Matt Harris and the Irish Land Question[1]

I

> The spectrum of notions that made up the Irish peasantry's case cannot be reduced to a unitary principle, whether it be insecurity of tenure or a sense of racial dispossession … Spokesmen for the peasantry devised and broadcast a social criticism that was concerned with the whole pattern of post-Famine Irish development.[2]

The complexities of late-Victorian Irish social radicalism manifested themselves through the activities of the Land League, Irish National League and United Irish League. On the eve of the Land War of 1879–81, 7,000 landlords owned widely disparate estates of up to 160,000 acres; with tenant farmers renting farms of widely varying sizes and quality from them.[3] The result of the various land acts that came into operation between 1870 and 1909 saw a revolutionary transformation of ownership to 600,000 tenant farmers.[4] Agrarian movements, such as Tenant Leagues, had emerged from the late 1840s and early 1850s, but they generally represented the interests of a small group of stronger farmers. These organisations disappeared as soon as economic conditions improved and they rarely paid attention to the plight of agricultural labourers or subsistence farmers scratching out a survival on marginal land in the west of Ireland where the risk of crop failure always lingered. These subaltern classes were voiceless and marginalised in any re-imagining of an Irish nation, with references always to the sturdy or strong farmer. This forced them to engage in episodic periods of localised agrarian violence against those above them in the rural class system. Matt Harris, the subject of this article, made

the first efforts to tentatively organise small tenant farmers and labourers in the west of Ireland, primarily in counties Galway and Mayo and he was one of the first to take their plight seriously and remarked that their powerlessness saw them remaining subjugated and his efforts at organising labourers and small farmers. The second level leaders of the Land League, (i.e. not the Davitt/Parnell class) are of great significance and in one sense they are the local measurement of the progress of the popular cause. Harris worked alongside an array of other grassroots leaders, resulted in these classes[5] gaining some semblance of a shared identity, which paralleled the rise of constitutional nationalism in Ireland as it became an all embracing, evocative and serious force to be reckoned with by the end of the first phase of the Land War.

Harris was born on a small farm outside Athlone in 1826 and later became a building contractor in Ballinasloe. He had a revolutionary background, with his grandfather Peter Harris being executed in 1798 for his part in the rebellion in Kildare. Harris was in turn a Repealer, Young Irelander, Fenian, Land Leaguer and M.P., having become a Fenian in 1865 and M.P. in 1885.[6] Throughout his life he contended that an inadequate resolution of the Irish land question by the British government perpetuated the social malaise experienced by small farmers in the west of Ireland. Harris's testimony to the Parnell Commission was acknowledged as an insightful analysis as to life in the west of Ireland from the mid-1870s and in it, he stated that he was forced from his family farm, which resulted in him having to become a building contractor, though he had previously remarked that he gave the farm to his sister.[7] Nevertheless, the testimony serves as a

useful explanation as to his animus towards graziers and landlords.[8]

This article focuses upon Harris's writings and ideas pertaining to the social difficulties presented by the land question and condition of labourers between 1876 and 1882. 1876 saw the establishment of the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association as the question of land reform to move centre stage. Donald Jordan elucidated that while Parnell was not fully convinced of the usefulness of utilising the land movement and temporarily relegating Home Rule: 'it is quite likely that during his visit to Ballinasloe in 1878, [he] became intrigued with the possibility that a land movement may have for the nationalist struggle ... the vigour of the nascent agitation had caught Parnell off guard, but he had yet to be convinced of its usefulness to his parliamentary campaign'.[9] Harris was eager that labourers would have a stake in the soil also. This paralleled earlier efforts in Britain by Joseph Arch through the National Agricultural Labourers's Union.[10] In 1882 Harris attempted to organise labourers in Ballinasloe into a distinct movement as they had previously been active in the Land League. It was also his first public involvement in politics following his arrest and release under the terms of the Protection of Persons and Property Act, which Paul Bew argued, removed the last remaining radical hue in the Land League, as it was now under the control of the larger farmers of Leinster and Munster.[11]

II

Harris believed that centrally organised and controlled movements would eventually be dominated by stronger interests: 'I am not a man who cares very much for central bodies.

My work was amongst the masses of the people'. Previously they had been mere extras in political movements, but because of the efforts of Harris and others, they began to play a leading role in political activities.[12] In a pamphlet entitled *A paper on the present condition, socially and politically of the artisans of Ireland* (1880), Harris gave a summation as to the reasons he strongly advocated reforms for marginalised farmers in the west: 'during a somewhat lengthened connection with public affairs, I have been careful to observe the course pursued by the artisan class [which has] been sadly wanting in everything that regarded their own advancement or the advancement of the class to which they belong', and he found such indifference unfathomable.[13] He wanted to see the enactment of legislation that would benefit small farmers, particularly those holding thirty acres or less.[14]

Priests were seen as the natural leaders of the people and they had acquired a reputation for zealous electioneering in the nineteenth century. They received unfavourable attention because of their activity during the 1872 by-election campaign which was held following the resignation of Sir William Gregory after he was appointed ambassador to Ceylon. The Catholic landlord, Captain John Phillip Nolan locked horns with Captain William le Poer Trench, scion of the house of Clancarty, a staunch evangelical Protestant family from Ballinasloe, with their religious beliefs attracting vitriolic language during this testy campaign. Captain Nolan emerged victorious in what became a bitter, and at times, violent contest. His expediency in offering *de facto* tenant right on the Portacarron estate alarmed the Galway landlords. During the campaign, sectarian hostility was expressed by Catholic clergy in most vociferous terms, even though such extreme vitriol was generally

absent from election campaigns in Galway prior and after this contest.[15] Trench successfully appealed the result and the presiding judge, William Keogh, delivered such a scathing judgement that Gladstone became concerned about a possible imperial crisis ensuing. Despite this fallout from clerical activity, it did not stymie their zeal and they remained active in neighbouring Mayo in 1874.

