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John Devoy (detail) by Séan Keating (1889-1977), charcoal on paper

Source: reproduced in “Escape! Fremantle to Freedom,” catalogue to exhibition on the Catalpa rescue mission in 2006

Preface

Why John Devoy?

John Devoy is the focus of this dissertation. The choice of topic for this work was to a certain extent dictated by a very simple academic feeling: curiosity. Having inadvertently read some material about the Fenian John Devoy, I was soon captivated, and wanted to expand my knowledge of this figure. In my study I will present a close-up view of Irish-American nationalism and Fenianism, as well as place it within the context of the struggle for Irish independence. On the one hand, I will explore John Devoy's life and work and investigate how his work contributed to the ultimate goal of an independent Ireland. On the other hand, I will examine Devoy's image through newspaper articles of the time and to present how this Fenian was seen by the Irish, American, and Irish-American readership.

Coming from Central Europe, one topic, that is also of personal interest to me, is that of Devoy's concept of nationality. What does it mean to be an Irish nationalist? How and when does someone who is Irish become Irish-American? How did the topic of nationality, "us vs. them," "Irish vs. Irish-American" relate to John Devoy? I have tried to provide answers to these questions through Devoy's writings, yet not without considering my own personal, "vajdasági magyar," i.e. Vojvodinian-Hungarian background and understanding of this issue.

While I consider myself to be a Hungarian by nationality, I will also add that I come from Vojvodina (called Vajdaság in Hungarian), thus, I am a member of the Hungarian minority living in Serbia. There is still a sizable Hungarian community in Vojvodina, who are often identified as "határontúli magyarok," i.e. Hungarians from outside the borders of Hungary. In this regard one can see some sort of a parallel with the Irish-American community, especially in the case of first-generation Irish-Americans. Although a significant difference must also be pointed out, namely that Vojvodinian-Hungarians did not move here from Hungary, but have been living in

this region for hundreds of years.¹ It is with this personal background as well as academic interest that I have analyzed the question of nationality concerning John Devoy and the Irish-American community.

Working on this study led to a most memorable research trip and to various source materials, including original letters, documents, and memoirs. It also led to meetings with highly supportive researchers, university professors, and other experts in this field, as well as email correspondence with authorities on this subject from Ireland, the United States, and Australia. The research for this work was completed by the end of 2013, and any material or sources that have been found since then are only indicated, but have not been used extensively. Having completed this study on John Devoy, I am keenly aware of areas for further research. Additional investigation could lead into Devoy's journalistic and editorial work with *The Gaelic American* and Devoy's correspondence with various nationalists which are preserved within their own papers. This remains to be the content of future work.

The issues discussed in this work are currently highly relevant, namely for two reasons: on the one hand John Devoy seems to have – to a certain degree, at least – slipped from Irish nationalist memory, and this can be seen from the scarcity of studies about his life and work. On the other hand, the centennial of the 1916 Rising is approaching, which presents an excellent opportunity for reigniting interest in this Fenian. Although Devoy did not participate in the Rising physically, his organizational skills and successful fundraising efforts were invaluable to the Rising.

With this study the author aims at expanding the existing body of John Devoy-related research and results.

¹ An often-quoted line from the song “Laloški valc” by Đorđe Balašević, a Vojvodinian singer goes as follows: “Nisam ja došao, 'di da se vraćam?” i.e. “I haven't come here, where should I go back to?”

Introduction

The original idea for the title was “What is so American about Irish Independence?” because, in broad terms, this was the central question to be answered by this dissertation. Irish independence was to a considerable extent the result of American support in the most various forms: financial, moral, military, organizational support. The aim of this study is to explore this support from the Irish-American community in general terms, and more specifically, focusing on John Devoy’s life and work.

The wider topic of this work can be identified as Fenianism, an Irish revolutionary movement primarily located in the United States. Fenianism has its origins in Ireland in the failed revolutions of 1848, then 1866-67. Some of the leaders relocated abroad, to France, though primarily to the United States, where they found a number of immigrants and/or exiles from Ireland, who did not give up their revolutionary work on the other side of the Atlantic. On a general level it can be said that Fenians, taking their name from ancient Irish warriors, were men who harbored passionate feelings towards an independent Ireland, free of British rule. They believed that legal, parliamentary means would not lead to the ultimate goal of a free Ireland, thus they followed the path of revolution. Much of the work was carried out within the confines of revolutionary organizations, primarily Clan na Gael (translated as ‘Family of Gaels’), and the secret, oath-bound Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB).²

In his seminal volume, *The Fenian Movement*, historian T. W. Moody stated the following: “Though a century has passed since the Fenian rising, we still have no history of the Fenian movement as a whole.”³ By now another half a century has passed since the Fenian Rising of 1867, and it is satisfying to see that these subsequent fifty years yielded some significant works in this field, while numerous historians continue with the task that was started by Moody. This study aims to make a contribution to this body of knowledge, specifically in two areas: it aims to explore Devoy’s role as a

² The spelling of Clan na Gael varies in some sources, John Devoy spelt it as Clan-na-Gael, yet this study will use a more common spelling, without hyphens.

³ T. W. Moody, ed., *The Fenian Movement* (Dublin: The Mercier Press, 1985), 9.

moderate nationalist as opposed to revolutionary promoting physical force; and to investigate John Devoy's image in the media through Devoy-related articles from *The Irish Times* and *The New York Times*.

John Devoy

John Devoy (Seán Ó Dubhuí; 1842-1928), the central character of this work, was one of the most active, determined, even stubborn nationalists, fiercely loyal to his principles, yet also practical almost to the point of opportunistic compromise (Fig. 1). He led an extraordinary, long, and productive life, his organizational activities spread over at least three continents. The list of nationalists whom he knew personally read like the "Who is who in 19th and 20th century Irish and Irish-American politics:" from James Stephens (1825-1901), and John O'Mahony (1816-1877), founder of the IRB, to Land Leaguers Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-1891) and Michael Davitt (Mícheál Mac Dáibhéid; 1846-1906), to the leaders of post-treaty Ireland, Éamon de Valera (1882-1975), and William T. Cosgrave (Liam Tomás Mac Cosgair; 1880-1965).

But who was John Devoy? To a great extent, his life and work fit Kerby A. Miller's definition of a political exile:

Certainly, the handful of Irish-Americans who were political exiles had great personal and symbolic importance in their community. By dramatizing their own plight as representative of the entire exodus, they strove to delay Irish assimilation and thus command emotional loyalty and financial contributions from potential supporters.⁴

However, Devoy was more of a controversial figure. He saw himself as a rebel (the title of his memoir, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, clearly indicated that), yet, except for his activities in his youth, he rarely wielded a weapon. He was a revolutionary, though he spent a good portion of his life as a journalist and editor. His organizational involvement in the Easter Rising was immense, still he was nowhere near Ireland during that fateful period. His ideas for promoting Irish independence were as versatile as the people he cooperated with: he planned the rescue of Fenians from an Australian penal colony, secretly contacted first Russian, then German diplomats in the

⁴ Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles – Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 7.

hope of plotting against the English, but also openly negotiated with Davitt and Parnell, the leading figures of the Land League movement.

In my study I will present a close-up view of Irish-American nationalism and Fenianism, as well as place it within the context of the struggle for Irish independence. The goal is also to explore John Devoy's life and work in a close-up. The detailed biographical chapter heavily relies on Devoy's own memoirs, which served as a background to his nationalist organizational work. All stages of his life are included, starting from his family home in Kill, his moving to Dublin, the beginnings of his Fenian activities, his incarceration, subsequent release, and finally his work in the United States.

Irish-American political influence

In a wider context, this study moves away from Devoy and his immediate nationalist organizational activities and rather looks at the role the United States played in the struggle for Irish independence. While the revolutionary faction of the Irish-American community was anything but inactive (selected highlights include the unsuccessful attack on Canada in the 1860s, the dynamite campaigns in the UK in the first half of the 1880s, the failed landing of guns smuggled from Germany in 1916), there were also serious efforts made on a political level to promote Irish independence. The organization "Friends of Irish Freedom" was set up in 1916 just a few weeks before the Easter Rising, its executive committee was predominantly made up of members of Clan na Gael. The Friends of Irish Freedom voiced outrage over the executions following the Rising and took a more hands-on approach in lobbying for Irish independence in the theater of American politics.⁵

The goal of the Friends of Irish Freedom was to form a link between their demands for Irish independence and President Woodrow Wilson's (1856-1924) concept of self-determination. The culmination of this drive was the dispatch of a three-member Irish-American delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in the spring of 1919 to try to secure a hearing with the Grand Committee for the representatives of the self-

⁵ Michael Doorley. "The Friends of Irish Freedom: a case-study in Irish-American nationalism, 1916–21." *History Ireland* (2008) accessed October 5, 2013, <http://www.historyireland.com/20th-century-contemporary-history/the-friends-of-irish-freedom-a-case-study-in-irish-american-nationalism-1916-21/>.

proclaimed Irish Republic.⁶ The activities and movements of the delegation were closely monitored by both the American and Irish-American press. In the first few weeks of the delegation's stay in Paris their work was not as successful as they had expected it to be, thus the delegation chose to travel to Ireland. The point of that visit was to experience Ireland's social, political and economic situation, and publish a report based on their observations. The visit was part of the overall goal of the Irish-American delegation, namely to enlist the support of U.S. President Wilson in the recognition of the new Irish Republic, and by this, pressuring Britain to follow suit.

Eventually, the delegation's visit and the resulting report would both prove to be controversial, possibly causing the failure of their original mission. The representatives of the Irish parliament were not granted a hearing with the Grand Committee, nor was the Irish-American delegation able to attain the unambiguous support of President Wilson for the Irish cause.

Devoy and the media

A separate chapter will explore John Devoy's image from a specific media-angle. Devoy spent most of his active life in or around journalism, he worked as a successful journalist in New York for *The New York Herald*, later became the proprietor and editor of his own newspapers, once between 1881 and 1885, with *The Irish Nation*, then with another newspaper, *The Gaelic American*, starting in 1903. He used his articles to inform the readership about current Irish and Irish-American issues, to educate, to influence, to argue, to attack, to refute. He would attempt to form and direct general opinion, unite the Irish-American public behind an issue, and tirelessly, relentlessly ask for financial contributions for the Irish cause.

However, Devoy was not only present in the printed press as an author and editor, but was also a towering figure of the Irish-American community regularly being written about. At the different periods of his life, his name frequently appeared in various newspapers. In Ireland, before his exile to the United States, he was prominently featured in *The Irish Times* in connection with his movements as an IRB

⁶ The Grand Committee consisted of the representatives of the 'Big Four.' Great Britain, France, the United States, and Italy, these were, David Lloyd George, Georges Clemenceau, Woodrow Wilson, and Vittorio Orlando, respectively. U.S. Department of the State Office of the Historian website, accessed October 5, 2013, <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1914-1920/paris-peace>.

member and recruiter. Following his release from prison, Devoy sailed for the United States where he lived most of the time in New York, which naturally made him a regular name in the columns of *The New York Times*.

This work will use a collection of articles from the above-mentioned newspapers and analyze them to determine what context John Devoy was mostly mentioned in. What image did these newspapers portray of Devoy to the average reader? What opinion did the public form of him? Was he seen as an always-busy organizer all too focused on Irish issues? Was he perceived as a revolutionary focused on attaining Irish independence at any cost? Did he manage to enlist sympathy for the Irish cause through his newspaper appearances? This dissertation makes an attempt to answer these and similar questions by exploring John Devoy's character in the press.

The titles of the articles will be used as found in the original editions of *The Irish Times* and *The New York Times*. Capitalization and punctuation within the titles might be different from current spelling trends, yet unless otherwise indicated, the original titles were left unchanged.

Spelling: hyphenated Americans

As this dissertation revolves around Irish-Americans, it was found necessary to elaborate on the use of this term. There is (still) much controversy around the question of the hyphen. Therefore some preliminary background information may be suitable in order to clarify the complexity of this issue. The term "hyphenated Americans" was first published in a slang dictionary, and gave a neutral explanation: "*Hyphenated American*, a naturalized citizen, as German-Americans, Irish-Americans, and the like."⁷ By the turn of the century the expression was used as a derogatory term, reaching full-blown proportions under Presidents Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919) and Woodrow Wilson.

In his famous speech made on October 13, 1915, Columbus Day, speaking to the Knights of Columbus at Carnegie Hall, New York, Roosevelt stated the following:

There is no place here for hyphenated Americans. When I refer to hyphenated Americans I do not refer to naturalized Americans. Some of the very best Americans I have even known were naturalized Americans born abroad. But a hyphenated American

⁷ O'Connor, Patricia T. and Kellerman, Stewart, "Hyphenated Americans" (2012) accessed March 27, 2012, <http://www.grammarphobia.com/blog/2012/01/hyphenated-americans.html>.

is not an American at all [...] There is no such thing as a hyphenated American who is a good American. The only man who is a good American is the man who is an American and nothing else.⁸

Wilson continued his presidency in this suspicious mindset, especially with the ever-increasing probability of the United States' entry into the war. His distrust was mainly directed at the German-Americans and Irish-Americans. Understandably, the German-Americans were readily associated with their country of origin, while the Irish were decidedly anti-British, which made them seek cooperation with the German-Americans. Although the following quote came from Wilson's Final Address in Support of the League of Nations, it accurately portrayed his stance on hyphenated Americans: "[...] any man who carries a hyphen about with him carries a dagger that he is ready to plunge into the vitals of this Republic whenever he gets ready. If I can catch any man with a hyphen in this great contest I will know that I have got an enemy of the Republic."⁹

Yet, although Irish-Americans were likely to retain a strong moral, emotional, and national connection with Ireland, they would also increasingly keep American interests and values in mind. Irish-American organizations and their leaders did not always see eye to eye with their Irish counterparts. This difference of opinion would eventually lead to a break between the Irish-American executive of the IRB and the Dublin-based executive, as well as to the parting of ways of the faction led by Devoy and Judge Daniel Cohalan (1865-1946, see Fig. 2.) and the Irish leader Éamon de Valera.

The question of the hyphen became a vital point of discussion in the 1960s again, as the Civil Rights movement led to many "marginalized communities" to assert their ethnic identities.¹⁰ Also, the question of "Just how American is an American?" was raised, in the vein of multiculturalism studies of the time, as well as a generally rising tendency of using politically correct terms. By today, the hyphenated version of "Irish-American" has widely been accepted. In this work I will use the hyphenated version to

⁸ "Roosevelt Bars the Hyphenated." *The New York Times*, October 13, 1915.

⁹ Woodrow Wilson. "Final Address in Support of the League of Nations," delivered September 25, 1919, accessed March 27, 2012 <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/wilsonleagueofnations.htm>.

¹⁰ Ashis Sengupta. "The Hyphenated Identity in Contemporary Multiethnic American Drama," *Americana E-Journal of American Studies in Hungary*, Vol. IV, Number 1, Spring 2008 (2008), accessed March 27, 2012, <http://americanajournal.hu/vol4no1/sengupta>.

denote the adjective (e.g. *Irish-American* revolutionaries) as well as the noun (e.g. Devoy is a prominent *Irish-American*).¹¹ Quotes will retain the original spelling and appropriate comments will be added where the use of the hyphen, or lack thereof, is especially indicative.

Since Irish-American, but specifically Irish history introduces names which have both an English and an Irish version, special attention will be paid to their spelling. Where relevant, both forms will be given in the text.

Structure

This work consists of eight chapters, including the Introduction and the concluding chapter. Chapter 1 presents a detailed review of the relevant literature in this field of research. Nationalism is one of the most significant underlying themes in this work, without which neither Irish-American nationalism, nor John Devoy's life and work can fully be comprehended. Thus the next chapter offers a short overview of nationalism in the 19th century. In understanding Irish-American nationalism, it is vital to explain how such a large and strong community came into existence, therefore a separate chapter will try to answer the question "How did *Irish* become *Irish-American*?" by giving a short overview of Irish immigration to the United States, its various stages and causes. Chapter 4 includes the detailed biographical section of John Devoy. This is followed by the chapter exploring how revolutionary a Fenian or how peaceful a negotiator he was. The final chapter will present an analysis of John Devoy's public image through a selection of articles from *The Irish Times* and *The New York Times*. The Conclusion section will summarize the results and present concluding remarks. The Appendix includes images, maps and relevant documents, followed by the Bibliography.

Terminology

There is a need for a clarification of terminology used in this dissertation. This study makes ample use of terms such as "Nationalist," "Nationalism," "Republican,"

¹¹ "Style for students online," accessed October 5, 2013, https://www.e-education.psu.edu/styleforstudents/c2_p2.html.

and “Republicanism,” thus there is a need to provide further clarification regarding their context and precise meaning in this work.

In broad terms, the phrases “Nationalist” and “Nationalism” refer to the drive in Ireland for an Ireland without British rule. The movement became increasingly popular in the 19th century, triggering a minor rising in 1848 and leading the way to more ambitious, if not necessarily successful risings in the second half of the 1900s.

The French Revolution of 1789 had an incredible ripple effect over most of – but not limited to – Europe, including Ireland. The core value of the republican line of thought in the 18th century was the following: the task of government was to promote the good of the community as a whole and that the people, not just individuals, ought to be able to have their voices heard in that government. “Separatism, establishing Ireland as an independent state separate from England, while not an integral part of Irish republican thinking at first, came to be seen as such when Tone and the United Irishmen became convinced that a republican form of government could not be achieved except by complete separation from England.”¹²

The underlying belief with all Irish nationalist movements in the 19th century was that the only way to create an acceptable government was ridding Ireland of English control. This drive included the Repeal movement of the 1840s, and also the Home Rule movement later in the century. It was believed that the prerequisite for the removal of English control was complete separation, even resorting to violence and revolt, if it was called for. One of the Young Irelanders, James Fintan Lalor further argued that not only a political revolution, but a social revolution must also occur in order to achieve their goal. In the 1870s and 1880s Michael Davitt became one of the pillars of the New Departure, his concept was to bring together social revolution and the nationalization of land with Home Rule. Socialism was introduced by way of James Connolly in the early 20th century, as he stated that a national revolution in Ireland was an integral part of a socialist revolution. An Irish Republic was within reach with the 1916 Proclamation.

After partition and the setting up of the Northern Ireland state and the Irish Free State, the Republican Movement did not recognise the legitimacy of the new structures and remained outside the public political process aiming to reverse partition and put into

¹² Cullen, Mary, “The meaning of republicanism: a debate,” accessed June 26, 2014.

http://www.theirelandinstitute.com/institute/p02_cullen_meaning_page.html

effect the republic of 1916 and of the First and Second Dáils. Belief in separatism for a 32-county Ireland which could only be achieved by physical force and the need for social as well as political revolution continued.¹³

If these terms are used in a different context within this dissertation, it will be pointed out and annotated.

¹³ Ibid.

Chapter 1 – The life and work of John Devoy: a literature review

John Devoy was certainly no “persona incognita” for historians and researchers, his life as a Fenian and his political longevity undoubtedly made him a figure worth researching. Conversely, given that he was one of the most energetic revolutionary figures on either side of the Atlantic for a period of over 60 active years, one would rather expect more original studies about Devoy. This chapter therefore presents the available literature on Devoy, both primary and secondary sources, the majority of which were used as resource material during the writing of this dissertation.

In this day and age, one of the most straight-forward search methods is via the Internet. A quick Google search for “John Devoy” listed four biographies and several studies written about the *Catalpa* mission which Devoy orchestrated. This section offers a short literature review of the current literature available on Devoy, both in printed and digital form. The primary sources will be mentioned first, followed by the biographies on Devoy including the works by historians Terry Golway and Terence Dooley. Short mention will be made of the commemorative booklet published in 1964. The section will close with a brief review of the *Catalpa* literature, dealing with Devoy’s possibly most famous and daring mission, the freeing of the Fremantle Six.

The second part of this literature review includes works that do not deal with Devoy specifically, but will provide the reader with a three-dimensional image of Devoy’s role in Irish and Irish-American history, as well as an American immigrant history. These studies, nonetheless, depict the historical background against which Devoy’s life and work is to be examined.

The build-up of this chapter is mainly dictated by the origin and topic of the books consulted. Primary sources and biographical works are listed first, followed by the American-based works, whose focus is on the history of the Irish-American community and Irish immigration to the U.S. in general. The author believes that since John Devoy’s operations were primarily organized from America, the aspect of the Irish-American community needs to be portrayed thoroughly. The second part of the

literature review will gradually shift to include the island of Ireland, with a separate look at a study on Ulster, and finally some general works of Irish history.

When compiling the list of works examined for this literature review, several assumptions were made regarding where one might find useful material about Devoy, which, however, did not always prove true. Seminal and general works on American immigration, including John Bodnar's *The Transplanted*, Oscar Handlin's *The Uprooted*, or Leonard Dinnerstein's *Ethnic Americans* did not contain any references to John Devoy. It seems Devoy's experiences in the United States are rather restricted to a Fenian revolutionary and not so broadly shared, whereas the works listed here deal with the common social, cultural, physical, and psychological experiences of immigrants.

In this dissertation, "primary sources" are identified as Devoy's original correspondence, edited and published by William O'Brien and Desmond Ryan, as well as Devoy's memoirs. Further original correspondence by Devoy can be found in the Department of Manuscripts of the National Library of Ireland. Further, the "Primary sources" section contains the descriptions of the biographies written about John Devoy, as well as John Devoy-based material in other forms of media. Secondary material is comprised of current literature providing a background to Devoy's life and work, including works on Fenianism, Republicanism, Irish Nationalism, the Irish-American community, and general Irish history.

Primary sources

Devoy's Post Bag

Devoy was a prolific writer as well as an avid collector of all things written and printed. Moreover, he spent most of active years working in the realms of the written word. Even in his young years, he wrote many letters to newspapers, often under an alias.¹⁴ Following his release from prison, he sailed to the United States, where he found work as a journalist, later he became a journalist, editor, and proprietor (all rolled into one) of his own newspapers, *The Irish Nation* (1881-5) and *The Gaelic American* (1903-28). In addition to his journalism, Devoy kept a continuous active correspondence with a number of prominent figures of Irish and Irish-American history.

¹⁴ Terrence Dooley, *The Greatest of the Fenians: John Devoy and Ireland* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 2003), 4.

Devoy's vast collection of letters and documents is on deposit in the National Library of Ireland. His papers were edited by William O'Brien and Desmond Ryan and first published in 1948 in two volumes under the title *Devoy's Post Bag* (Volume I covers the period 1871-1880, Volume II, 1880-1928). This was a valuable corpus of material on Fenianism, and certainly an indispensable source when writing this thesis work. The editors of the *Post Bag* summarized the significance of this collection as follows:

As Devoy most carefully preserved throughout his long and adventurous life nearly every letter addressed to him, and a whole library of press cuttings, reports of political conventions, and many irreplaceable Clan na Gael documents, and as Devoy's life covered the greatest days of the Fenian movement, and the struggle for Irish independence, the Devoy papers are of unique value.¹⁵

The Land of Éire

Apart from his letters, Devoy left us original works that also serve as a treasure trove of information about his life and work. He wrote a two-volume history of Ireland with a particular focus on the Land League entitled *The Land of Eire: the Irish Land League, its Origins, Progress and Consequences, Preceded by a Concise History of Various Movements Which Have Culminated in the Last Great Agitation, With a Descriptive and Historical Account of Ireland from the Earliest Period to the Present Day*, published in 1882.¹⁶ It was written as a sort of traveler's guide to Ireland, apparently describing Devoy's travels during his illegal trip to Ireland in 1879. Later, in a 1906 *The Gaelic American* article, though, he claimed to have seen almost none of those sights that tourists would see. Thus, if one is to accept Terence Dooley's line of reasoning, it remains unclear who wrote the descriptive parts about the state of the Irish countryside.¹⁷

¹⁵ William O'Brien and Desmond Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag 1871 – 1928* (Dublin: C. J. Fallon, 1948), Preface.

¹⁶ John Devoy, *The Land of Eire: the Irish Land League, its Origins, Progress and Consequences, Preceded by a Concise History of Various Movements Which Have Culminated in the Last Great Agitation, With a Descriptive and Historical Account of Ireland from the Earliest Period to the Present Day* (New York: Patterson and Neilson, 1882).

¹⁷ Dooley, *The Greatest of ...*, 6.

Recollections of an Irish Rebel

Possibly the most significant work by John Devoy was his memoirs written under the title *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, published posthumously in 1929. He began working on this autobiography following his return from the six-week visit to Ireland in 1924. He included a dedication that underlined the fact that he put his life's work in the service of his homeland: "Dedicated to my departed comrades of the I.R.B. in loving memory of their services and sacrifices in the cause of the Irish Republic which they "virtually established," and for which I have worked to the best of my ability and judgment for sixty-seven years of my life."¹⁸ At the time of publication it was considered "the best history of Fenianism"¹⁹ though, obviously, this was stated before any scholarly studies were written on this subject, primarily in light of the works by Desmond Ryan and T.W. Moody.

However, as author Terence Dooley pointed out, some key events in Devoy's life were either omitted by the author himself or just very briefly touched upon, leaving the reader to fill the blanks from other sources, such as for example Devoy's articles published in *The Irish Nation* or *The Gaelic American*. Although written around the mid-twenties, the time frame covered in the *Recollections* ended with the year 1916, with a very prominent omission of Devoy's thoughts on the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, and the ensuing War of Independence and Civil War. Notably, there was also no entry on Devoy's first official return to his beloved Ireland in 1924, which must have been an emotionally charged journey, both in the political, as well as in the personal sense of the word. As research material, the memoirs were of great value, while this work was also available online, the original publication from 1929 scanned and freely accessible.²⁰

Biographies

There are four biographies to date written about John Devoy. In chronologically order these works are: *The Phoenix Flame: a study of Fenianism and John Devoy* by Desmond Ryan, published in 1937; *John Devoy* by Seán O'Lúing, published in 1961;

¹⁸ John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel* (New York: Chas. P. Young, 1929), Preface.

¹⁹ Dooley, *The Greatest of ...*, 5.

²⁰ John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, accessed March 4, 2012,

<http://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/digital-book-collection/digital-books-by-subject/irish-people/devoy-recollections-of-an/>.

Irish Rebel: John Devoy and America's Fight for Irish Freedom by Terry Golway, published in 1998; and finally, *The Greatest of the Fenians: John Devoy and Ireland* by Terence Dooley, published in 2003.

The first biography was published less than a decade after John Devoy's death, under the title *The Phoenix Flame: a study of Fenianism and John Devoy*. It was noteworthy for being the earliest attempt to summarize Devoy's life and work, yet the author failed to make use of the Devoy papers as extensively as subsequent biographies have. This was most likely due to the fact that the work was written before *Devoy's Post Bag* had been published in 1948, thus, original source material was much harder to obtain.

The biography *John Devoy* by Seán O'Lúing was less known to the wider public, for the simple reason that it was written in the author's native language, Irish. O'Lúing's work focused on Devoy's active years in the period after he arrived in the United States. When the publisher Shannon (Irish University Press) did a facsimile reprint of Devoy's book, the *Recollections of an Irish Rebel* in 1969, it included an introduction written by Seán O'Lúing. In another significant historical work, *Fremantle Mission*, published in 1961, O'Lúing wrote about the *Catalpa* mission which Devoy organized.

With *Irish Rebel: John Devoy and America's Fight for Irish Freedom* Terry Golway offered a meticulously detailed account of Devoy's adventurous life, the book proved to be an exciting read as well as a valuable source of information. Golway made extensive use of the Devoy papers, resulting in this well-researched biography. He presented both sides of Devoy's life: the public one, where the ever-restless Fenian worked tirelessly to achieve the long-sought goal, Irish freedom; and the private one, portraying Devoy as a person who, while not married himself, cared deeply about his family and relatives. Although most works focused on his organizational, revolutionary work, apparently leaving no space in his life for a wife, his early courtship with Eliza Kenny, and then half a century later the gratifying meeting with his long-lost fiancée, were also given special attention in this study. The author did not shy away from pointing out Devoy's errors of judgment, such as his accusing Dr. William Maloney of being a British spy, or calling Devoy cantankerous in his old years, which he, by most accounts, was. In terms of this PhD study, Golway proved to be a most approachable and helpful historian, freely offering valuable input and support.

The most recent biography on John Devoy, published in 2003, was by Terence Dooley under the title “*The Greatest of the Fenians*” – *John Devoy and Ireland*. In the introduction the author gave a synoptic description of the available literature on Devoy and also highlighted his own interpretation on Devoy’s life. Namely, this work concentrated on John Devoy and his times in Ireland, whereas his early years were described in detail, other, significant periods of his life relating to Irish-American affairs were merely touched upon. The chapter headings lent support to such a view. For example, Chapter 4 ran under the title “Trial and Imprisonment,” enveloping the second half of the 1860s, yet the title of Chapter 5, “Devoy’s Illegal Trip to Ireland,” fast-forwarded to more than a decade later.

In this dissertation the latter two biographies were used extensively as works of reference. Both volumes contained elaborate and informative bibliographies, which were of great help with further research. *Devoy’s Post Bag* was indeed a source of invaluable information and served as the crux of this present work, as did Devoy’s *Recollections*.

Commemorative booklet

The commemorative booklet “*A Forgotten Hero*” – *John Devoy*, compiled by Kildare County local historians James Durney, Mario Corrigan, and Seamus Curran should also briefly be mentioned. Published by the John Devoy Memorial Committee in 2009, it was mainly a reprint of the 1964 edition of the booklet. The booklet underlined not only how important scholarly studies were, but also what significant contributions local historians might provide. The original foreword written for the 1964 edition stated the purpose of the John Devoy Memorial Committee, namely to make the name of John Devoy “known to every adult and school child in Ireland” by creating a John Devoy scholarship and possibly naming a park after him.²¹

The edition contained a detailed description of letters, which had been written by John Devoy to his one-time fiancée, Eliza Kilmurry, found by a local resident from Naas while cleaning out his attic, the text of the original letters, as well as extracts that were published in *The Leinster Reader* and *The Kildare Observer*.

²¹ James Durney, Mario Corrigan, and Seamus Curran, eds, *A Forgotten Hero – John Devoy* (Naas: John Devoy Memorial Committee, 2009).

The Fenian Movement

While this was not strictly speaking a biography of John Devoy, it was a crucial first study of the life and work of the Fenians. This booklet, published in 1968, was based on a range of essays presented in the Thomas Davis Lecture Series in 1967, broadcast by Radio Telefís Éireann. The book was essentially a collection of scholarly studies of the most prominent Fenians: James Stephens, Thomas Clarke Luby, John O'Mahony, Charles Joseph Kickham, John O'Leary, John Devoy, and Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa. Furthermore, it contained essays on the Fenian rising, the beginnings and later years of Fenianism, and a detailed bibliography listing all available Fenian literature up to the date of the booklet's publication. Certainly most of the studies listed in this chapter, as well as this current dissertation, used this work as one of the seminal sources in this field.

The Catalpa

Before presenting the literature that shows Devoy's life and work in a wider context, one must mention the relevant literature written about Devoy's possibly greatest feat, certainly the most daring one, the *Catalpa* rescue mission. The number of books written solely about the *Catalpa* episode even surpassed that of biographies published on Devoy. Devoy himself wrote about his planning of the rescue, but only some thirty years later, in 1904, when he was editor of *The Gaelic American*.

As previously mentioned, Devoy biographer Seán O'Lúing, published an account of events entitled *Fremantle Mission* in 1965. Two works have been published since the year 2000. Journalist Peter F. Stevens compiled a nearly 400-page description of the adventurous rescue under the title *The Voyage of the Catalpa – A Perilous Journey and Six Irish Rebels' Escape to Freedom*. The account, which appeared in 2002, also featured a set of photographs of the rescued Fenians and other relevant characters.

Editors Philip Fennel and Maria King published another work about the rescue mission in 2006 with the title *John Devoy's Catalpa Expedition*. Highly informative, it was an edited and annotated version of John Devoy's account of the mission. It included an Introduction with a concise biography written of John Devoy by historian Terry Golway.

Another significant publication in this field was the story of the *Catalpa* rescue as told by John J. Breslin (1833-1887), one of the chief organizers of the expedition. Called *The Cruise of the Catalpa* and published in 1876, and written in the form of a poem, with several other songs included in the volume. It was available on the Internet in full length thanks to the Openlibrary.org website.²²

Yet Breslin was not the only active participant who recorded his account of the rescue. Some twenty years after the heroic journey, Captain George Smith Anthony (1843-1913) made public his recollections of the mission under the simple title *The Catalpa Expedition*. In fact, the actual author was Zephaniah Walter Pease (1861-?), a journalist native to the city of New Bedford, Massachusetts. In the Introduction the author likened the *Catalpa* mission to the enforcement of the Declaration of Independence: “One hundred years after the Declaration of Independence, an American whaling captain, George S. Anthony, commemorated the event by enforcing another Declaration of Independence which set free the Irish political prisoners who were sentenced to a lifetime of servitude in the English penal colony in Australia.”²³ The full account can be freely accessed online,²⁴ while the book was also reprinted by the Hesperian Press in 2002.²⁵

John Devoy presented in other forms of media

The Untold Story of John Devoy & America’s Fight for Irish Freedom

This was not a printed biography but a three-part radio documentary series (3 x 58 minutes in duration) produced by independent producer Paul Wright for 103.2 Dublin City FM radio. It was first broadcast in July 2012 on this station. The series featured an impressive line-up of the key-scholars on Devoy's life – including Professor Joseph Lee of the University of New York, Terry Golway, author of *Irish Rebel*, New York based Irish-American historian Peter Quinn, Carla King, and Daithi O'Corrain of

²² John J. Breslin, *The Cruise of the Catalpa. A Poem* (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, 1876), accessed March 4, 2012. <http://www.archive.org/stream/cruiseofcatalpa00bres#page/n3/mode/2up>

²³ Pease, Z. W., *The Catalpa Expedition*. New Bedford, 1897, accessed March 4, 2012. http://www.archive.org/stream/catalpaexpeditio00peas/catalpaexpeditio00peas_djvu.txt

²⁴ Ibid., Introduction, no page number given.

²⁵ Pease, Z. W., *The Catalpa Expedition*. (Carlisle: Hesperian Press, 2002).

St. Patrick's College Drumcondra, Shane McKenna, Una Ni Bhroimeil of Mary Immaculate College Limerick, as well as Bernadette Whelan and John O'Callaghan of NUI Limerick. The series discussed the crucial points in Devoy's life and his main contributions to the struggle for Irish independence. The production was made with support from the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland.

The *Catalpa* in Folklore

As can be seen from the numerous scholarly studies and historical accounts on the subject, the *Catalpa* mission unquestionably left a great impression on the Irish-American collective imagination. Yet not only did Irish and Irish-Americans commemorate the *Catalpa* mission, it became an intriguing part of Australian folklore, as well. The song "*The Catalpa*" was first published in *Three Street Ballads* in 1957. Several tunes have been used for this song, including "*Botany Bay*" and "*The Dying Stockman*," however, the version to the tune of "*Rosin the Bow*" was collected by Russel Ward from Victor Courtney, a journalist with *The Sunday Times*, Perth, Western Australia. Courtney stated,

I remember in my early days as a cadet hearing a band of old boys in a pub in Fremantle singing this song. It is said that the song became so popular that it was banned by the authority of the day and jail was threatened to anyone caught singing it. It was suggested, too, that the escape was made easy because there was plenty of American gold and some of it was placed in the hands of unscrupulous warders.²⁶

According to Perth's newspaper, *The Western Mail*, on June 2, 1916 the singer, minstrel, musician, Walter Howson composed a song called "*The Catalpa*." The newspaper article gave a summary of the story of the *Catalpa* rescue mission and stated that the song was Howson's "popular music hall composition."²⁷ As the song found its way into Australian folklore, it was recorded by a number of artists, including The

²⁶ Homepage of the collection of Australian traditional and bush songs collected by Mark Gregory, accessed January 12, 2013. <http://folkstream.com/021.html>.

²⁷ "Old Time Memories," *The Western Mail*, June 2, 1916, accessed June 1, 2013, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/37437685>.

Cobbers, a now-retired Australian bush band,²⁸ and Irish-American traditional artist and National Heritage Award winner Mick Moloney.²⁹

The chorus of *The Catalpa* was a taunt to the wardens guarding the Fremantle prisoners: “Take care of the rest of your Fenians, or the Yankees will steal them away.” A video of the song can be seen on the video sharing website, YouTube.³⁰

The *Catalpa* Rescue – Irish Escape

The television channel ABC Australia produced a documentary program on the *Catalpa* mission directed and written by Lisa Sabina Harney titled *The Catalpa Rescue* in 2007. It was part of the PBC series *Secrets of the Dead*, which was created to examine some of the most iconic points in history and debunk myths related to them.³¹ It was an hour-long account of the entire rescue operation and the underlying story of Fenianism. Numerous scholars contributed to this documentary, including the writer and historian Thomas Keneally and the already mentioned historian and biographer, Terry Golway.³²

Current literature

The following section examines the global picture of what it meant to be a Fenian in 19th century New York, and in an even broader sense, what it meant to be a Fenian in Irish history.

The IRB – The Irish Republican Brotherhood from the Land League to Sinn Féin

It was virtually impossible to do any serious research on John Devoy without taking into account his membership in the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB). This

²⁸ The Cobbers’ homepage, accessed March 4, 2012, www.cobbersbushband.com.

²⁹ Mick Moloney’s homepage, accessed January 12, 2013, <http://mickmoloney.com/music/>.

³⁰ The *Catalpa*, song, accessed March 4, 2012. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oxdIzA_AGg.

³¹ The *Catalpa* Rescue, documentary, ABC Australia, 2007, accessed March 4, 2012, <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/guide/netw/200710/programs/ZY8538A001D25102007T203000.htm>.

³² The episode is still available online, accessed January 12, 2013, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets/episodes/irish-escape/128/>.

secret, oath-bound organization played a vital role in Irish history, especially in terms of shaping its course towards republicanism. According to its author, Owen McGee, this work portrayed the history of the Irish Republican Brotherhood from the “inside out,” meaning that it focused not so much on official materials and records on the organization, but on letters, notes, speeches of its members in trying to unveil its motives for action. McGee identified the pivotal period in terms of IRB influence as the years between the launch of the Land League to the formation of Sinn Féin. It could be argued that this period coincided with the time when Devoy was the most active and influential. Devoy not only started out his revolutionary career within the IRB, but later became one of the principal collaborators within Clan na Gael, indeed, his and the IRB’s story had become inseparably intertwined.

In discussing the origins of the IRB, McGee pointed out that Devoy was one of the very few who actually had some military training beforehand, while the majority came from the working classes.³³ Devoy played a significant role in bringing republicanism and nationalism out into the open political field. He represented Clan na Gael at the Paris meeting with the Supreme Council of the IRB. McGee underlined Devoy’s bold initiatives to publish the *New Departure* program without any previous consultation with the IRB. The author also made references to Devoy’s journalistic work in the service of promoting the land reform.³⁴ Furthermore, McGee stated that Devoy’s own *Recollections* were written upon the instigation of the republican government trying to juxtapose the two significant republican dates, 1867 and 1916. According to the author, Devoy may have distorted his memories of the Easter Rising arguing how a successful rising would have been possible based on the number of IRB recruits within the British army, in spite of the fact that Devoy had not supported this idea in his previous writings.³⁵ In fact, Devoy’s published articles tend to prove the point that the IRB’s main work was carried out through “radical, democratic activity” in the period of the mid-1870s to the mid-1910s. At this time, the IRB’s results came in the form of small political feats instead of successful insurrections.

³³ McGee, Owen, *The IRB* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 32.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 96-97. and 105-6.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 369-370.

Granted, John Devoy was not the focal point of this particular book, yet he was certainly an integral part of the IRB narrative, and in this sense, McGee's work provided vital background information to this dissertation.

Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America

John Devoy was also included in Kerby A. Miller's seminal work, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*. The reason why this book was consulted was that this study not only provided a historical account of events, but it also relied on a collection of 5000 personal letters and memoirs as the basis of presenting the Irish-American community, as well as the socio-economical and cultural background that immigrants had left behind. The study provided invaluable insight into the lives and sensibility of this community, into immigrants' actual, as well as psychological, transition from rural to urban, Irish to Irish-American, Irish nationalist exile to assimilated hyphenated American.

Miller highlighted Devoy's daring move to steer away from an exclusively armed approach to the fight for Irish independence only to endorse the New Departure in a cooperation with Michael Davitt and Parnell. Devoy was described as a " 'pure' physical force" person who nonetheless saw that aligning himself with the agrarian movement might prove advantageous for the nationalist movement. In Miller's words: "[...] Devoy shrewdly concluded that agrarianism and home rule could serve as stalking-horses for revolution, and that Irish tenants' and Irish immigrants' hatred of landlordism, if properly mobilized and led, could provide the mass base for ultimate insurrection which the IRB and Clan currently lacked."³⁶ Devoy believed that financial support collected in the U.S. would help with tenant resistance against landlord injustices and the promotion of peasant proprietary, the British repression of these in turn would bring about a revolutionary situation. While the Land Wars could not be deemed an outright failure, they did not actually realize the goals defined by the New Departure, and they did not provoke an insurrection, as Devoy had assumed.

Although the majority of Irish-American immigrants may have harbored a certain degree of hatred towards Britain, this still did not mean that they would automatically become ardent nationalists. Miller also argued that, while a number of Irish-American immigrants were raised in an atmosphere of anti-British sentiments,

³⁶ Miller, *Emigrants and exiles*, 441-442.

“proportionately few were active participants in nationalist movements [...]” Though they would support Irish nationalism, they would still shy away from the use of physical force, rather backing the parliamentary approach as promoted by Parnell. Nonetheless, Miller described the nationalist Devoy as being

“[...] very fortunate that in the end, in 1916-21, they finally succeeded in helping to free most of Ireland politically through Irish-American financial support. For essentially they were fighting what had appeared a losing battle against time, dwindling numbers of new emigrants, and the powerful forces working for ideological as well as behavioral assimilation in America.”³⁷

Irish-Americans saw the image of being exiles as a bonding image, keeping the community together, yet it most likely also slowed down the process of becoming, and more importantly, seeing themselves as “full-fledged Americans.”

The Columbia Guide to Irish American History

The Columbia Guide to Irish American History acted as a sort of guide and encyclopedia to the history of the Irish-American community over more than two centuries.

As was to be expected, there were several references to John Devoy’s character and work. Author Timothy J. Meagher, described Devoy as an “Irish American nationalist diehard.”³⁸ When discussing the question of whom the nationalist movement was mostly supported by, Meagher quoted the argument of Kerby A. Miller claiming that it was predominantly the working class who found their own American experience embittering. Devoy was categorized as such: “They [nationalists] were men like John Devoy, who lived out their American lives in Spartan simplicity, focusing myopically, relentlessly, and fanatically on Ireland’s cause.”³⁹

Further citations of Devoy tended to focus on his work with Clan na Gael, especially on his role in reuniting the Clan after becoming factionalized. One such factioning took place during the 1880s when the Chicago-based “Triangle” controlled

³⁷ Ibid., quotes and references in this section taken from 442, 546, and 554.

³⁸ Timothy J. Meagher, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 119.

³⁹ Ibid., 200.

the Clan, led by Alexander Sullivan, Michael Boland, and Denis Feeley, with Devoy on the opposing side. The Clan was shaken by the murder of Dr. Patrick Henry Cronin (1846-1889) and was united again under the leadership of Devoy at the turn of the century. Another serious split was Devoy's opposition to Éamon de Valera, especially in the period following the Easter Rising.

Part III of the book entitled "Important People, Organizations, Events, and Terms" most resembled a register of significant personalities and events in Irish-American history. The list was most probably not meant to be exhaustive, yet it is still worth pointing out that while, as an organization, "Clan na Gael" was granted an entry, as were the "Fenians," "John Devoy" did not have a separate heading in this chapter. In addition, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History* offered an overview of Irish immigration from the time of Colonial America, it delved into questions of race, ethnicity, politics, and nationalism. However, for one in search of a detailed discussion of Devoy's life and work, this book would only serve as a rich source of general background information on the Irish-American community.

It is worth noting that this edition did not use a hyphen in the term "Irish-American," even though it was published in 2005, long after the hyphenated version came into general use.

The New York Irish

For the purpose of comparison, another publication by Meagher was consulted, which dealt specifically with the Irish community that Devoy was also part of for most of his life, namely, the New York Irish community. This volume was a collection of scholarly essays which offered a different approach to already familiar topics in regard to Irish-American history. John Devoy was referred to in this work quite frequently, which was unsurprising, considering that the volume prominently dealt with Fenians and Clan na Gael as the leading nationalist organizations in the Irish-American community, especially within New York, the center of revolutionary activity in the U.S.⁴⁰ Much like *The Columbia Guide to Irish American*, this volume also used the term "Irish American" without a hyphen.

⁴⁰ Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher, eds, *The New York Irish* (New York: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 331.

The Introduction of this work first mentioned John Devoy in connection with his publishing and editorial activities. “By the end of the nineteenth century most of the influential Irish newspapers were located in New York: Patrick Meehan’s *Irish American* and John Devoy’s *The Irish Nation* and later *The Gaelic American*, and Patrick Ford’s *Irish World*.” However, the main focus with Devoy was on his work with Clan na Gael. He was described as a “political refugee” who, along with fellow Fenians John O’Mahony, John Mitchel, and Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa would see the Irish community of New York as a “springboard for their political causes.”

The book offered valuable discussion on the operation of Clan na Gael and its relationship with Irish-American Democratic party’s political machinery. The authors highlighted the fact that it was not always and exclusively the Democratic candidate whom the Clan endorsed, in fact, on two specific occasions, 1884 and 1888, Devoy and his associates pledged support to the Republican Party’s presidential candidates. Naturally, the factionalism of Clan na Gael during the 1890s was often cited, and in this light the Clan’s reuniting in 1900 was defined as one of Devoy’s most significant moves.

Devoy’s revolutionary nationalism was focused more on revolution than on long-term social justice, and Devoy failed to include social reform among his efforts. This, the authors of this book believed, only underlined his hard-liner image: “Indeed, with the exception of his support for the New Departure, the Fenian pioneer demonstrated a striking consistency over his entire career: he resisted all efforts to dilute pure nationalism with any kind of social program.”

This volume again did not provide an in-depth analysis of Devoy’s life and work, though it identified the highlights of his career, and while doing so, used these as a counterbalance to some novel fields of research. To give a few examples, this work did not only discuss Devoy’s function with Clan na Gael, but juxtaposed it with the women’s role in the Clan (or to be precise, the nationalist movement in general). Furthermore, not only was it underlined how the Clan had offered support for nationalist cultural and political movements in Ireland, such as the Gaelic League, the Gaelic Athletic Association, but the authors also focused on the use and role of the Gaelic language within the Irish-American community.⁴¹ To sum it up, this work

⁴¹ Ibid., quotes and references in this section taken from 5, 105, 226, 225, 332, and 331.

offered a thorough overview of the Irish community in New York and emphasized that New York was the *de facto* center of the Irish in the United States.

The Irish Americans: A History

This volume was written by one of America's eminent scholars of Irish immigrant history, Jay P. Dolan. It presented a great narrative history of Irish immigrants from the 18th century up to the year 2000. Similar to other reference works mentioned in this section, Dolan also used the non-hyphenated version of the term "Irish-American." As for the question relevant to this study, if and how John Devoy was incorporated in this book, the answer was positive. While Devoy was certainly not one of the central characters of this work, even when referring to the pertinent time frame, this volume offered a compact biography of Devoy, describing his younger years in Ireland, military training, arrest, and first successes within the Clan through the *Catalpa* rescue mission.

Devoy was mentioned in connection with the Land League, as well as his (and the Clan's) role in the Easter Rising, where several leaders of the Rising had met Devoy, including Pádraig Pearse (Pádraig Anraí Mac Piarais; 1879-1916), Thomas Clarke (Tomás Séamus Ó Cléirigh; 1857-1916), (who had become his confidant), and James Connolly (Séamas Ó Conghaile; 1868-1916).

Devoy's name also surfaced in relation to the topic of self-determination in the period just after the end of WWI. The newly-formed Irish-American organization, the Friends of Irish Freedom, took a leading role in propagating this issue, by organizing an "Irish Self Determination Week" in December 1918 in which, "Devoy was ecstatic" to have the Archbishop of Boston, William O'Connell (1859-1944) as one of the keynote speakers, who would endorse the quest for Ireland's independence.⁴² That Devoy was instrumental in attaining high-profile support for the cause of Irish independence was portrayed by the fact that at another rally James Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore (1834-1921) also gave a speech partly composed by Devoy, pledging support for Irish self-determination.⁴³

⁴² Jay P. Dolan, *The Irish Americans: A History* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2008), 202-203.

⁴³ Ibid, 203.

As Michael O'Donnell of *The San Francisco Chronicle* stated in the review of this work: "Dolan's book is scholarly and earnest [...] Dolan assembles and organizes sketches of prominent figures, compiles demographic information and spots out the broad trends [...]"⁴⁴ However, Devoy's work and its significance within the Irish-American community was also sufficiently indicated.

Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States

This work was a collection of academic essays about the Irish-American immigrant community, it dealt with questions of origin, nationality, ethnicity, and included the topics of culture, music, and sports. There were quite a few references made to John Devoy, but the essays' main highlights were hardly different from the previous general Irish-American studies covered in this literature review. These highlights were, arranged in chronological order: the New Departure, the re-unification of Clan na Gael, Devoy's connection with the German ambassador to the United States, Sir Roger Casement (1864-1916), the gun-running operation on the eve of the Easter Rising, his role with the Friends of Irish Freedom, and eventually, his discontinued support of Éamon de Valera.

As this was a general review of Irish-Americans over the centuries, it was safe to assume that Devoy would be found listed in the index. His leadership of Clan na Gael was contrasted with the "erratic" leadership of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa,⁴⁵ hence Devoy was described as "one of the most important personalities in the IRB revival" and an "arch-republican" who would lend support to Michael Collins (Mícheál Ó Coileáin; 1890-1922) over Éamon de Valera. His role in making contact with Count Johann von Bernstorff (1862-1939), German ambassador to the U.S., was also discussed, which later led to the (unsuccessful) gun-running operation of Sir Roger Casement (Ruairí Dáithí Mac Easmainn; 1864-1916). The reason for this failure was partly down to cumbersome communication which was routed through the New York-

⁴⁴ O'Donnell, Michael, "Nonfiction review: 'The Irish Americans,'" review of *The Irish Americans* by Jay P. Dolan, *SF Gate*, November 26, 2008, accessed February 16, 2012.

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/11/25/DD4T13SIIV.DTL>.

⁴⁵ Joseph Lee, Marion R. Casey, eds, *Making the Irish American: history and heritage of the Irish in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 290.

based Clan na Gael. Devoy's pro-German stance was underlined by his publication of pro-German articles in *The Gaelic American*.

A very apt summary of the central topic of this study, nationalism and ethnicity, was given in the following quote by chapter author Kevin Kenny: "Ethnic nationalism did raise troubling questions of divided loyalty in the United States. On which side of the hyphen, Irish or American, would the immigrants come down?"⁴⁶ Devoy was certainly on the side of the physical force approach, he put his life's work in the service of attaining an independent Ireland. This book, however, went much further in its examination of the Irish-American community, it discussed contemporary issues and even ventures to speculate on the community in the twenty-first century, and what the future might hold.

Class, Ethnicity, and Radicalism in the Gilded Age

Eric Foner is one of the most outstanding current U.S. historians, professor at Columbia University. His field of interest is the Civil War and Reconstruction Era. Irish-Americans have played a vital role in the Civil War, fighting in the ranks of the both Union and Confederate armies. The influence of the Civil War experience on the mindset of Irish-American nationalists is not to be underestimated. In this regard, even though a Fenian such as John Devoy lies outside Foner's primary scope of interest, nonetheless, Devoy was included in this historian's work entitled *Class, Ethnicity, and Radicalism in the Gilded Age*.

This study examined the social situation after the Reconstruction Era, in the Gilded Age. The central theme of this work was the analysis of the plight of the American working class, which Irish immigrants represented a significant part of. Even though the second generation of immigrants had climbed up the social ladder, this often meant a step-up from unskilled laborer to skilled laborer, laborer nevertheless. In terms of John Devoy, the references found in this book were mostly to do with the relationship between Devoy and the New Departure. It was highlighted that, despite the fact that the New Departure centered on land reform, Devoy did not waver from his

⁴⁶ Ibid., quotes and references taken in this section from 109, 296, 117, 294, and 370.

hard-line nationalist views. It was not his intention to use Ireland as a means to bring wide-spread social reform.⁴⁷

Similar to other works consulted in this literature review, John Devoy was again contrasted to Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa and described as being more influential and more representative of Fenian opinion than Rossa, and “probably the most nationalist ideologue on either side of the Atlantic.”⁴⁸

Ireland and the Americas: Culture, Politics, and History

John Devoy also had a separate entry in the three-volume edition of ‘Ireland and the Americas: Culture, Politics and History,’ edited by Philip Coleman, James Byrne, and Jason King. The entry was written by the Boston University Professor Ely Janis. It gave a concise description of Devoy’s life and work both as a journalist and a nationalist.⁴⁹

There were several more references to Devoy. He was prominently featured in connection with his collaboration with Daniel Cohalan on reuniting Clan na Gael and organizing the Irish Race Convention in 1916 and founding the Friends of Irish Freedom, which would play a vital role in the political approach towards achieving recognition for the Irish Republic following the First World War. Furthermore, his role with the Irish Republican Brotherhood was discussed as well, focusing on his attitude towards armed resurrection. In comparison with Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, Devoy was described as being a supporter of moderation. His categorization as a ‘moderate’ is probably a reference towards his role in forming the New Departure along with Charles Stewart Parnell and Michael Davitt, whose entry also featured Devoy’s name. Under the heading “Éamon de Valera” there were numerous references to his disputes and conflicts with Devoy. “[Earlier] when he [Éamon de Valera] had toured the United States to win support for the fledgling Irish republic, he antagonized leading Americans and left a legacy of division among the American friends of Ireland.” The controversy between Devoy and de Valera stemmed from the question of recognition: de Valera was

⁴⁷ Foner, Eric. “Class, Ethnicity, and Radicalism in the Gilded Age: The Land League and Irish America.” in *Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 167.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 164.

⁴⁹ James Patrick Byrne, Philip Coleman, Jason Francis King, eds, *Ireland and the Americas: Culture, Politics and History* (New York: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 252-253.

requesting formal recognition, yet he felt Devoy (along with Cohalan) was only seeking the recognition of the right for self-determination. The fact that de Valera gave the general impression of being able to considerably influence how the Irish-American community would vote in the 1920 elections caused further strain in the relationship between Devoy and de Valera.

Finally, the entry on nationalist, journalist, and social reformer Patrick Ford (1837-1913) also mentioned John Devoy. According to Ford, radical social reform in America went together with the struggle for Irish freedom, which put him at odds with “[...] single-minded nationalists like John Devoy, who believed that any focus away from Irish freedom was a dangerous diversion.”⁵⁰

The fact that a single volume had so many entries and references to Devoy only showed that he was a significant figure within the Irish-American nationalist community. His memoir, the *Recollections of an Irish Rebel* was cited as source material for numerous entries, as was the biography by Terry Golway. More to the point, Devoy’s work and influence was not limited to the American side of the Atlantic, but to the Irish side as well, making him a true representative of this volume’s subtitle, *Transatlantic Relations*.

Summary of general overviews of Irish history

Several overviews of modern Irish history were consulted, including Foster’s *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*, Lyon’s *Ireland Since The Famine*, Tim Pat Coogan’s *The IRA*, as well as Jonathan Bardon’s *A History of Ulster*.

Starting in reverse order, from more specific to largely general, the Bardon-volume offered a completely different geographical angle on the life of John Devoy. Instead of looking at his activities from an American point of view, this study was focused on Ulster. For the purposes of this dissertation, this work was consulted in search of references to John Devoy, as well as Clan na Gael as a whole. While the book was not expected to be of utmost relevance to this current research, as all Irish ties of Devoy’s were connected to the Irish, or at least to the Southern Counties, it appeared that the Clan’s organizing and funding activities had significant connections to Ulster, too.

⁵⁰ Ibid., quotes and references in this section taken from 191, 648, 234, 240, 241-42, and 349.

The book's index listed no more than four citations of John Devoy, and Bardon conspicuously shifted the focus from Devoy's character to four of his associates ("faithful lieutenants"), all originally Ulster-born.⁵¹ These northerners were Sean MacDermott (Seán Mac Diarmada; 1883-1916), tram driver from Belfast; Thomas Clarke, brought up in Dungannon, he later spent 15 years in prison for his role in the dynamite campaign in the 1880s; Patrick McCartan (1878-1963), from Carrickmore, medic by profession, who ran away to the States and joined the Clan; and Sir Roger Casement, who took up the republican cause after retiring from public service. Bardon stated that Devoy sent both money and instructions to prepare for the Rising. Just how important the role of these afore-mentioned participants was, was highlighted by the choice of word in the following quote: "On the eve of the First World War his northern zealots had seized complete control of the brotherhood, toppling the Dublin leadership opposed to insurrection [...]"⁵² Sir Roger Casement was rarely mentioned without reference to his German connection with the German diplomat Count von Bernstorff, organizing weapons and an Irish army made up of war prisoners in Germany. However, his gun-running efforts on board the *Aud* came to naught just off the shores of Cobh, Co. Cork, when the British seized a shipment of arms (20,000 rifles - obsolete Russian weapons, 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition, 10 machine guns, and some explosives) and captured the (German) crew as prisoners of war.⁵³

Moving along the lines of Clan na Gael, Tim Pat Coogan focused his attention on the arguably most important Irish military-political organization, the Irish Republican Army. Coogan can be described as one of the leading authorities on 20th century Irish nationalist history; a number of his works, primarily *The IRA: A History* are considered standard reference books in this field. This study was consulted for references on John Devoy for the simple reason that it was virtually impossible to discuss Devoy without also examining his role within Clan na Gael. Equally, it was hardly possible to discuss 20th century Irish history without dealing with one of the most controversial organizations, the IRA, which may not have emerged were it not for the financial support of the Clan.

⁵¹ Jonathan Bardon, *A History of Ulster*, (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 2005), 424-425.

⁵² Ibid., 425.

⁵³ "The Aud," accessed February 15, 2012, <http://www.wreckhunter.ie/wrecks.html>.

In this work, Devoy's character made several appearances in various chapters, understandably so, given Devoy's exceptionally long and active nationalist career. On the one hand, as previous work cited in this literature review, Coogan pointed out Devoy's role in the New Departure.⁵⁴ On the other hand, Coogan went into much more detail when discussing Devoy in connection with Clan na Gael. In the first years of the 20th century, a new ally appeared at the side of Devoy, namely Supreme Court Justice Daniel Cohalan. During this period John Devoy along with Daniel Cohalan and Joseph McGarrity (1874-1940) were the key figures in Clan na Gael. Devoy was also mentioned regarding his connection to the German Consul to the United States, Count Johann von Bernstorff, and his help in setting up the gun-smuggling mission and potential Irish Brigade made up of prisoners of war, organized by Sir Roger Casement. Certainly, the Clan played an important role in diminishing the influence of John Redmond (1856-1918) and the United Ireland Party. Devoy helped set up the organization Friends of Irish Freedom and eventually collected about \$900,000 by the end of 1920. Devoy also hoped to elicit open support from President Wilson for the independence of Ireland, though this proved difficult as Wilson harbored rather negative feelings towards Daniel Cohalan and was also trying to avoid conflict with Britain.

The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 caused a split not only among the Irish public on the island but among Clan na Gael, too. Devoy chose to support the Treaty, while the other key Clan figure, McGarrity, pledged his support to Éamon de Valera, rejecting the Treaty. However, the Treaty was not the only area that would cause parties to disagree. It was also the delicate issue of whom was in the dominant position of exerting "control" over the Irish-American community – was it the local, Irish-American leadership, with Cohalan at the helm, or was it the Irish president, Éamon de Valera, who arrived in the States to hold lectures and collect further financial support? Following the Irish Civil War, it was increasingly the faction supporting de Valera, led by McGarrity and his chief lieutenants, who would gain control within the Irish-American community, with the faction led by Devoy and Cohalan only strong in New York City.⁵⁵

The volume *Ireland Since The Famine* can be considered as one of the standard reference works for Irish history from the 19th century onwards. Consequently, taking

⁵⁴ Tim Pat Coogan: *The IRA: A history* (London: Harper Collins, 2000), 6.

⁵⁵ Ibid., quotes and references taken in this section from 99, 98, and 101.

into consideration what an important role Fenianism played, one could expect find a number of sections relating to John Devoy and his work within Fenianism. These expectations were not unfounded, Lyons highlighted Devoy as an avid nationalist, and also pointed out that at times he was willing to compromise and head into the direction of land reform, juxtaposing Devoy's move with the Supreme Council's leadership practicing 'revolutionary conservatism.'⁵⁶

In later sections of this work, Devoy was mentioned in already familiar context, based on his connection with Sir Roger Casement and the German gun-running scheme, focusing on the confusion that the communication constraints caused. Devoy's role within the struggle for Irish independence was furthermore explored in conjunction with the workings of the Friends of Irish Freedom, an organization heavily supported by Clan na Gael. Devoy's (and Cohalan's) conflict with Éamon de Valera was also explored, since Devoy and Cohalan, as the leaders of the Irish-American community, felt that de Valera was meddling in American affairs. In an apt summary, Lyons portrayed this clash as follows: "It was a collision of two stiff-necked, strong-minded individuals with another stiff-necked, strong-minded one, and it is not surprising that deadlock resulted."⁵⁷

To sum it up, this book offered ample information about Devoy and while it did not go into minute details, it provided a look at "the big picture" of the struggle for Irish independence, rather similar to Foster's work, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*.

Again, with this overview of modern Irish history, the aim was not to find in-depth novel information on Devoy, instead, it was to determine to what extent a standard work of reference for Irish history contained indications to the Irish-American factor. The results of this mini-research were hardly surprising: two key events brought up Devoy's name, these were the New Departure and the 1916 Rising. Irish politician Charles Stewart Parnell featured heavily and had an entire chapter devoted to his career, with Devoy termed the revolutionary with whom the constitutionals struck a deal. Later this deal would be subject to much ambiguous interpretation, each party recalling a different version of the outcome of the negotiations. Devoy was described as

⁵⁶ Lyons, *Ireland Since...*, 163-164.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 423.

“disingenuous” for insisting that there had, in fact been a “compact” between the parties,⁵⁸ a fact that Devoy-biographer Golway also referred to.⁵⁹

Further mentions of Devoy include a reference to his involvement in German weapons smuggling activities during the First World War, earning him the adjective “the inevitable John Devoy.”⁶⁰ No doubt, this choice of descriptive word indicated how Devoy was seen as an ever-present person in Irish-American nationalist, especially revolutionary affairs. Interestingly enough, Devoy was also portrayed as the cautious one when compared with Chicago Triangle boss, Alexander Sullivan.

The Foster-volume offered its readers a limited amount of information on Devoy’s role with the Clan, yet it *did*, as the previous listed work, indicate the overall significance of the Irish-American aspect of the struggle for independence in the few decades before, and after the turn of the century.

This short review of the available literature was based on a select list of works dealing with Devoy. Some of this literature placed more emphasis on Devoy’s nationalist work, while others put his work in context. In terms of the current research, though, it was important to identify the available literature. It provided a background to the research material from press archives, primarily *The New York Times* and *The Irish Times*. These newspaper articles that comprised the focus of this dissertation, helped to flesh out the image of John Devoy, showing how Devoy was seen by scholars and historians, but also, how he was seen by his contemporaries through the newspapers published in his day.

⁵⁸ Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 404.

⁵⁹ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 107-110.

⁶⁰ Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 479.

Chapter 2 - Nationalism

Before turning to the question of Irish and Irish-American nationalists' activities promoting the independence of Ireland, it is necessary to briefly discuss nationalism and provide a definition for it. Nationalism was one of the most defining movements of the 19th century, sweeping over the majority of the European continent, from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, over the Scandinavian countries, to the Southern Slavic nations.⁶¹ This topic has been widely discussed in the relevant literature⁶² and it is not the intention of this work to give an in-depth presentation of European nationalism. Instead, the aim is to provide a theoretical background to Irish nationalism, which, as it shall be pointed out, was not an isolated attempt at overthrowing foreign rule within the state, much rather a natural reaction to nationalist movements all over Europe.

The work of several significant contributors to the discourse on nationalism will be mentioned in this section, including Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson, and Azar Gat. The aim is shed light on the different understandings of the concepts of nationality, nation, and nationalism, if and how these are connected – limited to – to an independent state, as was the drive of Irish (Irish-American) nationalists.

The philosopher and social anthropologist Ernest Gellner (1925-1995) was one of the most significant scholars of nationalism. He first presented his thesis in the 1964 book *Thought and Change*, then expanded these arguments in his seminal work *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), which remained one of the most important works in this field.

The following quote summed up Gellner's idea of nations and nationalism:

Nationalism holds that they were destined for each other; that either without the other is incomplete, and constitutes a tragedy. But before they could become intended for each other, each of them had to emerge, and their emergence was independent and

⁶¹ Szedmina, Lívía. "Az 1867-es kiegyezés, vagy ahogyan Írország is csinálhatta volna." *Létiünk*. ed. Erika Bence. (2009) Vol. 1, 64-74.

⁶² "The Nationalism Project" website, accessed February 4, 2014, <http://www.nationalismproject.org/books.htm>.

contingent. The state has certainly emerged without the help of the nation. Some nations have certainly emerged without the blessings of their own state.⁶³

According to Gellner, nationalism implied that loyalty to the nation should be the first virtue of a citizen.⁶⁴ Although this work did not deal specifically with Ireland and Irish nationalism, it still placed the Irish nationalist movement (and by extenuation, the Irish-American movement), into a theoretical context.

Similar to Gellner, Benedict Anderson (1936-) also held that “nation” was a product of modernism, stating that the emergence of print has triggered the formation of nations as it used the vernacular language, spreading beyond the face-to-face communities of small villages and towns. In fact, Anderson introduced the idea of “imagined communities” with the following definition: “It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”⁶⁵ This seemed especially true of the Irish-American community, i.e. a nation as a socially constructed community, formed by all the people who saw themselves as belonging to that group, and was partly also true of the Vojvodinian-Hungarian community, who also perceived themselves as part of the Hungarian nation.

The historian Eric Hobsbawm (1917-2012) was another eminent scholar of nationalism, his most prominent work was the trilogy on the long 19th century (*The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789–1848* (1962), *The Age of Capital: 1848–1875* (1975), and *The Age of Empire: 1875–1914* (1987)). Hobsbawm stated that if a large body of people chose to regard themselves as members of a “nation,” they would be treated as such, yet he also added that while “nationalism” could be recognized prospectively, the real “nation” can only be recognized *a posteriori*. Further, the historian pointed out that “national consciousness” was subject to regional differences, it did not develop evenly among various social groupings or regions of a country.⁶⁶

⁶³ Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983). 6-7.

⁶⁴ O’Leary, Brendan. “On the Nature of Nationalism: An Appraisal of Ernest Gellner’s Writings on Nationalism.” *British Journal of Political Science*. 1997 (Vol. 27). 191–222. Web. February 4, 2014. http://www.polisci.upenn.edu/ppec/PPEC%20People/Brendan%20O%27Leary/publications/Journal%20Articles/Oleary_BJPS_Appraisal_Gellner.pdf.

⁶⁵ Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. (London: Verso, 2006). 6.

⁶⁶ “The Nationalism Project” website, Eric Hobsbawm: *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, accessed July 15, 2014, <http://www.nationalismproject.org/what/hobsbawm.htm>.

Another significant study in this field was published by Azar Gat under the title *Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationhood* (2013), which aptly contrasted some of the notions found in the works cited above. Gat rejected Gellner's view concerning how "nation" was the result of modernity and the French Revolution. In this work Gat stated:

Nationalism and ethnicity are closely associated; by and large, nationalism is one particular form of a broader phenomenon, that of political ethnicity; and ethnicity has always been highly political, ever since the emergence of the state and even before. By ethnicity I mean a population shared by kinship (real or perceived) and culture [...].⁶⁷

In terms of nation and state, more specifically, nation-state, Gat believed that in those historical circumstances where the state roughly encompassed and remained largely confined to an entire generally distinct ethnic space, was identified with a particular *Staatsvolk*, the result was known as a nation or nation-state.

