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CHAPTER FIVE

'Ireland's last fetter struck off':
The Lord-Lieutenancy
Debate 1800-67

PETER GRAY

For much of the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century the office of the Irish lord-lieutenant was a contested constitutional site. This is evident from the debates surrounding the series of attempts (ultimately abortive) to abolish it and replace the viceroyal system of executive governance based at Dublin Castle with direct rule from Westminster. The abolition debates gave articulation to a vigorous, if ultimately unresolved, controversy over Ireland's constitutional status within the United Kingdom and the British Empire, involving significant claims and counter-claims over the incomplete character of the Act of Union, the continuing 'colonial' status of Ireland, and the survival of 'national' political institutions.

This pre-Home Rule controversy reinforced the dualistic ambivalence that characterised British (and many Irish) constructions of Ireland's constitutional condition. Pulled in opposite directions by the contrasting imperatives of British integrationism and the practicalities of governing an intractable society shaped by previous colonial practice, British observers ultimately found themselves incapable of reconciling constitutional theory with governing realities. Although each had its advocates, neither the contrasting models of Scotland or the West Indies colonies were found to offer a satisfactory answer to the problem of legitimising the executive government of Ireland.

The lord-lieutenancy debate was limited largely to the period between the 1820s and the emergence of the Home Rule campaign in the 1870s. Polarisation over the more profound constitutional changes embodied in the Home Rule Bills eclipsed the lesser (if still symbolically charged) question of the lord-lieutenancy. In 1871–2 and again in 1883 Gladstone floated the idea of the Prince of Wales replacing a ministerial appointment as the resident representative of the Crown, but his concern appears to have been as much with the survival of the monarchy as a useful institution as with the underlying constitutional problems of Ireland.
At any rate, his plans for a suprapolitical Edwardian viceroyalty were scuppered by a combination of Sas-Coghe-Gotha family politics, Irish nationalism opposition, and parliamentary hostility towards further royal 'extravagance'1.

However, the issues raised in the early nineteenth-century debates continue to have resonance more than a century later. The idea that integrated direct rule would promote full political participation within a uniform British national state, and thereby marginalise Irish nationalism, attracted British radicals and liberals and their Irish Unionist allies in the nineteenth century. The same constitutional panaceas — sweeping away anything that smacked of constitutional or national difference — continues to appeal to sections of Unionism in Northern Ireland, and to elements of the British right, to the present. The ultra-integrationist language voiced by British and Irish advocates of viceroyal abolition in the nineteenth century was strangely re-echoed in the integrationist campaigns within Ulster Unionism led by Edwin Forrest from the mid-1970s and later taken up by the so-called 'Campaign for Equal Citizenship' in the 1980s and fitfully advocated by Robert McCartney and his accident-prone UKUP in the 1990s.2

**The Irish Viceroyalty and the Union.**

Motions or bills to abolish the Irish lord lieutenancy and the viceroyalty court, either replacing the position with a secretary of state for Ireland or transferring all Irish executive powers to the home secretary, were introduced into the Westminster Parliament in 1825, 1850, 1864, 1850, 1852, and 1858. The first three were brought forward by Joseph Hume, a Scot and a leading 'economic' radical. Those of 1857 and 1858 were proposed by one of Hume's successors in the radical leadership, John Arthur Roebuck. These backbench initiatives were attempts to push government or the main opposition party into action; although they failed, they attracted increasing support in the Commons and from the British press. When the long-serving viceroy Lord Carlisle retired from office in 1864, it was thus hardly surprising that a further press and pamphlet campaign attempted to re-open the question. The exception to these unofficial campaigns, and by far the most significant initiative, was the 1850 abolition bill, proposed by the Whig-Liberal government itself. Lord John Russell’s bill obtained a large Commons majority at its second reading but was lost due to lack of time at the end of the session. Russell’s ailing government did not have an opportunity to reintroduce the measure before it fell in 1852, but this official acceptance of the principle of abolition could not but alter the terms of the debate.