The Fenian and Supreme Council member, John O'Connor Power stood for election in Mayo in 1874 and Harris was his campaign manager with J. J. Lee presciently arguing that O'Connor Power's 'election team in 1874 formed the nucleus of the subsequent tenant leadership'.[16] The failed 1867 rebellion meant that a new direction was needed and the beginnings of this was manifested in O'Connor Power's election and willingness to sit in parliament, which embodied the first of a series of 'New Departures' between Fenians and constitutional politicians. Clerical pressure saw O'Connor Power withdraw his candidature in the general election, but after its result was nullified, he stood in the subsequent by-election and was victorious, thus becoming the first Fenian to take his seat in Parliament. While O'Donovan Rossa had been elected for Tipperary in 1869, Fenian hostility towards constitutional politics and the oath of allegiance to the crown saw him remaining absent from Westminster.[17] The Supreme Council was isolated from the reality in Ireland due to their exile in Paris and Charles Kickham's stance prevented other Fenians from getting involved in the movement. Lee has shown how individual Fenians, like Harris, had an acute social antenna and often ignored the directives coming from the Supreme Council as they became involved in the agitation in the west. Doctrinaire Fenians, such as Kickham were quite hostile to this and in 1877 Harris warned Kickham

that his intransigence was unwise because of the penury social conditions in Mayo at the time.[18]

Harris was hostile to clerical influence in political and social issues, arguing that 'the ecclesiastics in every church are taken from the middle and upper classes. It is so arranged by those who possess political power that those endowments which have been given and should be given to the poor are handed over to the rich'.[19] He was determined to construct an effective lay leadership in order to challenge clerical zeal, the unrepresentative nature of aristocratic politicians and the opportunism of merchants that were primarily interested in 'respectability' rather than the alleviation of poverty. The establishment of the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association in May 1876 reflected an attempt by Harris to create a movement free from these influence. He thought that the clergy and lower classes could not work in harmony because wealth and religion were inextricably intertwined and becoming more powerful and this needed to be challenged.[20] While there were clergy involved in it, none were members of the executive. James Daly's *Connaught Telegraph* recorded approximately twenty meetings between 1876 and 1879 and succeeded in bringing both the association and Harris to greater national attention.[21] The first meeting of the Land League of Mayo that took place in Irishtown on 20 April 1879 is often seen to be the spark that soon spread throughout the countryside, yet it was Ballinasloe that lay the seeds for a movement that reflected the desires of small tenant farmers and Harris called its establishment 'a new phase in Irish politics and a very

hopeful one'.[22]

Harris, James Kilmartin (farmer) and Michael Malachy O'Sulivan (teacher) were instrumental in the establishment of the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association in 1876. The disparate make up of the leadership reflected the growth of politcal participation amongst the lower classes in Ireland, which paralleled the growth of popular liberalism under W. E. Gladstone. The Reform Act of 1867 and Secret Ballot Act of 1872 shepherded these changes on and the move towards a more democratic political framework and was spearheaded by Gladstone's Liberal Party.

Samuel Clark mapped twenty-nine Farmers' Clubs and Tenant Defence Associations in *The social Origins of the Irish Land War*, while thirty-six are recorded in the John Sweetman papers in the National Library of Ireland.[23] Two of the best known were the Kerry and Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Associations. Donnacha Seán Lucey has recently contended that while the Kerry association had a Fenian element in its earliest manifestation, the leadership was soon dominated by the local merchant class and clergy, with the O'Donoghue of the Glens acting as the overall leader. With the exception of the Ballinasloe association, many of these associations had a strong clerical dominance on their executives.[24] Efforts to unite small farmers and town tenants by Harris resembled similar action taken in the United Kingdom in the 1830s when endeavours were made to bring the Cambridgeshire Tenant Farmers Association and the London Workingman's Association into an alliance in 1836. Following the legal recognition of trade unions by the British government in 1871, mass meeting were held in villages across Britain that

culminated in the National Agricultural Labourers' Union. Therefore, it is also likely that he was influenced by the 'Great Awakening' of agricultural labourers in the early 1870s and P. F. Johnson's attempts to organise them in Kanturk around this time.[25]

Tenant Defence Associations were established as a response to the inadequacies to the 1870 Land Act which failed to provide for leaseholders and along with Farmers' Clubs, they were part of the 'challenging collectivity', which consisted of: 'combinations formed by and claiming to represent the interests of tenant farmers [that] became the predominant type of agrarian collective action in the post-Famine period'.[26] These movements that emerged from the early 1870s and began discussing the weaknesses of the land legislation and representation being given by M.P.s at this time, yet they have been neglected in historiography until recently.[27] While there was no serious agitation because stomachs were generally full until 1878, ideas of class consciousness were still evoked at general meetings, with radicals, the stronger farmers and others involved in the nascent nationalist movement remaining on message together until 1881.[28]

The topics discussed at meetings of the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association included reform of the land system and criticisms of landlords and graziers, which was driven by Harris. While he dismissed any sympathies expressed towards good landlords at these meetings, he was keen that no injustice be served upon them, but bad landlords needed to be weeded out.[29] In 1880 Harris remarked that 'one of the greatest defects in Mr Gladstone's, and even Mr Butt's bill, is the absence of any provision that would ensure, even approximately, a fair valuation as between landlord and tenant'.[30] He believed that

the act gave effectual protection to larger farmers, further contending that a petty culture of small farms over monster farms was the best for the country on economic grounds.[31] Despite its inherent weakness, the significance of the 1870 act cannot be overestimated, because it was a realisation on the part of the government that they needed to put aside their concerns about interfering in the land holding system in Ireland and bring in some measures to counteract the hostility towards it in Ireland.

Like the coffee shops of E.P. Thompson's England, the pubs, reading rooms and mass meetings of late-Victorian Ireland played an important in the making of an Irish rural working class as efforts were made to inculcate ideas of liberty into the minds of small farmers. In *On the Political Situation* (1880) Harris rhetorically asked if liberty had deep roots in Ireland: 'or is it a thing on the surface, propped up by poets and dreamers, a pretence, a mockery, a sham, a toy for children and fools to be amused by and wise men to scoff at?'[32] He consistently stressed that the class divisions in the countryside were significant and remained hostile to unity of action because he saw it as a threat to smaller farmers and labourers, contending that stronger classes would be able to consolidate their positions and move into the spheres of influence held by landlords.[33]

While calling landlords the embodiment of an exclusive and unrepresentative body, Harris acknowledged the presence of good landlords in the country, but said 'the greatest enemies of the good landlords are those persons that would make a barrier of them to protect the bad ones'.[34] During the Land War, he also praised the efforts of Lords Clancarty, Clonbrock and the O'Conor Don in their efforts to alleviate acute distress in

the countryside. though he frequently criticised the same landlords on occasion.[35] In 1876, he said that there were three forms of landlord oppression: ‘the landlord who is fond of changing his tenants is a bad man; the landlord who, after evicting his tenants, amalgamates their farms, is still a worse man; but the landlord who, after doing both these things, lays down the land in grass is the worst of all.[36] Such criticisms of landlords did not occur at the same regularity at Tenant Defence Association meetings elsewhere in the country as the lack of clergy on the executive in Ballinasloe removed any restraining influence on these ideas.