In summary it can be said that the notions of "nation" and "nationalism" may have been defined in various ways, yet it is was one of the most important influences on 19th-century Irish history. The Irish certainly fit Anderson's concept of "imagined communities," yet it was precisely that part of the Irish nation which was swept far from the island, living in Irish communities in the United States, Australia, Canada, or Britain, that proved significant in terms of acting as the motivational and more importantly, financial, driving force behind Irish nationalist and revolutionary activities.

In the 1840s there was hardly a European country where nationalist movements did not arise, and their forces shook the foundations of traditional forms of rule. In 1848 there were uprisings in Prague, Naples, Rome, Florence, Venice, Milan, Tuscany, Piedmont, Sicily, Baden, Württemberg, Hesse-Darmstadt, Nassau, Bavaria, Saxony, Prussia, France, Denmark, Holland, Austria, Hungary, Sweden, and Belgium. It was named "Völkerfrühling" ("Springtime of Peoples") by German liberals.⁶⁸ These movements have produced a number of extraordinary leaders and revolutionary figures.

It has to be underlined that these leaders did not present nationalist theory as referenced above, instead they were rather military-political leaders who drove the

⁶⁷ Gat, Azar. *Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2012) 3.

⁶⁸ Hodgman, Charlotte. "1848: The Year of Revolutions." *History Extra*, April 2011, accessed February 4, 2014. <http://www.historyextra.com/feature/1848-year-revolutions>.

nationalist movements towards action. The 1848 revolution against the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was led by Lajos Kossuth (1802-1894), the German revolution was spearheaded by Johann Gottfried Kinkel (1815-1882), in Italy, Giuseppe Verdi's (1813-1901) operas contributed to the Italian resurgence, the Risorgimento spirit, at least as much Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872) or Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882); in Ireland, the Young Irelanders were fronted by William Smith O'Brien (Liam Mac Gabhann Ó Briain; 1803-1864), Thomas Francis Meagher (1823-1867), and John Mitchel (Seán Mistéal; 1815-1875). While the first waves of the mid-19th century revolutions may not have been successful in all locations, as for instance in Italy, Ireland, and Hungary, the nationalist movement grew increasingly stronger.

A number of revolutionary leaders helped carry the message of nationalism across the Atlantic and spread it among the American public, the examples of Kossuth, Smith O'Brien and Meagher, Michael Davitt and Charles Stewart Parnell readily spring to mind. The Hungarian freedom fighter Kossuth was only the second foreign statesman to be invited to address the Joint Meeting of the United States Congress. In his speech he stated: "I came to the noble-minded people of the United States to claim its generous operative sympathy for the impending struggle of oppressed freedom on the European continent."⁶⁹ His turning to the American political elite for support was not an isolated instance in U.S. history. Indeed, Kossuth would be followed almost 30 years later by Charles Stewart Parnell, the fourth foreign statesman, with a similar request – to enlist U.S. support for Irish home rule.

Ireland was often seen as being on the edge of Europe,⁷⁰ locked in the century-long Anglo-Irish conflict, yet as the Young Irelanders' attempt at a rising in July 1848 proved, Ireland was influenced by the surge of nationalism in a similar fashion as numerous other European states and cities were. Irish nationalism, and its correlation with European nationalist movements, was explored in the work *Life on the fringe? Ireland and Europe, 1800-1922*. The studies contained in this volume highlighted Irish events within a European context by seeing Ireland as an organic component of European developments.⁷¹ This naturally included Ireland's attempts at a revolution

⁶⁹ De Puy, Henry W. *Kossuth and his generals: with a brief history of Hungary*. (Buffalo: Phinney, 1852).

⁷⁰ Heffernan, Brian and Zarka Zsuzsanna, eds, *Life on the fringe? Ireland and Europe, 1800-1922*. (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2012).

⁷¹ Brian Heffernan's website, accessed February 4, 2014. <http://bheffernan.weebly.com/>.

against British rule, such as the 1798 Irish Rebellion involving the United Irishmen under Wolfe Tone's leadership, which was started from France, or the Young Irelanders' rising, which was influenced by the 1848 European nationalist movement.

The 19th-century Irish-American nationalist movement, which was the focus of this work, was by far not a unique instance where nationalists would promote the independence of their country from abroad. There were examples of different expatriate nationalist movements, especially in the U.S. during the late 19th and 20th centuries, including Polish and Czech nationalists both before World War I and again after World War II. Indian (among them Sikh) nationalists were also active in the U.S., often in alliance with Irish-American nationalists, before World War I.⁷² This can be seen as an indication of cooperation between nationalist movements, which was certainly not a rare case for Irish-American nationalists, especially considering their international cooperation efforts with Russia and Germany.

⁷² Author's email correspondence with Kerby A. Miller, dated February 12, 2014.

Chapter 3 – Related issues of Irish and Irish-American history: an overview

The focus will be on events that occurred in the second half of the 19th century and continued to have considerable influence well into the 20th century, though the primary scope is between the 1880s and 1919, the proclamation of the Irish Republic by the fledgling Irish parliament Dáil Éireann. It is not an easy task to pin down the exact moment or even one specific event that can be identified as the trigger for the unfolding of Irish nationalism. One would probably have to go back as far as the Wolfe Tone rebellion and the United Irishmen. Later this revolutionary attitude was continued by the Young Irelanders only to be bequeathed to the Fenians. However, this section will provide a description of how this same revolutionary attitude was transplanted to the United States. Before turning to Fenianism, though, it is necessary to first investigate the socio-political environment in which it emerged.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, similar to the United Irishmen, who had been inspired by the French Revolution, the Young Irelanders were heavily influenced by a series of revolutions taking place all around the continent. Emigrants leaving Ireland made sure these strong negative sentiments would be carried overseas, continuing to feed emigrants' nationalist feelings and aspirations for a free Ireland.

The Young Irelander rebellion proved to be a failure, which led to some of their leaders' (William Smith O'Brien, Thomas Francis Meagher, and John Mitchel) subsequent arrest and transportation. Others, including John Blake Dillon (1814-1866), James Stephens, and John O'Mahony managed to escape and make their way to the Continent, or ultimately, to the United States. "With Irish leaving Ireland for the U.S., Australia, New Zealand and obviously Britain, the Irish question became – and to this

day has remained – and international question, never again a domestic issue, no matter how much subsequent British governments would have wanted it.”⁷³

Although the rebellion did not yield the expected results, i.e. it failed to end British rule in Ireland, or bring about significant changes in an agro-economic sense, it nevertheless had a huge long-term impact on Irish nationalism. Numerous key players, who would later be founders of crucial organizations (James Stephens, John O’Mahony), military leaders in the American Civil War (Thomas Francis Meagher), and outspoken supporters of the Confederacy (John Mitchel), as well as prominent Irish nationalists, had come out of and relied on the experiences of the Young Irelanders. Ultimately, they were the ones who would ensure that the flame of Irish nationalism did not fizzle out, despite (or actually, alongside) other, more constitutional approaches.

With nationalists emigrating (albeit, involuntarily), Irish nationalism itself was also transplanted to other continents, most prominent of all, North America. Two significant organizations were born in the aftermath of the Young Ireland movement. In the United States, John O’Mahony founded the Fenian Brotherhood (the name heavily relying on O’Mahony’s studies in Hibernian history) which later evolved into Clan na Gael. On the Irish side of the Atlantic, James Stephens founded the Irish Republican Brotherhood, as a form of sister organization to the Fenian Brotherhood. These organizations were instrumental in bringing about the Fenian Rising of 1867.

But before going deeper into the topic of Fenianism, one must delve into the American side of this story. How and when did the Irish-American community come about? What was its social structure? How was it run? Who ran it? And most importantly, what was the Irish-American community’s attitude towards Anglo-Irish affairs? The following pages will offer answers to the questions.

Irish emigration to the United States

This section will provide an overview of underlying patterns in Irish emigration to the United States, focusing on social, political and economic aspects. The 19th century on the North American continent experienced several waves of mass immigration, with various triggering reasons and people originating from different countries, coming from all social layers. Immigration can be grouped into “early

⁷³ Ibid.

immigration,” “old immigration,” and “new immigration.” The first half of the 19th century saw the “early immigration,” while “old immigration” referred to the period between the 1840s and 1880s, when the most numerous immigrant groups were the Irish, and finally, “new immigration,” lasting roughly until the First World War, with the bulk of immigrants coming from Eastern and Southern Europe.

Emigration in light of The Great Famine

The pre-Famine period

Large-scale immigration from Europe to the United States started following the Napoleonic Wars, the majority of the immigrants came from Western Europe. In the pre-Famine period, encompassing the first half of the 19th century, the precipitating factors for immigration were partly of a personal, though to a greater extent, of an economic nature. In the early 19th-century Ireland was, given its inequitable system of land distribution, (which excluded most Catholics from owning land), grossly overpopulated.

Until the year 1827 the British government restricted Irish overseas emigration, leaving potential emigrants with Great Britain as their only destination. But soon Westminster sought to avoid Britain being flooded by impoverished Irishmen (primarily Irish Catholics) and consequently all restrictions were removed. In the 1820s altogether 50,724 Irish immigrants entered the United States (already accounting for more than the half of the entire number of European emigrants - 98,797).⁷⁴ The agricultural background tied to these immigration figures was a combination of bad harvests - fourteen partial or complete potato famines were recorded between 1816 and 1842 - and more importantly, the agricultural structure itself. It must also be mentioned that absentee landlords contributed to the worsening of the food situation by exporting much of the crops out of Ireland. Most Irish peasants did not work the land on a commercial basis. The commonly used system of farming was subsistence farming, when part of the harvest was to become the landlord's rent and the rest would sustain the family until the following summer. The 1830s saw the diet of the rural community increasingly narrowing down to the sweet potato as their sole staple food, making them particularly

⁷⁴ Leonard Dinnerstein and David M. Reimers, *Ethnic Americans* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1975), 162.

vulnerable to crop failures. At that point the Irish population was approximately 8 million.⁷⁵

The eviction of tenants from estates was by no means a rare phenomenon even in the decades preceding the Famine. Frequently, it was more profitable for landlords to clear their estates than have tenants or cottiers living on the lands. This attitude was indirectly promoted by the Irish Poor Laws of 1838 which put additional financial burdens on already heavily mortgaged landlords. As clearances accelerated, the homeless were forced to migrate to towns and cities to look for work. Yet, most Irish towns were hardly able to provide enough work for their own inhabitants and proved ill-equipped to take in the growing number of ex-small holding farmers. Emigration thus became the only legitimate option for many.

An Gorta Mór

For the Irish, there was no event more defining in the middle of the 19th century than the Great Famine (An Gorta Mór), which engulfed the country for nearly a decade, between 1845 and 1855. Social and economic struggle became the catchwords, as Ireland was trying to cope with one of the worst bouts of potato blight in the course of its history. Historian F. S. L. Lyons argued that the Great Famine caused not only incredible human suffering, but also triggered social changes that took place in a concentrated form over a relatively short period of time, changes that may have otherwise unfolded over the course of several generations.⁷⁶

The 1840s also brought the emergence of a new group of revolutionaries who would be seen as a crucial influence with all subsequent nationalist actions. For, the anguish caused by the Famine translated into disdain for the English. “Expressed in its simplest terms, this legacy was that the long-standing and deep-rooted hatred of the English connection was given not only a new intensity, but also a new dimension.”⁷⁷

The potato blight first appeared in the early summer of 1845 causing the complete destruction of the potato crop within two months. Still, the harvests of previous years were good enough to ensure that most farmers had some resources to fall

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ F. S. L. Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* (London: Fontana Press, 1971), 34-35.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 16.

back on in the first year of the crisis. It must also be remembered that the potato blight, or indeed, famine, was not an unknown phenomenon in Irish agriculture. Therefore the year 1845 did not witness an immediate frenzy to leave Ireland. Another reason for the slow uptake in emigration in 1845 was that the usual shipping season was spring. Since the blight hit the fields in summer the effects that the blight had on emigration figures would only begin to show in the course of the following spring, the shipping season of 1846. According to those figures, however, the number of emigrants hardly rose above the annual average of the preceding years of that decade.⁷⁸

However, when crops failed again in the summer of 1846, this left the rural community without any back-up resources. As a result Ireland faced a food crisis of epic proportions and very soon thousands were being evicted from their homes and left to starve and die. While the first season of the Famine brought only a slow rise in emigration, the second year of potato blight caused more than 200,000 to board sailing ships for passage to foreign lands (mostly the United States) in the spring of 1847.⁷⁹ The more fortunate ones were given money for the fare by their landlords or some food for the journey, yet most were left to endure dreadful ship journeys (on the notorious ‘coffin ships’) in their flight from their famine-ravaged native land.

By the summer of 1847 farmers had grown distrustful of both the potato and farming in general, thus relatively few patches of land were planted. They were proven wrong, as that year yielded a respectable harvest, and slowly their faith in farming was renewed. But the year did not bring the end of the Famine, in fact, it became known the as “Black ’47.” In 1848 a large amount of potato was planted, only to bring yet another year of complete crop failure. The last year of that decade failed to improve the overall situation, instead there was another bad harvest leading to universal starvation, destitution and despair. Emigration rose to unprecedented heights with 250,000 people fleeing the island in 1851.⁸⁰ Mass emigration of Irish to the United States would continue for the next few years following the famine. The Famine Memorial by artist Rowan Gillespie is located on Custom House Quay in Dublin, Ireland (Fig. 3.).

In 1849, Queen Victoria, whose reign spanned sixty-four years from 1837 to 1901, first visited Ireland. Altogether she made four visits to Ireland, the others were in

⁷⁸ Foster, *Modern Ireland* ..., 318-330.

⁷⁹ J. C. Beckett, *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603 - 1923* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), 344.

⁸⁰ Foster, *Modern Ireland* ..., 355.

1853, 1861, and finally, in 1900. At her first royal visit the circumstances were far from perfect. Ireland had not yet completely shaken off the trauma of the Famine, yet the Queen was determined to visit the country and show her support. Irish patriot and romantic muse Maud Gonne (1866-1953) later referred to Victoria “the Famine Queen.”⁸¹ The Queen was well received by most accounts, and even the militant revolutionary leader of 1848, John Mitchel, had to concede that “the debased nation set its neck under her feet in a paroxysm of fictitious ‘loyalty.’”⁸² Still, the monarch’s visit did not change the emigrating tendencies of the Irish population.

As was already touched on earlier, the phenomenon of Irish emigration to the United States had been going at a steady rate of 50,000–100,000 emigrants per annum in the pre-Famine period, and records portray a rising tendency. It may therefore be considered somewhat peculiar that the potato blight and the Famine it caused were interpreted as a watershed in the course of Irish history.⁸³ The potato blight itself provided some support for this claim. The first half of the 18th century had seen several severe crop failures, topped by the famine of 1740-41 which caused as great a starvation as the Great Famine of 1845 (ironically, though, even the spelling suggests that the instance of 1845 was the only famine “Great” enough to be spelled with capital initials). This may yield some explanation as to why in the first two years emigration figures did not rise dramatically. After the year of “Black 47” however, many thousands were left without any resources, homes or hope, seeing emigration as their only escape route.⁸⁴

In terms of numbers, the Irish population was reduced from 8.2 million in 1846 to around 6 million within a period of ten years. Quoting the figures given by Foster, an estimated 2,225,000 people succumbed to diseases, died of starvation or emigrated from Ireland. Between one and 1.2 million Irish emigrants arrived in America in this decade⁸⁵ (as opposed to the figure set by Miller, 1.8 million Irish left for the United States).⁸⁶ While emigration rates dropped to a certain degree in the post-Famine period, by the

⁸¹ “Dublin Paper Suppressed,” *The New York Times*, April 7, 1900.

⁸² Kelly, Richard J. “Queen Victoria and the Irish Post-Famine Context: a Royal Visit.” *Studies in Victorian Society*. (7), accessed February 7, 2014. <http://www.vssj.jp/journal/7/kelly.pdf>.

⁸³ Miller, *Emigrants and...*, 293.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 293.

⁸⁵ Foster, *Modern Ireland...*, 323.

⁸⁶ Miller, *Emigrants and...*, 280.

turn of the century there were 1.6 million Irish immigrants living in the United States along with 3.4 million native-born children of Irish immigrants.

During this period Irish agriculture was undergoing rapid transformation. In the 1860s and 70s there were no new instances of potato blight (the next outbreak would not occur until 1879), which renewed the faith of many farmers in working the land. But from the 1850s onwards there was a steady decline in the tillage of land due to the ever-growing concentration on cattle-raising. For this purpose, arable land was transformed into pastures which, in turn, led to a growing surplus of manpower.

The post-Famine period

The socio-political situation of rural communities did not change significantly in the post-Famine years. The average small-holder was still disenfranchised, at the mercy of the landlord, and in a rather impoverished state. Emigration, however, did pose a significant factor of change in the financial situation of those left in Ireland. During the Famine there were numerous cases of families sending their strongest son to emigrate with the imperative that he collect the money necessary for the entire family to follow him to the New World. In the years between 1850 and 1855 Irish immigrants remitted home around £1.2 million to support their families until they would be rejoined in the United States.⁸⁷

A different form of remittance was buying pre-paid tickets sold by most shipping companies. The sale of pre-paid passage tickets started as early as the end of the 1820s to act as a sort of incentive for emigration. Jones quoted a sample survey conducted by the Irish Emigrant Society in New York in 1843, which claims that approximately one third of all immigrants crossed the Atlantic with pre-paid tickets. This percentage did not include the fares paid for with remitted money from America.⁸⁸ The estimation of Miller, namely that in the second half of the 19th century, 75% of Irish emigrants travelled to America with pre-paid tickets, highlighted the rising tendency in financial aid from immigrants to their kin in Ireland.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Ibid., 349, 293.

⁸⁸ Jones, Maldwyn Allen, *American Immigration* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), 105.

⁸⁹ Miller, *Emigrants and...*, 352.

Until mid-century, emigrants were forced to use the sea routes of freighters, and in later years, the commercial shipping companies. For the Irish, this involved making the long and laborious journey from the interior of the island to Belfast first, then across the Irish Sea to finally arrive in Liverpool where they could board a ship for the New World. A common fate of potential emigrants was that by the time they had reached England, both the travelers and their financial resources were completely exhausted. Such emigrants would either settle in Great Britain or remain in the country only for the period of time needed to save enough money to sail for America.

After 1858 Irish immigrants were spared from this perilous odyssey, as direct shipping lines were established leaving from Galway for the United States. This, in turn, moved major British shipping lines to schedule stops at the Irish harbors of Queenstown (the city of Cobh was named Queenstown in honor of Queen Victoria's first visit, later the town reverted to its original name again in 1920) in Cork, as well as Moville near Londonderry, and also Belfast.⁹⁰ Combined with possible financial help from immigrant family members, the simplification and shortening of the journey became a rather powerful incentive for emigrating in the second half of the century.

The major reasons for immigration during the Famine period were, as mentioned previously, either personal or economic but both were forms of a strong push-effect. In Miller's words, emigration in those years was a "headlong flight of refugees."⁹¹ By contrast, the post-Famine era saw the push-effect abate slightly and the pull-effect grow increasingly stronger. The United States experienced a series of economic crises in 1857 and 1893, as well as a season of strikes in 1877. The effects of these crises could be traced in the sharply declining immigration rates in the subsequent few years. The drop could be clearly seen from the numbers of Irish emigrants disembarking at the Port of New York. While in 1857 Irish emigrants numbering 57,119 arrived into New York, in the following year a mere half of this number disembarked (25,075), and only in 1859 did these figures begin to climb again.⁹²

⁹⁰ Ibid., 354-355.

⁹¹ Ibid., 292.

⁹² Robert Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City 1825 - 1863* (Port Washington: Ira J. Friedman, 1949), 188. The numbers only refer to those for whom commutation and hospital money were paid or bonds executed.

In a sense, a new incentive for emigration was provided by the American Congress when it passed the Contract Labor Law in July 1864.⁹³ According to this act, agents could recruit laborers in their home countries and guarantee them jobs in the United States. At times these workers would also be offered passage tickets by the agents, to be paid for from their future wages. As inviting as these offers may have seemed though, the conditions of the deal were more often than not disadvantageous for the workers. The wages were generally low, and the laborers would be bound by contract to one particular place of work for a considerable period of time before they were allowed to search for better job opportunities.

Irish emigration was not greatly affected by the legislation regarding contract labor in the post-Famine period of emigration. While a significant number of Irish contract laborers were invited to work in the United States in the 1810s and 1820s, in the second half of the 19th century contract labor mostly concentrated on immigrants from Southern and East-Central, and Eastern Europe.

The American Civil War can also be considered a factor connected to immigration. This was proven by the fact that the recruits of the IRB would travel to the States to participate in the Civil War as a form of gaining military experience. It must be pointed out that on the one hand, there were Irish-American participants in both armies, Unionist, as well as Confederate. On the other hand, those fighting in the Unionist Army may have fought for the Union, but not for the abolition of slavery, the major ultimate outcome of the Civil War, as explained in more detail in the paragraphs below.

However, the acquired military knowledge would later come in handy during the struggle for Irish independence. The prominent Fenian, John Devoy was also faced with the need for hands-on military experience, and he was left with two choices: either take part in the Civil War or sign up with the French Foreign Legion, which is what he opted for.⁹⁴ Altogether around 200,000 Irish immigrants fought in the Civil War (second only to German immigrants), within the ranks of both armies. In the first two years Irish recruits came mostly from among earlier immigrants, who pledged their loyalty to the Union or Confederacy depending on which state they had settled in. Since the majority of Irish immigrants lived in the North, there were more Irish fighting in the ranks of the

⁹³ Illinois Labor History Society homepage, accessed June 1, 2013, <http://illinoislaborhistory.com/education/71/241-contract-labor-law-july-4-1864-.html>.

⁹⁴ Terry Golway, *Irish Rebel - John Devoy and America's Fight for Ireland's Freedom* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 39-40.

Unionist army (this, in turn, did not imply that most Irish stood behind the Republican Party). The initial reason for participation in the Civil War to save the Union, yet a combination of high casualty rates and the adoption of the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation led to decreasing enthusiasm for war among the Irish.

In the Unionist army Irish soldiers were members of separate companies, regiments and brigades, while in the Confederate lines the Irish were treated with more suspicion and thus dispersed throughout the regiments. As the war dragged on, and more and more replacements were needed to fill the ranks of the fallen, the distinguished ethnic identities of the newly-recruited were disappearing, native and foreign-born soldiers would fight side by side in mixed companies.

The end of the second year of war brought a great need for new recruits, whereas the initial enthusiasm for volunteering had decreased to such an extent that Congress was forced to pass a draft law in 1863, the Conscription Act. The Act, however, triggered a series of bloody riots in New York, as Irish immigrants felt that conscription was concentrated on Democratic wards. The possibility of being exempted from military service upon payment of \$300 only caused further frustration, since working-class Irish immigrants could not afford this form of avoiding the participation in the Civil War.⁹⁵ Many resented how the Irish regiments were supposedly sent into battle heedlessly, and the example of the virtually annihilated Irish Brigade of General Thomas Francis Meagher at Fredericksburg immediately sprang to mind.⁹⁶

U.S. immigration rates from Ireland declined by 40% in the first two wartime years, indicating that the American Civil War was indeed a strong push-factor at first. But in the years 1863-64, immigration tripled in volume. The sky-rocketing figures can mostly be ascribed to the booming wartime labor market and to a lesser degree, the lure of bounty.

Many in the South believed that the United States was recruiting soldiers from Europe, and to counter these activities, they sent their own agents across the Atlantic. The suggestion that “any official inducements had been offered in Europe to those who had enlisted on reaching America” was categorically denied by the Secretary of State.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ This topic was used as a background to the television series ‘Copper,’ running between 2012-2013, produced by BBC America, accessed May 15, 2014, <http://www.bbcamerica.com/copper/>.

⁹⁶ Ernst, *Immigrants Life...*, 173-174.

⁹⁷ Jones, *American...*, 173.

As far as voluntary emigration was concerned, it was heavily encouraged by publicizing the high wages in the U.S. and the advantages of the Homestead Act. But official and systematic recruitment only took place once the immigrants had arrived at Castle Garden, the immigration station, where they were pointed out the possibilities of large bounties and offered various types of inducements. The case of the Irish immigrant Thomas McManus was certainly not unusual, when upon his arrival to America he immediately volunteered for military service and received \$700. He remitted half the sum to his family in Ireland and tried to justify his decision to enlist by explaining that this amount of money would be ten years' wages of an Irish laborer.⁹⁸

It was hardly possible to determine the exact number of those immigrants whose leaving Ireland was directly triggered by the opportunities which the American Civil War had to offer. A decision like the previous example most was probably the result of the interplay of numerous factors. In the same period as the Civil War was going on, Irish rural society experienced bad harvests, and a significant 65% increase in the number of evictions from estates (as compared with figures from the four years before).⁹⁹ Nonetheless, whether for personal or economic reasons, it is irrefutable that the Irish were still heading for the New World in great numbers.

One specific reason for immigration was present in all of the above-mentioned periods, namely immigration driven by political motives. In the mid-century the main trigger for Irish political immigration was the abortive revolution of the Young Ireland movement. Several of the leaders of the movement would eventually settle in the United States and continue their social and political activism. The already mentioned Thomas Francis Meagher was one of them. For his role in the revolution he was arrested in Ireland and sentenced to transportation to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), but he managed to escape to the United States. He settled in New York and later helped John Mitchel, another prominent Young Irelander, launch his newspaper, *The Citizen*, in 1854. Like Meagher, Mitchel was also arrested, sentenced and banished, after spending several years in Australia, he successfully escaped. In this journal the writers of articles strongly argued for an Irish republic, which brought them into opposition with the Catholic clergy, and drove away a great number of their readers. Two years later

⁹⁸ Miller, *Emigrants and...*, 361.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 360.

Meagher would start his own newspaper, the *Irish News*, in which he continued advocating the independence of Ireland.

In comparison with the social and economic reasons for immigration, it must be contended that political motives did not account for a particularly high percentage of causes for immigration. Throughout the 19th century, and indeed, to this day, the United States has continued to be a popular destination for political activists for whom it was made impossible to operate from their own European bases. Yet political immigrants came to the U.S. because it was a far more liberal country than their original home country had been, which, in turn meant that they could continue with their activities that would eventually reform the home countries they had left behind.

Social distribution of Irish immigrants in the U.S.

In order to understand whom the Irish-American community actually consisted of, this section will delineate the social distribution of Irish immigrants. In the Famine years these immigrants came from a more impoverished background, with fewer skills and less capital than pre-Famine immigrants. Irishmen leaving for America prior to the 1840s were generally more likely to be skilled than those who left during or after the Famine period. Miller quoted data from ship captains' charts which lent support to this claim: in 1836, 27% of the passengers were classified as artisans or craftsmen. The comparable figure in 1856 was only 18%.¹⁰⁰ However, the fact that the great majority of immigrants were unskilled was not a feature characteristic only of the Irish, but of most immigrant groups. Among the "old" immigrants, however, the largest percentage of unskilled laborers had arrived from Ireland.

With most scholars of this field one is likely to find indications that it was not the lowest ranks on the social ladder, not the poorest section of society who were the first to leave Ireland.¹⁰¹ This can be explained by the fact that during the Famine people barely had enough food to survive, let alone money needed for making their way to a port or buying a passage ticket. Many craftsmen and artisans saw their customers – mainly farmers and cottiers – emigrate *en masse* and were thus left with little choice but for themselves to leave Ireland, too. A great number of priests immigrated along with

¹⁰⁰ Miller, *Emigrants and...*, 351.

¹⁰¹ John Bodnar, *The Transplanted* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 6.

the members of their parishes so they could look after their flock in the New World, as well.

As briefly noted earlier, the number of semi-skilled, skilled or professional Irish emigrants was far below the number of unskilled laborers. Yet the industrial background to these figures was not to be ignored: in the second half of the 19th century modernization in the field of industry was in full swing. It was the introduction of new technologies, and the use of more advanced machines that characterized the latter decades of the century. In the years up to mid-century immigrants could put their skills and experiences to use in the mills and mines of New England as the processes of production were likely to be the same or similar to those used in Europe. However, after the 1880s it was becoming more and more difficult to transfer and make use of the inapt or limited skills these immigrants had. The methods and technologies used in production towards the end of the century were not merely imitations of the European versions, but were originally developed American methods and technologies, therefore European experience mattered little. Such technological progress enabled employers to use unskilled laborers where hitherto only skilled workers could be employed. Maldwyn Allen Jones stated that “[...] in the cotton manufacturing, unskilled and inexperienced immigrants could, after brief training, operate automatic looms and ring-spinning frames which took over work formerly performed by mule frames and highly trained weavers.”¹⁰²

Apart from the proportion of skilled and unskilled immigrants in the various periods of immigration, a change took place in the distribution of male and female emigrants throughout the 19th century. During the pre-Famine period the number of immigrants predominantly included single men, usually the strongest sons of their families, the ones most likely to succeed in finding a job and earning enough money necessary for the family to follow. In the Famine years a growing number of women boarded the ships, both single and accompanied by their families. This was the prevalent tendency until the 1880s when the proportion of men and women was reversed, and a higher percentage of immigrants were women.

The mean age of Irish immigrants was 24 years in all periods of immigration. Yet during and after the Famine years, an increasing number of whole families could be found on board the passenger ships. In 1846 almost half (49%) of the immigrants

¹⁰² Jones, *American...*, 217.

heading for New York were middle-aged women, elderly people or small children. The comparable figure a decade earlier was only 41%.¹⁰³ Due to the devastating nature of the Famine in the 1840s-50s more than a third of all Irish immigrants were either under the age of twenty or past fifty, which in turn meant that a significant percentage of them arrived in an enfeebled physical (and often mental) state, many were sick or permanently disabled, and would become a burden on the state.

The distribution of the immigrants according to religious belief shows that the majority of the Irish coming to America during the Famine period were Catholics and categorized immediately upon arrival as “Irish Catholics.” Protestants, who made up the quarter of the population in Ireland, represented only one-tenth of the number of immigrants.¹⁰⁴ They tended not to associate or identify themselves with their Catholic countrymen, and when referring to their place of origin, it was “Ulster” as opposed to “Ireland.” The tag “Irish Protestant” did not prove to be as prevailing as “Irish Catholic,” or as hindering, as far as employment was concerned. Irish Protestants would be more likely to blend in with the Protestant population of the U.S. and thus be able to avoid the prejudice Irish Catholics were countered with. In order to avoid the prejudice associated with the Irish Catholics the term Scots-Irish came into being.

Occupational distribution of Irish immigrants

Considering the agricultural background that most Irishmen came from, it is difficult not to wonder why farming in America was so shunned. The fact that the vast majority of Irish immigrants had crossed the Atlantic in hope of finding work specifically in urban America may seem inexplicable, but upon closer examination one can identify a number of reasons that explain this phenomenon. Part of the explanation lies in the fact that in order to take up farming one needed a certain amount of initial capital. Travelling West and buying a plot of land to cultivate required financial resources that most Irish immigrants did not have at their disposal upon their arrival.

Despite the fact that the bulk of Irish immigrants had come from rural areas of Ireland, their experience in agriculture was generally limited to growing potatoes rather than having an extensive knowledge of plant cultivation. Farming in the United States

¹⁰³ Miller, *Emigrants...*, 296.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 297.

was significantly different from working the soil in Ireland, and turning virgin soil into arable land promised to be as difficult as putting up with the loneliness of farm life. Closely connected to the solitude was the reluctance of the Irish Catholics to disperse throughout the country where there were no church communities or Catholic priests nearby. Conversely, members of the Catholic clergy were anxious to keep their flock together lest the dispersal should result in the weakening or total loss of faith. In 1856 a move to create Catholic colonies in the open spaces of the West in order to avoid Know Nothing hostility in eastern cities was most strongly opposed by Archbishop John Hughes (1797-1864) of New York.¹⁰⁵

Whether or not the traumatic experience of the Famine was the one decisive reason for not resorting to farming remains a disputable question, but it is hardly deniable that “land” became a universal Irish symbol for insecurity and suffering. Instead, Irish immigrants concentrated in urban areas of Northeast America. Until the turn of the century 60% of the Irish-born population lived in six core states: New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island.¹⁰⁶

The urban concentration of Irish immigrants was by no means accidental. In cities experiencing rapid expansion such as New York City, Boston or Chicago, immigrants found a number of areas where unskilled labor force was continuously needed. Coastline cities had their harbors to offer as a steady source of jobs. How great the constant demand for common laborers in Northeast America’s ports was, was indicated by the fact that by 1884 nearly 70% of all U.S. imports were unloaded on the docks of New York City.¹⁰⁷ Irish immigrants could be found in great numbers among the longshoremen, who were responsible for the hoisting of freight into and out of the ships’ holds, as well as in the ranks of the stevedores, dealing with the stowing of freight. Other jobs around the harbor included boatmen, watermen and ferrymen, where the Irish made up approximately three-quarters of all immigrants working in this line.¹⁰⁸ In the field of local transport Irish immigrants would be found working as carters and teamsters, many became cabmen, coachmen, conductors, and stage drivers, while some could even put to use their experience in dealing with animals and would find work

¹⁰⁵ Jones, *American...*, 122-123.

¹⁰⁶ Joel Perlman, *Ethnic Differences - Schooling and Social Structure among the Irish, Italians, Jews and Blacks in an American City 1880 - 1935* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 45.

¹⁰⁷ Page Smith, *The Rise of Industrial America* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984), 364.

¹⁰⁸ Ernst, *Immigrant...*, 71.

taking care of all the horses that participated in the local transport. Within the cities there was a wide range of different jobs that countless Irish immigrants took up, among others such were porters, bartenders, waiters, livery workers, and street-cleaners.

There were no guarantees in the line of unskilled labor, except low wages and long hours. Some chose a particular job in order to stay in the vicinity of the harbor and be near their families, others would opt for construction work, one of the most dynamic industrial sectors. Miles and miles of railroads, canals, tunnels, and waterfronts were built by immigrants predominantly of Irish birth. Dinnerstein confirmed that along the West coast the rail tracks were mostly laid down by Chinese and Mexican workmen, while in the eastern part of the United States it was first and foremost Irish laborers, alongside German immigrants, who were responsible for the expansion of the railroad network.¹⁰⁹

The fact that the majority of Irish immigrants worked in unskilled labor, is beyond dispute, yet this is not to imply that the Irish were entirely absent from other fields of work in their urban surroundings. They played an important role in local retailing and food dealing. The social significance of such small immigrant businesses is not to be underestimated: immigrant women preferred to trade with “their own” people. This can be explained in part by the use of the common language, partly it was because these basement stores were convenient places for getting together, and partly because grocers also sold European delicacies which were very popular with immigrants. Liquor comprised the main source of profit for these shop owners. The association of the Irish with drinking and liquor retailing may be stereotypical, but the Irish pub would be granted an important social role in the context of Irish political rule and Fenianism in the cities.

Retailing and running pubs were not the only skilled occupations that the Irish were disproportionately represented in, as their increasing numbers in the ranks of fire-fighters, the police force, and ultimately in Tammany Hall show. Historians Glazer and Moynihan may have slightly simplified the process of growing Irish interest in politics when claiming: “They got off the boat to find their identity waiting for them: they were to be Irish-Catholic Democrats.”¹¹⁰ Yet it can hardly be ignored that politics was an

¹⁰⁹ Dinnerstein, *Ethnic...*, 27.

¹¹⁰ Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1963), 221.

occupational field that the Irish were successful in, rose to glory, and went on to provide the United States with its first Catholic president, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, by 1960.

The Irish affiliation with the Democratic Party was rooted in the times of the French Revolution. The Federalist Party sided with England whereas the Democratic Party sympathized with the goals of France, and this distinction automatically moved the Irish to align themselves with the Democrats.

Tammany Hall was the cornerstone of Democratic power in New York and its leaders warmly welcomed foreigners, especially for their “foreign vote.” Under the leadership of the 7th President, Andrew Jackson (1767-1845), the Democratic Party offered patronage to immigrants in exchange for their votes. The fact that Jackson was of Irish parentage (albeit Irish Protestant) made Irish immigrants willing to accept the Democrats’ pledge to protect the Irish from abolitionists and evangelicals who would free the slaves and force the Irish to compete with “degraded” Black labor.¹¹¹ Irish immigrants were given key positions within their wards, where they would earn the trust and respect of their fellow countrymen. Saloons and pubs emerged as important locations in terms of political activities.

The influence of Irish social leaders was soon supported by the growing number of Irish immigrants in the police force. By 1855 approximately a quarter of the New York police officers were of Irish origin.¹¹² New York’s “foreign wards” would almost exclusively be patrolled by Irish policemen.¹¹³ If Tammany Hall could rely on the police force, so could they rely on the support of fire-fighters who were also to a great degree Irish and nurtured close connections to the pubs and people in their neighborhoods.

In several urban centers along the Atlantic coast, parallel to the rise of Irish political power emerged the practice of boss-rule, most notably in New York City. “Boss-rule” implied the monopolization of political leadership and was based on working-class immigrant values: loyalty and mutual assistance. A political boss would provide for the daily needs of his immigrant communities, in exchange he could

¹¹¹ Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, ed., *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 112.

¹¹² Ernst, *Immigrant...*, 216.

¹¹³ On a tangent, the concept of an Irish policeman was here to stay, as highlighted by the following J. D. Salinger quote from the short story *Seymore: An Introduction*: “[...] our Bessie, when we were children, habitually took her knottiest problems to the nearest thing we had in New York to a Druidic oracle - the Irish traffic cop.” J. D. Salinger, *Seymore: An Introduction* (New York: Penguin, 1983), 138.

mobilize a large number of voters when necessary, and have them act according to the interests of Tammany Hall. In order to be more effective, many orators made use of the subject of Irish independence and other anti-English themes that would move the audience. The official take-over of Tammany Hall took place in the year 1874 when Protestant boss William M. Tweed (1823-1878) lost out to “Honest John” Kelly (1822-1886). Following that election William R. Grace (1832-1904) became the first Irish-American (in fact, the first Irish-born and Roman Catholic) mayor of New York City in 1880. Five years later Hugh O’Brien (1827-1895) was elected mayor of Boston. Al Smith (1873-1944) was to become the first Irish presidential candidate in 1928, only to suffer defeat from Herbert Hoover. The long line of succession of Irish Tammany Hall bosses ended with the mayoral victory of Italian-born Fiorello LaGuardia (1882-1947) in the middle of the 20th century.

Apart from party politics, Irish immigrants took an active part in trade unionism. While immigrants were not immediately embraced by American labor organizations, by the 1880s nearly all immigrant groups could be found within the ranks of the unions. “Old” immigrants, including the Irish, were more likely to be interested in organizing labor as they had experience in unionism brought from their home country. Before long leaders of the major American unions realized that Irish immigrants could be attracted to join their organizations if they promoted the cause of Irish independence. Both the Central Labor Union and the Knights of Labor managed to recruit a number of Irish workers into their ranks by promoting the “Irish cause.” The American Federation of Labor claimed relatively few Irish members, as the union was dominated by skilled craftsmen who would eventually encourage the restriction of unlimited immigration in fear of mass cheap labor. An Irish addition to trade unionism was “boycotting,” a tool to pressure employers into accepting labor demands, which the Irish made often made use of (as an example, New York experienced considerable boycotting in the 1880s by Irish dock workers).¹¹⁴

This was the general structure of the Irish-American community in the second half of the 19th century which served as a backdrop to numerous Irish-American nationalists, in particular, the Fenians. The Irish-American community was still keen on news from the old country, still nurtured the same deep-rooted negative feelings towards Britain, and still tended to support the struggle for independence. But the Irish-

¹¹⁴ Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, 90.

American community was also changing. As they began climbing up on the ladder of social status, more and more Irish-Americans were entering the ranks of the middle-class, and every subsequent generation tended to have a higher level of education than their parents. This, in turn, also meant that the types of support for the Irish cause was transforming on a wide scale. While for some, support meant actively organizing an armed assault on Canada, or working out a plan to bring down British ships in New York's Harbor with the help of a submarine, many would rather opt for sending financial help. One such person who understood the various forms of support and how to elicit, then use them best was John Devoy.

Chapter 4 - John Devoy – a transatlantic life

John Devoy was arguably one of the most controversial and complex characters in the Irish struggle for independence. He spent his entire life balancing between the revolutionary and the constitutional, the legal and illegal. He represented the link between the civilian and military, the peaceful and violent approach to reaching his ultimate goal: a free and independent Ireland. His relentless work ensured that the struggle for freedom in Ireland would have the moral as well as the financial support of the Irish-American community. Monetary support helped fund organizations such as Clan na Gael and the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Devoy's line of work included military recruitment, organization of revolutionary activities, gunrunning, collecting donations. He was also an immensely prolific writer, journalist, and editor, in short: an all-round Fenian. He was called a "fire-and-brimstone revolutionary," a "conspirator," "the greatest of the Fenians" by Pádraig Pearse, and "the forgotten hero" by Co. Kildare local historians.¹¹⁵ Devoy saw himself as a "Fenian rebel," even including the term in the title of his memoir.

Early life

Devoy was born on September 3, 1842, in Kill, Co. Kildare, Ireland, the son of William Devoy (1807–1880) and Elizabeth Dunne. His family was descendant from the Devoy Clan, which was one of the Seven Septs of Leix almost annihilated in the massacre at the Rath of Mullaghmast.¹¹⁶ John was the third of eight children. The family lived in the same thatched cottage that his mother, Elizabeth had been born in,¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ These terms are quoted from the following: biographer Terry Golway, editors of *Devoy's Post Bag*, William O'Brien and Desmond Ryan, Pádraig Pearse, and Co. Kildare historians James Durney, Mario Corrigan, and Seamus Curran, respectively.

¹¹⁶ Devoy, *Recollections*, 391.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 377.

on a half-acre plot of land. In his *Recollections* Devoy wrote fondly about the farm and the cottage:

Otherwise the little house where I spent the first seven years of my life was much the same as the ordinary Irish cottage. Inside, my father had constructed partitions to provide small rooms for a steadily growing family. He was a very handy man, a good cobbler who mended all our shoes and made all the tables, chairs and stools himself. My earliest recollection of that little house is seeing a crowd of men in corduroy knee breeches, with pipes in their mouths, sitting around the fire while my father read the Nation for them - every word of it – and hearing them every now and then exclaim: “Bloody wars!” That was the common expression at the time. He was the only man in the neighborhood who got the Nation and was a good reader.¹¹⁸

As can be inferred from this passage, his father was an intelligent man, however, half an acre was hardly enough land to support his family. He worked odd jobs, including breaking stone for road construction, as his income was crucial to the family’s survival. Yet nationalism was also vital to Devoy’s father, and much more than just a passive pastime. In his twenties, William Devoy had participated in the Catholic Emancipation and the Anti-Tithe Movements, as well as in Father Mathew’s great Temperance Movement.¹¹⁹ Later, William “was the Repeal Warden for the District (the Barony of South Salt) and devoted all his spare time (and much, of his working time, as well) to the collection of the “Repeal Rent” a shilling a year from each man [...].”¹²⁰

Nationalism in Devoy’s family ran deep even before William’s time: One of John Devoy’s great-uncles had led a party of rebels in 1798 and sent warning to the Kildare men instructing them not to accept the invitation to surrender their arms at the Curragh Rath on a promise of immunity.

Yet it was precisely nationalism that jeopardized the livelihood of the Devoy family in Kill: his father mistakenly sent his report as Repeal Warden in the envelope addressed to the Lord Mayo instead of a mundane drainage bid, which created considerable difficulties and forced William to move his family to Dublin. This caused William Devoy to caution his children against open support of nationalism.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 377-78.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 377. Father Theobald Mathew (1790-1856), Irish teetotalist, temperance reformer; further information can be found under this Princeton website, accessed February 10, 2014.

http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Theobald_Mathew_%28temperance_reformer%29.html.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

John Devoy's formal education began in the National School in Kill when he was six years old. The same building exists today and is still used as a school facility (Fig. 4.).

In those early years it was discovered that John's eyesight was defective. He showed signs of short-sightedness, which progressively worsened with age. Devoy offered an explanation in his *Recollections* as to why the teacher made him sit closer to the alphabet card: "After that I made rapid progress, but at that time giving spectacles to a little boy or girl was never thought of. If I had got them then and been coaxed to wear them perhaps I shouldn't have so much difficulty in writing this after three operations (two major and one minor) for cataracts."¹²¹ From 1840 onwards, he went to O'Connell's School in Richmond Street, the first Christian Brothers' school started in Dublin. He attended catechism classes at the Marlborough Street Model School. Indeed, young Devoy had a knack for getting into confrontations with the schoolmaster. On one occasion he kicked Superintendent Sheehy in the shin for beating him with a cane because the Superintendent – unjustly – refused to accept Devoy's "absent ticket" (the note written by his mother confirming that John had been suffering from "lightness in the head") as an explanation as to why he did not attend school for three days. In a previous, yet more revealing incident, the same superintendent gave John a blow on the head with a slab of slate because John refused to sing *God Save the Queen*. He was expelled from school for kicking Sheehy, and Devoy had no fond memories of him: "I vowed that when I grew big enough I would lick him, but he died before I was able."¹²²

Nonetheless, Devoy's educational experience ensured that he would become quite an accomplished scholar in his life. His father provided him with solid religious education, and John, in turn, worked hard on his literary education, reading extensively, yet probably also keenly aware of the superior literary qualities of the Young Irelanders.¹²³ This was not to say that John Devoy did not have other past times. On Sundays instead of sitting through three masses at church, (as was the habit of his father) John used to go on long walks with a group of boys who included two brothers, the Woods brothers, who would sing patriotic songs.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Devoy, *Recollections*, 378.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 381-82.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 283.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 380.

Early Fenian years

John Devoy developed an interest in learning the Irish language, he spent 2 shillings out of the 10 shillings of his first wages (which he received at the age of 14 for working as a monitor at the school) on two Irish language books. He started to attend Irish classes, taught by Martin A. O'Brennan held at the editorial rooms of the offices of the *Nation*, made available by A. M. Sullivan. Devoy summarizes his experiences with these Irish classes as follows: "That little Gaelic class was started by a few young men and boys who thought they were initiating a movement to revive the language, but many of them dropped away after a time because they got too busy in Fenianism."¹²⁵

Apart from Devoy's attempt to learn Irish, this was where he first became involved in Fenianism and took the Fenian oath. The oath would continue to be an integral part of Devoy's life, as he spent the next few years swearing in numerous young men with the following text:

I [name] do solemnly swear allegiance to the Irish Republic, now virtually established; that will take up arms at a moment's notice to defend its integrity and independence; that yield implicit obedience to the command of my superior officers, and finally I take this oath in the spirit of a true soldier of liberty. So help me God.¹²⁶

In this period the National Petition Movement was active in Ireland, which Devoy described as the real beginnings of Fenianism in Dublin.¹²⁷ They were collecting signatures to elicit a plebiscite on self-determination in Ireland, mirroring the campaign of *The Times* calling for the Italian people's right to have a say in their country's affairs. One evening, the Fenian T. D. Sullivan persuaded the young men attending Gaelic class to add their signatures to the National Petition. William Devoy, upon hearing of his son's signing was less than pleased. He understood just how easy it was to draw such young men deeper and deeper into nationalism, which had left himself with bitter feelings. Devoy recorded the following:

My father, who had had a sad experience from neglecting his own interests for those of the Repeal and Young Ireland Movements, told me I was making a mistake in throwing myself too early into the National Movement, and that my first duty was to finish my

¹²⁵ Ibid., 264.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 272.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 385.

education. He was right. I ruined my future chances in life by throwing myself too early into it.¹²⁸

The last two sentences indicated the wisdom of hindsight, yet this quote clearly showed the conflict between a worried parent and an over-ambitious young man who was ready to devote all his energy to Fenianism. Still, at age 19, Devoy saw the situation in a different light: he was determined to become a Fenian, despite his father's objections, and therefore ran away from home. His aim was to join the Zouaves (French army light infantry regiments) and obtain some military training. Although foreigners could not join the Zouaves, he thought if he managed to procure some letters of introduction from prominent Irishmen, they would ensure his joining. In spite of his thorough preparation there were unexpected obstacles: he soon discovered that he could only sign up in Paris; and that he could be admitted to the French army only through the Foreign Legion, which he eventually signed up for on May 2, 1861.¹²⁹

In the Legion, Devoy was assigned to the engineering corps and dispatched to Algeria as part of the French colonial garrison in North Africa. In spite of the fact that the primary reason for John's becoming a Legionnaire was to gain military training, his battalion saw hardly any action. A year later John left the Legion, though whether he was discharged or whether he deserted, remained rather unclear.¹³⁰ Nonetheless, the year that he spent in the Foreign Legion was not useless, as it provided him with a good opportunity to learn French, a skill which Devoy would exploit to full advantage in negotiations in later years.

On his return to Dublin he met with James Stephens, who immediately interviewed him about his knowledge of French and his readings in Irish literature. Stephens ordered Devoy to the town of Naas, (20 miles outside Dublin) where he took up a job at the Watkins Brewery office in town. Devoy was one of the junior Fenian officers who were in charge of training Fenian recruits. However, he was deeply involved with Fenian recruitment within the British army. In Devoy's reckoning some 60% of the army were of Irish blood and the aim was to turn them over to the Fenian cause, so that the expected rebellion could be won without actual bloodshed.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Ibid., 385.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 386.

¹³⁰ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 42-43.

¹³¹ Ibid., 43-44.

The Fenian Rebellion, which eventually took place in 1867, failed mainly due to delays, caused in part by extreme hesitancy by Fenian Chief James Stephens. However, Devoy was not involved in the rising itself, since he had been arrested in the course of a large-scale Fenian round-up in 1866.

The recruitment and organizing activities were at its peak in preparation of the announced rising. James Stephens created the IRB Executive in 1864, mirroring the Fenian Brotherhood in America. Yet it was precisely the American aspect of the Fenian movement that caused major disruption, and possibly, the failure of the rising. Stephens counted on American military as well as financial support. While some modest military support was provided in the form of Irish military officers who traveled over to Ireland after the Civil War, the situation was made a lot more complicated due to the split within the American Fenian movement. Stephens traveled to America to coordinate the promised support.

Upon his return to Ireland in 1864 Stephens announced that the “next year is the year of action.”¹³² The first half of 1865 only saw further recruitment and organizing, but for Devoy personally it also brought a promotion: in October 1865 he was made “Chief organizer of the British Army” in Ireland. Not only did this role include slipping in and out of the British Army camps unnoticed and swearing in soldiers under the noses of their superiors, but this task was made increasingly difficult by the number of informants who infiltrated the movement. Not for the last time the Fenian movement was described as “honeycombed by spies and indiscreet people who are not spies.”¹³³ The informants regularly reported to the authorities on the planned rising, which eventually resulted in the raiding of their unofficial headquarters, the offices of the *Irish People*, arresting everyone present. Devoy was not among them, yet his work at the Brewery in Naas also raised suspicion with the constabulary. A warrant was issued for Devoy’s arrest based on a letter seized at the raid in the *Irish People*’s office in which he criticized the Naas parish priest for denouncing the organization.¹³⁴

Devoy was informed by a friend, John Podesta, who worked in the printing office of the official police bulletin, the *Hue and Cry*, that his name would appear on the

¹³² Devoy, *Recollections*, 56.

¹³³ Devoy’s *Post Bag* Vol. I, 346.

¹³⁴ Devoy, *Recollections*, 69-70.

list of those for whom arrest warrants had been issued in the September 29 issue of the bulletin. This made John Devoy a wanted man.¹³⁵

While he was forced to continue his recruiting activities under the constant threat of arrest, he also brought the people in his private life into danger, primarily his fiancée Eliza. During his time spent working in Naas in the brewery he met a young woman named Elisabeth Kenny (Eliza). It was not long before they got engaged, and though living on the run made their meetings more risky, John continued to be a welcome guest at the Kenny house.¹³⁶ Their relationship had a deeper impact on them than they could possibly have predicted: long after John was jailed and later forced to move to the U.S., Eliza still waited for him to contact her, which he, however, failed to do. Devoy, on the other hand, never got married, or rather, he tied his life to the Irish cause. Nevertheless, life still held some surprises for them in the form of an emotional reunion some 60 years later, when Devoy visited Ireland for the last time.

In 1865 Devoy was in the midst of preparing for the announced Fenian Rising. Yet the Rising was postponed by James Stephens for the following year 1866, then once more postponed to 1867, until it finally took place – and failed – in 1867. However, the event took place without Devoy.

Namely, on November 11, 1865, James Stephens was arrested along with fellow Fenian Charles J. Kickham on the basis of a letter that revealed the American connection in preparation of a Fenian Rising.¹³⁷ He was soon rescued from prison in a mission that Devoy also helped organize and execute. Further delay was caused by the split in the American side of the Fenian movement resulting in a considerable lack of weapons, which the IRB had counted on in order to attempt a successful insurrection. Meanwhile those Irish-American officers, who did actually cross the Atlantic to lend their expertise to the Rising, grew restless over the postponement which was primarily due to the lack of guns previously promised by the U.S. side. The authorities intensified their efforts to prevent the rebellion by suspending Habeas Corpus on February 17, 1866.

Several days after the suspension of Habeas Corpus, Devoy, while on the run, was summoned by Stephens and participated in a serious, all-night deliberation over

¹³⁵ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 48.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹³⁷ Devoy, *Recollections*, 70.

whether or not to strike immediately. At this meeting the Irish-American military men, based on their experience of massacres of the Southern battlefields, ruled out an instant rebellion as there were not enough rifles at hand. Devoy, though, argued that the situation was desperate, and perhaps desperate means ought to be considered. He suggested raiding army installations in Dublin and Athlone.¹³⁸ Yet the IRB's top command took a vote, and while Devoy and two others cast their vote *for*, four others voted *against*. A heavily disappointed Devoy walked back to the pub where his staff were waiting, announced the bad news and spent the entire following day explaining to lower-ranked members the changed situation. He gathered with fellow members in the back room of the Pilsworth public house on James Street when they were informed that there were detectives outside the place. Several of the turncoat soldiers managed to slip out unnoticed (they would have been much more seriously punished had they, as members of the military been caught), but it was too late for John Devoy, and he was placed under arrest on February 22, 1866 (Fig. 5.).

For Devoy this meant he was forced to step out of the shadows as his identity and face became publicly known. His first official photograph was taken (Fig. 6.), and he was sent to Kilmainham Gaol in Dublin,¹³⁹ then after several weeks of processing, to Portland Prison in England, one of several institutions he was locked up in over the next five years.¹⁴⁰ In prison he would meet up with other notable Fenians, obtain as much information as possible about outside affairs and generally, keep focused on the cause. His trial came on February 19, 1867.

In his *Recollections*, Devoy assigned an entire chapter to the antagonistic relationship between the Fenians and the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic Church strictly prohibited any membership of an oath-bound organization as this would clash with the Catholic code of obedience to the Church. And despite the fact that confessions – and absolution – were fundamental elements of their religion, Fenians were denied the right to absolution, and thus, the sacraments, if they confessed to having taken the Fenian oath. Devoy's view of the Church's attitude can be understood from the following quote: "The Fenians were accused of being anti-clerical, but it was the Clericals who were anti-Fenian. And, there can be no doubt that the constant

¹³⁸ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 55.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 55-56.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 65.

controversies and the continued altar denunciations were fast developing an anti-clerical feeling and several Fenians were temporarily estranged from the Church.”¹⁴¹

Devoy offered descriptions of various problematic encounters he had had with priests during his time in prison. Regular visits by a prison chaplain named Father Cody were part of Devoy’s routine, and he was looking forward to the sacrament, as it had been several years since his last confession and absolution. The priest first promised not to ask Devoy about his Fenian affiliation, then did so anyway, to which Devoy refused to answer and they made out another date when the confession would be taken. This scenario was repeated on five consecutive days until Devoy eventually said the following: “Father Cody, I won’t argue politics on my knees any more.”¹⁴²

In another incident Devoy confessed to a Father Zanetti to having used violence in an attempt to escape from prison. Devoy recorded the following dialogue: “Father Zanetti said: ‘I am an officer of the prison and it is my duty to see the rules enforced.’ Then I stood up and said: ‘Father Zanetti, I came to you as a priest of the Catholic Church. I don’t make any confessions to an officer of an English prison.’”¹⁴³

Episodes such as those previously described, along with public statements such as the following given by Bishop Moriarty of Kerry (“Hell is not hot enough nor eternity long enough to punish the Fenians”)¹⁴⁴ mirrored the Church’s extremely negative attitude to Fenianism. Bearing these in mind, it was no wonder how impressed and honored Devoy was by the change in the Church’s attitude years later, especially after the 1916 Rising. Eventually, open Catholic support was shown for the drive for an independent Ireland, as proven by the 1919 Irish Race Convention held in Philadelphia, which was openly endorsed by Cardinal Gibbons and with other prominent Catholic bishops attending – a feat unheard of even just a decade earlier.¹⁴⁵

But to link the story back to Devoy’s incarceration, in an era when Irishmen prided themselves on the refusal to accept the validity of an English court Devoy not only stood trial but even dutifully answered the judge when asked how he pleaded:

¹⁴¹ Devoy, *Recollections*, 120.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹⁴⁵ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 251-52.

“Guilty, my Lord.”¹⁴⁶ This statement would return to haunt him in later years. In a letter to Devoy, Charles Kickham criticized him for pleading guilty. Such answers showed the court that Devoy acknowledged it. However, Kickham conceded that the guilty plea had been sanctioned by Charles Gavan Duffy (1816–1903) “for the purpose of effecting (your) escape in order to be out for the fight.”¹⁴⁷

Devoy did not spend his entire sentence behind bars, as he was released early, after serving five years. Upon pressure from Ireland in relation to reports of the squalid prison conditions the Fenians were forced to endure, Gladstone relented and agreed to the immediate freeing of a number of prisoners, among them John Devoy and Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa.¹⁴⁸ The terms of Devoy’s release dictated that he leave Ireland forever, which he actually did, accompanied by Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa and three fellow Fenians on board the *Cuba* earning them the collective name of “the *Cuba* Five.” A picture was taken of the freed Fenian prisoners when they arrived in New York in 1871, including John Devoy and Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa (Fig. 7.).

Irish-American Fenianism

In order to understand the circumstances that awaited Devoy and the other exiles in New York upon their arrival, it was necessary to first examine the planned invasion of Canada. This invasion was alternatively described as “doomed,” “harebrained,” “a foolish endeavor,” or downright “absurd.”¹⁴⁹ Yet as controversial as it may have been, it was an honest attempt by the Irish-American Fenians to advance the Irish cause by throwing an unexpected punch at Britain. There was, however, disagreement within the leadership as to when best to start the assault. The two factions, led by John O’Mahony and Roberts-Sweeny respectively, could not agree on one single plan. Eventually it was the O’Mahony-side that “drew first blood” in April 1866, when his army made the first move. Their preparations were anything but subtle. In fact, they included open drilling in Pittsburgh as well as public speculations regarding the date of attack in *The New York Herald*. Seen in this light, it was hardly surprising that the authorities were not caught

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 66.

¹⁴⁷ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. I, 163, letter from Charles Kickham to Devoy dated April 29, 1876.

¹⁴⁸ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 65.

¹⁴⁹ Devoy, *Recollections*, 271. and 239.

off guard. The action was closely followed by a number of interested parties, including the Canadian and American authorities, as well as the British Embassy in Washington.¹⁵⁰ O'Mahony's men made bold advances on their steamer across the border, however, when they were faced with the troops and the Fenian steamer was seized, they quickly withdrew. This meant for Roberts-Sweeny that their attack, originally designed for winter, had to be brought forward, with plans hastily altered. Throughout the month of May, Fenian troops began to filter through to the Canadian side of the border, yet the planned offensive was to be rendered impossible by the numerous informants who had infiltrated the Fenian ranks. Initial success over the Canadian forces was soon overshadowed by the decision of the Andrew Johnson (1808-1875) administration to intervene and instruct the U.S. troops to make the arrests. Thus ended the failed 1866 Fenian invasion of Canada, only to be followed by another attempt in 1870, with a similarly "ignominious end."¹⁵¹

The Canadian fiasco left the Irish-American Fenians on both sides of the Atlantic deeply demoralized. In this sense, it was quite understandable that, when the *Cuba* arrived in New York with five Irish rebels recently released from prison on board, these individuals would be called upon to step into the leadership vacuum so they might invigorate the organization.

Upon his arrival in New York, Devoy found that, in terms of Fenianism, the Irish-American community was in considerable disarray, and he himself was urged by his Boston friend and ex-Fenian John Boyle O'Reilly (1844-1890) to leave nationalism behind and go into business instead. Yet Devoy decided to stay the course he had been following prior to his exile, he found a job as a clerk with a sugar trader on Wall Street and joined an Irish-American nationalist organization called Clan na Gael. Clan na Gael, as already mentioned, was an oath-bound New York-based organization whose name translated from the Gaelic as "Family of the Irish," founded by Jerome Collins (1841-1881). Collins was the meteorological and science editor of *The New York Herald*, and later joined – and perished in – a fateful expedition to find the North Pole.¹⁵² John Devoy became active, not only within the Clan but was also involved in the International Workingmen's Association.

¹⁵⁰ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 60.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 57-65.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 72.

Mission impossible: the *Catalpa* rescue

By 1874 Devoy managed to attain a better job, working as a journalist at *The New York Herald*. In the same year, 1874, he received a letter from a Fenian convict called James Wilson (1836-1921), who was incarcerated in Fremantle prison in Western Australia. This letter would have a profound impact on Devoy's life and change his Fenian career forever.

Wilson wrote to Devoy from the Fremantle prison colony in Western Australia. He was one of six Irish Fenian prisoners sentenced for deportation to a prison colony, and in his letter Wilson begged Devoy for help. From Devoy's point of view, this letter was possibly more than just a simple call for help. It was also deeply personal since it had been Devoy himself who had sworn Wilson in as a Fenian, while Wilson was still a soldier in the British Army in Ireland. When Devoy and Wilson were eventually arrested and sentenced in 1866, Wilson's sentence was much harsher than Devoy's since he had become a Fenian while serving in her Majesty's army and was thus deemed a traitor by Crown authorities (this was already pointed out in regard to Devoy's arrest at the Pilsworth pub). From a moral perspective, this mission may have been John Devoy's way of "doing right by Wilson" (see James Wilson and the other five Fremantle Fenians in Fig. 8.). The letter Devoy received was written by Wilson and smuggled out of the colony to make its way across the ocean and onto Devoy's New York desk. It read as follows:

Dear friend, remember, this is a voice from the tomb. For is not this a living tomb? In the tomb it is only a man's body [that] is good for worms, but in this living tomb the canker worm of care enters the very soul. Think that we have been nearly six years in this living tomb since our first arrest and that it is impossible for mind or body to withstand the continual strain that is upon them. One or the other must give way. It is to aid us in this sad strait that I now, in the name of my comrades and myself, ask you to aid us ... We ask you to aid us with your tongue and pen, with your brain and intellect, with your ability and influence. We think if you forsake us, then we are friendless indeed.¹⁵³

For Devoy it became a mission he simply had to fulfill, but he did not possess the resources to undertake such a task alone and therefore, enlisted the support of the

¹⁵³ James Wilson's letter is quoted in several authoritative works on Devoy and the *Catalpa* rescue, this excerpt is quoted in Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 74; while the complete letter can be found in Philip Fennell and Marie King, eds, *John Devoy's Catalpa Expedition* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 193.

Clan. The mid-1870s were not the ideal period for mounting such a rescue attempt, as there was a significant economic crisis in the United States.¹⁵⁴ It took considerable effort and convincing on Devoy's part to bring Clan na Gael on board, with his rescue plan which was simple enough: "get me a boat and a crew, he said in so many words, and I'll bring back our men from Australia."¹⁵⁵

The fact that he had a lot to prove was not lost on Devoy, but he excelled in organizing this mission. As far as the financial aspect was concerned, the entire project was expected to cost about twelve thousand dollars, still, this was significantly more than the organization could afford. Devoy worked ceaselessly to persuade an extremely reluctant Clan na Gael to finance a rescue expedition to save the six incarcerated Fenians. The initial idea was to enlist the monetary help of a great number of Fenian branches, but due to the afore-mentioned financial difficulties of the country, this action brought in a mere seven thousand dollars. Devoy managed to convince the organization to divert the missing amount of money from the revolutionary fund, with the promise that the mission would actually be self-financing through whaling, thus the funds would be repaid. However, this idea proved to be unfeasible, when – after the Irish Fenians had been successfully rescued – whaling on the homeward journey was abandoned so as to shorten the travel time. As far as covering costs was concerned, it was expected that whaling would help finance this mission. Historian Ormonde D. P. Waters summarized the whaling mission as follows:

Whales were caught, and 210 barrels of sperm oil were shipped home from Fayal. As they travelled further away from their traditional Western Atlantic whaling grounds, Captain Anthony abandoned the pretence of whaling until the rescue had been effected. On the return journey, sperm whales were seen occasionally, and the boats were twice lowered, but the rescued men were impatient to proceed. They pleaded that they might be put ashore without any delay, and after a day or two it was decided to yield to their wishes.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ This fact was generally not pointed out by authors in this field, except for Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 74., as explained in detail in Philip Fennell, "History into Myth: The Catalpa's Long Voyage," *New Hibernia Review*, Vol. 9, Number 1, Earrach/Spring 2005, 77-94.

¹⁵⁵ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 74.

¹⁵⁶ Author's email correspondence with historian Ormonde D. P. Waters; dated January 25, 2014.

Following the arrival of the rescued Fenians, John Devoy and James Reynolds, one of his confidants, went to New Bedford in February 1877 and made a liberal settlement with the crew.

As for the afterlife of the whaling ship, the *Catalpa* was presented to Captain Anthony, John T. Richardson, and Henry C. Hathaway, though her value was not great. She was eventually sold and altered into a coal barge, before being condemned in Belize, British Honduras (Fig. 9.).¹⁵⁷

For Devoy the organization of this rescue mission meant a huge challenge, both on a personal, as well as professional level. On the one hand, he had to juggle all organizational work with his day-time job, reporting for the newspaper *The New York Herald*.¹⁵⁸ This was also a great opportunity to establish himself within the Fenian community. On the other hand, it was a tremendous chance to strike out against Britain.

The plan was as elaborate as it was daring: Devoy had the Clan buy the *Catalpa* vessel which needed to be converted into a whaling ship. Along with a few other organizers, Devoy organized a crew with only the head, Captain George Anthony (1843-1918) among the few who were aware of the true purpose of the mission. With the help of Florida politician (and sworn-in Fenian) Simon Barclay Conover (1840-1908), he arranged forged papers falsely stating considerable wealth for Clan-member John Breslin.¹⁵⁹ Breslin's role would be that of the mission's on-site manager. Unbeknownst to Devoy, there were two other rescue missions under way, one organized from Dublin, the other by local Fenians. The complex task of identifying and then coordinating all these rescue efforts so they would assist each other, and not cause collective failure, also became Breslin's responsibility.

In short, it was a tremendous gamble for Devoy, nonetheless, it proved to be a success. On Easter Monday, 1876 (that year it fell on April 17) the rescue of the six Fenian prisoners was successfully executed, albeit not without complications. The

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ In fact, throughout Devoy's active life he was burning the candle at both ends, devoting as much time, or even more, to Irish affairs, as to his job. In a letter to James Reynolds Devoy explained why he could not meet Reynolds: "After the three years' severe lesson I have got I must be very careful to give my employers no cause for fault finding. They are all old Herald men who like me, but have a notion that I am likely to neglect business for Irish affairs." O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 307.

¹⁵⁹ This goes to show just how deeply the Fenians had penetrated American politics, namely S. B. Conover was a senior senator from Florida, he was a descendant of Irish Presbyterians who had participated in the 1798 rising, and he had also taken the Fenian oath, as described in Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 79-80.

escape was almost made impossible by the approach of the patrol vessel *Georgette*, whose captain demanded to be allowed to board the *Catalpa* to determine whether she was carrying convicts on board. Luckily, the boarding attempt was prevented. Once safely en route for home, it was precisely the rescued Irish Fenians who ruined Devoy's carefully compiled plans. As referred to previously, they refused to allow the captain to spend any more time on whaling and demanded that they head straight for New York (instead of Florida, as originally arranged by Devoy).¹⁶⁰

The full account was made public in *The New York Times* in August, 1876.¹⁶¹ Just how meticulous Devoy's planning was can be seen from this quote from one of William Carroll's (1835-1926) letters to Devoy dated June 19, 1876:

When do you expect an arrival at Fernandina? Should we not have someone there on the look out? The Collector of that Port is a special friend of Conover, and we can I think have him board the vessel, and take charge of our friends on their arrival, sending them north by steamer from Jacksonville, in case our ship is not coming directly to N.B.¹⁶²

Again it was highlighted that the organization involved a long list of people as varied as seamen, Fenians, and politicians.

