



## Ireland 1801-1921

Lesson plans, worksheets & other resources

Booklet 8

Topic 7: Irish nationalism, 1848-1900 (Lessons 16-21)

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The following are available at <http://journals.aol.co.uk/iis04/trials/entries/926>:  
this booklet in pdf format; and  
a PowerPoint including the presentations and visual sources used in the topic.

Topic Title: Irish nationalism 1848-1900					
Lessons 16, 17 & 18	<p><b><u>Lesson title</u></b></p> <p>What were the aims and methods of the different nationalist movements during the period 1848-1890?</p> <p><b><u>Aims:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To research one particular movement's aims and methods.</li> <li>• To plan a starter and a 20 minute lesson on the chronology of their movement.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Starter</u></b></p> <p>Set the task – give out the materials and explain that the students have to create a starter, a PPT about the aims and methods of their movement, and a summary sheet.</p>	<p><b><u>Main Activities</u></b></p> <p>Students work in groups of 4 or 5 to plan their lesson.</p>	<p><b><u>Plenary</u></b></p> <p>N/A</p>	<p><b><u>Materials</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Source Packs – Fenianism; Land League; Home Rulers <i>Expansion, Trade and Industry</i>, pp. 93-96;<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Gladstone, Parnell and the Irish Question, pp 348-54;<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• 'The Fenians' &amp; 'Ireland and Home Rule', pp 98, 119<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• Paul Ginnis <i>Teacher's Toolkit</i>.<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• Computers.</li> <li>• Group task sheets.</li> </ul>
Lesson 19	<p><b><u>Lesson title</u></b></p> <p>What were the aims, methods and impact of the Fenian movement?</p> <p><b><u>Aims:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To teach a starter.</li> <li>• To present a summary of the aims and methods of the Fenian movement.</li> <li>• To understand the impact of the movement.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Starter</u></b></p> <p>Student starter.</p>	<p><b><u>Main Activities</u></b></p> <p>Student feedback of information coupled with a summary sheet.</p>	<p><b><u>Plenary</u></b></p> <p>w/s Reactions to the Fenians -</p>	<p><b><u>Materials</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Summary sheet</li> <li>• w/s Reactions to the Fenians</li> </ul>
Lesson 20	<p><b><u>Lesson title</u></b></p> <p>What were the aims, methods and impact of the Land League?</p> <p><b><u>Aims:</u></b></p> <p>To teach a starter. To present a summary of the aims and methods of the Land League. To understand the impact of the movement.</p>	<p><b><u>Starter</u></b></p> <p>Student starter.</p>	<p><b><u>Main Activities</u></b></p> <p>Student feedback of information coupled with a summary sheet.</p>	<p><b><u>Plenary</u></b></p> <p>w/s Land League Source Question – go through the sources with the students and then address the question.</p>	<p><b><u>Materials</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Summary sheet</li> <li>• w/s Land League source question.</li> </ul>
Lesson 21	<p><b><u>Lesson title</u></b></p> <p>What were the aims, methods and impact of the Home Rule movement?</p> <p><b><u>Aims:</u></b></p> <p>To teach a starter. To present a summary of the aims and methods of the Home Rule movement. To understand the impact of the movement.</p>	<p><b><u>Starter</u></b></p> <p>Student starter.</p>	<p><b><u>Main Activities</u></b></p> <p>Student feedback of information coupled with a summary sheet.</p>	<p><b><u>Plenary</u></b></p> <p>Give out the sources. Students read through/examine their source and decide whether they think it is for or against Home Rule and how far in favour or against it is. Each group in turn comes to the front and moves the swingometer to where they think it goes, justifying where they have placed it.</p> <p>Discuss the overall support for the Home Rule movement.</p>	<p><b><u>Materials</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Summary sheet</li> <li>• Home Rule Sources</li> <li>• Swingometer.</li> </ul>
Homework	<p>Lessons 16, 17 &amp; 18: Continue preparing lesson. Lesson 19: Parnell Timeline Creation – using Wikipedia.org. Lesson 21: To prepare a plan for the essay title – To what extent did the aims and methods of the Irish Nationalists change between 1848 and 1890?</p>				

<sup>1</sup> by James Mason, Longman, 0-58220-738-X, pp. 93-96; <sup>2</sup> *Challenging History: Britain in the C19th* by Howard Martin, Nelson, 0174350627, <sup>3</sup> *The World of Empire, Industry and Trade* by Bea Stimpson, Stanley Thornes (Publishers) Ltd, 0-74873-660-3; <sup>4</sup> Crown House Publishing, 1-89983-676-4.