Harris was a young adult during the worst ravages of the Famine, and it is obvious he was concerned that something akin to it would return if the land question was not resolved. His ideas were reflective of a wider sentiment felt amongst popular Liberals in post-Chartist Britain as they sought to challenge the power of privileged aristocrats.[37] While Chartism was a movement that had disappeared by 1848, it left a legacy that inspired later activists. The 1867 Reform Act and the 1872 Secret Ballot Act were influenced by Chartist activity and the extent of this influence in Ireland warrants greater investigation. Eugenio Biagini has also noted that by the 1880s Home Rule had begun to capture the popular imagination in Britain in relation to liberty and citizenship as it became part of a wider imperial question[38], though the social problems created by access to land was the most pressing issue in the west of Ireland. In *On the political situation,* Harris rhetorically asked: ‘before condemning the land movement, sincere Irishmen, should ... ask themselves whether the cause of the Irish farmer is not the cause of liberty and humanity ... as in the days of the French Revolution the cry for bread should be mingled with the

cry for liberty'.[39] There had been threats to aristocratic rule in the aftermath of the French Revolution, with the clarion call of liberty, equality and fraternity ringing loudly in the ears of the working classes in Britain, with Thomas Paine acting as a guiding light for many. However, the economic prosperity of the early nineteenth century saw privilege maintain and increase its influence, with many believing that 'providence had indeed favoured their way of life and that hierarchy and tradition had won out over democracy'.[40]

III

The changing attitudes towards aristocratic privilege was espoused through the expression of anti-landlord sentiment on Land League platforms. They were portrayed as heartless evictors that cared little for their tenants; treating them capriciously. Harris contended that landlords ensured that the lower classes were the 'bondholders of civilization ... oppressed by the aristocracy of wealth' and if they were to achieve real improvements in Ireland, the lesser cause, which was land, needed to be pursued in order to ensure that farmers were secure in their farms.[41]

The agitation that emerged as a result of the economic depression of 1877 was different to anything previous, coming as it did after one of the most prosperous periods witnessed in Ireland. J. S. Donnelly called it: 'a product not merely of agricultural crisis, but also a revolution of rising expectations'. Donnelly further stated that 'for the generation of Irish farmers who remembered the hardship of the Famine there was no desire to return to it;

for the generation that had grown up with economic prosperity there was no great desire to relinquish it'.[42] Small farmers in the west of Ireland were in a particularly vulnerable position, feeling the effects of the downturn quite acutely because they were heavily indebted to both their landlords and shopkeepers and 'genuinely held values of liberty and popular participation could and were also turned into ideologies of social control'.[43]. The rise of the urban bourgeoisie and the emergence of a market-economy in post-Famine Ireland saw an increased inter-dependency between towns and the rural hinterland and this resulted in the Land War becoming a 'bitter conflict between two sets of creditors'. While the urban milieu had a disproportionate influence upon the land movement, it could not have achieved the proportions it did without their assistance. The involvement of shopkeepers to remove landlordism was not because of any particular ideological inclination; rather it was a desire to remove a competing creditor. The extension of credit could be problematic as shopkeepers frequently charged steep interest, with one apparently charging a rate of forty-three per cent, with tenants compelled into accepting goods on credit and shopkeepers resented being so reliant on the trade of farmers. They formed a pragmatic alliance during the Land War, as shopkeepers provided the bulk of the leadership. Because they had similar associational links with tenant farmers, this made a union on the surface appear to be ideologically co-terminus. Irish towns and villages pulsated with the rhythm of the agricultural season[44], therefore, it was necessary for farmers to have successful harvests in order for merchants to survive and this serves as a further explanation for the involvement of shopkeepers and the begrudging nature of the alliance.

Irish farming had become increasingly pastoral after the Famine, with 84 percent of land in Connaught being used for grazing by 1876. The expansion of a livestock-orientated economy in the 1850s and 1860s created ideal conditions for radical political activity to grow. However, the lack of interest amongst Fenians in the land question during this period rendered the idea of such an agitation moot, but 'the speed at which economic adversity renewed hostilities indicates that, underlying the apparent harmony that prevailed during most of the 1860s and 1870s, there remained a basic weakness in the Irish landlord-tenant relationship'.[45] Communal solidarity along class lines was lacking in the Irish countryside as there was no sense of shared identity amongst farmers because their self-sufficiency from working the land gave them no reason to become involved in such organisations. The intensification of the crisis that arrived in the late 1870s saw the yield in potatoes collapse in 1877, with average yields of 1.8 tons being recorded that year. This was in comparison to an average of 3.3 tons per acre being produced between 1871 and 1876. There was a further collapse in 1879, as average yields of 1.4. tons per acre were recorded.[46] Until 1879 harmonious landlord–tenant relations existed as tenants generally paid their rents promptly, but 'when prosperity came to an end in the late 1870s, the groundwork had been laid by the challenging collectivities ... for the greatest challenge to established power in nineteenth-century Ireland' with James S Donnelly contending that a great leap of the imagination was the only way one could have anticipated the violence associated with the Land War.[47]

In *Land Reform: A Letter to the Council of the Irish National League* (1880),[48] Harris set out a detailed proposal for a solution to the vexing land question. While much that was proffered in it was idealistic and in an effort to counteract grazing, there were salient

demands for housing reform, which is outside of the remit of this article. Furthermore, they reflected those articulated by Harris in numerous speeches and letters to newspapers. While arguing that peasant proprietorship was the only way to abolish landlordism, he acknowledged that there were many good landlords and it would be injust and a form of robbery not to compensate them adequately. He appreciated that there would be no satisfactory reform to the land system that would please all, but contended that 'the man who tills the soil has the best right to own it' in spite of there being good larger farmers.[49] Neither was he in favour of the immediate overthrow of landlordism, rather a gradual process of deconstruction: 'though my plans are not of so comprehensive or so sweeping a nature as to require the total and immediate suppression of landlordism, I do not conceal my belief that this country would be al the better if landlordism was entirely abolished'.[50]

While landlords were subject to most criticisms during the Land War, Harris ensured that graziers did not escape public odium either and land grabbers were especially despised. His contempt for them stemmed from the consolidation of small farms by landlords in the aftermath of the Famine.[51] Graziers were treated with suspicion in the west of Ireland because they saw themselves as socially superior and a replacement to the gentry and aristocracy in the spheres of influence, such as local politics. Eugene Hynes argued that this suspicion was because they did not fit well into traditional communities as they threatened the subsistence of the most vulnerable farmers. 'In Mayo, more than a few were foreigners, (English and Scottish) and were detested for their foreign faith as well as

their economic practice'. He further stated that *all* (my emphasis) graziers were derided in the local community:

