Land and Investment Company Ltd.

In his speeches and letters Lavelle contended that the Amnesty movement was a forum to air Irish grievances. This portrayed two aspects of his personality and ideology. He was increasingly identifying himself with the advanced nationalists rather than with the Fenian groups, thus rehabilitating himself further with constitutional nationalists. Lavelle, unlike the Fenian leadership, also showed an awareness that the agrarian question needed immediate settlement. He pointed out those grievances which all Irish people were interested in and which needed redress, avoiding the division over which issue should have priority within the Amnesty movement.(75)

The unity within the country and the rehabilitation of the neo-Fenians by constitutional nationalists is reflected in the amnesty petition initiated by Dean O'Brien of Newcastle West and signed by over 1400 Irish priests. It was a major embarrassment to Paul Cullen.(76) Surprisingly Lavelle's signature was not included. The omission is even more extraordinary for nearly all the Tuam clergy, including Lavelle's own curate, Father John O'Malley, signed the petition. Perhaps Lavelle shared Fr Peter Conway's belief that it was pointless signing a document that would have little impact on the government. Again, Lavelle may have objected to any initiative from O'Brien as the O'Brien-Lavelle dispute from 1862 had never been properly resolved.

The advanced nationalists had further opportunities to promote their cause when two by-elections occurred in Tipperary and Longford during the closing months of 1869. J.F.X. O'Brien was responsible for nominating the imprisoned Fenian leader, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, for the Tipperary by-election. Tipperary was the ideal constituency from which to launch a political campaign, as it had been to the forefront of the rebellion of 1867. Its people were deeply conscious of the suffering of some of her native sons, like Charles J. Kickham, during their imprisonment. O'Brien also wanted to make a public gesture of admiration for O'Donovan Rossa whose treatment in prison was well known throughout Ireland.(77) George Henry Moore was responsible for Lavelle and other advanced nationalists travelling to Tipperary to support O'Donovan Rossa. They feared that Rossa would be defeated because of the combined opposition of the local clergy and landlords and felt this would have grave consequences for the Amnesty Association. Lavelle and Thomas Ryan instigated the attempt to get Rossa's candidature withdrawn, indicating another breach with his former militant nationalist colleagues, who were adamant that Rossa should stand. Thomas Heron, Rossa's opponent, offered £500 to the political prisoners' fund if Rossa retired and while the Fenians rejected the money, Lavelle and the constitutional nationalists on the committee were prepared to accept it.(78)

Even Lavelle's involvement in the Longford by-election, when John Martin was the nationalist candidate, poses questions about his activities. The Martin Committee invited him to help their cause, but he declined on the pretence that his parochial duties and legal obligations created difficulties for him. As in Mayo at the 1868 general election Lavelle questioned the point of sending Irish nationalists to Westminster:

Assert your manhood; belie not your intelligence; believe not the delusive professions of the man, perhaps some military sapling, who in one breath professes sympathy with the "political prisoners", and in the next avows his intention of supporting the government that persists in its refusal to set them free...(79)

In 1869, Lavelle did not explain why he did not go to Longford, but in 1870 and 1872 he alleged he did not attend the Ballymahon meeting because it was in the jurisdiction of another bishop who supported Martin's opponent, Col R.J.M. Greville-Nugent.(80) The explanation is strange, as he breached this principle when he appeared in Maynooth and Ballaghaderreen. His contribution to the Longford election was minimal, a letter supporting Martin being his only involvement. Nevertheless, the authorities and the bishops were fearful of his actions. Father John Reynolds and others who co-ordinated Greville-Nugent's campaign, did their utmost to curtail Lavelle's influence at the election.(81) It was not Lavelle's comments that were not being attacked but his past reputation. His peripheral electoral involvement in Tipperary and Longford show his closer association with constitutional nationalism.

Lavelle's drift towards constitutional nationalism can thus be attributed to a number of factors, each one complementing each other. None of them can be taken in isolation, but individually they suggest that he was becoming more moderate in his attitude. He adopted a more pragmatic approach to Irish independence and was prepared to back whatever group he felt would deliver this goal.

In October 1869, Lavelle was transferred from Partry to Cong, one of the most

prosperous parishes in the diocese. Many bishops were surprised at the appointment, and his opponents considered MacHale's action as a reward for his radical and rebellious past. Lavelle continued to meddle in political affairs and his defence of Fenianism against Cullen's 1869 pastoral was written from Cong. Police reports indicate a rise in Fenian activity and the importation of arms into the Cong-Neale district in this period. The region continued to have a high Fenian profile during the Land War of 1879-82.(82) This cannot be attributed solely to Lavelle's arrival. His curate, Fr John O'Malley of the Neale, was well known for his Fenian sympathies and was J.F.X. O'Brien's brother in law. O'Brien frequently visited the region during 1869-70 and the police were suspicious of his motives. However, the real reason for the visits was that Lavelle was preparing O'Brien and Maria O'Malley for marriage, which occurred on 20 December 1870.(83)

To describe Lavelle's transfer to Cong as a promotion, or, as Tomas Ó'Fiaich has suggested, a financial move overlooks the real problems in Partry.(84) While he was in debt because of his libel actions, his difficulties with his parishioners made a transfer necessary. Throughout the 1860s Lavelle was in dispute with a number of them, resulting in court cases which brought the clergy into disrepute. Although he fought their cause against agrarian and pastoral oppression, his vindictiveness, quick-temper and ruthlessness also brought him into conflict with them. Cong was free from landlord-tenant friction, for the principal landlord, Sir Arthur Guinness, was an improving proprietor who had his tenants' interests at heart. As Sheridan Gilley asserts, Lavelle in Cong was less militant than the priest of Partry. He was not a typical priest, but a man marked as a violent opponent of authority.(85) Still Lavelle launched his last defence of Fenianism from Cong.

On 20 November 1869 Lavelle published his final letter supporting the Fenian movement in the Irishman. It was his most forthright declaration and occurred while the Irish bishops were in Rome attending the First Vatican Council. Lavelle agreed with Cullen's detestation of continental secret societies who threatened the Church and religion. He alleged that the Church had never expressly condemned Fenianism and that in 1864 and 1865 Cardinal

Barnabò had insisted that the decrees of 1864 against secret societies should be referred to:

If the Holy See meant to condemn them, what was easier for it to say than this, - "The foregoing Pontifical constitutions apply to the Fenians?" Instead of condemning them their case is expressly reserved for future consideration to the Holy See itself...It leaves Fenians just as they were, neither specially protected not specially condemned, but subject to the application, should they be found on close scrutiny by the Holy See itself, deserving thereof, of the good constitution of previous Popes.

Lavelle argued that the Freemasons should be censured because they were a secret organisation and the Carbonari because they were against the Church. However, he said in defence of the Fenians, "[They] do not answer this hideous description of human monsters in Italy...they are the very reverse and have been shown beyond all doubt to be ...men, as a rule, of stainless character of a high sense of honour, of profound religious convictions, and of unaffected piety."(86)

He realised this letter would determine the Church's attitude to the Fenian movement. His opening paragraph said it was the most responsible letter that he had ever to write, for it was of importance to his countrymen at home and abroad. He audaciously forwarded an Italian version of the letter to the Irish bishops in Rome, obviously intended for the Vatican officials. The apparent swing towards Fenianism, evident from the Amnesty demonstrations and the O'Brien petition, may have influenced his decision to write the letter as a statement reflecting the emotional state of the country.

Cullen remained in touch with developments in Ireland throughout his stay in Rome, through letters from his secretaries and Irish newspapers. He was informed of Lavelle's every movement and of his letters defending Fenianism. The Irish bishops spent more time in December 1869 discussing ways of dealing with Lavelle and the Fenian problem than on the issue - papal infallibility - that dominated the Vatican Council. When the bishops met at the Irish College in Rome on 17 December Lavelle's letter was discussed. Many regarded it as a threat to religion within Ireland and feared it would have an adverse effect on Cullen's health.(87) An appeal to the Vatican was regarded as a final judgement on the case. With sympathy for Fenianism increasing it appeared the bishops were fighting a

losing battle. They decided to ask Pope Pius IX for a final and unambiguous declaration on Fenianism. Archbishop Leahy of Cashel and Bishops Moriarty, Gillooly and McCabe were directed to show Lavelle's letter to the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda and they maintained that Lavelle

endeavours to sustain his opinion by certain Theological arguments calculated to mislead the Public. The Prelates believe that Public Order and Ecclesiastical Discipline in Ireland require a speedy and definite decision - whether Fenianism, as it exists in Ireland, comes under the Pontifical condemnations against Secret Societies.

They also asked that Propaganda frame a measure to prevent a recurrence of this offence.(88) This was opposed by John MacHale and John Derry and was added because Lavelle had threatened to write a second letter which never materialised because Lavelle probably realised that the full force of the Vatican and the bishops was about to descend upon him. It was feared that Lavelle would not accept the Vatican's directive as past experience had shown. Father Laurence Forde of Dublin indicated this: "I fear the result will be...a vague response against unlawful societies and a new triumphant appearance from Lavelle or one of his organs to show that the Fenians are still unscathed."(89)

The bishops were helped in their crusade against Lavelle and the Fenians by the British government, which through its representative in Rome, Odo Russell, sent the Vatican letters, extracts and addresses to meetings from radical priests, including Jeremiah Vaughan, Patrick Quaid and Lavelle.(90) The British feared that the Irish bishops were not prepared to control Lavelle, as the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Spencer, wrote to George Conroy, Cullen's secretary: "I understand that his bishop [MacHale] backs him [Lavelle] in his views. At any rate, he has promoted him lately to the Deanery."(91)

The Vatican finally settled the Fenian question on 12 January 1870 when Pope Pius IX decreed that the movement in both Ireland and North America was a banned organisation and its members excommunicated. After eight years Fenianism had finally been condemned and the bishops had removed Lavelle's symbolic threat to their power over the people. Cullen was ecstatic, seeing the rescript as the dawn of a new era in Irish affairs,



especially as it blocked any further clerical involvement in the Amnesty movement. The Vatican had finally delivered the decisive answer to Lavelle and others who had insisted that Fenianism had never been proscribed.(92) However, Cullen failed in his other objective to have Lavelle punished. Rome realised MacHale would not carry out its instructions. Still, the declaration had the desired effect for Lavelle could no longer hide behind the Vatican's ambiguous approach to the Fenian movement.

It was difficult to know how Lavelle would react to the rescript, for in the past he had shown little respect for episcopal authority. Rumours abounded that he had left for Rome to defend the Fenians and that he had departed for America.(93) Lavelle knew that he could no longer pursue his previous course and was pragmatic enough to realise that Cullen had beaten him. His defence of Fenianism was now concluded: he could no longer use theological argument when the highest authority in the Church had ruled against them. He was a cleric, and while at times he implied that his religion was second to his patriotism, he was prepared to abide by the Pope's ruling. Fenianism was now to lose its appeal within Ireland, as the emphasis shifted from nationalism to agrarian issues with the introduction of Gladstone's Land Bill into parliament. Fenianism had advanced as far as it could go through the processes of political agitation and could progress no further. A new constitutional nationalist movement was taking shape with George Henry Moore, Isaac Butt and others at the helm, people who, Lavelle felt, could win independence for Ireland.

Cullen nevertheless continued to be suspicious of Lavelle. His most blatant affront was an unannounced appearance in Maynooth at the end of February 1870, arriving from Dublin on the 4 o'clock train and remaining at the seminary until 9 o'clock. The professors first became aware of his presence when they heard footsteps on the corridors and discovered 80 students, mainly from the west of Ireland, around Lavelle and cheering. Lavelle then visited six of the professors and they allegedly drank champagne. A professor apparently told a student "that no man in Ireland deserved a better reception than the P.P. of Cong."(94) It is probable that Lavelle went to Maynooth to look up old friends because the

bishops were in Rome and were unable to censure or punish him. Nevertheless, it was a reminder to Cullen of his propensity to create trouble if he so desired.

While the political situation in Ireland was changing rapidly between 1868 and 1870, George Henry Moore's death on 19 April was a cruel blow to Irish nationalism, and in particular to Lavelle. Many regarded Moore as the natural leader of the new popular movement then being formed. Lavelle was devastated by Moore's death. "Our poor country! How badly you could spare your son at this juncture", he wrote to A.M. Sullivan.(95) Lavelle's close relationship with Moore was well-known after the death, for Lavelle received as many messages of sympathy as Mrs Moore. His peripheral role in the early stages of the Home Government Association was due to the duty assigned to him as administrator of the Moore estate.

Lavelle also delivered Moore's funeral oration. He began by saying:

There is no other Moore in Ireland so Ireland's loss is very great. Woe is Ireland to-day. Oh! my country, how mayest thou weep - weep scalding tears from your million eyes until their very foundations become dried up! Many long years in mourning, to-day are thou widowed, indeed. That son who had been to thee the same as a spouse, adviser, protector, the terror of thy foes and the joy of thine own heart, shall never stand between you and dishonour again.(96)

Lavelle's oration suffered as he was in great mental anguish, unable to overcome his emotions he spoke in accents of exhausted grief. When he concluded he sank to his knees on the grave.

After Moore's death, Lavelle kept his memory alive. Whether at the 1870 by-election to select his replacement or the 1874 general election, Moore's political ideals suffused Lavelle's letters and speeches. At the 1870 by-election convention, Lavelle placed Moore alongside other great Irish constitutional patriots, Grattan and O'Connell, declaring that Westminster was not a fitting place for such patriots.(97) He also tried to assemble a memorial committee to honour Moore's name. This proposal was soon forgotten as the

country turned to the new Home Rule movement and its new leadership. Thus Moore's contribution to Irish politics passed into oblivion.

Moore's death denied Lavelle a friend as well as a confidant. One can only speculate as to whether Lavelle would have become embroiled in the confrontations of the 1874 Mayo election if Moore had been alive. Lavelle's fortunes were linked to Moore. Following his death Lavelle's prominence waned. There was now little outlet for his political involvement. The Home Government Association was established in May 1870 and was centred in Dublin, far away from Lavelle's base in Cong.

While Moore's death was a great loss, the period of mourning was short. A number of candidates, including Valentine O'Connor Blake, Sir George O'Donel and George Browne, indicated their intention to seek the nomination for his seat even before the burial of the MP. Lavelle was now regarded as a political power broker because of his influence and importance in the county, but the description was exaggerated.(98) While his contribution was significant, he had to remain within the limits imposed by the general clerical body and support the candidate they selected at their convention.

Throughout the 1860s all Irish elections, except for 1868, were dominated by local issues rather than national grievances. While the 1868 election saw the emergence of national issues, the contests remained localised. Most candidates were local, often the nominees of the local clergy, as was Moore.

The clergy's electoral power, already noted in 1868, continued up to 1874. Lavelle told the electors in 1870 not to promise their vote to any candidate until the bishops and priests had selected their nominees.(99) A clerically-controlled meeting (at least 38 priests were present), assembled on 5 May 1870 in Castlebar. A certain caution existed among the laity about the selection of their representatives. As constitutional politics were held in low esteem in the 1860s, it was difficult to choose a candidate who represented the electors'

opinions. Influential members of the laity expected the clergy to provide the people with leadership. This was apparent in 1870, for no candidate was selected until the bishops and clergy had deliberated on the subject. The landowner, Thomas Tighe, summed up the situation "...it will now be for the faithful clergy and the people to adopt steps, immediate and decisive, to secure an honest and trustworthy representative."(100) They chose George Browne, hoping that Moore's characteristics were inherent in him. Browne's nomination was more out of respect for the former MP than an endorsement of his political ideology. These events in Mayo in May 1870 helped lower the tensions obvious since the divisions in Longford and Tipperary in late 1869.(101)

The Mayo convention shows the continuing drift towards constitutional nationalism which became more apparent with the formation of the Home Government Association. Many in Mayo pointed to the coercive way that Ireland was being governed by the British parliament and the necessity for an Irish parliament. Lavelle, who was again nominated to contest the seat by Myles H. Jordan, an advanced nationalist, declined the offer saying:

No, it is not a fit or proper thing that Ireland should be represented, and much less so misrepresented, there at all (hear, hear). Our country ought to represent herself at home. Give us back the house in College-green, now a counting-house of gold, silver and copper - give us back the inestimable right of our country to manage her own affairs...(102)

Lavelle in 1870 was optimistic about the future because of the emerging constitutional nationalist movement.(103)

Lavelle never achieved the rapport with Browne he had enjoyed with Moore. This was due to Browne's conservative political outlook and his espousal of Whig policies. He did not share Lavelle's radical views on the land and the political question. By the time this occurred, Lavelle's transformation from militant into constitutional nationalist was complete. Although he played a prominent role in Browne's election, his period as MP for Mayo saw Lavelle's political demise.

Lavelle's rebellious and nationalistic nature in the 1860s had long term implications for the

political involvement of the Irish clergy. He set a precedent that enabled others clerics during the Land League and Plan of Campaign agitations to express nationalist sentiments. Because of Lavelle's activities, priests like Frs James McFadden in Gweedore and David Humpreys in Tipperary were able to play a more active role in Irish social and political life.(104) For all of them, the significant point was that their bishops accepted this behaviour. It had been more difficult for Lavelle, as he had to contend with Cullen who was then consolidating his power within the Irish Church. Thus Lavelle's represented the militant wing of the Irish Church, and carried on that tradition from the period before the Famine until 1879.

## Chapter 5

1. For example see his attendance at an anniversary mass for Charles J. Lynch, at Petersburgh, Co. Galway, Tuam Herald, 3 Jun. 1865, p.2.
2. See D.D.A., Cullen Papers, Roman Letters, 1850-68, Kirby to Cullen, dated 13 May 1865.
3. Emmet Larkin, Consolidation of Roman Catholic Church, 1860-70 (Chapel Hill, 1987), pp. 398-9.
4. Cullen Papers, (Roman Letters), Moran to Cullen, dated 9 Nov. 1865.
5. Ibid., (Bishops 1865), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 15 Jul. 1865; P.J. Corish, Irish College, Rome: Kirby Papers; Calendered in Archivium Hibernicum, xxx (1972), Cullen to Kirby, dated 16 Jul. 1865, pp.47-8; Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, p.399.
6. Irishman, 21 Oct. 1865, p.268.
7. N.L.I. MS 7687, Larcom Papers, from New York Irish American, 4 Nov. 1865.
8. See Irishman, 3 Feb. 1866, p.508. John MacEvilly remarked of Lavelle, "He is too cunning to mind those who allow him to have his own way in all things," Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1865), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 17 Nov. 1865.
9. Irish People, 11 Nov. 1865, p.3. See also Cullen Papers, (1865 Bishops), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 17 Nov. 1865.
10. Irish People, 8 Dec. 1866, p.1.
11. For Cullen's pastorals see Nation, 28 Oct. 1865, p.165; 3 Feb. 1866, p.375; Catholic Telegraph, 3 Feb. 1866, p.3; P.J. Corish, "Cullen and the National Association of Ireland", in Reportorium Novum, iii (1961-2), p.39.
12. Irish People, 2 Feb. 1867, p.1; also 12 Jan. 1866, p.1.
13. Ibid., 1 Sept. 1866, p.4; see also 7 Jul. 1866, p.5.
14. N.A., C.S.O.R.P., 1867/3847, Lavelle's pamphlet on Fenianism, p.1; Connaught Patriot, 9 Feb. 1867, p.3. See also Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1867), Manning to Cullen, dated 17 Mar. 1867.
15. Connaught Patriot, 9 Feb. 1867, p.4.
16. N.A., C.S.O.R.P., 1867/3847, Police report, Dingle, dated 4 Mar. 1867. This attack worried Cullen and the Irish bishops as they feared he had reverted to his former ways.
17. Mayo Constitution, 14 Jul. 1868, p.3; Irishman, 6 Feb. 1869, p.500; Tuam Herald, 4 Dec. 1869, p.1.
18. Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, p.643.
19. Irish People, 3 Mar. 1866, p.5.
20. Ibid., 1 Sept. 1866, p.4. See also 28 Jul. 1866, p.4; 4 Aug. 1866, p.5.
21. For the opposition to women's involvement in political affairs see Margaret Ward, Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism (London & Dingle, 1983), pp. 4-39. For male opposition to the Ladies Land League see Anna Parnell, The Tale of a Great Sham (Dublin, 1986); Paul Bew, Land and the National Question, 1858-82 (Dublin, 1987), pp. 198-201; T.W. Moody, Michael Davitt and Irish Revolution, 1846-82 (Oxford, 1981), pp. 482, 532-5.
22. Irish People, 3 Nov. 1866, p.3.
23. See ibid., 8 Dec. 1866, p.1.

24. See ibid., 26 Jan. 1867, p.1.
25. For the impact of the divisions on the Fenian movement in North America see Leon Ó'Broin, Fenian Fever: An Anglo-American Dilemma (New York, 1971), pp. 56-72; Kevin B. Nowlan, "The Fenian Rising of 1867", in The Fenian Movement (Cork & Dublin, 1978), p.25.
26. Irish People, 6 Oct. 1866, p.1.
27. Ibid., 20 Oct. 1866, p.1.
28. Irish People, 6 Oct. 1866, p.1; 1 Sept. 1866, p.4.
29. Irish People, 21 Jul, 1866, p.4.
30. Ibid., 21 Dec. 1867, p.1.
31. See N.L.I., MS 11,188 (23), Mayo Papers, report on meeting of the Supreme Council of the I.R.B..
32. Irish People, 23 Mar. 1867, p.1.
33. Ibid., 13 Apr. 1867, p.1.
34. Ibid., 20 Apr. 1867, p.1. See also 2 Feb. 1867, p.1, when he said that a couple of years before there would have been no trouble in getting 20,000 to fight for the Pope, but now there would have been trouble getting 100 because of the bishops' attitude to Fenians. This point is partly supported by John Blake Dillon in March 1865, see N.L.I., Gillooly Papers, J.B. Dillon to Gillooly, dated 3 Mar. 1865. Dillon was referring to the situation in Tipperary.
35. See Ó'Broin, Fenian Fever, pp. 132-3; Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, p. 424.
36. Irish People, 23 Mar. 1867, p.1. See also Lavelle's letter on Moriarty to Tipperary Advocate, 1 Feb., 1868, p.4.
37. Ibid., 12 Jan. 1867, p. 1.
38. For McGee's Role in Irish and Canadian affairs see Hereward Senior, The Fenians in Canada (Toronto, 1978), chpts. 3 & 6; T.P. Slattery, The Assassination of D'Arcy McGee: The Life and Tragic Death of Canada's most Colorful Founding Father (Toronto, 1968); Donald MacKay, Flight from Famine: The Coming of the Irish to Canada (Toronto, 1990), pp.320-325; William Kirwan, "Thomas D'Arcy McGee: Turning Points in the Life of a Nationalist", in Robert O'Driscoll & Lorna Reynolds (eds.), The Untold Story: The Irish in Canada (Toronto, 1990), pp. 521-536.
39. See Irish People, 5 Oct. 1867, p.1.
40. Ibid., 9 May 1868, p.4.
41. At the same time Lavelle's only remaining brother, Thomas, was murdered by a drunk in New York on 17 February 1868. This affected him and his column on 4 April 1868 was his shortest. His anxiety was evident in his words:  
     ...up to this morning, not a tear came to my eye. But a mountain-weight lay  
     on my heart; and I thought it could never leave.  
Irish People, 4 Apr. 1868, p.1.
42. N.L.I. MS 898, George Henry Moore Papers, dated mid Oct. 1867. For the attitude of O'Neill Daunt and Martin, see MS 8047(2), O'Neill Daunt Papers, John Martin to Daunt, dated 8 Oct. 1867; N.A. Fenian Papers, F. Files 1866-74, (2014 R) dated 24 Mar. 1868, Lavelle banquet report; MS 7695, Larcom Papers; Freeman's Journal, 17 Oct. 1867, p.3; Irishman, 19 Oct. 1867, pp. 244-5.
43. N.A., Fenian Papers (2014 R), dated 24 Mar. 1868, Lavelle banquet report; MS 7695, Larcom Papers; Irishman, 19 Oct. 1867, pp. 244-5.

44. Fenian Papers, (2014 R), Lavelle Banquet Report.
45. The two best accounts of the Manchester events are to be found in Paul Rose, The Manchester Martyrs: The Story of a Fenian Tragedy (London, 1970); Patrick Quinlivan and Paul Rose, The Fenians in England, 1865-1872 (London, 1982), pp. 43-75; O'Broin, Fenian Fever, chpt. xii.
46. Irish People, 19 Oct. 1867, p.1.
47. Ibid., 21 Dec. 1867, p.1; for a similar attitude see also 22 Jun. 1867, p.1.
48. Mayo Constitution, 26 Nov. 1867, p.3; Ballinrobe Chronicle, 23 Nov. 1867, p.1; N.L.I., MS 7695, Larcom Papers, Irishman, 30 Nov. 1867, p.350; Irish People, 7 Dec. 1867, p.1.
49. Larcom Papers, MS 7695; Freeman's Journal, 9 Dec. 1867, p.6; Connaught Patriot, 14 Dec. 1867, p.4; Nation, 14 Dec. 1867, p.260; Irishman, 14 Dec. 1867, p.372; Irish People, 4 Jan. 1868, p.1.
50. Larcom Papers, MS 7695; Irishman, 21 Dec. 1867, p.391.
51. Freeman's Journal, 20 Dec. 1867, p.3; Connaught Patriot, 28 Dec. 1867, p.1.
52. Larcom Papers, MS 7695; Irishman, 28 Dec. 1867, p.404; Nation, 28 Dec. 1867, p.404.
53. Connaught Patriot, 21 Dec. 1867, p.3; 28 Dec. 1867, p.1; Cullen Papers, (Laity, Jan.-Jul. 1868), newspapers cutting, dated 2 Jan. 1868. See also N.A., C.S.O., R.P., 1867/21955, Police report on Cong mass for Manchester Martyrs, dated 18 Dec. 1867; Mayo Papers, MS 11,950.
54. N.A., C.S.O., R.P., 1867/21955, police report of Cong mass.
55. David Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule (London, 1964), p.90; Joseph Hone, The Moores of Moorehall (London, 1939), pp.169-71; David Barr, 'George Henry Moore and his tenants, 1840-1870', in Cathair na Mart, viii (1988), p.75. See also Desmond Ryan, The Phoenix Flame (London, 1937), p.245; Donald Jordan, 'John O'Connor Power, Charles Steward Parnell and the Centralisation of Popular Politics in Ireland', in L.H.S., xxv, no.97 (May 1986), p.48; Maurice Johnson, "The Fenian Amnesty Movement, 1869-79" (St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, M.A. thesis, 1980), p.97
56. N.L.I. MS 895 (754), Moore Papers, Moore to Marquis of Sligo, dated 20 Aug. 1868.
57. See Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, pp.590-612; Thornley, op. cit., pp.37-45.
58. N.L.I., MS 899, George Henry Moore Papers, Mayo Election; Mayo Constitution, 11 Aug. 1868, p.3; Tuam Herald, 15 Aug. 1868, p.1.
59. Nation, 12 Sept. 1868, p.60.
60. N.L.I., MS 899, Moore Papers; Mayo Examiner, 23 Nov. 1868; Mayo Constitution, 24 Nov. 1868, p.3; Irishman, 12 Dec. 1868, p.382; Tipperary Advocate, 19 Dec. 1868, p.4.
61. N.L.I., MS 899, Moore Papers, Claremorris demonstration; also Ballinrobe Chronicle, 29 Aug. p.1; 31 Oct. 1868, p.1.
62. Irishman, 24 Oct. 1868, p.259.
63. Ibid., 26 Dec. 1868, p.406.
64. Nation, 21 May 1870, p.630. On Griffith's "Hungarian Policy" see Richard Davis, Arthur Griffith and Non-Violent Sinn Fein (Dublin, 1974), pp. 21-3, 26-9; Carlton Younger, Arthur Griffith (Dublin, 1981), pp. 222-5.
65. Gerard Moran, 'Politics and Electioneering in County Longford, 1868-1880', in Raymond Gillespie and Gerard Moran (eds.), Longford: Essays in County History (Dublin, 1991), pp. 183-4; Gerard



- Moran, 'The Advance on the North: The difficulties of the Home Rule Movement in South-East Ulster', in Raymond Gillespie and Harold O'Sullivan (eds.), The Borderlands: Essays on the History of the Ulster-Leinster Border (Belfast, 1989), pp. 134-5; B.M. Walker, 'The Land Question and Elections in Ulster, 1868-86', in S. Clark and J.S. Donnelly (eds.), Irish Peasants: Violence and Unrest, 1790-1914 (Manchester, 1983), pp. 235-242.
66. N.L.I., MS 899, Moore Papers; Mayo Examiner, 23 Nov. 1870; Irishman, 24 May, 1870, p.75; Mayo Constitution, 14 May, 1870, p.4.
  67. N.L.I., MS 899, Moore Papers, Mayo Election.
  68. Nation, 21 May 1870, p.630.
  69. Ballinrobe Chronicle, 30 Apr. 1870, p.1.
  70. Mayo Constitution, 14 May, 1870, p.4; Irishman, 24 May, 1870, p.757.
  71. M. Johnson, op. cit., pp 165-6.
  72. On the extent of the meetings and the significance of their locations see Johnson, op. cit., pp 196-211.
  73. Tomas Ó'Fiaich, "The Clergy and Fenianism, 1860-70", in The Irish Ecclesiastical Record, civ (Feb. 1968), p.95; Fenian Papers (5169 R); Cullen Papers, (Secular priests 1869), newspaper cuttings, dated 7 Aug. 1869; 10 Sept.; Nation, 30 Jan. 1869, p.384.
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  77. D. Nolan, "J.F.X. O'Brien, 1828-1905" (University College, Cork, M.A. thesis, 1971), pp. 122-6; R.V. Comerford, Charles J. Kickham (Dublin, 1979), pp. 105-6; Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, Irish Rebels in English Prisons (rep. Dingle, 1991).
  78. N.L.I., MS 13465(1), J.F.X. O'Brien Papers; Richard Pigott, Recollections of an Irish Nationalist Journalist, p.322; James O'Shea, Priests, Politics and Society in post-Famine Ireland: A Study of County Tipperary, 1850-1891 (Dublin & New Jersey, 1983), pp. 164-5; Irishman, 7 Mar. p.752, 21 Mar. pp. 604-5, 25 Apr. 1974, p.684, 17 Apr. 1880, p.659, 24 Apr. 1880, p.679.
  79. Irishman, 11 Dec. 1869, p.384; 23 Apr. 1870, p.699; Moran, 'Politics and Electioneering in County Longford', p.176.
  80. Irishman, 24 May 1870; Mayo Constitution, 14 May, 1870.
  81. Judgement delivered by Mr Justice Fitzgerald, and Minutes of the Evidence Taken at the Trial of the Longford Election Petition, (1870), H.C. 1870, [178], lvii, p.45.
  82. Fenian Papers, 1866-74 (7303 R) dated 26 Mar. 1871.
  83. Ibid.; N.L.I., MS 8706, Isaac Butt Papers; Sheridan Gilley, Catholic Church and Revolution in Ireland, p.126; Nolan, "J.F.X. O'Brien, 1825-1905", p.129.
  84. Ó'Fiaich, Patriot Priest of Partry, p. 145.
  85. Gilley, Catholic Church and Revolution, p.137.
  86. Irishman, 20 Nov. 1869, p.339; Nation, 20 Nov. 1869, p.214. See also Cullen Papers, (Secular priests, 1869), Lavelle to Irish Irish Bishops, dated 9 Nov. 1869; Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, pp. 647-51.