For Devoy the safe return of the six Fenian prisoners primarily meant two things: firstly, it was a relief and cause for celebration, and celebrated it was indeed; Tammany Hall had the streets of New York cleared for a ceremonial procession. Secondly, there were lingering financial questions that remained disputed, which Devoy was called upon to clear up. Because the rescued prisoners insisted upon their immediate returning and abandoning the hunt for whales, the expected return of investment never materialized. Devoy had to answer to the Clan in regard to the missing funds. Moreover, he was faced with criticism by some of the rescued prisoners themselves: they were promised to receive a sum of \$5,000, though only about half of that money was ever paid to them. One prisoner in particular, Martin Hogan, called Devoy upon his promise, yet the discussion ended in a noisy (and on Hogan's side,

¹⁶⁰ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 82-84.

¹⁶¹ "The Escaped Fenians.; The Story Told by the Captain of the *Catalpa* a Vessel Engaged for Whaling Purposes," *The New York Times*, August 20, 1876.

¹⁶² O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. I, 186.

drunken) dispute, with Hogan placed under arrest.¹⁶³ This unclear financial situation and the dissatisfied disgruntlement of some of the rescued men was taxing on Devoy, but support was offered by his colleague Dr. Carroll in a letter dated January 11, 1877: “We will see this business ended by rendering ‘honour to whom honour is due.’ Don’t think now of resigning in the face of the enemy. The cause cannot afford to ‘swap horses while crossing *this* stream.’”¹⁶⁴ Fifteen years later Devoy would be contacted by Captain Anthony who asked for Devoy’s photograph, as he was compiling an account of the events along with the photos of all those related to the *Catalpa*.¹⁶⁵

As far as the *Catalpa* rescue mission’s legacy was concerned, the centennial of the *Catalpa* rescue was lavishly celebrated on Easter Saturday and Sunday, April 17-18, 1976. Historian Ormonde D. P. Waters and his team organized a Centenary Concert of music, song, dance, and poetry at the Octagon Theatre in the University of Western Australia, with the help of the Western Australia Folk Federation. This brought the *Catalpa* story to the attention of the Australian public.

In 2006 the old Fremantle Prison organized an exhibition entitled “Escape! Fremantle to Freedom,” which ran in the old prison from September 18 to December 3, 2006. Later the exhibition went on tour to Geraldton, Bunbury, Albany, The Australian National Maritime Museum, and The Port Arthur Historic Site, where it closed on February 28, 2008. It was a huge undertaking, it involved bringing together exhibits from both Ireland and America, as well as local material, including some items owned by Waters.¹⁶⁶ Further information and images about the *Catalpa* memorial can be found in Appendix 7.

Stepping out into the mainstream: The New Departure

Meanwhile, John Devoy was also responsible for another great tactical step: upon a proposal from Dublin, the IRB and Clan na Gael agreed to elect a joint international committee to coordinate organizational efforts for a revolution. This became the Revolutionary Directory, with three members from the Clan and the IRB

¹⁶³ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 84-86.

¹⁶⁴ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. I, 229.

¹⁶⁵ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. II, 334.

¹⁶⁶ Author’s email correspondence with historian Ormonde D. P. Waters; dated January 13, 2014.

respectively, and one member delegated by the Irish exiles in Australia. Devoy was one of the three Clan members. For Clan na Gael, this meant that they were to be seen as the main representative organization of the Irish-American community, while for Devoy, this meant he could also exert a certain level of control over the international organizational activities. In Dr. Carroll's words: "[...] hitherto all kinds of *so-called* Irish Societies have held ground to the exclusion of the only *really Irish* Society of which I have any knowledge."¹⁶⁷

In the late 1870s Irish-American nationalism took a decidedly different turn, as Devoy made two new and highly significant acquaintances, both through his long-time Fenian friend at *The New York Herald*, James O'Kelly (1845-1916). One of these people was one Charles Stewart Parnell, an Irish politician with an American family background, who had already grown impatient with the Irish politician, Isaac Butt's (1813-1879), slow and non-offensive approach within the Westminster parliament. The other person, equally unlikely partner and future figure head of the Land Reform movement, was Michael Davitt (Fig. 10.), whom Devoy first met in his office when Davitt wandered in looking for O'Kelly.¹⁶⁸

These encounters took place in the summer of 1878, a year that was the beginning of an extremely fruitful chapter in Devoy's life, when he became instrumental in helping to create a pan-Irish nationalist political campaign (with the social justice agenda of land reform), which embraced both the militant and constitutional strands in Irish nationalism. The next few years reinforced Devoy's reputation as a revolutionary who was ready to make compromises if it meant furthering the Irish cause. This pan-Irish nationalist front which Devoy helped create became known as the "New Departure," and it enhanced his reputation as a man able to "think outside the box," a pragmatic revolutionary capable of breaking away from "the pure flame" of Irish Republican ideology.

As a result of this policy, in the years from 1878 to 1882, Devoy helped to steer the militant Clan na Gael away from its usual physical force stance, and towards a more constitutional role. He achieved this by attaching the Clan to two main-stream political groups: first, Davitt's Land League movement which sought justice for impoverished tenants in Ireland; and second, Charles Stewart Parnell's Home Rule party based in

¹⁶⁷ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. I, 127.

¹⁶⁸ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 99-101.

London's Westminster parliament. It is important to stress that adopting this strategy was a bold step for Devoy, causing him to be severely criticized by several hardliner Fenians, who believed that Irish freedom would only ever be achieved through armed insurrection. Equally so, it was a daring step for the constitutional parliamentarian Charles Stewart Parnell to ally himself to the more militant groups of the Irish freedom struggle.

Thus from 1878 onwards, John Devoy worked tirelessly on the New Departure initiative. In 1878 and '79 he organized and facilitated U.S. tours for both Davitt and Parnell, in which each of the latter spoke to Irish-American audiences throughout the United States and promoted the defense of the Land League cause. In particular, they argued that victimized Irish tenants could be best protected from exploitative landlords in impoverished Ireland by Americans giving money to the Land League. In the period of 1878 to 1882, in his quest for Irish freedom, Devoy moved away from the military force idea that he had primarily supported and steered the Clan towards a more socially conscious nationalist movement by attaching it to the Land League.

On his highly successful lecture tour in the United States (which Devoy had actually masterminded), Davitt managed to successfully portray the current situation of Irish farmers and introduce the concept of land reforms to the (Irish-) American public. Patrick Ford and his newspaper, the *Irish World* immediately backed the call for donations and the general message of the need for help.¹⁶⁹

Ultimately, the New Departure tied in the urgent need for land reform in Ireland with Irish nationalism. In a letter to the editor of *The Freeman's Journal*, Devoy described the program as: "a combination between all sections of Irish nationalists."¹⁷⁰

In 1878 Devoy was urgently invited (or rather, summoned) by the IRB and Fenian chief John O'Leary to travel to Paris to discuss Devoy's unorthodox strategies. Although Devoy was initially reluctant to go, he was "[f]inally, persuaded rather by Davitt's insistence than the appeals of other members of the Executive Body, he consented, and afterwards insisted that his consent proved almost ruinous to him."¹⁷¹ O'Leary needed to discuss the role of the IRB in the New Departure. One of the main reasons for this invitation was the following: "John O'Leary was unalterably opposed to

¹⁶⁹ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 106.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 111.

¹⁷¹ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. I, 382.

Parliamentary agitation and to Nationalists entering the British Parliament.”¹⁷² When O’Leary himself traveled to the U.S. on a lecture tour a year later, his stance was unchanged: “He pleaded for the old Fenian policy of abstention from all constitutional agitation and described the programme of the Land League as unsound and immoral,” Devoy recorded in his *Recollections*.¹⁷³

Inadvertently, the difference in approach to the Land Reform question also highlighted what was basically the first significant difference of views between Irish and Irish-American nationalism. Irish-American Fenians fully supported the New Departure, as witnessed by the telegram signed by the Clan leader sent on October 24, 1878 containing the five-point program to be sent to Parnell via Kickham. Davitt was not successful in communicating his message to the aging leaders of the IRB, especially the almost deaf and blind Charles Kickham, chairman of the Executive Council. Despite the agitation of both Davitt and Devoy, at the Paris meeting, it was decided that the Executive Council of the IRB refused to become fully involved in the support of the Land League. Yet eventually a working agreement was reached: “on the basis of approval of that part of the proposition aimed at securing control over the local bodies and leaving the members of the I.R.B. free to take part in Parliamentary elections, provided they did not enter Parliament themselves.”¹⁷⁴

The fact that Clan na Gael fully supported the Land League, while the IRB was rather ambivalent about the idea, cast light on a different issue: the two organizations did not always see eye to eye. While this may have been the first instance of a difference in opinion between the two organizations, it certainly was not going to be the last, though. The notion of “Irish-Americans knew best what was best for Irish-Americans and would not allow local Irish-American affairs to be dictated from the outside, specifically Ireland,” was to become a recurring issue throughout the Irish freedom struggle. In a letter to Devoy from April 29, 1880, Dr. William Carroll called Devoy’s attention to the need for people who could really understand the Irish-American standpoint. He wrote in regard to a planned Land League meeting in New York:

¹⁷² Devoy, *Recollections*, 283.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 286.

¹⁷⁴ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. I, 382.

[...] to make the movement at all representative, Irish and American, it will be necessary for Miss Fanny and “her brother” and Mr. Dillon to drop out of sight, and permit really representative men who have some notion of the temper and wants of Ireland and America to come together and so formulate these wants and demands as shall show the world that we at least know what we do want.¹⁷⁵

Future conflicts with Éamon de Valera were to occur stemming from this same prerogative, namely the issue of who actually controlled the Irish-American wing of the Irish freedom struggle – those in Ireland, or those in America.

Devoy spent the first half of 1879 doing extensive work and travelling in Europe. His four-month stay included several careful, i.e. secret trips to Ireland, a reunion with his father, thorough examination, and organization in the field of gun purchase and distribution in Ireland, as well as meeting with the Supreme Council of the IRB.

John Devoy met with Parnell on several occasions in March 1879 and became convinced that Parnell agreed to stand up for Land Reform in parliament, but more importantly, to enable the Clan to support Parnell and provide Ireland with “the sinews of war,”¹⁷⁶ which meant financial help and guns. Devoy understood Parnell to be willing to “go with the Irish people to the fullest limit in breaking up the existing form of connection with England.”¹⁷⁷ For their part, the Clan agreed to put both their organizational skills and financial means at Parnell’s disposal when he arrived in New York to start his lecture tour in 1880. The majority of the Irish-American public accepted Parnell (Fig. 11.) as a person who could efficiently represent Ireland’s needs in Westminster. The vast majority agreed, but still, there were hardliners who were adamantly opposed to this position.

The New Departure was perhaps the best example of Devoy’s balancing between the strictly-speaking legal constitutional approach versus the illegal physical force approach of achieving the ultimate goal of Irish independence. The upcoming section will deal with the New Departure in more detail, investigating whether or not Devoy was ultimately a staunch revolutionary or a pragmatic nationalist. At this point, though, it is necessary to make a short digression to present Devoy’s attitude towards,

¹⁷⁵ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. I, 521.

¹⁷⁶ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 116.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

and relationship with his sometime collaborator and avid Fenian, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa (Fig. 12.).

About a decade older than Devoy, he was one of the original Fenians and spent a considerable time in England's jails. His condition of release was the same as Devoy's: leave prison and also Ireland, and go into life-long exile. Along with Devoy he travelled to the United States as one of the *Cuba Five* arriving in New York in 1871. O'Donovan Rossa at that time was the most well-known face of a Fenian promoting Ireland's independence by means of physical violence. His radical actions often left the more moderate Fenians having to distance themselves from such belligerency for fear of tarnishing the public image of the Clan na Gael. In contrast to O'Donovan Rossa, Devoy was acutely aware of the importance of public image and timing, both of which Rossa seemed oblivious to. This is perhaps best evidenced by O'Donovan Rossa's establishing a contentiously named Skirmishing Fund in the 1880s, as well as his very public support and promotion of the dynamite campaign in England during the 1880s. The naming of the Skirmishing Fund was a particularly sore point for Devoy as well as for other politically adept Clan members. Devoy found the choice of name for the Fund politically unwise as it would generate unwelcomed unfavorable publicity, therefore efforts were made to take control of it, so as to sort out its financial problems, and change its name.

The Skirmishing Fund highlighted both Devoy's tactical skills and also his fiercely passionate personality, willing to put all friendly feelings towards O'Donovan Rossa aside and carry out a long line of accusations and attacks in public, on the pages of the Irish-American press. Due to allegations concerning the misappropriation of funds, Devoy severed all contact to Rossa and would not forgive his one-time prison mate and fellow Fenian until shortly before his death. Rossa's wife was instrumental in bringing the two old men together again, calling on Devoy to visit the "poor old wolfhound of the cause of Ireland"¹⁷⁸ and talk about "your earlier hopes and labours together before those differences of opinion crept in, it would do him a world of good. He has a simple loving heart and you were very dear to it long ago. Bury the times and be again the younger brother."¹⁷⁹ Further exploration on the topic of Devoy's

¹⁷⁸ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 418.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 407.

relationship with Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa in terms revolutionary versus peaceful solutions for Ireland will follow in the next chapter.

Nationality: Irish vs. Irish-American

At this juncture in the investigation of John Devoy's life progression, it will be necessary to briefly examine the issue of "Irish nationality," and how it was perceived by both those in Ireland and also those in America from the last quarter of the 19th century onwards.

By 1879, the gulf between "Irish" and "Irish-American" had grown unmistakably wider. The years spent away from Ireland ensured that Irish-American perception of the situation was somewhat different from that of the native Irishmen. On the topic of "chasm between the two countries," Devoy made an interesting remark about the Irish during his trip to Ireland in 1879, where he saw the Irish not as *us* but the *they*: "They are the most free and easy people the sun ever shone upon except when they take a fit and then the devil can't hold them."¹⁸⁰ As far as nationality was concerned, Devoy would always see himself as Irish, but the real question was, how did others perceive him? In a telling remark made as a reaction to unsupportive Irish press on the New Departure, he acknowledged that the New Departure was indeed formulated in the U.S., yet he did not see it as "dictation from America." Devoy's reaction was somewhat irritated: "These gentlemen must pardon me if I respectfully refuse the honour of being classed as an American."¹⁸¹ Still, this was not the only occasion where it was pointed out to Devoy that he seemed to be rather too sure of his "unchanged Irishness." In a letter to Devoy, Irish politician John Dillon (1851-1927) wrote these lines in regard to Devoy's difficulty of accepting differing political opinions on either side of the Atlantic: "The truth is – and you ought to know it as well as any man living – that in so complicated a crisis in affairs as this split has been, it is utterly absurd for a man who has not been in Ireland for years to be so positive and final in his views as you are."¹⁸² The truth, indeed, was that following his release from prison Devoy had only been to Ireland on two occasions, once in 1879, and late in his life, when he traveled to Ireland

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 407., quoted from John Devoy's letter to James Reynolds dated February 24, 1879.

¹⁸¹ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 111.

¹⁸² O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 320. Quoted from John Dillon's letter to John Devoy dated August 6, 1891.

in 1924 to meet his relatives, which turned into a semi-official state visit. Yet it was certain that with his enormous scope of mail correspondence he was bound to have a sound grasp of American as well as Irish affairs and sentiments, considering that he spent the better part of his life in the United States. Certainly, Éamon de Valera's visit to the U.S. in 1920 highlighted Devoy's "more American" side, with deep knowledge of American politics as opposed to de Valera's presumed deep knowledge on the same subject.

Biographer Terry Golway also pointed out that, while Devoy did actually visit Ireland in 1924, he did not "go home" to stay, but returned to the U.S. He said: "My educated guess is that in his old age, he reconciled himself to being both Irish and American, but *not* exclusively one or the other."¹⁸³ Another historian, Ormonde D. P. Waters reflected on the parallels between John Devoy's and his own question of nationality (Waters himself emigrated from Ireland to Australia several decades ago). He stated the following: "I know exactly how John Devoy felt in regard to his being either Irish or American. Having spent more than half of my life in Western Australia, I can only ask myself the question:

Am I Irish or Australian?
 My thoughts could fill a tome.
 When in Ireland I'm an Aussie,
 In Australia – Ireland's home
 I am torn between my countries,
 For I love them both, 'tis true.
 Half my life belongs to each.
 I cannot choose between the two!"¹⁸⁴

On the topic of Irish vs. Irish-American nationalism, historian Ely Janis seemed to support the arguments of author Thomas Brown, presented in Brown's work, *Irish-American Nationalism, 1870-1890*, namely that Irish-Americans actually proved themselves by participating in and supporting Irish nationalist causes and thus they gained acceptance into American society. A vital point of discussion among historians

¹⁸³ Author's email correspondence with Terry Golway; dated November 12, 2012.

¹⁸⁴ Author's email correspondence with Ormonde D. P. Waters; dated December 12, 2013.

continued to be the question of how much of being (becoming) Irish-American was about assimilation into the dominant host culture or to what extent it was rather their adapting earlier behaviors into a new trans-Atlantic setting. In Janis' opinion the correct answer was somewhere in the middle.¹⁸⁵

Conversely, Janis offered the following explanation concerning Devoy and his concept of identity:

As far as my opinion goes on Devoy, I would say that unlike many of his contemporaries, like Patrick Ford, Patrick Collins, or John Boyle O'Reilly, he never assimilates into American society. Unlike each of these individuals, Devoy kept his focus primarily on Irish independence and avoided most American social or political issues.¹⁸⁶

This opinion was also corroborated by the present author's study of Devoy's correspondence, as there was hardly any discussion of current American political happenings, but the main focus was on Irish and Irish-American political and revolutionary affairs.

Dangerous times – the Triangle

Devoy meanwhile poured his energy into literary and journalistic endeavors. He published his 1879 travel experiences in Ireland under the title *The Land of Eire* and also became the editor and publisher of *The Irish Nation*. Devoy used *The Irish Nation* repeatedly to voice his own opinions, with fairly little respect for either the subject itself or professional objectivity. He stubbornly attacked O'Donovan Rossa for his radical and capricious behavior, despite warnings of friends and colleagues. In a letter to John Devoy, Alexander Sullivan (1847-1913) quoted Michael Boland: "Beg of John to stop the personal quarrels. They are ruining the paper's prospects."¹⁸⁷ In another letter Sullivan cautioned Devoy against attacks directed at General Millen, referring to earlier behavior patterns towards O'Donovan Rossa: "I am sure a repetition of your Rossa war will disgust the best friends you have."¹⁸⁸ Yet it was Devoy's accusation against August

¹⁸⁵ Author's email correspondence with historian Ely Janis; dated February 17, 2014.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 133.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 132.

Belmont (1813-1890), one of the most powerful men of New York, that earned him a charge of criminal libel. The reason: Devoy claimed that Belmont had failed to return Fenian money. The court case was closely followed by both the American as well as the Irish-American press. Until the end, Devoy stuck to his principles of not revealing upon whose directive he wrote such articles. Eventually the court sentenced Devoy to 60 days in prison for holding the court in contempt.¹⁸⁹

The first half of the 1880s saw a very public split within Clan na Gael, when Alexander Sullivan, Michael Boland, and Denis Feeley took over the organization and had the more radical element triumph under their auspices again. They were known as the Triangle, and lent full support to the dynamite campaign. John Devoy did not share this view. This is certainly not to say that Devoy did not support violent actions at all but because of this power shift in the organization, he withdrew from Clan activities during the era of the Triangle. He joined forces with another opponent of the Triangle, Dr. Henry Patrick Cronin (1846-1889),¹⁹⁰ and together they tried to expose the covert operations of the Sullivan-Boland leadership. Devoy's primary aim was the reunification of the Clan and also resuming cooperation with the IRB. For Devoy, this period brought turmoil and danger to his life, whereas the Clan's internal struggle culminated in the murder of his close ally Dr. Cronin in May 1889 by supporters of Alexander Sullivan. The trial of the accused gang brought much unwanted publicity and probing into Clan activities. Another decade was to pass before the various factions finally reunited.

It had always been Devoy's belief that one of the most effective ways of communicating his ideas, and simultaneously providing the organization with a voice in the media, was to work as a journalist and editor. From 1874 he held a job with *The New York Herald*, which he acquired with the help of his childhood friend and Fenian, James J. O'Kelly, but due to his increased work load and open loyalty to the Clan, he was given notice in 1880. With some financial help Devoy started his own journal, *The Irish Nation* in 1881 and remained its chief editor until 1885 when again financial problems arose, and the paper was auctioned off. For the next few years he moved to

¹⁸⁹ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 148-149.

¹⁹⁰ For a more detailed account of Cronin's murder see Chapter 7, the section entitled Articles from the 1880s, 189-190.

Chicago and devoted all his time to the nationalist struggle, and the re-organization of Clan na Gael in this city.

Yet the moment when the Clan – along with a rather reluctant IRB – would successfully lend support to parliamentary agitation and in this way see Ireland’s independence (or at least self-determination) restored, had definitely passed. Just as the trial of Cronin’s murder came to a close, another court action occurred in London, that would distract the Irish-American community and John Devoy, namely, the divorce of William and Katherine O’Shea (1846-1921). Katherine (Kitty) O’Shea had already given birth to three of Parnell’s children, which caused an immense public outcry, and more importantly, a significant set back in Parnell’s soaring political career. Although the Parliamentary Party stood firmly behind him, the Liberal government with Gladstone at the helm did not. Devoy understood that without the actual figure of Parnell, the parliamentary approach would most likely fail. He voiced his fears to James O’Kelly in a telegram:

If Parnell yields to English clamour [it] will destroy American movement. No other man or men can keep it together. Retirement means chaos, leaving Ireland at mercy of English whims and Irish cranks ... Assure him [that he] may count on unswerving support and increased financial aid from American Irish, with or without Liberals.¹⁹¹

The final split of the Parliamentary Party into Parnellites and anti-Parnellites was not far off. Devoy offered to broker a solution between the two factions as he was a supporter of Parnell but was also on good terms with John Dillon. Devoy was keenly aware of the huge role that he played in the process of healing the split within the organization. In a letter to John Dillon, Devoy pointed out his own pivotal role: “I happen, rightly or wrongly, to be in a position to do a great deal to bring about peace or to make war effective, if war it must be. Let me remind you that I was instrumental in committing to the support of the movement led by Parnell forces [...]”¹⁹² Devoy’s version of a peace plan would have seen Parnell re-elected, then step down and hand the reigns over to John Dillon. The attempt was in vain, though, as the split was irreparable. The sudden death of Parnell in October 1891 ended all struggle to pursue this strategy. It also meant that everything that Devoy had worked for in the past decade had come to

¹⁹¹ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. II, 316. Letter from John Devoy to James O’Kelly, no date [November – December, 1890].

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 324. Letter from John Devoy to John Dillon dated August 30, 1891.

naught. Devoy remained loyal to Parnell for the rest of his life. This is something that was true of only very few people during his life as around this same time he attacked Michael Davitt in some of his writings for his alleged role in Cronin's murder. The long-term viability of the New Departure was thoroughly crushed.

In spite of these disappointments, Devoy's energy and organizing talent was still in high demand: he accepted Luke Dillon's invitation to return to New York and go on a nation-wide lecture tour to try and reorganize and revitalize Clan na Gael and the Irish-American nationalist movement. How badly such revitalization was needed, was mirrored in the number of Clan members: by 1894 membership had dropped to just over 4000.¹⁹³ Yet all his hard work of reorganization eventually paid off, and after a series of meetings in 1899, all factions agreed to reunite again at a meeting in Atlantic City in July 1900. Devoy was promptly elected as secretary, a job that would pay him \$100 monthly.¹⁹⁴ Parallel to this reunification, the Parliamentary Party also reunited under the leadership of John Redmond (1856-1919) who sought to win the support of middle-class Irish-Americans as well as the moderate Irish-American political circles. They requested Home Rule, but by that time, the 1910s, there were already other, more radical factions at work in Ireland, and Devoy made sure he was in contact with them.

Meanwhile, John Devoy resumed his career in the newspaper business, from 1903 onwards he again published a newspaper, *The Gaelic American*. He edited the paper until his death in 1928, and the paper finally folded in 1951.¹⁹⁵ He took on a certain Thomas Clarke (1858-1916), first as a personal assistant, helping Devoy with the weekly publication of the newspaper. Clarke would later assume a crucial role in the 1916 Easter Rising in Ireland. *The Gaelic American* was not envisioned to address working class Irish-Americans' daily affairs and publish tips to the newly-arrived on how to best establish themselves in the United States. Much rather the newspaper was directed at the Irish-American middle classes, with articles written in a high-brow, educated language, focusing on the theme of how England, seen as the arch enemy, was negatively impacting their American lives. It had a nation-wide circulation of 30,000.¹⁹⁶ Its significance was widely recognized on both sides of the Atlantic, as portrayed by this

¹⁹³ Golway: *Irish Rebel*, 178.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 180.

¹⁹⁵ Details given on the homepage of Library of Congress - Chronicling America, accessed November 14, 2012, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045246/>.

¹⁹⁶ Golway: *Irish Rebel*, 182-188.

confidential report addressed to the most senior civil servant of the Department of External Affairs at the time, Joseph P. Walshe in 1930, published within the Documents of Irish Foreign Policy. The author of the report, Michael MacWhite reported a rumor about the financial difficulties of *The Gaelic American*, and that unless some monetary help arrived, the newspaper was not likely to survive. As a reason for the low circulation, he stated the following: “The death of John Devoy was a severe loss to the paper, as his personality counted for much amongst Irish-Americans, whereas its present editors are practically unknown and their influence as well as that of the paper seems to be negligible.”¹⁹⁷ The fortunes of the paper were inextricably bound to the life, work, and personality of John Devoy.

International affairs

During the first decade of the 20th century, the Irish nationalist cause was slowly resurrected from the wreckage wrought by the Parnellite split of the early 1890s. In particular, the year 1912 witnessed a real heating up in Irish political affairs. John Devoy was receiving encouraging news both from his extended family (some of his nephews became actively involved in nationalism) as well as from Thomas Clarke, who had returned to Ireland and by that time ran a tobacco shop in Dublin. He wrote to Devoy: “[...] it is worth living in Ireland these times – there is an awakening ... [The] slow, silent prodding and the open preaching is at last showing results.”¹⁹⁸ While John Redmond was preparing the third Home Rule Bill in Westminster, there was a distinct minority, both in Ireland and the U.S., who were growing restless and demanded more action. This minority included Devoy, an aging Dr. Carroll (who called Home Rule a “betrayal”), and also the current head of Clan na Gael, John Keating.¹⁹⁹ These sentiments were only intensified by the bold move made by Sir Edward Carson (1854-1935) in Ulster with the public signing of the Solemn League and Covenant in September 1912.

¹⁹⁷ Confidential Report from Michael MacWhite to Joseph P. Walshe, dated April 16, 1930, published under *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy* homepage, accessed November 14, 2012,

<http://www.difp.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=1075>.

¹⁹⁸ Golway: *Irish Rebel*, 191.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 192.

Ulster's efforts involved creating the Ulster Volunteer Force, a private army, and enlisting German help with a large-scale gunrunning operation at Larne in February 1914. Not to be outdone, the Irish nationalists soon organized a matching private military under the name, Irish Volunteer Force and had their own gunrunning operation at Howth in July 1914. The situation in Ireland during this time was extremely precarious with the island teetering on the brink of civil war. However, with the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, the threatened war in Ireland was averted (albeit temporarily) as Europe's super-powers became engulfed in prolonged trench warfare.

Before examining how the First World War fundamentally changed the Irish political landscape, it is necessary to briefly analyze the historic roots of the international dimension of Ireland's freedom struggle during the previous century. Prior to Fenianism there had been an international element to the Irish struggle as revolutionaries would seek military assistance abroad so as to abolish English dominance in Ireland. The best example for such international aid was – or rather, would have been – Wolfe Tone's rebellion of 1798. Yet Irish independence truly became an international affair only in the middle of the 19th century when the leaders of the failed Young Ireland rebellion fled abroad, with their homes changed but not their sentiments towards English rule in Ireland. In Australia, and especially in America, the exiled leaders found those countless Famine emigrants who were willing, and over the decades became increasingly able to provide financial and moral support for the struggle for independence. Still, to Fenian leaders like Devoy, it was obvious that seeking international cooperation would greatly raise their chances of achieving the ultimate goal of the Irish independence.

Adhering to the principle "The enemy of my enemy is my friend," Clan na Gael leaders tried to establish cooperation with Minister Nikolay Shishkin (1830-1902), Foreign Minister of Russia in 1876. The delegation included Dr. William Carroll as Chairman, James Reynolds, General F.F. Millen, Rev. George Pepper, and John Devoy. Devoy acted as an interpreter in French. The delegation prepared a Memorial on the advantages of an understanding between Clan na Gael and Russia. However, the talks did not go as the Irish-Americans had envisioned it: Minister Shishkin informed them that war between Russia and England was rather improbable, and only in the case of a war could Russia enter into direct negotiations with Ireland. More importantly perhaps,

the meeting revealed that to the outside world, the Irish struggle projected a totally different image than the Fenians had assumed. Shishkin pointed out that there was no public evidence of a separatist movement in Ireland, only pressing for minor reforms, while Irish politicians were all loyal to the sovereign. Devoy later claimed Shishkin's words inspired him to launch the New Departure and employ the "tactics of urging the Fenians to take part in public affairs and obtain control of Parliamentary representation and local bodies."²⁰⁰ Devoy did not give up the idea of establishing stronger ties with Russia, and obtained a letter of introduction necessary for his planned visit to St. Petersburg. He picked up the letter at the American Embassy in Paris, it was signed by Senator Conover and stated: "The bearer of this letter, Mr. John Devoy, whom I know personally well, is abroad as the representative of the "Irish National Directory," and authorized to present their case to Continental Governments."²⁰¹ The trip to St. Petersburg, however, was never realized.

Another attempt at international outreach, though on a different continent, was the communication with the Mahdi's Rebel Chief through various Egyptian Nationalist leaders, during the war between England and the Mahdi. Devoy was contacted by James O'Kelly with a letter outlining the idea of putting a large number (around 20,000) rifles financed by the Clan into the hands of Mahdi rebels and thereby influence the outcome of the military situation in favor of the Egyptians. Devoy noted in his *Recollections*:

As the "Triangle" was in power at the time it was some time between 1881 and 1884 all I could do was to send his letter and cablegram to Alexander Sullivan, who was then Chairman of the Executive, and practically dictator, advising that the proposition be complied with. I knew there was sufficient money in the Treasury, as all the funds of the Clubs had been sent in and a Special Call had realized \$87,000 more. [...] but nothing whatever was done and a fine opportunity of striking a blow at England was missed. Instead, a lot of money was wasted on a more or less futile dynamite campaign of terrorism and the greater part of the funds was lost by Sullivan in gambling on the Chicago Board of Trade.²⁰²

As can be seen, Devoy was always open for promoting cooperation that would in the widest sense hurt Britain. The Egyptian conflict was only one item on the list of

²⁰⁰ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. I, 209.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 411.

²⁰² Devoy, *Recollections*, 345.

conflicts where Clan na Gael became involved. The Fenians considered support for the Zulus in South Africa during the British – Zulu War of 1879. The reason why assisting the Zulus would help the Irish cause was summarized by Devoy as follows: “I say that one million cartridges placed in the hands of the Zulus would help the Irish cause more than an equivalent amount of arms landed in Ireland.”²⁰³ Thus, if the Zulus were armed and fought successfully, that would have an effect in India and the Afghan situation would be prolonged, which would result in an “opportunity” for the Irish. Dr. William Carroll’s letter to John Devoy dated February 18, 1879 indicated that the key Clan figures, including James O’Kelly, General Millen and John Breslin discussed a plan to send Millen and a few others south of the Equator with “supplies.”²⁰⁴ However, the letter also contained a reference as to the question of how to best use the available resources (the estimated cost being \$20.000): spend them on weapons for the Zulus to be used against the British or send money directly to Ireland? Just how seriously this idea of sending weapons to the Zulus was contemplated, was indicated by the fact that the Devoy Papers included a “Zulu Key” to be used to decipher correspondence.²⁰⁵

General Millen was especially keen on this international outreach strategy of the Clan. In a letter to Dr. William Carroll, he pointed out an article published in *The New York Herald* describing the unclear, volatile situation of the Territory of Belize regarding its authority. According to the article the Mexicans lay claim because of its rich sources of timber, while Britain “snubbed” Mexico and stated “the province was theirs altogether” and threatened to send in troops. Millen reminded Carroll: “[...] we came to the conclusion that a big thing could be made of it. I feel certain that President Diaz would be glad to work with us in a secret manner.”²⁰⁶ However, eventually neither the Zulu weapons shipment, nor the secret help for Belize materialized, still, these episodes underlined that the Clan considered numerous ways of “fighting” for Irish independence.

Of all international outreaches the most fruitful – though not most successful – one was the Irish-American cooperation prior to and during the First World War. Possibly one of the greatest “what ifs” in Irish history started in 1914 with Bulmer

²⁰³ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. I, 410.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 392.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 408.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 352.

Hobson (1883-1969), an IRB member and writer for *The Gaelic American*, showing John Devoy a document written by Sir Roger Casement (1864-1916). Casement (Fig. 13.) was knighted because of his activities against human rights abuses in the Congo and Peru. He promoted the Irish language and when he retired in 1913, he devoted all his energy to the Irish cause. The document outlined possible ways the Irish-Americans could aid Ireland in the case of a war between Britain and Germany. Devoy read it and forwarded it to Joseph McGarrity, a Clan leader from Philadelphia with the comment that it was “an able document,” which was high praise coming from Devoy.²⁰⁷

The first contact with the German consulate in New York soon followed. The Clan na Gael delegation which met with the German diplomats in the German Club on East 59th Street in New York included Devoy. They introduced themselves as the official representatives of Irish-Americans as well as the IRB in Ireland. The German delegation included Count Johann von Bernstorff, German consul general in New York and his entourage, among them, Captain Franz von Papen (1879-1969), military attaché; Wolf von Igel (von Papen’s assistant); Georg von Skal, and others of lesser rank connected with the German Embassy. Devoy remarked on the style of the meeting: “Any appearance of secrecy was studiously avoided; the door to the hallway was kept open.”²⁰⁸ The Irish-American special delegation laid their cards on the table, told the present German representatives about the planned rising in Dublin and explained what type of support they were looking for from Germany. Help was primarily needed in the form of military expertise (officers) and weapons, whereas the financial means would be provided by the Irish-Americans. The Clan representatives pointed out that as far as they were concerned, Ireland did not have a quarrel with Germany, instead they saw this conflict as an opportunity to finally achieve a free and independent Ireland.²⁰⁹

Conspicuously, Devoy did not take the leading role at the meeting with the German delegation, as his hearing started to fail him. Instead, he relied on his associates to relay to him the whispered details of the conversation. In his dealings with Berlin he was termed a “confidential agent” of Germany.²¹⁰ His work included going to various German-American meetings and giving lectures, thereby conveying assurance that the

²⁰⁷ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 194.

²⁰⁸ Devoy, *Recollections*, 402.

²⁰⁹ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 197-198.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 199.

Irish-American community supported Germany. With this pro-German campaign Clan na Gael was trying to shift the imbalance tilted toward the overwhelming pro-English sentiments in America.

Irish-German cooperation

John Redmond may have been close to ensuring self-determination in London, but when he pledged to rally Irishmen to fight for the British Empire in the First World War, to many Irish-American nationalists such a declaration seemed outright treachery. The Irish-American community went out of their way to point out that they did not endorse Redmond's actions. To the argument that any rebellion staged by Irish rebels in Ireland was akin to stabbing Britain in the back, Devoy replied as follows:

England had been attempting to cut Ireland's throat for seven centuries, so that the English complaint that Ireland "stabbed England in the back" during the World War was utter nonsense. If the weapon were long and sharp enough to reach England's heart, either through the back or the chest, Ireland would have been entirely justified in giving the death blow.²¹¹

Devoy's addresses given at pro-German rallies were partly made to highlight the Clan's position that John Redmond did not represent their views or interests. The Clan formally condemned Redmond at their annual convention in the fall of 1914.²¹² Devoy cited a line from one of Redmond's speeches, which he considered as most revealing; the speech was given by Redmond at the Woodenbridge Volunteers meeting (when quoting them in his *Recollections* Devoy even added his own italics): "I say to you therefore your duty is two-fold - go on drilling and make yourselves efficient for the work, and then account yourselves as men, not only in Ireland itself, but *wherever the firing-line extends in defense of right, of freedom and religion in this war.*"²¹³

While certain aspects of Devoy's activities were known to the general public, and his writings were published widely, a great deal of his work was dependent on secrecy. This was true for using cipher in his correspondence as well as for having his image made public in the newspaper.

²¹¹ Devoy, *Recollections*, 402.

²¹² Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 200.

²¹³ Devoy, *Recollections*, 414.

Secret organizations have had a long tradition of using codes and cipher to make their correspondence hidden to the unauthorized, and Clan na Gael was no different. *Devoy's Post Bag* offered a valuable insight into the use of aliases and codes within the Clan, his system was described as the "Carroll – Devoy Cipher." Prominent names of people and organizations were invariably replaced with a list of aliases, John Devoy was mentioned as Dixon, Duval, Davis, Wallace, or simple Uncle; James Stephens was called the Old Gent, among others. The IRB in Ireland was referred to as Elder, and the Revolutionary Directory was Elder and Logan, while John Devoy in his capacity as Secretary of the Revolutionary Directory was denoted as Wallace Logan.²¹⁴

Instead of explicitly mentioning weapon shipments or possible rebellions the letters contained coded words such as "agricultural implements" as the following example shows: "Ben Elder [IRB] is greatly depressed by non-receipt of agricultural implements [arms] and non-arrival of agent who is to explain their use to purchasers."²¹⁵ In another instance, General Millen (referred to as "Morgan") was described as going to Ireland as an "instructor in agriculture," i.e. a military instructor.²¹⁶ The work of William Mackey Lomasney (1841-1884), who participated in dynamite campaign of 1880s, was termed as "doing the special work."²¹⁷

A great number of correspondents included indicators that the contents were meant for the recipient's eyes only. Expressions such as the following were often used to promote and ensure secrecy: "Burn this note," "Of course you will destroy this," "Confidential: Destroy after reading." James O'Kelly, though, went one step further and suggested that Devoy use secret ink for private correspondence: the special ink consisted of was a weak solution of yellow prussiate of potash to be applied on rough unglazed paper.²¹⁸ It seemed rather ironic that at the time of writing that letter O'Kelly was an active Member of Parliament of the British Empire. The advice, though, was hardly exaggerated, since Fenian correspondence was of utmost interest to the British

²¹⁴ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. I, 169.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 386.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 387.

²¹⁷ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 11.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 155.

authorities. Devoy once wryly remarked on the security of letters: “Nothing is safe in the mail in this free country.”²¹⁹ Fig. 14. shows a close-up of John Devoy’s signature.

A great deal of John Devoy’s work over the years required him to remain anonymous. He could not have become the chief organizer of the British Army and slipped in and out of the barracks, swearing in soldiers, had his face been publicly recognizable. Indeed, as already mentioned, his very first photograph was taken when he was arrested in 1866. Although not entirely secret, but his image was not widely known, this relative lack of notoriety was enough for him to make several safe visits to Ireland, which he was still banned from, in 1879. Years later, in the summer of 1914, his cooperation with Sir Roger Casement led to another unwanted photograph, when the men participated in a rally to protest against the Bachelors’ Walk massacre in connection with the Howth gunrunning. A journalist made the snap shot when the two men were returning in an open-top car and promptly published the photograph in newspapers of Philadelphia (Fig. 15.). Golway described this act (of having their picture taken) as an “intelligence blunder” for the Clan, because it made not only Devoy’s, but also Casement’s face highly recognizable, and thereby Casement’s secret mission to Germany became somewhat jeopardized.²²⁰

Devoy’s judgment of Casement’s character was reflected in the following lines:

While a highly intellectual man, Casement was very emotional and as trustful as a child. He was also obsessed with the idea that he was a better judge than any of us, at either side of the Atlantic, of what ought to be done (though he was too polite and good natured to say so), and he never hesitated to act on his own responsibility, fully believing that his decisions were in the best interests of Ireland's Cause. This created many difficulties and embarrassments for us.²²¹

Devoy introduced Casement to officials at the German consulate possibly against his suspicion regarding Casement’s trustworthiness. The “difficulties” mentioned above eventually included the failed attempt to organize an army from the Irish POWs in Germany, but peaked with the unsuccessful gunrunning operation aboard the *Aud* which, had it landed on time, could have altered the ultimate outcome of the Easter Rising.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 503.

²²⁰ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 202.

²²¹ Devoy, *Recollections*, 406.

Throughout 1915 Devoy worked tirelessly on establishing communication with the German Consulate, especially with Georg von Skál. The organization of the upcoming rising grew more and more intense. In June of that year, Devoy helped organize a massive pro-Irish and pro-German meeting at Madison Square Garden, to an estimated 75,000 supporters. However, if one had to pinpoint a single event that set the subsequent revolutionary events in motion, it would have to be the death of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa.

Devoy's relationship with O'Donovan Rossa had been problematic over the years, to say the least. Yet when Rossa's wife took it upon herself to re-establish contact between the two men, Devoy was respondent. After one of Devoy's visits she wrote to him "For you are the last of that beloved inner crowd of political brothers that travelled the same sacrificial road with him since '65."²²² Mary O'Donovan Rossa was fully aware of her husband's importance in terms of Fenianism, not only of his physical, but also his symbolic significance. She was contacted by Redmondites regarding her husband's body even while he was still alive, an act that was repulsive not only to Mary O'Donovan Rossa, but to John Devoy, as well. She wrote to John Devoy: "Not one of them has given a cent to the fund, but they are willing to make capital out of his corpse."²²³

When Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa died eventually on Staten Island on June 29, 1915, it was promptly decided by Thomas Clarke and Devoy to send his body to Dublin. Mary O'Donovan Rossa sent 20 £ to Thomas Clarke so that he would arrange a plot in Glasnevin Cemetery for Rossa to be buried in (Fig. 16.).²²⁴ Clarke also organized a funeral procession that would include Rossa's wife and daughter, a delegation from Clan na Gael and countless IRB members. In fact, the funeral became a gathering of the key players who would, in just 9 months' time, stage a bold and desperate rising. With the help of modern technology, the event was captured on camera, but even here, Devoy's organizational skills were needed, as he had to make sure the film rolls did not end up in the wrong hands after the event. "If the enemy learn that they are in their possession they are likely to make a strong attempt to secure or destroy them" Joseph

²²² O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 407.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 437.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 472-73.

McGarrity (1874-1930) reminded Devoy.²²⁵ The eulogy given over Rossa's grave had powerful repercussions with the entire Irish nationalist community. The nationalist and future Easter Rising leader Pádraig Pearse read the following lines:

And if there is anything that makes it fitting that I rather than some other – I, rather than one of the grey-haired men who were young with him, and shared in his labour and in his suffering, should speak here, it is, perhaps, that I may be taken as speaking on behalf of a new generation that has been re-baptised in the Fenian faith, and that has accepted the responsibility of carrying out the Fenian programme. [...]. Life springs from death, and from the graves of patriot men and women spring live nations. The defenders of this realm have worked well in secret and in the open. They think that they have pacified Ireland. They think that they have purchased half of us, and intimidated the other half. They think that they have foreseen everything. They think that they have provided against everything; but the fools, the fools, the fools! they have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.²²⁶

It should be noted that, as the text indicated, the oration over Rossa's grave was not given by one of the Fenians who had perhaps known him personally or spent time with him in prison. As Mary O'Donovan Rossa mentioned in her letter, there were but very few of the "great old Fenians" left, and Devoy did not take it upon himself to travel to Ireland for the funeral.²²⁷ Instead, Pearse, the orator was a representative of a new generation of Fenians who would inspire them to take action. Pearse included an essay in the special program issued for this occasion in which he paid homage to the person who was responsible for having Rossa's body sent over to Dublin. He called John Devoy "the greatest of the Fenians."²²⁸ The expression later was to become the title of the Devoy biography written by Terence Dooley, *The Greatest of the Fenians*. The memorial to Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa is situated in St Stephen's Green public park, Dublin, near Fusiliers' Arch (Fig. 17.).

On February 5, 1916 John Devoy was handed an encoded message by a courier from Dublin, it was from the Supreme Council of the IRB. The note contained the

²²⁵ Ibid., 474.

²²⁶ Oration of Pádraig over the grave of O'Donovan Rossa, Library Ireland website, accessed November 17, 2012, <http://www.libraryireland.com/HullHistory/Appendix2b.php>.

²²⁷ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 436-37.

²²⁸ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 208.

following information: “We have decided to begin action on Easter Sunday. We must have your arms and munitions in Limerick between Good Friday and Easter Saturday. We expect German action immediately after beginning action. We might be compelled to begin earlier.”²²⁹ He informed his immediate associates Judge Daniel Cohalan and Joseph McGarrity about the news the following morning at a meeting in Cohalan’s home. Another day later Devoy went to the German Consulate in New York and shared this information. One of the vital pieces of information included in this message was the time frame in which arms and ammunition ought to have arrived. Devoy played a conspicuous role in the question of the time frame: while the original message stated that arms should arrive between Good Friday and Saturday, as the Rising would be on Easter Sunday, Devoy indicated to the Germans that the Rising would start on Easter Saturday. According to his *Recollections*, he gave a four-day time frame, from Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday, yet his correspondence with the Germans indicated a shorter deadline, between Good Friday and Easter Saturday.²³⁰ Meanwhile another message from Pádraig Pearse to McGarrity added to the confusion, as it gave the time frame for arms between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. This mix-up of dates may have cost them the success of the rebellion.²³¹

Yet the time frames were not the only weak point in the organization of the Easter Rising. While the Irish-American party was extremely scrupulous regarding such confidential contents, the same cannot be said of the staff of the German consulate. They had cablegrams and letters carelessly lying around their office with the key players’ names clearly visible, and to make matters worse, a message with the encoded expressions crossed out and replaced with the decoded version.²³² Devoy had reminded them some time earlier about the threat of a raid by the U.S. Secret Service: “They want your papers for the information of the English, and will get them if they can, law or no law.”²³³ His warnings went unheeded and disaster struck on April 18, 1916. The offices of the German Consulate on Wall Street were raided and all sensitive material confiscated. Information was also leaked to the press, particularly the newspaper *The*

²²⁹ Ibid., 212.

²³⁰ Devoy, *Recollections*, 458.

²³¹ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 216-217.

²³² Devoy, *Recollections*, 463.

²³³ Ibid., 466.

World with the help of the Editor-in-Chief Frank Irving Cobb (1869-1923), making such confidential material easily accessible to the British government.²³⁴ Again, the secret-weapon-importing mission was becoming less and less secret.

Even in the very early stages, when Devoy was informed about the dates of the planned insurrection, he was not pleased with its manner of organization. He dryly remarked in his *Recollections*: “They [the Supreme Council in Dublin] did not ask our advice; they simply announced a decision already taken; so, as we had already recognized the right of the Home Organization to make the supreme decision, our plain duty was to accept it and give them all the help we could.”²³⁵ On April 14, 1916 Miss Plunkett²³⁶ walked directly into the office of *The Gaelic American* and informed Devoy about yet another change of date: “Arms must not be landed before night of Sunday, 23rd. This is vital. Smuggling impossible. Let us know if submarine will come to Dublin Bay.”²³⁷

Devoy deeply understood the need for support by the Irish-American community, support in the widest of senses. As Casement put it: “I would sooner see 20,000 American rifles and 10,000,000 cartridges landed in Ireland to-day than learn you (or somebody else) had cabled \$1,000,000. It is not American dollars, but Irish-American manhood, courage and skill we want to help an unarmed and enjailed people get rifles into their hands.”²³⁸ On more than one occasion during these turbulent years there were explicit references found in Devoy’s correspondent that highlighted the fact the Irish leaders were looking towards Irish-Americans for support as well as, at times, for guidance. Devoy, often called the “old man”²³⁹ represented not only an organization that was a source of money, desperately needed for a successful rising. He was seen as a figure of importance whose opinion or advice mattered, and it matter a lot. He was also the editor of an influential newspaper that could be used as an added instrument for promoting the Irish cause. One of his correspondents reminded Devoy of the fact that within the United States, people were looking up to him: “To yourself, Mr. Devoy,

²³⁴ Ibid., 460-469.

²³⁵ Ibid., 459.

²³⁶ Philomena Plunkett, daughter of Count George Noble Plunkett (1851-1948) and sister of ailing IRB leader Joseph Plunkett (1887-1916).

²³⁷ Devoy, *Recollections*, 462-463.

²³⁸ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. II, 463.

²³⁹ Ibid., 534.

more than any other Irishman in this country, Irish nationalists look to, to give the word. A serious and marked responsibility devolves upon you. You have a paper at your command, and can have its columns calling your countrymen to take action.”²⁴⁰ This notion of “looking to America” would only be intensified as the events in Dublin unfurled.

Nevertheless, the Irish-American public had to be informed of the planned insurrection and to this end a public meeting in New York, the First Irish Race Convention was organized. The chosen date was of highly symbolic meaning: March 4-5, 1916, with March 5 being the anniversary of the Rising of 1867. The event saw the largest ever gathering of Irish-Americans, around 2300 delegates attended. It was presided over by Supreme Court Justice John W. Goff (1848-1924) as Temporary Chairman of the Convention, and Judge O'Neill Ryan, of St. Louis, as Permanent Chairman. Another organization was founded at the convention, the Friends of Irish Freedom, which would go on to play a major role in Irish affairs at the Paris Peace Conference. Devoy summarized the significance of this event:

At no previous Irish Convention was there even one Supreme Court Judge: there were five at this, besides several other Judges of lesser rank, and a large number of lawyers. And there were prominent merchants, manufacturers and business men and women by the hundred. No such Irish-American gathering in the past ever had so many clerical dignitaries present as delegates.²⁴¹

Devoy knew what huge impact the Easter Rising would have on the course of Irish history, and he was desperate to make his way to Dublin and participate in it. Terry Golway summarized this period as follows:

By Holy Thursday, John Devoy had resigned himself to a reluctant place on the sidelines while the great drama was played out in Dublin. Devoy had been trying to arrange for false papers so he could board a ship that would take him to Dublin, where he would join in the fight he had worked so hard to bring about.²⁴²

Even before the plans for the Rising materialized, Devoy's desire to go to Ireland and actively take part in history was immense. Those around him understood

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 480-481.

²⁴¹ Devoy, *Recollections*, 449-450.

²⁴² Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 226.

this drive, even if they cautioned him against such a decision. Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa's wife, Mary expressed her concern:

Now that there is something tangible shaping itself on the national horizon you become too precious to be used except for actual necessity where no substitute would suffice. It is a cruel pity to squander your brain and vitality on anything less than supreme importance. If you were still under forty or even fifty you might venture to take the risk but the odds would be against you now to the despair of those who hope in you.²⁴³

The eventual course of events of the Easter Rising is well-known and will not be dealt with in detail in this work. Suffice it to say that the promised arms aboard the *Aud* did not arrive on time and were destroyed lest they should fall into the hands of the British. Sir Roger Casement also failed in his quest to organize an Irish brigade. Yet even years later, when compiling his memoirs, Devoy placed the blame with the Dublin organizers.²⁴⁴ Devoy dealt with the Rising extensively, primarily in the columns of *The Gaelic American* and his *Recollections*, but his correspondence from this period published in *Devoy's Post Bag* Vol. II also lent invaluable insight into how he interpreted the events. Still, the fact that his organizing activities played a key role was beyond dispute, and this was recognized in Ireland, as well. Years later Diarmud Lynch (1878–1950), IRB man and future member of the First Dáil paid tribute to Devoy's work:

[...] we could not have fought were it not for the money that John Devoy and you, his faithful comrades of the Clan na Gael, had sent us, wherewith to purchase arms and ammunition. When the Tricolor was implanted on the Dublin Post Office and when Pearse marched out to O'Connell Street to read the Declaration of Irish Independence to the citizens, the names of the gallant standard-bearers in former generations flashed across our minds, prominent among them being John Devoy; when our volleys were being poured into English lancers as they charged down O'Connell Street soon afterwards, I wished that John Devoy was there to witness the sight which would

²⁴³ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 417.

²⁴⁴ Devoy, *Recollections*, 465. John Devoy stated: "I reiterate that the change of date made by the Revolutionary Council for the landing of the arms, was responsible for turning what would have been the most formidable insurrection in Irish history, with a reasonable hope of success, into one which was confined almost solely to Dublin over the period of one week, and foredoomed to military defeat. Had the original decision, and the message to America informing us of it, called for arrival of the arms Ship on *Easter Sunday night*, there would have been no necessity for the second despatch which got here on April 14; the latter would not have been in the German office in New York to be seized by Secret Service men in pursuance of Wilson's *sham* neutrality, and its contents relayed to the British Government."

gladden his old heart and repay him for all his years of struggle on behalf of his land of birth.²⁴⁵

An especially great loss to the nascent state were the executed leaders, practically leaving the IRB without people in leadership. Irish politician and educationalist Mary MacSwiney (1872-1942), writing from Cork to her brother Peter MacSwiney in New York, stated the obvious in very clear terms: “Our present position is this: There is not a leader left. The men are there and the women too, full of spirit, but all the real brains of the organization are dead or locked up. Anyone who could voice the demand of the country at the Peace Conference is not here to do it.”²⁴⁶ In this sense, again, the task fell to the Irish-Americans to provide the necessary political support for Ireland.

The aftermath of the Rising

What was decisive during, but increasingly evident following the Rising and executions, was the changing mood of the Irish-American, and more significantly, the pro-British American public. Devoy voiced his anxiety in typical Devoy-fashion, on the cover of *The Gaelic American*, with blaring headlines such as “Wilson’s base act of treachery,” in which he charged the American president of having conveyed information about the planned rebellion to British authorities. While the British Secret Service had already cracked the German code, and the planned Rising was no news to them, historian Terry Golway stated that the neutral Wilson administration did, in fact, leak information.²⁴⁷ Naturally, the White House immediately reacted to this headline, publishing a denial in *The New York Times* on April 27, 1916. The executions of the Rising’s leaders in Dublin shocked Americans and drove journalists to seek comments from prominent Irish-Americans. One of the most critical remarks on the actual driving force behind the organization was made by Patrick Egan (1841-1919), one-time land reformer and Land League treasurer:

²⁴⁵ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. II, 489-490. Letter from Diarmud Lynch, Devoy read it as part of his speech made at the Westminster Hotel in Boston on March 8, 1921.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 493. Letter from Mary MacSwiney to Peter MacSwiney, undated [June 1916].

²⁴⁷ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 233.

My heart goes out to those men who had to face the firing squad today... I do not think that England should have had them shot. Ninety-eight percent of all Irishmen were in sympathy with the revolt, and England has nothing to gain by shooting people after it is over... If anyone were shot it should have been John Devoy, who hatched the whole nefarious scheme in New York and was personally responsible for it.²⁴⁸

Devoy certainly did not leave this comment without a rebuttal: he disclosed how Egan had drained Land League money to finance Alexander Sullivan's dynamite campaign. It was undeniable that Egan's accusation was not based on unfounded rumor but an irrefutable fact: without Irish-American planning and financing there would not have been a Rising. Yet the power of public opinion was possibly one aspect that neither the British, nor for that matter, the American authorities had reckoned with. The continued executions drew huge crowds of protesters, and even well-respected, and more importantly, traditionally moderate Irish-American politicians, such as Congressman W. Bourke Cockran (1854-1923) made comments that severely condemned Britain's harsh actions. He said the following:

I am here to make a confession. For thirty years I have been one of those who had believed ... that it was the part of prudence for Irishmen to forget – aye, to seek to forgive and try to forget – the wrongs of the centuries in the hope that better days were dawning ... And now, behold the consequences of this attempt. The vilest murders ever committed in Irish history are fresh before our eyes. The noblest Irishmen that have ever lived are dead, dead by the bullet of British soldiery, shot like dogs for asserting the immortal truths of patriotism.²⁴⁹

Golway remarked that the truly surprising aspect of the above comment was that such a militant tone could have come from a younger version of Devoy himself.²⁵⁰ The real significance of this kind of public exhibition of the Irish-American mood, Devoy hoped, would be displayed at the round table after the end of the war, (figuratively speaking), when the United States could weigh in on the Irish question.

It is interesting to note that Devoy's personal memoirs ended with the First Irish Race Convention. This is not to say that nothing noteworthy happened to him in the years to come, as important events and their repercussions can be traced throughout his

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 236.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 237.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

immense correspondence. A year after the Easter Rising the Irish-American community, with their decidedly pro-German stance, found itself on the wrong side of the divide, as America entered the Great War. Suddenly Wilson did not only see U.S. citizens such as Devoy as hyphenated Americans, but also as potentially disloyal citizens. Devoy understood the gravity of the situation and how Irish-Americans would have to prove their loyalty in a visible way. He was quick to inform Clan members via a circular, that they would remain loyal to the American flag and went on to organize a rally at Carnegie Hall to underline their pro-American position. Unsurprisingly, this public attitude did not reflect Devoy's true stance, he described his actual sentiments about the rally in a private letter to Joseph McGarrity: "[the circular and the rally were] a cruel necessity which was very irksome to me ... We [will] fight for the same thing, simply adjusting our tactics to the new situations."²⁵¹ There certainly was much "adjustment" to be done, as Devoy was being watched by the Secret Division of Military Intelligence, and from time to time some material emerged which linked his name to those of German diplomats.

The Secret Service was indeed busy, so by September 1917 the White House had gathered a formidable amount of material against John Devoy and Judge Daniel Cohalan, and they were not afraid to use it. As noted earlier, some documents were leaked to the press that clearly linked Devoy to the German consulate, including a memo from Devoy asking for a change in date of the arms delivery off Tralee Bay. Thereby Secretary of State Robert Lansing (1864-1928) made sure that Devoy would be put on the defensive and his newspaper criticized. The next – logical – step by the Wilson administration was to ban *The Gaelic American* from the mail, and in that way, significantly limited its role as a national voice of the Irish-American community.

Ireland represented at the Paris Peace Conference

Despite the surveillance and the published documents, Devoy was never indicted during the war, even though his correspondence with the Germans was deemed "treasonous" by the Military Intelligence service.²⁵² Moreover, the end of the war in November 1918 did not mean that the work of the Irish-American community (nor the

²⁵¹ Ibid., 241.

²⁵² Ibid., 248.

end of surveillance over Devoy, for that matter) had ended. Cohalan and Devoy were in charge of the Friends of Irish Freedom and believed that the role of the organization was to exert pressure upon the Wilson administration to obtain an official recognition of Ireland as an independent state. As a result of these efforts, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives organized a hearing regarding Irish independence.²⁵³

Meanwhile in Ireland the situation grew more and more tense and explosive: in 1917 there was widespread outrage at the death of Thomas Ashe (Tomás Pádraig Ághas; 1885- 1917), IRB member and founding member of the Irish Volunteers. In his oration over Ashe's grave, Michael Collins made a clear call to arms, speaking after the firing of the volley: "Nothing additional remains to be said. That volley which we have just heard is the only speech which it is proper to make above the grave of a dead Fenian."²⁵⁴ But the real catalyst for the unfolding events was the threat of compulsory conscription, which Ireland was exempt from up until 1918. As a reaction to this threat, the general elections held in December of 1918 brought a landslide victory for Sinn Féin who opted not to take their seats in Parliament. Instead, Irish political leaders met in Mansion House on January 21, 1919 and decided to take the matter into their own hands: they established the Dáil Éireann (in English translated as the 'Assembly of Ireland'). Fig. 18. shows the First Dáil, a part of the exhibition in Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin, indicating how many of the members (shown as drawings) were still imprisoned at the time of the creation of the Dáil.

As a form of international representation, a three-man delegation consisting of Éamon de Valera, Count Plunkett, and Arthur Griffith (Art Ó Gríobhtha; 1872-1922) was selected to travel to France and try to obtain an audience with the Grand Four at the Paris Peace Conference.

This practically signified that the struggle for independence had again been moved out of the streets and into offices and around negotiation tables, though the violent strategy in the drive for independence did not vanish completely. Political efforts were intensified on both sides of the Atlantic, as it was recognized that the Paris Peace Conference was where international recognition for Ireland's independence could

²⁵³ Ibid., 249.

²⁵⁴ Michael Collins' oration at Thomas Ashe's funeral, quoted on An Poblacht website, accessed January 15, 2014, <http://republican-news.org/archive/2000/May04/04hist.html>.

most likely be secured. The Irish-American community welcomed President Wilson's intention to champion small nations' right to self-determination. In one of his speeches Devoy expressed his belief that it was impossible for Wilson not to apply this concept to Ireland:

We don't know that President Wilson intends to bring the Irish question directly before the Conference... We don't know whether he only intends to bring it privately before the English representatives at that Conference; but we do know that his solemn declarations committed him irrevocably to bringing the case of [...] all oppressed people.[...] If he leaves Ireland out I am afraid he will never live long enough to live it down.²⁵⁵

On February 22-23, 1919, Philadelphia acted as host to the Third Irish Race Convention. It was a formidable show of Irish-American political power, and also an outstanding example of how far this ethnic group had come since the beginning of mass immigration to the United States. As indicated earlier, Fenianism was now openly supported even by the Catholic Church. The leading figure of the church, James Cardinal Gibbons agreed to give a speech, yet only used the term *self-determination*, and did not refer to a fully-fledged republic as the ultimate goal, which was sufficient to suit the Clan's purposes. A resolution was issued demanding that Paris "apply to Ireland the great principle of self-determination."²⁵⁶ Nonetheless, several Clan members, among them, Joseph McGarrity and Dr. Patrick McCartan, harshly criticized Devoy (there were severe "shouting matches"²⁵⁷) for not including the term *Irish Republic*.

In order to further persuade the American public opinion, the President of the self-proclaimed Irish Republic, Éamon de Valera travelled to the United States in 1919, leaving Michael Collins to co-ordinate the ensuing Irish freedom struggle against the British army in Ireland. "De Valera was the personification of the bond between Ireland and America, or more precisely, between revolutionaries at home and their sympathizers and fellow conspirators in the United States."²⁵⁸ While Clan na Gael and the IRB had been in cooperation for more than four decades, with the Clan primarily responsible for the financial support of the IRB's plans of action, both organizations

²⁵⁵ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 250.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 252.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 256.

were respectful of each other's domains of influence. Devoy voiced his worries in a letter to Irish republican politician, Harry Boland (1887-1922):

The men at home decide on their policy and we do our utmost to help them to carry it out... We expect and insist upon the same in regard to the conduct of the movement in America. [...] An American policy in favor of Irish independence directed from Ireland by men with imperfect knowledge of America would be just as sure to fail as an attempt to dictate the policy of Ireland from America.²⁵⁹

The reference to de Valera was hard to overlook, and this quote mirrored Devoy's resentment at having someone from outside the Irish-American community intrude into their affairs. What was also hard to miss was how ironic the situation was: the *Príomh Aire* (President of the Dáil Éireann) of Ireland was an American-born Irishman with Spanish roots, whose life was spared during the executions following the Easter Rising based on his American citizenship. After the unsuccessful attempt at international recognition, de Valera turned his attention to securing public and financial support from Irish-Americans and travelled to the U.S. on an extensive tour in May 1919.

When de Valera arrived in New York there was an official welcoming ceremony, Devoy and Judge Cohalan greeted the party at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. A group photograph was taken, which unintentionally highlighted the relationship between its subjects: Devoy was sitting on a chair, gazing into the distance away from the camera, while de Valera was standing right behind him, almost as if above him, his hand placed on the old man's shoulder (Fig. 19.).

Although initially Devoy seemed genuinely impressed by de Valera, indeed he described him as "the best President Ireland has had for a century,"²⁶⁰ he soon realized that their positions were starkly different. There was a distinct feeling that de Valera appeared to know how best to go about the Irish-American public, much better than seasoned Clan members such as, say, John Devoy. De Valera believed that the Irish-American revolutionary organization was to be at his disposal, since he was the elected President of Ireland. For Devoy this meant that he would be "giving up the reins" of influencing and coordinating Irish-American public opinion. It was Devoy's belief that

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 259.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 261.

together with his ally Judge Cohalan they, not de Valera, were the true spokesmen for the Irish-American community.

One of the focal points of the conflict with de Valera was the collection of Irish-American funds. Devoy was growing ever more suspicious of him, first privately, and then also publicly. At the same time, he was also aware that tension between the Devoy-Cohalan and de Valera factions would be anything but beneficial. Relating to the dispute over costs of de Valera's bond drive, Devoy stated the following: "We have preserved the appearance of unity on the surface for the sake of the big things at stake and through fear of giving comfort to the enemy, but it is only on the surface. It can't remain [that way] for long."²⁶¹ As events unfolded, Devoy's skepticism was proven to be well-founded. This was highlighted by de Valera's founding a rival organization to the Friends of Irish Freedom, the somewhat awkwardly named "American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic" (awkwardly abbreviated to AARIR, which Devoy referred to as "the Growl").²⁶² But there were also such off-the-cuff comments, such as the suggestion that Ireland should be in a similar relationship with Britain as Cuba was with the United States (which was a submissive position), or the reference to the fiasco in the attempt to have Ireland's independence included in the Republican party's manifesto (these will be described in more detail in a later chapter).²⁶³

On the whole, this Irish-American "civil war" left a permanent mark on the entire community, and bled it of a considerable amount of money which was meant to finance the war of independence raging in Ireland. The lasting impact, though, was even more detrimental: both Devoy and McGarrity (who had become de Valera's ally) became politically sidelined and discredited, which barred them from successfully lobbying for America's recognizing Ireland. At the crucial period when the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed, Devoy supported it. Historian Terence Dooley stated:

Devoy accepted the terms of the treaty as the best that could be secured at the time; the Free State, he argued, was only a step to complete national independence and was at least as good as what was proposed by De Valera in his so-called "Document number

²⁶¹ Ibid., 268.

²⁶² Ibid., 289.

²⁶³ Ibid., 276-283.

2.” “no sensible Irishman reading them can arrive at any other conclusion than that the difference between them was not worth the shedding of a single drop of Irish blood.”²⁶⁴

For Devoy, though, this did not mean that he was surrendering his republican ideals. According to him, “without accepting or recognizing the new status as final, to use such facilities as it might afford to work for the Fenian ideal, a wholly free and independent Ireland without any political connection whatever with England” may be an attainable goal.²⁶⁵

Devoy’s trip to Ireland

Devoy had been skillfully dodging invitations by his niece and nephew to visit Ireland for some time, until eventually in the summer of 1924, he relented and decided to travel to Ireland to see the family. He stated that he intended to arrive as a private person and not in any Clan na Gael capacity. For the Irish government this seemed like an excellent opportunity to exploit Devoy’s trip for their own PR purposes. General Mulcahy (1886-1971) directed an official query at the government asking whether they were aware of John Devoy’s imminent visit to Ireland and whether they intended to take “official cognisance” of his visit, in light of “the great and special services in the cause of our country’s independence.”²⁶⁶ President Cosgrave gave the following written answer: “I have received notification of Mr. Devoy’s visit, and have sent him a message of welcome by wireless. I have also invited him to be the guest of the State during his stay. I feel that this is the least tribute which we could pay to Mr. Devoy, whose life has been spent in the country’s service.”²⁶⁷

Still, Devoy stuck with his intention of having a private visit and replied in the following manner: “I thank you for kind and cordial message of welcome and reciprocate good wishes. Will land in Cobh and will proceed immediately to relatives in Dublin. As my visit is entirely personal and for the Aonach Tailteann, I wish to avoid

²⁶⁴ Dooley, *The Greatest of ...*, 131.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 132.