> Many people resented locals who became graziers as upstarts and derided them as "shoneens" whose acquisitiveness violated traditional notions of sharing. Others condemned them as bulwarks of the landlord system because of their demand for land to rent. Many saw them as monopolising access to land that others needed for subsistence. Anti-landlord feeling often spilled over into anti-grazier sentiment.[52]

Harris also linked their behaviour with the deteriorating condition of towns: 'the decay in towns, the want of labour, the depression in trade … are in the highest degree traceable to the extension of grass farming' and because it contributed to a general loss for the community as a whole, it needed to be abolished.[53] He contended that the government needed to compel landlords or graziers with farms larger than fifty acres to build suitable housing for labourers, provide one acre of good grass-land to rear a cow for twelve months and 100 boxes of turf. He believed that this, the construction of villages and the correct management of commonages would stymie emigration and the depopulation of the countryside. Harris also suggested that the boundaries of large towns could be extended into the country for land that could support working families that could not afford the 'bribe [necessary] for a townpark'[54] while ensuring that people would not be 'entitled to a larger proportion than would be necessary to supply his wants'.[55] Harris further proposed that the government should take possession of waste lands if crown or quit rents were not paid and suggested that if it were next to pasture, some of this could be provided, with good land given with each portion of bog or waste. He also wanted to see grazing tenancies voided because they locked 'up the earth against tillage [with] chains on the plough and spade'.[56]

Harris asserted that there was no employment to be had on grass farms, contending that it was bringing the country back to barbarism through the prohibition of tillage.[57]

> My desire would be to establish a peasant proprietary on every portion of the Irish soil, but there is one fatal impediment, and that is the non-existence of a peasantry on two-thirds of the land of Ireland, and without an occupying peasantry it is impossible all at once to create that form of proprietary.[58]

Furthermore, he was skeptical of the financial robustness of many graziers, believing them to be 'the most unreliable and worse agents government could advance to'.[59] These groups in the countryside remained a focus of criticism by Harris during the Land War because he believed that they did 'nothing to improve their country or themselves, and what is worse; they prevent others from doing it by their selfishness'.[60] He wanted fixity of tenure restricted to farms of sixty acres or less because he was concerned that graziers would gain greater powers in the countryside if it were extended to them. He believed that they did not have the same sentimental attachment to the land as landlords may have had. It was because of such a stance that saw Harris being accused of begrudging farmer prosperity.[61]

In his superb, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism, 1876–1906* (2007), Eugenio Biagini has saliently maintained that 'the legitimacy of the law was contested not because it came from a colonial power, but because it tended to enshrine landlord and farmer interests',[62] with small farmers and labourers losing out. Stephen Ball asserted that small farmers were opposed to the capitalisation of farming and the denial of what they saw as

their natural rights and grazing threatened this. Hugh Brody also showed how efforts to maximise profits went against traditional societal understandings and customs and grazing was simply a business in which farming was subordinated to the making of profit. This was in conflict with the mentality of subsistence that generally existed amongst farmers.[63] While Brody was writing about Ireland in the mid-twentieth century, his arguments are certainly applicable to the Ireland of two generations previously. Despite Harris's efforts to turn some animated criticisms towards graziers, their influence during the Land War succeeded in ensuring that landlords were the focus of any animus as they slowly became the common enemy of all farmers.[64]

IV

The worsening economic crisis was crucial in removing any popular sentiment that may have remained for landlordism and L. P. Curtis has said that: 'Land League leaders had made it clear that their long-term goal was to eliminate landlords, no matter how benevolent individual landowners might be' and 'forelock-tugging and cap-doffing to one-time social superiors were consigned to the past'.[65] Agrarian violence increased in the latter half of 1880 and this coincided with the increasingly forceful rhetoric of speeches and a breakdown in order in the countryside. While landlords and graziers were of course derided, the most abhorrent individual in the countryside was 'the grabber'. Throughout 1880 and 1881, more and more meetings took place and speakers began to forecast the fall of landlordism. This resulted in a full-scale confrontation between landlord and tenant now becoming unavoidable, with the likes of Harris stoking the fire

of antagonism between classes. Traditional notions of respect and deference were being explicitly challenged. As Laurence Geary argued 'the tenant involvement in land agitation shattered their inherited sense of deference towards their landlords'.[66]

The 'revolt of the tenantry' – a term coined by William Feingold – was part of a gradual democratic preparation and the popular political participation of the 1870s lay the foundations for a more coherent agrarian movement.[67] Harris astutely remarked that gentry, grazier and shopkeeper came to monopolise the various political boards, and he believed that if artisans, labourers or small farmers began to seek election or participate in these boards, then the ruling classes would laugh.[68]

Until the 1870s landlords could dictate the outcome of local government elections and even general elections. This changed in two ways. Firstly, the Secret Ballot Act of 1872 meant that electors could vote without fear of the consequences if they went against their landlords preferred candidate and secondly landlords grip on local government loosened considerably as nationalists began contesting elections to the Board of Guardians that were responsible for the management and operation of workhouses and relief works. Nationalists began to realize that these elections could help them win influence at a local level. There was significant respectability attached to such positions of local authority and with the increasing embourgeoisment of towns, the urban middle classes – shopkeepers, publicans –along with tenant farmers desired the respectability and influence once held by their aristocratic overlords and this intensified in the late 1880s. This metamorphosis of Poor Law administration in Ireland saw it cease 'to operate as a

branch of landlord–dominated local government and became tenant controlled assemblies'.[69] Harris also believed that there were nationalists that used the Poor Law elections for expedient purposes and not actually caring about the condition of the poor, remarking that they 'will hardly approach a mechanic, least (sic) he night soil his broadcloth by contact, though he seldom approaches any man except for the purposes of fleecing him'[70] and he said that such nationalists were 'strictly monarchical and aristocratic in their ideals'.[71] To challenge their influence, he argued that artisans and small farmers needed to seize this power and use it for the benefit of humanity: 'artisans have a higher and holier object than ministering to the diseased appetites, the insatiable desires of whose who possess wealth, and those who use wealth to degrade and enslave the men who have created it'.[72]

Evictions were not as widespread as orthodox historiography would lead one to believe, but when they took place, they were emotive spectacle that captured the imagination of the people and consequently mobilised them to resist. In his efforts to encourage farmers to engage in a more proactive struggle against process servers and bailiffs, Harris told a crowd in Loughrea in January 1880 to:

> stick to your holdings, don't allow yourselves to be driven away. I ask you is it just to allow landlordism in this country? Is it a just or an unjust institution backed up by an unjust constitution. You are bound to pull that institution of landlordism down, and, therefore, I don't care what any man says, I will say it must be pulled down. I maintain that the time has come when the land of this country which was confiscated from our forefathers, shall be confiscated once again to us.[73]

Harris told the Parnell Commission that pressurising grabbers to give up evicted farmers was one of the most important roles of the Land League because grabbers were seen to be enemies of God and man.[74] The language used at these meetings was frequently ambiguous, with interpretations varied, especially as tenants often resorted to violence against evictions and grabbings, with Harris being accused of encouraging some with his fiery rhetoric. The weekly mass meeting played an important role in marshalling the countryside. It was generally held after Sunday mass or on a market day, which would make it more likely to attract a crowd. Harris being one of the most active participants and prolific speakers and it is difficult to quantify the number of meetings he attended. The moral pressure of the 'crowd' could result in tenants conforming to the laws of the league, for fear of extreme consequences if they did not.