Before looking at the language of the debate, a brief summary of the power and political standing of the lord lieutenant may be helpful. The office had its roots in the twelfth-century position of the king’s lieutenant governor or 'locum tenentes', an institution of fluctuating importance and nomenclature, held at different times by energetic agents of the monarch, by sincurists, and by members of the leading Anglo-Irish families. After a period of inactive absenteeism, the lords lieutenant of the later eighteenth century had again become active executive officers, managing with the assistance of the Irish chief secretary and other Dublin Castle officials the often intractable Irish Parliament on behalf of the British government.1

The 1800 Act of Union created the new polity of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland with a unified legislature, but it left the executive apparatus in Dublin virtually unchanged. John Foster, one of the Act’s bitterest opponents, warned that the anomaly of abolishing the legislature while leaving the lord lieutenant and Dublin Castle departments intact would make Ireland 'a colony on the worst of terms', but this line of criticism did not become widespread in the Union debates. The absence from the Act of any mention of the executive was later to lead to sharp debate on what had been the intentions of the framers of the Union. Yet, while the abolition of the separate post of chancellor of the Irish exchequer in 1816 indicated that the Dublin executive was not concomitant, the offices of lord lieutenant, chief secretary and under secretary were to survive until the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922.

One of the objections raised after 1800 to the lord lieutenant was the simultaneous role it played in both the 'efficient' and 'dignified' aspects of the constitution, as Bagehot would later define them. As head of the Irish executive, the holder possessed significant statutory and prerogative powers over security and legal matters (including the power of mercy) and over other developing areas of administration such as the poor law commission and board of works. He also held considerable patronage powers. On the other hand, as viceregent he was also the monarch’s representative in Ireland, the apex of the Irish court and the focus of official ceremonies that traced their origins to Anglo-Norman times. Lords lieutenant continued, however, to be government appointments, the incumbent invariably departing with the fall of the governing party at Westminster. They were usually appointed from the British nobility or diplomatic corps (in the first half of the nineteenth century only Wellesley and Boothbrough were of Anglo-Irish background). One early twentieth-century historian of the institution, a Catholic liberal-unionist, lamented that the political dimension of the office had continually damaged its symbolic power, yet insisted that it was the mode of government best suited to the Irish character. As a country peopled by the descendants of Vikings, he could not be expected to have an instinctive respect for any form of Government savouring of Republicanism, or any that left swiftly to the imagination the majesty of the Sovereign ruler.1 Subsequent events were to reveal this to be wishful thinking, but the conflicts inherent in the institution of the lord lieutenant had long been a subject of heated controversy.

In the wake of the Union, internal tensions arose as the chief secretary’s position grew in status and responsibility vis-à-vis the viceregal Resident in London for half the year, and sometimes a full member of the Cabinet (which the lord lieutenant usually was not), a strong chief secretary such as Robert
Hume declared he was sure that Pitt’s intention in 1800 had been to introduce just such a ‘complete union’, but that executive corruption and special pleading had subsequently prevented this, just as they had the promised grant of Catholic emancipation.

Like many other British radicals and liberals in this period, Hume’s integrationism did not stop at the amalgamation of political institutions. The abolition of the lord lieutenantcy symbolised and would promote a more profound alteration in British-Irish relationships. The aim of the Union had been, he argued in 1836, ‘not alone to unite the two countries in name, but to blend them into one complete and perfect whole’. This means ‘assimilating the habits of the people’, explicitly by ‘raising’ the Irish to the level of the British, for ‘if Ireland were once set free from the burthen of a separate and a bad government it would speedily rise, both in civilization and prosperity, to a much higher grade than it had ever reached’.8 Hume’s model was his native Scotland – a society which, according to the Whiggish doctrine that exercised hegemony over much of its middle classes in this period, had been raised out of unlightened backwardness by the 1707 Union with England.9 Hume preferred total executive integration, but other Scots took a more ambiguous view of the legitimacy of distinct ministerial representation for the component parts of the United Kingdom: in 1836 Henry Cockburn urged the replacement of the anomalous office of lord advocate with a secretary of state for Scotland, a reform not enacted until 1858.10

The revival of Irish Repeal agitation in the 1840s merely convinced Hume of the rectitude of his previous statements: ‘take away the local Government’, he asserted, ‘and one great cause of discontent would be removed’.11 Other radicals echoed Hume on this point. To Bertrand Russell the lord lieutenantcy was ‘a proof of national servitude’, dehumanizing Ireland and weakening England.12 To J.A. Roebuck, succeeding Hume as the leading radical advocate of abolition in the 1830s, abolition would remove the ‘last badge of subjection’ and undo the legacy of conquest. Ireland would cease to be a distinct entity and would be merged into the greater England that he understood the United Kingdom to embody:

I want every county in Ireland to be like a county in England, and every parish in Ireland to be like a parish in England, and that she should not call herself Ireland, but a part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. What I mean is that Ireland should be part of England, really a part I want an equal law for Irishmen and Englishmen. I do not want the distinction of Irishmen to exist. Cork ought to be like York.13

While Roebuck failed to persuade a Commons majority that the time was expedient for winding up the Irish executive, his motion did stir the London Times into endorsing the principle of assimilation in 1837. The office of vicecy, its editorial declared, was a badge of provincialism; such pronouncements

**Integrationist initiatives**

Oppositional criticisms of the lord lieutenantcy touched initially on traditional radical and liberal objections to the costs of maintaining ‘the face of a vice regal court’ out of public moneys. The Duke of Northumberland (one of the wealthiest peers in England) offered in 1829 to forego half of his £30,000 annual salary, but the government, conscious that career diplomats might not have the private income necessary to finance the (already somewhat diminished) panoply of the Dublin court, declined to accept the proposal. On the other hand, in 1832 the prime minister had to warn Lord FitzGerald of the political exigency of too lavish a scale of entertainment at the Irish court.

The abolition debate was not, however, primarily about public money. The full-scale assault on the viceroyalty launched by Joseph Hume in 1823 was grounded on a more profound critique. Alongside his objections to the administrative inefficiencies and excessive cost of the office, Hume made it explicit that his chief motivation was ideological: a radical-integrationist understanding of the ‘Irish difficulty’. Ireland’s essential problem, Hume asserted, lay in the incompleteness of the Union, and the continuation of a colonial form of government in Dublin.

England, Scotland and Ireland, were called the united kingdoms; but, were they united in the spirit or intention of those who promoted the Union? Had Ireland participated of those promised blessings of the British constitution, and been a source of prosperity and of power to the empire? It was expected that, by the Union, the interests of England and Ireland would be so completely amalgamated . . . that Ireland should become the same country as England. But, up to the present time, Ireland had been governed as our slave colonies were, by a vicecy and colonial establishment; and Jamaica might be called, with as much propriety, a part of the united kingdom as Ireland.4
forms might be necessary in far-flung imperial territories, but were retrogressive in Ireland. "The paper returned to the design in 1846, when it criticized Palmerston's failure to take advantage of Carlel's settlement to act decisively to end the constitutional anomalies. The continuation of the office suggested that 'all Ireland is merely a colony when it is in reality just as much an integral part of the empire as England or Scotland.' The political consequences of this ambiguity were dangerous: 'The feeling of Ireland has always been to speak of herself and her institutions as opposed to England and Scotland. Nothing can be more impolitic or more pernicious than retaining any office which counterbalances such an idea.'

Such integrationist rhetoric was not restricted to British commentators. One anonymous Irish pamphleteer urged Lord John Russell in 1847 to end the constitutional anomalies of viceroyalty rule, which he claimed had been poisoning Anglo-Irish relations since the reign of Henry II. The Union of 1800 had been intended by Pitt to be an incorporating one; it followed that the survival in the lord lieutenantcy was constitutionally illegal and merely symbolized Ireland's continuing inferiority. In this writer's view the UK government and parliament had violated the principle of the Union in casting on Ireland, as if a colony or province, a Deputy or Local Government under whom its people were to be subjected, instead of living like their fellow-subjects in Great Britain, free and under the immediate and direct government of the Crown. Only a Hibernian, the author concluded, would promote the necessary amalgamation of the English, Scottish, and Irish into a single people."

'Ehancement,' the Irish author of an Appeal to Censor: or Ireland's last Step staked off (1864), was equally scathing about both the corruption and parsonism allegedly inseparable from the lord lieutenantcy, and the insult this compromised office presented to the most 'dignified' element of the constitution: 'We want an equal-handed justice!', the author declared, 'Justice unalloyed! Justice direct from its highest, purest source! We want not Sarrats nor Proconsuls, Governors nor Deputies, nor Viceroys. In fact, we want our Sovereign's rule direct!' The lord lieutenant and Irish executive are only inhibited self-reliance, corrupted the system of justice, and gave false hopes to the ignorant and disaffected to look upon Ireland as still a separate kingdom, not an integral part of the united kingdom, but by interposing between Ireland and the unifying majesty of the crown, it obstructed the full realization of a common British nationality. "Like most integrationists, 'Ehancement' was convinced that the viceroyalty was responsible for the absence of royal state (as opposed to private) visits to Ireland, and of the establishment of an Irish Kremlin. This was more than a complaint about Ireland's inequitable share of royal favour; it was a lament that Ireland was being denied the integrative magic of a regular royal presence.