²⁶⁶ Houses of the Oireachtas, Dáil debates, July 24, 1924, accessed November 20, 2012, <http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/1924/07/24/00032.asp>.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

public demonstration.”²⁶⁸ He may have wished this, but the government was rather determined to carry out their own plans regarding Devoy. He was received with a state welcome and military honors immediately as he disembarked from the passenger ship *President Harding* at Cobh, while in Dublin he was received by President Cosgrave. Devoy also made an official visit to the patriot’s plot at Glasnevin cemetery and ended up touring Ireland for nearly six weeks.²⁶⁹ At the Tailteann Games the Free State executives truly outdid themselves in terms of exploiting the Devoy persona. The games themselves were an attempt to create some sort of legacy for the Free State as a way of building a sense of nationhood. Similar to the Irish attempt to have the newly proclaimed state recognized internationally, the Free State government sought to gather an international audience for the games. Consequently, there were many attendees of Irish descent from a number of countries, but also many countries accepted the invitation by sending diplomats from France, Germany, Poland, Brazil, or Greece. John Devoy was among the official guests at the opening ceremony, whereby he was asked to present some prizes. The symbolic importance of Devoy’s presence could not be underestimated: he was seen a link between the “old” Ireland and now the “new” Free State, but at the same time, he represented the connection between Ireland and America. In Terence Dooley’s words: “Of even greater significance for the Irish Free State government was the fact that while Republicans were denying its legitimacy, the greatest of all republicans was now seen to be displaying his support.”²⁷⁰

On a personal level, this visit to Ireland (the chapter of which in Dooley’s biography was called “The last hurrah”²⁷¹) brought back countless memories for Devoy, yet also highlighted the fact that he was almost the sole survivor of his generation of Fenians. Most of the actors in the nationalist movement on both sides of the Atlantic were old enough to be his children, his immediate family long dead, while most of his close allies had also already passed away years before. Around the turn of the century, he received news in New York that his fiancée, Eliza Kenny had died. Therefore it very much came as a shock to him when, while Devoy was in Ireland in 1924, Eliza Kenny Kilmurry’s niece contacted him stating that Eliza was alive (see Eliza Kilmurry’s house

²⁶⁸ Dooley, *The Greatest of ...*, 133.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 133-134.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 137.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 121.

in Naas in Fig. 20.). The note, written to the address of John Devoy's nephew, indicated that it was Eliza's wish to meet her long-lost fiancée again. In a letter John arranged to meet her within a few days. The meeting was summarized in following manner:

When he arrived at the Kilmurry house on South Main Street, not far from where he had toiled as a clerk at Watkin's Brewery, Eliza greeted them while leaning on the arm of her niece. Victorian discretion and the ravages of age apparently ruled out an embrace, but neither Elizabeth Kenny Kilmurry nor John Devoy attempted to hide their emotions.

"John," she said in a voice loud enough for the deaf old man's ears, "why didn't you write? I waited for you for twelve years."

Devoy said nothing for a moment. Then, at last, he replied, "And I've been waiting for you all my life."²⁷²

They reminisced about long-lost times and familiar places. Unlike his hearing, John's memory of the surroundings was excellent, he even pointed out the exact spot of his family's cottage, long-demolished by then. "There is no house there now but I can put my finger on the spot," he told his niece and nephew.²⁷³ Today that site is marked with a John Devoy memorial.

Some presumed that Devoy would opt for spending his remaining years in Ireland, and local legend has it that John Devoy proposed to the now-widowed Eliza, yet she did not accept, and Devoy eventually left Ireland to return to New York. This time they did not break off correspondence, and there was a fairly regular exchange of letters between them. On one occasion John Devoy asked for a photograph, to which Eliza replied that she did not have one of herself. There was no professional photographer in Naas, thus she would have needed to make a trip to Dublin to have one taken, which, she believed she was too old for. The tone of the letters grew more and more intimate, at least judging by the form of address: from the initial "Dear John" it soon changed to "My Dear John," whereas the "Yours sincerely, E. Kilmurry" signing off mellowed to "With best love, your old friend, Eliza."²⁷⁴ The letters contained many descriptions about their respective daily lives, but also accounts of their ailments.

²⁷² Golway: *Irish Rebel*, 310.

²⁷³ Dooley, *The Greatest of ...*, 145.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 146.

However, their increasingly intimate correspondence was not to last very long, as Eliza's health deteriorated due to heart failure. John Devoy had originally made plans to visit Ireland – and Eliza – again in 1927, but Eliza died in February of that year. Devoy continued to keep in touch with Eliza's niece and in those letters she would express her gratitude to him for being so kind to her aunt: "She [Eliza] never forgot you. I don't wonder you are so good and kind."²⁷⁵ Eliza Kenny Kilmurry was buried in the local cemetery in the town of Naas (Fig. 21.).

After his visit to Ireland Devoy returned to New York and continued his tireless work in the service of a united Ireland. His health was also growing poorer with every year, and he underwent surgery on his weakening eyes. Since 1921 he had been living with two sisters with Cumann na mBan connections, as it would have been hardly possible for Devoy to be staying on his own, considering his increasing deafness and waning eyesight. He died on September 29, 1928 in Atlantic City, New Jersey. At the time of death Devoy was on a short break with a Harry Cunningham, a long-time friend.

He was laid to rest in Calvary Cemetery in New York, but only temporarily, as there were already plans underway by the newly-formed Devoy American Committee to have his remains sent over to Ireland. The committee demanded a private grave in Glasnevin cemetery in the Republican Plot, close to Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa's grave, which was eventually arranged. The Executive Council decided that the state would finance the funeral. Devoy's body was taken to Ireland aboard the *President Harding* with a small party of Irish-Americans accompanying the coffin. They arrived in Ireland on June 12, 1929, at Cobh then transported the coffin to Dublin. The remains lay in state in City Hall with thousands filing by and paying their respects. He was buried in Glasnevin Cemetery on Saturday, June 14, 1929. The oration at the graveside was given by Fr. Philip O'Donnell of Boston in the name of the American Committee. John Devoy was, he said, "a rebel, a soldier, a political prisoner, a writer, an editor, an orator, a statesman, [...] a plotter, a revolutionist, a physical force man, a dreamer, a man of action, an economist." He also repeated Patrick Pearse's description of Devoy as being "the greatest of the Fenians."²⁷⁶ The American Committee handed out John Devoy Funeral Medals to the immediate members of the Devoy family. Jim Devoy,

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 147.

²⁷⁶ Dooley, *The Greatest of ...*, 152.

nephew of John Devoy wore this medal (Fig. 22.) during John Devoy's funeral.²⁷⁷ In Fig. 23. John Devoy's nephews Jim and Peter are shown with the gravestone (Fig. 24.) not yet revealed. Devoy's funeral will be described in more detail in Chapter 6, as seen through the eyes of both the Irish and American newspapers. In terms of surviving family members, Jim Devoy was the last surviving nephew, and he and his wife Eileen, who lived in Sandymount, Dublin, in the late 1970s, had no children.²⁷⁸

Four decades after his death the Devoy Memorial Committee set out to make John Devoy's name known to every person in Ireland, by attaching his name to various Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) prizes and also an army apprentice school in Naas. They issued a commemorative booklet in 1964 (reprinted in 2009, presented in the literature chapter of this work), and erected a monument, a bronze full-face plaque at the site of Devoy's childhood home in 1965.²⁷⁹ In recent years the construction of a new road extension made it necessary to move the monument a few yards, but under the watchful eyes of local historians and members of the John Devoy Memorial Committee the monument is now restored to its original location (Fig. 25.).

The following two chapters will focus on Devoy in terms of his role as a revolutionary or diplomat, and how he was portrayed in the contemporary media of his day.

²⁷⁷ Author's email correspondence with Ormonde D. P. Waters, dated January 3, 2014.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Dooley, *The Greatest of ...*, 164.

Chapter 5 - Revolutionary or parliamentarian?

Previous chapters have already indicated how the struggle for Irish independence was moving between two extremes: all-out violent rebellion which would overthrow British rule in Ireland or peaceful parliamentary settlement bringing independence. This chapter will focus on Devoy's place on the sliding bar of the struggle for Irish independence.²⁸⁰ Throughout his political career, Devoy walked a precarious path between the two extremes. While some of the biographical information was already introduced in the preceding chapter, it was important to try to answer the question of whether Devoy was a die-hard revolutionary (wedded to physical force), or a constitutionalist, or a mix of both? Devoy *did* actually call himself a rebel in the title of his *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, thus the above question may seem superfluous. However, Devoy was precisely the type of rebel who also had a keen sense for when to remain a hard-liner, and when to resort to other means apart from violence. The "other means" in Devoy's arsenal principally comprised his genius for negotiation.

Devoy started out as a Fenian working in and around Dublin in the mid-1860s, helping to organize the planned Fenian insurrection, light-years away from any diplomatic work that he would later so skillfully employ. In 1865 he worked in the Irish Republican Brotherhood as the Chief organizer of the British Army stationed in Ireland. As mentioned earlier, in 1866 he was arrested, tried, and jailed. Receiving amnesty in 1871, he sailed to the United States where he continued his work in New York. His organizational skills were put to the test during the preparations for the *Catalpa* mission in 1874. After many adventures, the *Catalpa* returned triumphantly to New York in 1876, having successfully rescued Wilson and his five Fenian colleagues from incarceration in Australia. The *Catalpa* ship can be seen in a photograph in 1876, lying in dry dock in New Bedford (Fig. 26.). Although the rescue of the Fremantle Six did not bring Devoy and his fellow Fenians any closer to attaining the ultimate goal of an

²⁸⁰ Livia Szedmina, "John Devoy és az ír függetlenség," *A magyar tudomány napja a Délvidéken – 2011 kiadványa* - Vajdasági Magyar Tudományos Tanácskozás, Újvidék, Serbia, November 8, 2011, 279-294.

independent Ireland, nevertheless it *did* do the following: first, it had an enormous positive influence on the morale of Irish-American nationalists, since it was the first time in the long struggle for Irish freedom that the Fenians managed to successfully strike out against the British Empire. Second, it unequivocally proved to the world that John Devoy was a man who could “make things happen,” including extraordinary feats such as rescuing six men on the other side of the globe, which was (to many observers) truly miraculous. Third, it helped to confirm John Devoy in the belief that the path to Irish independence did not depend solely on violent insurrection, that other viable options might exist. This, in turn meant, reconsidering the implementation of traditional physical force Fenianism in favor of alternative solutions to achieve an independent Ireland. The question was, what was the best way, or ways, to achieve this?

The essential plan was generally agreed upon: financial help in the form of donations from Irish-America would be vital for any future successful struggle for Irish independence. The term “struggle” was deliberately left vague here: “struggle” could refer to a hoped-for successful insurrection (as the 1865/67 insurrection should have been) or the increasing social-economic struggle, aggravated by famine and the appallingly unbearable situation of rural societies. John Devoy attempted a balancing act between the violent and peaceful, between the revolutionary and negotiation-based elements within the Irish-American nationalist community. More and more he steered the U.S. wing of Fenianism towards the middle-ground, towards what could be achieved, rather than blindly lashing out against the British Empire by means of a bombing campaign and random acts of violence.

Rossa’s Skirmishing Fund

One of the most prominent representatives of the violent faction within the Clan was Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa. As mentioned in the biography chapter, Devoy and Rossa first met in prison, were released together, and ultimately made their way to the U.S. together aboard the *Cuba*. Both continued to pour their energies into achieving Irish independence. Yet despite this shared goal, they did not always see eye to eye, in fact, their approaches were diametrically opposed. Devoy was busy trying to make the marriage between the revolutionary and constitutional approach work, he increasingly adopted a less publicly “pro-violent” stance in order to win over U.S. public opinion to

the Irish cause. Meanwhile Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa was busy adopting a more hands-on approach, seeking a violent militant solution to achieve Irish independence by bombing Britain into submission. As a result, in December 1875 Rossa set up a fund for collecting money in support of the struggle and, rather bluntly, named it "Skirmishing Fund." It was endorsed by, and operated within the bounds of the newspaper *Irish World*. Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa explained the aims of the Fund as follows: "to subsidise the parties of skirmishers who 'would keep striking England year after year while the revolutionary organizations are preparing for the heavier work.'"²⁸¹ He also shed light on the reasons for his action, claiming that it had been five years since he had been out of prison, he was a member of two societies, yet in his view, their work was too slow, and he could not bear to see another five years pass this slowly.²⁸²

The initial reactions were positive, donations were considerable, and Richard Pigott (1835-1889), the Dublin editor voiced the view of many an Irishman (and Irish-American) in a letter to John Devoy dated March 18, 1876:

I think the Skirmishing idea of Rossa's is very good. There is a want of something to show that Ireland is still as desperately disaffected to English rule as ever [...] If an occasional prisoner were rescued or a police barrack seized it would at least show that there are some believers in the physical force theory still left in Ireland.²⁸³

While there was considerable support for Rossa's ventures, as this quote showed, there was also fierce resistance against it from many in the inner Fenian circles. John O'Leary reacted in an open letter stating that he did not want to take part in burning cities or other damages unless they were in conjunction with an open rising.²⁸⁴ Charles J. Kickham condemned the tone of Rossa's writing, yet also spoke out against O'Leary's public condemnation of Rossa.²⁸⁵ John O'Leary bitterly wrote to John Devoy: "We'd be so strong if we were all united. Then there's Rossa's lunacy. [...] I think Rossa has done more harm than all the rest of ye (or if you wish, any) have done good since we have left prison."²⁸⁶ His aversion did not abate with the passing of the

²⁸¹ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 141-142.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. I, 150.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 142.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 161.

years, in 1882 he still fumed about the “mad and bad notion” the Skirmishing Fund embodied.²⁸⁷

Devoy himself was highly critical of Rossa’s ideas (Rossa “[...] explained “Skirmishing” by allusions to capturing Princes, rescuing prisoners, etc. [...]”) and made a reference to their “own Skirmish on foot,” the *Catalpa* rescue mission which was underway simultaneously.²⁸⁸ Indeed, Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa’s increasingly erratic behavior was becoming difficult to handle and a risk to other ongoing Clan ventures. James O’Kelly summarized his annoyance in a letter to Devoy: “That “Skirmishing” idea must be dropped if we want to get money – the well-to-do respectables won’t touch it and with a little diplomacy they may be induced to come out handsomely I think.”²⁸⁹ Indeed, the money was badly needed for various projects, but the Fund’s name made it difficult to appeal to middle-class Irish-Americans, in particular to the so-called “lace-curtain” Irish-Americans, who were upwardly mobile and had worked hard to progress up the social ladder in U.S. society. This “lace-curtain” Irish-American element occupied the political middle-ground, and were not overtly committed to radical causes (especially dynamiting English cities), but nevertheless sympathetic to the concept of Irish self-determination and justice for Ireland.

In March 1877 two of the five trustees resigned and Devoy seized the opportunity to have himself elected to the Board of trustees with the help of Dr. William Carroll, who had already been on the board.²⁹⁰ The new trustees were: Dr Carroll, James Reynolds, Thomas Clarke Luby, Thomas Francis Bourke, John J. Breslin, Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa, and John Devoy. When they assumed control over the Fund, they issued a public statement in the *Irish World* announcing that the name had been changed from “Skirmishing Fund” (described previously as “very much of a scarecrow”) to “National Fund.”²⁹¹ It was also underlined that the collected money would not be used for “skirmishing” but for general nationalist purposes, and a repeated appeal was made to subscribers for further donations. The name change was vital not only because it would make the fund more attractive to the middle classes, yet also because it was a

²⁸⁷ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. I, 132.

²⁸⁸ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. II, 143.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 359.

²⁹⁰ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 94-95.

²⁹¹ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. II, 557.

reference to the most significant movement in the 19th century. The term “national” emphasized the Irish nation’s, as well as the Irish-American community’s struggle for independence from Britain. At the same time the expression “national” was probably in the spirit of the nationalist aspirations which were ongoing in most of Europe since the mid-19th century. With this bold move Devoy and his associates helped steer Irish-America away from Rossa’s radical agenda, and towards the middle-ground. Nonetheless, this public Fenian turn-about was indeed very much for the public. In the majority of the Devoy-related writings of this period published subsequently in *Devoy’s Post Bag*, the correspondents continued referring to it by its original name, “Skirmishing Fund” even after it had been renamed.

In a revealing letter to Thomas Francis Bourke, O’Donovan Rossa argued his side of the story, stating that he had not so much a problem with the change of name of the Fund, but the altered implementation of the donations:

[...] I cannot consent to have the Skirmishing policy changed. You say of me and others in Thursday’s Herald ‘He has talked of the destruction of cities and arsenals without regard for any rules of modern warfare or the restraints of modern ideas. All this talk is both foolish and immoral and no one sympathises with it except some ignorant persons who do not know any better.’ Here you stigmatise as ‘ignorant’ every contributor to the Skirmishing Fund.²⁹²

Rossa’s point may well be seen as a valid one, and the name change was certainly not about shifting the course of the National Fund completely away from violence. It was, instead, about steering it towards a more flexible form of republicanism, in fact, Devoy was steering it right out into the mainstream. Devoy made sure that promising plans, such as the design of a Fenian submarine would be supported from the National Fund, though he also had his eyes set on a new type of “revolution,” namely Land Reform. This was partly the cause for the growing rift between Rossa and Devoy. Devoy found it hard to accept the fact that certain amounts of money had been misappropriated. The charges brought against Rossa were: [...] “of the most serious nature, including misappropriation of the funds, disclosures of projects to improper parties and constant drunkenness ...”²⁹³ This was reason enough to have Rossa removed from the Clan.

²⁹² Ibid., 323.

²⁹³ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. I, 316.

The editors of *Devoy's Post Bag* summarized the differences between Devoy and Rossa as follows: "The clash between Devoy and Rossa was a clash between the revolutionary who believed firmly in a secret organization controlled by strict discipline and the individualist who insisted on going his own way and found the control of an organization or a party too irksome to endure."²⁹⁴ The two would not speak for decades, though they made up shortly before Rossa's death. As indicated in the previous chapter, during his illness in his old age, O'Donovan Rossa's wife Mary contacted Devoy and begged him to come and visit her husband. Rossa himself also sent a short note to his one-time friend: "I am home and in bed every day. I got a fall a few years ago and cannot walk out. 'Tis a lonesome kind of life."²⁹⁵

O'Botherams (as Rossa was also called) died in 1915 and, as described in the previous chapter, his funeral was used as a catalyst to step up preparations for the Easter Rising. Yet long before his death united the revolutionary Irish and Irish-Americans in action on Easter 1916, his dynamite campaign equally united the Irish and Irish-Americans, though mainly in objection. He was one of the most vocal proponents of the use of extreme measures during what became known as the "Dynamite Wars." But before turning our focus to the dynamite attacks in Britain, let us first look at the other possible route towards achieving independence, namely non-violent parliamentarianism.

New political alliances

As already mentioned, when Michael Davitt walked into the premises of *The New York Herald*, he was looking for James O'Kelly, but instead of O'Kelly he met John Devoy, whose name Davitt had seen carved into the doorframe of his Millbank prison cell some years earlier. While the initial connection was made based on their Fenian activities, their future cooperation would mark one of the greatest joint ventures between a strictly physical force-based revolutionary organization and an organization driven by social-constitutional reform. It was also Devoy's attempt at dragging out Clan na Gael into the mainstream. Concerning the significance of their cooperation, Golway stated the following:

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 315.

²⁹⁵ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 407.

If Devoy had died in 1882, his career a ceaseless agitation cut short by nearly half a century, he would nevertheless have earned a prominent place in the history of America's fight for Irish freedom. The years 1878 to 1882 produced in Ireland one of the nineteenth century's greatest social revolutions, and it was founded, to a great extent, upon the partnership Devoy formed with Michael Davitt in America during the summer and fall of 1878.²⁹⁶

It was becoming increasingly clear that rent, tenure, and land ownership were the key issues to resolving the Irish situation. Upon O'Leary's request Devoy sailed to Europe and spent some time in France, Britain and Ireland in the year 1878-9, when he was approached by Michael Davitt with the message that Charles Stewart Parnell wished to meet him. Charles Stewart Parnell's appearance on the Irish political horizon opened up new opportunities for action since he was a totally new type of Irish political figure. In historian Terry Golway's words, "He could not be caricatured as an emotional and unstable Celtic chieftain. He spoke the English language like an Englishman, yet wore his Anglophobia like the heirloom it was."²⁹⁷ Also, Parnell's rise on the political scene coincided with the ever-growing need for Irish politicians to be accepted and approved of not only in Ireland and Britain, but in the United States, as well. Devoy convened with Parnell and Davitt and the meeting was to be the first step towards an extraordinary collaboration. Since Devoy traveled to Europe as an envoy of the IRB, he duly possessed the power to commit Irish-American Fenians to supporting Parnell's Land Reform efforts. The relationship between the nationalists and Parnell was never officially formalized, but a telegram sent on October 24, 1878 by Devoy set down the conditions according to which Parnell could count on Irish-American support.²⁹⁸ In fact, the Fenians sent an open cablegram to Parnell, whose contents and conditions were simultaneously published in *The New York Herald*. It was signed by these Clan members: Dr William Carroll, John J. Breslin, General F. F. Millen, John Devoy, and Patrick Mahon. When Davitt found out about it, he was alarmed at such "imprudence of well-known revolutionaries, including three Trustees of the Skirmishing Fund."²⁹⁹ This imprudence also meant that the collaboration became widely known within the Irish-

²⁹⁶ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 103.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 115.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 108.

²⁹⁹ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. I, 370-371.

American community, and left all participants vulnerable to future attacks in connection with this cooperation.

John Devoy offered the following definition of the New Departure: it is a “combination between all sections of Irish nationalists.” He further added that “no party could win the support of Ireland without pledging itself to “radical” reform.”³⁰⁰ However, this cooperation was not an unconditional agreement. According to Devoy’s account of the June 1, 1879 meeting between himself, Parnell and Michael Davitt, Parnell agreed to four conditions:

Irish members of parliament would do or say nothing to hurt Fenianism or to discredit the notion that physical force might be necessary to win independence; that ‘the demand for Self-Government’ should not be publicly defined; that the final solution of the land question was peasant ownership; and the Irish members of parliament should form their own, independent party.³⁰¹

Whether or not Parnell *did* in fact agree to these conditions remains to be argued, since even Michael Davitt, who had been present at the meeting resolutely rejected the claim that Devoy and Parnell had agreed to any formal alliance with Irish-American “militants.” A peculiar follow-up to these events more than a decade later was presented by John Devoy’s speech upon Parnell’s death, when he openly spoke about their negotiations and Parnell’s vision of the road to independence. Those present at the memorial were surprised by Devoy’s account, and it triggered a public denial by Davitt published in *The New York Times* some days later.³⁰²

The significance of the New Departure lay not in its novelty, for there had been other movements in Irish history called “New Departure,” but in its effort to form a close cooperation between the revolutionary Clan na Gael organization (led by Devoy), the Land League (led by social reformer, Michael Davitt), and the constitutional Irish Home Rule party (led by Protestant parliamentarian Charles Stewart Parnell). The New Departure caused the Fenians to temporarily move away from the doctrine of physical force towards the constitutional mainstream.

³⁰⁰ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 111.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 120.

³⁰² “The Two Irish Factions; Parnell's Vacant Seat to be a Battle Ground. Michael Davitt's Reception,” *The New York Times*, October 24, 1891.

Davitt traveled to the U.S. on a lecture tour and kept in close contact with leading Clan members. Before his second lecture organized in New York, a meeting was held at Sweeney's Hotel, with the Committee (all were Clan na Gael members) in which they agreed upon a resolution, that would act as a forerunner of the New Departure policy. Devoy recorded the following points:

The first demanded National Independence for Ireland, another stated that the land of Ireland belonged to the people of Ireland alone, and that the only final solution of the Irish Land Question was the abolition of landlordism and the substitution of a system by which no one would stand between the State and the tiller of the soil – a solution which an Irish Republic alone could affect.³⁰³

Devoy further explained that no member of the Committee was opposed to this program, and that, in fact, these points were simply a return to the policy of John Mitchel and Fintan Lalor (Séamas Fionntán Ó Leathlobhair, 1807-1849) that James Stephens had abandoned.³⁰⁴

As the New Departure progressed, very soon the lines between the constitutional and the revolutionary in Irish politics became increasingly blurred, as on one occasion Skirmishing Fund money was lent to Davitt. The fact that this loan was made public by the Clan caused much annoyance with both Davitt and Parnell. It became known as “Mr. Jacob's Advertisement” and included the sentence:

We do not wish to provoke a hopeless resistance, but wholesale evictions at the bayonet's point are sure to end in bloodshed ... In the event of such a conflict the funds at our disposal shall be used to enable the people to stand by their homes, strike down the robber-rule of the landlord, and to inflict speedy punishment for acts of cruelty and murder.³⁰⁵

Parnell emphasized why the publication of such a text was seen as extremely harmful by saying that it would scare off “those on this side who would otherwise jog along and be ‘educated.’”³⁰⁶ This incident was a telling indication of the fact that the line dividing constitutional actions and armed force was rather thin. There were other occurrences that indicated, that many individuals, including Davitt and Devoy, believed

³⁰³ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. I, 346.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 460-461.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 461.

land agitation would help ignite an eventual insurrection in Ireland, such as this quote from a letter from Michael Davitt to John Devoy dated February 6, 1880: “Webster [Davitt] visited the districts where disturbances arose some weeks ago and found a great and general desire among the people to become possessed of material [arms].”³⁰⁷ Another letter, of the same date, was sent to Devoy by Dr. William Carroll, expressing the exact same idea, namely that it was the right moment to arm those being evicted. Carroll was even ready to call a general convention of the United Brotherhood on both sides of the Atlantic, informing all about the circumstances and leaving them with the right to decide.³⁰⁸ These lines of thought highlighted just how entwined parliamentary agitation, land reform, and revolutionary activities had become during this period.

Although Parnell did not want to resolutely commit himself to cooperation with an infamous revolutionary organization, (in later accounts he would deny having made a solid commitment to Devoy), nevertheless he understood the importance of financial and moral support by the increasingly influential Irish-American community. Referring to Parnell’s first speech given in New York, *The New York Times* quoted him on the all-important role he assigned to Irish-Americans: “The American people occupy today a proud position. They are virtually the arbiters of this Irish question.”³⁰⁹

The reactions to the Land League varied, with several leading figures of the IRB staunchly opposed to the abandonment of the physical force doctrine for various constitutional goals. John O’Leary was one such figure. John Devoy recorded O’Leary’s attitude during his visit to the United States in 1880 as follows: “He pleaded for the old Fenian policy of abstention from all Constitutional agitation and described the programme of the Land League as unsound and immoral.”³¹⁰ There were similar voices from within the United States, as well. Dr. William Carroll relayed to Devoy that Michael Boland, one of the rising figures of the Chicago branch of Clan na Gael, was of the opinion that having dutifully aided Parnell during his American tour, he and his men wished to return to their “own proper work.” Carroll also remarked that he had received half a dozen letters with messages along the same line.”³¹¹ Thus, Clan members

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 483.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 485.

³⁰⁹ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 126.

³¹⁰ Devoy, *Recollections*, 286.

³¹¹ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. I, 508.

continued to view their revolutionary work as their primary field of activity, and any other, social justice, or charity-type work (such as land reform), was rather seen as distracting them from more important activities. Although John Devoy was a supporter of Parnell, he never became a blind follower, as he pointed out to Carroll in June 1880: “I have my own faults to find with Parnell, but I will stand by the Land League, knowing, as I do, that Parnell has only *one* voice in its management.”³¹² Interestingly enough, despite the troubles that their cooperation had to face, including the political controversy over Parnell’s private life, there were a very limited number of people whom Devoy stayed loyal to, but one exception was Charles Stewart Parnell, moreover, Devoy continued to call himself a Parnellite later in life.³¹³

As the newly-elected President of the Irish National Land League, Parnell traveled to the United States in early 1880 as part of a tour. The tour took him to the East and upper Midwest to raise money for the Land League, for famine relief and to secure support for Home Rule. By the time of his arrival in the U.S., famine had, in fact, become a crucial issue, especially due to several crop failures throughout rural Ireland. Parnell wanted to establish closer connections between the Irish immigrant communities and Ireland. During his American visit, he repeatedly met with Devoy, who put the entire organizational resources of the Clan na Gael at Parnell’s disposal in order to help manage his tour. A great amount of organizing took place before the event and received considerable attention by the local press. *The New York Times* reported on the preparations in detail, including the meeting in December 1879 where decisions were made regarding the location and invitations for the lecture. “Resolved, That an Executive Committee be appointed to [...] make all necessary arrangements, and that it be requested to invite the co-operation of the Irish national, literary, social, benevolent, and temperance societies.”³¹⁴

On January 4, 1880, Parnell gave his first speech in New York at the Madison Square Garden. On the day of the event, a crowd of more than 7,000 people gathered to hear Parnell speak. On stage he was joined by his mother and sisters, all of whom

³¹² Ibid., 534.

³¹³ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 168-171.

³¹⁴ “Mr. Parnell's Intended Visit.; Preparing to Receive the Irish Agitator a Hall to be Hired,” *The New York Times*, December 18, 1879, with reports on further preparations published in *The New York Times* editions of December 29 and 30, 1879.

played an active role in organizing his tour. Parnell's aim was to raise money not only for promoting his political organization, but also for famine relief. The intention behind these two separate funds was to obtain financial support from the wealthier, middle-class Irish-Americans, the afore-mentioned "lace-curtain" Irish-Americans, who had no strong affinity to revolutionary causes, but who readily supported the humanitarian causes of famine relief and equitable land distribution.³¹⁵ This line of thought was in sync with Devoy's aversion to O'Donovan Rossa's unabashed promotion for violence as the sole means of achieving Irish independence, which was even mirrored in the choice of the name for the fund (*Skirmishing* Fund).

Parnell's speech was well-received in New York and this triumphal reception paved the way for him, to continue with a series of speaking engagements in as many as sixty-two cities. Indeed, so important was the Irish-American voting bloc in U.S. politics during this era, that Parnell was officially invited to speak before the U.S. House of Representatives. As indicated before, such an invitation was made only three times before, one of whom was Lajos Kossuth. Given the fact that Parnell was not a head of state, but only the leader of a minority party in the British political system, this is a graphic example of just how powerful the Irish-American community was in U.S. politics at this time. In early March 1880, Parnell's resoundingly successful U.S. lecture tour was cut short when he was called back to Ireland because of the sudden dissolution of Parliament, as *The New York Times* reported on March 11, 1880. Parnell summed up the results of his tour as follows:

[...] everywhere the cause which we represent has been received with the most extraordinary and spontaneous outbursts of feeling and sympathy. I had anticipated a good reception but had no conception of the extraordinary depth of feeling shown everywhere since our arrival. As regards the financial results of our mission, we have collected \$200,000, and of this sum about \$120,000 has actually reached Ireland up to the present date. I see on every side a strong desire to assist the National League of Ireland and would urge the necessity of forming branches in every city.³¹⁶

³¹⁵ Ely M. Janis, "Anointing the 'Uncrowned King of Ireland:' Charles Stewart Parnell's 1880 American Tour and the Creation of a Transatlantic Land League Movement," *German Historical Institute*, Bulletin Supplemental 5 (2008), 28. accessed May 8, 2010, http://www.ghi-de.org/files/publications/bu_supp/supp5/supp5_023.pdf.

³¹⁶ "Mr. Parnell on His Way Home. His Return to This City from Montreal – An Address to His Admirers," *The New York Times*, March 11, 1880.

Another organization with the aim to raise money for the Land League was the Ladies' Land League founded by Charles Stewart Parnell's sisters, "patriot poet" Fanny and Anna Parnell in 1879. The sisters' organization continued with their work even as the men's counterpart was hampered by arrests and imprisonment. With Anna Parnell based in Ireland as the Ladies' Land League president, Fanny remained in New York and campaigned relentlessly for Irish-American financial support.

Just before his departure for Ireland, in March 1880, Parnell suggested establishing an American Land League. For a hard-line nationalist such as John Devoy, the proposal of having an Irish-American organization under Dublin control was inconceivable. He expressed his concerns in a subsequent Clan na Gael circular: "No pains should be spared to secure the control of these [Land League] movements. [...] Lest these [Land League] organizations may at any time prove dangers rather than assistants to our work, we should so secure control of their management as to be able to disband them if that should ever become necessary."³¹⁷ Devoy's attitude toward this perceived infringement, was to display a fair amount of distrust towards any organization that had not been infiltrated by Clan members.

In the first two years of the 1880s, the American Land League proved to be highly successful, it established 1500 branches throughout the U.S. and managed to raise about half a million dollars in donations. Such success would undoubtedly have vindicated the three principal New Departure leaders (Devoy, Davitt, and Parnell) in their belief that it was imperative to unite all sections of the Irish-American community (from radical to "lace curtain") behind a unifying cause, land reform.³¹⁸ However, there was no "one single right way" to achieve freedom for Ireland. At the time when O'Leary was heavily opposed to abandoning the physical force doctrine, and Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa was preparing for dynamite attacks in Britain, even Parnell managed to surprise the public with his flexible attitude towards physical force. He seemed to show himself supportive of a non-peaceful solution with his comment made in *The New York Herald* in 1880: "A true revolutionary movement in Ireland should, in my opinion, partake of both a constitutional and an illegal character. It should be both an open and a

³¹⁷ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 127.

³¹⁸ Livia Szedmina, "Harc az ír függetlenségért az óceán két partján: amerikai kapcsolatok Charles Stewart Parnell politikai életében," *Korunk*, Vol. III, November, 2010.

secret organization, using the constitution for its own purposes, but taking advantage of its secret combination.”³¹⁹

The use of physical force

The paths of the violent and parliamentary methods were never controlled by “switch,” so that it would be *either* the revolutionary option *or* the constitutional solution. As indicated in the previous chapter, the plan of arming the Zulus in their war against the British was discussed both in Clan meetings and in correspondence that was simultaneous with the work of the Land League. With the person of James J. O’Kelly, the lines between physical armed force and parliamentarianism were particularly blurred, as he became an elected member of the parliament in 1885, yet still kept up his revolutionary work.³²⁰ He stated his feelings regarding the rejection of Zulu armament in the following manner: “The people here don’t receive the proposition well evidently not recognising its importance or feasibility. I consider this one of the saddest blunders yet made. The S.A. business is one of the most promising projects of the many that are ‘talked about.’”³²¹ In the same document that introduced a Zulu cipher, O’Kelly continued to argue for aiding Zulu fighters with weapons by pointing out that if some conflict were to break out in Ireland, the better chance they would stand if there were a great number of troops engaged in battles far from England.

As already argued, Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa occupied the ultra-extremist end of Fenianism. He was the archetypal Fenian fundamentalist. He staunchly believed that the key to an independent Ireland lay not in form of land reform as Parnell had formulated with Davitt and Devoy, but in military force – pure and simple. Richard Pigott quoted Rossa’s words in the *Irishman*:

I know nothing of the ‘New Departure.’ I know myself, and I know that since I came to that knowledge, I have tried to work for Irish liberty through *fight* – not through the

³¹⁹ Janis, “Anointing ...” 27.

³²⁰ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. II, 141. In fact, O’Kelly would liberally discuss the topics of smuggling arms in his letters, then go on and sign them as an MP, as for example in his letter to Devoy dated September 21, 1882.

³²¹ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. I, 392.

English Parliament, and though I am not well able to fight now, I believe that it is through fight alone that we can get independence for Ireland.³²²

Veering away from Rossa's Fenian fundamentalism; in contrast, Parnell's nationalist flexibility was best evidenced in a 1906 *The Gaelic American* article in which Devoy claimed that Parnell was well aware of the armed rising planned throughout the negotiations over the New Departure, however, he did not want to have an insurrection without adequate means, thus ensuring failure.³²³ In a similar vein, Davitt also seemed to comprehend the versatile nature of his cooperating New Departure partners. He informed James O'Kelly that he believed Parnell would benefit from such company: "I am desirous that Parnell should be in your hands while out there. [...] I look upon you as a medium between the Revolutionary and the Moderate parties out there – that is one who can command the confidence of both, and it is in the hands of such a man that Parnell should be placed."³²⁴ Again, it must be reiterated what an important role was delegated to Clan leaders, i.e. in this case, O'Kelly – he was to act as a link between the parliamentarian Parnell and Clan na Gael, an inherently violence-promoting secret organization, which by the early 1880s openly supported land reform, while simultaneously running guns in secret to Ireland. In later years, the British spy, known to the Clan as Henri Le Caron (1841-1894),³²⁵ also alleged that Parnell knew of and supported an armed insurrection; his claims were published in *The Times* Special Commission report.³²⁶

The Fenian, William Mackey Lomasney's letter to John Devoy, dated February 18, 1881, shed further light on the very fine line dividing the revolutionary element from the constitutional one during this era. Lomasney contacted Parnell and reported the following to Devoy:

I feel he [Parnell] is eminently deserving of our support, and that he means to go as far as we do in pushing the business. I had Knox [John O'Leary] also go and see him. He

³²² Ibid., 395.

³²³ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 3.

³²⁴ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. I, 456.

³²⁵ Also known as Thomas Billis Beach, he betrayed the Canada invasion of 1870; went on to join Clan na Gael and support Sullivan. Le Caron gave evidence to the 1889 Special Commission, thus revealing his true identity.

³²⁶ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 85-86.

told him the same as myself, that as soon as he secured the means he would start in business with us, and smash up the opposition firm.³²⁷

The fact that Lomasney, who would a short while later play a vital role in the dynamite campaign, claimed that Parnell would “go as far as we do,” again highlighted the fact that the physical-force-based course of action was never abandoned. Though, how this course of action was to be pursued, was an entirely different matter.

On January 14, 1880 one of the more militant factions of the Fenians led by Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, caused an explosion near Manchester, England, killing a young boy. Rossa's actions were widely criticized, including by Devoy. Even though he condemned the timing of the explosion, he was hardly a person to reject the use of violence on principle. Two days after the Manchester attack, Devoy was reported to have included the following in his speech to a New York branch of the American Land League:

A local eviction, a collision with soldiers may ensue, and our people may be shot down in multitudes. It is here that the offices of the American Land League will be called into requisition. Will we, then, stand idly by and see our people and country devastated, and content ourselves with enthusiastic resolutions and sympathies? ... No, for every Irishman murdered we will take in reprisal the life of a British Minister. For every hundred Irishmen murdered we will sacrifice the lives of the entire British Ministry.³²⁸

Whether Devoy's motivation for such an incendiary tone of voice was merely a show of rage at Rossa's impatient action and the portrayal of the Clan as “inactive,” or possibly the need to capture the public's attention, remains up for debate. However, for the most part, Devoy was more moderate in tone than the above statement indicated. In most of his public utterances or written opinions, he specifically rejected sporadic acts of violence against the British. The Phoenix Park Murders in May 1882, when the chief secretary Lord Frederick Cavendish (1836-1882) and the permanent under-secretary Thomas Henry Burke (1829-1882), were fatally stabbed in Dublin's Phoenix Park, shocked many. The site of the murders is still humbly marked by the victims' families with a cross filled in with white pebbles (Fig. 27.). Following the act, Devoy was quick to publicly condemn the savage killings and to state that Clan na Gael had no connection with those responsible, and that “the two extremist organs in Ireland and

³²⁷ Ibid., 40.

³²⁸ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 132.

America roundly condemned the Invincibles.”³²⁹ Others voiced a similar concern at Rossa’s actions, which just added to his already existing reputation of being an erratic, trigger-happy nationalist. The nicknames “dear old bomb-thrower” and “disturber of meetings” as used by John Boyle O’Reilly in correspondence with Rossa were certainly well-earned.³³⁰

In the meantime, while Devoy tried to steer the public face of Irish republicanism towards more mainstream positions, Rossa’s men continued with their bombing campaign, further infuriating Devoy and his associates. Lomasney was also highly critical of Rossa’s bombing plans, calling them “exceedingly ridiculous and futile efforts” and “insane designs.”³³¹ He also disapproved of the bombers themselves for not having sufficient scientific knowledge for performing successful bombing attacks. Lomasney raged:

[...] they are such stupid blundering fools that they make our cause appear imbecile and farcical. When the fact becomes known that those half-idiotic attempts have been made by men professing to be patriotic Irishmen what will the world think but that Irish revolutionists are a lot of fools and ignoramuses, men who do not understand the first principles of the art of war, the elements of chemistry or even the amount of explosive material necessary to remove or destroy an ordinary brick or stone wall.³³²

It was hard to read this quotation and not see a hint of irony in one bomber criticizing the actions of another, solely on scientific grounds. Yet, as historian Shane Kenna stated, the use of dynamite was becoming more and more wide-spread and correct instructions for its application were freely circulated at the time.³³³ Lomasney’s bombing plans, however, were not sanctioned by the Revolutionary Directory, which caused a fair amount of friction between the Irish and Irish-American organizations. Devoy’s skills as a diplomat and flexible negotiator were, again, in great demand. He pleaded with them to maintain the union between Clan and the Revolutionary Directory: “We have a chance of going smoothly now and of doing more effective work during the

³²⁹ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. II, 178.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 228.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 51-52.

³³² *Ibid.*

³³³ Shane Kenna, “‘One skilled scientist is worth an army’ – The Fenian Dynamite campaign 1881-85,” *The Irish History*, (February 13, 2012) accessed April 21, 2013, <http://www.theirishstory.com/2012/02/13/one-skilled-scientist-is-worth-an-army-the-fenian-dynamite-campaign-1881-85/#.UXOwPUong2c>.

next six months than we have done during the whole period of our existence. If our time is to be again taken up in squabbling it would be equivalent to a break-up.”³³⁴

Financing a Fenian submarine

Thus far this thesis cited various examples of how John Devoy devised an innovative and unorthodox interpretation of traditional Fenian militancy, in order to further the cause of Irish freedom. Two examples included: first, his 1876 *Catalpa* success, when he convinced the Clan to finance the rescue of six Fenian prisoners in Western Australia; and second, his successful alignment of the Fenian movement (in as much as it could be aligned) behind the New Departure and land reform in the 1878-79 period. However, perhaps the most innovative and colorful example of Devoy’s thinking “outside-the-box” occurred in the late 1870s, when he successfully secured Clan na Gael financial backing for the construction of an under-water Fenian torpedo-boat (i.e. a submarine). This Fenian submarine was to be constructed by an Irishman named, John Philip Holland (1840-1914), and be used to sink British warships.

John Holland was an inventor of Irish parentage who developed several prototypes for a submarine. He first submitted his designs to the U.S. Navy, who promptly rejected them. Yet after several successful dives made in the Passaic River in Paterson, New Jersey, Holland eventually won the support of Irish-American nationalists and Clan na Gael. The financial assistance from the Clan enabled him to resign from his teaching position at St. John’s Catholic School in Paterson, New Jersey and devote his full attention to building submarines. The aim was to build a submarine that would hold three people.

John Devoy and John Breslin (of *Catalpa* mission fame) first met John Holland at a reception for the *Catalpa* rescue in 1876. Devoy realized that by funding such a promising technical advancement, the organization could attain a technological edge over the British and U.S. authorities, and could use it to their advantage. Dr. William Carroll also backed this experiment which he termed “the salt water enterprise.” He stated: “The salt water enterprise I fully endorse. We *can* do it and we mean to try.”³³⁵ An earlier model, the *Holland Boat No. I* was demonstrated to the Fenians in the Passaic

³³⁴ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. II, 19.

³³⁵ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. I, 230.

River, in Paterson, New Jersey, on June 6, 1878, and although far from effective, it was convincing enough for the Fenian Brotherhood to provide further funding. The development phase was financed by money from the Skirmishing Fund, with John Breslin in charge of the work, who was also paid \$1,000 for his labor. In the period between 1876 and 1881, the Skirmishing Fund Trustees spent \$60,000 on the project.³³⁶ Eventually, John Holland presented the *Holland II*, the submarine that the press labeled the “*Fenian Ram*,” and it was launched in 1881. It was a three-man submarine, its structure 31 feet long, had a top surface speed of 9 knots and included a nine-inch pneumatic gun to be used to attack ships.³³⁷ After some initial testing the submarine was subjected to trials in the Hudson River. It could submerge as deep as 50 feet. It was planned that the “violent” implementation of this submarine would involve sending it out into the harbor to place explosive devices onto the hulls of British warships without being noticed. Holland carried out “several successful demonstrations of the pneumatic gun, projecting a dummy warhead both underwater and through the air to distances of several hundred yards.”³³⁸

However, due to financing problems within the Clan and a dispute over payment between the Clan and Holland the funding was discontinued. The dispute was solved in a rather unconventional manner: in November 1883, the Fenians stole the *Fenian Ram* and transported it to New Haven, Connecticut, but later came to realize that none of them knew how to operate the submersible, and Holland, quite understandably, refused to help. Thus the submarine ended up in a warehouse, stripped of its engine, unused for a number of years, until it was transferred to Paterson Park and eventually, in 1980, put on display inside the Paterson Museum (Fig. 28.).³³⁹ Holland would continue to perfect his construction until finally the U.S. government showed interest, bought his design, and commissioned it under the name *USS Holland* in 1900. The *Fenian Ram* was, nonetheless, given another chance at aiding the Irish cause, this time in a less

³³⁶ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. I, 471.

³³⁷ Specifications of Fenian Ram given on this website, accessed April 22, 2013, <http://www.williammaloney.com/Aviation/FenianRam/index.html>.

³³⁸ Edward C. Whitman, “John Holland: Father of the Modern Submarine,” *Undersea Warfare*, Summer 2003 (Vol. 5, No. 4) 21-31, accessed April 22, 2013, http://www.navy.mil/navydata/cno/n87/usw/issue_19/holland2.htm.

³³⁹ Biographical information on Holland given in Clare County Library homepage, accessed April 22, 2013, <http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/people/holland.htm>.

confrontational form. In 1916 it was exhibited at Madison Square Garden to raise money for victims of the 1916 Easter Rising.³⁴⁰

Return to violence

Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa was not the only vocal proponent of the application of physical force in order to achieve freedom for Ireland. The following statement was made by the Chicago-based Clan na Gael member, Michael Boland, when he spoke out against Devoy's lecture tour, claiming that he [Devoy] should organize a revolution instead of just giving talks. This 1880 comment actually signaled the beginnings of the Triangle's push for violence:

A battle within the law is a matter of those Irishmen who have faith in the chin music of parliaments. I regret to see you lending yourself to a business that will entail humiliation and defeat upon you country. We cannot fight, we are not ready. [...] I have seen much fighting in my time, but this is the first time I had ever heard of the enemy and some outside gentleman making the arrangements.³⁴¹

There was a clear sound of impatience in this letter, as Boland was realistic enough to know that the conditions for a full-blown insurrection were not right, but then, neither was Devoy's New Departure bearing visible fruits at this early stage. Later, in early 1881, Devoy made public his views on violence in his speech in Holyoke, Massachusetts, which was later heavily criticized by O'Donovan Rossa, O'Leary, as well as Sir William Harcourt. In that speech Devoy stated the following:

Ireland's opportunity will come when England is engaged in a desperate struggle with some European power or European combination or when the flame of insurrection has spread through her Indian Empire, and her strength and resources are strained. Under present circumstances Ireland cannot fight England. I wish she could and I hope to see the day when she can. It is a humiliating confession to make, but we must recognise the facts, and there is no fact to-day more patent than Ireland is not in the position to fight England.³⁴²

³⁴⁰ John Philip Holland biography, accessed April 22, 2013, <http://www.reocities.com/pentagon/barracks/1401/>.

³⁴¹ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 13.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 42-43.

While Devoy indicated Ireland's inability to fight, it certainly did not bring any decline in violence in the 1880s. When Clan na Gael was taken over by the aforementioned Chicago-based triumvirate consisting of Alexander Sullivan (Fig. 28.), Michael Boland, and Denis Feely, it meant a dramatic return to the promotion of violence (and the total renunciation of anything constitutional). It began rather inconspicuously, when Alexander Sullivan had Patrick Egan, Secretary of the Land League, confer to him nearly half of the financial means of the League in early 1882. Prior to this handover, Sullivan asked for Devoy's opinion on demanding money from the Land League to be used "for the purpose of retaliating on the English Government for the coercion in Ireland."³⁴³ Devoy opposed the idea, although he advised that it only made sense to ask for a large sum, which Sullivan did. However, Devoy was under the impression that Parnell, as President of the League had not been consulted. By March 1883 Clan members managed to infiltrate the ranks of the American Land League. Alexander Sullivan was elected president both of the public League, as well as the covert Clan. Devoy gave up his seat on the Revolutionary Directory during this period, and also resigned from the League's board. He did so because he intended for the moment to concentrate fully on his journalistic endeavors. He was increasingly discovering that there were considerable advantages to having a public medium to voice his opinions in.³⁴⁴

As Devoy gave up his central position with the Clan, the money from the National Fund, as well as further donations, were all increasingly channeled into "active work," as Sullivan boldly termed it. These were no small sums, either. In later years Devoy estimated that "during the stormy years of 1881 to 1888 [...] the Clan raised half a million dollars."³⁴⁵ Very soon the results of Sullivan's support for "active work" became quite obvious when a number of Clan members were arrested in England with a considerable amount of explosives. Among those arrested was the already mentioned Thomas Clarke, who would later take a prominent role in organizing the 1916 Easter Rising. Golway argued that it seemed reasonable to assume that Devoy knew little of the details of the bombing campaigns in London, especially, since the Clan's executive circle had been reduced to only three people, and its activities centered in Chicago,

³⁴³ Ibid., 232.

³⁴⁴ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 144-145.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 156.

away from Devoy's New York base.³⁴⁶ However, the fact that the Clan played a prominent role in these attacks was beyond dispute, as Sullivan declared that he had sent Lomasney and John Daly to England with the mission to blow up London Bridge. John Daly's case, though, was not completely clear, as "Daly certainly on his return to the United States in 1898 declined to support the Triangle and sided with Devoy."³⁴⁷ In a letter to Devoy, John Daly complained about feeling betrayed by the organization, as well as Parnell, and even bitterly accused Devoy: "[...] you never had time for anything or anybody."³⁴⁸

The Triangle years (1881 to 1888) brought almost a decade of violent attacks against England. Because of the Triangle's near-dictatorship of the Clan, and their severance of ties with the Revolutionary Directory, this inevitably caused a ruthless struggle between Sullivan and Devoy, and their respective supporters. It eventually culminated in the brutal murder of Dr. Patrick Henry Cronin. During these divisive years, the followers of Sullivan openly worked to overthrow Parnell as the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, as well as tried to subvert all attempts at parliamentary negotiations towards Home Rule. Again, it must be emphasized that Devoy was by no means fully opposed to physical force, but as he saw all his New Departure-based work disappear under the current Clan leadership, he took it upon himself to stand up to the Triangle. He relocated to Chicago and soon found an ally in another prominent Clan member, Dr. Cronin.

The Clan – split

The split within Clan na Gael was a far cry from a simple difference of opinion where arguments could be brought up, discussed in a civilized manner, and then agreements arrived at. Instead, by the mid-1880s, the organization was viscously divided in two: with Parnell and Davitt siding with Alexander Sullivan (since he controlled the finances), and with Devoy allying himself with Cronin and Luke Dillon. As Dr. Cronin busied himself collecting evidence in his papers against Alexander Sullivan, simultaneously, Devoy formed (and was offered substantial support for) a

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 151.

³⁴⁷ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 243.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

separate Clan na Gael organization, which was officially recognized by the IRB. Later Sullivan contacted Devoy, in order to call a joint convention where both factions would gather. This convention took place in June 1888 and was named the Union Convention of the Clan. At this event Devoy lay out the charges against Alexander Sullivan, including his misappropriation of Clan funds. He stated: “As for retaliation for England’s policy of coercion every cent of the money expended on the dynamite operations (outside of the small ones carried out by O’Donovan Rossa’s men) came from the Clan na Gael funds.”³⁴⁹ Ultimately Devoy emerged victorious from the Convention, while Sullivan was forced to resign from his post (due to misappropriation of funds). Still, even after his return to New York, Devoy was not satisfied and wanted Sullivan discredited. As a result, he called for an in-house trial. When Sullivan (Fig. 29) was later cleared by the Clan Tribunal, this, not surprisingly angered Devoy and Cronin. The spiraling events climaxed with the murder of Cronin, his naked body found in a storm sewer on May 22, 1889.

Ultimately, the murder brought about another trial, with Sullivan charged with Cronin’s murder. More significantly, it brought much unwanted press coverage of the feuding Irish-American organization. When the charges against Sullivan were ultimately dropped, this, too, failed to satisfy Devoy’s sense of justice. He became excessively focused on Sullivan, and this obsession soon turned into violent battle, and Devoy even came to fear for his life. It was in this period that he took to carrying a gun, and on at least one occasion, he came within inches of using it on Sullivan.³⁵⁰

Parnell’s path to political perishing

At around the same time as the conclusion of Sullivan’s Clan trial, another high-profile court case involving Charles Stewart Parnell began making headlines in England. In 1889, based on the so-called Pigott letters (which, as it turned out, were forgeries) a Special Commission began to investigate Parnell’s relationship with Irish-American revolutionary organizations. Eventually, when the letters were proven to be fakes, Parnell was able to return in triumph to the House of Commons in February 1890. Yet his triumph was less than short-lived. Soon afterwards, the Irish leader’s

³⁴⁹ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. II, 232.

³⁵⁰ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 167-68.

complicated private life eventually caught up with him, when Captain John O'Shea, the husband of Parnell's mistress Katherine (Kitty) O'Shea (who gave birth to three of Parnell's children), sued for divorce against his wife, naming Parnell as third party to the proceedings. Given the conservative social norms of the era, where divorce was frowned upon, especially by Ireland's majority Catholic population and also Britain's large Protestant evangelical constituency (which Gladstone's Liberal party depended on to stay in power), O'Shea's divorce suit meant political disaster for Parnell.

Devoy understood the repercussions of Parnell's possible fall all too well: with the Clan split, his ally Cronin dead, the Irish-American movement significantly weakened, no other person could keep the American Land League in operation, except for Parnell. In the end it was the Irish Party itself that withdrew support from their leader, when the Liberal leader Gladstone (with whom Parnell's Home Rule party were in coalition) gave an ultimatum – "lose Parnell or lose the Liberal party." Parnell's refusal to surrender his leadership caused his party to split, with the anti-Parnellite faction ultimately winning the day. When Devoy tried to help the situation by offering to act as broker, Luke Dillon told Devoy in clear terms that under Parnell there would never again be a united Irish Party.³⁵¹ The strains of Parnell's political demise took its toll on his health, and he died on October 5, 1890 (see his gravestone in Glasnevin cemetery, Dublin, in Fig. 30.).

Reunification of the Clan

Following the death of Parnell, for the next decade, Devoy devoted himself to the reunification of the Clan. That he succeeded in this task by the early 20th century was due in no small part to invaluable help by his Clan colleague, Judge Daniel Cohalan. In 1903 Devoy also set out on another venture and started a new newspaper, *The Gaelic American*. During the early years of *The Gaelic American* in the 1900s, Devoy took on Thomas Clarke as an assistant to help him run the newspaper. Soon, Clarke would return to Ireland and take on the role of central organizing figure of the Easter Rising.

A new principle was introduced by the young nationalist Arthur Griffith in his most influential work, *The Resurrection of Hungary* in 1904. This idea was based on the

³⁵¹ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 170-171.

fact that Austria and Hungary functioned as partners in a dual monarchy. Griffith argued that as a possible solution to the Anglo-Irish conflict, Ireland might exist as a separate, yet parallel kingdom alongside Great Britain – akin to the Austro-Hungarian model. Furthermore, he advocated abstentionism, similar to the technique the Hungarians had resorted to in order to achieve their *Ausgleich* in 1867. Abstentionism was not a novel idea in Irish history. Both Charles Kickham and John O’Leary had favored it. In fact, abstentionism would later become the catalyst for the emergence of a self-proclaimed Irish Republican parliament (Dáil Éireann) in 1919.³⁵²

Although an Austro-Hungarian-style dual monarchy never came into existence, nevertheless Griffith’s work added much constructive debate to the Anglo-Irish conflict and some of its proposals were later vital in helping to bring about an independent Ireland in the early 1920s. More importantly, Griffith founded Sinn Féin on November 28, 1905, since this was the date when Griffith presented what came to be known as the “Sinn Féin Policy.” In 1905 the founding of the party may have seemed like a minor event, yet just over a decade later in 1916, the very existence of Sinn Fein would fundamentally transform the Irish political landscape. There were more, minor and not-so-minor steps to follow. These were, among others: the increasing armament of factions, primarily the Larne gun-running by Ulster Unionists in 1912, the Howth gun-running by Irish Republicans in 1914, and finally the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. All these set the island of Ireland irrevocably on the road to all-out war.

The road to war and Irish independence

Events quickly turned from peaceful to the imminent outbreak of hostilities. Ireland hovered on the brink of all-out civil war between Ulster Unionists (who sought to maintain union with the United Kingdom) and the island’s Nationalist population (who sought to sever that union). Tensions were heightened in 1912 when the Third Home Rule Bill failed to bring about satisfactory results for either side. Moreover, the bill highlighted the diverging views of the majority Unionist North versus the majority

³⁵² On the Austro-Hungarian Compromise as a model for British/Irish Home Rule see Tibor Frank, “The Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 and the Contemporary Critics,” *Hungarian Studies* 14, (2000), No. 2, 193-200; see also Tibor Frank, *Picturing Austria-Hungary. The British Perception of the Habsburg Monarchy 1865-1870*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005). 140-147, 376-378.; see also Livia Szedmina, “Az 1867-es kiegyezés, vagy ahogyan Írország is csinálhatta volna,” *Létiünk*, (2009) Vol. 1, 64-74.

Nationalist/Republican South within the island. Although there were moments prior to 1912 when even Republicans would have seriously considered limited Home Rule as a viable option, by the time the Third Home Rule Bill was formulated, it had become increasingly clear to many Nationalists that constitutional means alone would bring neither independence, nor a republic. John Redmond's followers opted to support the Liberal Herbert Asquith's government in its endeavor to curb the powers of the House of Lords. Yet to Unionists, the idea that Ireland would be subject to Home Rule only meant "Rome Rule" in reaction to this policy, and they adopted a very visual and violent course of action. Visual, as in the long queues of Unionists waiting to sign the Solemn League of Covenant. This public display made it highly visible and tangible that the Carson-led party would not accept any form of Home Rule that would cut them off from the United Kingdom. Violent, because the more militant factions did not satisfy themselves with merely signing a document but went about organizing a full-scale gunrunning operation that was not even all that covert.³⁵³ This increased their body of weapons by 25,000 rifles and three million rounds of ammunition, landed primarily at Larne in County Antrim. Historian Alvin Jackson, however, stated as follows: "[...] as with the contemporaneous gun-running at Howth, the usefulness of Larne lay as much in the publicity which was generated, as in any more tangible legacy."³⁵⁴

Naturally, Nationalists were equally aware that no form of armed insurrection could take place until their weapons supplies had been significantly increased. The Curragh Mutiny confirmed many Irish Nationalists in their belief that all-Ireland Home Rule would only ever be gained with arms. The Curragh Mutiny occurred on March 20, 1914, when British Army officers declared to their superiors that they would rather resign than take action against the Ulster Volunteers. Because the incident clearly demonstrated that Britain's enforcing an all-Ireland Home Rule was off the table, this seemed to make armament by Nationalists all the more necessary.

Arming the nationalists was a joint effort between the IRB and Clan na Gael (the latter providing most of the financial means for gun-running). The O'Rahilly (Michael

³⁵³ "Amazing night at Larne. Wholesale gun-running. Thousands of rifles landed. Three-and-a-half million cartridges. Motors from far and near. An astounding achievement," *The Belfast Evening Telegraph*, April 25, 1914, accessed April 21, 2013, <http://www.libraryireland.com/articles/UVF/Larne-Gun-Running-1.php>.

³⁵⁴ Alvin Jackson, "The Larne Gun Running of 1914 in History Ireland" *History Ireland*, Issue 1, Spring 1993, accessed April 21, 2013, <http://www.historyireland.com/Vol.s/Vol.1/issue1/features/?id=102>.

Joseph O’Rahilly, Micheál Seosamh Ó Rathaille, 1875-1916), one of the founding members of the Irish Volunteers, made an appeal for funds to arm the Irish Volunteers in April 1914. John Devoy reacted to the appeal in a circular informing the Clan on the call for funds. At the same time, he also raised a sensitive point, whether or not such aid would cause any unwanted conflict with Orangemen. However, Devoy, ever the pragmatist, added that if they did not take on this role of financial assistance, then someone else would, and would it not be preferable to have this done under Clan supervision.³⁵⁵ It was important to underline how much the Irish-American faction was not in favor of gun-running. General Richard O’Sullivan Burke’s letter to Devoy, dated May 6, 1914, summarized the serious dilemma the Clan was facing at the time. The task of the American organization was to support the struggle for Irish independence, “to aid the Body in Ireland, that is the base of our organisation and in furtherance of our purpose many methods may be presented,” yet perhaps these “many methods” should be limited and the merchandise (weapons) be used only against the British, and not the Orangemen in the North of Ireland.³⁵⁶

Another familiar issue surfaced in Devoy’s letter to Bulmer Hobson dated July 3, 1914: the divergence between the Irish and the Irish-American factions. Devoy explained why surrendering the Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers to John Redmond was such a blow to the U.S. side:

Their intention is to minimise as much as they can the amount of money we raise to arm the Volunteers, and the disgust at their action has already produced considerable effect, while the appearance of division in the work, which they have deliberately created, has caused the wealthy class to refuse contributions to either party.³⁵⁷

The problem of dissent led the more well-off community members to refrain from donating completely. Devoy pointed out that their primary task was to try and make sure that the money kept flowing in.

While Devoy was flexible enough some twenty years earlier to lend his support to constitutional parliamentarians such as Parnell and promote the New Departure in the 1880s, collaboration with John Redmond was a different issue altogether. Devoy was informed by his regular corresponding partner, Tom Clarke that John Redmond had

³⁵⁵ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. II, 431.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 434-435.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 458.

offered to Irish scholar and revolutionary, Eoin MacNeill (Eoin Mac Néill, 1867-1945) to finance Irish Volunteers on condition that he was given control. Furthermore, nationalist politician Joseph Devlin (1871-1934) had made a similar offer to Sir Roger Casement. However, both MacNeill and Casement refused the offer.³⁵⁸ Devoy's usual understanding demeanor could be volatile and suddenly vanish, as in the case when he felt betrayed by Bulmer Hobson, a correspondent, who worked for him at *The Gaelic American*. Devoy apparently dismissed him on the grounds that Hobson had voted for the Redmondites to be accepted into the ranks of the Irish Volunteers. This drew fierce criticism from Pádraig Pearse towards Devoy, as Pearse pointed out the paradox in Devoy: he was someone who actually created the New Departure, one of the greatest political compromises, yet was so un-understanding towards Hobson, especially as the correspondence work was his sole income. The editors of *Devoy's Post Bag* gave the following elaboration on this topic: "[...Pearse] expressed ironic surprise in his reply to Devoy that the author of the New Departure should be so angered by temporary compromises to meet given situations, Devoy, amused by the retort, reappointed Hobson, a fact he omitted to state in his memoirs."³⁵⁹

The gun-running mission was successful in so far as it brought a lot of publicity to the Irish Volunteers, though if one takes the quality of the smuggled guns as an indication of success, then it was an abysmal failure. While there was a fair bit of overseas correspondence regarding the type of guns to be bought, eventually the models obtained were rather obsolete Mausers, which constituted the bulk of shipment that landed in the Howth gun-running incident. Erskin Childers was personally watching the Mausers being distributed during the Howth gun-running (Fig. 31.). The guns and ammunition were imported despite the fact that the British military was informed and unsuccessfully tried to intervene to halt the operation. Also, the overall success of the Howth gun-running was marred by the Bachelor's Walk massacre. This occurred when British troops returning from Howth were met by a restless crowd, who heckled them. Thus provoked, the unruly troops opened fire, killing three innocent by-standers. Later a fourth victim tragically died from bayonet wounds.³⁶⁰ There was an international outcry against the killings. In New York, Clan na Gael held a meeting of protest on August 2,

³⁵⁸ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 432.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 456-457.

³⁶⁰ Foster, *Modern Ireland ...*, 469.

1914. The meeting featured Sir Roger Casement as the main speaker, but more importantly, it was on this occasion that John Devoy found himself photographed by the press while sitting in the same carriage with Casement during a later procession. As mentioned earlier, in terms of secrecy and covert operations, such publicity was extremely harmful to Devoy's cause.³⁶¹

Devoy's days of New Departure lecture tours and organizing support for constitutional solutions had long since past, and by 1914-15, it had become rather obvious that Republicans would take the path of physical force. Devoy's role in ensuring financial and logistical support for the planned insurrection was immense. Apart from his physical influence, the symbolic value of his persona became obvious at Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa's funeral, where as referred to previously, Pádraig Pearse invoked the spirit and strength of rebels past (and present).³⁶² Seeing a successful rising unfold had been Devoy's goal for more than four decades. He was extremely keen on crossing the Atlantic to participate in the fighting himself, though age and health (as well as convincing arguments from acquaintances, such as O'Donovan Rossa's wife) ultimately prevented him so doing. While Devoy worked relentlessly to make the insurrection happen, nevertheless, it was no easy task.

The Revolutionary Directory made it clear that Ireland needed guns, if any rising was to happen. John Devoy understood all too well the current Irish-American political situation, and he was also realistic enough to know that it was impossible to simply send an illegal weapons shipment to Ireland without the knowledge of American and British authorities. For this reason, he pointed out to the IRB leadership in Dublin that arms shipments directly from the U.S. were impossible. Instead, he arranged for money to be channeled to Germany for the purchase of weapons on site. So as far as he understood, these weapons would then be shipped from Germany to Ireland.³⁶³ The editors of *Devoy's Post Bag* summarized Devoy's attitude towards providing weapons for the Rising with a speech made to Clan members in 1921, Devoy recalled his thoughts of early March 1916 (in fact, some of this speech was quoted in the *Boston Daily Globe* of March 9, 1921):

³⁶¹ Devoy, *Recollections*, 416-417.

³⁶² A short video of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa's funeral can be seen on YouTube under the address <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6FrDqyr3KA>. (accessed March 18, 2014)

³⁶³ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 485-486.

With the notification came the request to the Clan na Gael to furnish a shipload of arms to be delivered at Limerick as early as possible. The people in Ireland did not understand anything about conditions in America at the time, or they would not have made any such request, said Mr. Devoy. It was not possible to get any such quantity of arms in the United States to ship out of the country without the knowledge of the Government, nor would it be possible to clear a ship from any port in this country with such a consignment at that time.³⁶⁴

In order to avoid British or American detection, they enlisted the help of their German contacts. As was already touched on earlier in this thesis, concerning Devoy's dealings with the representatives of the German consulate, he was much more cautious about their correspondence and the handling of encoded and deciphered messages than his German partners. Their negligence and failure in this area, as well as the vigilance of the American authorities, led to the infamous raid and capture of the von Igel papers, when a message to Berlin was seized identifying John Devoy as a "confidential agent."³⁶⁵

Devoy's reactions to the 1916 Easter Rising

Regarding events of the Easter Rising, it began on Easter Monday April 24, 1916, and lasted a mere six days in total, before being quashed by overwhelming British military superiority. Within two weeks of the rebellion's failure, most of the principal rebel leaders had been executed by the British authorities. Although the rebellion was a military disaster, the insensitive execution of its leaders elicited outrage from the people of Ireland. The defiant actions of a handful of rebel poets and idealists who (whatever their motivations) had dared to stand up to the mighty empire, caught the imagination of Ireland and Irish-America. The execution of the leading figures only served to copperfasten their martyr status and legitimize their demands for Irish Freedom (Sir Roger Casement was executed at a later time in London, but was also interred in Glasnevin cemetery, see his gravestone in Fig. 32.). Therefore, as a result of these historical momentous events, how did Devoy react to the Rising and its aftermath?

In the middle of the disappointment connected with the Rising, Devoy keenly observed a peculiar issue in his account of the events in a letter to Clan member

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 488-489.

³⁶⁵ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 223.