One of the most celebrated moments in Harris's career prior to his arrest under the terms of the Protection of Person and Property Act, was the case of Martin Bermingham's eviction and Murty Hynes's taking of the holding on the Dunsandle estate at Riverville, Loughrea. Martin Bermingham had been evicted from his holding by Lord Dunsandle. Hynes defied Land League orders about taking an evicted holding and was subsequently denounced by Harris as a traitor. Such was the moral pressure exerted upon Hynes and threat of violence against him that he soon gave up the farm. A song was penned by T. D. Sullivan, recounting what happened, initially admonishing Hynes, then extolling him as a great Irishman relinquishing to this great moral pressure.

> The place that Murty lives in is handy to Loughrea.
> The man is good and dacent, but he was led astray;
> He did what every Christian must call a burning shame –
> But now he has repented, and cleared his honest name

> For when upon the roadside, poor Bermingham was sint,
> Because with all his strivin' he could not pay the rint.
> And keep auld Dunsandle in horse, dogs and wines,
> Who comes and takes the holdin', but foolish Murty Hynes
>
> But when the noble Land League got word of this disgrace,
> They sint a man to Murty to raison out the case;
> 'I own my crime' says Murty, 'but I'll wash out the stain –
> I'll keep the farm no longer; I'll give it up again'.[75]

As well as paying homage to a once misguided land grabber, this song also captures the difficulties faced by tenants in paying their rents in the midst of an economic crisis and Laurence Geary has argued:

> The failure of landlords and their agents to grant voluntary rent reductions and their insistence on the payment of customary rents revolutionised popular attitudes and gave rise to the demand that the land of Ireland be reclaimed from the present usurping landlords and restored to its rightful owners, the Irish people.[76]

Furthermore, Lord Dunsandle, like his neighbour, the Marquis of Clanricarde, did not have a favourable reputation amongst people in the Loughrea/Athenry region. Yet the idea of taking a neighbour's farm challenged unwritten rules and notions of community in rural Ireland. It was a reprehensible action and was akin to scab labour. Grabbing evoked memories of Famine clearances and in this case Hynes was made an example of. The tenant that took the farm after him was shot dead for doing so and this region was a hotbed of intense agrarian crime during the Land War.[77] The role of Harris and others in creating this sense of an imagined community of tenant farmers that were oppressed by an alien landlord class was critical in fostering a sense of oppression and maltreatment. The ambiguity of language in speeches meant that the various classes listening could interpret them as they saw fit.

Harris's language focused primarily on the landlord and grazier system rather than British rule as being the cause of woes. While reflecting on other revolutions with a speech possessing traces of Enlightenment influence, Harris told a meeting at Clonmacnoise on 5 September 1880 that

> throughout the world, the power of the people has pulled up kings and emperors...reflect on the mighty power that rests in your hands, you will find that this thing of tearing down landlordism is not such a monstrous thing as formerly you thought it was...enslaved by as worthless a class of men as ever enslaved their fellow man.

He said that it was important for the people to work together 'against this beastly system, if you had done this ... [landlords] would tremble before you' and they had to 'throw off this slavery...watch when they get a poor man at their feet, if they know him to be a man of some sentiment, a man of independent spirit, they crush that man. The crush him because they know he is not supported by his fellow men'. [78]

East Galway became one of the most active areas for agrarian violence by 1881. The most recent scholarship by L. P. Curtis and Pat Finnegan, along with that of Donald Jordan has shown how the government failed to really understand what could be crudely described as a 'peasant mentality', with resistance to threats to traditional societies frequently being met with violence.[79] Irish historians have been slow to appreciate this clash between official and unofficial rules of law that existed in the countryside, especially in more isolated regions that had still to fall to the vicissitudes of modernisation.[80] Furthermore, Biagini has argued that 'the legitimacy to the law was contested, not because it came from a colonial power but because it tended to enshrine

landlord and tenant interest' with paternalistic concession going hand in hand with coercion.[81]

V

'The land for the people' was the rallying call during the Land War. However labourers were excluded from what constituted *the* people. Rural labourers were frequently treated with contempt and at the precipice of destitution always, but a more despised individual in provincial Ireland was the urban labourer and Harris was almost a lone voice advocating reform for them during the Land War.[82]

There was no help forthcoming from rural Ireland to assist labourers, meaning that they were isolated from the focus of nationalist discussion of the redistribution of land and there was a purity about the feckless labourer for Harris: 'the poorer he is, the lower he is, the more despised he is, the better'.[83] While Harris blamed government apathy for their condition, he also contended that their own indifference limited their ability to improve their condition. He further apportioned blame on those 'who traffic on the wealth in which industry produces and produce nothing themselves'. He also suggested that education needed to be their priority[84] which would allow them to escape the cycle of poverty they were in and counteract the condescension of paternalism.

In an effort to further the cause of labourers, a branch of the short-lived Labour League was established in Ballinasloe in July 1882. Harris said labourers were the backbone of the Land League and if left to those who benefited the most from it, the farmers, it would

never have assumed the proportions that it did.[85] When questioning the competence of the gentry and the middle class, Harris argued:

> If the artisan class had control of public bodies which these men have usurped, our lunatics, our paupers, our police, our public officers of every class would be clothed with Irish manufacture; our county bridges would be built of durable stone instead of iron imported from England, our public buildings would be built of Irish stone or Irish brick.[86]

Harris genuinely believed that the participation of labourers in a separate struggle would bring about improvements in their condition. He countenanced that the urban poor were generally neglected in a mass movement as stronger classes consolidated their influence. In order to challenge this, he told the initial meeting of the Labour League in Ballinasloe that 'if you want to improve your own condition and raise yourself in the social status, then it is to your own class that you will have to look', while further arguing that 'the working men of Ballinasloe [need to realise] the great and absorbing necessity [that] there is for union amongst themselves' in order to remove the 'shackles of slavery' that had ensnared them.[87] However, the evidence suggests that he failed to mobilise them in anything resembling an independent movement, and the embers of this effort eventually burned out. In subsequent years, flashes of tension emerged in discussions relating to the provision of housing for the urban poor, with the local 'shopocracy' sneering at the plight of the urban poor.[88] Methodists were heavily involved in the National Agricultural Labourers' Union in Britain as they frequently preached the gospel to lower classes in society and were staunch critics of the land system being the cause of national impoverishment.[89] The same could not be said for the Catholic clergy in the west of Ireland generally, as they sought to stymie any hint of radicalism, fearing communistic propaganda challenging their authority.