87. Cullen Papers, (Vicar Generals 1869), Fr Forde to McCabe, dated 13 Dec. 1869; Ardagh Diocesan Archives, Conroy Papers, 1869-70, Cullen to Conroy, dated 17 Dec. 1869; MacSuibhne, Cullen and his Contemporaries, vol. iv, pp. 264-5; Larkin, Consolidation of Catholic Church, pp.652-3; Corish, Political Problems, pp. 41-2.
88. Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1869), From Bishops of Ireland to Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, dated 22 Dec. 1869; MacSuibhne, Cullen and his Contemporaries, p.267; Ardagh Diocesan Archives, Conroy Papers, 1869-70; Cullen to Conroy, dated 23 Dec. 1869.
89. Conroy Papers, 1869-70, Laurence Forde to Conroy, dated 22 Dec. 1869.
90. Sean Cannon, 'Irish Episcopal Meetings, 1788-1882: A Juridico-Historical Survey', in Annuaire Historiae Conciliorum, xiii, (1981), no. 2, p.400; Norman, Catholic Church and Age of Rebellion, p.129; Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1869), Conroy to Cullen, dated 16 Dec. 1869, 31 Dec. 1869; Fenian Papers, F. Files, (5126 R), memo from Vice Regal Lodge, Dublin, dated 27 Nov. 1869, a total of 33 cases involving 17 priests were cited. See also Johnson, op. cit., pp312; Corish, Political Problems, pp. 42-3.
91. Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1870), Conroy to Cullen, dated 14 Jan. 1870.
92. MacSuibhne, Cullen and Contemporaries, vol. v, pp. 42-3, Cullen to Dr Conroy, dated 20 Jan. 1870.
93. Cullen Papers, (Secretaries 1870), Conroy to Cullen, dated 10 Jan. 1870, 9 Feb. 1870.
94. Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1870), Conroy to Cullen, dated 25 Mar. 1870. See also 2 Mar. 1870, 11 Mar. 1870; Nation, 26 Feb. 1870, p.445.
95. N.L.I., MS 895(832), Moore Papers, Lavelle to A.M. Sullivan, dated 19 Apr. 1870.
96. Ibid., MS 899; Mayo Telegraph, 27 Apr. 1870; Irish Times, 25 Apr. 1870, p.5; Freeman's Journal, 25 Apr. 1870, p.3; Tuam Herald, 30 Apr. 1870, p.1; Irishman, 30 Apr. p.702.
97. Mayo Constitution, 14 May 1870, p.3.
98. Cullen Papers, (Bishops 1870), Conroy to Cullen, dated 6 May 1870.
99. Tuam Herald, 30 Apr. 1870, p.2.
100. Ibid., 7 Apr. 1870, p.1; Ballinrobe Chronicle, 30 Apr. 1870, p.1.
101. Nation, 7 May 1870, p.601. The difference between clergy and laity in Longford and Tipperary can be seen in Moran, Longford Politics, pp.175-183; Comerford, Kickham, pp. 106-118; Comerford, Fenians in Context, pp. 178-9; O'Shea, op. cit., pp. 162-4.
102. Freeman's Journal, 14 May 1870, p.4; Irish Times, 14 May 1870, p.31; Irishman, 21 May 1870, pp. 750-1; Mayo Constitution, 14 May 1870, p.3.
103. Ibid.
104. For role of McFadden see Laurence M. Geary, The Plan of Campaign, 1886-91 (Cork, 1986), pp. 29-33; and for Humpreys see, Denis G. Marnane, "Fr David Humpreys and New Tipperary", in William Nolan (ed.), Tipperary: History and Society (Dublin, 1985), pp. 339-66.

CHAPTER 6  
LAVELLE AND PARTRY, 1861-1870

(a) Life in Partry after the evictions

Lavelle's involvement with militant nationalism in the 1860s may have enhanced his reputation, but it did little to overcome his problems in his parish of Partry. The remainder of his ministry was taken up with his relationship with the Evangelicals, the authorities and his parishioners and the perennial distress in his parish. Similar difficulties were encountered by other clergy on a day to day basis, but none achieved the same prominence as Lavelle.

While the 1861 population census marked the decline of the 'Second Reformation' both in Partry and Ireland, Lavelle still had to contend with the Evangelicals in his parish. They continued to solicit subscriptions through their new organisation, the West Connaught Church Endowment Society, but they found it increasingly difficult to maintain parishes such as Partry. To get more money, Bishop Thomas Plunket still insisted that Partry was a success. Lavelle countered this claim with a call for an independent commission to come to Partry and witness the 'gains' that had been made. He stated "that the worst man to the Protestant interest is 'Lord Plunket, Bishop of Tuam.'"(1) Once Lavelle had Plunket and other members of the Endowment Society on the defensive he hammered home the point. He discredited their attempts to collect money in England and elsewhere on the grounds that the Church of Ireland population was increasing and he also tried to show that no conversions had been made in Partry. When W.C. Plunket wrote publicly for donations, Lavelle replied that the only Protestants in the region were in the cemetery and did not require funds. The Bishop of Tuam, he added, had an annual income of £27,683 for ministering to 17,156 souls and did not need any money either.(2)

By 1862 Lavelle and the Irish Church had overcome the Evangelical threat. Connemara was the only region in which the Irish Church Missions Society remained active.(3) The Evangelicals failed to win a single recruit from the Catholic population in Partry after 1862, although they expended vast sums. With individuals of Lavelle's calibre in charge of such parishes, it was virtually impossible make any headway with the local population.(4)

Eviction remained the most feared weapon in the landlords' arsenal and in 1862 the Plunket family resorted to it once more . In June 1862, Catherine Plunket evicted two tenants, Stephen Quinn and Pat Darmody, from the Cappaduff portion of her estate. As neither owed rent, this reawakened the old memories of the landlord's absolute power over his tenants. While explanations were offered for the evictions, the most common being that the farms were being cleared for an incoming convert, the motive for the expulsions appears to have been Quinn's decision to sell stones for a new school house to Lavelle.(5) This gave Lavelle another excuse to write to the press about the situation in Partry and to reintroduce the emotive imagery of the suffering children:

I saw the decent and kind-hearted mother weep as she leant over them in their bed of straw, and put the sugar and water to their withered lips. The good God gave a blessing to the sugar and water, perhaps as great as to Miss Plunket's buttermilk, and the little ones recovered and began to run about again like healthy little mountain children, that they are.(6)

In another letter after the evictions he showed his disgust for a system that permitted this:

I could not stand it - my heart sickened - my blood boiled. The tears of the women and the woe-begone looks of the sick children flung thus on the straw, with no roof but the canopy of heaven, went to the inmost core of my heart...It is such scenes, legally enacted, that have implanted in my bosom a horror of British rule in Ireland - a hatred of the British name, that neither time nor distance shall ever eradicate. Godless Colleges, Church Disestablishments, ruined industry, national contempt - these are bad enough; but, Sir, extermination, according to law, whether in Kerry or Erris - whether in Gweedore or Partry - is what my soul of souls rises up in red revolution against.(7)

The authorities were determined to contain him, given his past activities. They prosecuted him in 1862 over his involvement with the razing of Plunket's pound and his subsequent

'riotous behaviour'. Eventually the government dropped the charges, much to the consternation of the local magistrates. This decision was due to the death of Lavelle's brother, Francis, who fell from a horse in April 1862. The government hoped that this gesture would contribute to the restoration of good relations.(8)

Lavelle's attack on Plunket's pound resulted in eleven extra constabulary being stationed in Partry at an additional cost of £40 a month, an expense placed on the seven townlands surrounding Cappaghduff. At a time when distress was rampant in the region a supplementary burden of 8/- in the pound was placed on an already destitute population.

Lavelle stated:

Thus does it happen that, in spite of all the relief I am exhausting myself to obtain, the poor people are reduced to utter extremities. One man came to me today, Anthony Marrin, and, showing me the "six days' notice" from Mr Gibbons, of Castlebar, county cess collector for the barony, told me he should go to-morrow and pawn his last bed and bed-clothes to meet this iniquitous tax, otherwise distress will be made, perhaps next day, with double costs.(9)

Throughout his administration in Partry, Lavelle targeted the constabulary as the vulnerable link in the state's attempts to defeat him, arguing that they were opposed to the interests of the local population. As a majority of the police were Catholic, they were in the invidious position of appearing to uphold the proselytisers' position. They were forced to choose between their loyalty to their religion and to their employers. Their problems were exacerbated when the authorities' decided to send the constabulary to Mass to take notes of Lavelle's sermons. As late as 1862 the police were still forwarding weekly accounts to Dublin of Lavelle's sermons.(10) While the object was to build up a case against Lavelle in order to prosecute him, it failed miserably. Most of the notes were ambiguous, often written down days after the sermons and could not be used against him.

Once the Evangelical threat lessened, Lavelle turned his venom on the constabulary who attended Mass to spy on him:

...since the day I began to resist the "earnest desire" of Partry's Right Rev. and

Right Hon. Lord...the unfortunate Catholic police are commanded, under the dread penalty of unfrocking, or high displeasure at least, to report forthwith what I may have said, and the more there is added to it the more favourable is the report received. And is not this an outrage and an insult? Men come to church on the pretence of honouring their Maker, of sanctifying, by one great act at least, the day of the Lord; and they are commanded, under pain of ruin, not to reflect upon their own lives - not to atone for evil done - not to invoke Divine mercy and aid - not to adore the august Presence before which they kneel; but ear and eye erect, to catch every syllable that may fall from the celebrant's lips on that subject...(11)

Lavelle continued to write to the Inspector General of the Royal Irish Constabulary saying that he would no longer tolerate espionage in his church. The police left the chapel whenever Lavelle pointed to them. Eventually the authorities appointed only non-Catholic constables to the Cappaduff barracks.(12)

Throughout this period Lavelle controlled his parishioners. Most of his flock feared him. He warned them not to work for the Scripture Readers. Unknown to him some of his congregation, such as Daniel Buckley and John Mellet, continued to work in a clandestine manner for Evangelicals. When Lavelle approached the houses of the Scripture Readers, the workers hid and did not reappear until he departed.(13)

A few of his parishioners were prepared to defy Lavelle's wrath and tempestuous outbursts. The most controversial was John Horan of Derreenmore whom Lavelle assaulted on 6 December 1862, after he had celebrated a station mass in Horan's house. Lavelle accused Horan of writing to his landlord, Sir Robert Lynch Blosse, and naming Lavelle as a party in eviction resistance. Lavelle admitted he gave Horan "a clout on the shoulder" because of his unruly actions and his participation in quarrelsome scenes in the region. In fact, he struck Horan twice over the head. Lavelle was brought before the petty sessions court and fined 10/- with 2/6 costs.(14) This case also brought Lavelle into conflict with Colonel Nesbit Knox, one of the largest landowners in Mayo. Knox sent the constabulary to arrest Lavelle on the assault charge. He in turn accused Knox of coaching Horan as to what action to take and telling him what questions to ask and what not to.(15) The acrimony between the two was heightened by Lavelle's decision to apply to the Lord

Lieutenant to send a stipendary magistrate to preside over the Ballinrobe Petty Sessions court instead of Knox.(16)

Such cases were exceptional in nineteenth-century Ireland, for the priests' authority over his parishioners ensured they were rarely brought before the civil courts. Whenever it occurred, the plaintiff was pressurised to drop the charges, as in Ellen Walsh's case against Lavelle.(17) Horan's wife pleaded with him on the morning of the court hearing to drop the charges. It is a mark of Horan's outrage that he even considered bringing the case before the courts, but he only pursued the suit because of direct encouragement from two local magistrates and landowners, Colonel Knox and Robert Lynch Blossie. The authorities had an opportunity to prosecute Lavelle and they were not going to miss it. Horan received the full force of Lavelle's wrath. Father Peter Geraghty, Lavelle's curate, condemned Horan's actions from the altar, apparently with his superior's connivance. Horan had to travel to Ballinrobe to carry out his religious duties. Any person who crossed Lavelle had to pay the penalty. It was a reminder to all his flock not to disobey him.

The incident resurrected the argument as to who controlled the tenants. The landlords maintained that Lavelle had interfered in an eviction and was meddling with their right to control their estates. Lavelle countered that he was exercising his clerical prerogative to preserve social order among his parishioners by settling internal disputes.(18) Such disputes were not confined exclusively to Partry, but occurred whenever the interests of the landlords and the clergy collided.

Lavelle's greatest single problem in the post-1862 period was distress. While poverty, caused by the potato failure, had been apparent in 1860, by 1862 it had reached crisis proportions and remained acute up to 1867. If the Evangelicals did not crush the people, starvation would. Lavelle, like most of his peers, did not have the personal resources to help his flock.(19) While the poorer regions of the west, like Clifden, Newport and Partry, faced great hardship, it also affected the more affluent parishes like Cong.

The government's failure and Plunket's refusal to assist the Catholic population of Partry prompted Lavelle to call for urgent relief measures. In his letter of 18 January 1862 to the Catholic Telegraph, he said:

In God's name, let something be done to avert the impending calamity of wholesale death by starvation. As our foreign rulers refuse almost to listen to our cries of distress, dismissing what itself calls "respectable" deputations, with the laconic assurance that it "would bestow its serious consideration on the matter", while in the meantime the first pangs of hunger devour the entrails of its victims...Oh, people of Ireland, in the name of your brave and faithful fathers, starved and murdered by the same alien government, come to the rescue. The accounts I receive from my own parish are heart-rending...On you, then, devolves the traditionary duty of doing what your rulers refuse, the noblest act in the catalogue of human deeds - saving the lives of our people.(20)

In a further letter to the Catholic Telegraph, beseeching aid for his people, he said:

I don't care who they are. Let them be Turks or Pagans; they will be men, and they must report the truth. Even in my absence let them go there - any day they please, without notice or warning, and, before Him who will "judge justice," let them say if there is not, even at this moment, famine in Partry...In the name of humanity, if not of religion, let them get work. They are yet able to earn their bread, and seed for the coming spring...(21)

Sympathisers in Dundee, Deptford, Manchester and other British cities forwarded large sums of money to Lavelle. This prompted Lavelle to say, "With such aid, I hope to be soon 'free as the wind' and my poor people secured from the fangs of the proselytiser."(22) In these letters Lavelle told tales of the Evangelicals' exploits, such as the Scripture Readers' attempt to convert a poor widow back to the Evangelical fold. Lavelle ensured that the subscriptions were seen to be helping the people. He was also winning the religious struggle in Partry.

Though small, donations from the Irish communities in Britain represented widespread support for Lavelle. One group from Dundee wrote:

Above all other men, you have an undoubted claim on our Irish hearts. You have been the instrument under Heaven in saving many of our race from the fate of apostacy, and preserving them from the poisonous influence of those demons of discord, the "Soupers" that infest our country.(23)



To the Irish in Britain and America, Lavelle symbolised the resistance that was needed in Ireland; an opposition that did not exist when most of them left Ireland in the 1850s. They hoped that their small contributions would ensure that others did not suffer the same fate.

Lavelle also received donations from America. The American Fenian circles sent Lavelle funds, often transmitted by John O'Mahony.(24) Even after the closure of the Patrick's Pence Fund many Irish-Americans continued to forward subscriptions to Lavelle for the relief of distress.(25) One writer to the Boston Pilot, described Lavelle as a noble patriot and a true soldier of the cross, declaring that the best way of showing Lavelle the emigrants' appreciation was to send money for his people and added, "Would to God that every priest and bishop in Ireland were like Father Lavelle."(26)

Money was forwarded for the relief of distress in 1862 and 1863, when a thousand people in the region needed aid which cost nearly £50 a week, so that it took all of Lavelle's resources to protect his parishioners from death and starvation. That he succeeded must be attributed to his fame, especially among the Irish abroad.

His difficulties in Partry became an endurance test for Lavelle. Sometimes, he claimed, he went without sleep for four nights in the week. He had to spend long periods away from Partry appealing for funds to sustain his influence over his parishioners. He had to administer to their temporal, legal, material as well as spiritual needs. During this time two members of his family died: his brother, Francis, in April and his father the following November.(27) Relations between Lavelle and the Evangelicals remained tense. Plunket's impoundment of trespassing stock continued to antagonise the people. Robert Holmes, Plunket's bailiff at Gurteenmore, alleged that on 12 March 1863, Lavelle assaulted him with a whip after he discovered sheep trespassing on the Bishop's lands. Lavelle was fined 1/- with 10/- costs, but not before he protested that the magistrate, Colonel Nesbit Knox, was biased against him.(28)

Soon larger numbers of cattle and sheep were impounded and the tenants were forced to pay exorbitant fines for their release. Lavelle lamented:

But how can the cowering tenant-at-will try titles with his master? There is at present a case at my door in which a poor man is summoned by the bailiff and pound keeper - two characters that should never be found in one person - the temptation to illegal pounding is so great as facts only certify - for the trespass of one sheep, being thus placed in the alternative of either paying the trespass and costs of summons at home, or else of losing his time in going to defend the case in Ballinrobe. Try, please, and help me to put down their petty tyranny.(29)

Lavelle's Partry experiences helped form these radical sentiments and his antipathy to Irish landlordism. He now turned to an article by Judge Fletcher in the Dublin Review of July 1836, stating that Irish tenant farmers had every right to rise up against his oppressors and take the law into their own hands:

...were I the threatened "victim of unmerited oppression", I know of no principle of Christian or human morality that would prevent me from defending myself and mine against the exterminator, at the last sacrifice to him and to me. I do not believe I could stand to see myself and my innocent family beggered, ruined, outcast, lost, without giving them that protection denied them "by the law of the land".(30)

He returned to this issue in a letter to the Irishman in August 1863 on Irish landlordism. It was published in nearly every nationalist newspaper and Lavelle claimed that a revolt against landlords was inevitable because of their oppression of the tenants. If they looked after their tenants, as in La Vendee in France, they would not rebel. He added:

Like the Roman tyrant, the Irish landlord would rather be feared than loved by those over whom he rules. If he comes among his tenants, it is not to encourage or assist, but to terrify and drain...An Irish landlord is absolute, in the strictest sense. Without reason, or the assigning of reason, he may utterly ruin honest and industrious men. His power for destruction far exceeds that of the Queen. She may, indeed, save the criminal from death in the exercise of her supreme prerogative of mercy; but the landlord can pass sentence of death on the innocent and virtuous, and carry it into execution in spite of the Queen.(31)

These letters formed the basis of Lavelle's ideas on the land question, and were published in his book in 1870, The Irish Landlord since the Revolution.

Lavelle returned to the problems in Partry on a regular basis through the years 1863-4 despite his new found fame with Fenianism. He sought to revive Irish nationalists' memories about the situation in the region in order to solicit subscriptions. He readily admitted that had it not been for Plunket he would never have won national fame.

Circumstances threw me into the public arena. There I have taken my stand; and while the primary and official duty shall ever be to guard my flock, no power of man shall make me abandon my country. My special mission in Partry I have accomplished in saving the lamb of the fold - that to which I and every Irishman was born, the regeneration of our oppressed fatherland, never, never shall I forsake.(32)

Lavelle's cause was helped by the revelations that Plunket's supporters had libelled the tenants in the weeks after the 1860 evictions. Perpetuating such libels confirmed the belief that the Evangelicals would use every method to discredit Lavelle. John Boyle, one of the evicted tenants, took the first libel action against Plunket's agent, William Falkiner. Boyle alleged that since his eviction he had been unable to rent a holding because of Falkiner's allegations that those ejected were an unlawful, dangerous and troublesome combination. Falkiner admitted the libel against the tenants and gave £20 in compensation.(33) Michael Cavanagh's case against Rev James Fowler was along similar lines and while the jury disagreed, the judge, Baron Fitzgerald felt that libel had been proved.(34) The action resulted in Fowler withdrawing his allegations.(35)

Undoubtedly Lavelle instigated both libel actions. Cavanagh was eighty-four years old with no resources of his own. Once Lavelle resorted to the courts his opponents became worried as these actions usually cost them dearly. As the Connaught Patriot remarked of Lavelle, "Day after day has he been adding laurel to laurel. He is the priest - the man, and the priest of zeal - the man of energy and resolve - the priest of his flock - the patriot among his compatriots. He knows not what fatigue is - that is he yields not to fatigue - but

subdues it."(36)

Lavelle's relationship with the authorities remained tenuous. Despite the restoration of law and order in Partry in 1861 they continued to be, at both a national and local level, suspicious of Lavelle's motives and recommended that he not be allowed to carry arms. Sir Robert Peel, the Irish Chief Secretary, summed up their sentiments when he informed an angry Lavelle, "[They]...have led me to the painful conclusion that you are not a proper person to be entrusted with the use of firearms."(37)

His difficulties with Colonel Nesbit Knox also continued, extending beyond legal matters. The most serious was Knox's decision to refuse Lavelle and the other Partry tenants the right to land their boats at Creagh, a short cut across Lough Mask from Tourmakeady. The previous owner, Colonel Cuffe, had allowed them this privilege. Knox prosecuted Lavelle for trespass and he was fined 1/- with 1/6 costs at the petty sessions.(38)

This dispute continued throughout Lavelle's residence in Partry. John Hearne, a friend of Knox, lost his seat in the Partry electoral division of the Ballinrobe Board of Guardians, but was co-opted onto the board. Eleven Catholic priests in Ballinrobe deanery, including Lavelle, passed a resolution on 3 April, 1866, probably inspired by Lavelle, objecting to the manner in which Hearne rejoined the board.(39)

At the same time the additional police tax continued to be a major source of contention. Even a memorial from eight Catholics and Protestants magistrates to Dublin Castle in 1862, citing the region's extreme destitution, failed to get the tax removed.(40) Lavelle cited the poverty of Pat Angel of Cloonce. While Angel and his wife were working in the fields, the police ransacked the house and took his pig in lieu of the cess he owed. Angel's rent amounting to £4/10/-, was also missing and Lavelle added, "...it is a wholesome state of the law that a parcel of fellows like tax-bailiff's can enter a poor man's house in his absence,

and ransack the entire concern without hindrance or witness."(41) Lavelle led the protest against the unjust tax:

The excessive taxation imposed on the poor mountain district of Partry, I consider not alone unjust, but most cruel and inhuman...I must try and bring public opinion to bear on the oppression by allowing my effects to be detained and auctioned, before voluntarily paying any longer an iniquitous impost - an impost which I consider has been to some extent imposed for the purpose of sustaining a system, proselytism and hypocrisy among the people...(42)

His anger over the tax exploded when he discovered that Plunket and his sister were excluded from paying it. At Lavelle's instigation, the additional police tax was brought up at the Mayo Grand Jury Sessions in July 1863. Lavelle intended to have Plunket pay like the rest of the population and he claimed he would not rest until he discovered who was responsible for the Plunkets' exemption, implying that the local magistrates were behind these moves.(43)

Letters to the press in 1863 and 1864 about the police tax reawakened interest in the Partry affair. As the Tuam Herald remarked:

Never, in the history of the Church, has there been exhibited a more sublime spectacle than when, on the hill-side of Partry, a whole congregation knelt down and murmured forth to God the vow of self-immolation and the sacrifice of all the goods of the earth, rather than forfeit their heritage of Heaven.(44)

The townlands were not freed from the additional rates until July 1865 when the Lord Justice issued a proclamation revoking the order which had placed Partry under the Peace Preservation Act.

Lavelle tried to portray the police tax as a continuation of the conflict between himself and the Evangelicals. The problem originated with his decision to knock down Plunket's pound and continued with his attempts to make the Plunkets' pay the tax. His emotive portrayals of the poor selling their clothes and bedding, was a return to his methods at the height of the proselytising campaign. Lavelle realised that if he made the cases appear as a struggle between his parishioners and the Evangelicals, he could win more sympathy and

support. However, now that the main adversary was the government in an Ireland that was becoming consumed with Fenianism, incidents such as the Partry police tax did not ignite the public imagination.

On 29 December 1864, Lavelle was prosecuted for £5/16/- cess for his Traunlaur property at Ballinrobe Petty Sessions for the period 1862-4. While prepared to pay the cess, he refused to settle up the police tax portion. The high constable for Carra Barony seized Lavelle's horse in lieu of the outstanding money, but had to return it when no auctioneer could be found to sell it.(45) Again, this case illustrates the power of the parish priest within Irish society.

After 1861, he directed most of his attention to national issues. The four Scripture Readers, still employed in the region were constantly intimidated whenever they appeared in public.(46) In 1866, Lavelle was still confronting them and this resulted in charges and counter charges of assault. Sometimes litigation ensued, as when David Buckley and his wife alleged that Lavelle had struck Mrs Buckley with his fist at Drumcoggy on 31 October 1865.(47) Their presence in Partry was a major boon for Lavelle because he could constantly advertise their former activities. Lavelle said:

Personally I feel a sense of degradation in coming at all into collision with such vulgar characters. But, unfortunately, in the exceptional circumstances of this parish, I have no alternative. Individual collision I avoid as much as possible; but, when forced upon me, I do not shirk from it as the lesser of two evils - those of personal humiliation on the one side, and the danger of the faith and virtue of my flock on the other...I must add my conviction, that permanent peace is utterly inconsistent with the presence of such characters as the "Readers" in question in this locality.(48)

Despite his altercations with the Scripture Readers in the past, Lavelle still showed up his benevolent and humane qualities. When his former adversary Bishop Plunket died at his residence in Tourmakeady on 18 October 1866, Lavelle and a group of Catholic priests from Ballinrobe attended his funeral. Lavelle made a charitable reference to Plunket at the conclusion of mass on the day of the burial, asking his congregation to forget the past and

to remember Plunket's generosity in his earlier days.(49) Such actions, also evident when John Miley died in 1861, indicate a level of compassion and humility towards his enemies.

Again in the summer of 1867 Lavelle had to appeal for help when the potato crop failed. Although the official yields for Mayo was 3.1 tons per acre, which was close to the national average, there were regional variations in most years.(50) The first indication of distress in 1867 came in May when the old potato crop was used up and the people had to wait till August for the new harvest. On 14 May, Lavelle applied to the chairman of the Ballinrobe Board of Guardians for assistance for the Cappaduff electoral district, "My sole object in making the application is, that I may be in a position to render more efficient aid to the poor during the coming months, which threaten to be marked in this, as I regret, in other remote districts, with the horrors of hunger, perhaps of famine." Lavelle called on the government to give relief for the region as its overstretched resources were unable to cope.(51)

Throughout this period Lavelle showed another dimension to his role as protector of the people's interests. The local landlords or their agents, who often were the guardians for these areas, failed to acknowledge the destitution and poverty of the people.(52) The clergy had to publicise their parishioners' plight before the authorities and the general public. In 1867 the local guardian, Robert Holmes, who was also the local pound keeper and bailiff, and who was constantly in dispute with the tenants, alleged that most of the twenty-six applicants were not entitled to relief because they held land. Lavelle stated that many of them, like the Widow Naughten and Anthony Morrin, were totally destitute and needed help.(53) Landlords like Catherine Plunket used the distress to settle old scores against Lavelle and his supporters.

Lavelle's relationship with guardians like Holmes had a bearing on the distribution of relief to the region. His previous attacks on Colonel Knox, chairman of Ballinrobe Board of Guardians and his public castigation of the board officials for their failure to provide

assistance, had an important effect on their attitude to the Partry region. In two hard hitting letters in early July Lavelle blamed Holmes for the guardians' unsympathetic approach to the widespread poverty in the region. The problem centred on the people's determination to get outdoor relief rather than enter the dreaded workhouse in Ballinrobe, which was their only option. Lavelle asserted: "You are resolved on giving no relief outside the workhouse, and the poor, starving though they be, are now, at least, equally resolved on not entering the workhouse. Your officer's errand, therefore, is merely so much trouble to himself without benefit to anyone."(54)

Lavelle was frustrated in his dealings with the guardians and their refusal to give outdoor relief. In desperation he began to organise aid for his parishioners, after the local landlords and guardians had ignored his appeals. He turned to the guardians for help because he feared that the Irish in Britain and America would not forward him the same level of support as in the past. By 1867 his reputation was not as commanding as it had been five years previously and there was greater competition for funds in Ireland and the United States. He felt compelled to approach the local authorities for assistance.

When the distress subsided in August, Lavelle insisted it had been overcome without the aid of the local guardians and declared that some people had to use the pawnshops and depend on others for survival. The Widow Naughten had to sell her clothes and bedding for food.(55)

Lavelle also applied to the Irish Chief Secretary, Lord Naas, for relief, not because it would be easily obtained but because it would make further headlines for Partry:

I distinctly notified to his lordship that I did not apply in forma pauperis - that I applied as for a strict right, and that the Government would be wanting in its primary duty if it did not interpose...I have often declared, and I now repeat my declarations, that from praying and petitioning, from crouching and sycophancy, no good can ever come to this unhappy country...Ever since we have been on our knees, whining and praying, and our "most humble" approaches are spurned with disdain, which the servile attitude of unmanly slaves ever deserved.(56)



The confrontations with the authorities occurred at an opportune time. The Fenian rebellion of March 1867 had been suppressed and the political prisoners attracted widespread sympathy. Lavelle exploited this to win support for himself and to argue that Ireland could never expect any favours while she remained under British rule. He used such rhetoric to get subscriptions for his people from the Irish abroad.