Lawrence de Lucy, dated July 20, 1916. Namely, what most took him by surprise was the fact that the priests had crossed the lines and joined the ranks of the fighting Irishmen. Devoy wrote:

The turn over of the people to our side, according to everybody, is astonishing, partly because of the splendid fight and partly because of the atrocities, which were very extensive. The Dublin priests are collecting evidence about them and will publish the record. The conversion to our side among the priests is the most remarkable thing of all.³⁶⁶

The Rising may have been unsuccessful, but it did not mean the end of Irish-German collaboration. Devoy received a message from Count von Bernstorff, dated September 4, 1916, in which Bernstorff assessed the Rising:

[...] notwithstanding the failure in the military sense, the result has been of great essential benefit, short of complete victory, in Ireland, and of first importance in America. The entire Irish people are aroused and are now firm in the belief that military success can be achieved if the necessary arms and munitions can be secured.³⁶⁷

Bernstorff also suggested further cooperation, however, only on condition that military assistance was also provided to ensure the safe landing of arms. Liam Clarke, writer and Dublin Volunteer officer, indicated a similar request to Devoy, stating the need not only for arms but also for military support to help with the fighting; although he added a reminder to Devoy that the final decision on when to try their hands at another rising again had to rest with “the governing body here,” meaning in Ireland.³⁶⁸

As it can be seen from the previous paragraph, Devoy, even at this juncture of his long lived career as a covert rebel, still exerted considerable influence in shaping important events. He was revered by many of the Irish as a figure of eminent authority, the person whom many no doubt, thought could be instrumental in leading Ireland out of her ties from England. In one of the most informative accounts of the Easter Rising in *Devoy's Post Bag*, the already cited Mary MacSwiney, asked her brother Peter in New York, to relay the following message to John Devoy: “Tell John Devoy and the Clan na

³⁶⁶ O'Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy's Post Bag*, Vol. II, 505.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 512.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 513.

Gael that our hearts are full of courage, but we count on them to help us.”³⁶⁹ However, she also highlighted that it was America and the Irish-American community that they were looking to for help. She further stated: “At any rate, ‘The end is not yet.’ We shall come to our own, but let our fellow-countrymen over there remember: Our leaders are gone, the brains of the organisation are mostly locked up, and they must supply our wants.”³⁷⁰

Friends of Irish Freedom

As throughout his long struggle for Irish Independence, in the aftermath of the 1916 Easter Rising, Devoy did not confine himself solely to raising funds for IRB arms. Parallel to the obvious support of armed physical force, there was the alternative strategy of being able to achieve probably more in lobbies and at negotiation tables. Devoy worked tirelessly with his close Clan colleague, Judge Cohalan to try achieve more recognition for Ireland’s cause by lobbying several power-groups in U.S. politics. This was especially true for the “lace-curtain” middle-class, the respectable element of the Irish-American community, who, as indicated earlier, were not overtly committed to radical causes, but their support could help win mainstream U.S. public opinion to the Irish cause. Also, it would help ensure the necessary funds from middle-class Irish-Americans for the further struggle for Irish independence. To fulfill these goals, Devoy helped establish the Friends of Irish Freedom in 1916.

Historian Terry Golway pointed out how well Devoy understood the need for having mainstream Irish-American politicians, writers and members of the clergy supporting such a non-revolutionary organization. Golway tellingly described Devoy as the “de facto spokesman and chief propagandist of the Irish revolution in America.”³⁷¹ Devoy discussed initial plans for a new public organization with Judge Daniel Cohalan, and intended the organization to be controlled by Clan na Gael members.³⁷² The Friends of Irish Freedom (FOIF) was brought into existence in March 1916, just weeks before the 1916 Rising, at the Irish Race Convention held in New York. The aim of this body

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 495.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 231.

³⁷² Ibid., 219-220.

was to promote the cause of Ireland in the United States. “In their first constitution, they pledged themselves ‘to encourage and assist any movement that will tend to bring about the national independence of Ireland.’”³⁷³ The event presented an impressive array of public and political figures, including Congressman William Bourke Cockran, Judge Cohalan, and composer Victor Herbert. Devoy himself also gave a speech stressing the importance of Irish unity. Golway described the occasion as being the most important gathering of the Irish in America, in size, scope, and influence since the Land League days. Moreover, this assembly surpassed those meetings in terms of political and commercial accomplishment.³⁷⁴ The convention was followed by a wide-ranging appeal for donations to be used to aid the families of Irishmen killed during the Rising.

The key issues for Devoy were eliciting money from Irish-America in order to fund the revolution; and winning public opinion of Irish-America to the Irish revolutionary cause. As a result, he fought resolutely in the U.S. press to promote the Irish freedom agenda. As already mentioned, in the editorial of one of *The Gaelic American* issues entitled “Wilson’s Base Act of Treachery” Devoy accused President Wilson of providing information to the British regarding the planned insurrection. Not surprisingly, *The New York Herald* and other newspapers reported this with similarly grand headlines (“Irish Newspaper of This City Attacks President”).³⁷⁵ Nevertheless, he knew when to come out with brash headlines in support of the rebels in Dublin, and at the same time, he knew when to stand up, together with numerous other hyphenated Americans, and sing the *Star-Spangled Banner*. This he did at a rally held on April 30, 1916, still deeply shaken by the defeat of the Rising. Devoy continued to inform the readers on the executions of the 1916 Easter Rising leaders, as well as the excessive violence of the British executioners, which shocked public opinion in both America and Ireland.

Devoy’s work in that period greatly revolved around ensuring public support for the Easter Rising martyrs (even using symbolic props such as the “resurrected” *Fenian Ram*). Devoy’s newspaper, *The Gaelic American* was instrumental in influencing Irish-

³⁷³ Michael Doorley, “The Friends of Irish Freedom: a case-study in Irish-American nationalism, 1916–21,” *History Ireland*, Issue 2, Vol. 16, March/April 2008, accessed March 4, 2012, <http://www.historyireland.com/20th-century-contemporary-history/the-friends-of-irish-freedom-a-case-study-in-irish-american-nationalism-1916-21/>.

³⁷⁴ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 220.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 233.

American public opinion. Devoy and Judge Cohalan also tried to gather political support for Sir Roger Casement, while the Clan stepped up to finance the legal representation of Casement, who was tried – and eventually executed. Due to his knighthood, Casement's execution took place in London. However, as already briefly indicated, not much time had passed before Devoy and the Revolutionary Directory contacted Germany again requesting a new shipment of weapons along with military support. The plan, eventually foundered, when Germany could not provide the necessary military arms and expertise.³⁷⁶

No more neutrality: the United States enters the Great War

The position of Irish-Americans changed instantly once America entered the war on April 6, 1917. Again, it became important for the Clan, as representatives of the Irish-American community, to affirm their support for the United States and not only for their “hyphenated homeland.” As a result, the Friends of Irish Freedom cancelled the Second Irish Race Convention, and generally the Clan kept a low profile during this period. This was especially true given the fact that the Wilson government deliberately tried to discredit the Clan's most public figures by publishing in September 1917 some of the documents seized during a previous raid of *The Gaelic American* offices. The inevitable next step was not far off, keeping in mind Devoy's pro-German position resulted in *The Gaelic American* being banned from the U.S. mails from January 21, 1918 onwards.

During the year of 1918, the situation in Ireland had reached a breaking point following a series of politically significant events, including Thomas Ashe's death by hunger strike in 1917, the 1918 conscription crisis, and Sinn Féin's subsequent landslide victory in the 1918 general election. However, because the First World War was still continuing in Europe, suspect persons such as Devoy had to tread carefully, lest they end up in jail on grounds of subversion. Thus Devoy undertook a precarious balancing act, denouncing British rule in Ireland on the one hand, while simultaneously trying not to be perceived as publicly denouncing the U.S.'s war effort and its war ally Britain on the other. Nevertheless, on May 4, 1918 Devoy spoke at an event of the Irish Progressive League on May 4, 1918 stressing the huge contributions that Ireland had

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 240.

made towards the United States throughout its history and reiterating the loyalty of the Irish-American community. However, Devoy also called for Ireland to be released from England's grip, as so far the aim seemed to be for Ireland to "reap no benefit from this war for freedom and democracy."³⁷⁷ In response, British authorities reacted by arresting Sinn Féin leaders in Ireland and putting pressure on American authorities to take similar steps. When the full revelations of the 'German plot' subsequently appeared in the British and American press, this did much to stir public opinion against those who had previously conspired with Germany. It was perhaps Devoy's figurehead status which, more than anything, else saved him from imprisonment during these contentious years.

Eventually, Devoy was not indicted. At the end of the war, in November 1918, Devoy and the Clan increased their efforts to obtain support for the Irish cause from the U.S. government. The Friends of Irish Freedom (still heavily controlled by Devoy and Judge Cohalan) contacted President Wilson in the form of a memorandum only one day after the Armistice in November 1918. The memorandum contained a call for the recognition of an independent Ireland and that the new aspirant state be given a place at the negotiation table of the peace conference. The Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives started hearings on this topic, and several members of the Catholic hierarchy voiced their support for such a proposal. It seemed events were moving along the right track.³⁷⁸

In early January of 1919 John Devoy and the Friends of Irish Freedom organized another Irish Race Convention, the date was to be February 22-23. The Convention took place barely a month after the formation of the first free Dublin-based Parliamentary Assembly of the new illegal Irish republic (which had been originally proclaimed in the 1916 Rising). The new Parliament (called Dáil Éireann) issued a Declaration of Independence, adopted a provisional constitution, and called for international recognition with its "Message to the Free Nations of the World." This Message contained Ireland's demand for other governments to recognize it as a separate state, independent of Britain. "[Ireland called] through her elected representatives in Parliament assembled in the Irish Capital on January 21st, 1919, upon every free nation to support the Irish Republic by recognizing Ireland's national status and her right to its

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 247-248.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 249-250.

vindication at the Peace Congress.”³⁷⁹ In hope that this request would be heeded, the fledgling self-proclaimed Irish Parliament selected a delegation to represent Ireland as an independent state at the forthcoming Paris Peace Conference. The newly established Irish Republic refused to be represented by Britain at the Peace Conference. It was for this reason that the Dáil appointed three delegates to the Paris Peace Conference – Éamon de Valera, Arthur Griffith, and Count Plunkett, with the fourth member, Sean T. O’Kelly (Seán Tomás Ó Ceallaigh, 1882-1966) chosen as Envoy of the Government of the Irish Republic.³⁸⁰

The Third Irish Race Convention offered its full support for this course of action by lobbying for U.S. recognition of the new self-proclaimed Irish Republic. They openly called on President Woodrow Wilson to consistently apply his principles of self-determination and support the case of the Irish Republic. The event was attended by 5,132 delegates and presided over by Supreme Court Justice, Daniel Cohalan of New York.³⁸¹ It was estimated that about thirty Irish Catholic bishops were present at this meeting.³⁸² At the Convention a three-member delegation of Irish-Americans was selected under the name “American Commission of Irish Independence;” which was to act as an intermediary body on behalf of the Irish representatives to the conference. This three-member delegation consisted of: Frank P. Walsh (1864-1939), a Kansas City attorney and co-chairman of the National War Labor Board; Edward F. Dunne (1853-1937), a former mayor of Chicago and ex-governor of Illinois; and Michael J. Ryan (1862-1943), a prominent Philadelphia lawyer, and *de facto* initiator of the delegation. The Irish-American delegation set out two goals: firstly, to obtain the help of the American Peace Commission in ensuring safe passage for the representatives of Ireland to Paris. Secondly, to secure an interview for the Irish envoys stationed in Paris, namely Sean T. O’Kelly and also George Gavan Duffy (Seoirse Ghabháin Uí Dhubhthaigh, 1882-1951).³⁸³

³⁷⁹ The full document can be found as parliamentary document on website of Oireachtas, accessed April 25, 2013, <http://historical-debates.oireachtas.ie/D/DT/D.F.O.191901210013.html>.

³⁸⁰ Livia Szedmina, “Ireland's Case at the Paris Peace Conference,” *Proceedings of International PhD Students' Conference*, Miskolc, Hungary, August 13 – 17, 2007. 239-245.

³⁸¹ *The New York Times*, 28 March 1919.

³⁸² Doorley, “The Friends of Irish Freedom...”

³⁸³ Chronology of Irish History 1919 – 1923, accessed April 25, 2013, <http://www.dcu.ie/~foxs/irhist/Jan1919.htm>.

In addition, the Irish-American community used their political power to obtain Wilson's nominal backing for the Irish cause, both on American and French soil.³⁸⁴ Still, ensuring the president's support for the Irish cause would not be as straightforward a task as initially expected. This was signaled by an incident at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York the evening before Wilson himself was to sail for Europe, on March 4, 1919. When a select group of Irish-American politicians met with the President to ask his support for the Irish cause; the President refused to commit on the grounds that it would mean interfering with another country's internal affairs. *The New York Times* was very cautious with the wording of its article when they ran the story with the headline: "President reported to have said that unofficially he favored Ireland's aspirations." The interview only lasted twenty-five minutes. It was the Ex-Supreme Court Justice John Goff who asked the President directly if he would lend his support: "Mr. President, representing, as we do, millions of your fellow American citizens, I ask you if you will present to the Peace Conference in Paris the right of Ireland to determine the form of government under which she shall live?" No direct answer was given. To add insult to injury, Wilson refused to receive the Irish-American party as long as Judge Daniel Cohalan was also present in the room. The reason why Wilson was so dismissive towards Judge Cohalan was Cohalan's strong opposition to Wilson's proposal for the League of Nations. The delegation was given five minutes to decide whether or not Cohalan would withdraw. Historian Hans P. Vought recorded the following about this meeting: "Wilson told (his biographer Ray S.) Baker that he refused to see Cohalan in "language so plain and loud that it could be heard by the Tammany policemen who stood about" and that the delegates were so insistent in making their case that he "had hard work in keeping [his] temper."³⁸⁵

The meeting only highlighted Wilson's suspicious attitude towards what he considered "hyphenated" Americans such as Devoy (whose real allegiance was to their old homeland and not to their new home, the U.S.).³⁸⁶ While the meeting with Wilson did not go down well for Devoy's side, on a more positive note, the U.S. House of

³⁸⁴ Livia Szedmina, "Nagy utazás – az ír-amerikai delegáció írországi látogatása 1919. tavaszán," *A magyar tudomány napja a Délvidéken – 2010 kiadványa* – Vajdasági Magyar Tudományos Tanácskozás, Novi Sad, Serbia, November 8, 2010, 279-294.

³⁸⁵ Hans P. Vought, *The Bully Pulpit and the Melting Pot: American Presidents and the Immigrant, 1897-1933* (Macon: Mercer Press, 2004), 142-143.

³⁸⁶ Vought, *The Bully Pulpit* ..., 121.

Representatives passed a resolution on the same day of the meeting. It stated that the House of Representatives hoped the Peace Conference in Paris would, as the resolution stated, “favorably consider the claims of Ireland to self-determination.”³⁸⁷ To the Irish-American delegation this was an indication that international recognition might indeed be an achievable goal.

The Irish-American delegation’s journey to Europe

The Irish-American delegation spent the spring of 1919 focusing on the peaceful, negotiation-based approach combined with a good measure of lobbying (with the official American Peace Commission in Paris) and touring (the newly established Irish state, as a show of support). The journey of the Irish-American delegation did not go faultlessly. The first hurdle encountered was the attempt to obtain a passport. The delegates’ original passport request stated the following, as the purpose of their visit to France: “to obtain for the delegates selected by the people of Ireland a hearing at the Peace Conference, if the hearing has not been given, the case of Ireland; her insistence upon her right of self-determination, and to international recognition of the republican form of the government established by her people.”³⁸⁸ This initial purpose of visit would later be called in question several times in connection with the members’ visit to Ireland and their subsequent conflict with British authorities. The delegates would also repeatedly be reminded that their passports were valid only to their first destination, France, as stated in their request. Once the passports were provided, the Committee finally sailed to Paris on April 2, 1919 on the steamer *Touraine*, and stayed in Europe for almost three months.

The actions and movements of the Irish-American Committee were closely followed by *The New York Times*. The dates of the arranged meetings and aims were regularly published to keep the public back home updated. For example, on April 17, 1919 President Wilson received Frank P. Walsh at 5 o’clock in the afternoon. The following day the entire delegation made an appearance at the “White House” of Paris

³⁸⁷ The Chronology of Irish History 1919-1923, accessed April 25, 2013, http://www.dcu.ie/~foxs/irhist/march_1919.htm.

³⁸⁸ “Irish Envoys Sail for Paris Today; Convinced State Department is Not Antagonistic to Plea for Irish Republic. Passports Freely Given Walsh, Ryan, and Dunne, All American Born, Say Purpose of Visit was Plainly Stated,” *The New York Times*, April 1, 1919.

to discuss the U.S. Commission's refusal to receive O'Kelly and Duffy, the envoys of the Dáil in Paris.³⁸⁹ While the Irish-American delegation primarily turned to President Wilson, they were quickly referred to Colonel Edward House (1858-1838), whom they met with the following day and submitted the papers relating to their request concerning the Irish question.³⁹⁰

After what seemed like a positive start,³⁹¹ a number of days passed (following their submitting the papers), without the commission receiving any visible results. Upon seeing that the mission in Paris was not making significant progress, the three-member commission asked to visit Ireland to gain a first-hand impression of the social, economic and political conditions there. These were later to be communicated to the American Peace Commission and the Irish-American public in the United States. They could only travel with special permission from British authorities, which was eventually granted to them. The Irish-American delegates visited Ireland between May 3-16, 1919. The Irish political elite were very appreciative of their visit, all three members were invited to make speeches at the new Dáil. The three-member delegation arrived in Dublin on May 4, 1919 and made their appearance at the Dáil four days later.³⁹²

An eye-witness to the events at that ceremonial Dáil session recalled the audience's anticipation: "Cards were difficult to get for that meeting, and as each one passed through the long dreary ante-room of the circular assembly hall of the Mansion House, he was subjected to close scrutiny by the two dozen Irish volunteers on guard."³⁹³ Apart from Irishmen, there were a number of Americans and Australians amid the civilian audience. The delegates were seated in an honorary place, the throne of the Lord Mayor. Arthur Griffith was the first to address the guests. He spoke about how, if Ireland were free, the country would have a much more developed industry, therefore also significantly less unemployment, which was a great problem at that time.

³⁸⁹ "Wilson Receives a String of Peace Callers, Four an Hour, from All Quarters of the World," *The New York Times*, 18 April 1919.

³⁹⁰ "Call Again About Ireland.; Walsh, Ryan, and Dunne Again Visit Paris 'White House,'" *The New York Times*, April 19, 1919.

³⁹¹ "To Bring Up Ireland?; Walsh Said to Have Received Assurances from Wilson," *The New York Times*, April 18, 1919.

³⁹² *Chronology of Irish History 1919-1923*, accessed January 3, 2010, http://webpages.dcu.ie/~foxs/irhist/may_1919.htm.

³⁹³ Ruth Russell, *What's the Matter with Ireland?* e-book, Gutenberg Project, accessed January 3, 2010. <http://infomotions.com/etexts/gutenberg/dirs/1/2/0/3/12033/12033.htm>.

After this opening talk all three delegates gave speeches, with Sean O’Kelly making preliminary remarks as a way of introduction for each of them.

Frank Walsh began his speech by stating that their mandate was only partly political, but he came, in fact, from the “twenty millions of people of Irish blood represented in the Philadelphia Convention, but, as your President has so well stated, by the great heart of America itself.” He told the audience how deeply impressed the delegation was by actually visiting the historical places and buildings in Dublin, and meeting with family members of fallen heroes. It was his belief that

it came to every man at that gathering [in the Catholic Club in Kansas City, Missouri] that this bond meant the end of the Irish question and the absolute freedom of Ireland at last; for here was a nation with a homogenous population. There was nothing said about its boundaries, to question about its territory, because God settled it by the circle of the seas.³⁹⁴

How well such opinion on the question of the borders had been taken by the Northern Irish population, or indeed, the British authorities remains a point of discussion.³⁹⁵ Given the republican affinities of both audience and speakers, it is not perhaps surprising that nothing was said about the future configuration of a free Ireland. Most likely, it was remarks of this type that would later be referred to by the British Prime Minister as having caused offence, ultimately leading to the refusal to ensure safe passage for the Irish representatives sitting in the audience at this Dáil meeting.

Walsh also drew parallels in his speech between the quest for Irish freedom and America’s fight for independence, namely the decision of the original 13 States to declare independence from Britain.

We [Walsh most likely included all people who wish for an independent Ireland] took our cue from those dead patriots of the past. We intend what they intended. The only difference in our causes is that they fought for the freedom of the original thirteen

³⁹⁴ Parliamentary debates of the Dáil Éireann, speeches in Dáil given by Irish-American delegation, accessed April 25, 2013, <http://historical-debates.oireachtas.ie/D/DT/D.F.O.191905090005.html>.

³⁹⁵ Livia Szedmina, “Where do we belong? Reactions of Ulster Protestants and Hungarians of Vajdaság to impending border changes,” *Gateways to English – Current Doctoral Research*. Frank, Tibor & Károly, Krisztina, eds, (Budapest: Eötvös, 2010). 165-181.

American States while we fight for the freedom of all the nations of the world, large and small.³⁹⁶

He further underlined the parallel: “You have established, by a vote of the Irish people, a form of Government along the lines of the American Bill of Rights and the Constitution of the United States, and unless interfered with from outside, through the help of God Almighty you intend to have a Government such as we have.”³⁹⁷ Walsh also warned the Irish parliament not to make the same mistakes as the Americans had made by not including the black population in the voting population, as government could not be “half slave and half free.”³⁹⁸ This warning was equally meant for the participants of the Paris Peace Conference, namely that no actual peace could be achieved unless the Irish as a nation was also independent.

The last delegate to address the audience was Michael J. Ryan. He set out by stressing how proud he was of actually standing in the Dáil, for it was at his initiation that an Irish-American Committee was selected at the Race Convention. He admitted that it was his first time in Ireland, and he did not know anyone in his own family, either, who had visited Ireland before, and yet he retained his origins and Irish way of life as best as he could in the United States. In his view, there was only one Irish nation that they were all part of. Similar to Walsh, Ryan also mentioned the parallel of the War of Independence and highlighted the role of the Irish in the Americans’ victory against the British. He believed that there was no need for the United States to thank Ireland for their help in attaining their independence, but rather, the U.S. had to repay this debt.³⁹⁹

While in Dublin, the Irish-American delegation visited Mountjoy prison and met with Archbishop William Joseph Walsh, as reported in *The New York Times* on May 12, 1919.⁴⁰⁰ In addition, they participated in a reception organized by the Lord Mayor of Dublin where the hosts adopted resolutions wishing the American delegation success in their mission. In reply to this, Ryan expressed his belief that freedom for Ireland was no more than six months away. In addition, he stated that the United States was earnest in

³⁹⁶ Parliamentary debates of the Dáil Éireann, speeches in Dáil given by Irish-American delegation, accessed April 25, 2013, <http://historical-debates.oireachtas.ie/D/DT/D.F.O.191905090005.html>.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ “Predicts Irish Freedom.; May Come in Six Months, Ryan Declares in Dublin Speech,” *The New York Times*, May 12, 1919.

its reasons for entering the war, namely that all peoples should have the right to decide for themselves what form of government they wished to live under.⁴⁰¹ Again and again throughout their visit to Ireland the delegates would assure the Irish people that the United States had no other choice but to stand by the principles of self-determination, which were bound to lead to the recognition of the already proclaimed Irish republic.

Upon their return to Paris, they submitted a report on the social, political, and economic conditions in Ireland to the American Peace Commission (President Wilson and Secretary Lansing) as well as to British authorities (Prime Minister David Lloyd George).⁴⁰² Disappointingly, the Irish-American delegation realized that in the course of their two-week absence from Paris little progress had been made for securing a hearing or safe passage for the Irish representatives.

Michael J. Ryan returned to the U.S. sooner than the other two delegates in order to report on their mission to the Friends of Irish Freedom. The meeting was set for June 2, 1919, at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York. It was presided over by Supreme Court Justice, Daniel Cohalan. At this session Ryan gave a more detailed account of the delegates' visit to Ireland. Ryan told the audience that the "buzzards of the world" were gathered in Paris, and the Peace Treaty was decided upon by only five men, though he did not mention any names explicitly. Ryan spoke out against the League of Nations, which he believed, was "a scheme to perpetuate what they [the Irish-American delegation] termed British supremacy." He also reported on their fact-finding mission to Ireland, where the Irish-American delegation had met with the 73 elected Sinn Féin representatives. Michael J. Ryan summarized the strong bond between all Irishmen, wherever they might come from as follows: "We are part of you. Your aims are our aims, your hopes are our hopes, and speaking not only for Americans from Irish lineage, but Americans springing from where they may, we say, we stand behind you, until you, like us, are given the right of determining for yourselves."⁴⁰³

The Irish-American delegation's visit to Ireland and the subsequently submitted report became a highly controversial issue with both the British and the American

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Margaret Macmillan, *Peacemakers – Six months that changed the world* (London: John Murray Publishers, 2001), 498.

⁴⁰³ "Ryan Sees No Hope for Erin at Paris; Irish-American Envoy Says 'Buzzards of World' Are Gathered at Peace Conference. Denounces the League Justice Cohalan Calls Proposed Compact an "Anglo-American Alliance. Says Pledges Are Ignored," *The New York Times*, June 3, 1919.

authorities. While the delegates believed that their visit would further the chances of ensuring a hearing for the Irish political figures, in fact, it may have ruined the chances completely. The visit itself, but certainly the report it generated, put both British and American Peace Commissions in an uncomfortable position. As reports were coming in about the comments and speeches the Irish-American delegates were making in Ireland, the liberal Prime Minister Lloyd George came under fire from the British press. By mid-June the Irish-American delegation's situation looked gloomy. While the mission of the Irish-American delegation had not been overtly successful before their trip to Ireland, upon their return from Ireland it seemed to seriously falter. Ultimately, all efforts for securing a hearing for the Irish representatives were discontinued. President Wilson did not even make the effort to notify the delegation personally, but had Secretary of State Lansing inform them in a letter that all further attempts at bringing the Irish representatives before the Grand Committee were abandoned.⁴⁰⁴ Following this, the remaining two members returned to the U.S. Yet while they did not achieve their aim, Dunne defiantly asserted that their fight for recognition was far from over: "The Irish race both in Ireland and abroad intends to keep up the fight for an Irish republic until the flag of that republic floats over every inch of Irish soil."⁴⁰⁵

When Michael J. Ryan gave his first report on the delegation's work in Europe, he "paid a glowing tribute" to the leadership of de Valera and Count Plunkett and stressed how inspiring it was for them to see all over Ireland the American flag displayed along with the Irish Tricolor.⁴⁰⁶ The Irish and American flags would soon meet in a different form of cooperation. Following the unsuccessful attempt to ensure safe passage and an interview for the Irish delegation with the leading figures of the Peace Conference, Éamon de Valera travelled to the United States to obtain financial support for the continued struggle for Irish independence. For John Devoy, this was yet another challenging situation with yet another Irish leader, on this occasion de Valera, who arrived to the United States with the intention of becoming the chief leader for both

⁴⁰⁴ "Lansing Drops Efforts for Irish; Tells Dunne and Associates Their Speeches Offended British Authorities. Walsh Makes Tart Reply Denies "Authorizing Friendly Relations" with British Delegates--Fling at Secret Methods," *The New York Times*, May 28, 1919.

⁴⁰⁵ "Walsh and Dunne See Irish Victory; Representatives of Irish Societies Return from Mission to Peace Conference. To Issue Report Today Declare That Visit to Ireland Enabled Them to Tell Wilson of 'English Misrule,'" in *The New York Times*, July 9, 1919.

⁴⁰⁶ "Ryan Sees No Hope for Erin at Paris; Irish-American Envoy Says 'Buzzards of World' Are Gathered at Peace Conference. Denounces the League Justice Cohalan Calls Proposed Compact an "Anglo-American Alliance. Says Pledges Are Ignored," *The New York Times*, June 3, 1919.

the Irish in Ireland and also Irish-America. The core issue concerned who should control the message and also fund-raising. Up until this time, it had been the policy that the Irish-Americans controlled the message and the fund-raising purse-strings, from the U.S. side of the Atlantic. However, with the arrival of de Valera into the United States in 1919, this policy would soon come under severe attack, as the President of the aspirant Irish republic sought to control fairly everything and everybody (including Devoy) on each side of the Atlantic.

Battling de Valera

If photographs can be taken as visual representations of the relationships between the subjects of the photo in a given situation, then the image taken of de Valera and his associates on top of the Hotel Waldorf Astoria on the day of his arrival says it all. De Valera arrived in New York on June 23, 1919, John Devoy was part of the welcoming party organized for him. In that photo, Devoy was surrounded by the main revolutionary figures of the time, most of them at least one generation younger than him, pictured here before the Anglo-Irish treaty had turned this group of men into bitter enemies. As previously indicated, the famous photo depicted John Devoy seated on a chair, with de Valera standing directly behind him, his hand placed on Devoy's shoulder – as if signaling his position of supremacy in the Irish-American community, as well as back in Ireland. Regarding Devoy's position within the entire Irish and Irish-American political hierarchy at the time Golway stated the following: "Devoy, like all good Irish revolutionaries, recognized the IRB and now the Dáil as the legal government of Ireland, but neither the IRB nor the Dáil would dare tell him how best to do his business in America."⁴⁰⁷ Still, de Valera assumed an uncompromising political attitude in America that would bring much harm and grief to the Irish-American community and as well as causing considerable damage to the Irish cause. Golway also pointed out de Valera's stance on the Irish-American organizations: "The exile organizations that Devoy had built and rebuilt ultimately existed to serve the Republic and, therefore, in de Valera's eyes, the Republic's chosen representative."⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁷ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 258.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 263.

Conflict between de Valera and Devoy, and indeed, within the Irish-American community, arose primarily due to differences regarding the wording of their supposed end-goals. Was the ultimate aim the Irish Republic that the Easter Rising's martyrs had died for? Or would the acceptance of Wilson's idea of self-determination satisfy the revolutionaries? In other words: should the "pure flame" republican ideal of an Irish republic be compromised by something less than a one hundred per cent fully sovereign Irish Republic?

While Devoy had bitter discussions with his hitherto closest ally, Patrick McCartan regarding the kind of republic Ireland should be, de Valera, in one sentence, seemingly embraced the compromise, when he referred to "an Irish Republic established by the will of the Irish people in accordance with the principles of Self Determination."⁴⁰⁹ De Valera had three main goals set out during his mission to America: first, to secure the recognition of the Irish Republic by the U.S. government; second, to promote the Dáil Éireann External Loan, and finally, to give wider exposure to Ireland's national claim.⁴¹⁰

Another source of conflict between Devoy and de Valera, was determining the role the Irish-American community would play in the drive for Irish independence. As already argued, Devoy had always demanded – and by and large been given – a free hand to organize the Irish-American community's work as he saw fit. More than three decades earlier he had rejected the proposal for an American Land League organization that would have not been under his control, but Parnell's. Now, as in the case of Parnell, Devoy resented being dictated to by an outsider such as de Valera. According to Devoy's reasoning, the leaders of the Irish-American organization (as well as all Irish in America) were not only Irish, but American, as well. Thus Devoy considered it absurd that the Irish-American organizations should be led or controlled from Dublin. Although few of the Clan's members had ever travelled to Ireland, as Edward Dunne remarked in his speech at the Dáil (described in the previous section), it was precisely the "American" factor that they could bring to the proverbial table of the Irish cause, in fact, their influence within American politics. Any U.S. President who ignored the powerful Irish-American political constituency did so at great political peril. Since the

⁴⁰⁹ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 263.

⁴¹⁰ M. J. MacManus: *Éamon de Valera*, 1960, full text available, accessed June 20, 2013, https://archive.org/stream/Éamondevalera007589mbp/Éamondevalera007589mbp_djvu.txt, 66-67.

bulk of that important and powerful constituency in U.S. politics favored some form of Irish self-determination, therefore no U.S. President could afford to ignore the Irish cause. One of the most vital issues of the day was public and political support for the United States' joining the League of Nations, with Irish-American support being crucial. It was Wilson's extreme reluctance to consider Irish-American demands for Irish self-determination which ultimately turned a large portion of Irish-American politicians against his League of Nations concept. This was the backdrop to Judge Cohalan's successful appearance before the U.S. Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, during which, he gave a "masterful" presentation of Ireland's case for independence and argued against the League of Nations.⁴¹¹

As already indicated, America's entering the war made the hyphenated Americans' socio-political situation precarious, a situation which hardly changed after the war. The Irish-Americans' dual loyalties were continuously under severe scrutiny in the form of the banning of Devoy's newspaper from the mail, and arresting numerous militant members of the Irish-American community.

Finances – who has the reins?

Finances were always a delicate issue between the Irish on both sides of the Atlantic, and the de Valera period of collecting donations was no different. In the early 1880s Devoy had successfully ensured that Clan na Gael had total control over fundraising in the U.S., and not Charles Stewart Parnell. If de Valera sought to control public opinion in Irish-America (as he already did in Ireland), then he equally sought to seize control as much as possible over the channels of fundraising in Irish-America. A conflict between Devoy and de Valera was inevitable and erupted as follows: Devoy and Cohalan had already been asking the Irish-American community to dig deep into their pockets and donate money. They had two goals, namely to accumulate the means for a successful campaign against the United States' joining the League of Nations, and to purchase weapons for the upcoming IRA War of Independence against British crown forces in Ireland. Then came de Valera, who joined the bid for money with an entirely different goal: he began fundraising in aid of the new Irish Parliament, Dáil Éireann. In an act of common sense (since there was no point in having two money collections

⁴¹¹ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 266.

simultaneously) and simple courtesy, the Friends of Irish Freedom stepped back, what's more, they even redirected \$100.000 to de Valera for launching his bond drive.⁴¹² However, neither Cohalan, nor Devoy were impressed when de Valera set up the American Commission on Irish Freedom to handle the bonds. Especially for John Devoy this move brought back memories of previous attempts to take control the Irish-American community out of his hands.

While relations deteriorated rapidly between Devoy and de Valera in the U.S., on the other side of the Atlantic, British authorities decided to veer away from the peaceful negotiations approach. Instead they intensified their suppression of rebel forces and illegal rebel institutions. On September 12, 1919 British authorities suppressed the Dáil which led to one of the bloodiest struggles for Ireland's independence. By the time of its suppression in September 1919, Dáil Éireann had already taken steps towards successfully governing the country, including establishing its own court system, an active military, as well as an effective hit-gang operating under the leadership of Michael Collins (the Squad). Britain countered with deploying the Black and Tans, a ruthless para-military organization. Thus was initiated Ireland's "Year of Terror," which would continue until July 1921, when a truce was eventually brokered.⁴¹³

At the same time as war raged in Ireland, the division between de Valera and Devoy began to sharpen. Although de Valera was presented with the keys to New York by mayor John Hylan (1868-1936) when he started his bond drive, and was generally respected within Irish-American circles, John Devoy did everything in his journalistic power to highlight Judge Daniel Cohalan's role as the real voice of the entire Irish-American community. Cohalan was described as "the peerless leader of twenty millions of the Irish race in America."⁴¹⁴ Cohalan's speeches were heavily quoted in *The Gaelic American*.⁴¹⁵ De Valera certainly did himself no favors when he gave one notorious interview to *The Westminster Gazette* quoting the Monroe Doctrine in February 1920. De Valera stated that "[...] a free Ireland would be willing to offer Britain all the legitimate international guarantees necessary for her security, and [he] called attention to the article in the Cuban Settlement under which Cuba engaged to preserve its

⁴¹² Ibid., 265.

⁴¹³ Foster, *Modern Ireland* ..., 494-502.

⁴¹⁴ MacManus, *Éamon* ..., 67.

⁴¹⁵ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 269.

independence against any foreign power.”⁴¹⁶ Suggesting a co-existence for Ireland and Britain similar to that of Cuba and the United States caused an outcry both in Irish, as well as the Irish-American circles, and only deepened the rift between the Devoy-Cohalan faction and de Valera.

Another cause for the deepening rift was the failed promotion of the Republic of Ireland to the Republican Party’s platform. Although both Devoy and Cohalan considered themselves Democrats, they assumed the Republicans would be more sympathetic to Ireland’s cause, specifically Senator Hiram Johnson (1866-1943), who was running for the 1920 Republican nomination. Devoy already put his editorial powers to use and announced in *The Gaelic American*: “Go to the primaries and vote Johnson.”⁴¹⁷ Not to be outdone, de Valera also prepared to present Ireland’s case at the Chicago Republican Convention and push for its inclusion in the Republican platform – a rather brazen interference in American politics made by the head of an as-yet-unrecognized foreign state. Cohalan carefully worded his resolution: “the principle that the people of Ireland have the right to determine freely [...] their own governmental institutions,” so as to painstakingly avoid the Democrat’s phrase of self-determination.⁴¹⁸ Although Cohalan’s resolution passed and de Valera’s did not, de Valera demanded Cohalan’s version be disregarded and his own resolution given another hearing. As a result of such disunity in the Irish camp, neither resolution was eventually included in the respective election manifestos. This was a major setback to the Irish cause. As far as Devoy was concerned, the blame for this disaster lay squarely on the shoulders of de Valera, who by mid-1920 had become Devoy’s arch-enemy.

John Devoy was dealt yet another blow at the end of October 1920: after months of regular attacks on de Valera for the misappropriation of the funds and his Cuba-related comments, the IRB felt that they could no longer cooperate with an organization that did not recognize de Valera as the true President of the Irish Republic. The decision reached Devoy in the form of a letter written by Harry Boland. It was a unilateral decision made by the Ireland-based IRB calling for the severance of all ties with Clan na Gael. The letter stated:

⁴¹⁶ MacManus *Éamon* ..., 72-73.

⁴¹⁷ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 276.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 277.

In the view of the parent organization it is intolerable that *The Gaelic American*, well known here and in Ireland to be the organization organ, should be using its circulation [...] to propagate misrepresentation and falsehood [...] Speaking with full authority in the name of the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, I hereby announce that the Clan na Gael organization is no longer affiliated with the Brotherhood.⁴¹⁹

To Devoy, who had been a sworn IRB member since 1866, and had dedicated most his life from the 1860s onwards to the goal of achieving Irish independence, this IRB decision to sever ties could only have been received as a bitter blow and personal affront. Publicly Devoy ignored the decision, nevertheless, his private views were starkly different. In a personal letter to Harry Boland he wrote: “If I were a younger man I would [...] take whatever is coming to me, but I am too old and cannot endure it any longer. [...] After sixty years of the best work that was in me, instead of dying by an English bullet or a hangman’s rope, I am driven out by the chief officers of the Irish Republic.”⁴²⁰

Devoy was deeply humiliated. In spite of all these hurdles, though, Devoy remained highly involved in the fight for Irish freedom. In this case, “all these hurdles” actually refers to the following list of troubling events: his place as the official American liaison of the IRB was taken over by Joseph McGarrity; de Valera, before leaving the United States, formed the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic, draining the Friends of Irish Freedom of a large number of its members; furthermore, a rival Reorganized Clan na Gael was established, and finally, the office of *The Gaelic American* was broken into in search of information on Clan members still loyal to Devoy, with the break-in executed by formerly close associates of Devoy’s. What was occurring, in fact, was the local version (and precursor) of the 1921-23 Irish Civil War, except it was played out in the heart of Irish-America, and not in Ireland.⁴²¹

Devoy’s reaction to the Anglo-Irish Treaty

The end of the War of Independence in Ireland was made official with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty on December 6, 1922. It brought not only the long-

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 282.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ Ibid., 286-287.

awaited separation from Britain, but also the partition of Ireland. While the Treaty could be interpreted as an utter failure and the abandonment of the so-called “pure-flame” Irish republican ideal of a one hundred per cent fully sovereign all-Ireland republic, nevertheless many chose to see the other side of the medal. Many, including John Devoy adhered to Michael Collins’ belief that it represented “[...] *freedom, not the ultimate freedom that all nations desire* and develop to, but the freedom to achieve it.”⁴²² John Devoy, despite being considered by many to be a die-hard Irish republican, fully endorsed Collins’ viewpoint that the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty (which only granted limited Irish autonomy) was good enough for the moment. This also meant being opposed to Éamon de Valera, which perhaps suited Devoy just fine.

The clash – both personal and political – with de Valera was probably the last major battle that Devoy fought for Ireland. By now he was an octogenarian, both his hearing and sight were starting to fail him. Also, his weapons-smuggling years were over. Along with his ally Judge Cohalan, Devoy invested several years in fighting a fierce political battle for the recognition of the Irish Republic. When the Anglo-Irish Treaty tore the country and its fighting men into two, with pro-Treaty Republicans pitted against anti-Treaty Free Staters, Devoy sided with the Treaty-followers. Does this mean John Devoy did not deserve Pádraig Pearse’s title “the greatest Fenian”? Hardly, as he spent his entire adult life in the service of attaining a free and independent Ireland. The Treaty did, in fact, ensure just that, albeit at a price: a tragic price, costing the lives of thousands of Irishmen, and a symbolic price, dividing a geographical unit along socio-political lines, based on national-religious denomination.

Devoy continued his war of words on the pages of *The Gaelic American*, but also turned his attention to his own memoirs. His last journey to Ireland, as detailed in the previous chapter, was intended as a purely personal visit, but instead, given his prominent Fenian status, his very presence in the Free State helped to legitimize it. After all, having John Devoy acknowledge and accept the new political entity was the ultimate “seal of approval” of the Fenian generation to whom revolutionaries had looked to for so many decades.

⁴²² Debate on Treaty, in Dáil Éireann - Vol. 3 – December 19, 1921, accessed April 25, 2013, <http://historical-debates.oireachtas.ie/D/DT/D.T.192112190002.html>.

Chapter 6 – John Devoy, public persona

We live in a day and age when the life and work of a person is all too easily evaluated based on their public image, projected or perceived. The various forms of media and social media tend to have a considerable influence on this image. In the early 21st century the Internet has had much the same role as newspapers used to have in the 19th century. It is therefore equally important to take a thorough look at John Devoy's persona not so much as he was seen by his peers within his immediate circles, but how he was portrayed to the wider public in the pages of the newspapers of his time. Due to the transatlantic nature of his work, two newspapers were chosen, one from each side of the Atlantic, *The New York Times* and *The Irish Times*, published in the United States and Ireland, respectively.

The choice of these two newspapers needs some further explanation. *The New York Times* was selected because it was by far the most widely read national newspaper, certainly on the East Coast. The primary aim was not to gain an accurate (or indeed, objective) image of the activities of the nationalist Irish-American community and their leading figure, John Devoy. *The New York Times* was much rather chosen in order to present the public image of Devoy as seen by the general readership in the late 19th century United States, taking into account that *The New York Times* was anything but pro-Irish. Conversely, *The New York Times* was also one of the most effective ways of informing the public, as well as forming the public's opinion of issues related to Irish-American community, their nationalist views, and more specifically, Clan na Gael activities.

A similar line of argument can be brought to clarify why *The Irish Times* was selected from among numerous Irish and British publications. Yet again, the basis for selection was not the search for an objective image of John Devoy in the media. Furthermore, Irish nationalist opinion is certainly not to be gauged from this newspaper, neither is one to expect an all too positive image of John Devoy. Instead, *The Irish Times* was chosen because it was the most widely circulated Irish national newspaper

among the majority pro-British middle classes in Ireland. It was also considered the leading “local” Dublin newspaper, thus its articles would have been quoted both in the British (London), as well as the American press, thereby having direct influence on how Irish political and revolutionary events were reported abroad.

The majority of events related to the struggle for Irish independence will (again) be shortly referenced in this chapter, though the focus is on the portrayal of said events in the columns of these two newspapers. The chapter is divided into sections for the decades 1860s to 1920s.

John Devoy’s public image in *The Irish Times*

Here follows an analysis of articles from *The Irish Times* searching for citations and references to John Devoy. Due to Devoy’s extraordinarily long active life, this research encompassed articles from some six decades, starting from the 1860s all through to the late 1920s. The articles were examined with the following questions in mind: ‘In what context was the name of John Devoy mentioned in the article?’ and ‘What style and language was used?’ The initial assumption was that in this pro-British newspaper, John Devoy was distinctly seen as the Irish-American nationalist supporting the use of violence, and consequently most of his citations would be related to his organizing activities meant to propagate the armed struggle for Irish independence.

The examined articles portrayed a discernible change of tone over the decades, for example, when writing about John Devoy in the decades of the 19th and early 20th century a more militant and sensationalistic language was used than in the post-Treaty period. This may be explained by the fact that the early 1920s saw the creation of the Irish Free State that arguably brought the very faction to power that was considered as “revolutionary” in earlier periods of Irish history. However, it must be stated that the establishment of the Free State did not bring a radical, overnight transformation of the journalistic language used in *The Irish Times*. In general terms, it can be summarized as follows: the newspaper remained Unionist in outlook and tone until at least the 1930s. No wholesale changes of personnel took place during the political changes after the First Dáil or the creation of the Irish Free State. Therefore, its slightly partial depiction of events remained consistently unaltered. The Irish Free State continued to be part of the British Commonwealth until 1937, with the British monarch as the head of state.

Given its traditional political leanings, *The Irish Times* supported this arrangement. Within Ireland it was identified as a “Protestant” newspaper until the early 1960s.⁴²³

The Irish Times has an extensive archive of articles reaching as far back as 1859, found under the address <http://www.irishtimes.com/archive>. The archive for the period in question, the second half of the 19th century and first two decades of the 20th century, is a paying service. The articles were collected with the website’s search engine based on the keyword “Devoy.” The search engine is not entirely without flaws, because apart from references to John Devoy, it mistakenly included several hits for the word “decoy.” But more importantly for this study, it provided a result of 290 overall citations for this Fenian. Unfortunately, it must be stated that not all articles that contained a mention of John Devoy were legible due to the deteriorated state of the print before it was scanned. One such article was titled “Summary” dating March 5, 1881, which could not be deciphered, its content simply had to be disregarded.

Early references

The first instance of Devoy’s name mentioned in the columns of *The Irish Times* was in 1866. This was the year, actually one of the years, set for the Fenian Rising as planned by James Stephens. However, as described in detail previously, due to poor organizing, lack of weapons, and military expertise, the rising never materialized. Instead, a wide-spread Fenian round up was initiated by the British authorities and a great number of both military and civilian Fenians were arrested. Among them was a certain John Boyle O’Reilly, a Fenian Hussar, and John Devoy, arrested as a civilian Fenian. The earliest newspaper citations of Devoy dealt with O’Reilly’s trial, when O’Reilly recounted his Fenian activities and the role that Devoy played in the organization. Eventually, O’Reilly was, along with other military Fenians, transported to the Establishment at the British penal colony in Fremantle, Western Australia, to serve his sentence. Within a few years a plea for help from one of the incarcerated Fenians (i.e. James Wilson) to John Devoy would trigger one of the most spectacular rescue missions in Irish-American history, the *Catalpa* mission. No more than five

⁴²³ Author’s email correspondence with John Grenham, of *The Irish Times*, dated February 18, 2013.

articles contained references to Devoy during the 1860s, including the report on his own trial.⁴²⁴

Articles from the 1870s

Quite understandably *The Irish Times* pages from the early 1870s were devoid of Devoy citations, as he was released from jail in 1871 on condition he leave the country. The majority of articles mentioning his name in this decade were in connection with the afore-mentioned *Catalpa* rescue mission. As early as July 6, 1876 *The Irish Times* published an article on the incident in which the vessel *Georgette* tried to stop Captain Anthony's ship with the rescued convicts on board, although this particular article contained no direct mentioning of Devoy's name.⁴²⁵ The news of the *Catalpa*'s safe arrival in New York was published in a short, two-line summary on August 21, 1876.⁴²⁶

The New Departure was initiated in 1879 by secret meetings between John Devoy, Charles Stewart Parnell, and Michael Davitt as a new approach to the struggle for Irish independence. The first press citation came on January 4, 1879, highlighting the clashes between the extreme Nationalists and the New Departure as promoted by Devoy: "[...] extreme Nationalists have denounced the new departure, Mr. James Stephens, ex-head centre of the Fenian Brotherhood, and Mr John Devoy." The article also added that Devoy was in fact a "released Fenian prisoner."⁴²⁷

Articles from the 1880s

The 1880s were most certainly a more prolific decade in terms of articles related to John Devoy. The New Departure went on to become one of the most-discussed topics on the pages of *The Irish Times* in terms of Fenianism in the 1880s. It also led to extensive reporting of parliamentary debates on the issue of land reform and the Land League organization. Devoy was identified as the American representative of the Land League, yet in most cases, as in this article dating December 20, 1880, he was also

⁴²⁴ Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, February 14, 1867, 4.

⁴²⁵ "The Escape of the Fenians. Chase of the Rescuing Vessel," *The Irish Times*, July 6, 1876, 5.

⁴²⁶ "Dublin Summary," *The Irish Times*, August 21, 1876, 4.

⁴²⁷ "A New Irish Party," *The Irish Times*, January 4, 1879, 7.

defined by his Fenian past: “[...] Devoy who had been convicted during the Fenian uprising.”⁴²⁸

A considerable increase of John Devoy references was seen in the immediate period following John Devoy’s sending the infamous cablegram to Sir William Harcourt. Harcourt attacked Parnell over his association with John Devoy, whom he named publicly as an ex-convict. At Harcourt’s comment of February 24, 1881, that it was the duty of the government to “stamp out conspiracies,” John Devoy flew into a rage, and days later sent him a cablegram with the following text: “Two can play at stamping; the greatest sufferers are those who have the most to lose. The day when you can stamp with impunity has passed forever.”⁴²⁹ Quite understandably, this telegram caused a great stir, Harcourt announced in parliament that Devoy had made a death threat against him, while in a telegram, Parnell immediately demanded of Devoy to explain his message. Harcourt was reported to have said:

Devoy spoke on behalf of the American Land League, and he said that time had come for action in Ireland, that there would be a collision in Ireland between the authorities and the people and that he and his friends were prepared to reply in that by assassination. (oh), with the members of parliament clearly expressing their shock.⁴³⁰

Overall, John Devoy’s role in promoting the New Departure was considered to be the primary argument as to why Devoy was seen as a moderate, flexible nationalist, willing to negotiate and make unusual alliances in the service of achieving the ultimate goal. This particular telegram represented a stark divergence from that depiction, his voice openly threatening violence.

In the same article, Harcourt also made references to the Skirmishing Fund (whose name would only further contribute to the notion of Irish-American Fenians as violent revolutionaries), and put Devoy and Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa in one and the same category: “The Irish members had no responsibility for those things, and they protested against deprivation of the liberties of the whole Irish people because O’Donovan Rossa and Devoy published threatening letters and made threatening speeches in America. (hear, hear.)”⁴³¹ However, Harcourt’s equating these two

⁴²⁸ “The Hon. D. R. Plunkett on Ireland,” *The Irish Times*, December 20, 1880, 5.

⁴²⁹ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 136.

⁴³⁰ Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, February 23, 1880, 6.

⁴³¹ Ibid.

characters only bore witness to how superficially he considered the issue, since the majority of the literature on John Devoy, as indicated in Chapter 1, tended to juxtapose these two nationalists, and in this comparison Devoy was always portrayed as the more moderate, more disciplined, and the more reliable one of the two.

John Devoy continued to be associated with this infamous telegram in a number of subsequent articles, 16 altogether, running with regular references to Devoy as the author of the telegram and an aggressor threatening an attack on Harcourt's life as late as July 1881. Members of the Irish Parliamentary Party, including John Dillon, defended Devoy and especially criticized Harcourt for attacking Devoy while he was not there to respond to the charges. In the article "An Interview with Devoy" *The Irish Times* reprinted an interview published in "an American paper received last night" in which Devoy claimed that his speech was incorrectly reported and denied it was meant as a direct threat.⁴³²

Another reference to John Devoy published in 1881 was provided by the American correspondent about the *Fenian Ram*, the prototype torpedo boat that John Holland was working on.⁴³³ While the article itself perpetuated the image of John Devoy as an extreme nationalist, always linked to violence and planning attacks on British rule, it also highlighted Clan na Gael's serious security problems surrounding their supposedly clandestine operations. Having *The Irish Times* on the other side of the Atlantic openly report on the progress of the development of a Fenian torpedo submarine did not help the work of a supposedly secret organization.

Later, the focus of the press regarding John Devoy's character shifted from the threat against Harcourt, and towards Irish-American issues. The Clan na Gael Convention held in August 1881 in Chicago was overshadowed by "continuous wrangle over finances."⁴³⁴ While not particularly emphasized in this article, Devoy did, in fact, represent the more moderate faction of the Nationalists, as he called for a statement of accounts and tried to clarify the expenditure of the Clan, which was to be used henceforth for the "general dismemberment of the British Empire," discontinuing the dynamite campaign. The more extreme faction did not accept this. Moreover, they held a separate convention, rejecting the moderate position of Devoy's convention. Another

⁴³² "An Interview with Devoy," *The Irish Times*, March 12, 1881, 6.

⁴³³ "The United States," *The Irish Times*, August 1, 1881, 5.

⁴³⁴ "The Irish National Convention," *The Irish Times*, August 11, 1881, 5.

article quoted Devoy stating there was a need for revolution in people's minds, not just guns and dynamite in order to achieve "the proclamation of Ireland's right to control her own affairs."⁴³⁵

Although *The Irish Times* was chiefly preoccupied with Devoy's activities as a Fenian, it also published the announcement of Devoy's new newspaper, *The Irish Nation*, which he would use as a platform for Nationalist news.⁴³⁶ Yet Devoy was never too far away from promoting *any* means – violence included – in the struggle for Irish independence. In December 1881 a short remark was published on Devoy's journalistic work. It stated that the first two issues "give no evidence of any literary ability, but the dynamite theory is strenuously advocated."⁴³⁷ In another article Michael Davitt was accused of being 'dictated' to by John Devoy and *The Irish Nation*.⁴³⁸

The year 1882 did not yield much news on Devoy, except for a short reference towards disputes and charges within Clan circles, as James O'Kelly rejected allegations that he had received \$10,000 from the Skirmishing Fund, instead, he referred to fights between John Devoy and Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa over financial issues.⁴³⁹ While in the U.S.A. the John Devoy libel case against August Belmont, in the fall of 1882, was discussed in great detail over the course of several weeks (see the section *The New York Times* articles from the 1880s), in *The Irish Times* there were only few untitled news items on this topic. These included the edition of December 28, 1882, about the events of the trial⁴⁴⁰ and two articles in June 1883, regarding the sentence passed against John Devoy.⁴⁴¹ The case famously involved John Devoy refusing to name the person who ordered him to publish libelous information on August Belmont, thus resulting in a prison sentence for Devoy.

The actions of the Invincibles, i.e., the murder of the Permanent Under Secretary of the Irish Office, Thomas Henry Burke and the newly-arrived Chief Secretary for Ireland, Lord Frederick Cavendish on May 6, 1882 became prime news. Their trials took place in early 1883. In an article dating January 22, 1883 John Devoy's secret visit

⁴³⁵ Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, September 20, 1881, 4.

⁴³⁶ "The Irish in America," *The Irish Times*, September 15, 1881, 5.

⁴³⁷ "American Opinion on Ireland," *The Irish Times*, December 14, 1881, 5.

⁴³⁸ Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, June 24, 1882, 4.

⁴³⁹ "The Skirmishing Fund," *The Irish Times*, December 15, 1882, 5.

⁴⁴⁰ Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, December 28, 1882, 5.

⁴⁴¹ "The United States, and From the United States," *The Irish Times*, June 19 and June 20, 1883, 5.

to Ireland was mentioned, during which he carried out a civil inspection, among them members of the Invincibles.⁴⁴² Other articles on this topic revealed how the central figures of the Land League, including Parnell and Dillon, were in almost daily communication with John Devoy⁴⁴³ who, in turn, was accused of being one of the possible sources, along with O'Donovan Rossa, of funding for the Invincibles.⁴⁴⁴ The charge that Land League money was used for financing the assassinations was rejected by Patrick Egan, Land League treasurer; furthermore, he underlined his trust towards the Clan with his actions, as well: on his travel to the United States, the first call he made was with John Devoy.⁴⁴⁵

The Westminster explosion supposedly targeting the Home Secretary caused another wave of alarm and finger pointing. Devoy was quoted as stating that he did not believe Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa was behind the planning of the explosion, despite Rossa being "jubilant about the crime and having bombs lying openly around on [Rossa's] table."⁴⁴⁶ Several articles in the March-April 1883 period dealt with the topic of explosives and described how easy it was to learn to make them. In these articles Devoy's name was cited in regard to O'Donovan Rossa and the Skirmishing Fund. The article "The Dynamite Discoveries" claimed that one of the alleged bombers, Dr. Norman Gallagher, used to be close with John Devoy.⁴⁴⁷ In any case, the conspirators seemed to have come from the United States and at least one of them, Henry Dalton "had been in communication with O'Donovan Rossa, John Devoy, and others."⁴⁴⁸

Not all articles followed the objective, neutral-tone approach. In May 1883 an article written in a blatantly sarcastic language referred to the connections between the Phoenix Park murders and "Saint Devoy."⁴⁴⁹ In the same article, Devoy was also quoted as being critical of Irish affairs: according to the article, Devoy was "utterly disgusted with the quiet state of things in this country and the roundabout methods that were

⁴⁴² Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, January 22, 1883, 5.

⁴⁴³ "Irish Crime," *The Irish Times*, February 17, 1883, 6.

⁴⁴⁴ "The Identity of No. One," *The Irish Times*, February 20, 1883, 5.

⁴⁴⁵ "Mr. Egan in America," *The Irish Times*, March 15, 1883, 5.

⁴⁴⁶ "Mr. Devoy on the Outrage," *The Irish Times*, March 19, 1883, 6.

⁴⁴⁷ "The Dynamite Discoveries," *The Irish Times*, April 11, 1883, 5.

⁴⁴⁸ "The Dynamite Conspiracy," *The Irish Times*, April 13, 1883, 3.

⁴⁴⁹ Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, May 10, 1883, 6.

taken.”⁴⁵⁰ Another article recounted the details of the Invincibles’ trial, mentioning the “John Devoy Branch.”⁴⁵¹ These articles were not open attacks against John Devoy, nonetheless they certainly went out of their way to depict him as a character directly (or at the very least, indirectly) involved in the murders. The Invincibles – and therefore also related citations of John Devoy – continued to be present in the columns of *The Irish Times* well into the year 1884, as the Invincibles’ ties were traced to Paris and information on their structure of organization published.⁴⁵²

News also emerged about John Devoy’s secret journey to Ireland in 1879, as one of the Paris dynamiters, Patrick Delaney described a military inspection led by General Millen and John Devoy “around 1880.” Devoy was claimed to have attended a Fenian meeting, where he performed a head count of the members, as well as arms and ammunitions.⁴⁵³

The December 6, 1884 article was a re-print of a news item from the *St. James Gazette*,⁴⁵⁴ and stated that there were two factions within the Clan, one radical, killing Lord Cavendish, “the other (commonly called the Stephenite party) innocent of all sympathy with assassination, except for traitors or suspected traitors in their own ranks.” It claimed that Clan na Gael was the strongest organization in the United States, in alliance with the Parnellites. John Devoy was described as “its guiding spirit,” also the editor of *The Irish Nation*, a “newspaper which supports Parnell and his party, and defends them against all assailants.” In addition, there was a reference to John Devoy’s sentence from 1867 on “treason-felony” and “conspiracy to murder,” as well as the inference that, based on the evidence given during the Invincibles’ trial, Devoy seemed to be implicated in this crime, as well.⁴⁵⁵

Just how influential John Devoy’s name was in Fenian circles was supported by an article on the arrest of one Bernard Campbell, who was charged with administering

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, May 12, 1883, 5.

⁴⁵² “The Invincibles in Paris,” *The Irish Times*, April 19, 1884, 6.

⁴⁵³ Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, November 7, 7.

⁴⁵⁴ *St James Gazette*, a British newspaper, launched on May 31, 1880, merged with the *Evening Standard*, further details see Concise history of British newspapers in the 19th century, accessed May 3, 2013, <http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/news/concisehistbritnews/britnews19th/>.

⁴⁵⁵ “Extraordinary Statement,” *The Irish Times*, December 6, 1884, 5.

the Fenian Oath and suggesting to a prisoner that “he should take the oath and recognise John Devoy’s form of government in Ireland.”⁴⁵⁶

During the Irish Race Convention in Chicago in the summer of 1886, Devoy played a central role and made sharp comments against Congressman John F. Finerty (1846-1908), an Irish-American politician with senatorial aspirations. One of the articles on the Race Convention gave the following summary: “The Devoy party will strenuously oppose the adoption of a policy of force as a means of obtaining the realisation of the Irish Nationalist aspirations,”⁴⁵⁷ which again lent support to Devoy’s image as a moderate nationalist.

Charles Stewart Parnell was repeatedly attacked over his relationship with prominent Fenians, including John Devoy, as in this quote from an untitled article dating April 19, 1887:

The hon. member said in the same contradiction that except through public press he knew nothing as to who were the Fenian leaders in America. (Mr. Parnell – “Hear, hear”) [...] I believe, I have reason to believe, that men such as Ford, as Egan, as Finerty, as John Devoy, as Brennan, as Alexander Sullivan, as General Kirwin, and others mentioned in The Times articles are Fenian leaders, and I say the statements which have been published recently in The Times to prove conclusively that there are means of communication between the hon. member and his friends and the men whose names I have just [unfinished quote].⁴⁵⁸

As a form of explanation, Parnell countered that he did not consider these men to be leaders of the Fenians. From the tone it could be deduced that Devoy and other Fenian leaders were seen as a highly negative faction associated with Parnell. Only two days later another article appeared containing similar reactions to a set of articles that had been published on Home Rule in *The Times*. *The Irish Times* article “Parnell and Crime” described the New Departure as “a compact negotiated by John Devoy to secure ‘a common basis of political action’ for the quasi-constitutionalists and the revolutionists of the Fenian societies.” Devoy was also quoted as being “imprudent enough to state in the columns of *The Irish Nation*, ‘the number of conferences and caucuses held in the intervals between the sessions of the Convention was almost

⁴⁵⁶ “Charge of Administering the Fenian Oath,” *The Irish Times*, December 16, 1884, 5.

⁴⁵⁷ “Two Hostile Camps,” *The Irish Times*, August 21, 1886, 6.

⁴⁵⁸ Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, April 19, 1887, 6.

without number and it was here the real work was done.”⁴⁵⁹ This portrayal indicated that the Irish National Convention was seen as anything but a harmless or innocent congregation of Irish-Americans.

Some articles presented various Fenian figures, e.g. John Devoy and Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, as virtually indistinguishable, while in other articles, there was a distinct line drawn between them, stressing their different characters and political views. To illustrate, in the article “The Fenian Ram” dated February 4, 1888, Devoy was depicted as the person who had to take over from O'Donovan Rossa what he called the Resources of Civilization Fund, as Rossa had again “relapsed into irregular habits.”⁴⁶⁰ Parnell also related Devoy's stand on a revolution, stating how Devoy feared that a premature movement could take place, and considered that something should be done about “the more rabid who were demanding that some action should be taken” – directly referring to Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa.⁴⁶¹ On the other hand, an untitled July 1888 article spoke of demonstrations showing Irish-Americans' honest sympathy with loyalty and order in Ireland; protesting “against the Rossas and Devoy,” clearly considering them to be of one and the same category.⁴⁶²

The year 1887 saw the revelation of one of the most controversial set of letters, actually forgeries, created by Richard Pigott, the Irish journalist employed by *The Irishman*, which falsely linked Charles Stewart Parnell to the Phoenix Park murders. The letter most strongly implicating Parnell was published by *The Irish Times* in April 1887. However, over a two-year period, the in-depth investigation into this case ultimately cleared Parnell's name. The forger, Pigott fled to Spain and committed suicide. On this issue, several newspaper articles made a reference to John Devoy during the various interviews with other witnesses on Parnell's behalf. One such example for a citation was the article of July 24, 1888, which detailed Father Walsh's statement. He was accused of having met Devoy while he was in America and kept in communication, which he readily confirmed:

[...] all these communications were open to the fullest scrutiny, and they will be found absolutely innocent and colourless, and destitute of any incitement to bloodshed, and

⁴⁵⁹ “Parnellism and Crime,” *The Irish Times*, May 21, 1887, 6.

⁴⁶⁰ “The Fenian Ram,” *The Irish Times*, February 4, 1888, 3.

⁴⁶¹ Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, February 6, 1889, 5.

⁴⁶² Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, July 13, 1888, 4.

entirely undeserving of that lurid aspect with which the Attorney-General has described my interview with that man. [...] the intercourse was certainly of the most harmless and constitutional character.⁴⁶³

Parnell was also interrogated repeatedly over his connection and communication with Devoy, including the mentioning of having appeared together with Devoy at the Philadelphia Convention in April 1883,⁴⁶⁴ or Parnell joining Devoy for the Boston Convention in August 1884, along with him holding initial talks about a possible novel strategic approach called the New Departure in Dublin in 1880. In this latter article there was also a physical description given of John Devoy: “a stout man, about five feet six, of dark complexion [...] with a beard cut very close.”⁴⁶⁵

The first quarter of 1889 was almost exclusively devoted to the Parnell Commission, in which Devoy is mentioned in most articles. The British spy Henri Le Caron was questioned minutely on his knowledge of the Fenians, including his relationship with John Devoy. Questions often included fact-finding confirmations such as “When did Devoy return from Ireland?” or “Did you see Devoy in the year 1880? Yes.”⁴⁶⁶ Henri Le Caron was undoubtedly one of the best sources of information for the British government on Irish-American activities, since Le Caron had infiltrated Clan na Gael and become one of its respected and trusted members. He gave detailed information on the already mentioned secret codes used in correspondence by the Clan, and was asked to explain the various acronyms in use. He also shared his knowledge on John Devoy’s secret journey to Ireland, and revealed his attitude towards revolution. One of the more revealing questions posed to Le Caron included the following: “Did you know what policy Devoy had been preaching prior to his going?” to which he answered: “Active warfare.”⁴⁶⁷

The Irish Times issues of February 1889 mentioned John Devoy almost on a daily basis with the focus on Devoy’s illegal trip to Ireland in 1879; his connection and correspondence with Parnell, and his editorial work on *The Irish Nation*. The article under the title “The Special Commission – Mr. Parnell’s Cross-Examination” contained

⁴⁶³ “The Parnell Commission Bill,” *The Irish Times*, July 24, 1888, 5.

⁴⁶⁴ Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, October 26, 1888, 5.

⁴⁶⁵ Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, January 1889, 6.

⁴⁶⁶ Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, February 6, 1889, 5.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

rather controversial statements made by Parnell, namely, he was asked about his knowledge of the New Departure. While John Devoy in his *Recollections* stated that Parnell supported and agreed with the basic principles of the New Departure, Parnell's answers to the Special Commission painted a different picture. The questioning ran as follows:

Did you know of the term 'New Departure'? It's a term I must have heard. Do you represent that it did not come to your knowledge that the subject was being discussed in the Nationalist papers as a combination between physical force and the Land League? Certainly not. [...] Do you not know that 5,000 copies of the Devoy letters, printed at the expense of the Land League, were circulated in Ireland? I have never heard of it. I have no recollection of having heard of such a thing.⁴⁶⁸

As to whether he knew that Devoy was a prominent Fenian, Parnell stated that he had never spoken to any of these men about Fenianism, and he added that he did not know Devoy as a violent person, the only incident that Parnell could recall was the telegram threat sent to Harcourt in 1881.

In May 1889 the only John Devoy-related news item that was not directly in connection with the Special Commission, was about the suspicious disappearance of the Fenian Dr. Cronin in connection with the misappropriation of Land League money by three members of the Executive Board led by Chicago lawyer, Alexander Sullivan. As mentioned briefly in Chapter 4, Dr. Patrick Cronin was a prominent Chicago physician and a member of Clan na Gael. He made critical comments about the Board's covert financial dealings. As a direct reaction to these charges, Cronin was accused of being a British spy and suddenly disappeared on May 4, 1889. The article quoted John Devoy: "John Devoy declares that Dr. Cronin has been murdered, that he had no intention of going abroad, and that the fact of intending to give evidence in London is absurd."⁴⁶⁹ Eventually Devoy would be proven right, as Dr. Cronin was indeed murdered, Alexander Sullivan was charged, but acquitted due to lack of evidence. This attack – and the fact that it was reported on in *The Irish Times* – indicated just how deep the rift within Clan na Gael was.

A number of articles quoted from John Devoy's written materials, be it either from articles from *The Irish Nation*, or from Devoy's letters published elsewhere, as for

⁴⁶⁸ "The Special Commission – Mr. Parnell's Cross-Examination," *The Irish Times*, May 3, 1889, 5.

⁴⁶⁹ "The Missing Doctor," *The Irish Times*, May 10, 1889, 6.

example, in the articles of July 3, 1889⁴⁷⁰ and July 4, 1889.⁴⁷¹ The better part of July 1889 was spent with the questioning of Michael Davitt, and there were ample references to his relationship with John Devoy, although when asked about Devoy's views on bombing, Davitt declined to answer that question.⁴⁷² It was interesting to note that by the time of Davitt's cross-examination, Davitt considered Devoy to be a "personal and implacable enemy," having fallen out with him in 1882. The reason for their differences lay in the handling of finances: Davitt had asked for financial aid for his Land League work. This was granted and paid out of the Skirmishing Fund. Davitt, however, refused to be related in any form with the Fund which was mainly used for violent revolutionary purposes. This led to the deterioration in the relationship and eventual break between Devoy and Davitt.