VI

By the end of the first phase of the Land War, nationalists succeeded in portraying landlords as heartless oppressors and the English press treated them with a disdain that was often thinly veiled contempt and this intensified from 1886 during the Plan of Campaign. Landlord apathy, which frequently bordered on arrogance, isolated them from even their most ardent supporters in the Conservative party, who were becoming dismayed their lack of action. L. P. Curtis has recently argued that the reputation of landlords had been irreparably damaged due to the attitude of the eccentric and volatile second Marquis of Clanricarde, who 'single-handedly did more to tarnish the reputation of his class than any other landowner'.[90] The miserly Marquis was dubbed Clan-Rack - Rent and even ignored pleas from his land agent, Frank Joyce to grant a universal reduction of 25 percent on the Woodford part of his estate where land was desperately marginal, stating that he would only deal with individual cases.[91] His belligerence led to the second phase of the Land War that became known as the Plan of Campaign.[92]

The second half of the 1880s saw Irish landlords haemorrhaging support. Their response to the agitation was insipid as they naively believed that tenant loyalty would spring eternal. Their remaining source of power; their estates, were slowly disintegrating as a result of the land legislation being enacted. While the Conservatives were the natural allies of landlords, they began to see Irish landlordism as a liability and hoped that the enactment of Land Purchase legislation would quell discontent because the basis of moral force Unionism was that 'every native has his price'[93] Such a changing attitude towards landlords, was mostly due to the speeches made at Land League meetings, which focused

upon the system of landlordism as the root of suffering for the people of Ireland and it was only through its destruction that things would improve. Harris played a significant role in this as he 'had enlivened many an anti-landlord platform with his fiery rhetoric'.[94]

Harris had a great belief in the potential change that the Land League could bring if utilised in the correct manner and the holding of meetings, followed by their reporting in the local and national press would eventually bring the plight of farmers to greater attention. Harris's rhetoric was emotive and could be quite forceful and violent, resulting in his arrest under the terms of the Protection of Persons and Property Act in 1881. He was attuned to the condition of the people and was quite perceptive as to the problems that unity of action would present. In general, he was not an abstract political theorist, rather his ideas were formulated from observations and discussions with those that he sought to represent and his writings reflected this. His arrest in 1881 removed the final radical element remaining in the land movement. He did not encourage unity of action and despised the self-serving mentality of the stronger farmers and clergy, who were primarily interested in self-preservation and consolidating their position as a nascent elite in place of landlords, rather than assisting the lower classes in the countryside, calling it the alliance of the shark and the prey. P. K. Egan said 'there was a live zone of Fenianism about Ballinasloe and South Roscommon', which centred on Harris.[95]

Nationalist politics moved beyond the land question after the Kilmainham Treaty and became more conservative in its nature, as efforts turned to Home Rule. Nevertheless, Harris's radicalism remained, even though he had not been as visible as he had been prior

to his arrest. While the Irish National League now turned its attention to Home Rule, Harris still stressed that it was the land question which was of most concern to western farmers. It was more important to them than Home Rule and the idea of an independent parliament which was being pushed by the stronger classes. While the central leadership stressed unity of action in order to achieve Home Rule, it was obvious to Harris that unity of action was merely a fig leaf for the stronger classes to pursue their aims and efforts at achieving respectability at the expense of others in the countryside: 'we must often begin with the less in order to achieve the greater ... the land movement, due to its class basis, is in its essence, national'.[96]

Harris's language had obvious Chartist connotations and as he was of that generation, his language was also inflected with Enlightenment thought. He was likely influenced by Thomas Paine, a Chartist staple, along with Fergus O'Connor, who put forward the Chartist Land Plan in the 1840s and contemporary radicals in the Social and Democratic Federation and Lib-lab politicians also drew upon such influences.[97] While the extent of these influences on Irish radical thought needs to be investigated further, Harris's evolution from Chartism to agrarian radical was natural, considering his advocacy of the rights of smaller farmers and labourers, along with his embrace of democratic systems.[98]

Despite the numerous clashes and hostility between Harris and others, he was respected because of his acute sensitivity towards the crisis that presented itself in Ireland. The police called him a 'dangerously clever man' and his actions were an effort to give a coherent voice to subaltern groups in the Irish countryside that previously had none. He

showed that political participation could be the instrument for achieving real aims and his actions were symptomatic of the 'anti-parliamentary orientation of much radical politics and ideology during the period 1877–1906'.[99]

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[2] Paul Bew, *Land and the National Question in Ireland, 1858–82* (Dublin, 1978), pp 1–2.

[3]See John Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (1876).

[4]Bew, *Land and the National Question in Ireland*, conclusion. The relevant Land Acts were 1870, 1881, 1885, 1890, 1903, 1909 and the 1882 Arrears Act

[5]Matthew Harris, *A Paper on the Present Condition, Socially and Politically of the Artisans of Ireland* (Ballinasloe, 1880), p. 3.

[6]See minutes of evidence of Matt Harris at Parnell Commission, p. 171, 94,515

[7]*Report from the Select Committee on the Irish Land Act, 1870*, HC 1878 (249), xv, I, p. 270, qs 4987-8

[8]The baptisimal records of St Michael's Church, Ballinasloe, indicate that Harris had eight children with Molly (Honora) Bennet of Ahascragh. Their children were Peter Harris, born 14 October 1862 ; John Harris, born 19 March 1865; Patrick Harris, born 22 May 1866; Nora Harris, born 11 September 1867; Catherine Harris, born 7 March 1869; Peter Harris, born 25 April 1873; Bridget Harris, born 1 February 1877; Michael Harris, born 5 September 1879. The reader will note that two of the sons were called Peter. I have been unable to ascertain whether this was a transcription error or if the elder Peter had died before the younger Peter was born. My deep thanks to Dr Damian Mac Con Uladh for this information

[9]Donald Jordan, *Land and Popular Politics in Ireland: County Mayo from Plantation to the Land War* (Cambridge, 1994),p. 213.