Between June and August he purchased meal from merchants in Castlebar and Westport on the strength of funds he expected from abroad. In the first two months he spent £230 on relief and even when the distress subsided in August with the arrival of the new potato crop, one Castlebar merchant, James Falkiner, was owed £130 for meal.(57) Lavelle noted in his appeals to the Irish abroad:

...the necessity that has thus compelled me to raise the begging voice really sickens me at heart. Are we for ever to be mendicants in a country, which, self-governed, could support treble its population; but, governed as it is from abroad, and by foreign unsympathising masters, must from the very nature of things, remain in its normal state of beggary and degradation. In God's name, sir, let us all look to it - let bishops, priests, laymen see to our unhappy condition in time, even at the eleventh hour, or are they content to see the country as it is, seething with discontent and disaffection, devoured by utter hate of the dominant stranger...(58)

Lavelle succeeded in getting Irish exiles to subscribe to these appeals. Each issue of the Irishman in July and early August contained pages full of subscribers. These were mainly the Irish in Britain and the contributions were only of a few pence. Lavelle had again directed his attention to the Fenian question in the middle of 1867 and his weekly column in the Irish People brought in donations. Despite the large sums forwarded, by mid-July Lavelle still owed £100. His appeals for the Partry poor made people in Britain more conscious of Irish poverty, and there were large demonstrations in centres like London and Glasgow for the poor of the west.

The appeals for aid were aimed mainly at the Irish abroad. The Irish papers that carried his

requests were the Irishman and the Connaught Patriot and these had limited circulations. At the same time the Nation and the Freeman's Journal did nothing to publicise distress in Partry because of their continuing dispute with Lavelle over his advanced nationalist views.

Lavelle also tried to get aid amongst his supporters in Ireland. He chaired a public meeting at the Rotunda on 23 July, where there was a collection for the relief of distress in the west. He was cheered throughout the meeting by those inside and outside the hall. He compared England to the wicked stepmother who would let her child starve and renege on her obligations to look after Ireland.(59) He also addressed demonstrations in Dublin and Glasgow, bringing a political dimension to the proceedings and playing into the hands of the advanced nationalists. He maintained that the government displayed anti-Irish sentiment in its relief efforts. He compared its policy towards Ireland with that towards the destitution in Lancashire in 1864 when large sums of money were provided. Lavelle claimed that the Irish could counteract distress by completely controlling their own efforts.(60) Nevertheless, it was the generosity of his supporters in Britain and America that enabled Lavelle to ward off famine from his parishioners.

The distress in Partry in 1862 and 1867 points to an often overlooked aspect of post-Famine Irish history. While the Great Famine, the Land War and the distress of 1898 indicate the continuing subsistence crisis in Ireland, the recurring devastation of local communities by the potato failures is often forgotten. The destitution in Partry shows the continuing threat to the population of the more remote and poorer regions of the west. Their lives were battles and even during periods of national prosperity they found it difficult to eke out an existence from their holdings. The clergy played an important role in ensuring the survival of their flocks, especially in the west, where central and local government failed to support a destitute population.(61)

At the same time Lavelle still had to counteract the challenge from the Scripture Readers in Partry, taking them on in public on theological and historical issues. The Church of

Ireland still regarded itself as the true successor of the ancient Irish Church of St. Patrick. Lavelle debated this point with his Church of Ireland counterpart, Rev Andrew Tait, in early 1868. He attacked Tait's assertion that St. Patrick was a Protestant, by arguing that if France, Switzerland, Austria and Italy, which had been converted to Christianity by Irish missionaries, were Protestant before Luther's revolt, why had the Reformation taken place? For good measure, he brought up the Partry affair to smear his opponents' character. It was not the first time that he had reverted to personal abuse to intimidate his adversaries.(62)

Lavelle's knowledge of theology and ancient Irish history enabled him to debate with Tait the minor details of the ancient Irish Church. While his vindication of advanced nationalism was well known, he put aside his differences with Paul Cullen to defend his Church. Lavelle displayed a total commitment whether engaging in revolutionary, political, agrarian or theological disputes.

(b) Landlord-tenant relations in Partry, 1868-70

Throughout the 1860s, Lavelle's relationship with the Partry landlords was not good. Three cases in particular won him national notoriety and are central to an insight into his personality. They also reveal the basis of his concern with the land issue.

The first of these landlord-tenant clashes was at Port Royal. This property was in the hands of the National Land and Building Investment Company, established in 1865 by the Dublin wine merchant, Andrew McCullagh. Among the leading shareholders were A.H. Bagot and Messrs Wright and Penny. The company had little humanitarian interest in its tenants. In common with many such land management companies in post-Famine Ireland, the National Land and Building Investment Company existed to manage land in the most economically efficient way possible and lacked the paternalism of an individual landlord. In 1866, the firm purchased 5,480 acres of the Port Royal estate, previously the property of James Knox Gildea, in the Landed Estates Court for £9,000. The estate had 81 tenants and comprised the townlands of Port Royal, Kilkerrin, Gallagher, Kilfaul, Derrew, Newtown, Clonee, Furnace, Srah and Derassa. At first, the tenants were enthusiastic about the change in ownership because the company promised to give them leases and to allow them the fee simple of their farms within a few years.(63) The importance of these commitments to the tenants must be seen in the light of the police description about the estate:

The Port Royal property is a brutally poor one. The tenants as a rule live in miserable houses, and I cannot but consider are little better than paupers. The land is bad and the small amount in the possession of each which is available for tillage, is quite unable to support a family and pay an increased rent.(64)

The tenants' euphoria about their future did not last long. Shortly after the take over of the property the land was surveyed, drained, new fences were built and general improvements were carried out. It was then decided to take possession of existing holdings and reallocate the land in strips so that each tenant would have a viable holding.

Many landlords believed they were looking after their tenants' interests by providing leases and better living conditions, but their actions were not always accepted by the tenants as improving their lot, especially when a rise in rents accompanied this philanthropy. Rent increases hit the marginal lands of Port Royal especially hard since the returns would only accrue over time, while rents had to be found immediately. As Lavelle stated about Port Royal: "A "lease" is a good thing, but a lease at a rack rent is only fetters on a slave..."(65)

In most instances the arrangement of landholding was accompanied by an unaffordable increase in rents. The annual estate rental increased from £838 in 1865, to £980 in 1866, and to £1,190 in 1869. The rent rises were greatest in the townlands of Clonee, Newtown, Kilkerrin and Derrew, ranging from 23 to 66 per cent.(66) Furthermore, the holdings of some tenants were taken over and the occupants evicted to provide the new agent of the estate, J.W. Proudfoot, with a grazing farm. Part of Derassa Mountain, comprising 500 acres of the best grazing land in the area and used by the tenants as commonage, was fenced off and used by Andrew McCullagh. Cattle found trespassing on this land were impounded and not released until the owners paid a fine. Moreover, the timing of the tenure reorganisation created difficulties as the spring and summer of 1867 had been exceptionally severe, leaving the tenants unable to pay the May rents. When the next rent was due on 1 November most of the tenants were still unable to meet their dues. On the following day, the company sent out notices to quit to the tenants, who had to pay for the cost of the notices and the arrears owed.(67) As many tenants had only survived the harvest failure through meal obtained by Lavelle from merchants in Castlebar, they did not have the means to pay.

The notices to quit prompted Lavelle to become involved. Over the following twelve months, he called repeatedly on the tenants from the altar to refuse to give over their holdings to be reallocated, adding that if they yielded, he would put them out of the chapel. A number of witnesses at the Lavelle-Proudfoot libel case in Galway 1869 stated that

Lavelle had indeed ordered them to leave the chapel. Patrick Carey of Kilkerrin told the court he had to leave the church because he had signed a contract with the company and given up possession of his farm. Matthew Hannelly suffered the same fate when Lavelle saw him travelling in a carriage with Proudfoot. In the eighteen month period up to March 1869, 100 people, tenants and constabulary, were ordered to leave the chapel.(68) Even his curate, Fr John Mullarkey, was told to implement this policy, actively excluding those who supported Proudfoot, or those who had allowed their children to attend proscribed schools in the parish.(69) Lavelle, like many clerics, was only too willing to use his priestly authority to settle secular issues. Their power over their congregations was also obvious in that people often ostracised individuals who were out of favour with the clergy.

In April 1869, the tenants and the company reached an agreement whereby the tenants were allowed save their crops on their old holdings before transferring to the new strips. Lavelle blocked the settlement, prompting an employee of the National Land and Building Investment Company, Mr Griffen, to say, "there is no pleasing some people, particularly if not anxious for a settlement." Lavelle refused to allow any person to negotiate on the tenants' behalf, as Fr Peter Conway of Headford discovered.(70)

Proudfoot and others were right about Lavelle's violent temper and they were corroborated by the only reliable source in the region, the police. His congregation was afraid to get on his wrong side, as his wrath was more terrible than the protection provided by the landlords and the police.

Lavelle went on to publicise the case through letters to newspapers and in particular to the Irish Times. These letters were addressed to the shareholders of the company. The first, written on St. Patrick's Day 1868, stated four main points that annoyed the tenants from the outset - the stripping of the land, the notices to quit, the takeover of Derassa Commonage and Proudfoot's new grazing farm. Appealing to the Christmas spirit of the readers he cited the case of Philip Heneghan of Derassa whose cow was confiscated on

Christmas Day for the year's rent that was due on 1 November. Lavelle declared:

Allow me to assure you that, in my opinion, there has not been such opposition practised, or attempted to be practiced, in any other property in Ireland, for the last two years - model Scully's perhaps excepted - as has been carried on in this unfortunate estate.(71)

He added:

No doubt the object of this rise in the rent is to enhance the market price of the estate, of which your chairman stated at the 'third annual general meeting of the shareholders,' held this year, that "it was under the serious consideration of the directors to dispose..."

Much of his criticism was directed at Proudfoot who had issued the notices to quit on 2 November. Men like Proudfoot became the target of such criticism because they were most easily identified by the tenantry as the cause of their grievance. According to the police reports from Partry, most of Lavelle's accusations against the company were true.(72)

In this dispute Lavelle used all the techniques he had deployed in his fight with Bishop Plunket ten years before, especially court cases and pulpit condemnations. Proudfoot now replaced Plunket as the villain and he was pursued with a similar vengeance. The problem was compounded by the inability of Lavelle and Proudfoot to compromise. However, given the prevailing political situation with the 1870 Land Act imminent, it became increasingly difficult to reach an agreement. This point was brought up by Justice Fitzgerald at the Lavelle-Proudfoot libel case in Galway, when he described Lavelle as a man of great literary ability but a man of impulse.(73)

The affair reached a climax with Proudfoot's letter to the Mayo Constitution on 12 January 1869, in which he repudiated all of Lavelle's charges. He began: "Now let us see how this apostle of meekness and divine love had his rents collected in this locality." He alleged that a church official, acting on Lavelle's orders, went into the field of a parishioner, Widow Heneghan, and took the church's share of the crop for Lavelle without her consent. When Widow Heneghan approached the official, inquiring what was

happening, he knocked her to the ground. Again, the authorities tried, but failed, to persuade Heneghan to prosecute Lavelle.

Lavelle immediately resorted to his old methods of silencing his enemies through the courts. At the end of March 1869 his libel action for £3,000 against Proudfoot, over the latter's allegations about Widow Heneghan, was heard at the Recorders Court in Galway. However, the issue went much wider and embraced the whole Port Royal affair. The jury accepted Lavelle's claims against Proudfoot, but gave him compensation of only one farthing, clearly because of his previous reputation and actions. Gladstone's land bill and the recent attempted evictions at Ballycohey, Co Tipperary, by William Scully, attracted public attention to the events at Port Royal. The affair was raised by Mr Charly, MP for Salford in the House of Commons, who tried to discredit Lavelle, insisting that he had no right to exclude people from the chapel. However, George Henry Moore defended Lavelle, claiming, "a more conscientious, more earnest, more high-minded man did not exist."(74)

His correspondence with the papers continued over the next two months. He addressed many of his letters to prominent personalities, like Gladstone and the Irish Chief Secretary, Sir Chichester Fortescue. In his opening letter to Gladstone, he stated:

It was, sir, scenes and conduct such as I am going to describe, that inspired those "speeches" of mine, with which the senatorial advocates of ascendancy would fain cloak the seditious, if not treasonable, oratory of the learned fellow...such crushing, grinding tyranny, sustained as it was by a hundred statutes of law, go far to palliate any vehemence of language for its reprobation?(75)

Lavelle went on to describe with characteristic vividness and great detail the events that had occurred on the estate since its purchase in 1865, winning the sympathy of the uncommitted to his views with accounts of Philip Heneghan's cow, seized by the bailiff on Christmas Day, and of Austin Gibbons of Derrew, driven from his holding to a swampy strip to die of a broken heart. But Lavelle's success in the libel action against Proudfoot



was won at a large cost. Besides the compensation of one farthing, he was also awarded costs, but these proved impossible to obtain. Lavelle pursued a number of unsuccessful court actions against Proudfoot's sister and his associates in the National Land and Building Investment Company over the seizure of the agents' assets, but in the end he was out of pocket by £250.

The other important feature in this case was the role of the Irish Times, which published most of Lavelle's letters. McCullagh was forced to take legal action against the paper because its allegations of tyranny and eviction cast the company in a poor light. It was one thing for a landlord to evict, but when a land company was seen to do so, this had the effect of dissuading possible investors from placing money with it. The National Land and Building Investment Company could only counteract this bad press through legal action. While this might have ended the Irish Times' criticisms, it certainly showed up Lavelle as the protector of the tenants. The Irish Times won the case by eleven votes to one but the newspaper was liable for its own court costs.

From a nationalist perspective, the Irish Times' involvement was the first evidence of disillusionment of Protestant Conservatives with the existing political party system. Their growing irritation with Gladstone's interference in Irish affairs, as in the 1869 Church Disestablishment Act and the proposed curtailment of landlords' rights, resulted in Colonel Knox of the Irish Times and many other Protestant Conservatives pursuing a more independent line in the Home Rule movement. Knox's changing attitude first became apparent through his stand on the Port Royal case.

Knox realised that Lavelle had severe financial difficulties and he became one of the leading supporters of the Lavelle Indemnity Fund, which was an attempt to help defray Lavelle's legal expenses. Lavelle's problems were exacerbated by the decision of the Inland Revenue Office to seek £100 in outstanding income tax. He claimed that the poverty of Partry made his salary so low that he was exempt from paying tax.(76) While Knox

offered to pay some of Lavelle's legal expenses, he refused this generosity. It was then that Knox came out publicly in support of the Lavelle Indemnity Fund:

...it would be a shame in Irishmen who profess to sympathise with the unfortunate tenant-at-will to leave one of his most foremost advocates to fight the tenant-battle at a cost which he could not afford, and which if not otherwise lightened would be ruinous to him.(77)

It was perhaps the only occasion in nineteenth-century Ireland that a Protestant Conservative newspaper gave its total assistance to a fund for a radical nationalist figure. This endeavour drew together men of differing political ideologies, a prelude to the new political organisation which would come into being in May 1870 under Isaac Butt.

The Lavelle Indemnity Fund was launched in Ballinrobe in July, 1869. The central committee comprised a good cross-section of Irish society. Among its members were Fenian sympathisers, C.R. Mahoney, Denis Moran and John 'Amnesty' Nolan, while constitutional nationalists were represented by Hugh Sheridan, proprietor of the Mayo Examiner.(78) These men would soon be at the forefront of the Home Rule movement. The support of the Fenians for the fund was crucial, for they were beginning to accept the land question as a major issue.(79)

All of the major nationalist newspapers, with the exception of the Freeman's Journal, publicised the fund and subscribed donations. The fund indicated that Lavelle was regarded as a principal figure in the movement to protect the tenant farmer. Whatever the occasion, Lavelle's name ensured a flow of money, whether for the Partry tenants, the building of a new church in Cong or his legal battles. People regarded the land question as a uniquely Irish grievance which was in need of immediate redress. Lavelle was therefore able to solicit donations from the Irish communities in Bradford, Birmingham, Bolton, Sheffield and Peckham, from people that had been forced out of Ireland by land reforms, evictions and proselytising - the very causes with which Lavelle was identified.(80)

The new fund had broader objectives. It took into account all those groups who were fighting the tenants' cause and promised to reimburse their expenses if they could not afford them. They used Lavelle to crusade for these ideals. His fight against landlordism was well-known throughout the country and, like Michael Davitt a decade later, he succeeded in bringing together men of differing views.

From the outset it was clear that the Lavelle Indemnity Fund would never attract a substantial amount of money, but it nonetheless established the principle of helping tenants cope with adversaries. Lavelle's own financial predicament remained acute throughout the rest of his life and was undoubtedly a reason for his more subdued role in the 1870s and 1880s. The failure of the fund to cover Lavelle's costs was due to John MacHale's lack of support until September 1869. Crucial months were lost when money would have been contributed had MacHale espoused the cause earlier. The fund was overshadowed by the demand for the release of the political prisoners, which was the most important single question in the Ireland of 1869. By the time the Amnesty issue died down in early 1870 much of the momentum of the Lavelle committee had evaporated.

The second major case concerning landlord-tenant relations was with another of the Partry landlords, Robert Lynch Blossie. This coincided with the Port Royal affair, and the underlying cause was the very one that had brought Lavelle to national prominence in 1860 - tenants being forced to send their children to proscribed schools.

In May 1867, Lavelle contacted Lynch Blossie with a view to buying land for a new school convenient to the Catholic Church at Ballyovie or at the old school house at Newtown. The latter had previously been the property of the Irish Church Missions Society. Both the National Land and Building Investment Company and another local landlord, Captain Lynch of Partry House, had offered sites for the school, but the Lynch Blossie properties were considered more central.<sup>(81)</sup> Lynch Blossie's decision to open the Newtown school for his tenants and to place their education under his control was the

cause of the conflict. The hiring of a teacher who had been trained at a Model School in Dublin and the obligation on the tenants to send their children to the schools under threat of eviction prompted Lavelle to point out that: "The unhappy creatures were thus placed between two fires - on the one side the terrible 'notice to quit' stared him in the face if they withheld the children; on the other, I was debarred from giving any spiritual attendance whatsoever."(82)

The issue was one that had plagued the Plunket tenants ten years before: the absolute power of the landlord over his tenants to evict them at his pleasure. In an era when tenant security remained in the hands of the landlords, the last thing the tenants wished to do was antagonise them. With John MacHale still radically opposed to the National School system of education, the tenants were forced to choose between annoying their landlords or enduring the wrath of the local clergy. Many tenants consequently refused to help Lavelle build his alternative school at Mount Partry for fear of annoying Lynch Blossie. At the same time, there were many mothers who remained 'unchurched' (a rite of blessing women back into the church after childbirth) because they had allowed their children go to the landlord's school. Lavelle wrote to Lynch Blossie in February 1868: "Several of the poor people have with tears bemoaned to myself that it is through terror of eviction they thus violate the special mandates of their own Archbishop and the general authority of the Catholic Bishops of Ireland."(83)

The prospect or threat of a revival of the 'souper' schools sparked off Lavelle's crusade. He was prepared to kill off such schools, by altar denunciations and public condemnations through the newspapers, before they even started. He wrote to the newspapers in May 1868:

Now, neither his Grace, the Archbishop of Tuam, nor I wish to have anything approaching to a revival of such things in Partry. We, therefore, protested, and do protest, and will continue, to the end, to protest, against this "wresting" from the clergy that control over the religious education of their flocks...(84)

Lavelle had to build an alternative school for the people at a cost of £200, most of which he had to find himself. This further exacerbated his already appalling financial situation. By the time he was transferred to Cong in October 1869, no settlement had been reached with Robert Lynch Blossie over the schools .

The third landlord-tenant case that involved Lavelle was more personal, in that Lavelle's mother was the victim. On the death of Lavelle's father in November 1862 the ten-acre holding at Mullagh was taken over by his mother, Mary. She was joined on the farm by her daughter who was married to a tenant named McNamara on the neighbouring estate of the Marquis of Sligo. McNamara's residence at Mullagh was the cause of the dispute. One of the Palmer estate rules expressly forbade the married children of tenants to reside and to farm these holdings. The rule indicates that problems over land were common between neighbouring tenants and it was stated that many of the tenants at Mullagh complained about McNamara's dual renting of holdings - on the Sligo and Palmer estates.(85) Rivalry between tenants over farms was common in Ireland. Holdings were jealously looked upon by envious neighbours. Thus, many neighbouring tenants were inclined to ensure that estate rules were upheld. It was in these circumstances that Mrs Lavelle was served with an ejectment order in January 1866.

Since Lavelle's sister was married, the mother was in an invidious position. Her only alternative was to dismiss the daughter from the holding so that she could retain possession. This would have forced her to live alone. Lavelle thundered:

I ask how can peace or good-will be expected in Ireland while landlords are permitted and empowered by law to commit such unnatural deeds? Is it consistent with the public weal that power so extensive, so arbitrary and irresponsible, should be vested in only one man?...The landlord drives her houseless, homeless, landless, on the world, for obeying a law of nature, and striving to comfort herself in her terrible affliction by the society of her child.(87)

For five years Lavelle tried to have his mother retained on her holding. While he

corresponded with Sir Roger Palmer and his agents, Thomas Ormsby and Luke Norman, there was little doubt but that the landlord's legal position was supreme.(87) His appeals to these officials on humanitarian grounds, and because the family had resided in Mullagh for four generations, proved fruitless. He even contemplated employing Isaac Butt to take the case through the courts in order to give it maximum publicity, though he was aware he would lose the litigation.(88) These attempts failed to get Mrs Lavelle back her farm and she spent the rest of her days living with the married daughter on the Sligo estate.

The case of the Widow Lavelle attracted public attention to the weighting of the land laws against the tenants, solely because of Lavelle's own fame. There were similar incidents, such as the Anderson family at Cross, Co Mayo, whose ordeal was as traumatic, but who never received the same media exposure.(89)

As a result of these cases, Lavelle became known nationally as the protector of the tenants' interests. It was only natural that during landlord-tenant disputes he would be seen to look after them. Between 1869 and 1871 he was appointed arbitrator in two important disputes on estates in the west of Ireland - on George Henry Moore's estate in Ballintubber and on Captain John Nolan's property at Portacarron.

In early 1868, a number of Moore's tenants alleged that the landlord had evicted some tenants and forced others to pay unjust rents.(90) One of the major difficulties of nationalist leaders with landed interests was the blackmail that their tenants were sometimes prepared to use against them to get a reduced rent. To reject these demands would have portrayed them as uncaring, rack-renting landlords. Three nationalist leaders between 1868 and 1885, Moore, Charles Stewart Parnell and John O'Leary, could not afford to reduce their tenants' rents.(91)

There was a limit to which Moore was prepared to go with the tenants. He realised he had been cornered for his advocacy of tenant right and he had to show the public that, as a

landlord, he was prepared to practice what he preached. At the same time he was aware that there were tenants who wished to take advantage of the situation and he informed Lavelle privately that he was prepared to evict some tenants if necessary.(92) By appointing an arbitration board composed of advocates of tenant right, such as Lavelle and A.M. Sullivan of the Nation, Moore made it more difficult for these tenants to achieve their aims. Lavelle eventually persuaded the tenants to promise payment of what they owed, leaving future rents to be negotiated between Moore and himself. At the same time he and Sullivan exonerated Moore of all the allegations that had been made against him.(93) Lavelle, on his own initiative, wrote to the newspapers in July 1869 condemning those tenants who had failed to keep their side of the agreement. In defending Moore he said, "What other landlord would allow tenants to run four gales (two years) in arrears?"(94)

The second arbitration case at Portacarron, Co Galway, had aroused much national attention and once again involved a landowner who aspired to be a nationalist politician - Captain John Nolan of Ballinderry, Tuam. There were 14 tenants involved on the estate which was situated just outside of Oughterard in Connemara. The case began in 1864 when Nolan came of age and took over control of the property. He evicted twelve families in 1864 and 1867, in order to hand the whole townland over to a new tenant, William Murphy of Oughterard. It was not until 1871, when Nolan attempted to win the Liberal nomination at the by-election for Galway County, that his past misdeeds caught up with him. The only way that Nolan could restore his credibility was through an arbitration process similar to that conducted on the Moore estate. Nolan manipulated the tenants, clergy and media to get the future nomination for the county. When Nolan appointed Lavelle and A.M. Sullivan as arbitrators along with Sir John Gray, he did not know either of them personally. Lavelle was the first person he sought as a negotiator because of his connection with the Moore settlement. Nolan said of Lavelle: "The high character borne by Father Lavelle, who is so well-known, not only here, but in the sister county of Mayo by his writings, for his energy and patriotism, could hardly leave room for cavil at his choice."(95)

It was more useful politically for Nolan to get the mediation decided upon by people sympathetic to the tenant cause. By getting the courts to adjudicate on the dispute, Nolan ran the risk of further ridicule and criticism from among the tenantry in the event of the courts deciding against them.

While the tenants welcomed Nolan's decision to have the case settled by arbitration, most other landowners regarded the proceedings as a betrayal. With three nationalists and tenant-right advocates comprising the mediation team, landowners felt there would be little justice for their cause. The case also created a precedent which other tenants would want followed when such disputes arose. Throughout the late 1860s Lavelle and his fellow arbitrators advocated a settlement of the land question by upholding tenants' rights and by condemning the arbitrary manner in which landlords evicted their tenants. Under the terms of the settlement the tenants were restored to their original farms or received compensation. The agreement increased Nolan's political prestige because of his adherence to it. This was one of the major reasons behind the contentious issues during the 1872 Galway by-election. By the time of the by-election, Nolan's high profile and general support from the tenants and clergy had virtually assured his political future.

The Portacarron decision was the first occasion in post-Famine Ireland that a landlord was prepared to abide by the decisions of arbitrators and let them be legally binding on all concerned. Years later, A.M. Sullivan looked back upon the Portacarron settlement as a precedent for settling disputes.<sup>(96)</sup> For Lavelle it reinforced his standing as one of the most respected advocates of the tenant cause.

Lavelle continued to have enemies in the region in the 1860s. Partry remained polarised between those who supported and opposed Lavelle. Despite his national reputation, Lavelle had to display an authoritarian air to deal effectively with his opponents and ensure that they did not gain the upper hand. He could never be complacent about his power



within the parish. At the same time the vicissitudes within Partry reinforced his contention of the need for legislative independence and reforms to settle the social, political and economic problems facing Ireland. The problems within Partry fired Lavelle with the zeal of reformer and he was one of the few people in nineteenth-century Ireland able to make national capital out of local events.

### (c) The Land Act of 1870

The agrarian question was the single most important social issue in Irish life between 1868 and the end of the century. As the majority of people depended on land for their existence, it affected not only the farmer but all sections of society. The problem for tenant farmers was the lack of security. Most were tenants-at-will who could be evicted at the landlord's whim for reasons other than the non-payment of rent. They demanded security of tenure and this was only achieved after a very turbulent period in Irish history. The Land League was one of the most potent forces ever established in Ireland and resulted in farmers obtaining fixity of tenure under Gladstone's 1881 Land Act. This was a prelude to the creation of the peasant proprietorship completed between 1885 and 1923. However, the 1870 Land Act was the first piece of legislation to give legal recognition to the rights of Irish tenant farmers.

By the Autumn of 1869 the land question had replaced Amnesty as the single most important Irish grievance. This was the consequence of Gladstone's proposed agrarian legislation. To secure maximum support for the issue and to proclaim the importance of the proposed legislation, public demonstrations were held throughout the country. The meetings of 1869-'70 contrasted greatly with the other major periods of agrarian agitation in post-Famine Ireland: the 1850s, 1879-'81 and 1885-'92. Economic necessity drove the tenants to agitate in these periods. But in 1869-'70, it was the expectations from Gladstone's legislation that brought tenant farmers on to the streets. What was most unusual was that the period was one of high economic gains for farmers, with incomes greatly in excess of rents as a result of increased prices for agricultural produce.(97)

The tenant right demonstrators of 1869-70 wanted to ensure that Gladstone was aware of their difficulties. Many nationalists were losing confidence in him because of his failure to deliver on the Amnesty issue. Both George Henry Moore and Lavelle indicated that the Prime Minister could not be relied upon to settle all Irish grievances. In a speech at the

Castlebar meeting on 26 October Lavelle said:

We begged on every occasion that could influence the decision of men in power for an object dearest to every Irish heart, called for by every true Irish voice - the release of the political prisoners - and we have been peremptorily refused (groans). That refusal has fixed my ideas of Mr Gladstone's views as to governing Ireland according to Irish ideas (cheers). It also furnishes the very best commentary on his "message of peace", and proves the message was not sent by Mr Gladstone through love for Ireland, but by English dissenters through hatred of the English Established Church.(cheers)(98)

Even though his appearances were few, at Castlebar and Saltsbridge, Co Wexford in November, Lavelle was the ideal speaker for these demonstrations. There was no doubting his public appeal, as he was one of the few people who had suffered materially on behalf of the tenants. He was repeatedly cheered throughout his speeches and was afterwards carried shoulder high through the crowds. His audiences were deeply moved by his descriptions of events in Partry. At both the Castlebar and Saltsbridge meetings he included other grievances: education, Amnesty and the national question. The land and national questions were intertwined in the resolutions passed. Toasts were drunk to the 'National Cause'.(99)

There were, however, difficulties in bringing together the land and national issues. Lavelle tried to heal the widening divisions increasingly evident between the tenant right and Fenian movements. The attempts of each to dominate the national cause brought to the fore their ideological differences.(100) Lavelle at the Saltsbridge meeting tried to defuse these tensions: "I would impress upon the Fenians the impolicy of interfering, no matter with what intention, with the tenant movement. By doing so you will divide your house against yourself and unthinkingly play the game of the enemy."(101)

Lavelle also used the opportunity to publicise the new book he was then writing. This arose out of his personal experience of the land question and was designed as a major work on landlord-tenant relations. His limited involvement and correspondence in the last quarter of 1869 can be traced to his absorption in writing, as well as to his transfer from

Partry to Cong. It was his intention to have the book published before the provisions of the 1870 land bill became known. The book and Lavelle's theories on the land question were thus seen as a barometer of the success or failure of the land bill. As it was, Gladstone did quote from the book in his speech on the bill in the House of Commons.

The work, The Irish Landlord Since the Revolution, was published in January, 1870. One-third of its contents was devoted to Lavelle's dealings in Partry between 1858 and 1869. Lavelle laid the blame for the Famine and emigration on the British Government and the landlords, stating that it was responsible for not taking into account the subsistence nature of Irish agriculture. Like many of his contemporaries who espoused the tenant cause, Lavelle equated the tenant assassins with the landlords who evicted, or as he put it, "murdered". The only difference was that the latter's actions were deemed lawful by the courts while natural justice was on the side of the tenants, who were only opposing the 'murderers of their families'.(102) Lavelle also adopted John Mitchel's attitude that the clearances were carried out only by English and Scotch landowners, not by the new Irish middle classes. Lavelle accepted Mitchel's view that Ireland could have supported herself during the Famine if she had not exported food for rent. He believed that Ireland should have been able easily to feed a population of 20 million, rather than 5 million in semi-starvation.(103)

Considering that Lavelle was one of the advocates of "the land of Ireland for the people of Ireland", it is interesting that the argument in the book was for fixity of tenure and for the retention of the landlords as a force in Ireland. His other suggestions included that the law should prevent excessive abuse of landlords' rights, that there should be a fine on the income of absentee landowners and that farmers should be obliged to farm a sizeable portion of their holdings in order to provide the labourers with employment.