In articles detailing the speech given by Sir Henry James (1828-1911) for the Special Commission⁴⁷³ Devoy's role was revisited several times throughout November 1889. Understandably, Devoy's infamous confrontation with Sir William Harcourt was also mentioned: "Several speeches of Sir Harcourt, who was then Home Secretary, were referred to to show that Devoy was a dangerous person, that attention was called to the difficulty of dealing with the Irish in America."⁴⁷⁴

In the same month, *The Irish Times* published yet another section of Le Caron's report detailing Devoy's plans to visit Ireland in 1879. In it Le Caron accused Devoy of

the treasonable action of urging young men of Ireland to run the risk and all the consequences of their treason, while he should be safely in America; that he was organising among them, and that he was doing his best either by private advice – like that which he gave to MP John O'Connor – that they should remain in the rat-holes of conspiracy.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷⁰ "The Special Commission – Evidence of Mr. Davitt," *The Irish Times*, July 3, 1889, 5.

⁴⁷¹ Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, July 4, 1889, 5.

⁴⁷² "The Special Commission – A Member's Day," *The Irish Times*, July 10, 1889, 5.

⁴⁷³ The British government set up a Special Commission to investigate Charles Stewart Parnell's role in the Phoenix Park murders as suggested by the Pigott letters. The Commission operated between September 1888 and November 1889. The Commission cleared Parnell's name after the admittance of Richard Pigott that the letters were forgeries. The Commission also examined the wider context of these letters, including the Land Wars and Fenian activities.

⁴⁷⁴ "Special Commission – Sir Henry James's Speech," *The Irish Times*, November 23, 1889, 5.

⁴⁷⁵ Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, November 2, 1889, 5.

The newspaper also made it clear just how deeply undercover Le Caron was, when it published the letter of introduction written by John Devoy for Le Caron, to be handed to Patrick Egan, the Land League treasurer.⁴⁷⁶

Articles from the 1890s

Devoy's name appeared regularly throughout the year 1890 as related to the Parnell Commission and the elections; mainly due to Parnell's association with the Land League. Furthermore, there were a number of articles that only offered a summary of events published in detail in previous issues. Parnell's sudden death led to a surprising announcement by John Devoy, duly published some weeks later. It described Devoy's statement at the memorial service on how Parnell had fully agreed with the *New Departure*. In fact, Devoy publicly dared Michael Davitt to deny this claim.⁴⁷⁷ Naturally, such a bold statement elicited an immediate response from Michael Davitt, who asserted that Devoy's statement was absolutely not true, and Parnell's sworn testimony at the Commission would serve as proof for that. The article added: "No importance, said Mr. Davitt, should be attached to the sayings of Devoy, who was entirely without influence in America."⁴⁷⁸

It was not only Le Caron's report at the Special Commission that was amply covered on the pages of *The Irish Times*, but also his book *Recollections*, which appeared in October 1892. Understandably, these articles contained numerous references to John Devoy, as Le Caron's *Recollections* presented his account of his affiliation with the Clan. One of the most famous, though not flattering, physical descriptions of John Devoy was given in this work and quoted in the article "Major Le Caron's Book" dating, October 22, 1892: "Forbidding in aspect, with a perpetual scowl upon his face, he immediately conveyed the idea of being a quarrelsome man, an idea sustained and strengthened by both his manner of speech and gruffness of voice."⁴⁷⁹

Citations of John Devoy on the pages of *The Irish Times* grew sporadic in the next few decades. An interesting glimpse into Fenian circles was given by an article

⁴⁷⁶ "Le Caron and Patrick Egan," *The Irish Times*, March 1, 1890, 5.

⁴⁷⁷ Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, October 21, 1891, 6.

⁴⁷⁸ "Parnellite Revelations – Return of Mr. Michael Davitt," *The Irish Times*, October 24, 1891, 5.

⁴⁷⁹ "Major Le Caron's Book," *The Irish Times*, October 22, 1892, 5.

from 1897 entitled “The Old ‘New Departure’” which was actually a letter written by John O’Leary in which he vigorously rejected the paper’s connotation ranking himself and Charles Kickham with “opportunists” such as John Devoy and Patrick Egan. O’Leary added: “We, who were not opportunists, on the contrary, entirely dissented from these gentlemen and other opportunist Fenians, at home and abroad.”⁴⁸⁰ As seen in this quote, internal opposition was always present within the Fenian organization.

Articles from the 1900s and 1910s

The Irish Times gave a detailed account of the death of James Stephens in March 1901, and named Devoy as one of the fellow Fenians,⁴⁸¹ other articles gave a summary of old articles from the 1880s on the Land League and Devoy’s role in it,⁴⁸² and there was a reference to John Devoy in connection with the *Recollections* of William O’Brien, MP.⁴⁸³ Curiously enough, Devoy’s protest against the New York premiere of the John Millington Synge (1871-1909) play, “The Playboy of the Western World” was also worth a column in *The Irish Times*.⁴⁸⁴

The next significant mentioning of John Devoy was yet another criticism by him, this time directed at John Redmond regarding Home Rule. *The Irish Times* published a telegram sent by Devoy from New York to London’s *Daily Express*. It included the following lines:

If this Parliament ever comes into existence, its only use to Ireland will be the discussion of Irish affairs in Dublin by a legally authorised body. That will be something, but it will be powerless to enact a legislation for the improvement of Irish business, which is the chief function of government. Whatever becomes of the little Home Rule Bill the Irish question remains unsettled, and in my view, can be settled more satisfactorily when England gets into her next big war, just as Hungary’s national question was settled. The Tories will probably then be in power, and a man of stronger fiber than Redmond may be leading the Irish.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁰ “The Old ‘New Departure,’” *The Irish Times*, May 4, 1897, 6.

⁴⁸¹ “Death of a Famous Conspirator,” *The Irish Times*, April 6, 1901, 10.

⁴⁸² “Fruitful Seed,” *The Irish Times*, March 7, 1902, 6.

⁴⁸³ “The Recollections of Mr. William O’Brien, M.P.,” *The Irish Times*, December 1, 1905, 7.

⁴⁸⁴ “‘The Playboy’ in New York,” *The Irish Times*, December 18, 1911, 8.

⁴⁸⁵ “Mr. Redmond Criticised,” *The Irish Times*, May 12, 1914, 7.

Devoy became visibly more involved in Irish affairs after his efforts to reunite Clan na Gael met with success in the early 20th century, and a solution to the Irish question seemed to be within reach. With the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, Devoy viewed England's dilemma as a golden opportunity to conspire with England's enemy, Germany. Yet again, during Devoy's lifetime constitutional means were dropped in favor of a bold revolutionary step towards independence, made at Easter 1916. In June of that year, an article commented on the change in revolutionaries: "The intriguers of 1867 and 1880 were Irish-Americans; those of today are Germans, or persons in German employ," in reference to Devoy's role in the Rising.⁴⁸⁶

The period after the Rising was relatively devoid of Devoy references in *The Irish Times*. The most significant article related to him during this time came in 1917, when in September of 1917 the entire story of the von Igel documents was published and the scope of communication between the German consular service and John Devoy revealed. For added impact, full reprints of some of the letters were published with sensationalistic subtitles such as "Engineering Revolution in Ireland" or "Ireland's Alleged Complicity."⁴⁸⁷ An article from May 1918 detailed the involvement of Sir Roger Casement in the German-Irish plot, mainly focusing on his arrest, with John Devoy mentioned for his cooperation with him.⁴⁸⁸ The stories of a new revolution with repeated German help kept circulating, as highlighted by the article "German Plot for a Second Rising in Ireland – Plans to Establish Submarine Depots on Our Coasts" from June 1, 1918.⁴⁸⁹ Apart from giving a thorough account of the events of Easter 1916 and the main actors involved, including John Devoy, it claimed that Sinn Féin had been in continuous communication with their German co-conspirators ever since the United States entered the war. In fact, the contrary occurred, as the German party was leaving the intermediaries, i.e. the Irish-Americans, out of the process.

The year 1919 brought the long-awaited Declaration of Independence and the establishment of the new Irish Parliament of the Irish Republic. However, as was detailed in the previous chapters, Ireland's international recognition was anything but

⁴⁸⁶ "The Irish Situation," *The Irish Times*, June 14, 1916, 6.

⁴⁸⁷ "Special Extra – German Plots in America – Documents on the Irish Revolution," *The Irish Times*, September 22, 1917, 7.

⁴⁸⁸ "The German Plot," *The Irish Times*, May 25, 1918, 6.

⁴⁸⁹ "German Plot for a Second Rising in Ireland – Plans to Establish Submarine Depots on Our Coasts," *The Irish Times*, June 1, 1918, 1.

smooth. Apart from the Irish-American delegation's attempts to engineer a hearing with the Grand Committee at the Paris Peace Conference, there were considerable Irish-American promotional efforts of the cause, as well.

The article "Irish Americans and the Irish Republic" dating April 26, 1919 published a message received by the Sinn Féin headquarters with the following text: "Inaugurated to-day, Easter Sunday, by decree of National Council of Friends of Irish Freedom, on the motion of Joseph McGarrity, seconded by John Devoy, a nation-wide demonstration during this week in all important cities, demanding recognition of the Republic of Ireland."⁴⁹⁰ On the one hand, this telegram indicated how active and influential John Devoy still was in terms of organizing the Irish-American community. On the other hand, it showed how actively involved the Irish-American community was in the drive to elicit the international recognition of Ireland.

Articles from the 1920s

Previous chapters have already dealt with Éamon de Valera's trip to the United States to promote the new Republic and collect donations within the framework of Devoy's conflict with de Valera. This rather difficult relationship between Devoy and de Valera was widely covered in the Irish-American, as well as the general American press, and so it was naturally addressed in *The Irish Times*, as well. De Valera's actions caused a serious split within Clan na Gael, draining the Clan of a number of its members only to join de Valera's own, the newly founded organization, the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic. The article "Sinn Féin Split in America. Mr. De Valera Changes his plans" published passages from a telegram commenting on the rift within the Clan:

The charges published by Mr. John Devoy, editor of the *Gaelic-American*, that 50,000 dollars subscribed in America for Irish Bonds have been used to send a nondescript aggregation of individuals to Chicago in an effort to secure an Irish plank in the Republican Party's platform, may be interpreted to mark an open break between the Irish group headed by Mr. de Valera and "The Friends of Irish Freedom" of which Mr. Devoy is a member.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁹⁰ "Irish Americans and the Irish Republic," *The Irish Times*, April 26, 1919, 2.

⁴⁹¹ "Sinn Féin Split in America – Mr. De Valera Changes his Plans," *The Irish Times*, June 21, 1920, 6.

In order to avoid further accusations, the article added, de Valera altered his plans and cancelled a visit to the San Francisco Convention and concentrated his efforts to ensure American support and recognition mainly on the Eastern Seaboard.

The post-war years brought turmoil, countless atrocities on all sides, a civil war, and a highly controversial Treaty resulting in the eventual creation of the Irish Free State. During this period *The Irish Times* closely followed the events, but still there was relatively little mention of John Devoy. As far as the Treaty was concerned, it had a similar effect on the Irish-American community, as on the Irish society – namely, it split them in half. John Devoy was among those proponents who sided with the Treaty, believing that although it was not the desired end result, nevertheless it represented a step in the right direction. The article “The Treaty” made a short reference to this.⁴⁹²

Michael Collins was a towering figure in Irish history, so understandably his death was extensively covered on the pages of *The Irish Times*. Detailed lists of mourners, public figures, members of the Dáil, consuls, clergymen, wreath senders, and speakers were published, with Devoy’s name listed as a member of the Clan, who also sent their condolences.⁴⁹³

Meanwhile, John Devoy had come to be seen as a figure whose counsel and confirmation was to be sought by the present members of the Irish government. When General Eoin O’Duffy (Eoin Ó Dubhthaigh, 1892-1944) traveled to the United States, he visited “the veteran Fenian leader, who was an ardent supporter of the home Government.” O’Duffy mentioned this fact during an interview he gave in relation to his Civic Guard Address soon after his return from the States.⁴⁹⁴

Another fact that supported the previous claim, i.e. that Devoy had become an accepted public figure, was his family-visit-turned-state-affair to Ireland in 1924. The July 12, 1924 edition of the paper briefly reported on Devoy’s planned trip citing a cablegram sent by Judge Daniel Cohalan regarding the date of departure.⁴⁹⁵ This article was followed up with a presentation of a personal description of John Devoy in the July 19, 1924 issue of *The Irish Times* in the section “Round the World and Home.” While it touched upon Devoy’s main fields of interest, it also offered an unflattering comment

⁴⁹² “The Treaty,” *The Irish Times*, June 10, 1921, 4.

⁴⁹³ “General Collins’s Funeral,” *The Irish Times*, August 29, 1922, 6.

⁴⁹⁴ “The Civic Guard – Address by General O’Duffy – His American Experiences,” *The Irish Times*, May 24, 1923, 8.

⁴⁹⁵ “Mr. John Devoy coming to Ireland,” *The Irish Times*, July 12, 1924, 7.

on his journalism. Regarding *The Gaelic American*, this article the following summary: “It has a small circulation still amongst its old followers, and devotes its pages to twisting the British Lion’s tail and writing attacks of a most lurid and vitriolic character on Irish men and women who do not agree with its policies, which are largely those of the Irish-American politician, Justice Cohalan.”⁴⁹⁶ The question of John Devoy’s visit was brought to the attention of President Cosgrave, and the decision was made to welcome Devoy as a state guest. This decision was summed up in the article of July 25, 1924: “official cognisance would be taken of the visit.”⁴⁹⁷

The visit itself commenced with Devoy’s arrival at Queenstown on July 26, 1924 and the paper’s edition of that day gave a list of all the public figures who participated in the official welcome alongside Desmond Fitzgerald (1888-1947), Minister for External Affairs, who greeted Devoy on behalf of the Free State Government.⁴⁹⁸ Another, rather similar account published two days later added that “A guard of honour was mounted at the Custom House, and presented arms when Mr. Devoy landed from the tender.”⁴⁹⁹ While he was in Ireland, John Devoy was invited to attend the Tailteann Games, and he was added to the list of distinguished visitors, as published on July 30, 1924.⁵⁰⁰ That Devoy was a guest of the State was highlighted by the fact that, (as another article from the same day reported), he was invited to meet President Cosgrave at Government Buildings and was introduced to several ministers as well as Sean Collins, brother of the late Michael Collins.⁵⁰¹

The Irish Times issue of August 4, 1924 reported the details of the opening ceremony of the Tailteann Games (August 2-17, 1924). Devoy was greeted by the Governor General, which was summarized in the article as follows:

[The Governor General and other government representatives] cordially welcomed their old friend John Devoy, the exile of half a century from whose heart, not even the great Continent of America could wipe out the memory of this little spot of earth. Always true, always hopeful, never yielding to tyranny or despair, he had come back to see the old land redeemed, rejuvenated and disenthralled, and he hoped that before long the

⁴⁹⁶ “Round the World and Home – John Devoy,” *The Irish Times*, July 19, 1924, 1.

⁴⁹⁷ “Questions. Mr. John Devoy to be State’s Guest,” *The Irish Times*, July 25, 1924, 6.

⁴⁹⁸ “Mr. John Devoy,” *The Irish Times*, July 26, 1924, 7.

⁴⁹⁹ “Mr. John Devoy,” *The Irish Times*, July 28, 1924, 5.

⁵⁰⁰ “Dublin’s Fetes – Dinner to Distinguished Visitors,” *The Irish Times*, July 30, 1924, 5.

⁵⁰¹ “Mr. John Devoy,” *The Irish Times*, July 30, 1924, 5.

barriers which divided them from a small portion of their fellow-countrymen would disappear and evaporate, because there was no boundary question where sport was concerned.⁵⁰²

Apart from the opening ceremony, Devoy also participated in the procession across the city of Dublin and gave a speech, which the article of August 9, 1924 reported on: “Mr. John Devoy, who was received with cheers, said that he had come from America to pay the last visit which he expected to pay alive to his native land, as the next would be feet foremost to be borne to Glasnevin, where all his people were buried, as well as his late comrades.” He further added that it was a proud feeling to see the Tricolor flying in the streets and ensured the audience of the support of the Irish-Americans in developing the country.⁵⁰³ In fact, Devoy had correctly anticipated his next visit to Ireland, namely, it was when they brought his coffin to Dublin four years later in 1928.

Devoy was vocal about his feelings on the boundary question in the North and reacted to comments made by Lord Rossmore who stated that the boundary should be abolished only with the consent of the people of the Six Counties. The article presenting Devoy’s views claimed that he was hopeful that it would be done peacefully, as the island of Ireland “can bear only a single Legislature, in which all the interests of the people will be together.”⁵⁰⁴ In another article he underlined his views on the boundary by issuing a statement. The article quoted, among others, these words:

There are two ways of effecting that solution. One way, and by far the best, is by an agreement-based on the will of the people of both sections and entirely satisfactory to both. The other is by waiting for England’s next war and taking chances of securing it by force.

Force is now wholly out of the question and is also wholly undesirable. It would mean war between a section of the Irish people and England, backed by another section of Ireland, which could only end in the reconquest of Ireland and a new heritage of hatred, strike and turmoil which would blast Ireland’s hopes for ever and would be equally disastrous to North and South.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰² Untitled article, *The Irish Times*, August 4, 1924, 6.

⁵⁰³ “Decorated Streets – Influx of Visitors,” *The Irish Times*, August 9, 1924, 7.

⁵⁰⁴ “Mr. John Devoy’s Views,” *The Irish Times*, August 11, 1924, 7.

⁵⁰⁵ “The Boundary – Mr. John Devoy’s Plan,” *The Irish Times*, August 27, 1924, 7.

His statement on the rejection of a violent solution at that moment indicated that Devoy still had not, even as an octogenarian, lost the sense of when to vote for a revolution and when to give preference to peaceful negotiation, hopefully leading to a solution. This only served as further proof for the argument that Devoy was a master of balancing. More of his opinion on the boundary question was published under the title “Devoy on the Boundary” in the August 29 issue, summarizing the earlier presented views.⁵⁰⁶

Prior to his departure from Ireland, Devoy made yet another appeal for the abolition of the recently erected boundary between Ulster and the rest of Ireland. In the September 5, 1924 issue he was cited:

The business interests of Ireland – not those of the Six Counties or the Twenty-Six Counties alone – make it absolutely essential that all Ireland shall become, as nature intended it, a single political and economic unit, and the only way to effect that is by united action on both sides of Lloyd George’s artificial and unnatural boundary.⁵⁰⁷

He further stated that union in Ireland would also ensure union among the Irish abroad – indicating how important the unity of Irish-Americans was for him.

During his visit to Ireland Devoy participated in various military events that the press regularly reported on, such as the Presentation of the Scott medal, where members of the Civic Guards were awarded for bravery,⁵⁰⁸ or the anniversary ceremony held in memory of Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins, when Devoy attended a mass held at Glasnevin.⁵⁰⁹

John Devoy celebrated his eighty-second birthday while in Ireland. Although he initially intended this visit to be a private journey to see his relatives, as indicated earlier, the Free State government soon turned it into a visit of an official of the Clan. For his birthday a formal banquet was organized at the Dolphin Hotel, in Dublin, as the article “Mr. Devoy’s Hope to See Beginning of Unity,” dated September 4, 1924, reported. It was stated that those invited came from a small circle “who in the past were

⁵⁰⁶ “Devoy on the Boundary,” *The Irish Times*, August 29, 1924, 6.

⁵⁰⁷ “Mr John Devoy – Appeal for National Unity,” *The Irish Times*, September 5, 1924, 6.

⁵⁰⁸ “Bravery of Civic Guard – Presentation of Scott medal – Fight with Armed Men,” *The Irish Times*, August 19, 1924, 6.

⁵⁰⁹ “Griffith-Collins Anniversary – A National Tribute – Sunday Ceremony at Cenotaph,” *The Irish Times*, August 23, 1924, 7.

intimately associated with the movement of which Mr. Devoy was the pioneer.” Those gathered were seen as a fusion of the various factions united by their support for Devoy’s ideals of Irish nationality. According to the article Devoy was presented with a silver cigarette cabinet made in Dublin. Devoy enjoyed the evening and retold some of his early experiences in the Fenian movement in the city. He also confessed that he never “passed through greater agony of mind” than in the postwar year up to 1923 when Ireland’s formation seemed to be final.⁵¹⁰

Devoy’s stay in Ireland lasted for six weeks, and the above-described amply portrayed how his visit was closely followed by contemporary newspapers. His departure from Ireland was again accompanied by the guards presenting arms in honor of John Devoy, reported by the September 6, 1924 issue of *The Irish Times*.⁵¹¹ His parting words, first published two days previously, were on national unity and the need for the abolishment of the boundary, and were reprinted on the day of departure.⁵¹²

The month of September 1924 presented the publication of several more John Devoy-related news items on the pages of *The Irish Times*, partly related to his visit, summarizing his birthday celebration and comments on the call for national unity. Moreover, news emerged that Devoy was promoting a coalition government, which, however, never materialized.⁵¹³ As late as December 1924, news items still mentioned the negotiations that Devoy had with Joseph McGrath (Seosamh Mac Craith, 1887-1966), former Minister of Labor who resigned because he disagreed with the government’s treatment of ex-IRA fighters, in the hope of reconciliation between the opposing sides.⁵¹⁴

There were hardly any articles in connection with John Devoy in the second half of the 1920s, quite understandably so, if his advanced age was taken into consideration. A short article mentioned John Devoy’s message of sympathy, sent in the name of Clan na Gael in New York, in the wake of Kevin O’Higgins’ (Caoimhghín Críostóir Ó

⁵¹⁰ “Mr Devoy’s Hope to See Beginning of Unity,” *The Irish Times*, September 4, 1924, 6.

⁵¹¹ “Departure of Mr. John Devoy,” *The Irish Times*, September 6, 1924, 8.

⁵¹² “National Unity,” *The Irish Times*, September 6, 1924, 9.

⁵¹³ “The Free State Cabinet,” *The Irish Times*, September 20, 1924, p. 7; “Republican Meeting in Dublin,” *The Irish Times*, September 22, 1924, 9.

⁵¹⁴ “Dublin To-day – A Change,” *The Irish Times*, December 20, 1924, p. 1.; “Free State Policy – Rumours of Crisis and Dissension,” *The Irish Times*, December 23, 1924, 5.

hUigin, 1892-1927) death in July 1927.⁵¹⁵ Devoy was still able to meet with William T. Cosgrave in February 1928, when the President visited New York and dined with the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, as the article “Mr. Cosgrave’s Last Day in New York” reported.⁵¹⁶

Devoy’s death in *The Irish Times*

The following citation of Devoy’s name in October of the same year already announced his death in Atlantic City at the age of 86 years under the title “Death of Mr. John Devoy.” Devoy was described as “the last survivor of the band of Fenians which included James Stephens, John O’Leary, O’Donovan Rossa, and Michael Davitt.” *The Irish Times* published a summary of Devoy’s life and work as a Fenian, and recalled some of the stops of his 1924 visit to Ireland, including Mountjoy, Kilmainham, and Arbour Hill prisons, all of which he had been locked up in prior to his departure for America in 1871. This time around however, when Devoy visited the buildings, military guards saluted him going in and out of the various prisons.⁵¹⁷ In December the article “Curragh Barracks Renamed – Sinn Féin Leaders Commemorated” revealed that several Fenians were being honored by having the Curragh barracks renamed after them, while one of the Camp roads was named in honor of John Devoy.⁵¹⁸⁵¹⁹

Bringing coffins home to Ireland to be buried at Glasnevin had long since been a Fenian tradition. These funerals were a defiant show of nationalism, as in the case of the Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa funeral in 1915. As described in detail in the Chapter 4 in John Devoy’s biography, he was temporarily buried in New York, but his final resting place was always going to be at Glasnevin in Dublin. In Mid-May the following year, in 1929, *The Irish Times* informed its readers in the article “The Late Mr. John Devoy – Proposed Public Funeral in Dublin” about a meeting held in Dublin’s Mansion House to discuss plans for a public funeral of John Devoy. It was to be organized under the

⁵¹⁵ “Further Expressions of Sympathy, in *The Irish Times*, July 18, 1927, 5.

⁵¹⁶ Mr. Cosgrave’s Last Day,” New York, in *The Irish Times*, February 11, 1928, 6.

⁵¹⁷ “Death of Mr. John Devoy,” *The Irish Times*, October 6, 1928, 4.

⁵¹⁸ “Curragh Barracks Renamed – Sinn Féin Leaders Commemorated,” *The Irish Times*, December 7, 1928, 7.

⁵¹⁹ “Curragh Barracks Renamed,” *The Irish Times*, December 15, 1928, 6.

Chairmanship of Dr. Mark Ryan (1844-1940), an old Fenian with the following set dates: arrival of the body on June 13, with the funeral planned for June 16.⁵²⁰

It must be mentioned that not everyone supported the idea of a public funeral. Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington (1877-1946), suffragette and Irish nationalist was reported to be opposed to the appointment of an official deputation. She was quoted as expressing her dismay: “This was a political device to use a dead man, whose record was subject to fluctuation, as an advertisement for the Government, and she disapproved of this kind of *post mortem* propaganda.”⁵²¹ However, generally speaking the preparations ran smoothly and the newspaper brought regular updates (articles dating June 1, June 6, June 8, June 10, 1929) in the lead-up to the funeral. The news item on the departure of the body from the United States described how his send-off was followed by at least one thousand people, including representatives of various Irish Nationalist societies and prominent Catholic clergy. The coffin was covered with both the American and Irish Free State flags. Devoy’s body was accompanied by a party of ten Irish-Americans aboard the steamer *President Harding*.⁵²²

The coffin arrived at Queenstown⁵²³ and received an official welcome, with a guard of honor composed of twelve military officers and a band playing. Those present at the arrival included the Lord Mayor of Cork, representatives of the Free State Ministers, and members of the National Committee. A mass was held in Devoy’s memory at the local St. Colman’s Cathedral.⁵²⁴ The press were keeping the public constantly informed, as the title of the June 13 article portrayed: “The Late John Devoy – Body to Arrive in Dublin This Evening.” The plan was laid out in detail:

Procession to the Pro-Cathedral will start at 8 o’clock, along the northern quays, O’Connell street, Abbey street, and into Marlborough street. The space from the exit gate of Kingsbridge Station to the entrance door on the departure side will be reserved

⁵²⁰ “The Late Mr. John Devoy – Proposed Public Funeral in Dublin,” *The Irish Times*, May 14, 1929, 5.; “The Late John Devoy – Tribute to Fenian Leader,” *The Irish Times*, May 15, 1929, 5.

⁵²¹ “Devoy Funeral in Dublin – County Council Views,” *The Irish Times*, May 31, 1929, 11.

⁵²² “The Late John Devoy – Escort for Body of Fenian Leader,” *The Irish Times*, June 6, 1929, 9.

⁵²³ It must be pointed out that by 1929 the city had already officially reverted to the name ‘Cobh,’ yet the title of the article still used the name Queenstown (see next footnote), which may be ascribed to the pro-British nature of *The Irish Times*.

⁵²⁴ “The Late Mr. John Devoy – Reception of Remains at Queenstown,” *The Irish Times*, June 10, 1929, 8.

to the military contingent and the clergy. On the way to the Pro-Cathedral the clergy will immediately precede the remains.

Mourners, old colleagues, and those travelling with the remains will form up immediately behind the gun-carriage, followed by members of the Executive Council, members of the Oireachtas, official representatives, and representatives of public bodies.

Army officers and the general public will follow, and the Civic Guard Band and a contingent of the Guards. Mourners, Army officers, and the general public will form up on the left side of St. John's road, head on the entrance door to the railway station.

The remains will be received at the Pro-Cathedral by the Rev. J. Flood, Administrator.

On Friday morning there will be Solemn Requiem Mass at 11:00 after which the remains will be taken to City Hall for the lying-in-state until 1.30pm on Sunday.

The order of procession from the Pro-Cathedral to the City Hall will be published on Friday morning.⁵²⁵

The following day the newspaper reported on the procession, repeating much of the previously published information, adding that the procession was witnessed by thousands of people.⁵²⁶ The June 17, 1929 article "The Late Mr. John Devoy – Public Funeral in Dublin" elaborated on the funeral, describing how the streets along the route to the cemetery were lined with people, and the monuments in Sackville Street were used by many sight-seers to find foothold upon them. At the cemetery members of the old Irish Republican Army Brigade formed a square outside the Fenian plot, with a firing party of the National Army present. The article further quoted the words of Rev. P. J. O'Connell from Boston who held the oration for Devoy: "He [Devoy] hoped, [...] as we do, that the Irish were on the road to that for which he ceaselessly toiled and worked, the full measure of independence for all – not for part – of Ireland and for the whole people of the country, regardless of any religious, racial, or political difference among themselves."⁵²⁷

After this article there were only two more editions of *The Irish Times* that mentioned John Devoy published in the 1920s, both indirectly. One news item reported

⁵²⁵ "The Late John Devoy – Body to Arrive in Dublin This Evening," *The Irish Times*, June 13, 1929, 5.

⁵²⁶ "The Late Mr. John Devoy – Mourners in Dublin Procession," *The Irish Times*, June 14, 1929, 8.

⁵²⁷ "The Late Mr. John Devoy – Public Funeral in Dublin," *The Irish Times*, June 17, 1929, 5.

on the Wolfe Tone commemoration that was attended by the Irish-American party who accompanied Devoy's coffin on his last journey,⁵²⁸ while the other was a summary of the funeral, published five days after the event.⁵²⁹

Concluding remarks on Devoy's image in *The Irish Times*

First, it should be highlighted that *The Irish Times* was a rich source of information, but most certainly not an unbiased one. This current research was not carried out with the aim of presenting a biography of John Devoy through the published articles on him. But the fact was, accurate portrayal or not, *The Irish Times* was widely read and the above-mentioned articles were responsible for shaping the public image of Devoy. It may not have corresponded to the Fenian image of him, but as far as the slightly conservative, pro-British readership was concerned, these were the impressions they formed of John Devoy.

Devoy was always seen as a rather menacing, yet leading character of the Irish-American nationalist community. Adjectives used in connection with his person or work in *The Irish Times* more often than not carried a negative connotation. When quoting Irish-American sources for realistic opinion, rarely was Devoy's *The Irish Nation* or *The Gaelic American* cited, but rather Patrick Ford's *Irish World*. Negative actions linked to Devoy's name, such as his sentencing for treason, imprisonment, or the infamous threat made against the Home Secretary Sir William Harcourt, via cablegram were often repeated in later issues of *The Irish Times*.

In light of this it was interesting to trace how the tone of Devoy references changed after the formation of the Irish Free State. After all, the new government was composed of nationalists who grew up on Fenian stories of old, in which Devoy played an important role. His visit to Ireland, which was promoted as a state visit, was amply reported on, as was the progress of organizing Devoy's public funeral. Journalists recounting Devoy's threatening cablegram to Sir Harcourt in the early 1880s surely would not have foreseen such a change of tone in *The Irish Times*.

The following section will look at citations of John Devoy in the columns of *The New York Times* for the purpose of comparison. Whereas certain events related to

⁵²⁸ "The Wolfe Tone commemoration – To-day's Ceremony," *The Irish Times*, June 17, 1929, 11.

⁵²⁹ "The Late Mr. John Devoy," *The Irish Times*, June 22, 1929, 10.

Devoy's name were headline news in *The Irish Times*, such as Devoy's relationship with Parnell, the initial assumption was that these same events were barely dealt with in *The New York Times*, and instead, other events, such as the libel case or the Triangle received considerably more attention.

John Devoy's public image in *The New York Times*

The main source for this part of the research was the online archive of *The New York Times*. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, this newspaper had a reputation of being less-than-sympathetic in their depiction of the Irish-American community, if not outright anti-Irish. Still, this newspaper was chosen as a representative of general, public, late-19th-century U.S. opinion based on its nation-wide circulation. The archive can be freely accessed online under the address <http://www.nytimes.com/ref/membercenter/nytarchive.html>. The analyzed articles not only presented the viewpoint of the newspaper, but also offered a comment on articles and editorials by John Devoy himself, published originally in *The Irish Nation* and *The Gaelic American*, and often quoted in the pages of *The New York Times*.

The research of *The New York Times* articles was divided into six sections encompassing all articles of a given decade: the 1870s, 1880s, 1890s, 1900s, 1910s, and finally the 1920s. Altogether 89 articles were used as the basis for this study, which contained either a direct or indirect mentioning of John Devoy. The earliest article found was dated August 20, 1876, while the last reference came from June 13, 1929, when Devoy's coffin was reburied in Dublin. Similarly to the research for *The Irish Times*, the aim with *The New York Times* was to find out how often, but more specifically, in what context John Devoy was mentioned on these pages. It must be borne in mind that Devoy was not only an editor, and the Chairman of the Executive Board of the Clan, living as a rather public figure, he was also a member of the IRB, a very secret organization. In this sense it was not very surprising to find a number of "retrospective" articles, which reacted to some documents newly released by the government and dealt with Devoy's role in certain events from years before.

Articles from the 1870s

The first period incorporated the years from Devoy's arrival to the United States in 1871 up to 1879. Undoubtedly the main event related to Devoy's name was the *Catalpa* rescue mission. Devoy was mentioned in two articles during this period, although this search was not based on a query for the tag "Devoy" but for the tag "Catalpa." The overall number of hits for this search was high, but this was due to the fact that a number of articles referred to the plant, the Catalpa tree rather than the ship,⁵³⁰ these hits were obviously disregarded.

The *Catalpa* rescue mission raised some eyebrows not only within the Irish-American community, but also among the wider American public. The mission was a bold "poke in the eye" to the British authorities and highlighted the actual financial and organizational power of Clan na Gael. One of the articles described the rescue mission as a "daring expedition."⁵³¹

While there was no direct mention of John Devoy in these articles, these references were still deemed important enough to be included in the present study as a form of general portrayal of Devoy's organizing work in the 1870s. It was also noteworthy that the *Catalpa* mission was not only written about in the 1870s, but well into the 1920s, with the latest citation coming from the year 1923 in the article "How Fenians Of America Foiled The British Lion; Inspector John Harley's Death Revives Memories of the Rescue of John Boyle O'Reilly and His Fellow Irishmen From Australian Convict Camp."⁵³²

Articles from the 1880s

In this period the majority of articles came from the years 1882 and 1883. The libel case incident from the fall of 1882 marked one of those cases mentioned earlier, where *The New York Times* and *The Irish Times* showed significant differences in

⁵³⁰ Commonly referred to as Catalpa or Catawba, this is a type of ornamental tree, with two species native to North America, *Catalpa bignonioides* and *Catalpa speciosa*.

⁵³¹ "Goff's Part in the Rescue; How the Irish Patriots Were Restored to Liberty," *The New York Times*, November 2, 1890.

⁵³² "How Fenians Of America Foiled The British Lion; Inspector John Harley's Death Revives Memories of the Rescue of John Boyle O'Reilly and His Fellow Irishmen From Australian Convict Camp," *The New York Times*, August 12, 1923.

covering a story. Barely mentioned in *The Irish Times*, *The New York Times* dealt with this trial in twenty-four articles. There were almost daily updates published regarding the case.

Devoy went before court and stood trial in connection with a libel case. The charge was that Devoy had published an article in his paper, *The Irish Nation* accusing the banker August Belmont of misappropriation of money. As already detailed in the section “Dangerous times – the Triangle,” the event took place 20 years previously, when a certain sum was transferred to Ireland, but did not find its way to the due recipient owing to their death, yet the money also failed to be returned to the original sender. In the first round of the trial, *The New York Times* published the following description of John Devoy:

After his arrival in America he engaged in journalism and became active in Irish revolutionary movements. The Fenian Brotherhood in America had, with the exception of an insignificant faction, during his imprisonment become merged in the organization known as Irish Nationalists. This Body he joined on his arrival in this country, and held certain offices of trust in it, but inasmuch as it was a secret revolutionary organization he declined to state what these offices were.⁵³³

The trial was a lengthy affair, it started in October 1882 and the final verdict was not returned until the following summer. The trial put Devoy in an inescapable dilemma that resulted in John Devoy being in contempt of the court. The predicament was the following: in his statement Devoy claimed that he did not write the libelous article by his own volition, he was instructed to do so. When asked from whom the instruction had originated, Devoy refused to reveal their identity. The language of the articles describing this particular situation reflected the general annoyance of the court, as well as that of the public, with Devoy who disregarded a direct order from the judge, a representative of the United States law. In short, not only did Devoy ignore the judge’s order, but instead he chose to follow the instructions of an unidentified leader of a secret Irish-American organization. The article of December 2, 1882, with the title “Devoy Refuses to Answer” quoted the following dialogue between Judge Cowling and the defendant:

⁵³³ “John Devoy’s Trial. The Defendant Of The Witness Stand - Slow Progress Of The Case,” *The New York Times*, November 29, 1882.

Judge Cowing – Mr. Devoy, I decide that you must answer this question, no authority for your exemption having been shown. If you decline to answer I shall have to commit you to the Tombs for contempt.

Mr. Devoy – I cannot answer that question, because by doing so I should place the person by whom I was appointed at the mercy of the British Government, and I would, in addition, be committing perjury. I decline to perjure myself.

Judge Cowing – You must obey the order of the court or I shall have to commit you.

Mr. Devoy – I cannot help that, your Honor. I have been sent to prison for graver offenses than this. Were I to give the information sought by counsel for the prosecution I should imperil the liberty of the individual interested. My conscience would not permit me to do this, and I refuse to do it, no matter what the consequences to myself may be.”⁵³⁴

Three days later, according to the article “John Devoy Committed – Sent to Prison for Thirty Days for Contempt of Court” published December 5, 1882, Devoy was again instructed to reveal “the name of the chief officer of the Irish revolutionary party in this country, by whom, the defendant said, [...] he had been authorized and instructed to write the alleged libelous article.”⁵³⁵ Despite the fact that the defendant considered this privileged information, the judge ordered him to respond to his question. Following a short consultation with his attorney, Devoy still refused. The jury spent 17 hours deliberating the sentence but failed to come to a unanimous decision. Judge Cowling was left with no other choice but to dissolve the jury and ask for a retrial of the case. Given that the trial had ended, John Devoy was released before the end of his 30-day period of imprisonment.

In June 1883 the news of Devoy’s libel case was picked up again when the retrial began. The events of the trial took a similar turn as in December of the previous year: Devoy insisted that he had published the given article upon somebody else’s instruction, yet the identity of the person still remained undisclosed. The court ordered him to serve 60 days in a penitentiary, which Devoy duly did. He was released on August 18, 1883, which *The New York Times* reported in the article “John Devoy at

⁵³⁴ “Devoy Refuses To Answer; The Trial Of The Belmont Libel Case,” *The New York Times*, December 2, 1882.

⁵³⁵ “John Devoy Committed.; Sent to Prison for Thirty Days for Contempt of Court,” *The New York Times*, December 5, 1882.

Liberty; a Reception Tendered to Him by His Friends.” There was a welcoming party of 400 waiting for him as he disembarked from the Blackwell’s Island boat. Devoy stated that he had been treated with respect by the staff and had been given access to *The Times*, essential for editing his own paper.⁵³⁶ Altogether this event yielded material for more than twenty articles in *The New York Times* published over a roughly 10-month period.

As with any newspaper, *The New York Times* regularly published obituaries of outstanding people from New York society as well as the Irish-American community. Such was the case with John Breslin’s obituary published on November 21, 1887. Breslin was John Devoy’s partner, the business manager of *The Irish Nation*, key member of the *Catalpa* rescue mission, and all-round Fenian. The article gave a detailed description of his funeral and the list of representatives of various Irish-American organizations, including Devoy.⁵³⁷

Unlike *The Irish Times*, in the columns of *The New York Times*, John Devoy was often mentioned in connection with some lectures and talks he held at various social-political meetings. The titles of such articles often sounded over-excited and sensationalistic, as with the news item on John Devoy’s and Patrick Egan’s address in April 1883 (“Irish Agitators in Rochester”),⁵³⁸ or the Maple Grove Picnic in July 1884, when Devoy and Alexander Sullivan gave speeches (“Irish National Agitation”).⁵³⁹ The topics of these talks generally centered on the activities and success of the Irish Parliamentary Party, as well as the ultimate goal of Irish nationalism, the independence of Ireland.

Land agitation was mentioned in several articles, focusing on its negative effects (“Affairs in Foreign Lands; the Disorder Caused by the Land League Agitators”)⁵⁴⁰, its

⁵³⁶ “John Devoy at Liberty.; a Reception Tendered to Him by His Friends,” *The New York Times*, August 18, 1883.

⁵³⁷ “The Last Earthly Honors.; Hundreds of Irishmen Attend the Funeral of John J. Breslin,” *The New York Times*, November 21, 1887.

⁵³⁸ “Irish Agitators in Rochester.; John Devoy and Patrick Egan Address a Large Crowd,” *The New York Times*, April 16, 1883.

⁵³⁹ “The Irish National Agitation.; John Devoy and Alexander Sullivan Address the Rochester League,” *The New York Times*, July 25, 1884.

⁵⁴⁰ “Affairs in Foreign Lands; The Disorder Caused by the Land League Agitators,” *The New York Times*, March 5, 1881.

main initiators (“Michael Davitt’s Story; John Devoy on Ireland”),⁵⁴¹ and Irish-American support for the Land League (“Going to Help Parnell; a Delegation of Sympathizers to be Sent to Ireland”).⁵⁴² In these above-mentioned articles, John Devoy was named as the figurehead of the Irish-American nationalists, whereas in the last article Devoy was listed as one of a planned party of 50 Irish-Americans to be sent to Ireland to assist Charles Stewart Parnell with the elections in 1879.

Articles from the 1890s

In fact, this section could well be named “Parnellism Continued,” as the turn of the decade primarily dealt with Charles Stewart Parnell: first with the Special Commission, then with his sudden death. As John Devoy was one of his more (possibly, most) controversial collaborators, the majority of these articles, both in *The Irish Times*, as well as in the case of Devoy-related articles in *The New York Times*, contained references to Devoy.

Overall, compared with the 1880s, this decade provided significantly fewer appearances in the public spotlight for John Devoy, as he was only mentioned less than ten times in the 1890s. The year 1891 provided several pieces of news in connection with the death of Charles Stewart Parnell. One specific event caused a considerable controversy on both sides of the Atlantic, namely, Devoy’s disclosure of his cooperation with Parnell, which Devoy announced immediately following Parnell’s death. The article “Devoy Divulges Secrets. He Tells About Agreement with the American Party” described Devoy’s speech at the memorial ceremony. He gave a detailed account of a secret meeting between Parnell, Michael Davitt and himself held ten years earlier. Devoy stated that he had kept his promise that he would never tell anyone about those negotiations, however, with Parnell’s death, he was no longer bound by that promise. The audience listened to the account in disbelief as he described the details of the meetings: in May 1879 these three people met on several occasions in Dublin at Morrison’s Hotel. The topic of the meetings was the future political path of Ireland. The result was an agreement under the name of New Departure which would point in a significantly different direction in Irish politics. While previously the factions

⁵⁴¹ “Michael Davitt’s Story,” *The New York Times*, July 5, 1889.

⁵⁴² “Going to Help Parnell.; A Delegation of Sympathizers to be Sent to Ireland,” *The New York Times*, October 6, 1885.

promoting a peaceful, constitutional, political approach had rigorously distanced themselves from the revolutionary, violent, nationalist approach, this meeting brought precisely these factions to one table. Not only were they willing to negotiate but they also managed to reach a consensus. On the one hand, Parnell agreed to do everything in his power to represent and support the Home Rule movement. This would give Ireland the right to deal with issues pertaining to law and law enforcement, appoint judges and prefects. On the other hand, the “American nationalists” agreed to accept Home Rule instead of a full republic, as requested before, if it resulted in a permanent peace treaty with Great Britain and two conditions were met: first, there would be no uprising and second, Parnell’s Land League would strive for nothing less than peasant ownership rights.⁵⁴³

Michael Davitt immediately reacted to this depiction of events, and *The New York Times* published a denial by Davitt regarding Devoy’s account in its article dated October 24, 1891, claiming that such a meeting had never even taken place.⁵⁴⁴ The following day, on October 25, *The New York Times* published yet another statement by Devoy confirming his story.⁵⁴⁵ As seen from the descriptions both in Chapter 4 and 5, the meeting and negotiations did actually take place. Furthermore, Devoy made numerous references to this event in his own notes and correspondence (for a detailed account of the events see Golway’s biography).⁵⁴⁶ Nonetheless, the fact remained that the wider public had no knowledge of this radical move by Devoy. It must again be highlighted that the New Departure deal was of enormous significance: Devoy channeled the moral and financial support of the entire Irish-American community in support of this deal, which was a radical move away from the violent, revolutionary approach which had prevailed up to then. Still, events took a different turn, the hoped-for Home Rule was never achieved, while Charles Parnell’s political career became overshadowed by personal scandal leading to his untimely death in 1891.

There were no more than six articles altogether in this decade that made any reference to John Devoy. One topic that had surprisingly few, in fact, only one citation,

⁵⁴³ “Devoy Divulges Secrets. He Tells About Agreement with the American Party,” *The New York Times*, October 19, 1891.

⁵⁴⁴ Untitled article – Front Page 5, *The New York Times*, October 24, 1891.

⁵⁴⁵ “The Two Irish Factions; Parnell’s Vacant Seat to be a Battle Ground. Michael Davitt’s Reception,” *The New York Times*, October 24, 1891.

⁵⁴⁶ Golway, *Irish Rebel*, 104-114.

was John Devoy's conflict with the Triangle. Although knowing the story from other sources, this might as well be considered as a marker of success that the entire affair of accusations and missing funds only led to very scarce mentioning in *The New York Times*.⁵⁴⁷ However, it must be emphasized that this was true only of this particular newspaper, it did not mean that the wider public had absolutely no knowledge of these events.

Articles from the decades 1900s – 1910s

The first decade of the new century brought very few references of Devoy in the pages of *The New York Times*, and those items were only indirectly related to him. Conversely, the period between 1910 and 1920 yielded a huge number of Devoy-articles. One could say this was understandable, as this particular period witnesses a number of key events for the Irish-American community, including the First World War, the Easter Rising, and the Proclamation of the Irish Republic. In terms of the relationship between the U.S. government and the Irish-American community, the most significant affair was the seizure of the von Igel documents in April 1916. These documents contained proof that both John Devoy and Daniel Cohalan had been in contact with the German consulate. Under the cover of an advertising agency Wolf von Igel maintained an organizational center for the German consulate with documents stored in a safe with the insignia of the German Imperial government on its door. Although Wolf von Igel's office was raided in April 1916, the full contents of the seized documents were only made public in September of the following year.⁵⁴⁸

Knowing how "big" this story was, it was reasonable to assume that the largest number of citations of John Devoy's name would derive from the years 1916, 1917, and 1918. The onset of the Great War highlighted the mutual support of the Irish-American and German-American communities. The December 1914 article "Hissed Name of Carnegie; And of Redmond at a Clan-na-Gael Pro-German Meeting" lent proof to this statement. In the described incident Congressman Daniel Griffin (1880-1926), who was originally supposed to be Chairman, refused to attend the Clan na Gael meeting once he

⁵⁴⁷ "John Devoy to Patrick Egan.; Some Facts Brought to the Recollection of Our Minister to Chile," *The New York Times*, October 29, 1892.

⁵⁴⁸ "Cohalan and Other Irish Leaders Named in New Expose of German Plots; Von Igel Papers Bared," *The New York Times*, September 23, 1917.

found out that a resolution was to be adopted confirming the Clan's support of Germany. Griffin felt this would be a breach of neutrality as adopted by Woodrow Wilson, so he cancelled his appearance. As a (probably rather willing) substitute for Griffin it was John Devoy, who accepted the role of chairman for the meeting. Adding a general comment, the article ended as follows: "The Clan na Gael has been recently denounced by other Irish societies as a secret organization and it was said the opinion of its members was not representative of the views of the great majority of Irish Americans."⁵⁴⁹ The Clan almost certainly begged to differ.

It was in the year of 1916 that events concerning the Irish question accelerated and reached their peak: self-determination by means of the Easter Rising failed, and thereby any further parliamentary attempts to attain Home Rule for Ireland had been postponed until the end of the Great War. The American, as well as the Irish-American press kept a keen eye on the unfolding affairs. Occasionally, the Irish-American press, and specifically, John Devoy's *The Gaelic American* tended to give slightly biased accounts of events, to which the American government reacted. One such instance was *The New York Times* article "Betrayal of Plot Denied by Lansing; New York Irishman's Charge Is Flatly Contradicted in Washington." Secretary of State, Robert Lansing was forced to deny the charges published in Devoy's *The Gaelic American*, according to which the U.S. government had leaked information to Great Britain regarding Sir Roger Casement's plans. The seizure of German confidential documents by the U.S. Secret Service took place on April 18, 1916. Those documents, as referenced earlier, shed light on Casement's plans to smuggle guns from Germany to Ireland for the planned rising. In the above-mentioned article Lansing claimed that such an act would have meant a breach of U.S. neutrality and that the obtained information had been passed on to London only after Casement's arrest. In order to corroborate that this article was, in fact, a reaction to Devoy's editorial published in *The Gaelic American*, a short summary of Devoy's column was included.⁵⁵⁰ The next day's *The New York Times* issue informed the readers that the U.S. Department of Justice ordered an investigation to find out whether the Easter Rising had indeed been planned and designed in the United States and whether Irish-Americans had thereby committed a breach of neutrality. The article

⁵⁴⁹ "Hissed Name of Carnegie; and of Redmond at a Clan-na-Gael Pro-German Meeting," *The New York Times*, December 7, 1914.

⁵⁵⁰ "Betrayal Of Plot Denied By Lansing; New York Irishman's Charge Is Flatly Contradicted In Washington....," *The New York Times*, April 28, 1916.

stated the following: “ ‘We have not got the evidence – yet.’ was the answer to inquiries of whether the Government had ascertained whether John Devoy had violated the neutrality laws.” The article also delicately criticized and dismissed Devoy’s editorial:

Beyond private expressions, uncomplimentary to Mr. Devoy, there was no disposition in official quarters to pay attention to his editorial in *The Gaelic American*, in which he attacked President Wilson’s personal character in connection with allegations that the Government gave information of the expedition headed by Sir Roger Casement to the British Government.⁵⁵¹

Rather expectedly, John Devoy’s name was frequently mentioned in this period, especially since the seized documents associated his name with that of Horst von der Goltz (1884-?),⁵⁵² one of those German nationals who were charged with conspiring in the “von Papen plot,” for planning to blow up the Welland canal on the border of the United States and Canada. The article “Name Editor Devoy in Plot Indictment” explained that according to those documents, Devoy vouched for von der Goltz when he (von der Goltz) had arrived in Buffalo. As Devoy wrote to an associate of his, he directed a certain John T. Ryan to “do all you can for him,” as von der Goltz was one of Captain Franz von Papen’s “trusted lieutenants,”⁵⁵³ and, based on those documents, von Papen’s partner in planning this act of sabotage.⁵⁵⁴

As stated earlier, the contents of the von Igel papers were not made known to the public until more than a year after they had been confiscated. Then, in September 1917, John Devoy was yet again numerously mentioned regarding his association with German officials. The article “Cohalan and Other Irish Leaders Named in Expose of German Plots” called Devoy a “go-between” between the German secret service and Sir Roger Casement. It included quotes from an original document, a letter written by

⁵⁵¹ “Devoy Statement is Under Inquiry; Officials are Investigating Allegations That the Irish Revolt Was Here,” *The New York Times*, April 29, 1916.

⁵⁵² Jefferson Adams, *Historical Dictionary of German Intelligence*, accessed May 4, 2013, http://books.google.si/books?id=gnEWm4kC844C&pg=PA144&lpg=PA144&dq=horst+von+der+goltz+married&source=bl&ots=TWmUzCsbbr&sig=FDDQrbqgdQY1SHJA-pRodRSPPB4&hl=en&sa=X&ei=NJudT-LUOfD2QX9xMyKDw&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=horst%20von%20der%20goltz&f=false.

⁵⁵³ Franz von Papen was a German statesman who went on to play a leading role in dissolving the Weimar Republic and in helping Adolf Hitler to become German chancellor in 1933; he served both as Chancellor of Germany and Vice-Chancellor under Hitler.

⁵⁵⁴ “Name Editor Devoy in Plot Indictment; Superseding Bill Against von Papen and Alleged Aids Is Returned. Sent Buffalo Telegram Gaelic-American Writer Said to Have Vouched for Horst von der Goltz,” *The New York Times*, May 4, 1916.

Devoy to the German Consul, Johann von Bernstorff, in which Devoy asked the consul to forward a telegram to Casement. Furthermore, a check was mentioned to the value of one thousand dollars that Devoy had allegedly accepted in the name of Sir Roger Casement.⁵⁵⁵ Devoy vehemently denied this, both on the pages of *The Gaelic American* and *The New York Times*: “It is a mixture of invention, suggestion, falsehood, and stupid assumption based on nothing but a desire to injure the Irish cause and certain men connected to it.”⁵⁵⁶ This affair did not only concern John Devoy, but a number of Irish-American politicians, therefore the press made an effort to involve these prominent figures, one of whom was Judge Daniel Cohalan.

The New York Times, though, published not only the news of their involvement, but also that of Clan na Gael’s public support. The Clan repeatedly showed loyal support of both their leading figures, as could be gauged from their issued statement:

We, the officers of the Clan-na-Gael in Boston, as an answer to the latest British proclamation from the United State Department at Washington unanimously vote publicly to thank Judge Daniel F. Cohalan and John Devoy, editor of *The Gaelic American* for their efforts, a year before the United States declared war on Germany, to aid the men in Ireland to strike a blow for freedom against the foulest tyranny of civilized times, besides which the worst that has been imagined in connection with Belgium pales into insignificance.

We sympathize with these men and urge them defiantly to endure under the baiting which we know red-blooded Irishmen must endure in America, now, as formerly in Ireland, since the United States Government has seen fit to undertake the dirty work of the British Government.⁵⁵⁷

Another article, expressing similar support for Devoy and Cohalan was published on October 12, 1917 under the title “Defend Cohalan and Devoy. Friends of Irish Freedom Declare They are Persecuted.”⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁵ “Cohalan And Other Irish Leaders Named In New Expose Of German Plots,” *The New York Times*, September 23, 1917.

⁵⁵⁶ “Cohalan Inquiry Likely At Albany; Legislators Predict Investigation of the Jurist's Alleged German Activities. Tammany Men Behind Him. John Devoy Attacks von Igel Disclosures as a Blow at the Irish Cause,” *The New York Times*, September 25, 1917.

⁵⁵⁷ “Boston Clan-na Gael Thanks Cohalan; Urges Him and Devoy to Keep Up the Fight – Assails Wilson Administration,” *The New York Times*, September 26, 1917.

⁵⁵⁸ “Defend Cohalan and Devoy.; Friends of Irish Freedom Declare They are Persecuted,” *The New York Times*, October 12, 1917.

The fact that Devoy was referred to as Bernstorff's "confidential man" was highlighted in the article "Yellow Streak Is in Hylan, Says Mitchell; Declares He Lacks Courage to Defy Any Sinister Influence" dated October 31, 1917. The journalist expressed concern regarding one of the candidates for the upcoming mayoral elections, John F. Hylan (1868-1936), because Hylan was supported by Tammany Hall as well as various German-American organizations. *The New York Times* brought up the fact that the *Staats Zeitung*, a German-American journal, called on its readers to support Hylan with their votes. The other mayoral candidate, John Purroy Mitchell (1879-1918) spoke out against Hylan at a grand meeting to an audience of 1500 people, criticizing him for being supported both by the Irish-American, as well as the German-American community. Both John Devoy and Judge Cohalan were named in the article as supporters of John F. Hylan.⁵⁵⁹

To further emphasize John Devoy's politically "shady" journal, *The Gaelic American* also came under investigation because it printed a number of attacks against William J. Flynn (1867-1928), the head of the America Secret Service. On November 10, 1917, *The New York Times* published an article that included several quotes from *The Gaelic American* editorial, mainly highlighting and extracting the negative language used in the attack on the Secret Service. The article quoted *The Gaelic American* repeatedly calling Flynn the author of "impudent fakes" and branding him a "common liar."⁵⁶⁰ It was added that the attacks on the Secret Service were triggered by the arrest of Liam Mellows (1895-1922), the Sinn Féin politician. The article gave Mellows' rank in quotation marks, indicating a rather ironic tone: "General" Liam Mellows. On the other hand, *The Gaelic American* was described as the "Sinn Féin weekly published in New York," indicating that it acted as a mouthpiece for Sinn Féin policies.⁵⁶¹ In fact, as published in the article "Seized Letters Reveal German Aid to Sinn Féin; Tell of Agitators Traveling From Germany to Ireland," the New York Sinn

⁵⁵⁹ "Yellow Streak Is in Hylan, Says Mitchell; Declares He Lacks Courage to Defy Any Sinister Influence ...," *The New York Times*, October 28, 1917.

⁵⁶⁰ "Gaelic-American Is Under Inquiry; Federal Authorities Give Attention to Sinn Féin Organ Published Here," *The New York Times*, November 10, 1917.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

Féin organizations were in no sense subordinate to the ones operating in Ireland, but actually two independent bodies of equal rank working towards a common goal.⁵⁶²

The New York Times often used *The Gaelic American* as a source of information and cited from its editorials, focusing especially on Devoy's forceful language. Reacting to the above-mentioned inquiry into *The Gaelic American*, the November 16, 1917 article quoted Devoy threatening the Democrats that if his paper was banned, they would lose the Irish-American vote. The title "Irish Vote' Used as Club by Devoy; *The Gaelic-American's* Editor Threatens Democrats if His Paper Is Barred from Mails" implied that Devoy used the Irish-American vote as a "club," underlining Devoy's assumed violent tendencies. A strong-worded refutation by Devoy was published to illustrate his definitive rejection of the charges to have cooperated with the Germans based on the seized letter addressed to the recipient denoted as "My Dear Mr. D." Devoy's argument, as furnished in *The Gaelic American*, was the following: "If such a letter was addressed to John Devoy, as Lord Northcliffe's *New York Times* says it was, it would not have been found among Mellows's papers, but would have been delivered to Devoy."⁵⁶³

There were several references of John Devoy in May 1918, when the rumor was circulated that another rising was planned for the anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising. On May 26 the pages of *The New York Times* contained two articles on this topic. "Sinn Féin Rising Planned for May" quoted some information received from the London Press Bureau, according to which a new shipment of smuggled weapons would be arriving in Ireland. The article also provided a short review of the events of 1916. Devoy was mentioned as the person who devised the line of communication between the Irish-American and German faction.⁵⁶⁴ The same issue of *The New York Times* contained another column with Devoy's strong denial regarding his relationship with the Germans. He called the news from London a rehash of older bits of information, dismissed and ridiculed the notion that a submarine full of guns would be enough to start a country-wide rising. He repeatedly rejected the claim that he had allegedly

⁵⁶² "Seized Letters Reveal German Aid to Sinn Féin; Tell of Agitators Traveling From Germany to Ireland ...," *The New York Times*, November 11, 1917.

⁵⁶³ "Irish Vote' Used as Club by Devoy; the Gaelic-American's Editor Threatens Democrats if His Paper Is Barred from Mails. Denies Irish Revolt Plans Demands That Since America Prevents German Aid to Ireland, She Force England to Act," *The New York Times*, November 16, 1917.

⁵⁶⁴ "Sinn Féin Rising Planned for May; British Press Bureau Says Munitions Were Shipped from Germany Early...," *The New York Times*, May 26, 1918.

accepted a check to the value of \$1,000 in the name of Sir Roger Casement from the German secret service. He stated that there was no new plot for an insurrection in Ireland. The retelling of Devoy's statements happened in a rather neutral tone, yet it was not difficult to infer the author's disbelief from the way Devoy's sentences are reported. One of the quotes was as follows: "Devoy also makes the significant statement that 'Irish leaders in America have had no dealings with Germany since America entered the war.' Whether or not he means to infer that these leaders did deal with Germany before the United States entered the war he does not say."⁵⁶⁵

The idea that newspaper articles alone could serve as a rough guideline to Devoy's revolutionary activities and organizational actions was naturally far-fetched, and the striking rarity of news on Devoy during the period of 1918 to the early 1920s was excellent proof of that. This turbulent, yet dividing era saw some of the most significant events in Irish, as well as Irish-American history, including the Third Irish Race Convention, the Irish-American delegation's promotional work in Paris, and, most importantly, the Proclamation of Independence in Ireland. Yet almost none of these were discussed in the pages of *The New York Times* in relation to John Devoy. The year 1919 contained just a single article on Devoy, in which John F. Hylan was reported to have rejected Devoy's accusations that he had been extra kind to the Prince of Wales. Hylan described Devoy's view of his actions as a "petty and unwarranted misconstruction upon an official courtesy." Hylan's criticism was nothing if not direct. The open letter, quoted in full by *The New York Times* ended with the following comment: "My sympathies with Ireland are fully as deep and as great as yours. The fact that I have not made my living exploiting it is not necessarily a test of my sincerity."⁵⁶⁶

This quote might lead to the misconstrued conclusion that Devoy was deeply immersed in Irish nationalism not only for sentimental, but for financial reasons, as well. Yet his biographical data did not seem to support this idea. Devoy spent most of his time living in modest apartments or cheap hotel rooms; his travel arrangements were organized in a low-budget, low-comfort fashion, and he appeared to be overworked much of the time, dividing his energies between his journalistic and nationalistic work. Yet Hylan was right in the sense that Devoy *did* make his living utilizing the Irish-

⁵⁶⁵ "John Devoy Denies Dealing With Germans; Gaelic-American Editor Calls British Charges "A Rehash of..," *The New York Times*, May 26, 1918.

⁵⁶⁶ "Hylan Answers Devoy.; Mayor Resents Criticism Based on Prince of Wales's Visit," *The New York Times*, September 16, 1919.

American community's nationalist feelings, working as a revolutionary, be that either as a journalist or as a Clan na Gael organizer.⁵⁶⁷

Articles from the 1920s

Devoy's exceptionally long and productive working life was mirrored, to a degree, even well into the 1920s on the pages of *The New York Times*. Unlike in the case of the Proclamation of Independence and the ensuing years of turmoil, the birth of the Irish Free State actually received a number of citations with regard to Devoy. Following WWI Éamon de Valera, the first president of the newly-proclaimed Irish Republic, traveled to the United States for a lecture and fund-raising tour. Although Devoy's *The Gaelic American*, as well as the organizations Clan na Gael and the Friends of Irish Freedom, offered their support to the Irish leader, soon however, substantial differences between the two leading figures came to light. The article of June 20, 1920, "De Valera Spent \$25,000 at Chicago" published the charges made by Devoy and Judge Cohalan, claiming that de Valera was spending financial resources that should have ended up in Ireland. Furthermore, de Valera was also accused of meddling in U.S. politics without consulting or making use of the local Irish-American leaders' political insight and expertise. However, de Valera rejected these accusations and retorted by stating that as long as America failed to recognize Dr. Patrick McCartan as an Irish Ambassador, the United State could not claim to be neutral.⁵⁶⁸

There was not only antagonism between specific people but between entire organizations, resulting in a deep divide within the Irish-American community. The next day's issue of *The New York Times* published an article on how the Coleman branch of the Friends of Irish Freedom, condemned the attacks of Cohalan and Devoy against de Valera, stating that they were only motivated by envy. De Valera's move to create another organization, the American Association of the Recognition of the Irish Republic, and operate it parallel to the Friends of Irish Freedom, was seen by many as yet another outrageous offence. However, numerous disillusioned members of the Friends of Irish Freedom chose to join the newly-formed "rival" organization. The Cohalan-Devoy faction saw this as a sign of dissent while those supporting de Valera,

⁵⁶⁷ Author's email correspondence with historian Terry Golway, dated February 9, 2014.

⁵⁶⁸ "De Valera Spent \$25,000 At Chicago; Says Money Came Out Of "Irish Treasury," Which Got Proceeds Of ...," *The New York Times*, June 20, 1920.

interpreted this development “not [as] a split, but the consolidation of forces.”⁵⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Devoy stood by his opinion that the policies for the Irish-American community ought to be dictated by “a citizen, not alien.” A further point of insult was the failure of having the issue of “Irish self-determination” (an intentionally ambiguous term) included in the Republican Party’s platform, for which Cohalan and Devoy held de Valera directly responsible. Cohalan and Devoy submitted a plank to the committee of the Republican National Convention, while de Valera submitted a competing plank and requested on the one hand, that the committee hear his arguments for his submission, and on the other hand, that they drop Cohalan’s resolution. Such a blatant intervention was appalling and the conflict found its way into the columns of *The New York Times*. This conflict between Judge Cohalan and de Valera was summed up in the June 21 article by the following quote: “De Valera, according to some, loses weight in his argument in this country because he is an Irishman first, last and all the time, while Supreme Court Justice Cohalan in all his public pronouncements has declared that he is an American first and an Irishman next.”⁵⁷⁰ While the language of the articles referred to above, describing this serious split within the Irish-American community, was generally neutral in tone, the quotes cited here left the reader without a doubt of how deep-running the differences within the community were.

On January 8, 1921 Great Britain made a copy available to the United States of the so-called “Sinn Fein White Book,” and some of these documents were made public by the U.S. government in *The New York Times*. Naturally, this was a controversial topic, as it shed light on Irish-American involvement and secret talks with Germany during the First World War. Similar to earlier articles, John Devoy was described as the immediate contact person between Clan na Gael and the German Embassy, as well as listed as one of the Chairmen of the German-Irish Association. Furthermore, Devoy was also mentioned in relation to the communication between The Friends of Irish Freedom and German-American representatives just prior to the 1916 Easter Rising. While the article “Says Irish Plotted Here After 1917; British White Paper Reports Dealings With Germans” gave an elaborate report of the organizational activities of Sir Roger Casement with the Germans, it also published Devoy’s version of events. Devoy

⁵⁶⁹ “Branches Quit Irish Friends Here; Cohalan-Devoy Rule Of Organization Denounced At Crowded Meeting...,” *The New York Times*, December 13, 1920.

⁵⁷⁰ “Irish Denounce Cohalan.; The Justice And John Devoy Condemned For Attacks On De Valera,” *The New York Times*, June 21, 1920.

strongly criticized Casement and largely blamed him for the failure of the Rising. His harsh words against Casement were cited in the article: “We knew he would meddle in his honest but visionary way to such an extent as to spoil things, but we did not dream that he would ruin everything as he has done.”⁵⁷¹ The term he used to describe Sir Roger Casement, “visionary,” may have indicated that Devoy saw himself rather as a practical “down-to-earth,” pragmatic revolutionary, as opposed to Casement, whose strength was ideas, yet not so much the aspects of organization and implementation.

The article titled “A New Light on Sinn Féin” stated that George von Skal, one of von Bernstorff’s staff referred to Devoy as their “confidential agent,” highlighting the close cooperation between Irish nationalists and Germany. Devoy’s nickname used among Irish and Irish-American revolutionaries was also published, he was called “Sean Fear” – Old Man. Interestingly enough, the article also described Devoy as an “ex-Fenian” who was one of the most prominent leaders of Irish-American organizations. In fact, if anything, Devoy was only “more Fenian” in said phase of his life, his revolutionary feelings running high, and though he was not able to participate in the actual Rising in person, as indicated in Chapter 4, his organizational activities portrayed him as a most highly motivated Fenian.⁵⁷²

Nevertheless, not all news items from this period related to John Devoy dealt with the circumstances of the Easter Rising. While one page of *The New York Times* ran an article about how Devoy was among the main organizers of the Easter Rising from the U.S., another reported the celebration in honor of John Devoy’s 60-year active career held at the Biltmore Hotel with more than 800 people present. The article detailed the event: the guests included members of Clan na Gael and the Friends of Irish Freedom. Devoy was handed a check of \$5,000, though by the end of the evening the amount of the donations was close to \$10,000. Devoy’s speech was cited in the article, in which he pointed out that Sinn Féin could only be successful if the Irish-American community was united, otherwise it might have catastrophic consequences for the Irish-American community. *The New York Times* also chose to highlight the conflict within this community: Devoy stated that the task was to overcome the differences between Éamon de Valera and Judge Cohalan, but he also added: “We insist, above all, on the

⁵⁷¹ “Says Irish Plotted Here After 1917; British White Paper Reports Dealings With Germans,” *The New York Times*, January 11, 1921.