### Introduction

Gladstone committed a great deal of time and energy trying to pacify Ireland between 1868 and 1874 but it was clear by 1871 that his policies were not succeeding. If anything the discontent with British rule in Ireland was growing. Between 1870 and 1886 the Nationalist movement became stronger and stronger. Campaigns over the Land Question and whether Ireland should have Home Rule became key issues in British life. In a nutshell, the majority of Irish people wanted an end to the Union.

### Charles Stewart Parnell

How did this happen? How were Irish Nationalists able to put Ireland on the centre stage when most English politicians knew little and understood less about it? A key figure in answering these questions was the Nationalist leader Charles Stewart Parnell. He was a very able politician. He was also a complex man, not always easy to get on with. To understand how a Protestant landlord became leader of Irish nationalism in the 1880s, supported by tenant farmers and the Catholic Church, we need to go back a couple of years.

### Nationalism in the 1870s

The old divisions in the Nationalist movement were still there in 1871. The Fenians still plotted and dreamed about total independence for Ireland achieved by an armed rebellion. However, times were changing. There was another branch of Nationalism which might be able to bring about peaceful change. There was widespread discontent with British rule at the 'respectable' end of society.

### Home Rule

Many Protestant landowners felt that a Parliament in London could not govern Ireland properly. Irish MPs were outnumbered by English MPs who knew little about Ireland and cared little as well. Laws passed to help England might actually damage Ireland. They felt there was a need for Ireland to have Home Rule. This meant staying part of the British Empire, but Ireland would have its own Parliament and rule itself. In 1870 a gentleman lawyer, Isaac Butt, founded the Home Government Association. It was a very mixed bunch of Protestants, Catholics, tenants and landlords and even a few Fenians.

They all agreed on one thing - the need for an Irish Parliament. As Gladstone's reforms failed to please anyone in Ireland they became more sure of this. One important development was that some Fenians began to see the possibilities of Butt's movement. In 1873, the Association became a proper political party called the Home Rule League. In the 1874 election 59 Home Rule MPs gained seats. Not all of them were totally committed to home rule - they just wanted to be MPs. However, there were some MPs who were Fenians and they were committed to the cause. One of them, Joseph Biggar, was a member of the IRB's Supreme Council.

## Parnell

The new party made little impact. Butt was not the best man to lead it. Anyway, the Tories won the 1874 election with a comfortable majority. The Tory Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli ignored Irish affairs. But not for long. In 1875 Biggar and some of the other Fenian MPs began a policy of obstructionism in the House of Commons. This drove English MPs wild and infuriated the press. However, it gained huge support in Ireland. One young MP saw this effect. This MP for Wicklow, Parnell, saw the impact of more extreme action by the Fenian MPs. He also saw that the Fenians had a lot of support and influence at grass roots level in Ireland. He wondered whether the Parliamentary wing of Nationalism could be allied more closely with the Fenian wing. Others had developed their thinking along the same lines, particularly the Fenian leader Michael Davitt. It was the beginning of the new departure.

## The New Departure

In the 1860s and 1870s both Parliamentary Nationalists and the IRB helped to campaign for changes in the land laws. John Devoy (Fenian) and Michael Davitt (IRB) helped to organise a Tenant League to protect tenants. The Tenant Leagues were successful. In 1879 Devoy, Davitt and Parnell discussed ways to harness the support of the tenant farmers for Parnell's party. This combination of land campaigners, Fenians and politicians was the New Departure. It was strengthened by the support of the Catholic Church and by changes in the British voting system.

Despite the tragedy of human suffering, the great Famine was not without some benefits. The drop in population that resulted from mass emigration helped to create a better balance between food resources and need.

### The Fenians

Such a detached view did not prevail at the time. The bitterness of those Irish who escaped the famine, whether as survivors or emigrants, found its most violent form in Fenianism. This movement, which took its name from 'Fianna', the warriors of Irish legend, came into being in 1858 simultaneously in Dublin and New York. It pledged itself to drive the English out of Ireland by force. The struggle was carried to the mainland in the 1860s, with Fenian outrages involving the deaths of civilians and policemen in Manchester and London.

### Pacifying Ireland

Gladstone, during his first Liberal administration, 1868-74, set himself the task of pacifying Ireland, but despite his good intentions his reforms relating to land, religion and education did little to lessen the bitterness. The number of evictions and retaliatory outrages mounted.

