

saw this need as not only a solution to the problems of the present, but also as a foundation for a better future and stronger empire. "The concession of local self-government is not the way to sap or impair, but the way to strengthen and consolidate unity."⁵ These sentiments echoed those of Gladstone's longtime political opponent, Benjamin Disraeli, who thought self-government to be "part of a great policy of imperial consolidation."⁶

Gladstone's provisions for Home Rule included clear outlines of the duties of an Irish parliament and how much voice Ireland would have in governance of the United Kingdom. I see no reason why this arrangement would not have worked. Hartington, however, objected that the plan would be the creation of a state of things as absolutely and entirely different from that as it is possible to conceive.⁷ But Hartington's argument is shallow at best. Gladstone's plan was well thought out, carefully constructed, and certainly conceivable.

As to the question of Ulster, Gladstone was right when he stated, "I cannot allow it to be said that a Protestant minority in Ulster, or elsewhere, is to rule the question at large for Ireland."⁸ Gladstone did not shy away from the question. The threat of civil war in Ireland over this question did not intimidate Gladstone. For this, he deserves credit as a progressive thinker. He had a firm grasp on the situation and I believe that history has proven him correct in his assessment.

The best thing for both Ireland and Great Britain would have been one Home Rule parliament for the whole of Ireland, with no divisions. Some may argue that this would have brought civil war. But a civil war would not have been any worse at that moment in history than what has actually happened since then. Indeed, a decisive civil war would probably have been better for Ireland and England in the long run.

Gladstone laid it out plainly when he discussed Irish nationalism as a force to be taken seriously. His comparisons of Irish local patriotism to that of the Welshman or the Scot were compelling and strengthened his

⁵William Gladstone, "The Case for Home Rule," in *The Past Speaks*, ed. Arnstein, 254.

⁶Benjamin Disraeli, "The Maintenance of Empire," in *Past Speaks*, ed. Arnstein, 270.

⁷Hartington, "The Case Against Home Rule," 255.

⁸Gladstone, "The Case for Home Rule," 252-3.

former assertion that good laws should not only be passed, but "that they should be passed by the proper persons."⁹ In saying this, Gladstone echoed the powerful speech of Isaac Butt to the House of Commons twelve years earlier. In that speech, Butt stated the obvious truth of the matter: "the English Parliament undertakes a duty it is unable to perform--namely to manage the Internal affairs of Ireland to the satisfaction of the Irish people."¹⁰

Gladstone had the most compelling solution to the Home Rule question. Had it been implemented at the time of proposal, many of the future difficulties could have been avoided. In the long run, it would have provided the foundation for a strong Ireland and a stronger United Kingdom.

Home Rule:

The First Step Toward Disenitigation

by Kristian Crawford

In April of 1886, William Gladstone, the Liberal Prime Minister of England, addressed the House of Commons. He asked that Home Rule be granted to Ireland, thus implying that the Irish be allowed to form their own separate parliament. This parliament that would have the power to determine its own internal legislation while remaining tied to the Imperial Parliament in London through "defence, foreign policy, trade and navigation" laws.¹¹ Gladstone's support for Irish Home Rule opened a debate in the British Parliament that continued for thirty years. Gladstone's

⁹*Ibid.*, 252.

¹⁰Isaac Butt, "Irish Affairs for an Irish Parliament," *The Past Speaks*, ed. Arnstein, 246.

¹¹Teresa O'Donovan, "Ulster and Home Rule for Ireland. To 1914," *Eire-Ireland* (Fall 1983): 7.

opposition, the Unionists, noted that he had failed to mention the cultural factors that bound England and Ireland, the willingness of the British Parliament to appease the Catholic masses within Ireland, and the imminently disastrous consequences of Home Rule to the Empire as a whole. The economic, religious, and cultural forces apparent at the time led Gladstone's opponents to one inescapable conclusion: the maintenance of the Union was the only solution to the Irish problem and therefore, Home Rule, the first step towards separation, would not be tolerated. This essay attempts to make sense of Gladstone's opposition: that is, could the Unionists have had a better argument?