⁵⁷² “New Light On Sinn Féin; Trail Of Americans Intriguing With Germany Uncovered In British White Book,” *The New York Times*, January 30, 1921.

right to select our own leaders.”⁵⁷³ The inclusion of such statements only underlined Devoy’s image as a staunch, uncompromising leader.

Events in Ireland were all closely followed by the Irish-American community, including the Proclamation of the Irish Republic in January 1919, the attempt to gain international recognition, the Irish parliament sending an official envoy to Paris, and the three-member delegation travelling to Paris from the United States to promote Ireland’s recognition. The British Army and the IRA agreed to a truce on July 9, 1921, ending the War of Independence, and eventually leading to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921. The reactions to the truce within the Irish-American community naturally also made it onto the pages of *The New York Times*. The front-page article of the July 9 issue with the title “Irish Here Pleased Over Monday Truce; But They Distrust Lloyd George and Expect Little of Conference” echoed the community’s initial reserve. A number of public figures from the Irish-American community, though excluding both John Devoy and Judge Daniel Cohalan, were asked to reflect on the news of the truce. Apparently these two key figures were not available for comment on that day. The general reactions spoke of hope that the foundation for any form of negotiations was the recognition of the Irish Republic, skepticism regarding de Valera, and fear that he was too conservative and would probably consider accepting dominion status.⁵⁷⁴ The following day, *The New York Times* also published an article on this topic which now included Devoy’s and Cohalan’s statements. Devoy’s opinion was cited from a three-column discussion published in *The Gaelic American*. Devoy charged David Lloyd George with gathering the leaders, de Valera and Sir James Craig (1871-1940) only to prove that they were unable to cooperate. Conversely, according to Cohalan’s quoted statement, de Valera was accused of having been working all along on a compromise solution with Lloyd George.⁵⁷⁵

Some articles in *The New York Times* showed an aspect of Devoy that ensured his lasting position in Irish and Irish-American nationalist circles: the power to compromise when necessary. A good example for this argument was the article

⁵⁷³ “800 Pay Tribute To Devoy.; Gaelic American’s Editor Gets \$5,000 At Dinner In The Biltmore,” *The New York Times*, January 30, 1921.

⁵⁷⁴ “Irish Here Pleased Over Monday Truce; But They Distrust Lloyd George And Expect Little Of Conference...,” *The New York Times*, July 9, 1921.

⁵⁷⁵ “Cohalan Attacks De Valera’s Stand; Accuses Him Of Favoring Compromise Right Along With Lloyd George...,” *The New York Times*, July 10, 1921.

“Cohalan and Devoy Now Extol de Valera; They Praise Reply to Lloyd George – Both Had Attacked Him” dated August 18, 1921. Devoy was not above changing his opinion regarding de Valera: although he had harshly criticized de Valera earlier, this article reported on a message that Devoy sent to de Valera congratulating him on how well he reacted to Lloyd George’s offer of negotiation. Devoy’s message to de Valera included the following: “Your action is a trumpet call to the race in America, which will bury all differences and bring united action to enable the republic to defend the Irish people in the bitter struggle before them.”⁵⁷⁶ Yet apart from the initial praise, Devoy remained undeterred, as summarized in the same article: he reasserted his standpoint that each country can best fight for the independence of Ireland if given the right to elect its own leaders. Devoy ended his message with the Irish expression “Faire go Buadh” meaning “forward to victory.” As expected, *The New York Times* did not fail to point out in the article’s subtitle the stark contrast between Devoy’s earlier criticism of and break with de Valera, and his current message full of admiration and congratulation on his negotiation skills.⁵⁷⁷

The signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty on December 6, 1921 was well received in the Irish-American community, though not all those asked by *The New York Times* for comments were immediately forthcoming with their views on the event. The article “Irish Leaders Here See New Era Dawn; Settlement Hailed With Delight and With Praise for de Valera” reported that John Devoy, among others, was not able to comment on the Treaty as yet, since he needed to learn more about it in order to evaluate it.⁵⁷⁸

While the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty was a milestone in modern Irish history, still it did not make all problems disappear overnight. There was continuous need both for moral and financial support from the Irish-American community overseas. Neither did the Treaty make the subject of Irish-American support for Ireland disappear from the pages of *The New York Times*. The December 12, 1921 issue published the story of a meeting organized by the Friends of Irish Freedom at the Hotel Waldorf Astoria just five days after the date of signing. Those present pledged a fund of nearly three million dollars to be used for the purpose of successfully countering British propaganda. But the

⁵⁷⁶ “Cohalan And Devoy Now Extol De Valera; They Praise Reply To Lloyd George – Both Had Attacked Him For....” *The New York Times*, August 18, 1921.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁸ “Irish Leaders Here See New Era Dawn; Settlement Hailed With Delight And With Praise For De Valera...,” *The New York Times*, December 7, 1921.

article did not only focus on the support of Irish-Americans, it also highlighted the community's unceasing rift. An unnamed delegate's words were quoted verbatim: "There will be peace in Ireland, but there will be no Irish peace in America."⁵⁷⁹ In addition, the article reported on John Devoy's speech held at the event. It was stated that Devoy was introduced by Judge Cohalan as "the noblest Roman of them all, condemned by de Valera."⁵⁸⁰ Devoy made yet another attack directed against de Valera for entering a compromise at the end of the negotiations, the Treaty meant the *de facto* division of the island of Ireland into two separate political entities: the 26-county Free State and the 6-county Northern Ireland. On this account Devoy seemed to have disregarded the fact that de Valera, in fact, refused to accept the Treaty settlement and thereby precipitated the Civil War. Devoy was also cited attacking de Valera for ruining Irish-American unity: "He came here and found a united race – united as never before, and he left here with a unity broken. But the settlement he has entered into is not going to be final. God forbid that it is! A republic only can be the final solution."⁵⁸¹

Despite the fact that funding from the United States did not stop with the birth of the Irish Free State, Devoy was reported to have criticized several times how those funds were used. *The New York Times* article described the commemoration ceremony for the Easter Rising held with the participation of the three major Irish-American organizations, Clan na Gael, the Friends of Irish Freedom, and Cumann na mBan (the women's branch of Clan na Gael) at the Lexington Theater on April 16, 1922. Devoy was among those who attended. Several resolutions were adopted which reflected their positions regarding the Irish struggle, their condemning the collection of money by one set of Irish to fight another set of Irish. Devoy read out the resolutions, for which the article used the term "Devoy's resolutions." Devoy stated that funds collected by Irish-Americans "were lavishly used for the purpose of breaking up both American organizations."⁵⁸² The funds ought not to be used to further widen the division in the Irish-American community. The same article also reported on the rift between the various organizations: Devoy claimed that there was no reason for the Supreme Council

⁵⁷⁹ "Irish Pledge Fund To Fight On Here; 'Friends Of Freedom' Denounce The Settlement With England And....," *The New York Times*, December 12, 1921.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

⁵⁸² "Irish Here Attack Anti-Treaty Fund; Condemn Collection Of Money In America To Enable One Set Of Irish....," *The New York Times*, April 22, 1922.

to sever ties with Clan na Gael, as they had kept every pledge and promise in the last 49 years of cooperation, and yet their ties had been severed. To conclude the article, Devoy was, yet again, described as attacking de Valera regarding the financial resources originating from the United States, which in turn, were being used to attack Irish-American organizations. Devoy was referring to a speech made by de Valera in which he criticized the standpoint of the Friends of Irish Freedom.⁵⁸³

In the subsequent period there was considerably less mention of Devoy in the pages of *The New York Times*. Though he never really retired in the true sense of the word, his age and health made it increasingly difficult for him to do as much work as in previous years. As already discussed in Chapter 4, despite these health conditions, he made one last visit to his home country in the summer of 1924. *The New York Times* reported on his meeting with William T. Cosgrave, President of the Executive Council. Altogether three articles were dedicated to Devoy's journey and Irish experiences: "John Devoy arrives in Ireland"⁵⁸⁴ "John Devoy sees Cosgrave,"⁵⁸⁵ and specifically regarding his reconciliation efforts directed at the Irish government, "Reconciliation Near in Irish Free State; National Group in the Dáil is Now Expected to Return to the Government Fold."⁵⁸⁶

After the articles about his journey to Ireland there was only a single reference to his activities promoting Irish unity, in April 1927.⁵⁸⁷ The news of his death came in the fall of 1928, ending his remarkably long and active Fenian career. The first article to break the news was published in the issue of September 29, 1928.⁵⁸⁸ The following day the paper published a longer article on the life, work, and death of the Fenian.⁵⁸⁹ An estimated one thousand people came to his funeral in New York.⁵⁹⁰ In June 1929, *The New York Times* reported Devoy's reburial: John Devoy's coffin was transferred to

⁵⁸³ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁴ "John Devoy Arrives in Ireland," *The New York Times*, July 27, 1924.

⁵⁸⁵ "John Devoy Sees Cosgrave," *The New York Times*, July 30, 1924.

⁵⁸⁶ "Reconciliation Near in Irish Free State; National Group in the Dáil Is Now Expected to Return to the Government Fold," *The New York Times*, September 5, 1924.

⁵⁸⁷ "For Irish Unity," *The New York Times*, April 6, 1927.

⁵⁸⁸ "John Devoy, Irish Editor, Dies," *The New York Times*, September 29, 1928.

⁵⁸⁹ "John Devoy Dead; Noted Irish Leader; Gaelic American's Founder Stricken At 86 In An Atlantic City Hotel," *The New York Times*, September 30, 1928.

⁵⁹⁰ "Friends Of Ireland At Devoy Funeral; 1,000 Mourners, Many From Afar, Attend High Mass For Irish Liberator," *The New York Times*, October 3, 1928.

Glasnevin cemetery in Dublin, Ireland where nearly five thousand people came to pay their respects, though this event, understandably, was covered in much more detail by the Irish press, including *The Irish Times*, as discussed in the previous section.⁵⁹¹

⁵⁹¹ “Irish Honor Devoy.; 5,000 Pay Tribute When Body Arrives At Cobh From Here,” *The New York Times*, June 13, 1929.

Conclusion

This dissertation is a case study of the life and work of the possibly most prominent revolutionaries, John Devoy. Yet, his work can only be evaluated against the backdrop of Irish and Irish-American nationalism and republicanism. In fact, from the late 18th century during most of the 19th century, Ireland witnessed the emergence of revolutionary violence, with the ultimate goal of an independent Ireland. Far from being a unique occurrence in Europe, Irish republicanism was one in a long list of nationalist aspirations throughout the continent. There are numerous examples of one nationalist movement influencing another, such as Deák Ferenc's 1867 Compromise being seen as a possible blueprint for an Irish solution.⁵⁹² The importance of the United States' position cannot be underestimated, and was indicated by how its support was sought by a number of revolutionaries and nationalist leaders, including Charles Stewart Parnell and Lajos Kossuth. Nationalist movements were also actively supported not only by the political negotiations of the various leaders of aspiring states, but also by the moral, and more equally importantly, financial support of the hyphenated minorities living abroad, e.g. the Irish-American community.

There were many other examples of expatriate nationalist movements in the U.S. during the late 19th and 20th centuries apart from the Irish (Irish-American) one discussed in this dissertation. These included Polish and Czech nationalists before World War I (and again after World War II). In the given period, before World War I, Indian (among them Sikh) nationalists were also active in the U.S., at times in alliance with Irish-American nationalists, but Caribbean nationalism, and the Zionist movement also spring to mind. To study and detect similarities and potential meeting points between the above-mentioned and the Irish nationalist movement would be a possible direction of further research.

Nationalist movements rarely relied on a single approach for achieving their goals, none of those movements listed above resorted to solely constitutional methods

⁵⁹² Conversely, the Irish Home Rule structure was examined as a possible blueprint for settling the governmental structures of Taiwan and Japan in the early 20th century. This was explored in Conor Mulvagh's paper: Mulvagh, Conor, et al, "Lin Hsien-Tang's Taiwanese Home Rule Movement as Inspired by the Irish Model," *Taiwan in Comparative Perspective*, Vol 4, December 2012, 65-88.

or exclusively the revolutionary, physical force approach. Most likely, the movements included various organizations promoting different means to reach the same goal. As seen in this study, this was also true of Irish nationalism. One of the aims of this dissertation was to determine if one of the most prominent Fenians, John Devoy, was a die-hard violent revolutionary nationalist (believing in physical force), or a constitutionalist, or a mix of both? Based on the historical evidence, I would suggest that Devoy was a combination of the two. In fact, he can best be likened to a tightrope walker. Throughout his career he displayed a healthy dose of flexibility and a sense for pragmatism to use the best options available. Devoy had no problem with supporting whichever solution worked best, be it either armed revolt or a constitutional approach, as long as it would lead to the ultimate goal: an independent Ireland. Chapter 5 showed that although he started his rebel life in the traditional Fenian mold of armed revolt, over time his early Fenian world-view widened and evolved to accept alternative paths to Irish freedom, which did not necessarily involve bombs and guns. As a direct result of this “thinking-outside-the-box” pragmatism, from the early 1870s to the early 1880s, he was able to achieve several remarkable successes, which greatly boosted the Fenian cause. These included: first, his master-minding and financing of the successful the rescue of Irish political prisoners from Australia in the famed 1876 *Catalpa* mission; and second, his success in mobilizing and unifying the Irish-American community from the 1880s onwards in support of the issue of Irish land reform via his New Departure initiative. The New Departure helped bring about the necessary social reforms in Ireland in the 1880s (by means of the ground-breaking 1881 Land Act) that would eventually give Ireland enough economic and social confidence to, (within one generation), begin the revolution of 1916 which eventually achieved Irish independence by 1922.

Conversely, Chapter 5 also amply demonstrated that when constitutional politics were pushed into the background, and militarization encompassed both Europe and Ireland from 1914 onwards, Devoy was a key figure in the organization of the necessary arms without which the 1916 Easter Rising could never have taken place. Ultimately the events of the Easter Rising did not unfold as it had been envisioned by Devoy, or indeed by the prime organizers themselves, it was still a vital step on the long path to independence. By that time he himself had not held a weapon for more than twenty years, instead, Devoy made sure that the Irish cause was featured prominently in the Irish-American press. The Irish revolutionary war (1919-1921) eventually resulted in

the creation of the 1922 Irish Free State. When the truce of July 1921 was finally negotiated between Britain and IRB rebels, Devoy welcomed it. Afterwards he gave his full support to the compromise Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, which only offered a Free State Ireland with limited autonomy, and not the desired fully sovereign all Irish republic. Devoy believed the Treaty granted “the freedom to achieve freedom.”⁵⁹³ History was to prove Devoy correct in this assessment, when the Irish Republic was established by peaceful means in 1949.

Describing John Devoy as a tightrope walker is by no means to be understood as a derogatory term, much rather a tribute to his balancing-act skills. Namely, tightrope walkers do not only have to make sure they do not fall off the tightrope to one side or the other. They also have to take great care that the rope is fixed on both ends securely to the two pillars, otherwise even their good sense of balance will not prevent them from falling if the rope comes loose. So let us see how this metaphor applies to John Devoy.

He spent his life balancing between the all-out revolutionary element and the constitutional, negotiation-based approach. Siding too much with either would have discredited him in the eyes of the other party. This can be seen, for example, from the fact that throughout the Land League period Devoy was also aware of the Skirmishing Fund. What’s more, he was, to a limited degree, involved in the revolutionary operations the Fund was financing. Another example for the previously mention dichotomy was his correspondence with Westminster MP and ex-Fenian James O’Kelly about the optimal type of weapons for purchase, with the letters being written on O’Kelly’s Westminster stationery.

However, another type of “balancing” occurred throughout Devoy’s exiled life in the United States. He was an Irishman living in New York, never giving up on his Irish identity or his Fenian aspirations, yet over the course of five decades he also became Irish-American. These two worlds, Ireland and Irish-America, no matter how closely linked by the common goal of an independent Ireland, were nonetheless two separate worlds, and Devoy was continuously balancing between the two. To underline this point, one only has to refer back to Devoy’s trip to Europe in 1879 at the expressed

⁵⁹³ Michael Collins’ words, see in Matthew Heintz, “The Freedom to Achieve Freedom: Negotiating the Anglo-Irish Treaty,” *intersections*, 10, no. 1 (2009). 431-451. Web.

http://depts.washington.edu/chid/intersections_Winter_2009/Matthew_Heintz_Anglo-Irish_Treaty.pdf.

request of John O’Leary. The topic of discussion was the IRB’s stance towards the New Departure. While O’Leary stated that the IRB would not move away from their ideal of a full republic attained by revolutionary means, Devoy likewise stated that Clan na Gael had already committed to lend their support to Parnell and Davitt’s Land League work. This marked the first occasion when the Irish-American organization followed a categorically different path from the one indicated from Ireland.

During his secret visit to Ireland in that year, Devoy was quoted as referring to the Irish as “them,” instead of “us,” inadvertently pointing out the subtle difference in their mindsets. More significantly, on several occasions, his correspondents pointed out to him that the long decades of exile meant that he might not see the Irish situation in the same light as if he was living in Ireland. Yet Devoy equally rejected being called “American,” when asked if the New Departure was “dictated from America,” because he would not deny his Irish roots. With such a multi-layered sense of identity, Devoy represented the perfect link between “Irish” and “Irish-American,” as well as between “old Fenian” and “new revolutionary.” This link, though, came with the responsibility towards both the revolutionary executive leadership in Ireland and Irish-American, or generally American politics. These were the two pillars that Devoy’s tightrope was strung out between. He had to make sure that his revolutionary organizational work was supported and looked for in Dublin. Still, it was equally important for him to establish the Irish-American political community’s role within the American political society.

It must again be stressed how Devoy’s sense for pragmatism made sure that he never fell off this proverbial tightrope. When the United States entered the First World War, Devoy stood up and sang the national anthem. For that given period he deemed it necessary to tone down his journalistic work in the support of an independent Ireland, for fear of being charged with breach of neutrality. Thus Devoy made sure he was, and remained classed as a “loyal” Irish-American. On the other hand, in the preparation period for the Easter Rising, he informed the Irish organizers that he could not simply organize a vessel loaded with weapons sail out of New York harbor bound for Ireland, as it was not possible to do that without the knowledge of American authorities. This, however, did not mean that Devoy would not organize weapons to be sent to Ireland, in fact, the Irish-German cooperation was under way. But he made sure that his revolutionary organizational work was not too conspicuous to U.S. authorities, so he could continue with his political lobbying work, pressuring the American government to

support the recognition of an independent Ireland. Since he was never indicted, it can only be concluded that his balancing act worked out well.

What the above presentation of ideas aimed to prove was that John Devoy was first and foremost a flexible rebel, not one blindly clinging to the idea that Irish freedom could only be achieved by violent armed revolt. Instead, he was always an activist who put pragmatism ahead of violent revolutionary ideology, and political reality ahead of revolutionary ideas. He was able to choose the achievable over the vain pursuit of the “pure flame” Republic ideal. John Devoy can thus be termed a successful tightrope walker, ensuring that the rope was safely fixed to both pillars, represented by Ireland and America, and one who did not fall off it, either to the revolutionary Fenian or the constitutional pragmatist side of the struggle for Irish independence.

Cultural memory: the afterlife of a hero

John Devoy is yet to be presented with the public recognition of his work, which was based on his relentless revolutionary work he fully deserves. While in Dublin one can find streets named after revolutionaries, public statues of Fenian figures, such as for example Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, currently there is no monument, memorial, or even a plaque commemorating Devoy.⁵⁹⁴ Nor is there, for that matter, a memorial that acknowledges the role the Irish-American community played in the struggle for Irish independence. Their role, however, as it has been argued in this dissertation, was immense.

It seems astounding how much the name of John Devoy has been forgotten in Ireland. In Hungary his name has never made it into the realm of general knowledge of history (unlike Arthur Griffith's name, who is quite often quoted in connection with his comparison of the Austro-Hungarian *Ausgleich* and a possible Irish-British compromise). I have spent the better part of three years researching John Devoy's life and work, and have been presented with an image of a person full of controversies. He was not universally liked, yet he did not immediately take to one, either. He was known to keep a grudge for a long time, as he did with Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, reconciling with him only near his death; or Michael Davitt, with whom he rather quickly discontinued his cooperation on the New Departure and never contacted again. Still, Devoy was widely respected for his revolutionary and organizing work, and he was remembered by several subsequent generations of revolutionaries. This was highlighted, for example, by the reference to Devoy made by Pádraig Pearse in graveside oration in 1915 at Rossa's funeral. Devoy's image as a hardened Fenian was mirrored against the caring relative, who, while not having a family of his own, harbored deep feelings towards his brothers' families.

The list of Devoy's accomplishments is a long one. Without John Devoy's organizational work, the arrested IRB leader James Stephens would not have been sprang from prison so quickly. Then again, his recruiting activities also led to the sentencing of numerous army members who were also enlisted Fenians, many of them banished to the notorious Australian prisons (hence Devoy's enthusiasm for the 1876

⁵⁹⁴ Local historian Seamus Curran shared information with the author about plans for a Devoy statue to be put up for the 1916 centennial in 2016.

Catalpa rescue mission). Once in the United States, his journalistic work helped promote the cause of Irish independence and inform the Irish-American public as well as, to a certain extent, form their opinion. Yet the language of these articles was sometimes overtly excited, exaggerating, accusatory, sensationalistic, or at times, simply not quite true, thus drawing unwanted attention from the US authorities (the libel case against August Belmont can be given as an example). Devoy could accuse a person of being a British spy, without irrefutable evidence, and remain convinced of it, while not spotting the real spy amongst them (Henri Le Caron, among others). He was equally capable of remaining loyal to a person, even after their death, as he did with Charles Stewart Parnell.

During my research I have found that Devoy worked best in an organizational, consulting role. He did not sail to Western Australia himself, yet managed to organize and finance the entire rescue mission from the East Coast of the United States. He did not wield a gun often, yet thought of himself as a “rebel” (and included the term in the title of his *Recollections*). He did not support the dynamite campaign of the 1880s, though this he did more for practical reasons than on moral grounds.

In this period leading up to the centennial celebration of the Easter Rising, it feels important that Devoy’s role in the struggle for Irish independence should be highlighted and promoted. He did not win any battles single-handedly, he did not lead a rebellion, he did not plant a bomb himself to disrupt Victorian British life to further the cause of Ireland, he did not even personally smuggle any guns into the country or participate in the Rising. However, it was his persistent journalistic work, his enormous energy that he put into writing, editing, fund-raising, which contributed to the eventual success and establishment of an independent Ireland. His role as an organizer inspired and motivated countless Irish and Irish-American Fenians and politicians of his time, and hopefully of our time, as well.

In contrast to this current relative obscurity, the significance of John Devoy’s work was well understood by his contemporaries. Again and again there were references of this in his writings and collected correspondence. His detailed knowledge of the Land League was commented on by Bulmer Hobson when he encouraged Devoy to write more on this topic: “I have just been looking over your articles on [Michael] Davitt and the Fenians. Is there any chance of your doing some more? You are the only

man who can speak with authority on the subject, and I do hope you may be able to finish the series, or else give us a history of Fenianism.”⁵⁹⁵ Robert M. McWade (1857-?), biographer of Charles Stewart Parnell, was of the same opinion regarding Devoy’s authority on the Land League. In a letter to Dr. John McNerny dated December 1, 1886, he stated the following: “To John Devoy more than any other man belongs the credit of initiating the movement. As my friend, Dr. Wm. Carroll, writes me: ‘Without John Devoy your history of the Land League in American would be ‘Hamlet without a Dane’”⁵⁹⁶

If Devoy’s enormous volume of correspondence gave us insight into the minute workings of the Clan na Gael organization, then his articles and editorials written for *The Irish Nation* and *The Gaelic American* offered insight into the life of the Irish-American nationalist community. Although the tone of his articles often mirrored his heated reaction (or in some cases, overreaction) to unfolding affairs, his overall journalistic work represented a valuable source of information. This was recognized as early as the 1920s, when Sean T. O’Kelly pointed out the importance of having all files of *The Gaelic American* collected in the National Library in Dublin:

It occurs to me to ask you if it would be possible to have a complete file of *The Gaelic American* from the start presented to the National Library in Dublin. I think it would be most important to have this done, as the files would be invaluable to the historian, who will later write the history of these times, and in fact, of all the period since *The Gaelic American* was founded. If it is not possible to send these to the National Library, perhaps a complete file could be deposited with the New York public library. At any rate, I think it essential that the files should be available somewhere.⁵⁹⁷

While there is no memorial of John Devoy in Dublin, there is however, a statue at the townland of Greenhills, Kill, County Kildare, Ireland at the (almost exact) location where the Devoy family house used to stand. It was erected in 1966, but has since been moved several yards (under the watchful eyes of local historians) with the building of a nearby motorway. Next to the monument there is also a statue of a tree, the

⁵⁹⁵ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. II, 384.

⁵⁹⁶ O’Brien and Ryan, eds, *Devoy’s Post Bag*, Vol. II, 293.

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 536.

Tree of Liberty. In fact, there *used to be* a tree, but it was crudely cut down by some vandals in 2010 (Fig. 33.).⁵⁹⁸

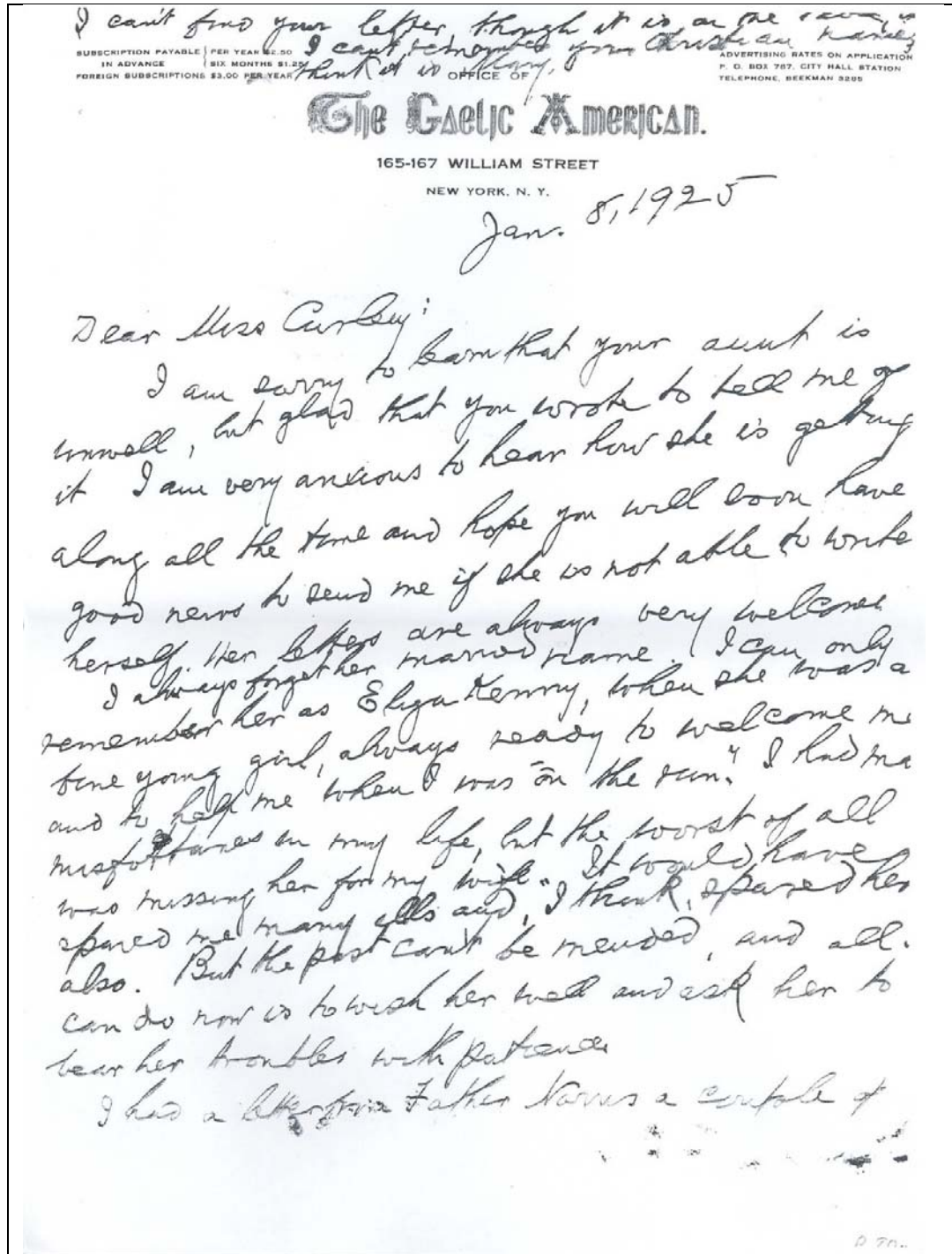
In March 2012, I met with local historians and relentless supporters of John Devoy's legacy, Seamus Curran, James Durney, Mario Corrigan, and Brian McCabe for a fascinating trip visiting some of the key locations connected to Devoy's life in and around Naas.⁵⁹⁹ Why fascinating? Because the places from my research material suddenly came alive and stories of Devoy's life that I had read before were fleshed out by seeing and experiencing the original locations. This great Fenian's memory is being kept alive by the above-mentioned team of dedicated historian working in the immediate area where Devoy grew up and later lived and worked. Although the Tree of Liberty at the Devoy memorial was cut down, a shoot is still preserved there, intact, going strong. The same seems to be true of Devoy: as long as there are people committed to researching the life and work of this local hero from Naas, as long as historians are investigating his contribution to the eventual establishment of the Irish Free State, John Devoy's legacy will not be forgotten but will continue to be appreciated by future generations. This dissertation is but a small contribution to the body of knowledge on John Devoy's life and work.

⁵⁹⁸ Author's personal communication with Seamus Curran, James Durney, Mario Corrigan, and Brian McCabe in Naas, in March 2012.

⁵⁹⁹ Livia Szedmina, "Great Expectations – Even Greater Impressions: A Visit to Naas," *Co. Kildare Online Electronic History Journal* (March 30, 2012), accessed June 22, 2013, http://www.kildare.ie/library/ehistory/2012/03/a_visit_to_naas.asp.

Appendix

Appendix 1



weeks ago, in fact he is quite very kind
 of your aunt and you, but I haven't been
 able to answer him yet. Writing is very dif-
 ficult for me, though I have to write a good
 deal. The oculist keeps putting off the opera-
 tion on my right eye, but wants to operate on
 the other one. That would be of course
 for ten or twelve months until he operates
 again, so I won't let him. He says the right
 eye is not bad enough yet for the second
 operation, although it's nine months since
 the first one.
 Kindly let me know when Mr Kilmurry
 died and also when your mother died.
 I met one of the Sawlors a few weeks
 ago, a former Free State officer, on his way
 to Australia, and he told me he was born in
 Halverston which surprised me, as I
 thought the Sawlors had only moved there recently.
 With kindest regards to your aunt and yours
 Yours truly
 John Devoy

Letter written by John Devoy to Eliza Kilmurry, found by local historians in private possession in Naas

Source: Kindly provided by local historian Seamus Curran

Appendix 2 – Relevant dates and events in Irish and Irish-American history

» **Biographical information on John Devoy is shown in bold**

September 3, 1842 – birth of John Devoy

1845-55 – the Great Famine

1848 – Young Irelanders' Rebellion

1856 – Devoy recruited to Fenianism, took the oath during a Gaelic language class

1861 – Devoy spent one year with the French Foreign Legion in Algeria

1862 – Devoy took a job in Naas at the Watkins Brewery, Devoy was junior Fenian officer in charge of training Fenian recruits

1865 – Devoy got engaged to Eliza Kenny

1865-66-67 – planned Fenian Rising

1866 – Devoy arrested and sentenced for conspiracy to commit treason

1871 – Devoy and fellow Fenian Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa released from prison, traveled to the U.S. on board the *Cuba*

1874 – Devoy took a job as journalist and editor at *The New York Herald*

1874 – Devoy received the letter from imprisoned Fenian James Wilson calling on Devoy to rescue the Fenians from the Fremantle prison colony in Western Australia

1875-76 – at the agitation of Devoy, Clan na Gael agreed to (partly) fund the Catalpa rescue mission

August 19, 1876 – *Catalpa* rescue mission completed

1879 – discussions with the IRB leadership in Paris regarding the Land League

1879 – Devoy made an illegal trip to Ireland, as a result, in 1882 published *The Land of Éire*;

1879-1880 – meetings in Dublin at the Morrison's hotel with Irish politician Charles Stewart Parnell and land reformer Michael Davitt about a possible cooperation resulting in the adoption of the New Departure

1879 - Irish National Land League founded, newly-elected President of the League was Parnell

1880 – Devoy forced to resign from *The New York Herald* for his open loyalty to Clan na Gael

January 1880 – Parnell started a lecture tour in the United States

January 14, 1880 – militant factions of the Fenians led by Jeremy O'Donovan Rossa organized Manchester explosion

1880s first half – Clan na Gael was more intensely focused on physical force policy

1881 – development of John Holland's submarine *Fenian Ram*, partly financed by Clan na Gael

1881 – 1885 – Devoy was editor of *The Irish Nation*

May 6, 1882 – Phoenix Park murders of Chief Secretary for Ireland Lord Frederick Cavendish and Permanent Under Secretary of the Irish Office Thomas Henry Burke

March 1883 – Irish-American nationalist, Alexander Sullivan elected president of Clan na Gael, start of the “Triangle” period

1882-1883 – John Devoy accused of libel, trial lasted all year

December 13, 1884 – dynamite attack on London Bridge in London, U.K., Fenian, William Mackey Lomasney died

1885 – *The Irish Nation* was terminated due to financial difficulties

1885 – Fenian, James J. O'Kelly elected as MP at Westminster

1886 – Irish Race Convention held in Chicago

1886 – First Irish Home Rule Bill – defeated in the House of Commons

1887 – Irish journalist, Richard Pigott's letters, later proven to be forgeries, linking Parnell to Phoenix Park murders

June 1888 – Union Convention of the Clan, Devoy laid out the accusations (misappropriation of Clan funds) against Alexander Sullivan

May 4, 1889 – murder of prominent Fenian, Irish-American physician, Dr. Henry Cronin in Chicago

1889 – start of high profile court case against Charles Stewart Parnell based on Pigott letters

early 1890 – Parnell cleared, returned to the House of Commons

October 6, 1891 – Parnell died in Brighton, Great Britain

1892 – publication of Devoy's *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*

1893 – Second Irish Home Rule Bill – defeated in the House of Lords

1900 – Devoy worked on the reunification of Clan na Gael

March 29, 1901 – IRB founder James Stephens died

1903 – Devoy became the editor of *The Gaelic American*

1904 – Future founder of the Sinn Féin movement, Arthur Griffith published his work *The Resurrection of Hungary*

November 28, 1905 – Arthur Griffith presented the Sinn Féin policy

September 28, 1912 – Ulster Unionists signed the Ulster Covenant

1912-14 – Third Irish Home Rule Bill – passed under Parliament Act with Royal Assent, never came into force

1914 – Devoy started cooperation with representatives of Germany and former British public servant and Irish nationalist Sir Roger Casement to organize guns to be smuggled into Ireland for the planned rising

March 20, 1914 – Mutiny of the Curragh

April 24-25, 1914 – Larne gun-running organized by Ulster Unionists

July 26, 1914 – Howth gun-running by Irish Volunteers, Bachelor's Walk massacre

September 1, 1914 – outbreak of WWI

June 29, 1915 – Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa died in New York, funeral in Glasnevin, catalyst for Rising

February 1916 – Devoy received news of the planned date of the Rising (Easter Monday)

March 4, 1916 – Devoy helped organize the First Irish Race Convention, The Friends of Irish Freedom founded

April 18, 1916 – German consulate raided by American authorities, German diplomat Wolf von Igel's documents seized

April 24, 1916 – start of the Easter Rising

May 1916 – executions in Dublin: Pádraig Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh, Thomas J. Clarke, Joseph Plunkett, William Pearse, Edward Daly, Michael O'Hanrahan, John MacBride, Eamonn Ceannt, Michael Mallin, Sean Heuston, Conn Colbert, James Connolly, Sean MacDiarmada

April 6, 1917 – U.S. entered WWI

August 3, 1916 – Sir Roger Casement executed in London

September 25, 1917 – Irish nationalist and hunger striker Thomas Ashe died

November 11, 1918 – signing of the armistice with Germany, end of WWI

December 1918 – landslide victory for Sinn Féin

January 21, 1919 – formation of First Dáil in Mansion House, Dublin, issued Declaration of Independence and Message to the Free Nations of the World

February 22-23, 1919 - Third Irish Race Convention held in Philadelphia, Irish-American delegation selected

April 2, 1919 – Irish-American delegation sailed for France

April-May 1919 – Irish-American delegation's visit to Ireland, met with political leaders

May 1919 – future Irish president Éamon de Valera traveled to the United States to secure financial support

1919 – Devoy cooperated then clashed with de Valera during de Valera's time in the United States

1920 – Government of Ireland Act

1920 – de Valera formed the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic

February 1920 – de Valera's interview published in *The Westminster Gazette* suggesting Ireland take similar form to Cuba according to the Monroe Doctrine

October 1920 – IRB broke ties with Clan na Gael

November 1920 – American presidential elections, Wilson did not run, Warren G. Harding elected new president of U.S.

November 21, 1920 – “Bloody Sunday” the Squad executed 19 suspected British Army intelligence officers, police fired indiscriminately into crowd at Croke Park killing 12 people

June 1921 – King George V opened the Parliament of Northern Ireland in Belfast, indicating willingness for truce

July 1921 – Irish and British governments agreed to truce

December 6, 1921 – Anglo-Irish Treaty signed, Irish Free State established

1921 – Devoy supported the Treaty sharing Irish revolutionary leader Michael Collins's opinion that it gave Ireland “freedom to achieve freedom”

June 1922 – start of Civil War, pro-Treaty forces and anti-Treaty forces clashed

August 12, 1922 – Arthur Griffith died

August 22, 1922 – Michael Collins died

May 1923 – end of Civil War

September 1923 – Ireland accepted into the League of Nations

February 3, 1924 – Woodrow Wilson died

August 1924 – John Devoy's trip to Ireland, which became a state visit, received by Prime Minister William Cosgrave, participated in the official opening of the Tailteann Games; met with Eliza Kenny (Elizabeth Kilmurry) again

September 1924 – John Devoy returned to the United States,

September 29, 1928 – John Devoy died in Atlantic City, NJ, U.S.

June 14, 1929 – John Devoy funeral in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin, Ireland

December 1937 – Irish Free State replaced by Éire

Appendix 3 – Glossary of terms

American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic (abbreviated: AARIR) – fundraising organization established by Éamon De Valera.

Anglo-Irish Treaty – Treaty ending the War of Independence in Ireland, signed December 6, 1921, following the July truce, it made the division of the island of Ireland official, keeping the 6 northern counties within the United Kingdom and providing the 26 counties with “the freedom to achieve freedom,” as Michael Collins put it.

Bachelor’s Walk massacre – incident during the Howth gun-running operation, the army shot into the crowd killing 4 and wounding more than 30 people, mainly civilians; protest was held in New York when Devoy and Casement were photographed together.

Bloody Sunday – event of November 21, 1920, when Michael Collins’ Squad assassinated the Cairo Gang, and as retaliation the Crown forces initiated a shooting into the crowd and players at Croke Park during the Dublin vs. Tipperary Gaelic football match. A total of 31 were killed.

British Commonwealth – association of nations consisting of some of the former colonies, headed by the United Kingdom.

Catalpa – whaling ship transformed into a rescue vessel that rescued the Fremantle Six – Fenian prisoners held in Western Australia in 1876. The rescue mission was organized by John Devoy and financed by Clan na Gael. The costs of the rescue were supposed to be complemented by whaling and selling the fish en route.

Clan na Gael – Irish-American revolutionary organization working for the independence of Ireland.

Curragh Mutiny – event took place on March 20, 1914 at the Curragh Camp in County Kildare, Ireland. British officers would rather resign than take action against the Ulster Volunteers.

Dáil Éireann – in English translated as the “Assembly of Ireland” – first established on January 21, 1919, in Mansion House, adopted legislative documents, among others, the Dáil Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Message to the Free Nations of the World.

Easter Rising – attempt to rise against British forces in Ireland in April 1916, with Irish-American funding, possible arms shipment from Germany, partly organized by John Devoy.

Fenians – members of the Fenian movement aiming for an Ireland independent of British rule; planned a rising in 1865, postponed to 1867, many of them arrested, including John Devoy.

Fenian Ram – submarine designed by John Holland, financed by Clan na Gael, planned to be used against British vessels in New York Harbor.

First Dáil – pledging not to sit in the Westminster parliament, 28 of the elected Sinn Féin representatives set up an Irish legislative assembly, the first Dáil Éireann. The first Dáil met in the Round Room of the Mansion House on 21 January 1919.

Fourteen Points – delivered to Congress by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson on January 8, 1918; a statement outlining the policies on free trade, democracy, self-determination, as an aim of any nation fighting in WWI.

Fremantle Six – refers to the six Fenians who were rescued in the *Catalpa* mission organized by John Devoy and financed by Clan na Gael. The Fremantle Six were: James Wilson (who wrote the letter to John Devoy), Robert Cranston, Michael Harrington, Thomas Darragh, Martin Hogan, Thomas Hassett.

Friends of Irish Freedom – Irish-American organization founded in New York in 1916 at the First Irish Race Convention, supported the Easter Rising and during the Paris Peace Convention sent a three-member delegation to Paris to lobby for the international recognition of Ireland.

Glasnevin cemetery – cemetery in Dublin, Ireland where the Republican plot is located. John Devoy, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, Charles Stewart Parnell, and Michael Collins, among others, are buried there.

Great Famine – encompassing the period of 1845-55, the Famine was caused by the appearance of the potato blight destroying the potato harvest; hardest hit were the years of 1846 and 1847, in total the Famine led to a population drop of about 2 million people, approximately 1 million people died, while 1 million emigrated, primarily to North America.

Habeas Corpus – a writ requiring a person under arrest to be brought before a judge or into court, to avoid unlawful imprisonment; British authorities in Ireland intensified their efforts to prevent a Fenian rebellion by suspending Habeas Corpus on February 17, 1866.

Home Rule – movement in Irish history to achieve some sort of degree of self-determination, idea first introduced by Isaac Butt, then promoted by Charles Stewart Parnell and William Ewart Gladstone. Three Home Rule Bills were proposed: in 1886, 1893, 1914, with the Fourth Irish Home Rule Act (Government of Ireland Act of 1920) fully implemented in Northern Ireland, and only partly in southern Ireland.

Howth gun-running – event took place on July 26, 1914 as a reaction to the Larne gun-running, guns smuggled into Ireland to arm the Irish Volunteers as a preparation for the Easter Rising in 1916.

Irish Free State – Irish: Saorstát Éireann; established on December 6, 1922, when the state was established as a Dominion of the British Commonwealth, based on the signed Anglo-Irish Treaty. The Irish Free State was replaced by the Ireland (Irish: Éire) in December 1937 when the new Constitution of Ireland came into effect.

Irish National Land League – founded in 1879 by Michael Davitt, Charles Stewart

Parnell was appointed as its president. Its goal was wide-spread land reform in Ireland.
Irish Volunteers – established in 1913, a nationalist military organization fighting for self-government in Ireland, participated in the Easter Rising.
Know-Nothing Party – political party most significant in the 1850s, promoting strong anti-immigrant and especially anti-Roman Catholic sentiments.
Larne gun-running – event took place on April 14-15, 1914, guns smuggled into Ireland to arm the Ulster Volunteer Force.
League of Nation – organization for international cooperation which was initiated by the Allied Powers following the end of WWI.
Nationalism – most prominent political force of the 19 th century, based on Liberal requirement that the people constitute the base of a legitimate state; this ideology's foundation is that the loyalty and devotion to the nation-state of an individual will outweigh other individual or group interests.
New Departure – proposed cooperation Clan leader John Devoy, Irish Parliamentary Party leader Charles Stewart Parnell, and land reformer Michael Davitt, attempt to draw Clan na Gael into the mainstream.
Pigott letters – letters published by Irish journalist Richard Pigott, accusing Charles Stewart Parnell of having instigated the Phoenix Park murders. The letters were proven to be forgeries.
Self-determination – the movement seeking varying degrees of autonomy, which can be self-governance and/or independence within their current state, this principle allows a people to choose its own political status and to determine its own form of economic, cultural and social development.
Sinn Féin – an Irish republican party, founded on November 28, 1905 based on Arthur Griffith's Sinn Féin policy; won a landslide victory in the 1918 elections.
Tailteann Games – one of the initial aims of the Gaelic Athletic Association was the revival of the ancient Tailteann Games (Irish: Aonach Tailteann), a Celtic Olympics associated with the ancient Queen Tailté. John Devoy participated in the opening ceremony of the Tailteann Games held in August 1924.
Tammany Hall – cornerstone of Democratic power in New York, under the leadership of 7 th U.S. President, Andrew Jackson, the Democratic Party offered patronage to early Irish-American immigrants in exchange for their votes.
Ulster – the 6 counties in the north-east of the island of Ireland which remained part of the U.K. following the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 6, 1921.
Ulster Volunteers – founded in 1912 with the aim to prevent self-government for Ireland, predominantly Protestant; transformed into the Ulster Volunteer Force in 1913.
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland – formal name referring to

the state that includes England, Scotland, and Wales, as well as the 6 Northern Ireland counties that opted to remain within the Union in 1922; the rest of Ireland, the 26 counties formed the Irish Free State.

Sources

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<http://www.britannica.com/>

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Bachelors Walk massacre:

http://www.turtlebunbury.com/history/history_irish/history_irish_bachelors_walk.htm

Tailteann Games:

<http://www.tailteanngames.com/2.2.history.php>

Appendix 4 - Biographies

Anthony, Captain George Smith

1843 –1913

Captain of the *Catalpa* rescue ship.

Ashe, Thomas Patrick

January 12, 1885, Lispole, County Kerry, Ireland –September 25, 1917, Dublin, Ireland
School teacher, IRB member and founding member of the Irish Volunteers, as a result of a hunger strike.

Beach, Thomas Billis

see Le Caron, Henri

Bernstorff, Johann-Heinrich von

November 14, 1862, London, Great Britain – October 6, 1939, Geneva, Switzerland
German diplomat who represented his country as ambassador, in Washington, D.C. (1908–17). Cooperated with John Devoy on providing German assistance to the Easter Rising.

Breslin, John J.

1833, Drogheda, County Meath, Ireland – November 18, 1887, New York, NY, U.S.
Fenian, Clan na Gael member, chief on-site manager of the *Catalpa* rescue mission

Burke, Thomas Henry

May 29, 1829, Tuam, County Galway, Ireland – May 6, 1882, Dublin, Ireland
Permanent Under Secretary of the Irish Office, killed in Phoenix Park murder together with Lord Frederick Cavendish

Butt, Isaac

September 6, 1813, Glenfin, County Donegal, Ireland – May 5, 1879, near Dundrum, County Dublin, Ireland
Lawyer and Irish nationalist leader. Founder (1870) and first chief of the Home Government Association and president (1873–77) of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain, but he was superseded in 1878 as head of the Home Rule movement by Charles Stewart Parnell.

Carroll, Dr. William

February 24, 1835, Rathmullan, County Donegal, Ireland – May 3, 1926, Philadelphia, PA, U.S.
Nationalist and physician, second Chairman of Clan na Gael, confidant of John O’Leary, worked closely together with John Devoy, arranged the first official alliance between the Clan and IRB through the formation of a body known as the “Revolutionary Directory.”

Carson, Edward Henry, Baron Carson of Duncairn

February 9, 1854, Dublin, Ireland – October 22, 1935, Minster, Kent, U.K.
Lawyer and politician, led Ulster unionist resistance to the British government’s attempts to introduce Home Rule for the whole of Ireland.

Casement, Sir Roger David

September 1, 1864, Kingstown [now Dún Laoghaire], County Dublin, Ireland – August 3, 1916, London, Great Britain

British public servant, received knighthood in 1911 for his revelations of atrocities against native workers in the Congo and Peru. Collaborated with John Devoy which resulted in the organization of the Easter Rising, was responsible for shipping arms from Germany on the vessel *Aud*. Executed in London for treason.

Cavendish, Lord Frederick Charles

November 30, 1836, Eastbourne, Sussex, Great Britain – May 6, 1882, Dublin, Ireland

British politician who was murdered by Fenians the day after his arrival in Dublin as Chief secretary of Ireland in Phoenix Park.

Clarke, Thomas

March 11, 1857, Isle of White, Great Britain – May 3, 1916, Dublin, Ireland

IRB member, one of the main organizers of the Easter Rising, one of those 16 executed.

Cockran, William Bourke

February 28, 1854, County Sligo, Ireland – March 1, 1923, Washington, D.C., U.S.

U.S. Congressman, Representative from New York.

Cohalan, Daniel F., in full Daniel Florence Cohalan

December 21, 1867, Middletown, NY, U.S. – November 12, 1946, New York, NY, U.S.

Close associate of Irish revolutionary leader John Devoy, member of Clan na Gael and Tammany Hall, Chief Justice of the New York Supreme Court, Chairman of the Irish Race Convention held in 1919.

Collins, Jerome

October 17, 1841, Cork, County Cork, Ireland – circa early November 1881, near delta of Lena river, Siberia, Russia

Meteorologist, Arctic explorer and founder of Clan na Gael. He was the meteorological and science editor of *The New York Herald*, he managed to provide the newly-arrived John Devoy with a position with the newspaper. Collins later joined – and perished in – a fateful expedition to find the North Pole. One of the expedition member's diary entry for 30 October 1881 noted that Collins lay beside him dying. Three of the crew managed to reach a settlement and alerted the authorities to the fate of the ship. A rescue party discovered the dead bodies of Collins and his comrades on Boloni Island in the Lena delta on 7 April 1882.

Collins, Michael

October 16, 1890, Woodfield, Sam's Cross, County Cork, Ireland – August 22, 1922, Béal-na-mBlath, County Cork, Ireland

Irish revolutionary leader, politician, defining figure of the War of Independence, one of the signatories of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, Director of Intelligence for the IRA.

Conover, Simon Barclay

September 23, 1840, Middlesex County, NJ, U.S. – April 19, 1908, Port Townsend, WA, U.S.

U.S. Physician and politician who served as a Republican Senator from Florida, Senate

years of service: 1873-1879

Coogan, Tim Pat (Timothy Patrick Coogan)

April 22, 1935, Monkstown, County Dublin, Ireland -

Historical writer and journalist, mainly active in the field of Irish history

Cosgrave, William Thomas

June 5, 1880, Dublin, Ireland – November 16, 1965, Dublin, Ireland

First president of the Executive Council (a.k.a. prime minister; 1922–32) of the Irish Free State, received Devoy during his visit to Ireland in 1924.

Cronin, Dr. Patrick Henry

1846 – May 4, 1889, Chicago, IL, U.S.

Prominent Chicago physician and Clan na Gael member, brutally murdered by Alexander Sullivan-inspired members of Clan na Gael.

Davitt, Michael

March 25, 1846, Straide, County Mayo, Ireland – May 31, 1906, Dublin, Ireland

Founder of the Irish Land League (1879), collaborated with John Devoy and Charles Stewart Parnell on the New Departure.

de Valera, Éamon, original name Edward de Valera

October 14, 1882, New York, New York, U.S. – August 29, 1975, Dublin, Ireland

Irish politician who served as prime minister (Taoiseach); 1932–48, 1951–54, 1957–59 and president (Uachtarán na hÉireann); 1959–73 of Ireland.

Devoy, John

September 3, 1842, Kill, County Kildare, Ireland – September 29, 1928, Atlantic City, NJ, U.S.

Fenian, Clan na Gael and IRB member, journalist, editor of *The Irish Nation* and *The Gaelic American*.

Dillon, John

September 8, 1851, Blackrock, County Dublin, Ireland – August 4, 1927, London, U.K.

Leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party (Irish Nationalist Party) in the struggle to secure Home Rule by parliamentary means.

Dillon, Luke

1850, Leeds, Great Britain – 1930, Pennsylvania, U.S.

Clan na Gael member, sentenced for his role in the Welland Canal explosion in 1900.

Dunne, Edward FitzSimmons

October 12, 1853, Waterville, CT, U.S. – May 14, 1937, Chicago, IL, U.S.

Former mayor of Chicago and ex-governor of Illinois, part of the three-member Irish-American delegation sent to Paris to lobby for Ireland's international recognition.

Egan, Patrick

1841, County Longford, Ireland - 1919, New York, NY, U.S.

Land League treasurer, made secret payments to the Sullivan-led Clan, land reformer

Fitzgerald, Desmond

February 13, 1888, London, Great Britain – April 9, 1947, Dublin, Ireland

Minister for External Affairs in Irish Free State government under William Cosgrave; part of welcoming party in Queenstown (Cobh) for John Devoy during his visit in Ireland in 1924.

Flynn, William James

1867, New York, NY, U.S. – October 14, 1928, Larchmond, NY, U.S.

Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1919-1921

Ford, Patrick

April 12, 1837, Galway, Ireland – September 23, 1913, New York, NY, U.S.

nationalist, journalist, and social reformer, editor of the Irish World

Fremantle Six

refers to the six Fenians who were rescued in the *Catalpa* mission organized by John Devoy and financed by Clan na Gael. The Fremantle Six were: James Wilson (who wrote the letter to John Devoy), Robert Cranston, Michael Harrington, Thomas Darragh, Martin Hogan, Thomas Hassett.

Gibbons, James, James Cardinal Gibbons

July 23, 1834, Baltimore, MD, U.S. – March 24, 1921, Baltimore, MD, U.S.

Archbishop of Baltimore and second Roman Catholic cardinal of North America.

Gladstone, William Ewart

December 29, 1809, Liverpool, England, Great Britain – May 19, 1898, Hawarden, Flintshire, Wales, Great Britain

Statesman and four-time prime minister of Great Britain (1868–74, 1880–85, 1886, 1892–94).

Goff, John William

1848 – 1924

U.S. lawyer and politician from New York, State Supreme Court Justice, member of the Lexow Committee that investigated Tammany corruption in the 1890s. “In a lengthy obituary Devoy observed: ‘Goff’s service to the Irish Cause outweighed his faults, but both are part of the history of the Irish movement of our time.’ ”

Griffith, Arthur

March 31, 1871, Dublin, Ireland – August 12, 1922, Dublin, Ireland

Founder of the Sinn Féin movement, president of the Dáil Éireann (1919-1922), member of the delegation that negotiated the Anglo-Irish Treaty

Harcourt, Sir William

October 14, 1827, York, Yorkshire, Great Britain – October 1, 1904, Nuneham Courtnay, Oxfordshire, Great Britain

British lawyer, journalist, politician, and cabinet member in five British Liberal governments

Harding, Warren Gamaliel

November 2, 1865, Marion, OH, U.S. – August 2, 1923, San Francisco, CA, U.S.
29th president of the United States of America, served from 1921 to his death in office in 1923.

Holland, John Philip

February 29, 1840, Liscannor, County Clare, Ireland – August 12, 1914, Newark, NJ, U.S.
Father of the modern submarine, designed the submarine *Fenian Ram* with Clan na Gael funding, later designed and built the first underwater vessel accepted by the U.S. Navy.

House, Edward Mandell

July 26, 1858, Houston, TX, U.S. – March 28, 1938, New York, NY, U.S.
American diplomat and confidential adviser to President Woodrow Wilson (1913–21), played a crucial role during the Paris Peace conference.

Hughes, John, John Archbishop Hughes

June 24, 1797, Annaloghan, County Tyrone, Ireland – January 3, 1864, New York, NY, U.S.
First Roman Catholic archbishop of New York

Hylan, John Francis

April 20, 1868, Hunter, NY, U.S. – January 12, 1936, Queens, NY, U.S.
The 96th mayor of New York City from 1918–1925, supported by Tammany Hall, started the building of the New York subway system.

Igel, Wolf von

Assistant of Captain Franz von Papen, Military Attaché of Germany

Jackson, Andrew, byname Old Hickory

March 15, 1767, Waxhaws region, SC, U.S. – June 8, 1845, the Hermitage, near Nashville, TN, U.S.
7th president of the United States

Johnson, Hiram

September 2, 1866, Sacramento, CA, U.S. – August 6, 1945, Bethesda, MD, U.S.
U.S. Republican Senator with presidential aspirations, ran in the 1912 presidential elections.

Kilmurry, Elisabeth, often mentioned as Eliza Kenny

1840s – February 20, 1927, Naas, Co. Kildare, Ireland
Fiancée of John Devoy, engaged before Devoy was arrested in 1866, met again in 1924.

Lansing, Robert

October 17, 1864, Watertown, NY, U.S. – October 30, 1928, Washington, D.C., U.S.
International lawyer and U.S. Secretary of state (1915–20), eventually broke with Pres. Woodrow Wilson over differences in approach to the League of Nations.

Laguardia, Fiorello

December 11, 1882, New York, NY, U.S. – September 20, 1947, New York, NY, U.S.
U.S. politician and lawyer who served three terms (1933–45) as mayor of New York City.

Le Caron, Henri, also known as Thomas Billis Beach

1841, Essex, Great Britain – 1894, London, Great Britain
Fought in the American Civil War for the Union, joined the Fenian Brotherhood as Henri Le Caron, soon recruited as an informant (known as “Informant B”), betrayed the Canada invasion of 1870. Went on to join Clan na Gael and support Sullivan. His handler at Whitehall was Thomas Anderson. Gave evidence to the 1889 Special Commission, thus revealing his identity.

Lloyd George, David, also called 1st Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor, Viscount Gwynedd of Dwyfor

January 17, 1863, Manchester, England, Great Britain – March 26, 1945, Ty-newydd, near Llanystumdwy, Caernarvonshire, Wales, U.K.
British prime minister (1916–22), prominent during World War I, one of the Grand Four at the Paris Peace Conference.

Lomasney, William Mackey

1841, Cincinnati, OH, U.S. – 1884, London, Great Britain
Life-long proponent of physical force, led the dynamite offensive in London 1883-84, blew himself up under London Bridge.

Lynch, Diarmud

1878 – 1950
IRB man and future member of the First Dáil

MacNeill, Eoin

May 15, 1867, Glenarm, Co. Antrim, Ireland – October 15, 1945, Dublin, Ireland
Irish scholar, revolutionary, and politician, co-founded the Gaelic League in 1893 and the Irish Volunteers in 1913.

McCartan, Patrick, in full Dr. Patrick McCartan

March 13, 1878, Eskerbuoy, near Carrickmore, County Tyrone, Ireland – March 28, 1963
Irish republican, Clan na Gael member, trained physician, appointed as Sinn Féin's representative in the USA at the meeting of the First Dáil. Sided with Joseph McGarrity and de Valera supporting the Philadelphia branch of the Clan as opposed to the Devoy-Cohalan led New York faction.

McGarrity, Joseph

1874, Carrickmore, County Tyrone, Ireland – 1940
Irish republican, traveled with de Valera to the United States in 1919.

Meagher, Thomas Francis

August 23, 1823, Waterford, County Waterford, Ireland – July 1, 1867, near Fort Benton, MT, U.S.

Leader of the Young Irelanders, convicted, transported to Van Diemen's Land, escaped, made his way to America, participated in the American Civil War (1861–65) as a Union officer, recruited and led the Irish Brigade.

Mellows, Liam William Joseph

May 25, 1892 – December 8, 1922

Irish republican and Sinn Féin politician. He was active with the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Irish Volunteers, and participated in the Easter Rising and the War of Independence. Elected as a Teachta Dála to the First Dáil (member of the Dáil, TD or Deputy), he became one of the most prominent anti-treaty Republicans. Captured by pro-Treaty forces during the Irish Civil War. Mellows was executed by Free State forces in 1922.

Mulcahy, Richard, in full General Richard Mulcahy

1886 – 1917

Fought in the 1916 Easter Rising and served as IRA Chief of Staff during the War of Independence, supported the Treaty.

O'Donovan Rossa, Jeremiah

late August or early September 1831, Roscaberry, County Cork, Ireland – June 29, 1915. St Vincent's Hospital, New Brighton, Staten Island, New York, U.S.

Fenian, one of the Cuba Five who were released and traveled to New York, promoted the use of physical force in the struggle for Irish independence.

O'Duffy, Eoin

October 30, 1892, Lough Egish, Co. Monaghan, Ireland – November 2, 1944, Dublin, Ireland

Irish Republican, General, IRA Chief of Staff, police commissioner

O'Higgins, Kevin

June 7, 1892, Stradbally, County Laois, Ireland – July 10, 1927, Dublin, Ireland

Irish politician, Vice-President of the Executive Council, later Minister of Justice in the Irish Free State government

O'Kelly, James Joseph

1845, County Roscommon, Ireland – 22 December 1916

Fenian, close associate of John Devoy, later elected Member of the British Parliament for County Roscommon

O'Kelly, Seán Thomas

August 25, 1882, Dublin, Ireland – November 23, 1966, Dublin, Ireland

Irish nationalist, acted as Envoy to Ireland in 1919 during the Paris Peace Conference, later served two terms as president of Ireland from June 1945 to June 1959.

O'Leary, John

July 23, 1830, Tipperary, County Tipperary, Ireland – March 16, 1907

Fenian, IRB member, joint editor of *The Irish People*

O'Mahony, John

January 12, 1815, near Mitchelstown, County Cork, Ireland – February 6, 1877, New York, NY, U.S.

Gaelic scholar, founder of the Fenian Brotherhood in the United States, Fenian Chief

O'Reilly, John Boyle

June 24, 1844, Drogheda, Ireland – August 10, 1890, Hull, MA, U.S.

Fenian, journalist, poet. Escaped from the Convict Establishment in Fremantle, Western Australia before making his way to America and becoming editor of the Boston Pilot.

O'Rahilly, Michael Joseph, named himself The O'Rahilly

April 22, 1875, Ballylongford, Ireland – April 29, 1916, Dublin, Ireland

One of the founding members of the Irish Volunteers

von Papen, Count Franz

October 29, 1879, Werl, Germany – May 2, 1969, Obersasbach, Germany

German statesman and diplomat who cooperated with John Devoy to organize an arms shipment for Ireland to aid the Easter Rising; later played a leading role in dissolving the Weimar Republic and in helping Adolf Hitler to become German chancellor in 1933.

Parnell, Charles Stewart

June 27, 1846, Avondale, County Wicklow, Ireland – October 6, 1891, Brighton, Sussex, Great Britain

Irish nationalist, supporter of land reform, founder and leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party. He formed the New Departure with John Devoy and Michael Davitt.

Pearse, Pádraig

November 10, 1879, Dublin, Ireland – May 3, 1916, Dublin, Ireland

Irish nationalist leader, poet, and educator. The first president of the provisional government of the Irish republic proclaimed in Dublin on April 24, 1916; was commander in chief of the Irish forces in the Easter Rising, one of those 16 executed.

Pigott, Richard

1835 – March 1889, Madrid, Spain

Irish journalist infamous for the Pigott letters accusing Parnell with instigating the Phoenix Park murders. The letters were proven to be forgeries.

Plunkett, George Noble

December 3, 1851, Dublin, Ireland – March 12, 1948, Dublin, Ireland

Biographer and Irish nationalist, and father of Joseph Plunkett, one of the leaders of the Easter Rising of 1916.

Plunkett, Joseph Mary

November 21, 1887, Dublin, Ireland – May 4, 1916, Dublin, Ireland

Irish nationalist, poet, journalist, and a leader of the 1916 Easter Rising.

Redmond, John Edward

September 1, 1856, Dublin, Ireland - March 6, 1918, London, Great Britain

Leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, supported Home Rule for Ireland.

Ryan, Michael J.

1862, Philadelphia, PA, U.S. – 1943

Prominent solicitor of Philadelphia. He was also the national president of the United Irish League of America, starting in 1906, *de facto* initiator of the three-member Irish-American delegation sent to Paris to lobby for Ireland's international recognition.

Sheehy-Skeffington, Hanna

May 24, 1877, Kanturk, County Cork, Ireland – April 20, 1946, Dublin, Ireland

Irish Nationalist, Ireland's most prominent suffragette and promoter of women's rights

Shishkin, Nikolai Pavlovich

1830 – 1902

Russian Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in the United States (1875-1880), Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia in 1896-1897.

Stephens, James

January, 26, 1825, Kilkenny, County Kilkenny, Ireland – March 29, 1901, Dublin, Ireland

Fenian, founder of the Irish Republican Brotherhood

Sullivan, Alexander

1847 – August 21, 1913, Chicago, IL, U.S.

Head of Clan na Gael during the Triangle period in the 1880s, involved in Dr. Cronin's murder in 1889

Tumulty, Joseph Patrick

May 5, 1879, Jersey City, NJ, U.S. – April 19, 1954, buried in Rockville, MA, U.S.

American attorney and politician, best known for his service, from 1911 until 1921, as the private secretary of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson.

Walsh, Frank, in full Francis Patrick Walsh

July 20, 1864, St. Louis, MO, U.S. – May 2, 1939, New York, NY, U.S.

American lawyer and political reformer, co-chairman of the National War Labor Board, part of the three-member Irish-American delegation sent to Paris to lobby for Ireland's international recognition

Wilson, James

February 6, 1832, Newry, County Down, Ireland – November 3, 1921

Fenian, one of the rescued Fremantle Six during the Catalpa rescue mission, his letter ("*this is a voice from the tomb*") prompted John Devoy to attempt the rescue operation – the other five members of the Fremantle Six were: Martin Hogan, Robert Cranston, Michael Harrington, Thomas Darragh, Thomas Hassett.

Wilson, Thomas Woodrow

December 28, 1856, Staunton, VA, U.S. – February 3, 1924, Washington, D.C., U.S.