### Land League

Fenianism was not the only Irish reaction. Equally significant was the Land League. Founded in 1879, this organisation aimed at breaking the grip of landlords as a step towards independence for Ireland. Modern scholars emphasise that whatever their social privileges may have been and however much they were disliked as exploiters by their tenants the landlords were themselves suffering from economic decline. Their income from rents rarely met overheads.

### Charles Stewart Parnell

The Land League's first president was Charles Stewart Parnell who was to become as outstanding a spokesman of Irish hopes as O'Connell had been earlier in the century. Parnell, a Protestant landowner, was driven by a deep and abiding detestation of the British. He advocated a two-fold strategy: in Ireland, a campaign of rent-strikes against landlords; at Westminster, a programme of obstruction by Irish MPs of government and parliamentary business. That a movement which was anti-landlord and supported by Catholics should have been led by someone who was both landlord and Protestant suggests the complexities and cross-currents that made up Irish nationalism.

### Gladstone and the Land League

Although the League had a constitutional front, it adopted radical, activist methods from the beginning. The violent period that followed became known as the 'land war'. Gladstone persisted in his efforts to solve the outstanding problems but whatever the merits of his intended reforms they were seen as concessions wrung from an unwilling English

administration. Gladstone's government tried both coercion and conciliation. Parnell, who had been imprisoned on suspicion of sedition, was released in return for promising to use his influence to lessen the violence in Ireland.

The Land League did not achieve its immediate objectives, but it did arouse national consciousness to new heights. Moreover, it could be argued that the Irish land question was effectively solved by Wyndham's Act in 1903. This measure, introduced by a Conservative government, granted substantial proprietorship to former tenants and compensated the dispossessed landlords. However, by that time the land issue was no longer the outstanding question affecting Anglo-Irish relations. It had been superseded by the Home Rule movement and the drive towards Irish independence.

**Group 1 - What were the aims and methods of the Fenians?***Task:*

Your group will provide the first 25 minutes of a lesson on teaching the rest of the group about your given topic. In preparation for this you must:

- Create a starting activity to last no more than 7 minutes.
- Produce a PowerPoint which goes over the chronology of your movement between 1848 and 1890, with particular focus on the AIMS and METHODS of the group.
- Write a summary sheet with the main facts on for the rest of the class.

*Resources:*

- Remember that you have a list of websites which might be useful.
- Resource packs.
- Adelman, chapter 5.

**Group 2 - What were the aims and methods of the Land League?***Task:*

Your group will provide the first 25 minutes of a lesson on teaching the rest of the group about your given topic. In preparation for this you must:

- Create a starting activity to last no more than 7 minutes.
- Produce a PowerPoint which goes over the chronology of your movement between 1848 and 1890, with particular focus on the AIMS and METHODS of the group.
- Write a summary sheet with the main facts on for the rest of the class.

*Resources:*

- Remember that you have a list of websites which might be useful.
- Resource packs.
- Adelman, chapter pages 83-88.

### Group 3 - What were the aims and methods of the Home Rule Movement?

#### *Task:*

Your group will provide the first 25 minutes of a lesson on teaching the rest of the group about your given topic. In preparation for this you must:

- Create a starting activity to last no more than 7 minutes.
- Produce a PowerPoint which goes over the chronology of your movement between 1848 and 1890, with particular focus on the AIMS and METHODS of the group.
- Write a summary sheet with the main facts on for the rest of the class.

#### *Resources:*

- Remember that you have a list of websites which might be useful.
- Resource packs.
- Adelman, chapter = 5, pages 81-82; 98-100.

## Fenian Brotherhood

The Fenian Brotherhood was an Irish nationalist organization based in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. It was a precursor to Clan na Gael, a sister organization to the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Members were commonly known as 'Fenians'. The revolutionary secret society was founded by John O'Mahony in 1858. O'Mahony, who was a Celtic scholar, named his organization after the Fianna, the legendary band of Irish warriors led by Fionn mac Cumhail.

## Founding of The Fenian Brotherhood

After the collapse of William Smith O'Brien's attempted rising in Ireland in 1848, O'Mahony, who had been involved in it, had escaped abroad, arriving in New York City in 1852. Around 1858, O'Mahony established the Fenian Brotherhood, whose members bound themselves by an oath of allegiance to the Irish Republic and swore to take up arms when called upon and to obey their superior officers. After a convention held at Chicago, Illinois under O'Mahony's presidency in November 1863, the American wing of the movement began to become effective.