The Unionists cited the close economic and political connection between England and Ireland as a reason not to accept Home Rule. Led by the Marquess of Hartington, a member of the Liberal party (the same party as Gladstone which was now divided over Home Rule), the opposition forces decided not to compromise on the issue. The Unionists were wary of the Irish Land League, formed in 1879 under Charles Stuart Parnell: a league intent upon obtaining Home Rule. The members of this League desired a redistribution of Irish land, believing this would be advantageous for the Catholic masses. As eight-ninths of the land in Ireland belonged to Protestant landowners, the Unionists felt it was necessary to protect the landowners' interests. Hartington stated:

We have a Roman Catholic clergy wielding a large political influence. The owners of land in Ireland have been deprived of almost all control over their estates; and with the loss of that control they have lost the political influence which they formerly enjoyed.¹³

It was mandatory to protect the economic and political interests of the landowners, regardless of where they lived. Whether or not these landowners were located in Ireland was irrelevant; the rents collected from the Irish tenants were their source of livelihood. Thus, Home Rule, in which land redistribution would favor the Catholics, endangered the interests of the landowning class—the Protestants.

¹³Marquess of Hartington, "The Case Against Home Rule (1886)," in *The Past Speaks, Sources and Problems in British History* ed. Walter L. Arnstein (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Co., 1993), 255.

The opponents of Home Rule further noted the economic prosperity of Ulster in their arguments. Ulster, in which the industrial city of Belfast was located, was strongly Unionist.¹³ They desired "...the continuation of the policy of development which can alone be carried on under an Imperial Parliament." Not only was the industrial northeast (Ulster) prosperous for those living within it, it was also prosperous for the whole of England. "In 1892...the customs and inland revenue returns at Belfast amounted to £3,250,000; last year [1911] the figure was £4,915,000— not a bad contribution to the Imperial Exchequer." The idea of Home Rule was harshly rejected by those in Ulster. They preferred to retain Union and the economic growth that corresponded with Union. They upheld the Constitution, equality, unity, and progress: ideals that could not be maintained with the institution of Home Rule.¹⁴

Religion became closely related to the economic factor. It was believed a restored parliament in Ireland would be Roman Catholic. As a result, the Irish Parliament would enact legislation to hurt the Protestant minority in Ulster, thus disrupting their economic well-being.¹⁵

The Imperial Parliament in Britain had enacted laws which were advantageous for the Catholic masses. The Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 allowed Catholics to sit in Parliament and hold military and civil offices. In addition, the disestablishment of the Protestant Church of Ireland in 1869 freed the Irish-Catholics from paying tithes to a church that served only one-eighth of the population. The establishment of these laws proved that parliament was willing to pass domestic legislation helpful to the Irish-Catholic populace. Hartington stated:

We may grant that the Parliament of the United Kingdom delayed too long Catholic Emancipation; we may grant that it too long maintained Protestant ascendancy in Ireland; we may grant that the land legislation of the imperial parliament was too long conceived in the interests of the landlord class and in disregard of those of the occupiers and cultivators; but it is beyond the possibility of proof that an Irish Parliament,

¹³O'Donovan, 6.

¹⁴Ibid., 258-9.

¹⁵Hartington, "The Case Against Home Rule (1886)," Arnstein, 255.

...would have initiated and carried out the reforms that were needed before the imperial parliament did so.¹⁶

The British Parliament's understanding and acceptance of the reforms desired by the Irish people allowed them to enact laws that were as fair and just as possible for all concerned.

Another argument utilized by Hartington was the extension of Home Rule to the other lands which comprised the United Kingdom. He traced the consequences of Home Rule to their logical conclusions:

If this is a plan which is good for Ireland, I conceive that it ought to be and must be good for England, Scotland, and Wales. If Scotland or Wales demand that this plan should be extended to them, I do not see how that demand can possibly be refused.

He continued by mentioning how these independent legislatures would have to "contribute to the expense of an imperial policy...when they would have no voice whatever in controlling it."¹⁷ With this argument, Hartington questioned whether Home Rule was really the best course. Indeed, it would actually lead to less representation rather than greater representation.

The prospect of Home Rule in Ireland did not "command the support--the intelligent and informed support--of the majority of the people" in England.¹⁸ Quick change was not acceptable; natural progression, was preferred over forced progression. In addition, cultural ties bound the people of the United Kingdom. Hartington stated:

The people of Great Britain--England and Scotland--have relatives, and connections, and friends in Ireland, and great interests in Ireland, and the people of Great Britain will not be indifferent to what passes in Ireland;...but if they think that oppression or injustice is taking place, the minority in Ireland will appeal to the people of England and Scotland, and will not appeal in vain. The occasions of collision will be too likely, in fact will be certain, to occur....¹⁹

It was, therefore, most beneficial to maintain the ties, both cultural and political, that appeased the majority of the United Kingdom. The issue of

¹⁶Ibid., 254-255.