Other Irish voices were also raised against the viceroy's office. Not surprisingly, many of these were Irish Whig Liberals engaged in building 'imperial' careers at Westminster and who had committed themselves wholeheartedly to the one-nation principle. Thomas Spring Rice (from 1839 Lord Malmesbury) endorsed Hume's 1850 motion on the grounds that 'the present tendency was to assimilate the two countries', and that 'Castle Government' was redundant in an era of rapidly improving communications (a theme continually stressed by integrationists). Accordingly, Spring Rice valorized a single stream-birth more than a whole wilderness of Lord Lieutenants. Others, such as the former Catholic Association orator and Whig-Liberal junior minister Richard Latro Sheil in 1850, and the former chief secretary Sir William Somerville in 1857, echoed these opinions. Sheil urged that this 'badge of colonial inferiority' be removed, and that the moral transition initiated by the famine be further promoted by abolition. Somerville hoped such a step would not denationalize Ireland, but 'unprovincialize it', and render it 'more imperial in character'. From this liberal-imperialist perspective, Ireland could never truly fulfill its destiny as part of the imperial mother-country so long as the institutional framework of its own colonized past remained in place.

In contrast to these liberals, most Irish Conservatives opposed the abolition of the viceroyalty (not least as it was consistently proposed by radicals and liberals), but there were some exceptions. Angered by the Whigs' anti-landlord policy during the famine, and irritated by Lord Clarendon's energetic and provocative style in the office, the Dublin Evening Mail, organ of the Irish landed interest, tacked with the idea of abolition in 1847. The corruption of patronage and the crenage competition for viceroyal favour had, in the paper's opinion, demeaned the Irish character and inhibited concerted resistance on the part of the aberrate 'Irish Party.' Perhaps more significantly, a number of Ulster Conservatives broke ranks in 1857-58 to support abolition, and were promptly accused by their southern colleagues of promoting the jealousy of the English industrial town of Belfast and its hinterland towards the ancient institutions of Dublin. This north-south split was accentuated by Conway Dobbs, MP for Carrickfergus, who asserted that Ulster (implicitly as a distinct political entity) was in favour of any step that would 'complete the Union.' This assertion of 'Britishness' as a primary and integrating identity was by no means universal in the north, but it was of significance for the future that tensions within Irish Conservatism should have arisen on this constitutional issue.

The 1850 Abolition Bill

The most significant initiative in the abolition campaign was Russell's government bill of 1850. This marked a shift for integrationism from the margins to the centre of British policies and indicates in part the success of radical advocates in persuading the Whig-Liberal elite of the logic of their proposal. Signs of this change could be detected by early 1844, when the economist and political commentator Nasaw Senior placed abolition in his programme for Irish amelioration published (with the approval of the party's leadership) in the
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The Scotch Privy Council, and then made the two countries really one, though the laws were different and the Church different - Ireland with the same law as England, and the Established Church the same has remained a separate kingdom, owing to the short-sighted plans of Mr. Pitt.

Two years in Dublin had led Clarendon to develop some scepticism towards Russell's enthusiasm for 'Englishing' the government of Ireland. Yet, while he felt that Ireland could not be treated like Scotland, and that only a permanent official could hope to understand Irish conditions and feelings, he became more amenable to the economic and political crisis eased. Furthermore, the unexpectedly successful royal tour of Ireland in August 1849 had opened up the possibility of regular visits, undermining any residual case for the viceregal court. By May 1850 Clarendon was promoting the bill as an essential step in the elimination of Ireland's culture of political dependency. Russell presented his bill to the Commons on 17 May 1850 as the completion of a long-considered plan. His speech touched on all the principal grounds already made for abolition: the suitability to Ireland of the Scottish model of integration, the unnecessary inefficiencies and adverse effects of the dual administration, the prejudice of regular royal visits and the completion of the work left unfinished by Pitt in 1800. Russell's insistence on abolition reflected his Whig belief in the primacy of constitutional forms in resolving the question of Ireland: the bill paralleled his Irish franchise reform measure of 1850. Clarendon's views were more ambivalent, but he too was prepared to use integrationist arguments in private, insisting that the government of Ireland was a colonial policy, humiliating the Irish to an 'Irish men ... Ireland is entitled to be placed on a footing of perfect equality with England and Scotland, and treated as an inseparable part of the Imperial Unity instead of an outlying dependency.' Both were to be disappointed. Despite the large second-reading majority, the bill was dropped due to lack of time. In a session which saw the ministry severely buffeted on foreign policy and financial issues, Russell ultimately had to admit that he could not also risk the parliamentary guerrilla tactics threatened by Irish and English opponents of the abolition of the lord lieutenancy.