[10] Nigel Scotland, 'The National Agricultural Labourer's Union and the demand for a stake in the soil, 1872–1896' in Eugenio F. Biagini (ed) *Citizens and Community: Liberals, Radicals and collective identities in the British Isles, 1865–1931* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 152

[11]Donnacha Seán Lucey, *Land, Popular Politics and Agrarian Violence in Ireland: The Case of County Kerry, 1872–86* (Dublin, 2011), pp 36–7.

[12]See J. J. Lee *The Modernisation of Irish Society, 1848–*1918(Dublin. 1973), pp 68, 72.

[13]Harris, *A paper on the present condition*, p. 3.

[14]Idem, *Land Reform: A Letter to the Council of the Irish National Land League* (Dublin, 1880), p. 5.

[15]One notable exception was during the 1859 election when Captain Trench's older brother, Lord Dunlo ran for election, see Brian Casey, 'Land, politics and religion on the Clancarty estate, east Galway, 1851–1914' (Ph.D thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2011) pp 88–90.

[16]Lee, *The modernisation of Irish society* p. 68.

[17]T. W. Moody, *Davitt and the Irish Revolution, 1846–*82(Oxford, 1982), pp 122–6, 133–4.

[18]Ibid.,p. 72; for more on Kickham, see R. V. Comerford, *Charles J. Kickham: a study in Irish nationalism and literature* (Dublin, 1979)

[19]Harris, *A paper on the present condition* ,p. 11.

[20]While Harris stated this in 1880, it is arguable that his sentiments could be applied retrospectively to 1876 and before. See Harris. *A paper on the present condition*, p. 11.

[21]See Gerard Moran 'Laying the seeds for agrarian agitation, the Ballinalsoe Tenant Defence Association' in Conor McNamara and Carla King (eds) *The west of Ireland: New perspectives* (Dublin, 2011), p. 82

[22]*C. T.*, 19 Aug. 1876; Bew, *Land and the national question in Ireland*, p. 55; Comerford, 'Isaac Butt and the Home Rule party', p. 16; Moran, 'James Daly and the rise and fall of the Land League in Ireland, 1879–92', p. 190; David Thornley, *Isaac Butt and Home Rule* (Dublin, 1964), p. 250.

[23] National Library of Ireland, John Sweetman papers, MS 47,573/8; Samuel Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish Land War* (Princeton, 1979), p. 220.
[24]Lucey, *Land, Popular Politics and Agrarian Violence*, chapter four; Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish Land War*,pp 214–19.
[25]Nigel Scotland, 'The National Agricultural Labourers' Union and the demand for a stake in the soil, 1872–1896' in Eugenio F. Biagini (ed), *Citizenship and Community: Liberals, Radicals and Collective Identities in the British Isles 1865–1931* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 151; Edward Royle, *Chartism* (London, 1996, 3rd edition), p. 21.
[26] Clark *Social Origins of the Irish Land War*, p. 211.
[27]See Lucey, *Land, Popular Politics and Agrarian Violence*, pp 15, 34–5; Moran, 'Laying the seeds for agrarian agitation'; Brian Casey, 'Matt Harris and the Ballinasloe Tenant Defence Association' in idem (ed.) *Defying the Law of the Land: Agrarian Radicals in Irish History* (Dublin, 2013), pp 90–9 and idem 'Land, politics and religion on the Clancarty estate, east Galway, 1851–1914' (Ph.D, NUI Maynooth, 2011), chapter four.
[28]Royle, *Chartism*, p. 17. This is an idea of Edward Royle's in relation to the early days of Chartism in Britain. The similarities between this and what Harris was putting forward were striking and merits further scholarly investigation in terms of British and Irish radicalism and the similarities between both.
[29]Harris, *Land Reform*, pp 20–1.
[30]Ibid.,pp 12-13.
[31]Ibid., p. 21
[32]Ibid.,*On the Political Situation* (Dublin, 1880), p. 1. See also E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, 1963. R. V. Comerford's 'Patriotism as pastime, the appeal of Fenianism in the mid–1860s' in *Irish Historical Studies*,xxii (1981), pp 239–250 is important for understanding this also.
[33]*C.T.*, 9 Nov. 1878.
[34]Ibid.,2 Sep. 1876.
[35] See Casey, 'Land, politics and religion on the Clancarty estate', pp 172–4; Aidan Enright, 'The political life of Charles Owen O'Conor' (Ph.D, 2011, Queen's University Belfast), p. 65, Kevin McKenna, 'Power, resistance and ritual: Paternalism on the Clonbrock estates, 1826–1908' (Ph.D, NUI Maynooth, 2011), pp 113, 189, 249.
[36]*C.T.*, 24 Jun. 1876.
[37] For a useful comparative see Scotland, 'The National Agricultural Labourers' Union and the demand for a stake in the soil, 1872–1896', pp 151–65.
[38]Eugenio Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism, 1876–1906* (Cambridge, 2007), pp 3–5
[39]Harris, *On the Political Situation*, pp 1–2.
[40]Irene Whelan, *The Bible War in Ireland*: *the Second Reformation and the polarisation of Protestant-Catholic relations, 1800*–1840 (Dublin, 2005),pp 55, 70.
[41]Harris, *A Paper on the Present Condition* p. 12; idem *On the Political Situation*, p. 2.
[42]James S. Donnelly, Jr., *The Land and the People of nineteenth century Cork: the Rural Economy and the Irish Land Question* (London and Boston, 1975) pp 250–2.
[43]Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism*p. 19
[44] Kevin Whelan, 'Town and Village in Ireland: a socio-cultural perspective' in *The Irish Review* 5 (1988), p. 36.
[45]Clark, *Social origins*, pp 153–7.
[46] Gerard Moran, '"Near famine": The Roman Catholic Church and the subsistence crisis of 1879–82', in *StudiaHibernica*, no. 32 (2002), p. 156
[47]Cit. In Laurence M. Geary, 'Anticipating Memory: Landlordism, Agrarianism and Deference in late nineteenth-century Ireland', in Tom Dunne and Laurence M. Geary (eds) *History and the Public Sphere: Essays in Honour of John A. Murphy* (Cork, 2005), p. 131.
[48] For a useful comparison with British social radicals, see *Labourers' Union Chronicle*; *The Laws of God versus the Laws of Man* (1881); Pamela Horn, 'Agricultural Trade Unionism in Oxfordshire', in J. P. D. Dunbabin, *Rural Discontent in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1973); Scotland, 'The demand for a stake in the soil'.
[49]Matthew Harris, *Land reform: A letter to the Council of the Irish National Land League* (Dublin 1880), p. 4.
[50]Ibid., pp 4–5.
[51]*C. T.*, 13 Apr. 1878; 11 May 1878.