Overall, the reaction to the book was varied, according to the views one held on the land question. Nationalist newspapers regarded it as a most valuable work, while Lavelle's

opponents stated that "it perverts truth with all the recklessness of blind partisanship".(104) Nevertheless, those hostile to it maintained that Irish landlords would do well to read the book to see how they were perceived in some quarters in the country. The book was never a commercial success, but it was important. It was used by future Irish parliamentarians, such as Tim Healy, to paint the background to the agrarian question at the Parnell conspiracy trials in 1880.(105)

Most of the bishops were critical of the book. They were prepared to do anything to diminish Lavelle's reputation in the country. The land question did not rank high among their priorities.(106)

The provisions of the land legislation became known in February 1870 and proved a major disappointment to all advocates of tenant right. The bill made a limited but inadequate attempt to give security of tenure, through the payment of compensation for improvements and disturbance when the tenant was evicted. There was no attempt to extend the Ulster Custom to the whole of Ireland, which had been advocated by the tenant right leaders. Lavelle himself asked rhetorically: "are the three-fourths of the Irish tenants to be worse off still because they have been worse off always?"(107) Landlords continued to manage their estates with complete freedom of contract after the act was passed.(108) The 1870 Land Act proved to be a half-measure which was universally condemned. But it was the first occasion on which the British Government was prepared to legislate on agrarian matters in favour of tenants.(109). In this an important precedent had been created. For the rest of the century, Irish landlords felt threatened and their fear manifested itself in the demand for additional powers to put down even rumours of murder attempts. Many of them lived under constant fear from a community that regarded them as foreigners. This state of affairs was heightened by a press that overreacted to any agrarian disturbance.

Lavelle was one of the first people to see a draft of the new legislation, being given the

opportunity to do so by George Henry Moore. His first reaction was to accept in principle the provisions of the bill, but he realised there were many points that needed modification, such as arbitration on rents and a tax on the incomes of absentee landowners. He accepted the bill because it was better than nothing, as he stated to Moore: "...I wish the bill were to pass even in its present state."(110) Moore and Lavelle showed a more pragmatic approach to the bill than that of the majority of their countrymen. They were also conscious that it was a first attempt to settle the land question, and while it had many deficiencies it was a base from which to work. They were aware that most Irish people had too high an expectation of the bill and for that reason they did not attend the land conference in Dublin on 30 January 1870, the week before the bill was debated in parliament.(111) Lavelle, nevertheless, continued to point out the deficiencies in the legislation, as in the number of letters he addressed to Gladstone:

...you profess to give "fixity" of tenure in reality, but not in name, in substance but not in form, and this as a matter of necessity to the community at large. You allow the landlord to evict for more reasons than non-payment of rent, deterioration of land, or injurious sub-letting...you leave him the full possession of his old feudal right "to do what he likes with his own", only at the end of "a fine on causeless eviction"...(112)

He added that the only way to help the cultivator of the soil was to curtail the power of the landlord to disturb him for any cause other than the non-payment of rent.

While Lavelle accepted the land bill with reservations, the bishops, who were regarded as not having a major interest in the land question, opposed it.(113) Other nationalists appointed it as the best on offer and a step in the right direction. Moore was one of these stating that it was the only remedy for "the barbarous social altercations which disgraced Ireland."(114) The bill became law in April 1870, by which time Lavelle was in his new parish of Cong.

While Lavelle's association with Fenianism in the 1860s is well known, his experiences in Partry during this period are as important to our understanding of the formation of his nationalist views. His encounters with landlords, the constabulary and the Scripture

Readers all helped shape his ideals on the land and political questions. While the Land Act restricted the landlords' authority over his tenants, Lavelle had witnessed the extent of their power at a local level more than most other people. That he kept up two campaigns, at a national and local level, shows up his tenacious and unrelenting qualities.

## Chapter 6

- 1 Connaught Patriot, 21 May 1863.
- 2 Ibid., 9 May 1863, p.2; Tuam Herald, 16 May 1863, p.2. Even after Plunket's death in 1866 Lavelle continued to write to London about the futility of sending money to Partry where past efforts had achieved such negligible results.
- 3 See Kathleen Villers-Tuthill, Beyond the Twelve Bens, A History of Clifden and District, 1860-1929 (Galway, 1986), pp.43-5.
- 4 It was becoming increasingly difficult for converts to remain in these regions and emigration to North America was their only hope to escape the persecution of their former co-religionists.
- 5 Nation, 12 Apr. 1862, p.523.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid., 7 Jun. 1862, p.652; Catholic Telegraph, 7 Jun. 1862, p.7.
- 8 Hansard, clxx [28 May 1863], col. 2022; N.L.L., MS 7583, Larcom Papers, Peel to Solicitor General, dated 21 Jul. 1862.
- 9 Nation, 7 Jul. 1862, p.715.
- 10 See N.A., C.S.O.,R.P., 1861/7273.
- 11 Catholic Telegraph, 6 Sept. 1862, p.7.
- 12 N.A., C.S.O.,R.P., 1869/1783; Letters dated 8 Dec. 1868; 11 Jan. 1869; 23 Jan. 1869; 7 Feb. 1869.
- 13 See Mayo Constitution, 12 Nov. 1866, pp.3-4; Ballinrobe Chronicle, 10 Nov. 1866, p.1.
- 14 N.L.L., MS 7583, Larcom Papers; Mayo Constitution, 23 Dec. 1862, p.1; Connaught Patriot, 3 Jan. 1863, p.2.
- 15 Connaught Patriot, 17 Jan. 1863, p.3.
- 16 Dublin Daily Express, 4 Apr. 1863, p.1; Bridie Molloy, Itchy Feet and Thirsty Work: A Guide to the History and Folklore of Ballinrobe (Ballinrobe, 1990), p.26.
- 17 The affair of Lavelle pulling down Plunket's wall is to be found in pp.70-1.
- 18 Connaught Patriot, 3 Jan. 1863, p.2.
- 19 The average salary of a parish priest at this stage was £200. For the financial difficulties and salaried of the clergy in this period see D. Keenan, The Roman Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century (Dublin, 1983) pp. 63, 74.
- 20 Catholic Telegraph, 18 Jan. 1862, p.5.
- 21 Ibid., 22 Feb. 1862, p.5.
- 22 Irishman, 4 Jan. 1862, p.387.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid., 10 May 1862, pp.676-7.



- 25 For the Patrick's Pence Fund see pp.89-90. See ibid., 15 Aug. 1863, p.101; Irish People, 3 Sept. 1864, p.3.
- 26 Irishman, 11 Jan. 1862, p.411.
- 27 Irishman, 26 Apr. 1862, p.651; 15 Nov. 1862, p.286.
- 28 Mayo Constitution, 31 Mar. 1863, pp.3-4; Galway Express, 4 Apr. 1863, p.3; Dublin Daily Express, 4 Apr. 1863.
- 29 Ballinrobe Chronicle, 2 Nov. 1867, p.1. See also case of Catherine Plunket v John Dermody for trespass, Ballinrobe Chronicle, 9 Nov. 1867, p.1.
- 30 Irishman, 7 Feb. 1863, p.470.
- 31 Ibid., 12 Sept. 1863, p.166; Nation, 19 Sept. 1863, p.60; Connaught Patriot, 22 Aug. 1863, p.3.
- 32 Connaught Patriot, 12 Sept. 1863, p.1.
- 33 See Catholic Telegraph, 15 Nov. 1862, p.4; Galway American, 14 Feb. 1863, p.6; Connaught Patriot, 14 Feb. 1863, p.2.
- 34 Irishman, 23 May 1863, pp.710-1; Connaught Patriot, 30 May 1863, p.3.
- 35 Nation, 27 Jun. 1863, pp.696-7.
- 36 Connaught Patriot, 14 Feb. 1863, p.4.
- 37 N.L.I., MS 7583, Larcom Papers letter dated 23 Oct. 1863.
- 38 Tuam Herald, 31 Dec. 1864, p.2; 7 Jan. 1865, p.2.
- 39 Tuam Herald, 7 Apr. 1866, p.3; Mayo Constitution, 10 Apr. 1866, p.3.
- 40 Ibid., 7 Jul. 1862, p.715; 9 Aug. 1862, p.792; Irishman, 7 Mar. 1863, p.541.
- 41 Reprinted in Connaught Patriot, 28 Feb. 1863, p.4; Mayo Constitution, 3 Mar. 1863, p.2.
- 42 Mayo Constitution, 10 Mar. 1863, p.2; Connaught Patriot, 14 Mar. 1863, p.4.
- 43 Nation, 25 Jul. 1863, p.765; Connaught Patriot, 25 Jul. 1863, p.3; Irishman 25 Jul. 1863, p.60.
- 44 Tuam Herald, 11 Jul. 1863, p.2.
- 45 Mayo Constitution, 3 Jan. 1865, p.3. A similar situation occurred in Jul 1863, see Nation, 11 Jul. 1863, pp.732-7.
- 46 See F.D. How, William Conyngham Plunket (London, 1900), p.59; John Garrett, Good News from Ireland (London, 1863), pp.110-111; A.C.R. Dallas, The Story of the Irish Church Mission Society up to the Year 1869 (London, 1875), p.236.
- 47 Lavelle was fined 2/6 and 1/6 costs for assaulting Mary Buckley.
- 48 Ballinrobe Chronicle, 10 Nov. 1866, p.4.
- 49 Tuam Herald, 27 Oct. 1866, p.2; Ballinrobe Chronicle, 27 Oct. 1866, p.1; Mayo Constitution, 30 Oct. 1866, p.2.

- 50 Ibid, 15 Aug. 1863, p.101; Irish People, 3 Sept. 1864, p.3.
- 51 See Agricultural Stastics for Ireland for the year 1867, H.C. 1868-9, lxii, 645, p.lvii. Accounts of the numbers in receipt of relief in the poorer unions of Mayo and Galway is to be found in N.L.I., MS 11,221 Earl of Mayo Papers, correspondence of the Poor Law Commissioners, dated 25 Jul. 1867. It shows there were more receiving relief in Ireland in 1867 than at any time over the previous five years.
- 52 Mayo Constitution, 21 May 1867, p.3.
- 53 See Gerard Moran, "Famine and the Land War: Relief and Distress in Mayo, 1879-82, pt.2 ", in Cathair na Mart, vi (1986), pp. 118-9.
- 54 Ballinrobe Chronicle, 22 Jun. 1867, p.1; N.L.I., MS 11,218 (14), Earl of Mayo Papers, Mr Blunt to Lavelle, dated 9 Jul. 1867, & John Kelly to Ballinrobe Guardians, dated 28 Jun. 1867. For evidence of the attempts at local level in Mayo and Galway to stop the extension of outdoor relief see MS 11,218 (1), Mayo Papers
- 55 Ballinrobe Chronicle, 20 Jul. 1867, p.1. See also 13 Jul. 1867, p.1.
- 56 Irish People, 10 Aug. 1867, p.8. See also N.L.I., MS 11,218 (14), Earl of Mayo Papers, Lavelle to Lord Naas, dated 16 Jun. 1867.
- 57 Irish People, 6 Jul. 1867, p.1; Irishman, 13 Jul. 1867, p.29.
- 58 Irishman, 17 Aug. 1867, p.109. See also 16 Jun. 1867, p.807; Irish People, 29 Jun. 1867, p.1; 28 Sept. 1869, p.5.
- 59 Irishman, 27 Jul. 1867, pp. 52-3; N.L.I., MS 11,211, Earl of Mayo Papers, correspondence of A. Power to Lord Naas, dated 25 Jul. 1867.
- 60 Irishman, 19 Oct. 1867, p.254.
- 61 Other clerics besides Lavelle had to make continuous appeals for their people in post-Famine Ireland. They included Frs Patrick Malone in Belmullet, Patrick MacManus in Clifden, Michael Curly in Louisburg and Patrick Lyons in Spiddal.
- 62 For the debate between Lavelle and Tait see Mayo Constitution, 3, 10, 17, 24 31, Mar. 1868.
- 63 Sheridan Gilley, "The Catholic Church and Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Ireland", in Yonah Alexander and Alan O'Day (eds.), Terrorism in Ireland (London, 1974), p.136; Patrick Lavelle, The Irish Landlord since the Revolution (Dublin, 1870), p.401; Nation, 3 Apr., 1869, p.518; Irishman, 12 Jun. 1869, p.790; N.A., C.S.O.R.P., 1869/4477; National Archives, Landed Estates Court Rentals, 77/3, Counties of Mayo and Galway; D'Alton, E.D., History of the Archdiocese of Tuam, vol. ii (Dublin, 1928), pp. 78-9.
- 64 N.A., C.S.O.R.P., 1869/4477, police report, dated 12 Mar. 1869.
- 65 Freeman's Journal, 31 Aug. 1869, p.4.
- 66 Irishman, 12 Jun. 1869, p.790.
- 67 See Lavelle, op. cit., pp. 402-4; N.A., C.S.O.,R.P., 1869/447, Port Royal, Lavelle to Chichester Fortescue.
- 68 Nation, 3 Apr. 1869, p.510.
- 69 Ibid.

- 70 Ballinrobe Chronicle, 24 Apr. 1869, p.1; Freeman's Journal, 31 Aug. 1869, p.4; Tuam Herald, 4 Sept. 1869.
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## CHAPTER 7

### LAVELLE AND THE POLITICAL QUESTION, 1870-86

#### (a) Lavelle and the Home Rule movement, 1870-1874

The years between 1870 and 1886 saw a major transformation of Irish politics. For the first time in over a decade the emphasis of Irish nationalists moved from revolutionary methods to constitutional agitation, bringing together Irishmen of all persuasions under the banner of the Home Rule Party. While the latter's objective, that of Irish legislative independence, was similar to that of the Fenian movement, it differed in its approach. While the party's fortunes in its early days under Isaac Butt were unhappy and often bordered on the ineffective, it survived to become a most effective political force under Charles Stewart Parnell. In the process it replaced the two other political parties in Ireland, the Liberals and Conservatives, and made Home Rule for Ireland an attainable goal.

The Home Government Association was established in Dublin on 21 May 1870 by Isaac Butt. In its formative years it faced many uncertainties, such as internal divisions and the failure to attract the clerical support which was necessary for electoral success. To understand Lavelle's involvement with this movement it is necessary to comprehend the problems and difficulties it faced. Many priests and bishops withheld their support because they distrusted the motives of the large number of Protestant Conservatives who were involved in the early days of the Association. Only after they left the party was there a slow movement of Catholic clergy into its ranks.<sup>(1)</sup> In those constituencies, such as Meath and Galway, where clerical participation was forthcoming at election time, the Home Rule candidates were successful. There was also a section of the lay community who held back from participating in the organisation because they disagreed with the Catholic Church's stranglehold on Irish affairs. They feared that the priests would take over the movement. Nevertheless, it soon became apparent, as in Derry, that without active clerical support the

electoral achievements of the Home Government Association would be limited.(2)

Overall, the hierarchy's attitude to the Home Government Association in the first three years of its existence was that of benevolent neutrality. While not overtly espousing the organisation, it did not actively oppose it to the extent of killing it, as happened with the Tenant Right movement of the 1850s. While the electoral successes in Meath in 1871 and Galway in 1872 can be attributed to the local bishops' contempt for the alternative candidates available, it represented a tacit acceptance of the cause. This was especially the case with prelates such as John MacEvilly, whose expectations about the Liberal government's sincerity in delivering on university education began to decline.(3)

The Home Government Association drew together men of different political views. It contained people such as the Conservative, Isaac Butt, the constitutional nationalist, John Martin, and a radical like Lavelle. There was a small number of clerics in the party like Archdeacon James Redmond of Arklow, Canon James Rice of Queenstown and Lavelle, who represented the contrasting political views within the Church.

Many people were taken aback by Lavelle's participation in the new organisation. As a result of his friendship with George Henry Moore he was aware of the movement's formation. While absent from the inaugural meeting in May, he had joined the association by September, having been nominated to the sixty-one man central committee which controlled the party in August 1870. His entry into the Home Government Association was not unique among Fenian sympathisers. There was also a certain amount of Fenian involvement in the party as a result of an agreement between Butt and the I.R.B., whereby the latter adopted a conciliatory approach towards Home Rule. This allowed many of the younger generation of Fenians to participate in the constitutional process. Other Fenian sympathisers besides Lavelle who were involved in the party from the early days were James O'Connor and D.B. Cronin.(4) While many moderates considered Lavelle to be a Fenian, to the old constitutional nationalists, like W.J. O'Neill Daunt, he was regarded as

an old repeal nationalist.(5)

It is not surprising that Lavelle joined the Home Government Association, as it was regarded as the brain child of George Henry Moore.(6) What is surprising is that it took Lavelle five months to become officially associated with the movement. One explanation was that many moderate nationalists and Conservatives would have refrained from supporting it if a radical like Lavelle was seen in its ranks from the outset. Both nationalists and Conservatives were surprised by Lavelle's adherence to the new party. Dean O'Brien in a letter to Isaac Butt said of Lavelle:

I have a real respect for Fr Lavelle's pluck and intelligence as well as honesty: (sic) but I fear his appearance among us so soon. By and by he would be a power; now he will give us a character from which hundreds of priests and all the Bishops - nearly - will shrink.(7)

Many Protestants saw in Lavelle the inherent evils which they associated with the Catholic Church, and they did not like his revolutionary past. While such accusations, especially those by the Conservatives, were directed at Lavelle, in the long term it was he who remained true to Home Rule principles and it was the Protestant Conservatives who abandoned the cause. While many Protestants refused to endorse the Home Rule movement because of Lavelle's involvement there were also many Catholics, notably the bishops, who were not prepared to ratify the organisation because of his participation, but more importantly because of the many Protestants who were members.(8)

Lavelle was also involved in the campaign to assist France, then at war with Prussia. The outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 resulted in an outburst of sympathy for France. The old historical ties between the two countries, the fact that Prussia was portrayed as a Protestant heathen against Catholic France, united all sections of Irish society, from Fenians to clergy, to advance the French cause. Support for France was greater than feeling for the Fenians and the political prisoners.(9) Irish aid for France was expressed in three ways. A number of Irishmen joined the French army, like the future

Irish Parliamentary Party MP, James J. O'Kelly, and fought against the Prussians. Large demonstrations were also held throughout the country in support of the French. A collection was held to assist the French war effort.

Patrick Lavelle devoted much of his time and energy to helping France, to the detriment of his local political involvement. He wrote a number of letters to the newspapers urging his fellow countrymen to give assistance to France. Lavelle was responsible for the demonstration at Cong and also transmitted Irish contributions to France to finance an ambulance corps. His most important activity was acting on behalf of the French authorities to purchase 5,000 cavalry horses and an equal number of oxen. However, the Battle of Sedan in September ended French resistance and Lavelle's assistance was no longer required. Lavelle was one of the main speakers at a demonstration in the Rotunda at the end of August 1871 to mark French appreciation for Irish aid during the war.(10)

Because of these diversions Lavelle's name only became associated with the Home Government Association on 1 September 1870. In a letter to the organisers of a meeting he stressed his support for the movement and said:

In 1782 the independence of our country was proclaimed and legislatively guaranteed "for ever". Eighteen years only elapsed when also "for ever" she was doomed to provincial servitude. This second "for ever" must be unsaid, must be undone. For this end, union and mutual toleration are chiefly needed, and, trusting these virtues will characterise your meeting...(11)

One of the most important features of the Home Government Association was that it represented a new coalition of the different political traditions in Ireland. Despite the reluctance of some to welcome Lavelle into the movement, he was accepted by the majority of Protestant Conservatives on the first occasion he attended a meeting of the association's central committee in September 1870.(12)

His attendance at the meetings of the Home Government Association was erratic, and he



missed the first annual general meeting of the party in June 1871. Nevertheless, from his correspondence it is clear that he had a positive attitude to the movement once he had committed himself to it. Since the 1850s his political goals had not altered radically, rather it was the ways of achieving these aims that had been modified.(13) This was in stark contrast to the leaders of the Fenian organisation. They still supported the traditional approach of a military solution to the Irish question. They also continued the old system of demonstrations to generate support for Fenianism, especially on the deaths of prominent members of the organisation. However, while this method was successful in the 1860s, many of the more enlightened Fenian members felt a more constructive result could be achieved through their co-operation with constitutional nationalists.

The Home Government Association represented different things to different people, but to Lavelle it was the vehicle to attain independence; freedom in the form of a parliament in College Green. The controversy over Repeal of the Union and Federalism remained a long and tortuous one, with many of the old constitutional nationalists, such as John Martin, not prepared to compromise on the question of Repeal. Martin was pessimistic about Federalism.(14) Federalists, such as Mitchel Henry and Isaac Butt, saw Federalism as a solution to Irish needs, maintaining the integrity of the empire and more importantly retaining Protestant support for the party. The principle of Federalism was always one that was under threat from the more advanced nationalists within the movement. Its survival into the late 1870s was in itself a major feat.

Eventually Lavelle sided with the main grouping, the Federalists, advocating the Swiss or the United States federal models as the solution to the Irish problem. In 1871 he wrote:

...the programme of our Association...is ...complete independence of national or "Home" legislation, a firm grasp of our national purse with a federation similar to that of the American states or the cantons of Switzerland; and all this to be accomplished without violence, disorder, or blood.

Lavelle would have preferred to have 300 Irish Protestants making laws for Ireland than 500 Englishmen, for at least they could be called Irish.(15)



ISAAC BUTT,

The rise of the Home Government Association can be attributed primarily to the spirit and legacy of independent parliamentary action, brought about by the Independent Irish party of the 1850s. While support for constitutional nationalism had declined in the 1860s, it had not died. The Home Rule movement of the 1870s resembled more the Irish party of the 1850s than Parnell's centralised organisation of the 1880s. Butt's organisation was Dublin based and did little to try and spread its message throughout the country through demonstrations and meetings.

Many Fenians were opposed to any involvement with the constitutional nationalists. Others, like John Ferguson of Glasgow, John O'Connor Power and Joseph Biggar, adopted a more pragmatic stand. As the Fenian Rising of 1867 had been a failure, they now considered the parliamentary movement as the best chance of success.(16) Lavelle shared this view, insisting the Irish had the right to take up arms whenever it had a good possibility of success. He said:

May we all hope ...that recourse to such violent means may, by the wisdom of our foreign rulers, not be necessary. Let us hope that "the union of Irishmen" may teach him that wisdom, and that thus what we were deprived of by means both corrupt and violent, we may regain by the brotherly union of hearts from end to end of the land.(17)

The Home Government Association's first electoral triumph occurred in February 1871 with John Martin's victory in the Meath by-election. This gave the movement the necessary springboard to become a serious political party within the country. Over the next three years the party won seven of the ten by-elections contested. These electoral successes indicated that a united front of Catholics and Protestants could provide hope for legislative independence in the near future. This was the main thrust of Lavelle's speech at the Rotunda banquet to celebrate Martin's by-election success:

He did not suppose that the Rev Mr Galbraith was an Orangeman, nor was he (the Rev Mr Lavelle) to be regarded as a rebel, but he hoped that their joint efforts on that occasion would result in the verification of the prayer of Davis,

that "Orange and Green" will carry the day.(18)

He went on to say: "He loved his creed as much as, he was sure, Mr Galbraith loved his; but his love for his creed could not be an obstacle in the way of his love for liberty; on the contrary, he believed there never was a greater tyrant than a bigot."

Lavelle defended the Home Government Association whenever it came under attack from within the ranks of the Catholic Church. It was more effective to have a cleric rather than a layman justify the movement. Lavelle came to the party's defence when Father Patrick Turner of Rhodes, Co Offaly, alleged that the organisation was anticlerical and anti-Catholic. Turner asked if the leaders of the Home Rule party were behaving like characters from the French Revolution.(19)

Lavelle's importance to the movement was also noted in his participation in a number of deputations, as in the meeting to the Dublin Corporation to discuss the possibility of its supporting the principle of Home Rule.(20) He was in demand to address demonstrations throughout the country, such as in Kilraghtis, Co Clare, the parish of Rev Jeremiah Vaughan. Nevertheless, while Lavelle was one of the leading personalities in the association, he contributed little to Martin's success in Meath. This is surprising when compared to his limited involvement in the 1869 contest in Longford and must be attributed to the increasingly local character of Lavelle's political participation from then on.

The Galway by-election of 1872 had considerable implications for the Home Government Association. The elevation of W.H. Gregory to be Governor of Ceylon in 1871 created a vacancy in the county. Captain John Nolan of Ballinderry, Tuam, entered the contest as the Home Rule candidate, having secured the backing of the Archbishop of Tuam and his clergy on 26 July 1871.(21) MacHale's promptness in backing Nolan forced the other bishops in County Galway, most notably John MacEvilly, to support him if only for the sake of clerical unity.

Nolan had tried to get a previous nomination for Galway County a few months before when Mitchel Henry was the successful candidate. Nolan withdrew from this contest because of the clergy's refusal to endorse him, due to his long-running dispute with his tenants on his Portacarron property. When he withdrew from the contest the clergy promised to assist him at the next election if he got his estate in order.(22) By accepting the arbitrators decision on Portacarron, Nolan restored his political credibility. Nolan now ensured he retained the steadfast allegiance of the clergy. Thus Lavelle criticised those opposing Nolan's candidature:

I pray the tenants and tenant-farmers of Galway to ask themselves who is the tenants' friend - the man who nobly repairs a wrong done, or the man or men who vehemently denounce reparation and the principle of reparation.(23)

Having won his bishop's assistance Lavelle was morally bound to assist Nolan, the more so because he had agreed to the arbitrators' findings. By refusing to aid Nolan, Lavelle would have been stating his opposition to the arbitration agreement he had helped secure. It was thus not surprising that Lavelle should describe Nolan as "one of the greatest benefactors to the tenant farmer class which the country has produced within the present century."(24) Nolan's political views on nationality and Home Rule were not as important to Lavelle as his pragmatic approach to agrarian affairs. Lavelle's statement at a later stage that he would have preferred if Patrick Barret, convicted of attempting to assassinate a landlord, had been chosen, would appear not to be entirely true.

Lavelle's commitment to Nolan is best observed in his letters to the newspapers in August and September, attacking Hyacinth D'Arcy, who was contemplating contesting the election on the Liberal ticket. Lavelle alleged that D'Arcy was an evicting landlord who did not merit the clergy's support. He maintained that the population on the D'Arcy property in Glenamaddy Union had declined from 267 families in 1841 to 89 in 1872, and forwarded the names of a number of tenants who the D'Arcys had supposedly evicted.(25)

While letter writing greatly preoccupied Lavelle during the election, he also worked tirelessly behind the scenes for Nolan. The Nolan camp undoubtedly felt Lavelle was an important figure, as they spent close on £100 to ensure that his letters and speeches on the election were published in the newspapers, especially in the Tuam News. Lavelle was also persuaded to work behind the scenes to win over other clerics, like Fr Thomas Burke of Portumna, whose allegiance was considered lukewarm. He also issued the letters that resulted in the clergy of the four provinces convening in Athenry to ratify their support for Nolan and to consider how they should go about ensuring that the tenants voted against their landlords' wishes.(26)

Nolan was anathema to the landlord class because he had appointed three well-known advocates of tenant-right to arbitrate on his estate.(27) Other tenants or nationalists could in future blackmail their landlords into securing arbitrators who were not favourable to the landlords. These circumstances led many Catholic and Whig landowners, like Captain Daly and Sir Thomas Burke, to support the Conservative, William Le Poer Trench, not out of political conviction but because of landlord solidarity.

Lavelle and the other priests realised how explosive the situation could become between landlords and tenants, as both sides endeavoured to gain the tenants' votes. In August 1871 Lavelle wrote of these dangers and said:

Men of Galway - Be prepared. The wolf is on the wake - the landlord and the bailiff have already commenced their old accustomed game, and are attempting to make you yourselves the instruments of your own oppression. Vainly fancying that your eyes are closed to the vast changes effected in your relations with them within the last two years, and that they can still, as of old, frighten you into doing their will - their proud bidding - no matter how opposed to your own interest and will, they now demand your suffrages for one according to their own heart, as against one, who has happened to incur their deadly enmity for daring to make generous and ample reparation for wrong done by him in once copying, though at a large interval, after their example.(28)

This point was reiterated at the clergy's meeting in Athenry on 7 December 1871, at which Lavelle spoke. The first resolution called on all the priests in Galway to ensure that the

landlords did not coerce their tenants on polling day.(29) These two power brokers, clergy and landlords, were heading for a major confrontation. At a meeting of the Galway gentry in Loughrea on 13 December to support Le Poer Trench, Sir Thomas Burke, a Galway landowner and Catholic, issued a circular that stressed the differences between the two. It said:

...I cannot see any reason why the Landlords alone should be debarred from any interference in politics, or why their Tenants should be allured from their guidance and advice. Still, persons who would go between Landlord and Tenant should remember that no party is so much interested in the real prosperity of the Tenant as is the Landlord. I now express my hope and confidence that none of my Tenants will vote against my will for any Candidate...(30)

Lavelle criticised Burke for this circular. As a result Burke received a threatening letter. Violent words at these demonstrations was putting people's lives at risk and others like Lavelle became easily excited by the events and used language which was afterwards regretted. Burke was branded a "shoonen".(31) Lavelle was also reputed to have stated that Burke had signed his "death knell" because of the rumour that his tenants had been ordered to vote for Trench. Lavelle insisted that he was incorrectly quoted and that he had spoken of Burke's "political death knell".