¹⁷Ibid., 256.

¹⁸Ibid., 254.

¹⁹Ibid., 257.

Home Rule challenged the cumulative desire of the populace for peace and harmony. Grant Home Rule and observe the suffering to come, or dispense with the issue and observe the ability of those within the United Kingdom to progress towards the zenith of morality.

The only solution to the Irish problem, as observed by the Unionists, was the maintenance of the Union. Hartington noted that the mere introduction of Home Rule "will be henceforth the minimum of the Irish demand; it will be the starting-point and the vantage-ground of whatever proposals they may hereafter think it necessary to bring forward."²⁰ In fact, Hartington believed "the demand which the Irish people make is not a demand for the reform or the extension of local self-government...at all. What that demand really is, is a demand for practical separation from this country."²¹ The belief that Home Rule would lead to separation could not be ignored. The imperialist policy of England forbade the removal of British governance from its dominions. It could not accept Home Rule as it embodied the first step towards separation and independence. As a result, those who resisted Home Rule did so vehemently. Sir Edward Carson, in 1912, said:

We...men of Ulster,...hereby pledge ourselves in solemn covenant throughout this our time of threatened calamity to stand by one another in defending for ourselves and our children our cherished position of equal citizenship in the United Kingdom, and in using all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland. And in the event of such a Parliament being forced upon us we further solemnly and mutually pledge ourselves to refuse to recognize its authority.²²

Clearly, the Unionists would not be swayed into accepting Home Rule.

The Irish problem plagued the Imperial Parliament for numerous years. Prime Minister William Gladstone first proposed Home Rule for Ireland in 1886, a proposal countered by staunch opposition. Those who opposed Home Rule cited the cultural bonds that held the United Kingdom

²⁰Ibid., 254.

²¹Ibid., 255-256.

²²Carson, "The Case for Ulster," *Amatein*, 258.

together, the attempts by Parliament to appease the Irish masses, and the expected dissolution of the Empire if Home Rule were granted. Tensions escalated as this question went unanswered, for the opposition believed the maintenance of Union was the only answer to the Irish problem. The paramountcy of Union would not be denied, and neither would "the undisputed supremacy of the law" of England.²³ Ireland was bound to Great Britain through ties not easily broken, and those who opposed Home Rule decided those ties must never be broken.

*My Lai:
The Making of a Massacre.*

by William A. Brooks

Research Methods, a required course for history majors at Eastern, demands that, as their final assignment, students support or rebut a paragraph from a standard history text. In so doing, students draw upon the research skills developed throughout the semester. In the following essay, Mr. Brooks accepts the facts presented in Litwack and Jordan's The United States: Becoming a World Power; yet, he questions their analysis.

The administration had good reason to be concerned with the television and press coverage of the war. The daily barrage of pictures and words constantly reminded the American public of the brutality and apparent futility of the conflict. Early in 1970, for example, the full details were revealed of an American attack in March 1968 on My Lai, a Vietnamese hamlet. Led by Lieutenant William L. Calley, Jr., a company of United States soldiers had massacred at least 175 and perhaps more than 500 Vietnamese, mostly old men, women, youths, and infants. The Army's official inquiry found the troops guilty of "individual and group acts of murder, rape, sodomy, maiming and assault on noncombatants and the mistreatment and killing of detainees."¹

A little over a year has passed since the above paragraph appeared in *The United States: Becoming a World Power*, a standard college history textbook by Leon Litwack and Winthrop Jordan. While a history text may provide facts, it seldom answers the questions how and why something of this nature could happen. While this paper will not dispute the facts presented, it will argue that the term "individual and group acts of murder" ignores the root cause of the massacre.

When Americans hear the words "war atrocities" they often visualize

²³Hardington, "The Case Against Home Rule", *Araratian*, 257.

¹Leon F. Litwack and Winthrop F. Jordan, *The United States: Becoming a World Power* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1991), 837.