The Irish People, a revolutionary journal started in Dublin by IRB leader James Stephens, was appealing for aid from Irishmen who had received military training and experience in the American Civil War. At the close of that war in 1865, numbers of Irish veterans flocked back to Ireland, but a government crackdown arrested many and forced Stephens to flee.

## Irish National Land League

The Irish Land League was an Irish political organization of the late 19th century which sought to help poor tenant farmers. Its primary aim was to abolish 'landlordism' in Ireland and enable tenant farmers to own the land they worked on. The period of the Land League's agitation is known in Ireland as the Land War.

On April 20, 1879 the first of many 'monster meetings' of tenant farmers was held near Claremorris, County Mayo, with an estimated turnout of 15,000 to 20,000 people. Following this a number of local land league organisations were set up to work against the excessive rents being demanded by landlords all over Ireland, but especially in Mayo and surrounding counties.

The Irish National Land League was founded at the Imperial Hotel in Dublin, on 21st October, 1879. At that meeting Charles Stewart Parnell was elected president of the league. A.J. Kettle, Michael Davitt, and Thomas Brennan were appointed as honorary secretaries.

The two aims of the Land League, as stated in the resolutions adopted in the meeting, were:  
...first, to bring out a reduction of rack-rents;

...second, to facilitate the obtaining of the ownership of the soil by the occupiers.

That the object of the League can be best attained by promoting organisation among the tenant-farmers; by defending those who may be threatened with eviction for refusing to pay unjust rents; by facilitating the working of the Bright clauses of the Irish Land Act during the winter; and by obtaining such reforms in the laws relating to land as will enable every tenant to become owner of his holding by paying a fair rent for a limited number of years.

Charles Stewart Parnell, John Dillon, Michael Davitt, and others went to America to raise funds for the League with spectacular results. The League was created just before the Land War of 1880-1882 in which there was widespread upheaval. The League would decide on a fair rent and then encourage its members to offer this rent to the landlords. If this were refused, then the rent would be paid to the League and the landlord would not receive any money until he saw the light.

The first target was a member of the Catholic Church hierarchy, Canon Ulick Burke, who eventually reduced his rents by 25%. Many landlords resisted these tactics violently and there were deaths on either side of the dispute. The Royal Irish Constabulary, though largely made up of Irishmen, took the landlord's side. Originally, the movement cut across sectarian boundaries, with many meetings being held in Orange halls in Ulster, but this ended as the landed gentry extended their influence within the Orange Order.

Within a few short decades of the league's founding however, through the struggles of men like William O'Brien achieving the Wyndham Land Purchase Act of 1903 and through its implementation by such land and labour activists as D.D. Sheehan M.P.'s together with the Irish Land and Labour Association, the vast majority of Irish land and housing was, after the final passing of the Labourers (Ireland) Act 1906 and Labourers (Ireland) Act 1911, in the hands of small farmers, not large landowners.

## How did the British react to the Fenians?

Lesson 19 - w/s 1

*Read page 89 of Adelman and answer the questions below:*

What was the Coercion Act?

Why do you think Gladstone passed this measure?

Do you think it had any impact at all?

*Read page 92 of Adelman and answer the questions below:*

What was the reaction to the Phoenix Park murders by Gladstone, Parnell and the general public?

*Study the picture on page 93.*

Who do you think the figure is handing money

over to the anarchist?

What do you think the artist is trying to say  
about the Invincibles?



**Source A**

*The Land League states its aims in a propaganda poster of 1879.*

First, to put an end to Rack-renting, Eviction, and Landlord Oppression. Second, to effect such a radical change in the Land System of Ireland as will put it in the power of every Irish farmer to become the owner, on fair terms, of the land he tills.