Throughout the campaign the main theme of Lavelle's speeches was landlord-tenant relations. He never mentioned the question of nationality, an indication that the Home Rule question was of secondary importance in the election. Few of the Home Rule leaders participated in the campaign, the clergy alone being to the fore. Lavelle said that Galway County was not created for the five peers, one baronet and other landlords, but for the 300,000 souls that inhabited it. He said: "They threaten the one in the event of not getting the other. Like the footpad to his victim, 'Your purse or your life' the crowbar brigade cry out to their tenants 'Your vote, your conscience or your life.'(32)

He returned to this theme in speeches at Gort, Loughrea and Milltown. In the overall context of the election none of Lavelle's orations was seditious, nor could they be construed

as rabble-rousing. Nevertheless, he did make a critical attack on individual landlords, like Sir Thomas Burke. His Milltown speech was mainly confined to reciting incidents from his stay in Partry. Overall, his rhetoric was mild compared to the contributions of many other clerics. These included Father M. Connolly who at the Gort meeting maintained the clergy had every right to defend the tenants in political affairs with every means at their disposal. Fr James Staunton of Clarenbridge and Fr Thomas Ryan of Claregalway threatened the wrath of God on anyone who dared vote against Nolan.(33)

Lavelle showed that he had a broader understanding of political relations than many of his peers. While the role of non-electors was important at election time - for the intimidation of opposing voters - Lavelle realised the significance of the electors' wives. They were to play an important role in the Galway contest. It was perhaps the first time in nineteenth-century Ireland that women played a prominent part in electoral affairs. Lavelle realised their value to the Nolan cause. At two of the election meetings he told the wives to monitor the voting intentions of their husbands.(34) This was an appeal to the group most able to influence the tenants' voting pattern. Unquestionably there were many voters, like Edward Kelly of Tuam, that were torn between the dictates of their priests and the demands of their landlords. It was the promptings of their wives that made them vote for Nolan.(35) Lavelle told them not to cook, sew or tend to their husbands' needs if they voted for Trench.

The extent of the clergy's participation in the election was most noticeable at the Nolan demonstrations. Not only were they present in great numbers at the meetings, 40 attending at Athenry, 22 at Loughrea and 12 Portumna, but they also comprised the majority of speakers at these gatherings. At least 60 of the 150 priests in County Galway were actively involved in the campaign. This level of clerical participation polarised relations within the county and within a short time these transcended local boundaries and appeared on the national stage. Thus the contest was not between Nolan and Trench, but rather between priests and landlords over their ability to influence the tenants.



Under these circumstances electoral violence became common place during the election. On election day fighting broke out in Tuam, Ballinasloe, Kinvara and Oughterard. The riot act had to be read to a mob in Loughrea. In Galway City, all the cars carrying the Trench voters had to be heavily guarded by the police and military. At Oughterard, Sir Arthur Guinness, who enjoyed a good rapport with his tenants, was attacked and injured as he accompanied 27 voters to the polls.(36) This was despite the agreement that Lavelle had secured from Guinness that all of his tenants would not be instructed as to how they should vote.

Undercurrents of unrest also surfaced in Galway courthouse on nomination day. There was great excitement and tension throughout the proceedings as both sides attempted to antagonise their opponents. Lavelle unsuccessfully tried to instil order into the affair, calling on the people to remain silent. He also appealed to the High Sheriff to evict some of the Trench supporters for starting the disturbances. This led the Nation to say of Trench's followers, "These gentlemen...conducted themselves during the proceedings more like a pack of infuriated savages than anything."(38)

Both sets of supporters heightened the tension with intimidating letters. Lavelle was threatened because of his rhetoric at some of the meetings, especially at Gort. As most clerics had used more seditious language than Lavelle one can only deduce that he was singled out because of his high national profile. The threat to Lavelle stated:

Mind, now, surplised ruffian, that for every peer that is shot an archbishop will fall, for every baronet that is shot a bishop will fall, for every country gentleman that is shot a parish priest shall fall, and for every tenant farmer that is shot, down comes a curate...(38)

The landlords viewed Lavelle with trepidation and were prepared to move against him when the occasion arose. Mr Serjeant Armstrong, one of the prosecuting counsels at the Galway election petition enquiry, described Lavelle as the greatest firebrand in the country, an accusation which greatly annoyed him.(39) Attempts were made to get MacHale to

silence Lavelle. Sir Thomas Burke in a letter to MacHale alleged that Lavelle was inciting the people to crime, "...there are many who would look upon Father Lavelle's speech as a clear order to shoot me, and if that is not an attempt at intimidation, I do not know what is".

MacHale, however, refused to entertain these complaints, stating that Burke was making it a bigger issue than it actually was.(40) Burke found out what Cullen had learned in the 1860s, that MacHale would not check Lavelle and if anything gave him a free rein. MacHale's attitude towards Burke illustrated the clergy's unity on the election issue and their refusal to break ranks, at least not publicly.

Lavelle's public involvement in the campaign was peripheral. While he addressed four of the twelve meetings convened by the clergy and spoke from the altar in Cong on two occasions, his overall contribution was minimal. There were only six electors in Cong and he felt that he did not have to exert much pressure on them. Only three of these voters voted. Initially they promised to vote for Nolan, but they followed their landlord's lead and voted for Trench.

On polling day Lavelle did not remain in Cong to escort his parishioners to the polls, as most of his colleagues did. He was not needed in Cong, so he left his sick bed and travelled to Galway city to be with the candidate. His failure to deliver these three votes provoked the criticism from his old colleague Father Peter Conway of Headford, that Lavelle was not as committed to the cause as he should have been.(41)

While Nolan easily won the contest by 2,823 votes to 658, the Trench party petitioned the result to parliament because of undue interference in the election by Lavelle and his colleagues. The election trial was one of the longest to take place in post-Famine Ireland, sitting for 47 days and examining one hundred and eleven witnesses, including Lavelle. It was presided over by Judge Keogh, who was detested by Irish nationalists because of his defection from the Irish Independent Party in 1854. While Keogh criticised the clergy's

role in the contest, he was especially scathing in his attack on Lavelle. Lavelle's past reputation made him a target for Keogh. Compared to the other sixty clerics who were actively involved in the campaign Lavelle was harshly treated. When one considers the landlords' speeches at their Loughrea meeting, for example Sir Thomas Burke, their rhetoric was as seditious as Lavelle's. However, none of the landlords was reprimanded or prosecuted. The real case against Lavelle was that he had declared at the Gort meeting that Sir Thomas Burke had sounded his "political death knell" for wanting to influence his tenants' voting intentions. Keogh described Lavelle as worse than "those profligate priests of the French Revolution." He asked: "What right had he, I say to pollute the diocese which is presided over by an intellectual, educated, solemn graceful and religious pastor."(42) Keogh went on to say of Lavelle:

This officiating priest who goes to the altar, and who, as I say, does not perform but desecrates the renewal of that tremendum mysterium which was consecrated upon Calvary, who in public meetings, on public platforms talks of "political death-knells", and he says that he would, if necessary, prefer, I would not say an assassin, because when a man is acquitted he must be believed in the spirit of our laws to be innocent, but a man who had no other title to the notice of any human being, except that he stood twice accused at the bar of a court of justice for the attempted assassination of his fellow creature!(43)

Keogh's criticism was curious, for he himself had used rhetoric similar to that of Lavelle against the Galway landlords in a speech in Galway City in the 1850s.

Lavelle's presence and reputation condemned him in the landlords' eyes. This can be seen from the way people like Judge Keogh and Mr Murphy at the election petition inquiry delved into Lavelle's past. His role at the 1869 Longford by-election had been minimal, but this was introduced to discredit him, with the claim that he spent much of his time interfering in issues that did not concern him. Keogh said of Lavelle:

I most entirely approve of the course taken by Father Reynolds in keeping that "patriot priest of Partry" out of the county of Longford. If he was doing his duty as a parish priest, it would not be in Longford, but in attending to the wants of his own parishioners.(44)

Lavelle was not unduly annoyed by Keogh's personal attack. He felt that if Keogh had

not criticised him, along with the other 32 priests accused, it would have been a terrible indictment. In a long letter to the Freeman's Journal, he condemned Keogh's judgment and his character. In particular he criticised Keogh's denunciation of the Catholic clergy of Galway and said that he had only cemented the union between the priests and the people. "Meaning to replace territorial despotism in its traditional dominant place, he has, on the contrary, inflicted on it a blow from which it can never recover..."(45)

While Lavelle was not among the 22 people named for prosecution, the Keogh judgment restricted his open involvement in Galway politics for at least seven years. While legally barred from the election proceedings in County Galway in 1874, Lavelle nevertheless used his old techniques to ensure that he still remained before the public eye. Through letters to the press he actively supported the candidature of Mitchel Henry and Captain Nolan, while condemning the intervention of Hyacinth D'Arcy.(46)

While Lavelle was happy to be criticised by Keogh, the same was not true of the rest of the Galway clergy. Keogh's views and judgement upon them caused consternation in Ireland. In attacking the priest's role in the contest he said: "...I have no hesitation in pronouncing that the whole of this vast county was made one aceldana of frenzy and hatred."(47)

Keogh condemned the clergy's use of altar denunciations and their threat to withhold the sacraments for electoral purposes. He deplored their efforts to overthrow all free will and civil liberty in the county. He recommended that 24 priests, including the Bishop of Clonfert, Dr Duggan, be sent forward for trial for having exercised undue clerical influence at the election.

The attack on the Catholic Church and its clergy brought the Catholic population of Ireland together in a way that had not been evident since the early 1850s. Nearly every parish in the country held a demonstration in which the priests denounced Keogh's

comments. Between the 8th and 15th of June 1872 over 40 meetings were held throughout Britain and Ireland condemning Keogh. At the same time all Catholic and nationalist MPs, led by Isaac Butt, carried on a campaign within parliament. A sum of £15,000 was required to defray the petition costs and this was raised within four months. This money was gathered so quickly because every parish in the west, led by the parish priest, contributed to the fund. Lavelle and the parish of Cong typified this approach, collecting £40, Lavelle giving £10. Many of those who gave donations did so not out of allegiance to the principle of clerical involvement in politics, but rather because they regarded the prosecution as a direct attack by the government on the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Lavelle encountered ill-feeling from MacEvilly during the 1872 Galway by-election controversy. He publicly stated that he had never given Lavelle permission to attend public meetings within his jurisdiction, referring to the Gort demonstration which Lavelle addressed. Lavelle had also preached at the 10 am mass in Gort, when the clergy were uniting after Keogh's declaration.<sup>(48)</sup> MacEvilly's motive was to ensure that Lavelle did not enhance his reputation within the country. There was a note of cynicism in MacEvilly's first letter on the issue: "He [Lavelle] would have still far greater reason to complain had he been subjected to the deep humiliation of being made the subject of the learned judge's eulogies." MacEvilly's attitude must be taken in context, for Lavelle attended the Loughrea meeting in the same month and was never publicly or privately rebuked by the Bishop of Clonfert, Patrick Duggan.

He still continued to have difficulties with most of the Irish bishops, mainly due to his negligent attitude to pastoral duties. This also brought him into conflict with the civil authorities. In 1872 he was accused of performing a bigamous marriage, and in 1878 he refused to sign marriage certificates in the Cong district, so that the marriages were not registered with the state. The bigamy case occurred in 1868 when Lavelle officiated at the marriage of Pat Walsh of Ballybannon to his second wife, Mary Malley. Lavelle maintained that Walsh's first wife, Anne McNally, at whose marriage he had officiated in

1862, was an 'idiot'. Lavelle also argued that Walsh had been tricked into the marriage and that he had not realised how afflicted she was. On several occasions Lavelle brought Walsh's wife back home, only for her to run away again. He stated MacHale told him to settle the case and it was then he allowed Walsh to remarry.<sup>(49)</sup> Four years later the state prosecuted Walsh and refused to recognise the second marriage. It was an example of state law not recognising the Church's code. For Lavelle, it created difficulties as many of the bishops including MacHale insisted that he had overstepped his authority.

After the 1872 Galway by-election Lavelle faded from national prominence. This can be primarily attributed to the changing regional base of Irish nationalism after the formation of the Home Rule movement. The Home Government Association was based in Dublin and it replaced local grievances with national issues. Between 1868 and 1870 meetings took place all over Ireland in favour of Amnesty and tenant-right which enhanced the national reputation of people like Lavelle. After 1870 the new Home Rule organisation was Dublin-oriented and it failed to initiate local associations which would hold demonstrations in support of the national demand. Thus personalities like Lavelle disappeared from prominence as they no longer had an outlet to express their opinions. Only those within easy reach of Dublin and those who could afford to attend the meetings and demonstrations of the Home Government Association remained in the limelight. The movement thus became little more than a Dublin pressure group without any local base. In many respects it resembled the National Association of the 1860s.<sup>(50)</sup> Only on certain occasions, like the Rotunda banquet to celebrate John Martin's Meath by-election victory, did Lavelle make a personal appearance in Dublin.

He was also at a disadvantage compared to the lay members of the association when it came to participating in demonstrations held in Dublin. He was expected to get permission from those bishops in whose dioceses the meetings took place. This could prove difficult as his reputation with most bishops was not good. Thus Lavelle regularly used the excuse of important parish duties to absent himself from many meetings and became one of the

main losers within the Home Rule movement.

The extent of Lavelle's decline from national prominence was not just confined to his political activities. This was also evident during the resurgence of the Amnesty Association in 1873. Lavelle had played a limited role during their campaign in 1869, but the only mention of him during the 1873 agitation was an apology for his non-attendance at the Newry meeting.<sup>(51)</sup> As none of the demonstrations was held in the west he played no part in them.

During this period the Home Government Association was in a demoralised state. Attendances at the weekly meetings were on the decline and there was general disillusionment about its future. The League's failure to attract clerical support for its programme reflected its weakness. While the hierarchy hoped that Gladstone would provide a solution for the university question, most bishops remained reluctant to assist the party. Many priests privately sympathised with the Home Rule movement, but were not prepared to make their views public until their bishops had expressed their opinions. Some bishops like Duggan of Clonfert withheld their co-operation waiting for their more senior colleagues to declare their support first.<sup>(52)</sup> The breakthrough in reviving the declining morale of the party occurred in May 1873 when the priests of Clifden and Castlebar deaneries publicly espoused the association's principles. It was the clergy's disappointment with the government's university bill that turned them to Home Rule. This encouraged their fellow-priests to follow suit and many more joined the party, including Lavelle's own deanery of Ballinrobe.<sup>(53)</sup> It was mainly priests from the west that joined the movement up to November 1873.

The Liberal administration's defeat on the university bill in March 1873 made a general election imminent. The Home Rule Association held a conference between 19th and 21st November to formulate a policy for the election. It was convened to reaffirm its objective: winning Home Rule by constitutional agitation. It was one of the first opportunities for the

non-Dublin based members like Lavelle to comment on the movement and was also one of the largest political gatherings to assemble in nineteenth-century Ireland, with 1,250 people present in the Rotunda. The organisation changed its name to the Home Rule League. The Irish Liberal MPs now flocked to the party. A total of 26 MPs gave some form of commitment to the cause, 18 of them having been elected as Liberal representatives. Many of the MPs, like Major O'Reilly of Longford and The O'Connor Don of Roscommon, were not wholly committed to the movement and used it to secure their political future.(54)

The conference did nothing to placate many of the party's enemies, and particular criticism was levelled at John Martin and Lavelle. The London Standard described Lavelle as being heartily earnest in every sort of political and social mischief. It maintained that while Protestants knew that Gladstone had fleeced them, Lavelle would strip them of their very skins.(55)

There was nothing exceptional about Lavelle's speech to the conference on the third day, 21 November. He reiterated that he would rather be governed by 105 honest Irish Protestants in Ireland than by 5,000 English Catholics in Westminster, and highlighted the difficulties that the Irish had to endure from the English, "The Government had the sword and the bayonet, and the Irish people had only their tongues - they had not even the pikes now. (laughter)" (56)

The most contentious resolution before the conference, which had severe repercussions for Lavelle, came from the Fenians, John O'Connor Power and Joseph Doran. Power was one of the up-and-coming personalities within the association and he proposed that representatives should address their constituents annually about their parliamentary actions. He alleged there were groups within the movement who were opposed to this new departure. This was a reference to Lavelle although he was not specifically named.(57) It was being suggested that Lavelle feared the growing influence of these Fenians within the Home Rule League. It also was a prelude to the divisions that would bedevil the party for



the rest of the decade between its advanced nationalists and Whigs.

(b) Lavelle and the General Election of 1874

The Home Rule party was caught completely unawares by the suddenness of the 1874 general election, having only reorganised itself in November 1873. Consequently, the clergy played an important role in many counties during the 1874 general election, being indispensable as local leaders of opinion.(58) While clerical assistance was necessary for the fledgling party, the advanced section of the movement preferred that such participation be kept to a minimum, ever mindful of the episcopal betrayal of the 1850s.(59)

Ironically while most Irish constituencies accepted candidates on the promise of support for the principle of Home Rule, in Mayo the contest for the two seats was among three candidates whose adherence to the ideal of Home Rule was never in doubt, but whose nationalist ideology differed greatly in its content. By this stage Lavelle's radical position had changed and he now stoutly espoused the clerical nominees.

Lavelle and other clerics refused to accept the Fenian, John O'Connor Power, as their representative and consequently invited the landlord, Thomas Tighe, to contest the seat. He probably organised the invitation to Tighe as he considered him to be one of the most liberal landowners in Mayo. Tighe had an estate of 1,720 acres and 35 tenants at Ballindine and was regarded as an improving landlord who held advanced views on the national question.(60) Lavelle's curate, Father John O'Malley, nominated Tighe, which indicated a certain amount of connivance on Lavelle's part.(61) He knew Tighe since the 1850s when the landlord had supported Lavelle during the Partry affair. While Tighe was a strong advocate of a national parliament he did not join the Home Rule League until a couple of weeks before the general election. His delay in joining was due to two recent family bereavements.(62)

In the controversy that ensued, the most unfortunate and innocent person caught up in the whole affair was Tighe. His crime was that he had taken up Lavelle's invitation to contest

the seat, as he was more acceptable to nationalists than many of those returned on the Home Rule ticket at the 1874 election. The difficulties were exacerbated when Lavelle realised his standing in Mayo was on the decline and he could no longer regard himself as the people's spokesman. He then withdrew his support for Tighe and declared that A.M. Sullivan of the Nation should be nominated as the county's parliamentary representative.(63)

While Lavelle argued in a letter to the Mayo Examiner that the people should be allowed vote as they desired, he clearly had a deeper meaning in mind. He wanted the people not to promise their vote to any candidate until the lay and clerical leaders had chosen the names of two representatives.(64) He wished to curtail greatly the choice of candidates available. This attitude was due to the growing neo-Fenian threat within the county and the increasing political power of the tenant right representatives on the local boards of guardians. Many of this latter group were merchants and some were members of O'Connor Power's election committee.

John O'Connor Power's nomination created great confusion in Mayo. In the late 1860s the clergy held a dominant position at Mayo elections; in the 1870s, however, this authority came under threat. The rise of the nationalist movement in the early years of the 1870s indicated that the laity were no longer prepared to play a subservient role as electors. Mayo Fenians were prepared to take the initiative in displacing the priests from their role as political power brokers within the community.

By the 1870s Connacht Fenianism had altered fundamentally. Its merger with local Ribbon societies gave it a clear-cut agrarian direction. Supporters were recruited from the ranks of artisans, agricultural labourers and small farmers.(65) This contrasted with the Fenian policy that Lavelle had espoused ten years before and the change distanced him from Fenianism. His friendship with Sir Arthur Guinness removed him from the mainstream landlord-tenant tensions then prevalent in the west. He thus departed from his previous attitudes to agrarian and political problems.

Fenian participation in electoral affairs in Connacht first became apparent during the 1872 Galway by-election when Matthew Harris of Ballinasloe and Mark Ryan of Galway actively supported Captain Nolan.(66) Their involvement in the Mayo election was more overt because they opposed the clergy's nominees. By 1874 Mayo was regarded as the most organised Fenian county in the country with 2,400 members.(67) Their candidate in Mayo, John O'Connor Power, was born near Ballinasloe in 1849, the son of a middle-class farmer. Most of his childhood was spent in the local workhouse. Having emigrated to Rochdale in 1862, he joined the Fenian movement, and in 1868 he became a member of the Supreme Council of the IRB, probably representing Connacht. Returning to school in St. Jarlath's College, Tuam in 1870 he became one of the principal smugglers of arms for the Fenians into Ireland.(68)

This occurred when Lavelle's relationship with the advanced nationalists in Britain was on the decline. By the 1870s the Irish in Britain were mainly concerned with the Amnesty cause and Lavelle was no longer interested in this issue. In the 1850s and 60s his tours of Britain, his speeches and letters in aid of the poor of Partry had given him a privileged position among the Irish in Britain. However, his transfer to Cong no longer necessitated these journeys and thus he faded from the limelight. Although a high profile member of the Home Government Association, Lavelle lost out to others with more radical views.

In the early 1870s O'Connor Power used those tactics that had gained Lavelle fame in the 1850s and 1860s - radical speeches to the Irish communities in Britain. Throughout the summer and autumn of 1873 O'Connor Power delivered lectures to Home Rule branches throughout the North of England. When he joined the Home Government Association in September 1873 his fame within the movement spread quickly.(69)

Before the clergy assembled at the presbytery in Castlebar in February, Lavelle and others decided that Tighe and Browne should be their candidates. Lavelle and Bishop Conway of

Killala proposed them before MacHale joined the meeting. It later emerged that MacHale and Canon Ulick Bourke, President of St. Jarlath's College, Tuam, came to the meeting with the intention of promoting O'Connor Power's selection. Lavelle's carefully laid plan had outmanoeuvred MacHale who was left with little option but to accept the assembly's decision, if only to show the continuing unanimity among the priests. This was probably the reason for MacHale's sudden departure from Castlebar. Lavelle and Conway also succeeded in getting the agreement of all candidates that they would accept the decision of the meeting, thereby ensuring the electoral supremacy of the clergy. Once the clergy had selected Browne and Tighe, Power withdrew from the contest .

The clerical attempts to win a victory through their old methods failed because the laity were no longer prepared to accept priestly dictation in electoral affairs. Anticlerical sentiments in the constituency were manifest in calls of support for such anti-Catholic symbols as Garibaldi, Bismarck and Judge Keogh. It was reported that, "The mob passed backwards and forwards before the Presbytery where the Archbishop was hooted, and shouted at and groaned at."(70) None bore the brunt of these attacks more than Lavelle and MacHale, who were former demigods of the crowds.

In the weeks following the clergy's meeting Lavelle had to fight with all the venom and strength that had characterised his days in Partry and his defence of Fenianism in the 1860s. On this occasion he was waging battle without MacHale's assistance nor did he have the sympathy of any other powerful nationalist figure in the country. He was a lone combatant, as the direction of the nationalist movement was changing.

The personalities of Lavelle and O'Connor Power ensured that the conflict would be long and bitter. While Lavelle was zealous, headstrong and determined, O'Connor Power was arrogant and ardent, and any reconciliation between them would be impossible.(71) The acrimony stemmed from the Home Rule conference of November 1873, when Lavelle opposed the proposal that MPs should regularly account for their parliamentary

conduct.(72) He wrote to Butt in March 1874, a letter that was kept private at Lavelle's request:

You may have often heard the question put - "who is this Mr O'Connor Power"? - I often did but never could I get an answer. I am, however, now in a position to tell you he is the bastard son of a policeman named Fleming from Co Cavan, and a house painter by trade, who has managed to live on his wits and the gullibility of others and myself for years -!!!(73)

He classified O'Connor Power as a political adventurer who had deceived everyone.

Lavelle and the Mayo priests regarded Tighe and George Browne, the outgoing MP, as a team and saw O'Connor Power as an intruder. They toured the county together addressing the voters in all the major towns. The south of the county, where Lavelle was situated, was the heartland of Browne and Tighe's support. When O'Connor Power visited Ballinrobe he was given a very poor reception.(74) O'Connor Power's supporters were mainly situated in the north and east of the county, especially round Balla and Claremorris.

Lavelle was worried by the advanced nationalists' activities within the county. The Fenian demonstrations in support of O'Connor Power had a direct military format. The clergy had refused Power a hearing in Claremorris and eighty Fenians marched into the town on 24 May, led by local Fenian leaders, J.W. Nally, Patrick Nally and Patrick Gordon, bringing the place to the verge of a major riot.(75)

The conflict over O'Connor Power intensified throughout the opening months of 1874 and started with a stinging attack by the correspondent of the Irishman, who said that Lavelle was unpatriotic although he was not mentioned him by name. It stated: "The conduct of one of these reverend gentlemen is calculated to strengthen the suspicions long entertained towards him by many Irish Nationalists."(76)

Lavelle contended that O'Connor Power had no right to contest the seat because he had not suffered for his country to the same extent as John Mitchel or O'Donovan Rossa. He

also maintained O'Connor Power was directly responsible for the mob that hooted and jeered the priests after the Castlebar meeting. Surprisingly, he used the very terms that had been hurled at him in the 1860s - communist and International member. Directly challenging O'Connor Power's nationalism he said:

Where he was, what he was doing, while I was labouring hard and suffering penalties worse than Millbank for my, I admit, indiscreet, but honest defence of my country's rights, remains also to be seen. I put my character against his vile attack, and leave the issue to honest, earnest, unselfish Irish patriots.(77)

Lavelle insisted that while he would have supported O'Connor Power at election time, the Fenian had mistaken this for friendship.

Throughout the exchanges, Lavelle was adamant he had nothing against Power personally (which was not entirely true) and that the Fenian was responsible for the difficulties, as he had repeatedly tried to undermine Lavelle's public character. Again he outlined his past record in Partry. He said he felt ashamed that he had to refer to his past deeds for Ireland, but when his honour and political reputation were assailed he felt bound to defend them. Lavelle implied that he should be respected for his past sacrifices for his country. In the past he had maintained that his clerical duties were secondary to his nationalism, but he was prepared to refer to his priestly responsibilities whenever the occasion merited it.(78) The Tuam News said of him: "He is fond of likening himself to the greatest men of ancient and modern times. He has modestly pictured himself as Leonidas at Thermopylae; and last week he was strutting in the clothes of Grattan and Smith O'Brien."(79)

The correspondence between Lavelle and O'Connor Power's supporters in The Irishman, the Tuam News and the Mayo Examiner was a feature of the election. There was a certain amount of collusion between the Irishman and the Tuam News over their attacks on Lavelle. Certain letters on the Lavelle-O'Connor Power feud addressed to the Irishman first appeared in the Tuam News. At the same time the Tuam News refused Lavelle the right to reply to their allegations. The bitterness of these attacks made it difficult to believe that the participants were Home Rulers and nationalists. Lavelle's involvement in the 1869

Tipperary and 1872 Galway by-elections on the nationalist side was questioned. It was alleged that he did little to further the cause of O'Donovan Rossa and Nolan.

Lavelle contended that blaming O'Connor Power for those deeds carried out in his name would stem moderate nationalist sympathy for the Fenians. By threatening those newspapers that supported O'Connor Power, in particular the Irishman, with legal proceedings, he hoped to erode his popularity further. The Irishman took the warning seriously, but it allowed the controversy to continue hoping that Lavelle's own writings would further reduce nationalist sympathy for him. By leaving its columns open, especially to other correspondents, Lavelle's reputation among Irish nationalists would be further tarnished. At no stage did the paper comment editorially on the issue. It allowed other correspondents to discredit Lavelle. In early May, the paper unsuccessfully attempted to reconcile the two groups, but most importantly, it desisted in attacking Lavelle at a time when it had every reason to criticise him.(80) It also showed itself to be more conciliatory than Lavelle.

The demise of Lavelle can be attributed to the cunning decision of the Irishman to allow access to its columns to O'Connor Power and others, who dismissed Lavelle's nationalist record on issues such as the Tipperary and Galway by-elections. O'Connor Power stated, "Sensible men are heartily sick of him and all his electioneering wire-pulling. They do not share his love of contention, and they will henceforth regard his affirmation or denial of anything with the most perfect indifference."(81).

Father Richard MacHale wrote on behalf of the Archbishop of Tuam intimating that his uncle had not been adverse to O'Connor Power's candidature. Lavelle alleged that John MacHale was actively opposed to O'Connor Power, thus casting an unintended aspersion on MacHale's nationalism.

Many leading nationalists, like John Martin, attempted to reconcile the two men, but their



endeavours failed because the Tuam News revived the feud, possibly because Lavelle questioned that newspaper's nationalism. The News had brought Captain Nolan to court over a £1,000 bill he owed it for the coverage and reporting of Nolan's election campaign in 1872.(82) It also alleged that Lavelle had withheld the leases of a number of the Portacarron tenants and consequently they were unable to get credit without this security.

Lavelle's treatment of O'Connor Power greatly enraged the advanced nationalist section within the Home Rule movement.(83) The Irish community in Britain was also annoyed with Lavelle, who wrongly felt he had its support. His appeals to the Irish in Britain that he was the innocent party during April and May, fell on deaf ears.(84) Once again he returned to the events at Partry in an attempt to reawaken nationalist sentiment for him. John Barry, one of the leaders of the Irish community in Britain and a Fenian, correctly predicted that Lavelle would be the only person to be injured in the affair.(85) Lavelle was condemned by 20 Home Rule associations in Britain for his treatment of O'Connor Power. These branches had furnished the Fenian with financial contributions, moral aid and comfort.

The Lavelle affair gives us an insight into the Irish community in Britain. Their extreme political temper was due to their awareness of Ireland's problems and the contrast they observed in Britain.(86) Unlike friends at home, their ordeals made them more radical and revolutionary in their nationalism. They were more likely to participate in organisations like the Fenians, the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick and Home Rule which gave them an identity in a country that was regarded as the source of Irish grievances. Such movements enabled the Irish in Britain to retain a common bond with Ireland in a country whose very culture was alien to them.(87)

The clergy's political dominance in Mayo tottered when they failed to avoid a contest. George O'Donel, a fourth candidate who sought the nomination, reneged on the undertaking given to the priest's at the Castlebar convention. After Tighe and Browne had

been declared elected unopposed, O'Donel appealed against the decision of the returning officer who had invalidated his candidature because he had failed to appoint an expenses agent within the time permitted. The three judges who heard the case, including Lavelle's old adversary, Judge Keogh, overruled this decision. In a reference to the high level of clerical interference in elections in Mayo between 1854 and 1874. Keogh and Justice Morris said that such electoral misdemeanours could only occur in that county.(88)

John O'Connor Power was thereby allowed to re-enter the contest, as he was no longer compelled to abide by the decision of the Castlebar meeting. The clergy resorted to their old techniques of altar denunciations, in Westport, Castlebar, Kiltimagh and Killala. Paul Cullen was the only bishop to show sympathy for O'Connor Power, probably because he preferred to see Lavelle and MacHale embarrassed.(89) Up to this the Mayo priests had a complacent attitude to their electoral influence. They felt their power over the people would prevail, as Fr Patrick Ryan of Headford wrote: "I fear very much he (O'Connor Power) does not know Mayo well. I was there for the last ten years and as far I can give an opinion there is no county in Ireland so much in the hands of the Priests as Mayo."(90)

The forces that had supported Lavelle in 1868 and 1870, now opposed him and canvassed for John O'Connor Power and some, like Matthew Harris, James Daly and Thomas Brennan, later became influential Land League leaders. While the leading figures behind the O'Connor Power campaign were mainly Fenians, one must not over-emphasise their importance. One of his leading campaigners was James Daly, who was not a Fenian and who refused to have any direct dealings with the militant nationalists.(91)

While many Mayo priests resigned from the Home Rule movement, as in Westport and Ballinrobe, because of the role of the advanced nationalists, Lavelle remained loyal to the party.(92) Often the clergy threatened to resign from the organisation if their nominees were opposed by advanced nationalists.(93) Such threats placed Butt in a predicament, as the priests were the single most powerful force within the movement. However, the

advanced nationalists were a very active group within the party and Butt could ill-afford to antagonise them.