28th president of the United States (1913-1921), introduced the "Fourteen Points,"

advocate of the League of Nations

Sources:

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<http://www.britannica.com/>

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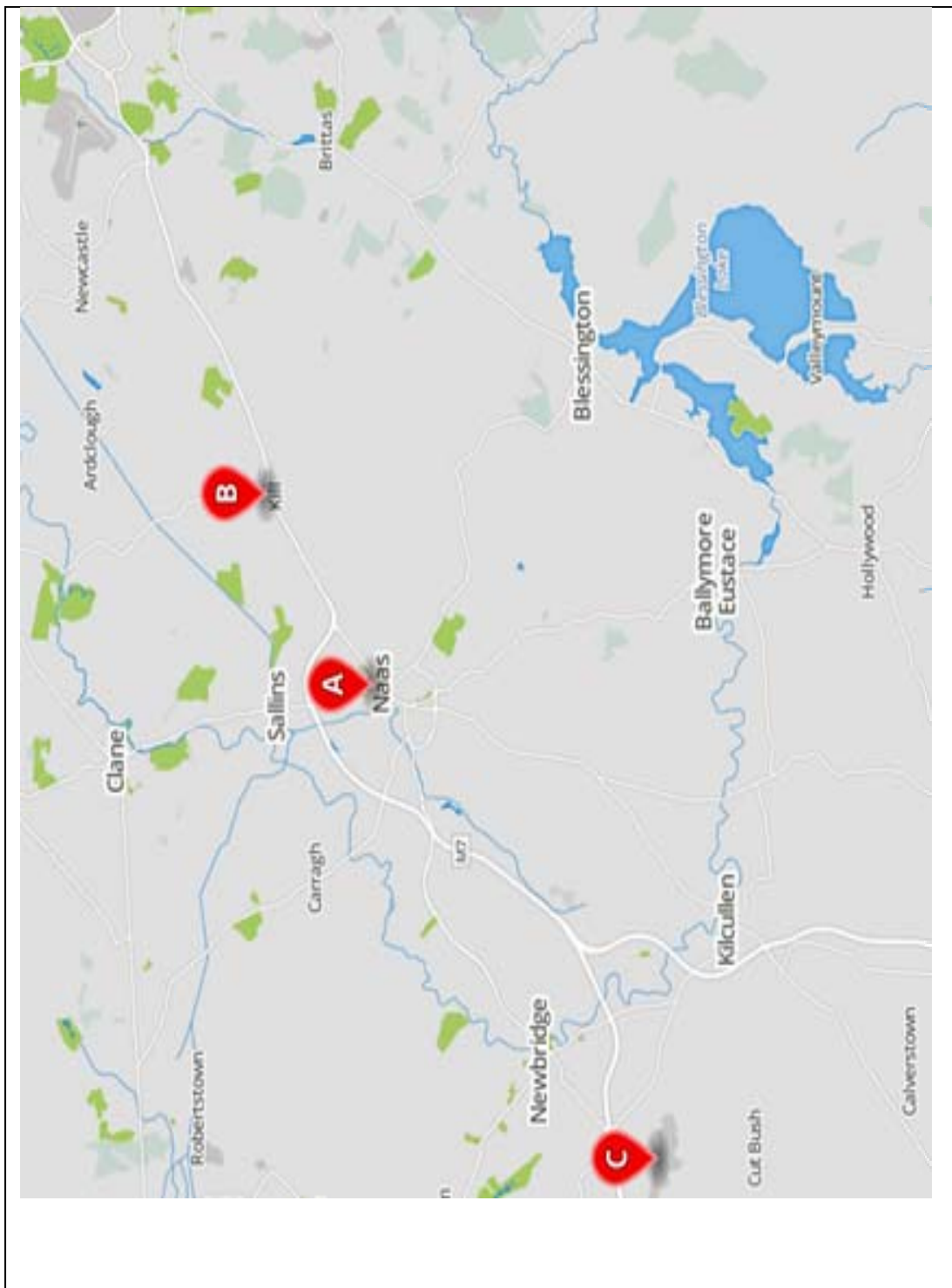
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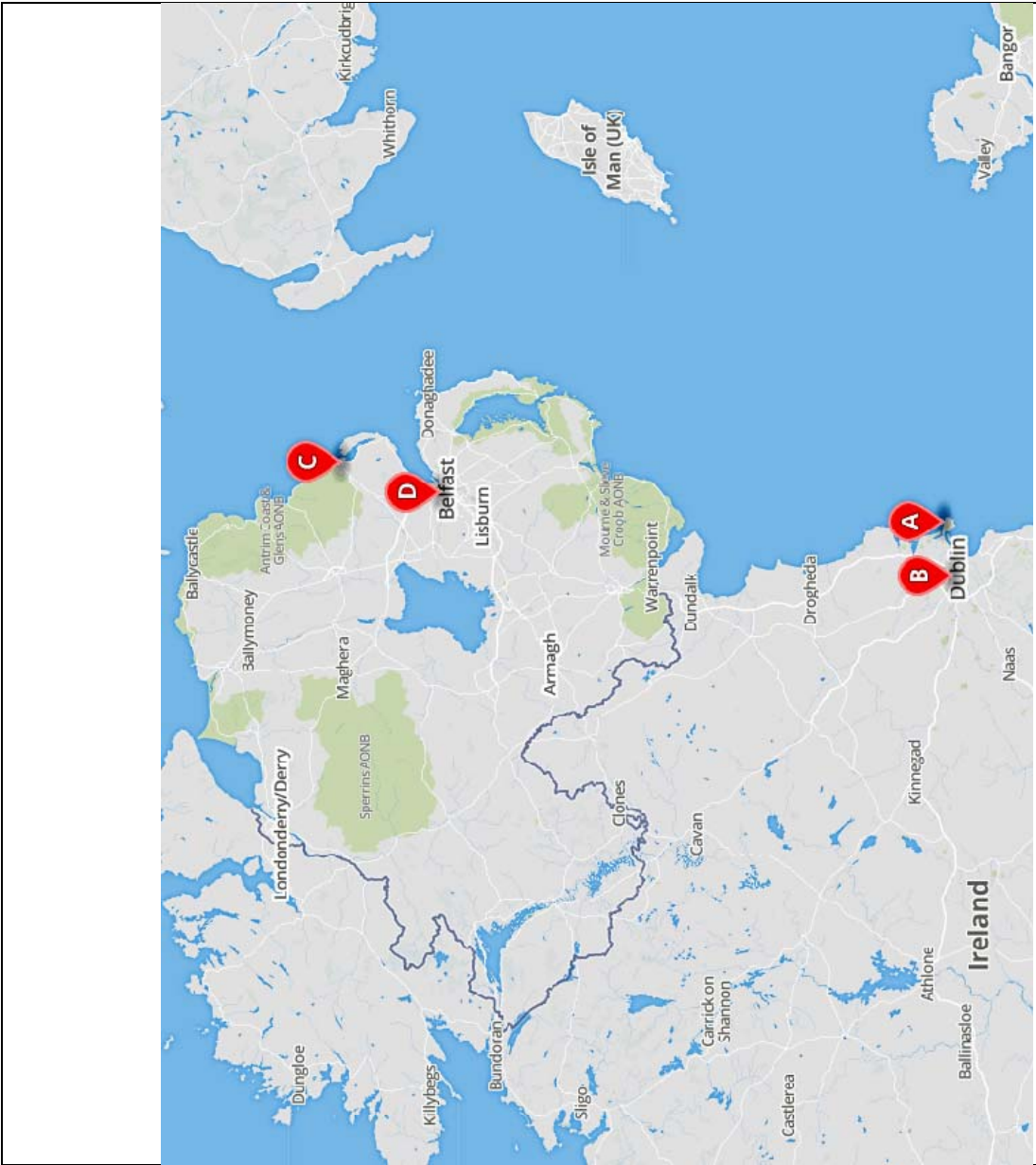


Appendix 5 – Maps

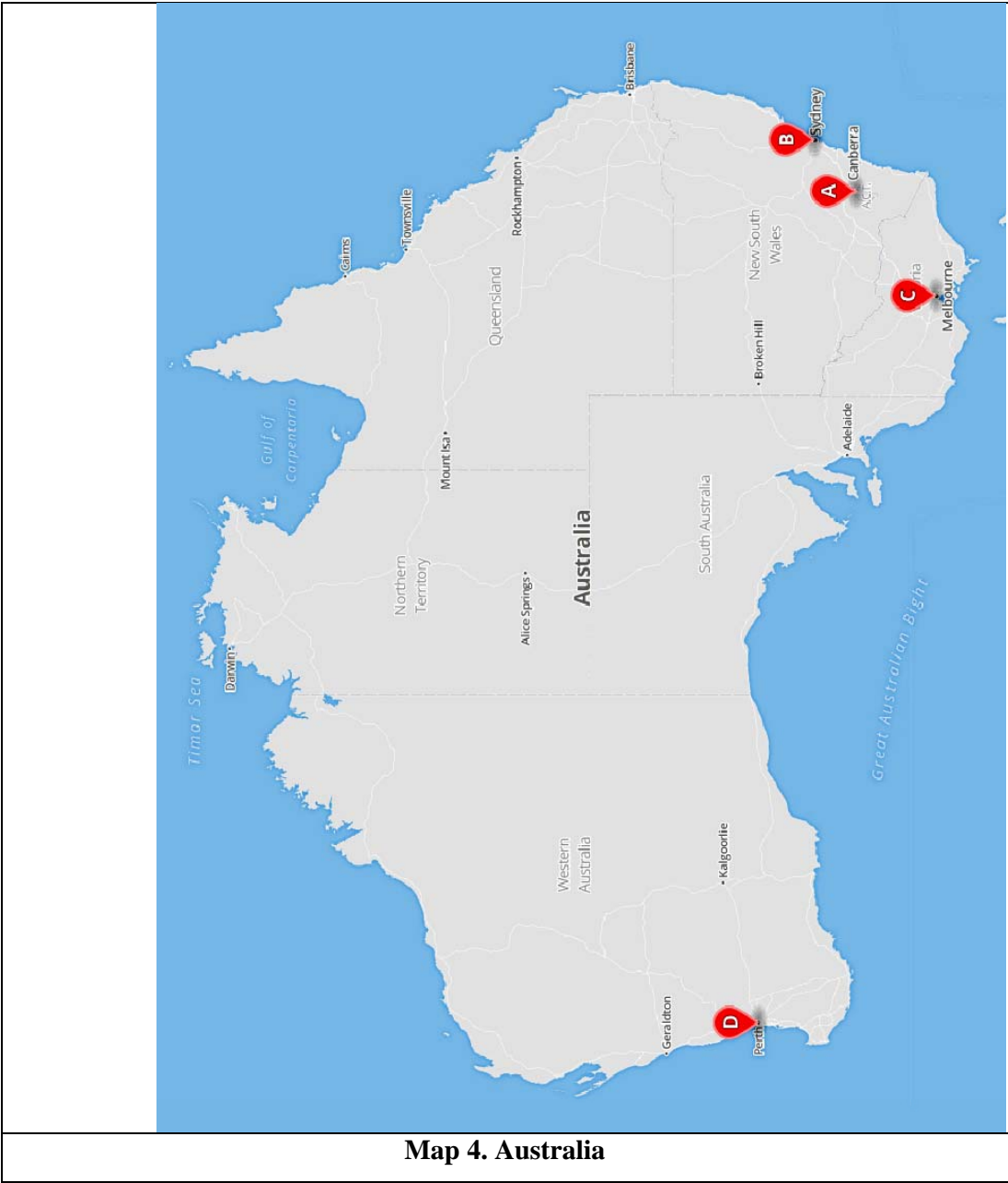
Map 1. Locations related to John Devoy in Ireland - I

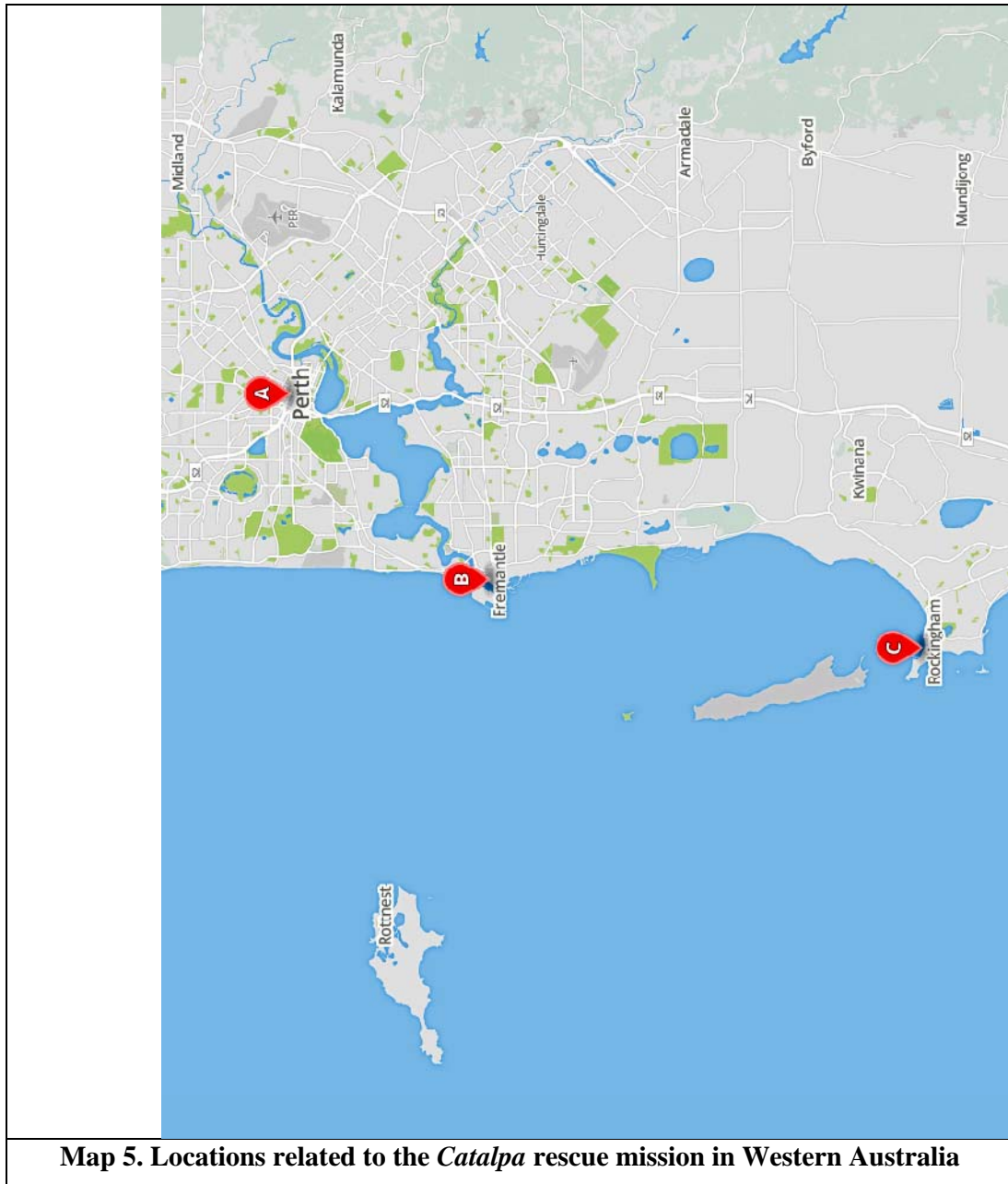


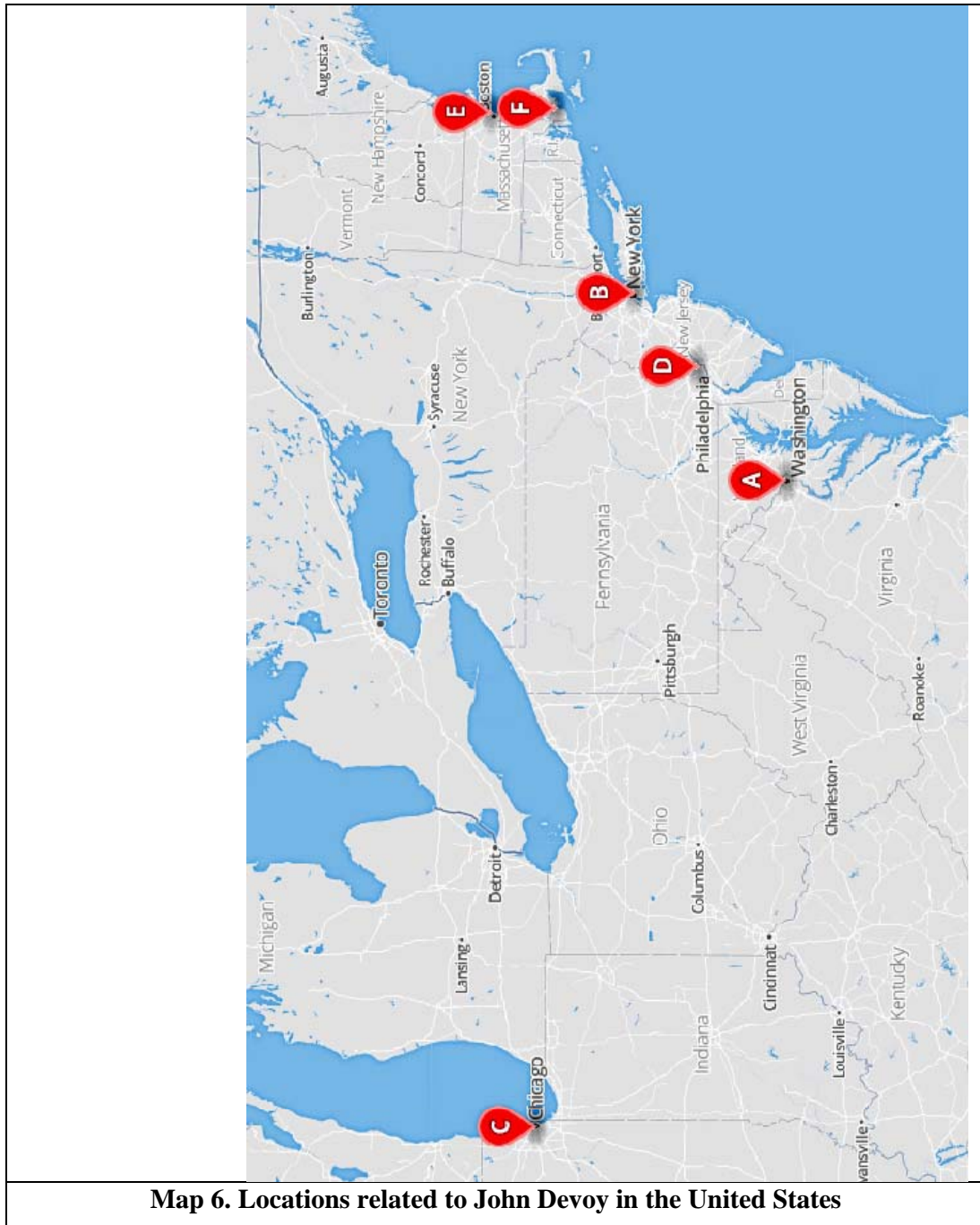
Map 2. Locations related to John Devoy in Ireland - II

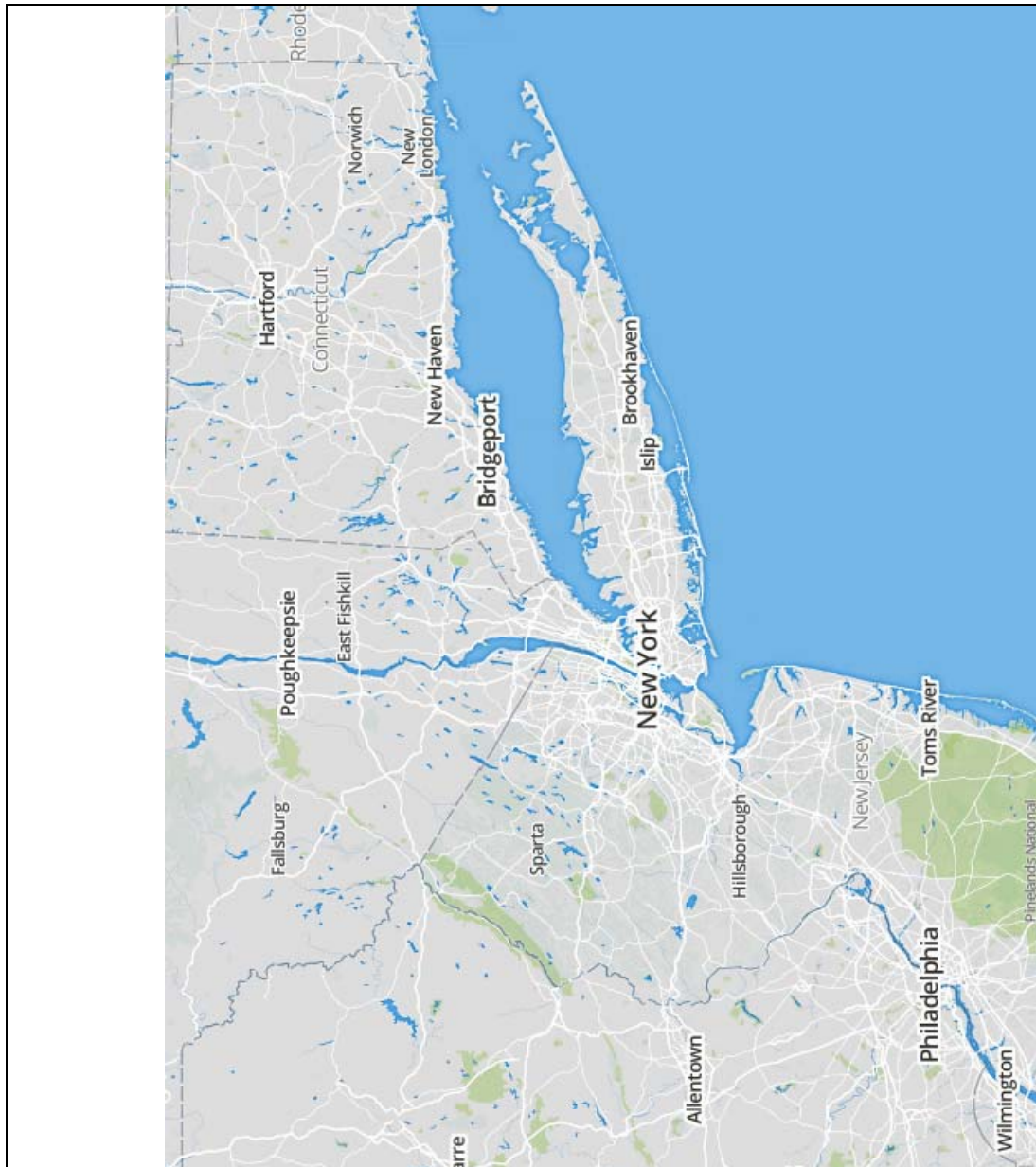


Map 3. Locations of gun-running operations (1913-14)

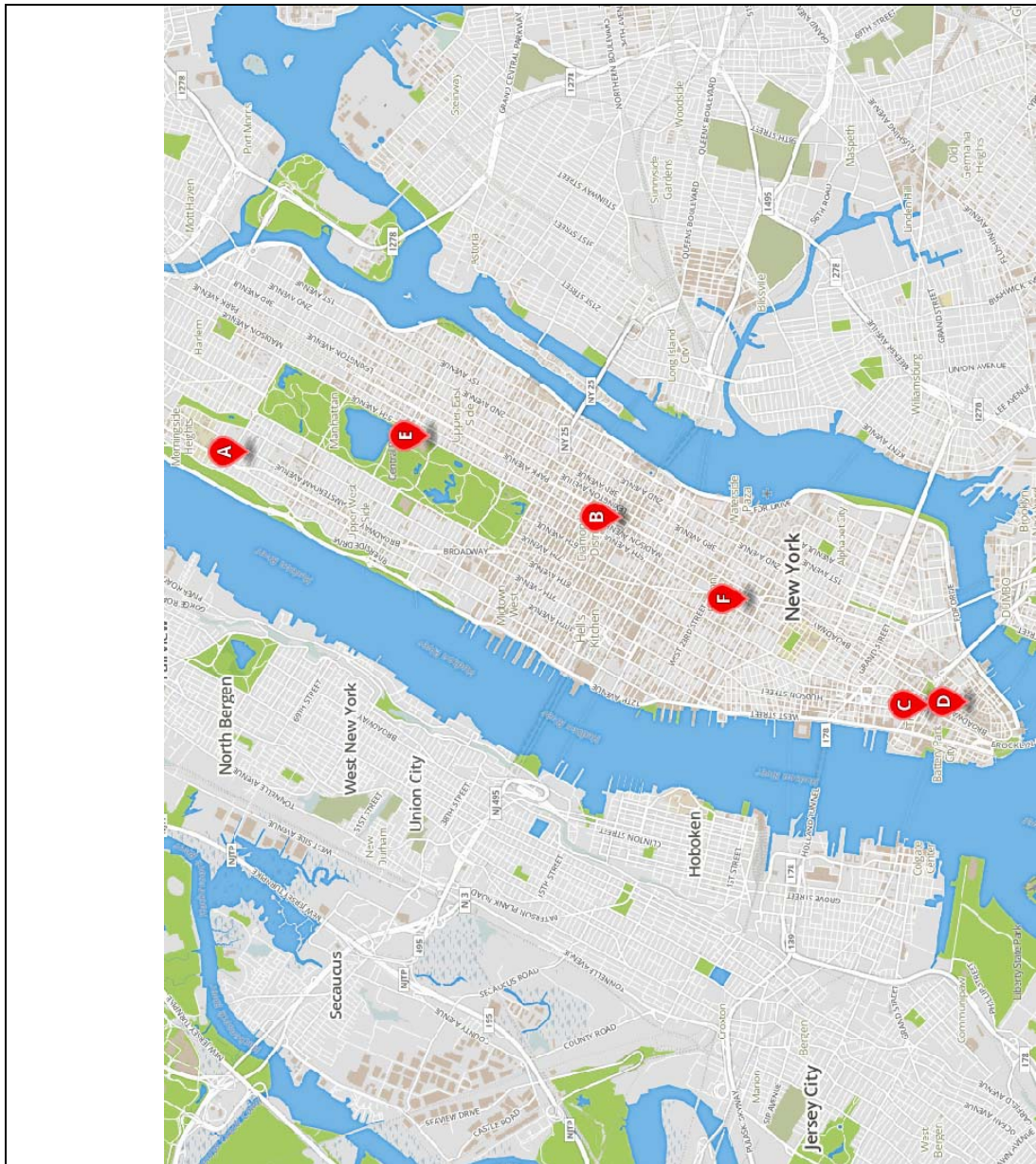




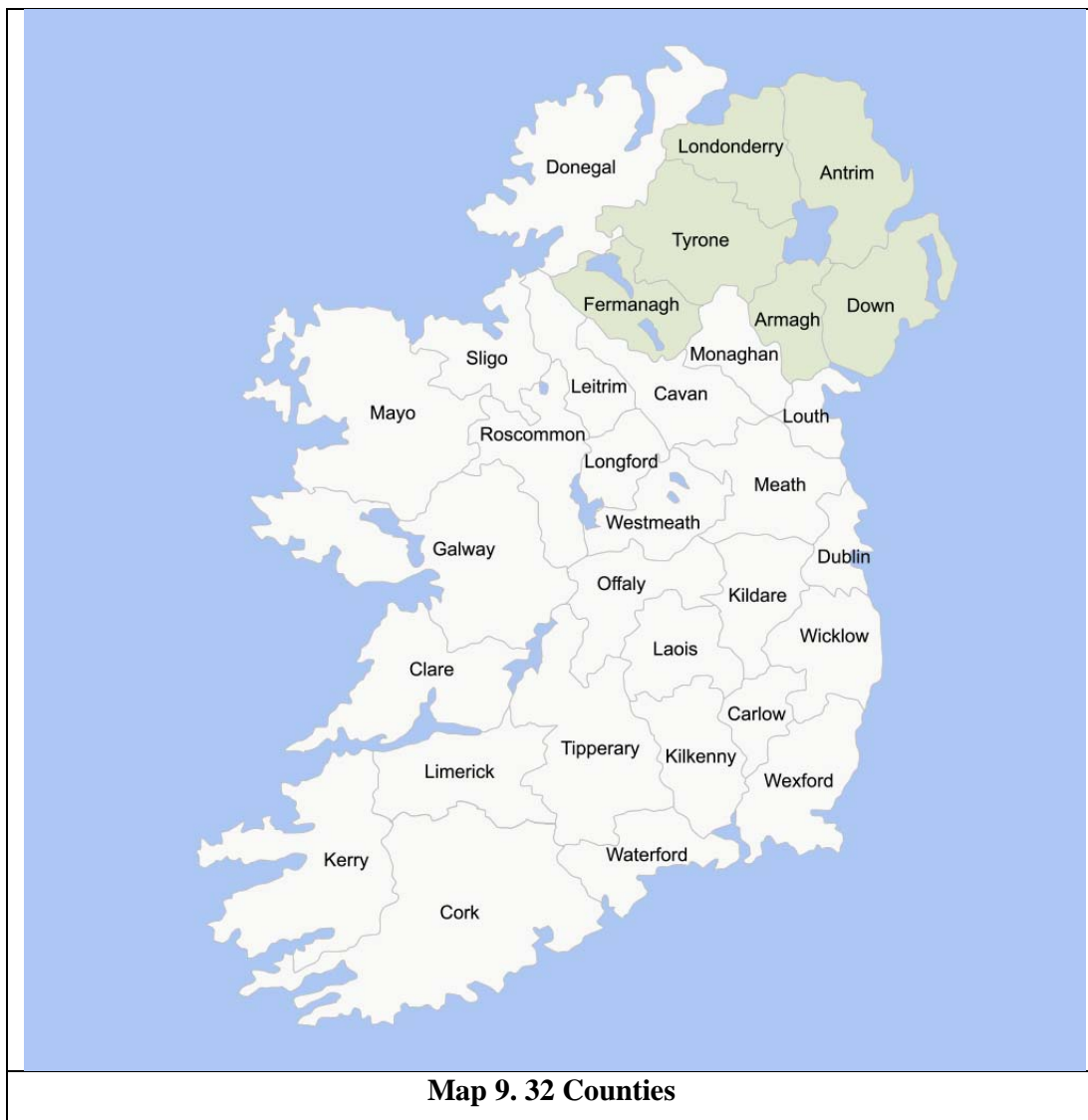




Map 7. New York City, N.Y., U.S. A.



Map 8. Locations related to John Devoy in Manhattan, New York City



Map 1. Locations related to John Devoy in Ireland I

- A: Dublin, County Dublin, Ireland
- B: Belfast, County Antrim, Northern Ireland, U.K.
- C: Galway, County Galway, Ireland
- D: Cork, County Cork, Ireland
- E: Naas, County Kildare, Ireland – Devoy worked at Naas Brewery after returning from the Foreign Legion

Map 2. Locations related to John Devoy in Ireland II

- A: Naas, County Kildare, Ireland – Devoy worked at Naas Brewery after returning from the Foreign Legion
- B: Kill, County Kildare, Ireland – birthplace of John Devoy
- C: Curragh Camp, County Kildare, Ireland – location of the Mutiny of the Curragh in 1914

Map 3. Locations of gun-running operations (1913-14)

- A – Howth, County Dublin, Ireland
- B – Dublin, County Dublin, Ireland
- C – Larne, County Antrim, Northern Ireland, U.K.
- D – Belfast, County Antrim, Northern Ireland, U.K.

Map 4. Australia

- A: Canberra, New South Wales
- B: Sydney, New South Wales
- C: Melbourne, Victoria
- D: Perth, Western Australia

Map 5. Locations related to the <i>Catalpa</i> rescue mission in Western Australia

A: Perth, Western Australia

B: Fremantle, location of the Fremantle penal colony, “the Establishment”

C: Rockingham, location of the <i>Catalpa</i> Memorial by sculptors Charles Smith and Joan Walsh-Smith
--

Map 6. Locations related to John Devoy in the United States
--

A: Washington D.C.

B: New York City, NY – Devoy landed here in 1871, lived in New York most of his life
--

C: Chicago, IL – Devoy relocated to Chicago during the Triangle period in the 1880s

D: Philadelphia PA – location of Third Irish Race Convention held in February, 1919, Irish-American delegation to travel to Paris selected here

E: Boston, MA

F: New Bedford, MA – the <i>Catalpa</i> was bought and launched from here

Map 8. Locations related to John Devoy in Manhattan, New York City

A: 203, West 107th Street, Harlem, New York, 10027, Apartment 4b – last address of John Devoy, where he lived at the end of his days
--

B: Grand Central Hotel, 42nd Street – John Devoy lived here for a time
--

C: 32, Park Place, New York, Room 59 – offices of <i>The Gaelic American</i>
--

D: William Street, downtown Manhattan – offices of <i>The Irish Nation</i>
--

E: 991, Fifth Avenue, Manhattan – offices of The American Irish Historical Society, Devoy was one of the founding members

F: Union Square, New York – headquarters of the Fenian Brotherhood
--

Appendix 6 - Images

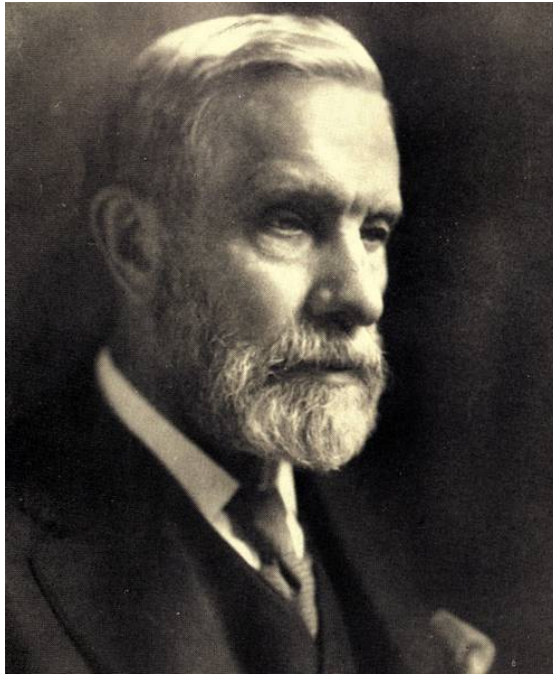


Fig. 1. John Devoy (image circa 1910)

Source: http://feniagraves.net/Devoy.%20John/John_Devoy.jpg



Fig. 2. Judge Daniel Cohalan (undated photograph)

Source: http://ecx.images-amazon.com/images/I/41bYj8-PVGL_ SS500 .jpg



Fig. 3. Famine Memorial by artist Rowan Gillespie, Dublin

Source: photo taken by the author



Fig. 4. School building in Naas

Source: photo taken by the author

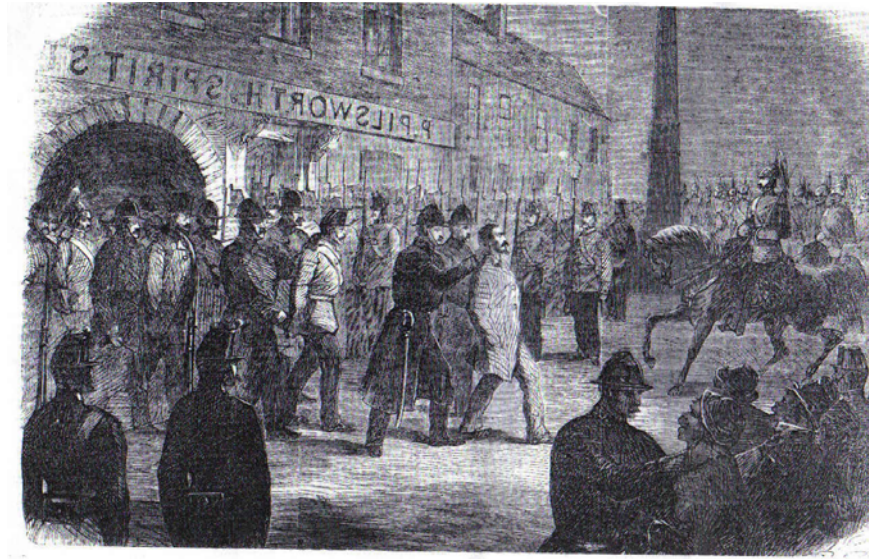


Fig. 5. Scene of John Devoy's arrest, published in *The Freeman's Journal* February 23, 1866

Source: private collection, kindly provided by historian Ormonde D. P. Waters



Fig. 6. First ever photo taken of John Devoy at his arrest in 1866

Source: http://multitext.ucc.ie/d/John_Devoy_photographed_in_prison_clothes_1866



Fig. 7. "The Cuba Five" – picture taken of the freed Fenian prisoners when they arrived in New York in 1871:
Left to right. Sitting – Captain Charles Underwood O'Connell and Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa. Standing –
John Devoy, Harry Mulleda, and Captain John McClure

Source: photo taken by the author of image published in *Devoy's Post Bag*



Fig. 8. "The Fremantle Six:" Top row: James Wilson, Robert Cranston, Michael Harrington, bottom row: Thomas Darragh, Martin Hogan, Thomas Hassett

Source: <http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/history/2013/03/the-most-audacious-australian-prison-break-of-1876/>



Fig. 9. Bark *Catalpa* by Charles S. Raleigh (1830-1925), oil on canvas (1876)

Source: reproduced in *Escape! Fremantle to Freedom*, catalogue to exhibition on the *Catalpa* rescue mission in 2006

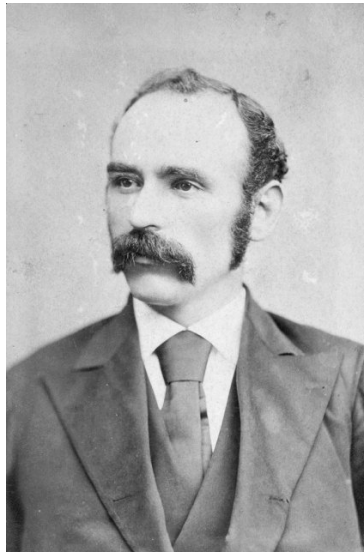


Fig. 10. Michael Davitt (around 1870s)

Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/99/Michael_davitt.jpg

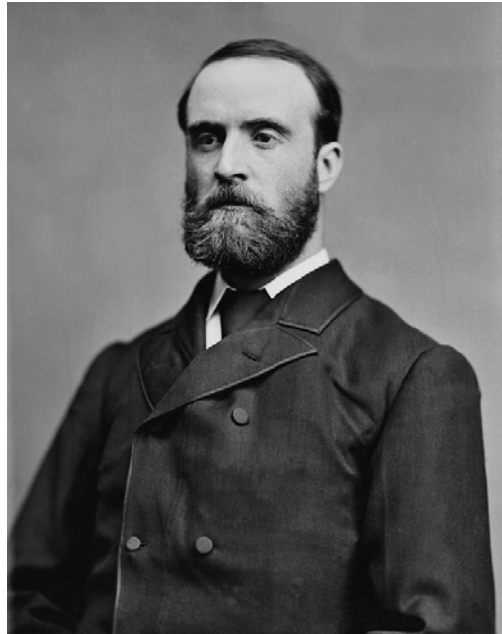


Fig. 11. Charles Stewart Parnell (circa 1880s)

Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/55/Charles_Stewart_Parnell_-_Brady-Handy.jpg

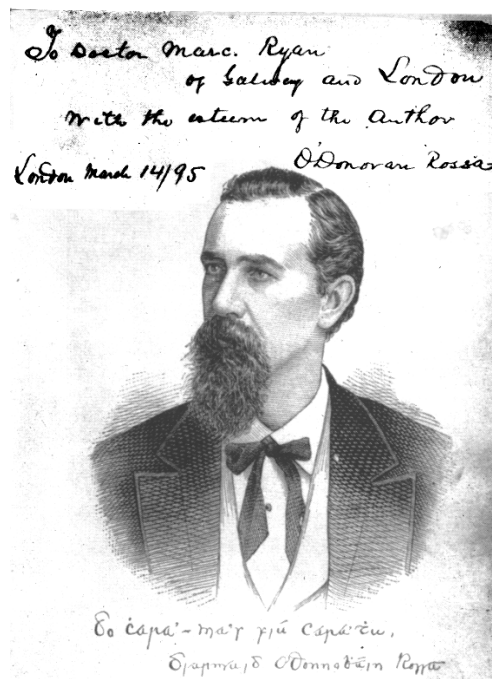


Fig. 12. Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa (circa 1880s)

Source: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mruddy/UI.htm>

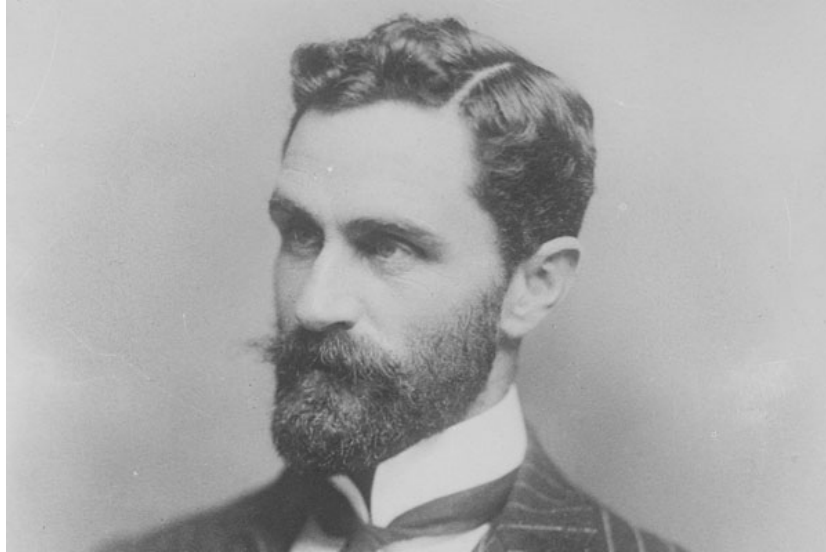


Fig. 13. Sir Roger Casement (circa early 1900s)

Source: http://www.rte.ie/centuryireland//images/uploads/content/Ed4-KE_009_Casement

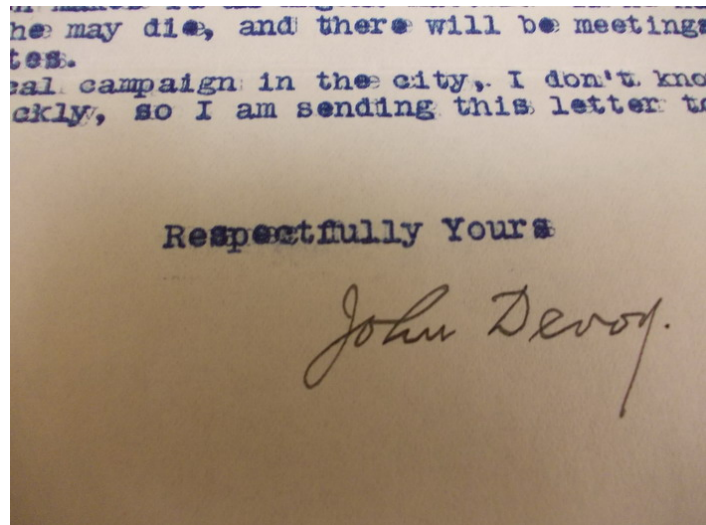


Fig. 14. John Devoy's signature

Source: photo taken by the author



Fig. 15. Sir Roger Casement and John Devoy (image taken at the Bachelor's Walk parade in July 1914)

Source: <http://irishvolunteers.org/page/15/>



Fig. 16. Funeral of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa (1915)

Source: http://www.emersonkent.com/images/o_donovan_funeral_1915.jpg



Fig. 17. Monument to Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa in St Stephen's Green, Dublin

Source: photo taken by the author



Fig. 18. The first Dáil, taken at exhibition in Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin, indicating how many of the members (shown as drawings) were still imprisoned at the time of the creation of the Dáil

Source: photo taken by the author

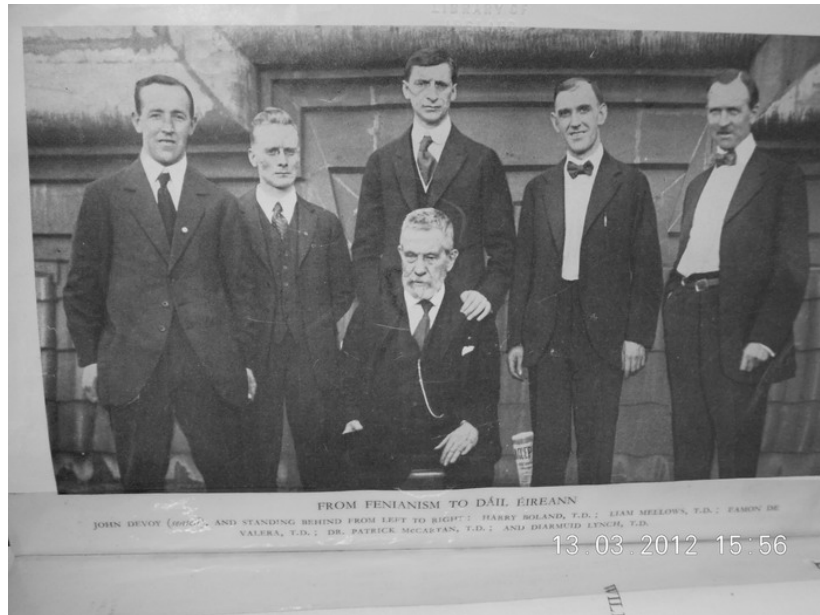


Fig. 19. From Fenianism to Dáil Éireann: John Devoy is seated; standing behind him left to right: Harry Boland, Liam Mellows, Éamon de Valera, Dr. Patrick McCartan, and Diarmud Lynch (1919)

Source: photo taken by the author of image published in *Devoy's Post Bag*



Fig. 20. House of Eliza Kilmurry (Kenny) in Naas

Source: photo taken by the author



Fig. 21. Gravestone of Eliza Kilmurry (Kenny) in Naas

Source: photo taken by the author



Fig. 22. John Devoy Funeral Medal

Source: Photo kindly provided by historian Ormonde D. P. Waters



Fig. 23. John Devoy's nephews Jim and Peter at his gravestone, not yet unveiled

Source: Photo kindly provided by historian Ormonde D. P. Waters



Fig. 24. Gravestone of John Devoy, the side caption reads 'Rebel'

Source: photo taken by the author



Fig. 25. Memorial of John Devoy in Kill, Co. Kildare

Source: photo taken by the author

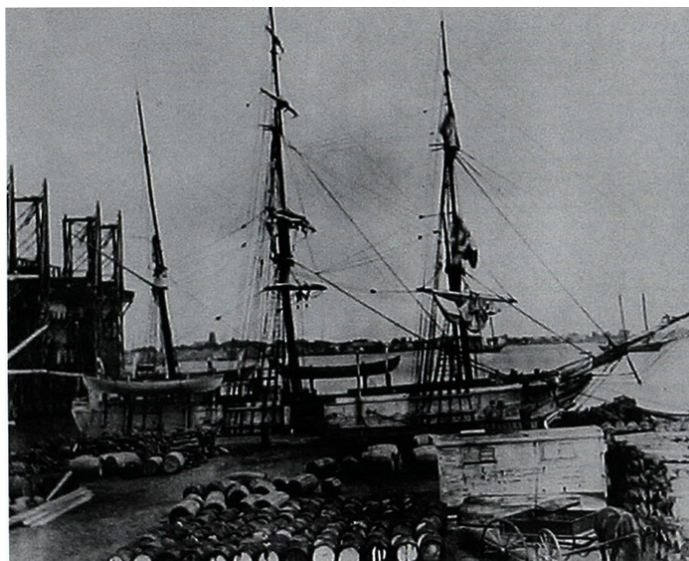


Fig. 26. *Catalpa* in dry dock, New Bedford, c. 1876

Source: reproduced in *Escape! Fremantle to Freedom*, catalogue to exhibition on the *Catalpa* rescue mission in 2006



Fig. 27. Cross marking the site of the Phoenix Park murders of May 1882

Source: photo taken by the author



Fig. 28. The *Fenian Ram* in Paterson's West Side Park, exhibited in 1928

Source: <http://www.navsource.org/archives/08/08449.htm>



Fig. 29. Alexander Sullivan (undated drawing)

Source: <http://www.murderbygaslight.com/2010/06/clan-na-gael-and-murder-of-dr-cronin.html>



Fig. 30. Gravestone of Charles Stewart Parnell in Glasnevin cemetery, Dublin

Source: photo taken by the author



Fig. 31. Howth gun-running, Mausers being distributed (1914)

Source: http://www.turtlebunbury.com/images/history/irish_history/asgard/howthpier.jpg



Fig. 32. Sir Roger Casement's gravestone, Glasnevin cemetery, Dublin

Source: photo taken by the author



Fig. 33. Vandalized stump of the Tree of Liberty

Source: photo taken by the author

Appendix 7 – Catalpa Memorial images

The Catalpa Memorial

Title of the sculpture: The Catalpa Memorial

Location: Esplanade Rd Rockingham, Western Australia

Client: City of Rockingham

Medium: Bronze & Granite

Size: 6 m tall

The *Catalpa* Memorial was created by Irish-Australian sculptors Joan Walsh-Smith and Charles Smith in 2005 to commemorate the successful escape of the Fremantle Six, the Fenian prisoners in the *Catalpa* rescue mission that John Devoy helped organize. The memorial consists of a centerpiece and 7 surrounding pillars which are surmounted with 7 seven A3 bronze plaques, which were completed and unveiled at Easter 2014. Detailed images of the Memorial are presented in Fig. 34, Fig. 35, Fig. 36, and Fig. 36, kindly provided in high-resolution by sculptors Joan Walsh-Smith and Charles Smith.

The artists described the concept behind the Memorial as follows:

The centrepiece “Wild geese” sculpture represents the Fenians flying free into the setting sun and freedom, distilling the essence of the whole endeavour. Birds are important emblems of freedom in all cultures, representing, through flight, transcendence, and the ascendance of man into a higher state of being. To the Celts, birds are particularly sacred as harbingers of good fortune, enchantment and healing. Geese were particularly sacred. Said to follow the sun they represent light, inspiration, the concept of migration and the eventual flight home. The semi-circular form of the memorial echoes the sacred groves of the Celts. It is constructed in local limestone symbolising Fremantle prison from which they fled and the many civic structures built by the Fenians from this same stone. [...] The symbolism is based on many references, particularly, in this context the Siege of Limerick in 1690 when twenty thousand Irish soldiers followed their leader, Patrick Sarsfield to France. Fighting with distinction in all the armies of Europe, they became known as the “Wild Geese.” This term has passed into common usage for all the subsequent revolutionaries exiled from their native land. Ultimately it has become the ubiquitous name for all the millions of Irish migrants the world over and for the 70 million that comprise the Irish Diaspora today.⁶⁰⁰

⁶⁰⁰ Smith sculptors’ website, accessed February 2014,
http://www.smithsculptors.com/The_Catalpa_Memorial%20Artists_Concept.html.

During the long journey on the last convict ship, the Hougoumont, the transported Fenians created a handwritten news and literary magazine under the title *Wild Goose*, a weekly journal, which was an obvious reference to the Wild Geese. “As with all seven weekly issues that the Fenians produced, the “staff” wrote by hand on both sides of four long white sheets of paper, the sheafs folded in the center to make an eight-page booklet and each page double-columned.”⁶⁰¹ The paper was given the subtitle “A Collection of Ocean Waifs,” with the front page decorated with shamrocks and ivy wreaths, which one of the Fenians, Denis Cashman had drawn.⁶⁰² The seven weekly editions of “The Wild Goose” convict journal were commemorated in the seven plaques placed on top of the semi-circle of pillars (see Fig. 37., Fig. 38., Fig. 39., Fig. 40., Fig. 41., Fig. 42., and Fig. 43.).

⁶⁰¹ Stevens, Peter F. *The Voyage of the Catalpa – A Perilous Journey and Six Irish Rebels’ Escape to Freedom*. New York: Carroll and Graf, 2002. 68.

⁶⁰² Ibid.



Fig. 34. *Catalpa Memorial*



Fig. 35. Catalpa Memorial close-up



Fig. 36. Annual celebration at the *Catalpa* Memorial, Rockingham, Western Australia, with historian Ormonde D. P. Waters giving a speech

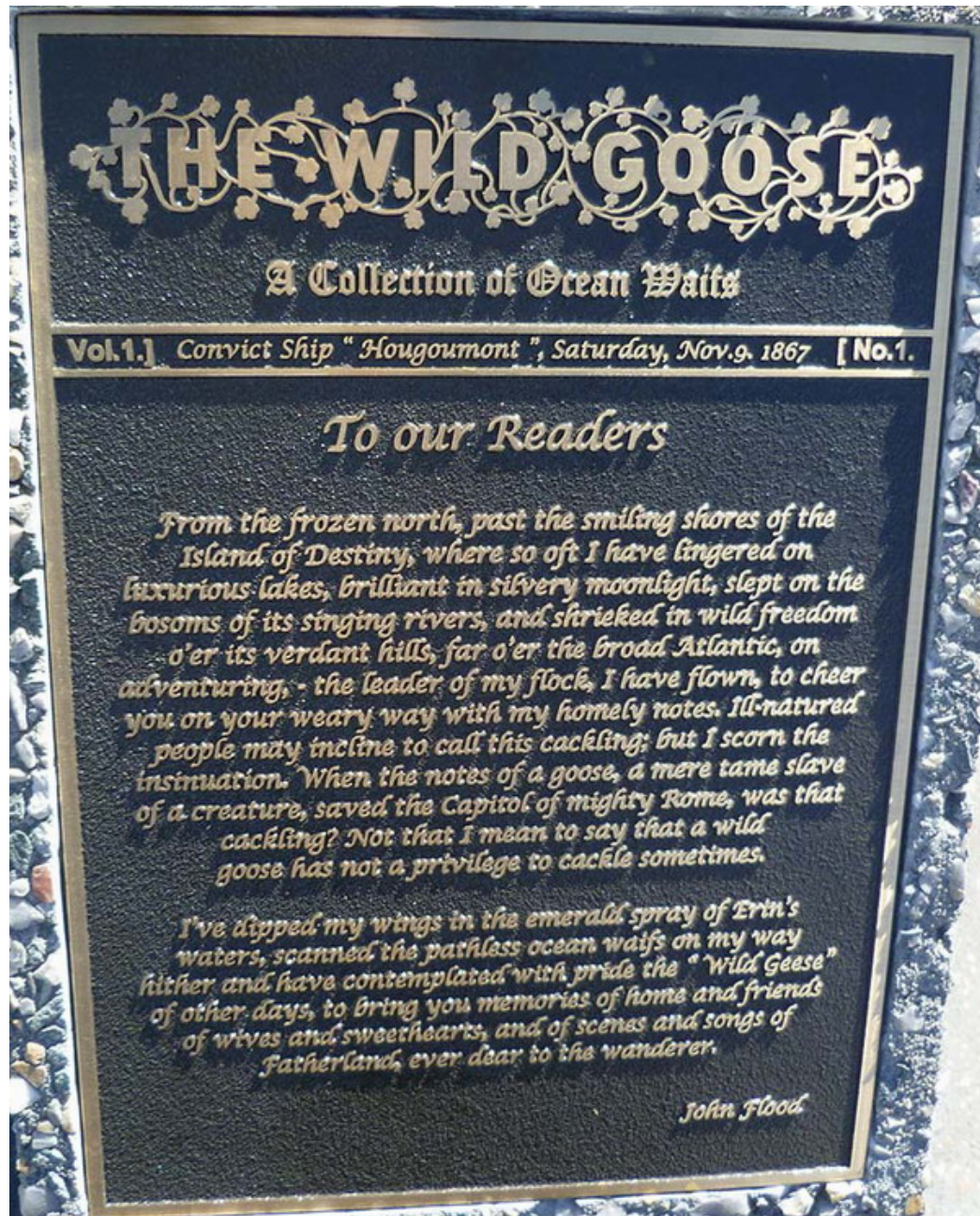


Fig. 37. Catalpa Memorial – Plaque 1, as part of the completed Catalpa Memorial, unveiled by the Mayor of Rockingham and in March 2014

THE WILD GOOSE

A Collection of Ocean Waifs

Vol.1.] *Convict Ship "Hougoumont", Saturday, Nov 16. 1867* [No.2.]

Farewell!

*Farewell! Oh, how hard and how sad 'tis to speak
That last word at parting - forever to break
The fond ties and affection that cling round the heart,
From home, and from friends, and from country to part!
But 'tis harder, when parted, to try to forget,
' Though it grieves to remember; 'tis vain to regret.
The sad word must be spoken, and memory's spell
Now Steals o'er me sadly, Farewell! Oh Farewell!*

*Never more thy fair face am I destined to see;
E'en the savage loves home, but 'tis crime to love thee.
God bless thee, dear Erin, my loved one, my own!
Oh! How hard 'tis these tendrils to break that have grown
Round my heart,- But 'tis over, and memory's spell
Now steals o'er me sadly. Farewell! Oh Farewell!*

John Boyle O'Reilly

Fig. 38. Catalpa Memorial – Plaque 2

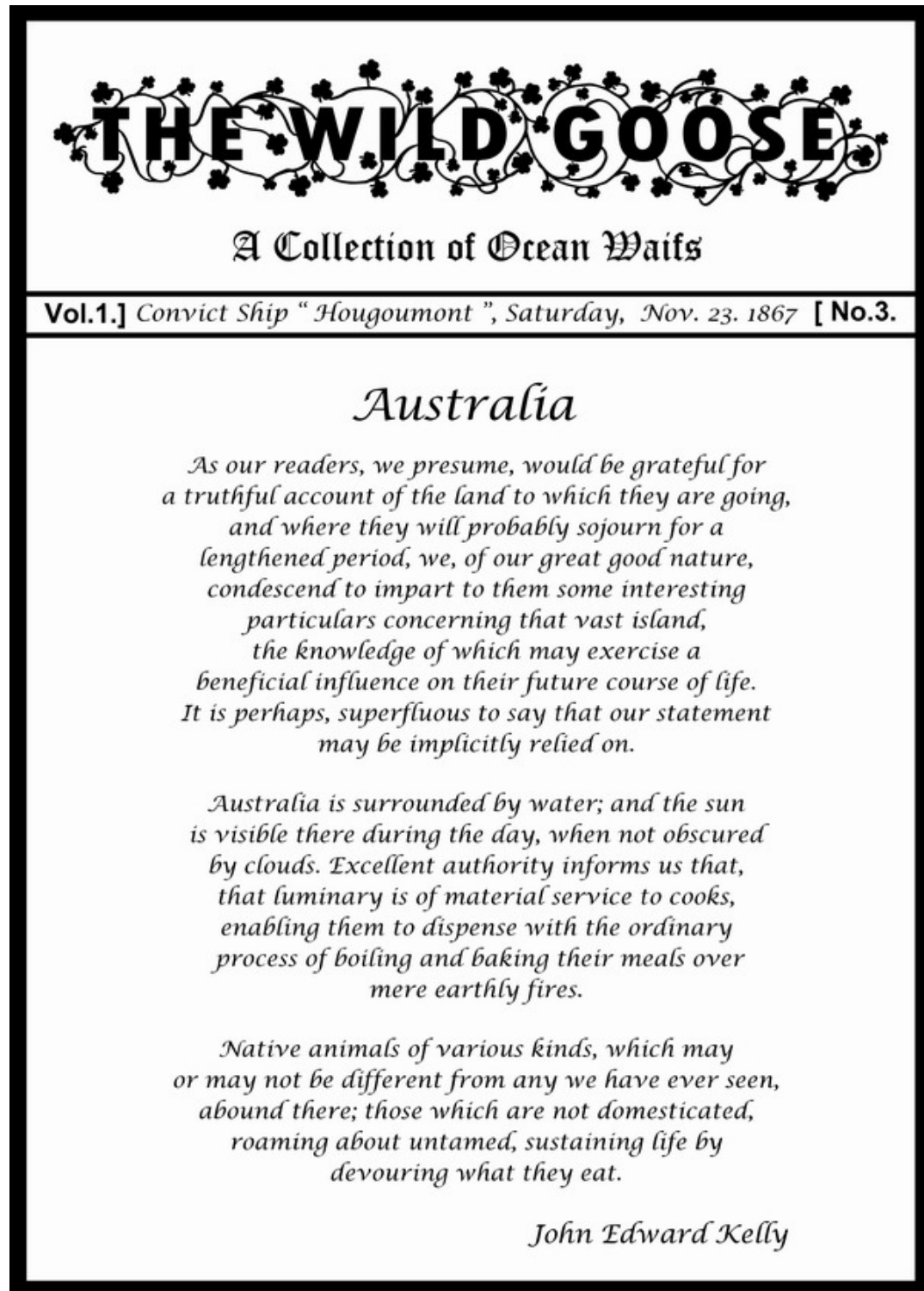


Fig. 39. Catalpa Memorial – Plaque 3

THE WILD GOOSE

A Collection of Ocean Waifs

Vol.1.] *Convict Ship "Hougoumont", Saturday, Nov. 30. 1867* [No.4.]

Australia (Continued)

*The island is about as broad as it is long,
and contains as many square miles as its average length
multiplied by its average breadth will produce.*

*This great continent of the south, having being
discovered by some Dutch Skipper and his crew,
sometime between the 1st and 19th centuries
of the Christian Era, was, in consequence,
taken possession of by the Government of Great Britain,
in accordance with that just and equitable maxim,
"What's yours is mine; what's mine's my own "
That magnanimous Government, in the kindly
exuberance of their feelings, have placed a large
portion of that immense tract of country
at our disposal, generously defraying all
expenses incurred on our way to it,
and providing retreats for us there to secure us
from the inclemency of the seasons.*

*The inhabitants of Australia are chiefly convicts
and kangaroos. The form of Government is popular,
and particularly gives satisfaction to high officers
of state who secure themselves 1,000 pounds
a year for life, for obliging the people by enduring
the fatigues of office for twelve months.*

John Edward Kelly

Fig. 40. Catalpa Memorial – Plaque 4

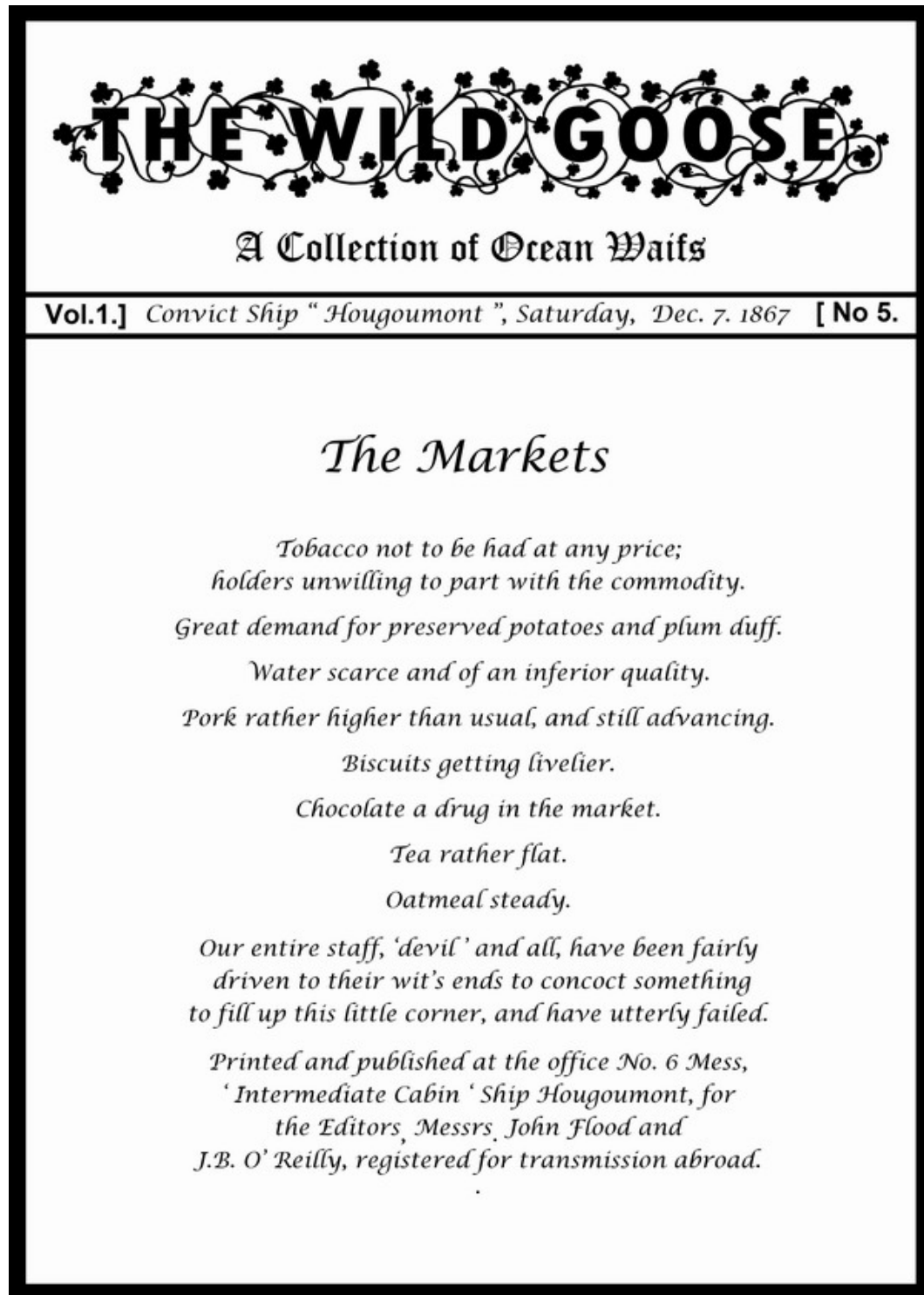


Fig. 41. Catalpa Memorial – Plaque 5

THE WILD GOOSE

A Collection of Ocean Waifs

Vol.1.] *Convict Ship "Hougoumont", Saturday, Dec. 14. 1867* [No.6.]

ADIEU!

*With feelings of regret I come, the last of the
"Wild Geese", to bid you adieu. Week by week,
one of our flock has tracked you across the ocean,
and flown to you, if not welcome visitors, at least
with an earnest wish to be both agreeable
and welcome; and though few our number,
and our visits having come to a premature end
in consequence of the swift approach of the
termination of your voyage, I hope that, our
appearance has been a source of some little pleasure,
and that we did not entirely fail in our
efforts or our aims.*

*The end of your uneventful but rapid passage
quickly approaches, and already your hearts
are beginning to quicken with anticipation
at what may be your future in the new land you
are fast nearing. Hearts are beating for you, from
which time or space cannot separate you.
Prove worthy of their interest in you, and for the rest -
Courage, and trust in God. Adieu!*

John Flood

Fig. 42. Catalpa Memorial – Plaque 6

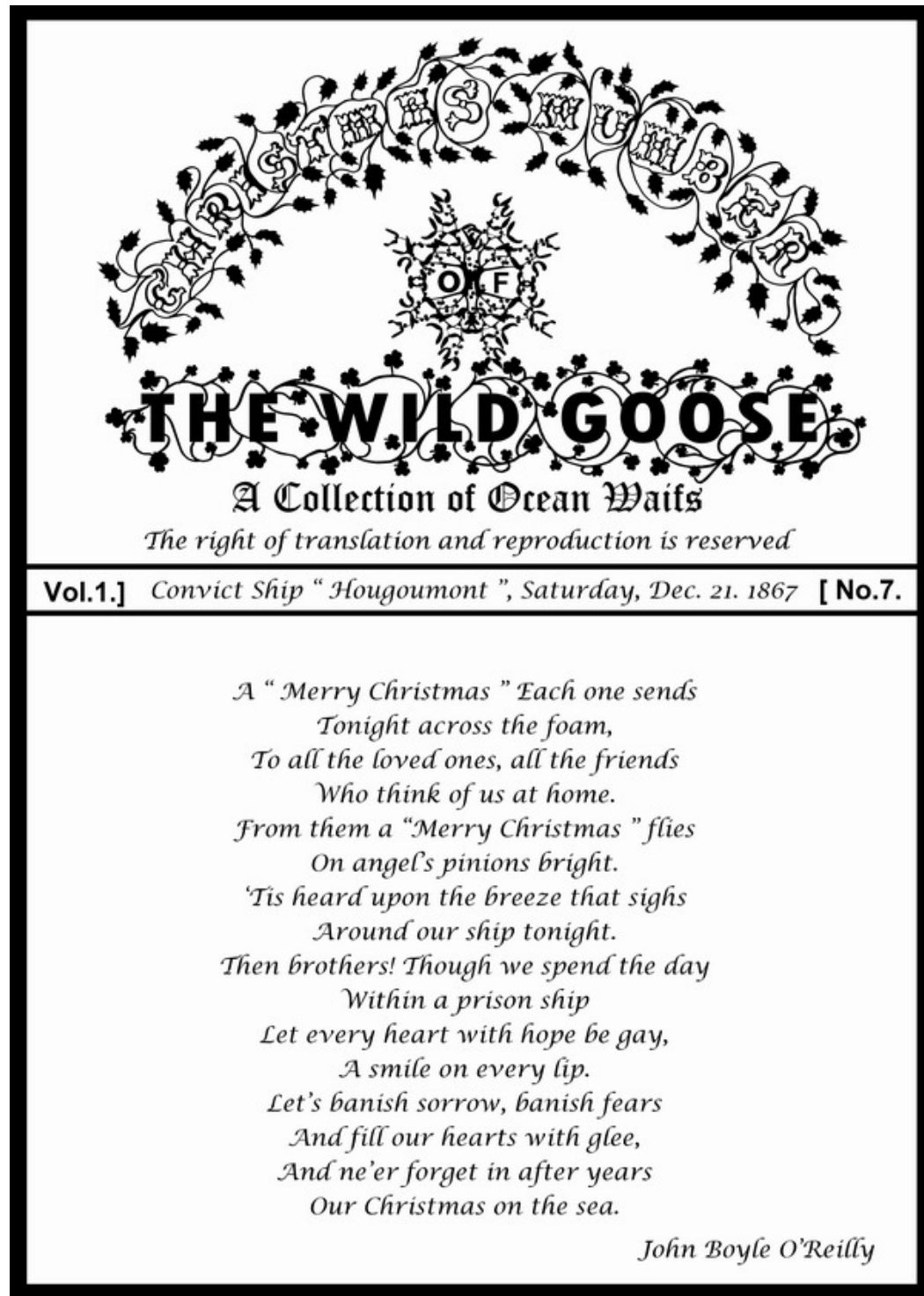


Fig. 43. Catalpa Memorial – Plaque 7

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