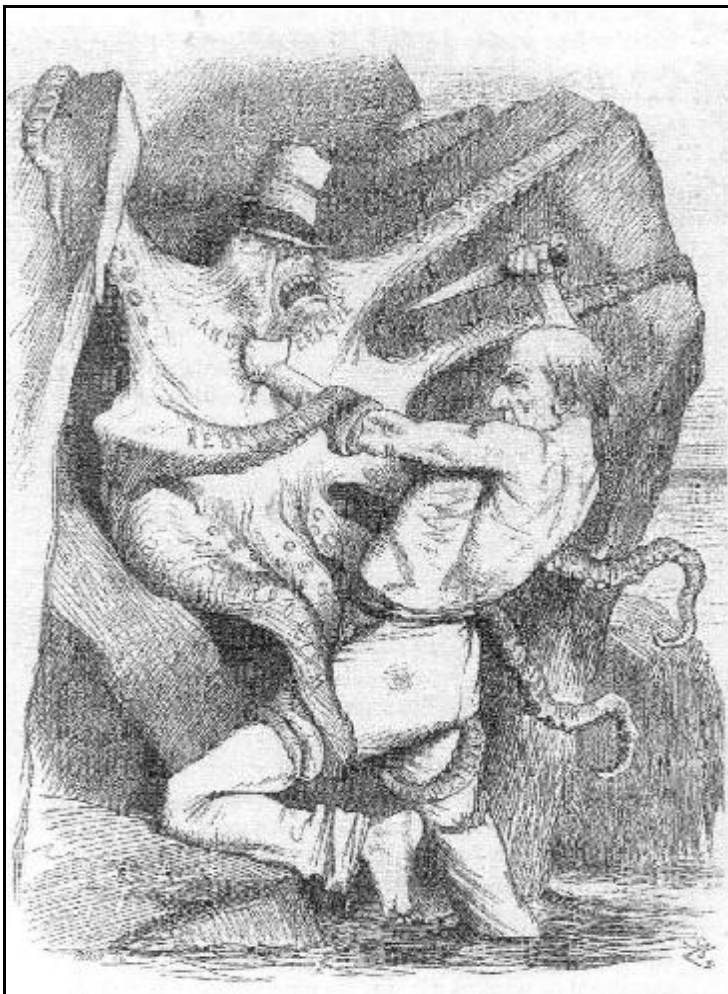
The means proposed to effect this object are:

Organisation among the people and Tenant Farmers for the purpose of self-defence.

The cultivation of public opinion by persistent exposure...of the monstrous injustice of the present system...

A resolute demand for the reduction of the excessive rents which have brought the Irish people to a state of starvation.

Temperate but firm resistance to oppression and injustice.



**Source B**

*From: Cartoon in Punch, 1881.*

The cartoon shows Gladstone fighting the Land League - represented by the Irish Devil-Fish.

## Source C

*Paul Adelman and Robert Pearce, Great Britain and the Irish Question 1798-1921.*

### The Second Land Act 1881

Gladstone's Second Land Act introduced the '3 Fs':

1. 'Fair rents' for tenants, which were to be fixed for 15 years by Land Courts.
2. 'Fixity of Tenure' throughout Ireland, which meant that tenants could not be evicted providing they paid their rents.
3. 'Free sale', which was the recognition of the tenant's 'interest' in his holding and his right to compensation when he relinquished it.

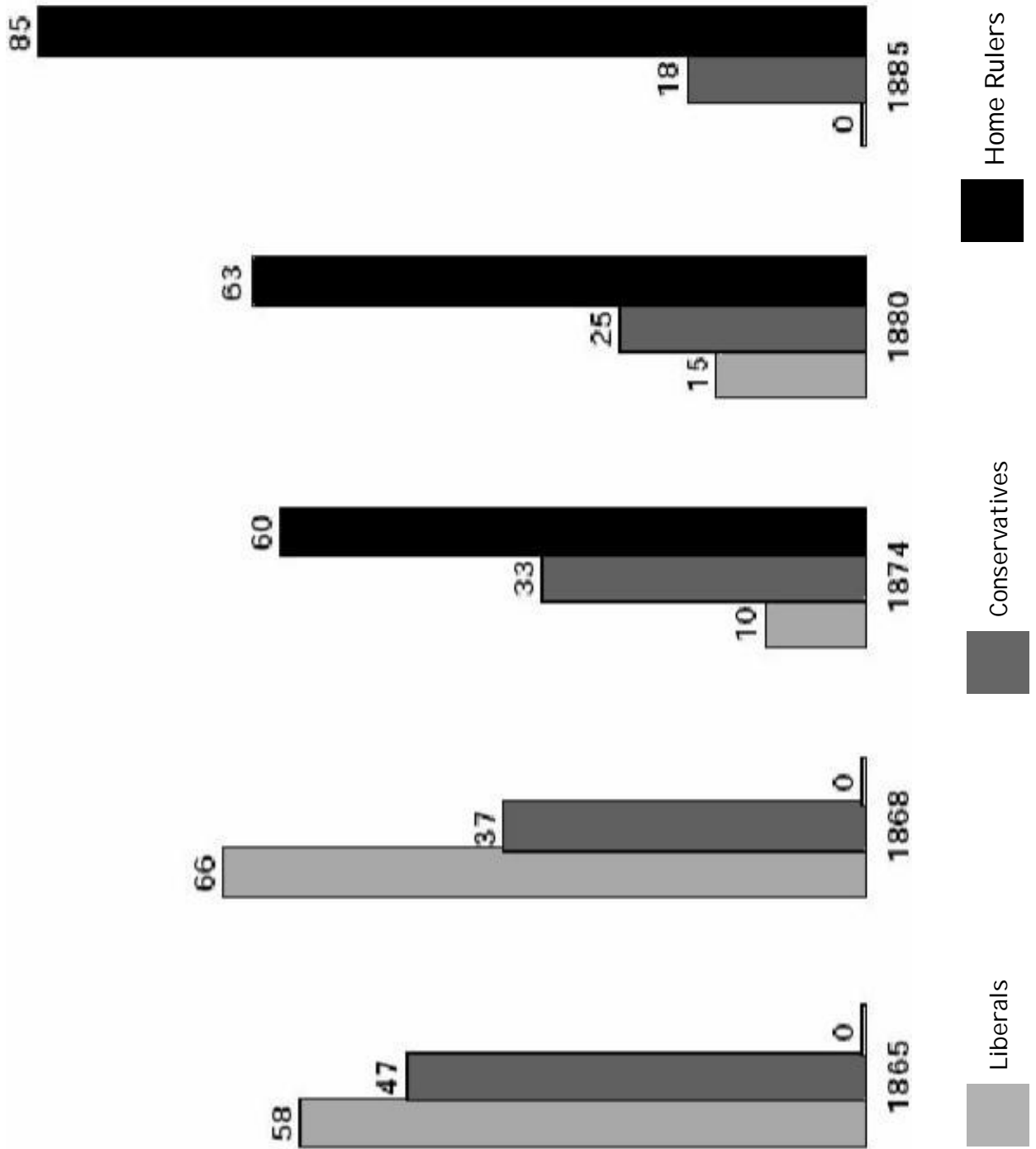
In addition, the government again included a land purchase scheme. This time it was rather more favourable to the tenant since it raised the state's proportion of the purchase price from two-thirds to three-quarters.