In the election John O'Connor Power defeated Thomas Tighe by 1,319 votes to 1,272 to take the second seat. The effects of this election on Lavelle were twofold. For the first time, he had distanced himself from John MacHale on a political issue and he could never again rely on the Archbishop's help. MacHale henceforth tended to be critical of Lavelle. In September 1874, MacHale declared that during the election he had not promised O'Connor Power his support.<sup>(94)</sup> However, he had not promised to assist Tighe or Browne and never spoke on their behalf. Nevertheless, Lavelle only aggravated the problem by dismissing Fr Richard MacHale's letter and implying he was ignorant of the facts as he had not attended the Castlebar meeting.

By May the divisions between Lavelle and John MacHale became obvious. MacHale complained to Rome about Lavelle, much to the Vatican's amusement.<sup>(95)</sup> While MacHale maintained he was annoyed at Lavelle's dissolution of the Walsh marriage in Partry, he had been aware of this case since at least 1872. The more probable explanation was Lavelle's role during the 1874 election.

O'Connor Power's election signalled the dawning of a new era in Mayo politics. His return ended the landlord monopoly of parliamentary representation in the county, but it also marked the end of Lavelle's importance as a political force at election time. The contest had seen the emergence of a new political elite in Mayo, the Catholic middle-class laymen, to the exclusion of the clergy. The Fenians had finally made the breakthrough of offering the Irish electorate candidates other than those nominated by the priests. Given Lavelle's political importance between 1868 and 1874, this transformation greatly affected him. It was a prelude to his fading from the national scene over the next decade.

(c) The political demise of Lavelle, 1874-1886.

The 1874 general election was a watershed in Irish political history. For the first time in nineteenth-century Ireland a third major political party had emerged - the Home Rule party - which was not connected with either of the British parties. The return of 59 Home Rule MPs sounded the death knell of the Liberal party in Ireland and eventually reduced the Conservatives to a regional party based in Ulster. The election also marked a change in the social background of MPs. John O'Connor Power was the first non-landowner to be returned in Mayo. Within a decade landlords comprised only a small minority of the Irish representatives at Westminster.

O'Connor Power's election transformed politics, not only in the House of Commons where he was one of the Home Rulers who used obstruction tactics, but also within Mayo. He discontinued the old practice of ignoring his constituents except at election time. In October, he addressed meetings throughout Mayo, beginning in Castlebar.<sup>(96)</sup> Despite the clergy's opposition he showed no animosity towards them. Whereas clerical involvement in such political demonstrations was essential for their success in the 1850s and 1860s, this was no longer the case in the 1870s. The priests' absence at O'Connor Power's meetings between 1874 and 1879 mirrors the changing political scene in Mayo. This contrasts with the demonstrations of other Home Rule representatives, like Dr Michael Ward in Galway City and Joseph Biggar in Cavan where the local clergy attended. Their absence in Mayo may be explained by their fear of O'Connor Power's radicalism.<sup>(97)</sup> They were not present the meeting on 26 October 1878 in Castlebar when the Mayo Tenants Defence Association was launched by James Daly, Hugh Feeney, and J.J. Loudon. Only one cleric, Fr O'Connor of Belcarra, attended. However, Lavelle was one of ten clergymen requested to form a committee to establish the tenants' association.<sup>(98)</sup> There is no indication that he accepted this invitation.

New power-groupings emerged in Mayo, namely the Catholic middle classes and the

Fenians. Politics began to be controlled by a group of influential townsmen, such as James Daly and Hugh Feeney of Castlebar and John J. Loudon of Westport, who were gaining experience of politics at a local level through their participation in the Boards of Guardians and Town Commissioners. This group replaced Lavelle and the rest of the clergy as the political power brokers within the community.(99) The same group of people had played a major role in Power's election success in 1874. It was to be the prelude to the electoral successes of the Parnellite party in 1880.(100)

Lavelle lost out in this situation, considering he had once been the principal speaker at all meetings within Mayo. His demise at a national level can be noted, for he seldom participated in any of the nationalist or Home Rule demonstrations. O'Connor Power's rise was at Lavelle's expense.

There were many similarities between Lavelle and O'Connor Power. O'Connor Power followed the path that Lavelle had trodden in the 1868-1874 period, although for more diverse and complicated reasons. After his entry into parliament the Fenians withdrew their support for him and in 1876 he was expelled from the Supreme Council of the IRB. He pursued an individual course and tended to be critical of everyone. In the days immediately before the Land League he attacked his obstructionist colleagues and was as liable to oppose obstruction as he was to defend it.(101)

In the changing political climate, O'Connor Power replaced Lavelle as the darling of the advanced nationalist press and of the Irish in Britain. In the opening months of 1875 two pages of each issue of the Irishman were devoted to the Mayo MPs engagements, including his speeches to Irish communities in Britain and letters on a large number of Irish topics. There was no indication of Lavelle's activities in the Irishman, which in the past had been one of his most active supporters. Lavelle was now more likely to write to the more respectable newspapers like the Freeman's Journal and the Galway Vindicator.

Between June 1874 and the end of 1876, Lavelle wrote few letters to the newspapers, a reflection of his declining political influence. When he did communicate it was to answer charges made against him on issues that occurred before 1874, like his role in the 1869 Tipperary by-election when O'Donovan Rossa was elected. He no longer attended functions and banquets for former colleagues, like John 'Amnesty' Nolan.(102) He was also absent from political functions in the archdiocese of Tuam, as in October 1875 when over 2,000 people attended a Home Rule demonstration in Tuam. His presence was only noted at religious occasions, like funerals, confirmations or the blessing of new churches.

There were indications that Lavelle was turning his back on his radical past. He appeared to be returning to the main fold of the Church and opposed those organisations that were anti-religious. In March 1872 he condemned the International Association which was supported by sections of the Irish working classes in Britain. He described it as an ill-fated movement that should be shunned:

I now feel called upon to use any and all the influence which I may possess, through your confidence in my sincerity, in my undying devotion to my country and to you, to warn you against this trap laid for that dear country's destruction, the ruin of its honour, and the shipwreck of its faith.(103)

Despite this Lavelle continued to be elected to the executive council of the Home Rule League. The last occasion he served on the council was in 1880 when he was one of the 50 co-opted members. This continuity of membership of the executive council must be attributed to the fact that the League remained in the hands of the more conservative elements of the organisation. Only with the extension of the Land League throughout the country after 1880 did the dominance of people like Lavelle within the party begin to wane. At this point Lavelle's apathy over the movement's strategy is apparent by his absence from most of the executive meetings. He attended none of their meetings in the 1875-'76 period. While election to the council of the Home Rule League carried prestige, it had little practical consequences for the members from the provinces. As the council met each week in Dublin, it was monopolised by those members who resided near the capital, with little

input from those, like Lavelle, who lived in rural Ireland.(104)

1874 to 1880 was a difficult period for the Home Rule MPs in parliament as the Disraeli administration refused to bring forward any significant legislation for Ireland. In frustration a group of Irish MPs, the most notable being Joseph Biggar, Charles Stewart Parnell and O'Connor Power, began a policy of parliamentary obstruction. This entailed the disruption of parliamentary business by delaying tactics. It split the Home Rule movement and adversely affected the relationship between Isaac Butt and Parnell. The supporters of obstruction, like John Ferguson and Richard O'Shaughnessy, stated that the Irish people were losing confidence in the party, because Butt's parliamentary policy had failed and a more militant approach was required.(105)

By 1875, Lavelle agreed that a radical change in attitude among the Home Rule party's MPs was required. Absences from parliament, in particular by people like Butt, led to increasing criticism. Lavelle felt it was up to each county to ensure that its representatives were the servants and not the masters of their constituencies. He argued that the parliamentary recess should not be a dead season, but should be used for the good of the country by preparing and organising all Irish deputies for the next session.(106) Lavelle was coming round to the views of O'Connor Power and the other advanced nationalists as to the manner in which Irish representatives should behave in parliament.

With the Home Rule movement in disarray over the policy of parliamentary obstruction, Lavelle sided with the obstructionists when both sides appealed to the country for support in August 1877.(107) In a letter dated 18 August 1877 to a meeting in the Rotunda he said:

Will it, then, be asked do I mean to advocate the policy of "obstruction"? And nothing, no, nothing in the slightest abashed by the question, I answer most decidedly, "Yes". But not the obstruction of four, five, or seven, the *summus numerus* of our gallant Irish obstructives, but of forty, fifty, or seventy, banded as one man, tied together, like the broom in the fable, so firmly that its breaking up would defy the power of even Ministerial and Opposition omnipotence combined. I will be asked on what grounds defend this action? and I will answer, on the broad and, to my mind, very intelligible ground of a

state of war.(108)

His espousal of obstruction indicated a pragmatism as to how the national question should be approached. He backed the Fenians, Home Government Association and obstructionist groups because at those particular points of time they represented the best means of advancing Irish grievances. By 1877-'78 Lavelle had become more radical in his political philosophy than at any time since 1870. He wholly rejected the Whig attitude to parliamentary tactics, as shown in his letter of 2 November 1878 to the Home Rule League:

Though comparatively silent for some years past, I have not been the less observant of, and anxious about, the attitude of those men - every man of whom, from the sloth who sleeps away his whole Parliamentary life, to the deserter, like the Home Rule member for King's County, I have at this moment before my mind. These men must be "eliminated". Young and pure blood must be infused into their veins.(109)

He then called for a total campaign of parliamentary obstruction during the session of 1879.

Lavelle agreed with most of the points put forward by the dissidents and his name was constantly linked with Parnell and the other leading radicals within the party. As early as March 1874 Lavelle had written enthusiastically about Parnell's candidacy at the County Dublin election.(110) He was one of 37 League members who signed a petition in November 1878 calling on the secretary of the League to consider the position of the Home Rule movement and to advise what action should be taken towards its advancement. The petitioners included Parnell, Biggar, O'Connor Power and John Ferguson, all ardent advocates of obstruction.(111) While he rarely attended the party's meetings he continued to write to the newspapers, especially to the Nation and the Freeman's Journal, as in the 1860s when the newspapers were his chief way of strengthening his political position.

Lavelle had definite views about the party's position in parliament. He accepted that Isaac Butt had given the party great service, but felt it was time he resigned the leadership. It was argued that Butt's role within the movement was grossly ineffective and hindered its advancement. While Lavelle advocated obstruction he also called for the party to act



independently of the two main British parties and if the opportunity presented itself they should defeat them. Parnell was to adopt this policy in the mid-1880s. Lavelle said:

...whether the Irish Home Rule party in Parliament is to be permitted, when the occasion arises, to allow either Whig or Tory to have his way unchallenged, when, by the united vote of that party, the scale may be turned. Whether it should or should not be made known to the Government and Opposition alike that the side which engages practically to give Ireland her full, just demand (not her pitiful prayer) shall possess the confidence and vote of the Irish National Party.(112)

He also defended those obstructionists who were criticised by opponents within the party. His most vicious attack was on Dr M. Ward, the Home Rule MP for Galway City, who publicly rebuked Parnell and another radical, Frank Hugh O'Donnell, for their unparliamentary conduct and their attack on the recently assassinated Lord Leitrim. He said:

Were the hon. member for Galway borough paid by the worst enemies of his country for doing dirty work, he could not have accomplished his task with more zest and heartiness...I believe they [Parnell and O'Donnell], in unison with every man of honour and faith, abhor the foul crime of cowardly assassination, no matter how much provoked; yet he has the audacity of impeaching those ...members.(113)

Lavelle's renewed radicalism led to a rapprochement with his former allies, the advanced nationalists. In August 1878, he was invited by the Glasgow nationalists to address a demonstration in that city.(114) He also wanted to get involved with the New Departure, which was an attempt to get agreement between Parnell, Michael Davitt and the American Fenians regarding Irish independence.(115) There was an indication that Lavelle had reached some kind of working relationship with his old adversary, John O'Connor Power, if only that he now agreed with the parliamentary tactics of the junior MP for Mayo.

Lavelle's re-emergence within the Home Rule organisation occurred at a time when O'Connor Power's influence was on the decline. After 1875 Power's popularity within the Fenian movement receded and in 1876 he was expelled from the Supreme Council of the

IRB along with Joseph Biggar and John Barry, after they had refused to resign from the Home Rule movement. O'Connor Power's involvement in the parliamentary process provoked more bitterness within the IRB than that of any other Fenian.(116) Also his position within the Home Rule party became less secure. After 1878 relations between himself and Parnell were strained because he envied Parnell's growing popularity and because of their different social backgrounds. It reached its climax during the 1880 election in Mayo in which both were candidates. O'Connor Power was now liable to attack his fellow obstructionists as he was to criticise the Whig element in the party.(117) While one can only speculate as to Lavelle's motives for re-emerging on the national stage, one must assume that it was partly done to upstage his opponent, for despite Lavelle's approval of parliamentary obstruction, he did not attend any of O'Connor Power's demonstrations between 1877 and 1879.

Despite Lavelle's conversion to a radical political approach, his new found fame was short lived. The position in 1879 showed up the shifting scene in Irish politics. When the old guard of the Home Rule movement convened in February to discuss the political situation, it failed to recognise the newly emerging local politicians in the west. This group was to have a vital role in the land question and eventually replaced many of the older nationalist figures in the country. Few of these older political figures, those who were instrumental in the formation and development of the Home Rule organisation in the early 1870s, played any part in the Land League. In this Lavelle must be included, although he did attend a few Land League meetings close to Cong. The failure of the older generation of politicians to come to grips with the agrarian question in the 1879-'81 period hastened their demise and led to the rise of a new breed of politician, like John Dillon, Tim Healy, Tim Harrington, Thomas Sexton and Matthew Harris. They became involved in politics because of their participation in the land question.

The laity controlled the Land League in Mayo and directed the 1880 election in the county. This was done without clerical help and resulted in George Browne's defeat.(118) Clerical

influence at this contest was at its lowest point during the nineteenth century. MacHale's contribution was negligible because of his age and his difficulties with his new coadjutor, John MacEvilly.(119) Furthermore, many priests had earned the wrath of the Land League because of their opposition or negativity towards it. The clergy were annoyed that they were omitted from the contest because they considered themselves the natural leaders of the people and a restraining influence on lawlessness and radicalism. For the first time since the 1868 election clerics like Lavelle played no role in the proceedings in Mayo. This signalled his demise within both the Home Rule movement and within Mayo.

In the post-Land League period the political structure within Mayo changed once more. The formation of the National League, with its emphasis on co-ordination of the constituencies, took power away from the local power brokers and placed it in the hands of the central organisation in Dublin. Between 1874 and 1885 political control in Mayo passed from the clergy to the laity and then to the centralised organisation in Dublin. The extent of this centralisation meant that three of the four Mayo seats at the 1885 general election went to nationalists unconnected with the county. The fourth candidate, John Dillon, had very tenuous links with Mayo.(120) Given that the centralisation of the Home Rule movement in the 1870s had effectively curtailed Lavelle's importance on the nationalist stage, there was little he could do to reverse this in the years before his death.

Once MacEvilly succeeded to Tuam in 1881 there are few accounts of Lavelle's involvement with his archbishop, except on pastoral issues, like confirmation ceremonies. He never regained the bishop's trust and had continuing altercations with them. It was alleged he was irregular in saying Mass on Sundays and denounced prominent laymen from the altar. While MacHale may have turned a blind eye to these inconsistencies, his successor, John MacEvilly, did not, and said of Lavelle in 1882: "Lavelle is an outrageous defiant man. He will not pay his debts or observe the statutes."(121)

Lavelle's disappearance from the public eye in the 1880s can be gauged from his omission

from The Nation's series of 1884-5, entitled 'Famous Irish Priests'. This included Dean O'Brien of Limerick and Father James Corbett, the Partry curate, who had gained fame during the Maumtrasna murders affair. Compared to Lavelle, both of these had played an insignificant role in Irish affairs.

He took no part at the proceedings of the Mayo selection conventions in 1885 and 1886. While he had not been actively involved in politics in the county since 1874, it was assumed that his close personal friendship with J.F.X. O'Brien, who contested the South Mayo nomination, would have reawakened his interest in political affairs but it failed to do this. It was also rumoured that he was unable to participate because of his 'disease'. This ailment had all the characteristics of alcoholism. As no reference was made to him at any to the meetings or at the selection conventions, it would seem that his political significance in the region had now vanished. At this juncture the most influential cleric in Mayo was Lavelle's former curate, Fr John O'Malley, P.P. of the Neale.(122)

Tragically, Lavelle just survived to see the dawn of a new age in political affairs. The electoral success of Parnell's party at the 1885 and 1886 general elections and the conversion of Gladstone to the concept of Home Rule for Ireland have been regarded as the origin of the modern Irish state.(123) They inaugurated a new era in Ireland and Lavelle witnessed a new approach by an Irish political party: the use of the balance of power at Westminster. Ironically it was Lavelle who had first suggested such a policy in the 1870s.

The period 1870-1886 marked the decline of the clergy's political dominance not only in Mayo but throughout the country. It also saw Lavelle's total political eclipse. He became a victim of the changing pattern of political leadership in the country, with the urban middle class now in control. However, for someone who had contributed significantly to the nationalist ethos of the country in the 1860s and 1870s, Lavelle's decline into political oblivion showed all too clearly the harsh reality of the changing pattern of leadership within Irish nationalism.

1. W.J. O'Neill Daunt, A Life Spent for Ireland (Shannon, 1972), pp. 274-276; D.D.A., Cullen Papers, Bishops, (1870), George Conroy to Cullen, dated, 4 Feb. 1870.
2. N.L.I., MS 8693 (7), Isaac Butt Papers, J. Cantwell to Butt, dated, 24 Nov. 1871; MS 8694 (20), Butt Papers, J. Ferguson to Butt, dated 14 Nov. 1872.
3. Cullen Papers, Bishops, (1873), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 21 Jan. 1873. See also K. Theodore Hoppen, Elections, Politics and Society in Ireland, 1832-1885 (New York, 1985), p.275.
4. R.V. Comerford, The Fenians in Context, 1848-1882 (Dublin and New Jersey, 1985), p.188; A.M. Sullivan, New Ireland, vol. ii (London, 1877), pp. 301-2.
5. See N.L.I., MS 8047 (2), W.J. O'Neill Daunt Papers, John Martin to Daunt, undated.
6. See N.L.I., MS 8692 (7), Butt Papers, John Martin to Butt, dated 26 May 1870.
7. N.L.I., MS 8692 (11), Butt Papers, Dean O'Brien to Butt, dated 26 Sept. 1870. See also MS 8693 (7), Butt Papers, J.G. Potter to Butt, dated 25 Oct., 1871; E. Burke to Butt, dated 30 Oct. 1871; MS 7731, Larcom Papers, dated 27 Oct. 1871.
8. Emmet Larkin, The Roman Catholic Church and the Home Rule Movement in Ireland, 1870-'74 (Chapel Hill, 1990), pp. 104-5.
9. Comerford, Fenians in Context, p.183.
10. Tuam Herald, 24 Sept. 1870, p.1.
11. Nation, 26 Apr. 1871, p.851.
12. N.L.I., MS 7731, Larcom Papers; Freeman's Journal, 2 Sept. 1870, p.3; Nation, 10 Sept. 1870, p.54.
13. N.L.I., MS 8047 (2), O'Neill Daunt Papers, John Mitchel to Daunt, undated, Sept. 1870 ?; David Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule (London, 1964), p.107.
14. N.L.I., MS 7731, Larcom Papers.
15. N.L.I., MS 8047 (3), O'Neill Daunt Papers, John Martin to Daunt, dated Feb. 1871; See also MS 8047 (1), O'Neill Daunt Papers, Martin to Daunt, 16 June (?); MS 8047 (2), Martin to Daunt, 26 July, 1870; Thornley, op.cit., pp.103-105; N.L.I., MS 7733, Larcom Papers; Freeman's Journal, 21 Nov. 1873; MS 7731, Larcom Papers, Freeman's Journal, 2 June 1871.
16. N.L.I., MS 7733, Larcom Papers; Freeman's Journal, 28 Jun. 1871.
17. Irishman, 17 June 1871, p.811. Ferguson said there was no point in taking up arms unless there was a firm conviction that the object could not be secured in any other way.
18. Nation, 11 Feb. 1871, p.127; Irishman, 11 Feb. 1871, p.516.
19. N.L.I., MS 7731, Larcom Papers; Freeman's Journal, 7 Feb. 1871, p.3. See also Freeman's Journal, 9 Feb. 1871, p. 3.
20. See N.L.I., MS 7732, Larcom Papers; Irishman 1 Jul. 1871, p.837; Galway Vindicator, 5 Jul. 1871, p.3; Freeman's Journal, 14 Aug. 1871.
21. N.L.I., MS 7731, Larcom Papers; Times, 20 Jul. 1871; Irishman, 22 Jul. 1871, p.37.

22. N.L.I., MS 7764, Larcom Papers, Freeman's Journal, 28 Jul., 1871; Cullen Papers, 1871 (Bishops), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 15 Oct. 1871.
23. Tuam News, 25 Feb. 1871, p.2; Cullen Papers, Bishops, (1871), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 20 Feb. 1871; Thomas Brett, Life of the Most Rev. Dr. Patrick Duggan, Bishop of Clonfert (1921), pp. 47-8.
24. Galway Vindicator, 3 Jan. 1872, p.2.
25. N.L.I., MS 7764, Larcom Papers, 1872 Galway by-election; Times, 25 Sept. 1871.
26. See Galway Vindicator, 20 Sept., p.3, 7 Oct., p.3; Tuam Herald, 23 Sept. p.3, 14 Oct. 1871, p.3.
27. Copy of the Minutes of the Evidence taken at the Trial of the Galway County Election Petition, 1872, with an Appendix and Index, H.C. 1872 (241 - 1), xviii, p.34 q.1442; Judgement Delivered by the Judges Selected for the Trial of Election Petitions, H.C. 1872, (268), xlvii, pp. 32-3; Mary Naughten, "Judge Willaim Keogh, 1817-1878" ( University College Galway, M.A. thesis, 1978), pp. 282-3.
28. Michael Hurst, "Ireland and the Ballot Act of 1872", in Alan O'Day (ed.), Reactions to Irish Nationalism, 1865-1914 (Dublin, 1987), pp. 49-50.
29. Galway Vindicator, 2 Aug. 1871, p.3; Tuam Herald, 5 Aug. 1871, p.2. See also Nation, 30 Sept. 1871, p.986, for the declaration of clergy from Tuam deanery against landlords using undue pressure against their tenants at the elections.
30. N.L.I., MS 7764, Larcom Papers, Galway by-election; Freeman's Journal, 8 Dec. 1871, p.4.
31. Tuam Herald, 16 Dec. 1871, p.2; Evidence of Galway County By-Election Petition, p.51, q.1667.
32. Galway County By-Election Petition, H.C. 1872, [241-1], xlviii, p.798, q.27,266.
33. N.L.I., MS 7764, Larcom Papers, Freeman's Journal, 20 Dec. 1871, p.4; Tuam Herald, 23 Dec. 1871, p.2. See also Freeman's Journal, 25 Jan. 1872; Tuam Herald, 27 Jan. 1872, p.2.
34. Galway Vindicator, 6 Jan. 1872, p.3; Galway County By-Election Petition, 1872, H.C.1872 [241-I], xlviii, p.508.
35. N.L.I., MS 7764, Larcom Papers; Freeman's Journal, 25 Jan. 1872; Tuam Herald, 27 Jan. 1872, p.2.
36. Galway County By-Election Petition, p.30.
37. Irishman, 10 Feb. 1872, p.502; S.P.O., Fenian Papers, F Files, 1868-1874, (8083R), from Patrick Gavin, dated 22 Feb. 1872; Galway County By-Election Petition, H.C.1872, (241-I), xlviii, p.86, q.2847-1873; Judgement Delivered by the Judges at the Trial of the County Election Petitions, H.C.1872 (268), xlvii, p.43.
38. Nation, 10 Feb. 1872, p.83. See also N.L.I., MS 7764, Larcom Papers, Freeman's Journal, 9 Feb. 1872; Nation, 17 Feb. 1872, p.101; Tuam Herald, 10 Feb. 1872, pp. 1-2; Galway Vindicator, 10 Feb. 1872, pp. 1-2.
39. Galway County By-Election Petition, p.800, q.27346.
40. Ibid., p.49, q.1,655.
41. Ibid., p.14.
42. Galway County By-Election Petition, p.802, q.27,438.

43. Liam Bane, "John MacEvilly" (University College, Galway, M.A. thesis, 1980) p.95.
44. Judgement Delivered by the Judges Selected for the Trial of the County Election Petition, H.C.1872 [268], xlviii, p.14. Larkin, Catholic Church and Home Rule Movement, p.129
45. Nation, 25 May, 1872, pp 327-8; Naughten "Judge William Keogh", pp. 282-3.
46. N.L.I., MS 7765, Larcom Papers, 1872 Galway by-election; Freeman's Journal, 12 June 1872; Galway Vindicator, 15 June 1872, p.4; Nation 22 June 1872, p.392.
47. Freeman's Journal, 12 Feb. 1874, p.3.
48. Cullen Papers, Bishops, (1872), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 27 Apr. 1872, 19 June 1872; Judgement Delivered.....of County Election Petitions, H.C.1872 [268] xlvii, p.62.
49. Nation, 30 Mar. 1872, p.196; Irishman, 30 Mar. 1872, p.612; Galway Vindicator, 30 Mar. 1872, p.4.
50. Judgement delivered by the Judges selected for the Trial of the County Election Petition, H.C.1872 [268], xlviii, p.40; MacEvilly to Kirky, 4 Aug. 1872, Archives of Irish College, Rome, Kirby Papers, 1872, no.196, calandered in P.J. Corish, "Irish College, Rome: Kirby Papers" in Archivium Hibernicum (1972), p.67. See also Cullen Papers, Bishops, (1872), MacEvilly to Cullen, dated 27 May 1872. MacEvilly wrote, "Anything so outrageous I never heard of. He [Keogh] did not mind evidence at all, his attacks were on religion." For the overall reaction of the bishops to Keogh's judgement see Larkin, Roman Catholic Church and Home Rule Movement, pp. 127-131.
51. See E.R. Norman, The Catholic and Ireland in the Age of Rebellion, 1859-73 [London, 1965], pp. 416-7; N.L.I., MS 8694(8), Butt Papers, John Ferguson to Butt, dated 14 Aug. 1872; Thornley, op. cit., pp. 94-5.
52. Irishman, 25 Oct. 1873, p.262.
53. See N.L.I., MS 831, Butt Papers, Butt to Daunt, dated 24 Sept. (?).
54. N.L.I., MS 7733, Larcom Papers; Nation, 10 May 1873, p.290; 17 May 1873, p.306; 14 June 1873, p.370; 11 Oct. 1873; Ballinrobe Chronicle, 18 Oct. 1873, p.1.
55. Thornley, op. cit., p.163; Gerard Moran, "Politics and Electioneering in County Longford, 1868-1880", in Raymond Gillespie & Gerard Moran (eds.), Longford: Essays in County History [Dublin, 1991], pp. 187-9.
56. N.L.I., MS 7733, Larcom Papers; Standard, 22 Nov. 1873. See also London Times, 24 Nov. 1873.
57. N.L.I., MS 7733, Larcom Papers; Freeman's Journal, 21 Nov. 1873, p.6.
58. Norman, op. cit., p.456; L.J. McCaffrey, "Home Rule and the General Election of 1874 in Ireland", in Irish Histroical Studies (no. 34), ix, (Sept. 1954), pp. 199-205; Moran, Longford Politics, pp. 187-8.
59. Amongst those with these sentiments was J.F.X. O'Brien, a Fenian and anti-cleric, N.L.I., MS 8696 (3), Butt Papers, J.F.X. O'Brien to Butt, dated 12 Jan. 1874.
60. Patrick Lavelle, The Irish Landlord since the Revolution (Dublin, 1870), p.312. For an account of Tighe as a landlord see Finlay Dunn, Landlords and Tenants in Ireland (London, 1881), pp. 215-6.
61. Nation, 14 Feb. 1874, pp.2-3. It was afterwards alleged that O'Malley privately supported O'Connor Power's candidature.