[52] Eugene Hynes, *Knock: the Virgin's apparition in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Cork, 2009), p. 168
[53]Harris, *Land reform*, p. 13.
[54]Ibid., pp 27–8.
[55]Ibid., pp 5, 8.
[56]Ibid., pp 9, 33
[57]Ibid.,p. 34.
[58]Ibid, p. 37.
[59]Ibid.,pp 38–9.
[60]*C.T.*, 31 Mar. 1877.
[61]Ibid.
[62]Biagini, *British democracy and Irish nationalism*, pp 26–7.
[63]Hugh Brody, *Inishkillane: Change and Decline in the west of Ireland* (London, 1973) pp 192–6
[64]Bew, *Land and the National Question in Ireland*, pp 1, 38, 40; Jordan, *Land and Popular Politics in Ireland*, p. 215.
[65]Cit. in Geary 'Anticipating memory' , p. 127.
[66] Ibid.
[67]Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism* p. 28. For more on the increased democratisation in the Irish countryside see W. E. Feingold *'The Revolt of the Tenantry: The Transformation of Local Government in Ireland, 1872–1886* (Boston, 1984).
[68]Harris, *A paper on the present condition*, p. 7.
[69]Virginia Crossman, *Politics pauperism and power in late nineteenth-century Ireland* (Manchester, 2006), p. 36.
[70]Harris, *A Paper on the Present Condition*, p. 11
[71]Ibid., *On the Political Situation*, p. 2
[72]Ibid.,*A Paper on the Present Condition*, p. 12
[73]Speech at Loughrea, County Galway, Irish National League (INL) No. 200 6 January 1880,
[74] Parnell Commission, pp 211–12, qs 95,077–9.
[75]Cit. in Curtis *The Depiction of Eviction in Ireland* p. 127–8.For a recording of a recitation of this ballad, see *Great British Railway Journeys* series four, episode twenty-five, Athlone to Galway. (First broadcast, 8 Feb. 2013).
[76]Geary 'Anticipating memory', p. 132
[77]Parnell Commission, vol. 1, p. 63; Pat Finnegan, *The Case of the Craughwell Prisoners during the Land War in county Galway, 1879-85* (Dublin, 2011).
[78]Speech at Clonmacnoise, King's county, 5 September 1880, Irish Land League and Irish National League. Reports of speeches A–L, 1879–1888 Box 2.
[79] This has been elucidated by Stephen Ball, 'Policing the Irish Land War: Official Responses to Political Protest and Agrarian Crime in Ireland, 1879–91 (Ph.D thesis, University of London, 2000); Thomas Feeney, 'The Woodford Evictions'(M.Ed. thesis, U. C. G., 1978); Anne Finnegan, 'The Land War in South-East Galway' (M. A. thesis, U.C.G., 1974). For published works, see Bew, *Land and the National question in Ireland*(Dublin, 1978); L. P. Curtis, On Class and Class conflict in the Land War' in *Irish Economic and Social History*, viii (1981), pp 86–91; idem, *The Depiction of Eviction in Ireland, 1845–1910* (Dublin, 2011); Pat Finnegan *The case of the Craughwell Prisoners during the Land War in Co. Galway, 1879–85* (Dublin, 2011); Donald Jordan 'The Irish National League and the 'Unwritten Law': Rural Protest and Nation-Building in Ireland 1882–1890' in *Past and Present*, no. 158 (1998), pp 146–171.
[80]Exceptions to this include Jordan 'The Irish National League and the "unwritten law"'; John Cunningham, 'Recovering the cargo of the Julia: Salvage, Law and the Killing of "Wreckers" in Connemara in 1873 in Maura Cronin and William Sheehan (eds) *Riotous Assemblies: Rebels, Riots and Revolt in Ireland* (Dublin, 2011), pp 127–53 and Hynes, *Knock*. European historiography has been far more progressive in drawing on the social sciences in order to understand these clashes. A superb example of this is Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The modernization of rural France, 1870–1914* (London, 1976).
[81]Biagini, *British democracy and Irish nationalism* pp 26–7.
[82]See Gerard Moran, 'The Land War, urban destitution and town tenant protest, 1879–1882' in *Saothar*, 20 (1995), pp 17–30.For more on later clashes, see Conor McNamara, 'A Tenants' League or a shopkeepers' league? Urban protest and the Town Tenants Association in the west of Ireland, 1909–1918' in *StudiaHibernica* vol 36, 2009–10, pp 135–60.

[83]*Western News*, 29 Jul. 1882.
[84]Harris, *A Paper on the Present Condition*, pp 2–5.
[85]*W. N.*, 29 Jul. 1882.
[86]Harris, *A paper on the Present Condition*, p. 7.
[87]*W. N.*, 29 Jul. 1882.
[88]See Mc Namara'A Tenants' League or a shopkeepers' league? and Casey 'Land, politics and religion', chapter seven.
[89]Scotland, 'The demand for a stake in the soil', p. 159.
[90]Curits, *The Depiction of Eviction.*
[91]Idem.,*Coercion and conciliation in Ireland, 1880–1892* (Princeton, 1963),pp 238–41.
[92]For more on the Plan of Campaign, see Laurence Geary, *The Plan of Campaign, 1886–91* (Cork, 1986). Despite the intrinsic interest and significance of the Woodford campaign, the historiography has been scant until recently. Nevertheless, there are some useful accounts in: Brian Casey, 'The Battle of Saunders Fort', in *South East Galway Archaeological and Historical Society Newsletter* (Feb. 2013); Curtis, *The depiction of eviction in Ireland;* Feeney, 'The Woodford evictions', Thomas Gorman, *Clanricarde country and the land campaign* (Woodford, 1987) and Miriam Moffit, *Clanricarde's planters and land agitation in east Galway* (Dublin, 2011).
[93]Lee, *The Modernisation of Irish Society* p. 127.
[94]L. P. Curtis Jnr., 'Force: the Language of Violence in Irish Nationalism', in *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (April, 1988), p. 183.
[95] P. K. Egan, *The Parish of Ballinasloe: Its history from the earliest time to the present* (Dublin, 1960), p. 247.
[96] Finnegan, *The Land War in South-East Galway*, p. 22.
[97]For more on Fergus O'Connor and the Chartist Land Plan see Timothy Keane, 'Narrating the Irish Famine: Chartism, the Land and Fiction', in Brian Casey (ed), *Defying the Law of the Land: Agrarian Radicals in Irish History* (Dublin, 2013), pp 44–64; see also Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism*
[98]See Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism* p. 51.
[99]Ibid., pp 22–3.