Despite his masterly performance in pushing the complicated Land Bill through the Commons in the summer of 1881...recent historians have argued that Gladstone again failed to face up to the economic realities of rural Ireland. For in the west of Ireland particularly, it was the lack of cultivable land rather than the problem of rents that was the fundamental problem for the smallholders....

...But the Second Land Act has been described as 'less an economic policy than...a political stroke'. For Gladstone its purpose was to destroy the *raison d'être* of the Land League and the necessity for violence by granting the tenants their major demands. To a large extent he succeeded - thanks to the work of the Land Courts. For, owing to their decisions, over the next few years a 20% reduction in rents gradually occurred.

**How far do the sources agree on why Gladstone pushed for the Second Land Act to be passed?**

General election results  
Ireland, 1865-85



From Gladstone to Lord Granville, January 1886.

Hartington writes to me a letter indicating...his determination to maintain the legislative union, that is to proclaim a policy (so I understand the phrase) of absolute resistance without examination to the demand made by Ireland through five-sixths of her members. This is to play the tory game with a vengeance. They are now most rashly, not to say more, working the Irish question to split the Liberal Party. It seems to me that if a gratuitous declaration of this kind is made, it must produce an explosion; and that in a week's time Hartington will have to consider whether he will lead the Liberal Party himself, or leave it to chaos. He will make my position impossible.

**From Gladstone's speech in the Commons, March 1894.**

We are compelled to accompany that acceptance [of the Bill's defeat] with the sorrowful declaration that the differences, not of a temporary or casual nature merely, but differences of conviction, differences of prepossession, differences of mental habit, and differences of fundamental tendency, between the house of Lords and the House of Commons, appear to have reached a development in the present year such as to create a state of things of which we are compelled to say that, in our judgement, it cannot continue.

From *Ireland Since the Famine* by F.S.L. Lyons, 1973.

Racism was no monopoly of the educated classes. It reflected, also, popular prejudices about the Irish in Britain working often at lowly and ill paid employment, living in squalor...suspect in their religion, despised (and sometimes feared) as drinking too deep and quarrelling too often...It was by no means impossible for ordinary British citizens, whatever their politics, to feel at one and the same time that the Irish were deeply to be pitied for their poverty and sufferings, but also that because of their backwardness, their illiteracy, their supposed domination by their priests, they were fundamentally unsuited to have charge of their own affairs.



In this *Punch* cartoon, Harry Furniss shows William Gladstone trying to persuade his Cabinet to support his proposed Home Rule Bill in 1893.