62. See Ballinrobe Chronicle, 28 Mar. 1874, p.1.
63. Irishman, 14 Feb. 1874, p.517; Tuam Herald, 7 Feb. 1874, p.1.
64. Reprinted in Tuam Herald, 7 Feb. 1874, p.1.
65. Paul Bew, Land and the National Question in Ireland, 1859-1882 (Dublin, 1978), pp. 42-3.
66. Mark Ryan, Fenian Memories (Dublin, 1946), pp.41-4; Brian Griffen, "The IRB in Connacht and Leinster" p.92.
67. Donald Jordan, "John O'Connor Power, Charles Stewart Parnell and the Centralisation of Popular Politics in Ireland", in Irish Historical Studies, xxv, (no 97), (May 1986), pp. 49-50; Griffen, IRB in Connacht and Leinster, p.85.
68. Cullen Papers, Bishops, (1874), McEvelly to Cullen, dated 16 Feb. 1874; Norman, op. cit., p.457; Bane, MacEvelly, p.116; Irishman, 28 Feb. 1874, pp. 856-7.
69. Marcus Bourke, John O'Leary: A Study of Irish Separatism (Tralee, 1967), p.144; Comerford, Fenians in Context, pp. 157-8; William O'Brien and Desmond Ryan, (eds.), Devoy's Post Bag, vol. ii (Dublin, 1979), p.78; Griffen, IRB in Connacht and Leinster, pp. 86-8; Bane, MacEvelly, p.172; N.A., Fenian Papers, A Files, 1874-1880, (A 567), dated 9 May 1874, File on Mark Ryan; T.W. Moody, Davitt and Irish Revolution, 1846-1882 (Oxford, 1981), p.47; Gerard Moran, "The Changing Course of Mayo Politics, 1868-74", in Raymond Gillespie & Gerard Moran (eds.) 'A Various Country', Essays in Mayo History, 1500-1900 (Westport, 1986), p.172, 21n.
70. Irishman, 13 Sept. 1873, p.174.
71. For examples of O'Connor Power's arrogance see Sean O'Luing, The Catalpa Rescue (Tralee, 1965), p.47; O'Brien & Ryan (eds.), op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 74-5.
72. Thornley, op. cit., pp. 164-5.
73. N.L.I., MS 9686 (6), Butt Papers, Lavelle to Butt, dated 12 & 13 Mar. 1874; Thornely, op. cit., p.184; Hoppen, Elections, Politics and Society, p.68; Larkin, Roman Catholic Church and Home Rule Movement, pp. 254-5. The only truth in these allegations would appear to be that O'Connor Power was a painter who lived near Rochdale, Mark Ryan, Fenian Memories, p.13.
74. N.L.I., MS 8706, Butt Papers, Fr Patrick Ryan to Mitchel Henry, dated 18 May 1874; Ballinrobe Chronicle, 23 May 1874, p.1.
75. N.A., Fenian Papers, 1866-1874, (8977), Claremorris, dated 24 May, 1874; Irishman, 31 May, 1874, p.765.
76. Irishman, 14 Feb. 1874.
77. Ibid., 28 Feb. 1874, pp. 556-7.
78. Ibid., 4 Apr. 1874, p.636; 25 Apr. 1874, p.684.
79. Ibid., 9 May, 1874, p.716.
80. Ibid., 2 May 1874, p.697.
81. Ibid., 25 Apr. 1874, p.684.
82. Ibid., 2 May 1874, p.700; 9 May 1874, p.716.



83. N.L.I., MS 8696 (4), Butt Papers, John Barry to Butt, dated 21 Feb. 1874; See also Irishman, 9 May 1874, p.716.
84. Irishman, 18 Apr. 1874, p.688; 2 May 1874, p.700.
85. Ibid., 11 Apr. 1874, p.652.
86. T.P. O'Connor, The Parnell Movement (London, 1866), pp. 266-7.
87. See W.J. Lowe, "Lancashire Fenianism, 1864-1871", in Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire cxxi (1977), p.163. For further evidence on this point of social outlets of Irish organisations in Britain see Alan O'Day, "The Political Organisation of the Irish in Britain, 1867-1890", in Roger Swift & Sheridan Gilley (eds.) The Irish in Britain, 1818-1939 (London, 1989), p.205.
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92. Irishman, 13 June 1874, p.709; Nation, 13 June 1874, p.3; Ballinrobe Chronicle, 13 June 1874, p.1.
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96. Nation, 17 Oct. 1874, p.2.
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100. Andrew Murray, "The Politics of Nationalism in Westmeath, 1868-1872" (University of Manchester, Ph.D. thesis, 1984), p.351.
101. Irishman, 12 June 1875, p.788.

102. See Galway Express, 23 Oct. 1875, p.3.
103. Ballinrobe Chronicle, 3 Feb. 1873; Irishman, 17 July 1872, p.51.
104. See Conor Cruise O'Brien, Parnell and his Party, 1880-1890 [London, 1974], pp. 122-3.
105. N.L.I., MS 8698 (1), Butt Papers, John Ferguson to Butt, dated 4 Jan. 1876; MS 8698 (25), Ferguson to Butt, dated 20 June 1876; MS 8699 (6), Richard O'Shaughnessy to Butt, dated 2 Sept. 1877. O'Shaughnessy told Butt, "Try and distinguish friend from foe".
106. Tuam Herald, 18 Sept. 1875, p.3; Nation, 28 Sept. 1875, p.5.
107. Thornley, *op. cit.*
108. Nation, 25 Aug. 1877, p.4. See also Nation, 22 Sept. 1877, p.2; 12 Jan. 1878, p.5.
109. Ibid., 2 Nov. 1878, p.7.
110. Freeman's Journal, 16 Mar. 1874, p.7.
111. Nation, 9 Nov. 1878, p.5; N.L.I., MS 7734, Larcom Papers.
112. Ibid., 8 Feb. 1879, p.11.
113. Ibid., 27 Apr. 1878, p.3; Galway Vindicator, 24 Apr. 1878, p.4.
114. Nation, 27 July, 1878, p.5.
115. O'Brien & Ryan, (eds.), *op. cit.*, vol. i, p.427, letter from Michael Davitt to John Devoy, dated Mar. 1879.
116. See Richard Pigott, Recollections of an Irish Nationalist Journalist (Rep. Cork, 1979), pp. 345-6; T.D. Sullivan, Recollections of Troubled Times in Irish Politics (Dublin, 1905), pp. 134-5; O'Brien & Ryan, (eds.), *op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 118, 121; Thornley, *op. cit.*, p.161; Comerford, Fenians in Context, pp. 132, 207. The concept of Home Rule was not appealing to many of the old militant nationalist leaders, John Martin calling it "that helpless driftless concern". N.L.I., MS 3226, Hickey Papers, John Mitchel to P.J. Smyth, dated 5 Sept. 1874.
117. See T.W. Healy, Letters and Leaders of my Day, vol. i (London, 1928), pp. 64-5; O'Brien & Ryan, (eds.), *op. cit.*, vol. i, p.35.
118. See Gerard Moran, "The Land League and Electioneering in County Mayo, 1879-1882", in Bliainiris, iv (1986), pp. 38-49.
119. See Emmet Larkin, The Roman Catholic Church and the Creation of the Modern Irish State, 1878-1880 (Philadelphia, 1975), pp. 11-13.
120. Nation, 26 Jan. 1885, p.2.
121. Bane, MacEvilly, p.159, 202; Corish, "Kirby Papers" in Archivium Hibernicum xxx (1972), MacEvilly to Kirby., dated 13 May 1882, p.110.
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## CHAPTER 8

### LAVELLE AND THE LAND QUESTION, 1870-1886

#### (a) Lavelle and Sir Arthur Guinness' estate in Cong

Lavelle took up residence in Cong in October 1869, an area in which landlord-tenant relations were often cited as a model to others. Sir Arthur Guinness, of the famous brewing family, was the principal landowner in the region. He was also Conservative MP for Dublin City and had inherited the estate, which covered an area of 33,298 acres in the parishes of Cong and Clonbur, in 1868. The property had 670 tenants who paid an annual rental of £12,000. Guinness was regarded as an improving landlord, having expended much money on drainage, pier construction and other projects that bettered the lives of his tenants.(1) About 400 labourers and artisans were directly employed on the estate, and unlike tenants and labourers elsewhere in the west, none of them had to migrate annually to Britain in search of work.(2) The Guinness family were renowned for their benevolence, as in 1879 when they provided £3,000 for the purchase of meal. They were also known for helping in the economic improvement of the South Mayo region. Guinness was one of the leading supporters of attempts to bring a railway line from Claremorris to Ballinrobe, and invested £10,000 in the company.(3)

From the beginning Lavelle ingratiated himself with his parishioners. His predecessor, Father Michael Waldron, had lost the local people's support in 1839 when he sold the Cross of Cong, an ancient symbol of the area's past ecclesiastical greatness, to the National Museum in Dublin for 100 guineas so that he could put a new roof on his church. Local folklore alleges that Lavelle went to the museum wearing a large overcoat and placed the Cross underneath this. He had not travelled very far when he was apprehended and forced

to return it. Even if he did not succeed in bringing the Cross back to Cong, Lavelle was showing his solidarity with the people on the issue, who felt the Cross should be returned to Cong.

While many improvements had been carried out on the Guinness estate, there were tenants who were critical of the developments in the Cong area. These came to the fore during the famous issue of "scalding a land agent" during June and July 1879. Some critics insisted that Guinness had pulled down houses in the town, like the one between the Old Quay Road bridge and the road to the chapel. It was also alleged that Guinness had been responsible for the demise of the thriving milling industry in the town which ground the tenants' corn. One of the streams that previously drove a mill had come to be used to provide Ashford House, Guinness' residence, and its fountains with water.

Guinness was not a resident landowner, but his estate was without the negative characteristics of the absentee's lands evident on many other properties in Mayo. On those lands where the landlord was an absentee, the day to day running of the estate was left in the hands of a paid professional agent who often did not have the best interests of his employer at heart, resulting in poor landlord-tenant relations.<sup>(4)</sup> Nearly half of the total land of Mayo was controlled by ten landowners, nine of whom were non-resident. Even though Guinness only spent four to five weeks out of the year in Cong, he nevertheless developed good relations with his tenantry through his agent, William Burke of Lisloughry.

Only one other issue brought Guinness into direct conflict with his tenants and this involved the question of trespass on his lands. While most local courts in the west had to contend with evictions and ejection notices, in Cong and Clonbur the petty sessions were concerned with the case of willful trespass. Guinness was prepared to enforce the full rigours of the law against the tenantry if they trespassed on to his property, in particular his woods and lakes which he preserved for fishing and shooting. The setting of traps or

snare for game was strictly forbidden, as was the cutting of heath. In most instances, the tenants had to pay heavy fines on conviction, as in April 1874 when 30 tenants were fined 2/3 each at Clonbur court for pulling heath from Coolin Mountain. The tenants argued that the heath was required for cooking purposes because of a scarcity of fuel.(5)

The otherwise tranquil relations between Guinness and his tenants were best shown in the events surrounding the landlord's annual stay at Ashford House. He and his wife were normally met by the tenantry in Ballinrobe and the young men on the estate would pull his carriage all the way to Cong, where the party was greeted with bonfires and a general address in which all of the major local dignitaries took part. In January 1877, the Guinness family returned to Cong after spending three months in France while Sir Arthur recovered from a major illness. The tenants gave him a rousing reception, coming out to greet him in the most inclement weather.(6) At the 1872 Galway by-election contest, Guinness granted his tenants a free vote, in contrast to most of the Galway landlords who tried to get all their tenants to vote as they directed. As a Conservative MP for Dublin City and a landlord, he would have been expected to serve some notice on how his tenants should vote.

It was in this environment that Lavelle spent the last seventeen years on his life. As has already been noted, Lavelle was at his best when confronted by adversity. This did not exist in Cong and was the primary reason for his change in attitude. Lavelle was heavily involved in the organisation of most of the loyalty demonstrations for Guinness. He was also one of those constantly with the landlord while he resided in Cong, occupying one of the principal positions at the top table at the many banquets which Guinness held for his tenants.

Within a short time, Lavelle had adjusted to the new lifestyle and was fraternising with the Guinness family in a manner which he would never have contemplated with the Plunkets in Partry. Even the issue of a Protestant teacher at the Guinness school in Cong, which was attended by the children of the tenantry did not spur him to controversy, as it had in Partry

with Plunket and Lynch Blossie. Social contact and friendship with the Guinness family brought about this sudden transformation in Lavelle's character, from the radical revolutionary to the quiet constitutionalist. Guinness was also able to get round Lavelle in where his adversaries had failed. He decided against confrontation, unlike Plunket and Paul Cullen, and tried to conciliate this once turbulent priest. At the same time Lavelle had a way of securing money from the Guinness family which helped the Catholic religion in the region. He received funds for the erection of schools and chapels, as in the promise in 1877 to construct a new chapel in Clonbur. Shortly after his arrival in Cong, Guinness gave Lavelle a new residence at Pidgeon Park a mile outside of the village. His predecessor had had to take out lodgings with some of the parishioners. In 1879, Lavelle was given a 13 acre grazing farm rent free at Caherduff by Guinness.(7) For many of his supporters it was difficult believe that this was the man who in the 1850s and 1860s had so bitterly opposed landlordism. As one observer put it in 1880:

Cong is changed and so is Father Lavelle. The soft hand of Lady Olive (Guinness) has worked wonders. How she must have winked at Sir Arthur when Father Lavelle was parading the poor tenants and instructing them as to how they were to cheer on that festive occasion, which was described by him in a local contemporary as "Tenants' rejoicing at Ashford!"(8)

It was during the period of the Land League that the change in Lavelle's attitude was most noted and commented upon.

### (b) Lavelle and the Land League

In the late spring of 1879 a land agitation began in the west. Between April and October demonstrations were held in nearly every parish in the North Galway-South Mayo region, which eventually resulted in the formation of the Land League. Its aims were a reduction in rents and an end to capricious evictions. The advent of this movement afforded sections of the Guinness tenantry with the opportunity to put forward their case. Many were tenants who had been transferred from within the estate when the Guinness family took over in 1852 and consolidated the holdings.<sup>(9)</sup> During the Land League campaign these actions were constantly denounced and his activities as a progressive landlord was overlooked.

Landlords like Guinness became increasingly frustrated by the Land League's intimidatory tactics against the payment of rent. There is no doubt but that tenants who had the money to pay their rents were coerced into withholding it. The importance of collective action within the Land League was such that it was imperative for the success of the agitation that everyone should adhere to the same policy. At the same time, there were calls from the more moderate tenant leaders, such as James Daly of Castlebar, who was a leading figure of the organisation in Mayo, to pay the rent to those landowners who did not exact an excessive sum from their tenants. Nevertheless, all tenants on the Guinness estate were told to withhold their rents. This had an adverse effect on relations on the property. The public displays of loyalty were not as frequent as before, as many tenants were no doubt afraid to be seen so doing. This was despite Guinness' £3,000 for meal and seed potatoes for the tenants, and rent abatements of between 20 and 30 per cent in December 1879. The League's decision to ensure that rents remained unpaid also had a severe effect on employment on the Guinness estate. Only 100 artisans and labourers were employed in the 1879-'80 period compared to the normal complement of 4-500.<sup>(10)</sup>

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While Guinness was magnanimous in his rent reductions in December 1879, his attack on the Land League agitation for its intimidatory tactics and for exaggerating the problem of

the alleged landlord oppression in the area made him many enemies. His decision to exclude those tenants on the mountain part of his lands from the rent abatements, because of their past opposition to him, only exacerbated the ill-feeling towards him.(11) Compared with other estates in South Mayo, relations between landlord and tenants remained good, although there were individual incidents which were grossly misrepresented. Often the poor relations that existed on other properties in the region could be attributed to the land agent, the most notorious being Charles Cunningham Boycott of Lough Mask House in the neighbouring parish of The Neale.(12) Guinness' agent, William Burke, was also land agent for other landlords in the region, most notably Lord Kilmaine and Lord Clanmorris. Much of the opposition to Guinness was directed at Burke who did not endear himself to the local nationalists by his treatment of the Noonan family in Cong in the autumn of 1879 and by his ejectment notices to the tenants on the Clanmorris estate. By 1880, Burke was one of a large number of agents in South Mayo who were receiving constant police protection.

Lavelle's initial contact with the Land League agitation was not friendly and undoubtedly influenced his attitude over the next three years. The rise of the land issue in the west saw the emergence of new leaders and the replacement of the old guard. Many of this new generation were Fenians like P.W. Nally, who had come into conflict with Lavelle in 1874. There was no love lost between Lavelle and the emerging tenant right leaders.

The new agitation produced an attack on the Guinness family within six weeks of the Irishtown meeting; this was enough to leave Lavelle aloof from its leaders. Lavelle came to the landlord's defence when he was criticised in July 1879. The Catholic clergy were reticent to become involved with the movement for the first four months of its existence, as it was lay inspired and led and was not prepared to give the clergy any significant role.

Throughout these events, Lavelle continued to support Guinness. This prompted the nationalist press to ask what had happened to the Lavelle of old. Lavelle wrote in defence



of Guinness to the Irish World in February:

...I now, with full deliberation, declare before the world that Sir Arthur Guinness is a model landlord for all Ireland. He has never got a 'notice to quit' served on his estates, either in this parish or in the neighbouring parish of Ross, in which lies the bulk of his property. He has never raised his rent by a penny.(13)

Two incidents emphasised Lavelle's isolation within the Land League. The first of these occurred in June-July 1879 and centred on Lavelle's defence of Guinness' land agent, William Burke, and his outright criticism of one of the tenants, Margaret Noonan. The background to the case was Burke's decision to evict Margaret Noonan and her brother, Nicholas, from the house in the village of Cong, where they had been sub-tenants of their uncle, Michael Hopkins. Hopkins had been in possession of the house for 40 years and had taken in the Noonans. They in turn took control of the house and the only way that Hopkins could regain possession was to appeal to Sir Arthur Guinness. Guinness was then in the process of having the Noonans evicted and Hopkins reinstated when the fracas with the agent occurred. As Burke rode towards the centre of Cong on the afternoon of 13 June, Margaret Noonan threw a bucket of hot water at him which scalded his right eye, his right arm and right leg. Margaret Noonan told the arresting policeman she had done this because Burke was about to rob them of their house.(14) The Land League portrayed Burke as an uncaring, evicting agent who was forcing a defenceless family out of their home. However, the case was a family squabble, rather than one of landlord tyranny against his tenants. During the Land League agitation, all evictions were regarded as unjust, even though technically some who were evicted were not reduced to spending their days by the roadside.(15) The Land League used the Noonan incident to maintain that Guinness was not the kind, caring landowner as was universally believed. The point was lost that it was more expedient for Guinness to evict Hopkins and then reinstate him as the caretaker than to have the Noonans evicted and Hopkins retained.(16) The Noonan affair was a complicated one, taking in arguments that had occurred between the uncle and the nephew, rather than a simple matter of turning out a tenant for the non-payment of rent.

The Connaught Telegraph and its proprietor, James Daly, took up the Noonan case. Most Land League leaders regarded landlords as being one of a kind. Moderate nationalist MPs discovered that once a conflict had arisen on the land or national questions, there was little room for people with tolerant views. One was expected to be on one side or the other. During the land war all landlords were accused of belonging to the same stable, being 'exterminators and rack renters'. There was no exemption for the improving landowner who enjoyed good relations with his tenants and spent a sizeable proportion of his income on bettering the position of his tenants. Thus when it was stated that Sir Arthur Guinness was about to evict the Noonans from Cong, the tenants' organisation was quick to reprimand him.(17) The report was also critical of Lavelle, who for ten years had been a staunch supporter of the Guinness family the Connaught Telegraph maintained that there were many attempting to give the landlord a good reputation throughout the world. The focus of attention quickly switched from Guinness, Burke and the Noonans to Lavelle's espousal of the landlord. In his letters to the Connaught Telegraph, Lavelle stated that neither Guinness nor Burke had acted inhumanely, as they had always worked to improve the position of the people of Cong. He went on to say: "I now deliberately pronounce your article a tissue of either unmitigated falsehoods, or worse, of malicious, cowardly, and treacherous insinuations, no matter by whom furnished."(18)

Some in Cong rejected his allegations that Cong was better now than it had been years before and demanded to know who had provided Lavelle with his information. Another correspondent, ("Censor", from Louisburgh, believed to be the Fenian, Thomas Hastings), indicated that Lavelle acted as henchman for landlord and agent, and went round the houses getting worthless documents signed in support of Guinness, which was unworthy of him. "Censor" went on to say: "Do the Catholic clergy of Mayo deny that some of them have "slumbered", and still slumber, while wolves are devouring their flocks?"(19)

These attacks revived Lavelle's belligerence and James Daly and the Connaught Telegraph

were not prepared to face his threat of a libel action. A similar fear over a possible legal suit from some landlords had existed in the immediate months before the Irishtown meeting of 21 April, 1879, which initiated the Land League agitation.(20) The Connaught Telegraph was already in acute financial difficulties which forced the Land League Central executive to provide a £50 grant to it at the end of 1879.(21) The paper would have been unable to afford a libel action, let alone the compensation it would have had to pay if judgment were to be given against it. Lavelle stated that the letters were published for the sole purpose of injuring his reputation. He said that the Connaught Telegraph was

...flinging poisoned shafts right and left at everything and everyone not fitting, or supposed not to fit, into their groove of public, social and political morality - flaunting a new flag of spurious Nationality unknown to the real patriots present and past of Ireland - a Nationality which finds its noblest expression in the use of boiling water...(22)

The confrontation between Lavelle and the Connaught Telegraph was averted, however, when both parties backed down. Lavelle dropped the action because the state was about to send Daly, along with Michael Davitt and J.B. Killen, for trial on the charge of using seditious language at a land demonstration in Gurteen, Co Sligo. He added that if the authorities did not proceed with its prosecution against Daly, he would take up the matter once again.(23) This created much bitterness between Lavelle and the nationalists in the Cong area, who argued that the priest's resources could have been put to better use against the landlords and on behalf of the Land League.(24) While a number of people attempted to defuse the explosive situation, these altercations with Daly cost Lavelle an opportunity to contribute to the agrarian movement.

The Noonans had been pawns on the agrarian chessboard and throughout 1880 and 1881 the family was largely forgotten by the Land League. They continued to re-occupy the premises in Cong whenever they were not in prison and so were jailed on a regular basis. By October 1881, their position was so acute that James Daly was constantly badgering the Land League executive in Dublin about their plight.

Lavelle was conspicuous by his absences from land meetings in Headford in January 1877 and Clifden in January 1878, especially as large numbers of priests from the south Mayo - north Galway area were in attendance. He did, however, make an appearance at a Land League demonstration in Ballinrobe in October, 1879.(25) This was surprising, as his participation in the agrarian meetings in the 1877-79 period was limited. They were the type of demonstrations that Lavelle might have been expected to attend and his absence indicates his declining interest in the agrarian question.

While Land League demonstrations were held in the nearby parishes of Shrute, Clonbur and Kilmaine between August and October, Lavelle was not present. Besides his dispute with James Daly over the Noonan case in July 1879 it must be noted that most of the meetings, especially up to October, were poorly attended by the clergy. Lavelle's absence cannot, therefore, be viewed as of major significance. While limited clerical participation within the Land League only became obvious after July, it was an involvement that contrasted sharply with the clergy's activity in similar agrarian agitations in the second half of the nineteenth century. The priests were not permitted to incorporate religious resolutions, such as Catholic education, into the proceedings of the Land League when they did become involved, a clear mark of the secular leadership of the secular agitation.(26) The clergy were thus given only a limited role in the movement from the outset. Even though they were present at the demonstrations from July on, the extent of their failure to exert an influence over the direction of the agitation was shown by the non-attendance of priests at the meeting which established the National Land League of Mayo in Castlebar on 16 August 1879.(27) Only after the League took on a more national dimension in the closing months of 1879 did clerical involvement become more pronounced. One of the factors that was responsible for their increased participation was the threat of famine in the west between October 1879 and June 1880.

The Ballinrobe meeting in October 1879, with Father John O'Malley of the Neale as

chairman, was one of the first meetings where the people and the priests joined forces. The involvement of the laity and clergy was important, for this was the biggest demonstration since the Irishtown meeting, with over 20,000 people present. It would appear to have been the first time that Lavelle and John O'Connor Power had shared the same platform since their bitter dispute in 1874. Lavelle stated his participation at the meeting was due to a personal invitation from Michael Davitt, the driving force behind the agitation.

At the Ballinrobe demonstration, Lavelle showed that he could still deliver a radical and boisterous speech. In his criticism of the landlords, he asked whether an assault on a land agent in Ballycroy was an agrarian attack or a simple case of theft.(28) He was implying that the attacks on landlords were not in the same league as simple cases of thievery. All landlords, he stated, were not bad and mentioned some like William Pimm, who owned property between Westport and Newport, and who had granted his tenants a 50 per cent abatement, as being good to their tenants. Many of the more moderate Land League leaders, such as James Daly, pursued a similar line. In some of his speeches in 1879 Daly stated that there were a number of landlords who were good to their tenants.

The second incident that highlighted Lavelle's isolation was his dispute with the administrator of the neighbouring parish of Clonbur, Father Walter Conway, who displayed Lavelle's tenacity and radicalism of years before. In July 1879, when the land agitation was gaining momentum in the south Mayo-north Galway region, it was Conway who encouraged the tenants to petition Guinness for a rent abatement.(29) This action enraged Guinness as he had for six months declined to accede to the tenants' demands and when he did, in December 1879, he was most bitter about those people who had incited the tenants, a clear reference to Conway's involvement.(30)

Conway's attack on Guinness was an attempt to discredit him as a landlord, by comparing him to some of the most notorious landowners in the country, including Lord Leitrim, who

was assassinated by his Donegal tenants in 1878 because of his excesses.(31) Conway also alleged that the prohibition on the keeping of dogs by Guinness increased the number of rats on the estate and that this resulted in a decline in the amount of corn available. The proscribing of dogs was no doubt carried out to ensure that wildlife in the area remained undisturbed for shooting. Conway also stated that many of the absentee landlords in the south Mayo region had given more for the relief of distress in 1879-80 than Guinness, and most of these had never even seen their properties. This was unlikely, as most absentees were notorious for their lack of interest in their tenants' welfare.

In July and August 1880, Conway wrote a series of letters to the Connaught Telegraph condemning Lord Ardilaun (as Sir Arthur Guinness had become in April 1880) for having done little for the people on his estate.(32) As most of the land was situated in the parish of Clonbur rather than Cong, the allegations of the Catholic administrator of Clonbur carried considerable weight. Conway voiced his antagonism towards Ardilaun in his apology for non-attendance at the Land League demonstration in Cong on 11 July, 1880. Conway wrote that he had hoped to make public the disgraceful conduct of the tyrants who had been held up in the locality as model landlords and went on:

I must for the present be content with saying that I have never witnessed such callous and heartless indifference to the moral and religious as well as the social and physical well-being of the people as I have since I came to this parish. If landlordism here is to be taken as a specimen of the institution I would say unhesitatingly, "Away with it - cut it down". Give them what they would not grant their unfortunate serfs - compensation, and let them no longer lumber and curse the sacred soil of Ireland...You have only to look around, and from the very platform on which you stand you can see the waving forests which have superseded the fields of waving corn which was prepared for food by those mills which have shared the fate of other sources of employment, and which are now razed to the earth, or standing idle and silent as the tomb.(33)

The dispute between Conway and Lavelle arose from their attitude to the Guinness family. While Lavelle attempted to placate the tenantry against Guinness during these most difficult times, it was Conway who urged them on. For people like Conway, the Land League was a pretext to vent personal grievances against neighbours and others they disliked.

However, the real motive for this acrimony was his failure to get a contribution from the Guinness family for repairs to his church in Clonbur. Instead, Lavelle used the money for a new chapel at Cornamona, between Cong and Clonbur.(34)

In July 1880, shortly after Conway had attacked Ardilaun, Lavelle launched his own campaign against the Clonbur administrator. Lavelle persuaded a local man, Thomas Walsh, to write to the newspapers proclaiming that Guinness had been responsible for much good work in the area. It later transpired that Lavelle had written the letter, which declared: "If this kind of landlordism be tyranny, I wish all the landlords in Ireland were tyrants of such a stamp."(35)

While Lavelle criticised Conway on Guinness' behalf, he was also protecting himself, as it had been implied in Conway's letter that the parish priest of Cong was responsible for the religious and social indifference in the region. Just as with the Noonan affair, the question was more complicated than simply one of landlord-tenant relations. Before long issues like the payment of the school teacher at Cross, the eviction of Widow Doyle and the take over of her holding became features of the case.

Lavelle's isolation with the Land League was also evident in the Cong area. A branch of the Land League was established in Cong, its secretary being Patrick Higgins of Cross. Lavelle never played any role in its activities. During Lavelle's confrontations with Conway and James Daly, it supported his opponents.(36)

The allegations made by Conway and Patrick Higgins, secretary of the Land League, against Lavelle and Ardilaun, were found to be without foundation and admitted by the Connaught Telegraph, the only newspaper to publish their letters.(37) While Ardilaun was exonerated and regained his reputation as a good landlord, Lavelle did not come out of the proceedings unscathed. Once again he was seen as a defender of landlordism and the radical nationalists who had looked on him with admiration in the past, had by now lost all

confidence in him. J.W. Nally, a Fenian and Land League leader from Balla, told a meeting in Shrulle on 31 October, 1880, that all those clerics who supported landlords like Ardilaun should be present with the people to witness what the landowners were doing to the country. The only reason that priests like Lavelle were not speaking out was because of the bribes they were receiving: "The priests should be here to face up against the landlords, these land-sharks and these land-thieves..."(38) There were similar denunciations in the Irish World. Lavelle does not seem to have been invited to attend, let alone to speak, at demonstrations in neighbouring parishes during this period.

This confrontation underlay the animosity between Lavelle and Conway right up to the former's death in 1886. Lavelle was one of the most notable absentees from the subscription lists for the enlarged church which Conway was building in Clonbur. This was at a time when most of the major donations for such edifices came from clergymen in neighbouring parishes.(39) Lavelle's name was also absent from the testimonial got up to meet Conway's legal expenses as a result of an assault upon a notorious civil bill officer, Mr McGrath, which resulted in Conway being sentenced to two months hard labour.

During both the Noonan and Conway incidents, Lavelle was obviously more intent in coming to the aid of Ardilaun than in looking after the tenants' rights. Some tenants undoubtedly had grievances against landlords, even those of the calibre of Ardilaun. Lavelle also championed Ardilaun when he chaired the Land League meeting in Cong on 11 July 1880, and called on the people to bear in mind that there were good landowners as well as bad. While Guinness was not mentioned by name, it was clear that Lavelle was referring to the local proprietor.(40) He was aware of Conway's letter to the meeting condemning Ardilaun and needed to counteract this criticism of him.

Lavelle and Father John O'Malley of The Neale were the only priests present at the meeting, which was attended by a number of leading Connacht Land Leaguers: Matthew Harris, P.J. Gordon, James Daly and J.W. Nally. It was stated that all of the local clergy



had decided to boycott the meeting, but Lavelle and O'Malley had changed their minds at the last minute, clearly to counteract Conway's attack on Ardilaun. Lavelle's speech was an attempt to portray himself as a friend of the tenant:

I hold that book in my hand, "The Irish Landlord since the Revolution" and that is Father Lavelle's gospel on the subject (cheers). Twenty years ago I thought I spoke and wrote as strongly, as forcibly, and as decidedly on this subject as any man has ever since opened his lips or drew his pen or paper to advocate that sacred cause...And I am the same Father Lavelle as I was twenty years ago.(41)

Given his antipathy to the Land League in the past, it must be asked why he was selected to chair the Land League meeting in Cong. He certainly was not the same Fr Lavelle who had been to the forefront of the tenant cause ten years earlier. The Cong demonstration was probably dependent on the presence of the local parish priest to ensure that the local tenantry would espouse it. In those centres where the local clergymen were absent or were wholly hostile to the Land League, such demonstrations were failures, as in Shrulce in October 1880.(42) Most of the population of Cong were then dependent on the relief distributed by the Mansion House Relief Committee and Lavelle was the major figure behind its organisation in Cong. People therefore looked to Lavelle for guidance on whether to attend or abstain, and on him depended the success or failure of the meeting.

Lavelle's only other direct involvement with the Land League was his attendance at a central executive meeting in Dublin on 26 July 1880, at the very time of his altercations with Conway.(43) While it is difficult to be certain, it would appear his prime motive in attending the meeting was to defuse the tensions between himself and the administrator from the neighbouring parish. Lavelle was appointed chairman of the meeting, undoubtedly as a result of his past endeavours for the tenant.

While Lavelle's activities in the promotion of the Land League's ideals were minimal, they contrasted sharply with his contribution to the relief of distress in his parish. This was an activity begrudgingly taken on by the Land League at the end of 1879 because of the

severity of the destitution throughout the west. The distress was brought about by the decline in the yield in the potato crop to 1.4 tons per acre in Mayo, the lowest recorded since the days of the Great Famine of 1845-1850, and by the fall in seasonal migration remittances from Britain. These events brought two million people to near starvation along the western seaboard by the end of 1879.(44) Were it not for the activities of private charities, such as The Mansion House Relief Committee, The Duchess of Marlborough Relief Committee and the New York Herald Relief Committee, there is little doubt but that Ireland would have been faced with a crisis as great as that of thirty years before. While little detailed research has been undertaken on the distress nationally, none has been carried out at a local level to describe the heroic deeds of many clerics, like Lavelle, to keep their flocks from starving.

It was not until the closing months of 1879 and early 1880 that local relief organisations were established in nearly every parish in the west to distribute funds from national relief organisations. The first indication of large scale destitution in Cong occurred at the end of December 1879 when Lavelle acknowledged a £2 subscription from a person in Iowa. Lavelle cited a case of a cottier who, with his wife and nine children, came to him on Christmas Eve night to plead that the family had nothing to live on. Lavelle insisted that the government needed to provide relief, not private charities:

Where will seeds of all sorts be got for their lands? And if these lands be left untilled, what next for landlord as well as tenant? The answer is - the chief remedy must be found in honest, manly, reproductive labour, organised by Government, under Government control and inspection, The Government that shirks or shrinks from this primary duty stands self-condemned.(45)

As in every other parish in the west the distress of 1879 and 1880 had a devastating effect on the Cong region. The extent of the problem can be seen in the formation, during the second week of January 1880, of a relief committee for the parish, covering an area of eight Irish miles by four with a population of 3,000 people. The committee comprised 20 influential people, headed by Sir Arthur Guinness, and it had a fair representation from all

parts of the parish. Lavelle was appointed secretary, and the committee included farmers, landowners, doctors and Justices of the Peace.(46) More than 1,000 were being aided in January 1880 and the relief provided reached its peak in early April when 2,333, or 70 per cent of the population were on the relief lists.

How did a comparatively affluent parish become so engulfed in distress? There was a high proportion of labourers and tradesmen in the Cong area and the downturn in economic activity in the late 1870s brought them great hardship. Only 100 out of the normal complement of 400-500 labourers that Guinness employed were in work. While Guinness tried to assist his tenants with meal and seed potatoes, there were eleven other estates in the parish, whose proprietors were mainly absentees and who did little or nothing to help.

The Cong Relief Committee had a more cross sectional core group on its committee than those in neighbouring parishes. In Ballinrobe none of the Protestant clergy were prepared to sit on the committee, while in the Neale and Clonbur there was acrimony between the Catholic and Protestant clergymen. In Clonbur the problem centred on allegations by Father Walter Conway, secretary to the relief committee, that the Protestant members were not doing enough to alleviate local distress.(47) At the same time the participation of local landed proprietors on the relief committees in those areas was minimal or non-existent, except for Cong. This was due to the refusal of the local tenant leaders to participate if these groups were involved on the committees.(48) Even on other parts of the Guinness property there was much altercation, as in Killanin parish, where the landlord and the Catholic administrator, Fr Patrick Coyne, warred over allegations as to whom Guinness was giving aid.(49)

A remarkable level of jealousy about levels of relief existed between neighbouring parishes. In April 1880, the Mansion House Relief Committee reduced the level of assistance to the Cong district because of unfounded allegations that adequate relief was being provided by Sir Arthur Guinness.(50) During these months, the activities of the

Cong relief committee bordered on total collapse, as occurred with many other local bodies along the western seaboard. The money being forwarded from Dublin was barely sufficient to cover the weekly requirements of the Cong committee and there were times when the people had to be sent home empty-handed. Lavelle wrote to Dublin of:

...some of the creatures excluded have been about my house these twenty-four hours pleading most piteously to be restored - all on the grounds that they had not a particle of food in their houses, not a penny to purchase it nor credit from any quarter.(51)

By early spring, Lavelle had become the leading member and driving force behind the relief committee's efforts. He was continuously writing to Dublin about the local situation and these letters give glimpses of his old radical self. Dublin's failure to provide adequate assistance made him threaten to resign. In so doing, the other Catholic members of the committee would have followed his example. He also wrote personal letters to Dwyer Grey, Lord Mayor of Dublin and head of the central committee of the Mansion House Relief Fund, emphasising the difficulties due to the inadequate funding.(52)

Lavelle also appealed to his former friends in North America to contribute towards the alleviation of distress in Cong. Two letters were published in the Boston Pilot in the Spring of 1880, in which he asked for help for the poor of Cong, who were enduring great hardship because of the failure of the absentee landlords in the parish to come to their aid.(53) It is difficult to determine how successful these appeals were for Lavelle had not been receiving much prominence among the Irish-Americans for some time. Some people in the United States who remembered his exploits in Partry and for Ireland may have been prepared to give donations for the relief of distress in his parish. However, the clergy in most west of Ireland parishes, as well as the four major relief organisations, were making similar appeals to Irish-Americans so it is unlikely that Lavelle's calls had much positive effect.

Lavelle generally felt disdain for the majority of landlords in the Cong area and on many

occasions was as critical of them as he had been in the 1860s. He maintained that most of the landowners had done little for their tenants throughout the distress, contending that they were absentees who rarely saw their estates and bled the occupants dry.(54) These condemnations were never made in public. They are found only in his private correspondence to the central committee in Dublin.

Lavelle turned to the Mansion House Relief Committee rather than the Land League, primarily because of Guinness' participation with this organisation.(55) All landlords supported the aid efforts of the Mansion House Relief Committee or the Duchess of Marlborough Relief Committee, which had been established by the wife of the Irish Lord Lieutenant, rather than the Land League which tended to be openly hostile to the involvement of the landowners in relief operations. While the Mansion House Relief Committee contributed over £700 to parishes like Cong and Clonbur, the Land League expended less than one-tenth of this figure in these areas. Little or no money was made available to the Cong relief committee out of the League's funds. The Cong committee contained a number of landlords and the League leadership was loath to give funds to committees which contained landlords or their agents.(56)

The Cong committee did seek aid from the Central Land League, but in the January to July period few grants were made available. The funds for the relief of distress in Cong came primarily from the Mansion House Relief Committee, with some additional sums from the New York Herald Relief Fund. The Cong committee never applied for assistance from the central committee for the region of the Duchess of Marlborough Relief Fund which was based in Ballinrobe.

The paucity of funds from the Land League was also due to the animosity that existed between Parnell and Dwyer Grey, which was reflected in the dealings of the local relief bodies with these national organisations. From an early point, the Cong committee nailed its colours to the mast and passed a resolution expressing confidence in the impartial

manner in which the Mansion House Relief Committee was distributing funds. Lavelle added a postscript to the resolution stating that everyone, including Sir Arthur Guinness, supported the resolution.(57)

Indeed Lavelle's involvement in the relief work within Cong proves that he did not care where the money came from. The issue was beyond political or ideological considerations and he was prepared to appeal to newspapers, the Mansion House Relief Committee or any other quarter where funds could be had. He was taking up the role of leader of his community as he had done in Partry during the agricultural distress of 1861-'62. Until the new potatoes were harvested in July 1880, Lavelle continued to seek aid for the 1,639 people who remained in need of help. Overall, his efforts illustrate the priesthood's role in protecting his flock during times of crisis. He was the intermediary between the landlords and the tenants, as in November 1885 when Lavelle represented the tenants and won a 20 per cent rent abatement from a local landowner, Mr John Jameson, because of the severe economic conditions then prevailing.(58)

Lavelle's limited association with the Land League ended in August 1880. It occurred at a time when the direction of the agitation in south Mayo was changing radically, with lawlessness becoming more prevalent. The Boycott affair was now in full swing in the neighbouring parish of the Neale. At no point did Lavelle take any part in the proceedings, either through letters to the press or by appearing on platforms to give the people his moral support. The Boycott affair is often regarded as the incident which saw the demise of the Fenian involvement in the Land League in Mayo.(59) The moderate Land Leaguers wanted to ensure that non-violent methods were pursued and the Fenians felt that more radical action should be taken against the Ulster volunteers who had come to save Boycott's crops. As early as the Westport meeting in June 1879, the Fenians had urged the use of violence to attain their goals. Michael O'Sullivan of Ballinasloe stated at the meeting: "Moral force is truly against power; but it becomes greater when backed up by physical force - by the power of the sword. Do not expect autonomy from your hereditary enemies by peaceful

means."(60) By the end of 1880, the Fenians had made major inroads into the Land League organisation in the west. Their espousal of physical force methods became more overt than during the first twelve months of the movement's progress. In some instances, there were direct calls of assistance for the Fenians by speakers such as R.D. Walsh at Shrile in October, 1880:

What, after all, gentlemen, is to be gained by a peasant proprietary in a free soil? What is to be gained by it in the shape of national independence? You are still to love the emanations of an alien power; you are still to doff your hat for the Queen and her ministers; you are able to say this until you have the shackles severed...The cause of every tenant farmer who is a Land Leaguer, is the cause of every man who is a Fenian. Stick together their cause is the same.(61)

Lavelle's participation in any agitation, political or agrarian, now ceased altogether. He was no longer revered as the fiery nationalist cleric he had been in the 1860s and 1870s. Certainly the activities of clergymen such as Fr John O'Malley of the Neale and Fr James Corbett of Partry placed them on a higher plane within nationalist circles than Lavelle.

The area round Ballinrobe-Cong had always been to the fore throughout the Land League agitation. It was also the region with one of the highest levels of crime in the country, as can be seen by the number of landlords and their agents who received police protection. Consequently Cong became one of the first places to be proscribed under the Coercion Act in February 1881 and remained so up to 1884. According to the many tourists who visited Mayo, the south of the county had the highest level of lawlessness and the largest body of police quartered there. Between 1882 and 1884, at least seven murders were committed in the region, those of Lord Mountmorres at Clonbur, the Huddys at Cloughbrack and the Joyces at Maumtrasna being the most notorious. It was thus not surprising that the area came to be known as 'Murderers' Country' and people were afraid to leave their homes.(62) One reason put forward for this state of affairs was that local landowners were non-resident on their estates, compared to the north of the county.

At no stage did Lavelle condemn this lawlessness or prevent radical groups from taking

control of the local Land League organisation. This was most noticeable with the assassinations of Lord Mountmorres, a landowner in the nearby parish of Clonbur in October 1880 and Lord Ardilaun's bailiff, Huddy, in February 1882. Suspicion in both these murders fell upon tenants from the Guinness estate.(63) This attitude contrasted greatly with other clerics in the region, most notably Father O'Malley, who by their presence in the movement inhibited its radical tendencies. While Lavelle remained silent on the killings, and especially on the Huddy murders, there were other priests in the region, like Frs Eagleton and Michael McHugh of Clonbur, who defended the tenants' position, alleging that the people had little sympathy for Huddy because of his refusal to reach agreement on arrears of rent in the area.(64) Again the question arose of innocent persons having been executed for their part in the Maumtrasna Murders, and while local clergymen such as Frs O'Malley and James Corbett backed up Archbishop John MacEvilly's calls for a new inquiry, Lavelle's absence from the case was most obvious.(65)

It is ironic that at the very time that most Irish clerics began to take an active interest in political and agrarian affairs at the end of 1882 and early 1883, Lavelle did not attend any of the meetings in the west or in Dublin. A number of reasons would account for his decline. The new archbishop of Tuam, John MacEvilly, who succeeded John MacHale in late 1881, was hostile to Lavelle. During the 1860s and 1870s he had reported Lavelle's every move to Paul Cullen and to Rome. He was also known to be unhappy with Lavelle's priestly duties. Furthermore, the whole political structure in Mayo and Galway had altered dramatically as a result of the Land League agitation. The emphasis now was on a more centralised approach to politics, rather than on the localised kind of activity that had preceded it.(66)

Lavelle did see the fruits of his proposals for peasant proprietorship, which he had advocated in the 1860s, come into being with the enactment of the Ashbourne Land Act of 1885. This gave the tenants £5 million towards the purchase of their holdings. Among the first landlords to reach agreement with tenants was Lord Kilmaine who was the principal



landowner in the parish of the Neale. In October 1886 Kilmaine, allowed his tenants to purchase their holdings at 19 times the annual rental.(67) However, Lavelle was not to live to see how these new proprietors fared. He died the following month.

Overall, Lavelle's ideas and actions about the land question were moderate and surprisingly at variance with his radical views in the early and mid 1860s. Hence his mild conclusions in his book as to the solutions to the land question and his tacit acceptance of the 1870 Land Act. While his transfer to Cong may have solved his financial problems, it certainly took his soul away. Away from confrontational landlords and from polemical local issues, there is definite evidence to suggest that Lavelle's idealism on the land question stagnated. His contact with and ability to publicise local problems had kept him in the national limelight. Once these issues failed to materialise in Cong his reputation faded.

Notes: CHAPTER 8

1. F. Dun, Landlords and Tenants in Ireland (London, 1881), pp.246-7; Patrick Lynch and John Vaizey, Guinness Brewery in the Irish Economy, 1759-1876 (London, 1960), p.182.
2. For conditions of seasonal migrants to Britain from the West of Ireland see Gerard Moran, "A passage to Britain: Seasonal Migration and Social Change in the West of Ireland, 1870-1890", in Saothar xiii (1988), pp.22-31; Cormac O'Grada, "Seasonal Migration and Post-Famine Adjustment in the West of Ireland", in Studia Hibernica, xiii (1973).
3. Ballinrobe Chronicle, 20 Oct. 1877, p.1.
4. For problem of absentee landlords in Mayo see Gerard Moran, "Absentee Landlords in Mayo in the 1870s", in Cathair na Mart, ii (1982), pp.30-34; Paul Bew, Land and the National Question in Ireland, 1858-1882 (Dublin, 1978), pp.23-4.
5. Ballinrobe Chronicle, 25 Apr. 1874, p.1.
6. Ibid., 6 Jan. 1877, p.1; Galway Express, 13 Jan. 1877, p.4.
7. Valuation Office, County of Mayo, District of Ballinrobe, Electoral division of Cong, 1858-1903; Connaught Telegraph, 7 Aug. 1880, p.4.
8. Connaught Telegraph, 12 July 1879, p.5.
9. Dunn, op. cit., pp.247-8.
10. Ibid., p.247.
11. Ballinrobe Chronicle, 6 Dec. 1879, p.1; Nation, 6 Dec. 1879, p.8; Samuel Clark, The Social Origins of the Irish Land War (Princeton, 1979), p.238.
12. For an account of the Boycott affair see Joyce Marlow, Captain Boycott and the Irish (London, 1973) Gerard Moran, "The Origins and Development of Boycotting", in Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society (1985-1986), vol.40, pp.49-64.
13. Quoted in Galway Vindicator, 6 Mar. 1880, p.4.
14. Ballinrobe Chronicle, 21 June 1879, p.1.
15. See Barbara Solow, The Land Question and the Irish Economy, 1870-1914 (Cambridge, Mass. 1971), pp. 51-88.
16. Connaught Telegraph, 7 Aug. 1880, p.4. On the importance of this see W.E. Vaughan, "Landlords and Tenants in Ireland, 1848-1904", in Studies in Irish Economic and Social History, no 2 (Dundalk, 1984), pp.16-7. Vaughan shows that on the Trinity College estate in Co. Kerry, the authorities had to evict 753 tenants in the 1850s because they wanted a middle man removed and the tenants leased their holdings from him. The tenants were subsequently returned to their holdings. For legal reasons all of the tenants leasing from the middle man had to be temporarily removed from their holdings.
17. Connaught Telegraph, 21 June 1879, p.5
18. Ibid., 28 June 1879, p.5.
19. Ibid., 12 July 1879, p.5.

20. See Gerard Moran, "Land Agitation in Connaught: The Writings of James Daly on the Land Question, 1876-1879", in Retrospect (1980), pp.33-41.", in Retrospect (1980), pp.33-41.
21. T.W. Moody, Davitt and Irish Revolution, 1846-1882 (Oxford, 1981), p.361.
22. Connaught Telegraph, 5 July 1879, p.5; Tuam Herald, 5 July 1879, p.1.
23. Galway Vindicator, 6 Mar. 1880, p.4.
24. See Connaught Telegraph, 19 July p.2; 26 July 1879, p.5.
25. Galway Vindicator, 3 Feb. 1877, p.3; Nation, 5 Jan. 1878, p.6.
26. Moody, op. cit., pp.310, 337-338.
27. See Michael Davitt, The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland (London & New York, 1904), pp.160-163.
28. Ballinrobe Chronicle, 11 Oct. 1879, p.1; Connaught Telegraph, 11 Oct. 1879, p.3.
29. Tuam Herald, 19 July 1879, p.1.
30. Galway Vindicator, 6 Dec. 1880, p.2.
31. Connaught Telegraph, 31 July 1880, p.4. On the murder of Lord Leitrim see Liam Dolan, The Third Earl of Leitrim (Fanad, 1978).
32. Connaught Telegraph, 14 Aug. p.2, 9 Oct. 1880, p.2; 22 Oct. 1881, p.5
33. Ibid., 17 July 1880, p.3.
34. Ibid., 17 July 1880, p.3.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid., 5 June 1880, p.5.
37. Ibid., 11 Sept. 1880, p.5.
38. N.L.I., MS 11,289, National Land League Papers, Shrle meeting, 31 Oct. 1880.
39. Connaught Telegraph, 12 Mar. 1880, p.5.
40. Ibid., 17 July 1880, pp.2-3; Irishman, 17 Jul. 1880, p.38.
41. Connaught Telegraph, 17 July 1880, pp.2-3; Galway Vindicator, 13 July 1880, p.3; N.L.I., MS 11,289, National Land League Papers, Cong meeting, 11 July, 1880
42. See N.L.I., MS 11,289, National Land League Papers, Shrle meeting, dated 31 Oct. 1880.
43. Nation, 31 July 1880, p.4.
44. For a more detailed account of the extent of distress in the West of Ireland see J.H. Tuke, Irish Distress and its Remedies: The Land Question, A Visit to Donegal and Connaught in the Spring of 1880 (London, 1880); N.D. Palmer, The Irish Land League Crisis (New York, 1978), pp.64-108; Gerard Moran, "Famine and the Land War: Relief and Distress in Mayo, 1879-1881, Pt. 1", in Cathair na Mart, v (1985), pp.54-66; Gerard Moran, "From Connaught to North America: State-Aided Emigration from the West of Ireland to North America in the 1880s", in Raymond Gillespie & Gerard Moran (eds.), Galway: History and Society (Dublin, forthcoming).

45. Connaught Telegraph, 3 Jan. 1880, p.5
46. Dublin City Archives, (D.C.A.), Correspondence of the Mansion House Relief Committee, Cong, Co Mayo, letter from Lavelle, dated 12 Jan. 1880; Galway Vindicator, 28 Jan. 1880, p.4.
47. Ibid., Clonbur, Co Galway, 1/39/160.
48. See Gerard Moran, "'Famine and the Land War': Relief Distress in Mayo, 1879-1881, Pt. 2", in Cathair na Mart, vi (1986), pp.117-8;
49. Connaught Telegraph, 6 Mar. p.5; 29 May 1880, p.4, Irishman, 13 Mar. 1880.
50. See D.C.A., Mansion House Correspondence, Cong, Lavelle to Mansion House Committee, 16 Apr. 1880.
51. Ibid., Lavelle to Dublin, dated 8 July 1880.
52. Ibid., Lavelle to Dwyer Grey, dated 25 May 1880.
53. Boston Pilot, 7 Feb. 1880, p.1; 27 Mar. 1880, p.3.
54. D.C.A., Mansion House Relief Committee Correspondence, Mansion House Relief Committee to Lavelle, dated 16 Apr. 1880.
55. See Irishman, 10 Jan. 1880, p.436.
56. See Moran, Famine and Land War, pt.2, pp.119-122.56. D.C.A., Mansion House Relief Committee, Lavelle to Mansion House Committee, dated 18 Feb. 1880.
57. Tuam Herald, 28 Nov. 1885, p.1.
58. See Donald Jordan, "John O'Connor Power, Charles Stewart Parnell and the Centralisation of Popular Politics in Ireland", in Irish Historical Studies, xxv, no 97 (May 1986), pp.62-4.
59. Bew. op. cit., p.58.
60. N.L.I., MS 11,289, National Land League Papers, Shrulce meeting, 31 Oct. 1880. At a meeting in Ballindine in March 1880, J.W. Nally told the crowd, "No honest man can enter parliament. Remember physical force." See Nation, 13 Mar. 1880, p.3.
61. Sir Edward Fry, James Hack Tuke, a Memoir (London, 1899), pp.199-204; Tuke, op. cit., pp.86-7.
62. See Nation, 16 Oct. 1880, p.1; Galway Express, 11 Feb. 1882, p.4.
63. Tuam News, 17 Feb. 1882, p.3.
64. Hammond, Gladstone and the Irish Nation, [London, 1964], pp.315-337; Jarlath Waldron, Maumtrasna: The Murders and the Mystery, (Dublin, 1992)
65. Jordan, op. cit.,
66. Connaught Telegraph, 16 Oct. 1886, p.4.

## CONCLUSION.

Lavelle's death on 17 November 1886 went largely unnoticed in a nationalist Ireland caught up with the problems facing the Home Rule issue. Throughout his last years Lavelle had been in poor health. While the official record gives a heart attack as the cause of his death, some of his adversaries, like Archbishop John MacEvilly, insinuated that an over indulgence in alcohol brought about his early demise.(1) Newspaper obituaries concentrated upon his activities against Bishop Plunket in Partry and made little mention of his Fenian sympathies or his contribution to constitutional nationalism. Some papers like the Tuam Herald and the Connaught Telegraph, weighed up his legacy to nationalist Ireland over his full life.(2) Otherwise, the brief reports in the national press indicate the extent of his fall from national prominence.

The people who attended his funeral on 19 November, also tell us much about Lavelle's demise within nationalist Ireland. They included Lord Ardilaun; William Jackson, JP; H.W. Jordan; R. Blake; O.Elwood and Rev Lyon, Rector of Cong. The Lavelle of the 1860s would have been shocked to learn that it was the ascendancy who turned up at his funeral. None of the leading personalities from the Fenians or the Irish Parliamentary Party were present. All the 13 priests who attended were from the Ballinrobe region. The absence of John MacEvilly was most notable, for he normally attended the burial of the parish priests in his diocese.

Father John O'Malley, Parish Priest of the Neale, who officiated at the requiem mass and who knew Lavelle better than most, summed up his character:

We all know he was impulsive, but we also know that he was at the same time the most generous, the most unselfish of men. Among his many noble qualities of head and heart there was none more conspicuous than his readiness to forgive the trespasser or those (that had) trespassed against him.(3)

Patrick Corish describes Patrick Lavelle as zealous, courageous and devoted to the care of

his people; but he was also outspoken, headstrong and defiant.(4) Corish might have added that he was strongly nationalist, a political pragmatist and dedicated. He came to the notice of his superiors because of his radicalism and insubordination to ecclesiastical authority. These were not acceptable traits for a priest in Cullen's Ireland. With the exception of Lavelle, Fr Robert O'Keeffe of Callan and Fr Peter Daly of Galway, the radical tendencies of individual clerics, so prominent within the Irish Church before 1850, fell victim to a new enforced uniformity within the Church.(5)

While Cullen may have wished to limit the participation of priests in political affairs, this was impossible for many like Lavelle. The social conditions of their flocks - destitution, landlord tyranny, evictions and famine - forced many of them to adopt radical outlooks. In many cases the priest was the only way the people could express their difficulties and this could only be done through political channels. In the past the priest had been the natural leader of his people. If he did not provide them with leadership and intercede on their behalf they would go elsewhere for this authority. As Paul Cullen had never experienced these parochial difficulties, mainly found along the western seaboard, he never understood what motivated Lavelle.

Lavelle was a pawn in the ongoing divisions in the Irish Church between John MacHale and Paul Cullen. Had he served in any other diocese than Tuam, he would have been unable to undermine Cullen's authority. He certainly would have been unable to carry out his crusade in support of Fenianism. To recall the treatment which befell Fr Peter Daly in Galway and Fr Robert O'Keeffe in Callan is to realise the privileged position that MacHale gave Lavelle. Without MacHale's connivance Lavelle would have been unable to achieve his notoriety. MacHale assisted him because he wanted to gain an advantage over Cullen. As the Irish Church in the 1850s and 1860s came increasingly under Paul Cullen's control, Lavelle became the only weapon available to him.

In the Irish Church of the 1860s, Lavelle and MacHale were two of the few clerics to

identify themselves openly with nationalism. This made them heroes to the thousands who espoused Fenianism. Their identification with the Fenian cause helped persuade many nationalists to remain within the Church.

It is interesting that, given Cullen's preoccupation with proselytising he looked upon Lavelle so negatively; he never espoused Lavelle's position in Partry against the Evangelicals, either privately or openly.<sup>(6)</sup> One can only assume that Lavelle's activities in the Irish College in Paris made him deeply suspicious. This also raised an interesting question: was Cullen's fear of Fenianism greater than of proselytism? Certainly if one is to judge by his attitudes towards Lavelle's there is little doubt that Cullen considered Fenianism to be a greater threat than the Evangelical Crusade.

Lavelle's career must be viewed in the overall context of the changing fortunes of the Irish Church. His rebellious nature had lasting implications for the political activities of the Irish clergy and was probably his greatest legacy. He set a precedent in the 1860s that was followed by other priests during the Land League and Plan of Campaign agitations and which allowed them to express their political and social concerns. Lavelle's example inspired priests like Father James McFadden in Gweedore and Father David Humpreys in Tipperary to play a more important role in the lives of their community. However, in each instance their bishops permitted the priests to take on these roles. Lavelle had greater difficulties to overcome as Cullen was consolidating his position at the head of the Irish Church. Thus Lavelle represented the bridge between the radical Church of the pre-Famine period and that of the post-Cullen era.

Lavelle always claimed that he considered his nationalism to be more important than his clerical role. This is seen in his use of papal encyclicals to defend the Fenian position rather than use it against the anti-clerical elements that existed within its leadership. Nevertheless Lavelle respected the ultimate authority of the Church like all other clerics.

Lavelle's life illustrates the fact that the functions of the Irish priest was not confined to pastoral issues, but that he played a significant role in the economic and social survival of his parish. The priest was an important intermediary at both a local and national level for his local community. He was often the only educated person within the parish, with the possible exception of the school teacher, and it normally fell on him to secure relief and aid for his people. They often had to plead for help from the general public to feed their congregations, so they had to be good communicators. For some there were more extreme pressures to be overcome, such as the direct attack on their parishes by the Evangelical Crusade of the 1850s and 1860s, and they sometimes wilted under the strain. The life of the Irish cleric was very difficult. Nevertheless, Lavelle at no time deserted the needs of his parishioners and must rank as a priest who was prepared to go to great lengths to help them.

Lavelle's career between 1854 and 1880 shows the changing nature of Irish nationalism and Irish society. While he was acceptable to the supporters of the radical nationalism of the 1860s, they refused to support him in the 1880s. It is ironic that the sections of Irish society which he condemned so forcefully in the 1880s - the landlords and the ascendancy - were the very groups who befriended him during his last years and who attended his funeral. This reinforces the point that the personalities that Irish nationalists accepted in the 1860s were forgotten about by the 1880s.

Support for Lavelle says much about the geographical base of Irish nationalism in this period. He received more support for his brand of nationalism from the Irish in the United States and Britain than in Ireland itself, a reflection of their more extreme patriotism. His radical views on the political, social and economic question found a much broader audience amongst the Irish exiles because they had suffered the ultimate sentences - eviction and exile. However, this was a more fickle audience than that in Ireland, and one that was constantly turning its attention to leaders with more radical ideals on the national question. Thus, while Lavelle became one of the most prominent figures amongst the Irish exiles in



the 1860s, he also quickly fell from fame in the 1870s. Nevertheless, he represented the hope and resistance that the Irish people needed in the post-Famine period. Individuals like Lavelle transformed the old subservience and attitudes within Irish society at a time of a deep depression in nationalism.

The recent revisionist analysis of Irish history and especially Irish nationalism, has asked questions about our past perception of the main historical events and leadership. Any attempt to open such a debate and give us a more questioning and enlightening approach to Irish history must be applauded and encouraged. However, this process can only be of benefit when the contributions of all who have participated in Irish nationalist movements are acknowledged and understood. Nowhere is this more important than with Father Patrick Lavelle.

Notes:

1. County Registrar's Office, Co. Mayo, (Castlebar), Death Certificate for Patrick Lavelle, entered November 1886.
2. See Tuam News, 19 Nov. 1886, p.3; Nation, 20 Nov. 1886, p.1; Connaught Telegraph, 20 Nov. 1886, p.5; Tuam Herald, 27 Nov. 1886, p.2.
3. Freeman's Journal, 20 Nov. 1886, p.8; Connaught Telegraph, 27 Nov. 1886, p.2.
4. P.J. Corish, "Paul Cullen and the National Association of Ireland", in Reportorium Novum, iii (1961-2), p.20.
5. For life and tribulations of Fr Peter Daly, see James Mitcheal, "Rev. Peter Daly, (c1781-1868)" in Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society, xxxix, (1983-4), pp.27-115; for O'Keeffe, see Patrick Hogan, "Fr Robert O'Keeffe, Parish Priest and the Callan Controversy, 1869-1881", in W. Nolan & Kevin Whelan, (eds.), Kilkenny: History and Society (Dublin, 1990). Another radical in the Irish Church in this period was Sister Mary Francis Clare ( Miss Mary Francis Cusack, see Margaret Cusack, The Nun of Kenmare: An Autobiography, (London, 1889).

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