ANTI-ABOLITIONISM: CONSERVATIVE, NATIONALIST AND IMPERIALIST

What objections were raised by those opposed to the abolition of the viceroy? Perhaps surprisingly, there was some overlap between the expressed opinions of Irish Conservatives and constitutional nationalists. There was, firstly, a pronounced Dublin lobby which objected equally to the threatened financial loss which the city's merchants and artisans might suffer from the closure of the court, and the final elimination of its status as a capital city. Dublin MPs and
lord mayors, both Tories and Repealers, were vigorous opponents of the mea-
sure throughout the period. Petitions were prepared by the Corporation and
commercial bodies in 1830 and 1864 in defence of the viceroyalty, and tumours
that the Irish legal institutions were also under threat were exploited by the
motions' opponents. Clarendon regarded the overt popular opposition of 1850 with some disdain, but at a time of continuing political insecurity the
dangers of further alienating the capital's artisan and mercantile classes could
not be discounted.

Others warned that abolition smacked of the pernicious principle of 'cen-
tralisation', further removing the power and status of local elites and transfer-
ring these to Westminster. The ignorance of British MPs had, it was claimed,
already led to damaging legislation and 'rule by boards' in Ireland, the loss of
the viceroy would mean the end of all Irish influence over both law and patron-
age - greater absenteeism would be the inevitable result. The evils of cen-
tralisation were also vigorously benumbed by the independent-minded Irish
liberal Torens McCullagh. No lover of the lord lieutenant in principle, he
nevertheless opposed any suggestion that the home secretary be made respon-
sible for Ireland. Ireland required equal, not identical, institutions; Parliament
should not, he insisted:

forget the moral, social, political, and religious differences between the
two nations. Of these the Channel is but in truth a very inadequate sym-
bol ... but the thirst of centralisation is ... insatiable; for it would not only
gulp the sea, but it would fail believe that those popular wants and pas-
sions with which the dark and restless waves have been so often com-
pared, can be got rid of by simply refusing to see or heed them more. McCullagh's stance is remarkable given that he held the position of private
secretary to the chief secretary in 1850, and was thus speaking against the very
abolitionist policy of the government he then served.

Irish Tories were yet more defensive of the lord lieutenant as an emblem of
the sort of loyal Irish nationality with which they felt comfortable; the institu-
tion was for them something distinctive, approachable, and unthreatening.
Presenting the Dublin petitions in 1850, Lord Londonderry warned that the
proposed abolition of the Irish court contravened the political contract under-
lying the Union. Joseph Napier preferred a Burkean defence, arguing that the
vice-regal system's 'disturbing lineaments ... had been stereotyped by the
hand of God', and that the viceroyalty was one of those 'national peculiarities
which nothing could efface; the land of Burke and of Wellington might cling to
her national feelings with pride, and at least without rebuke.' In this organi-
cist ideal, the lord lieutenant and his Dublin court symbolised the distinct
identity of the Anglo-Irish political class within the larger British polity.

Nationalists might be expected to be more hostile towards an institution
that could indeed be seen as symbolising Ireland's colonial subjugation; yet here
again the response was mixed. Revolutionary nationalists were by definition
excluded from the parliamentary debate, but did cast a shadow over proceed-
ings (especially in 1850). One Repealer who supported the abolition bill
argued that, irrespective of individual intentions, the lord lieutenant had
operated as a divisive force in Ireland, as the office was a 'bauble' that inhib-
ited the creation of national unity. Others, however, anxious to distance them-
selves from extremism in the aftermath of the 1848 rising, argued that aboli-
tion would further promote the separatist agenda by provocatively 'crushing all
national feeling in Ireland'. E.B. Roche was sure that 'if the bill passed, the cry
of national redemption would go forth to excite a people who were both patri-
otic and sensitive.'

There was, however, a more considered O'Connellite position on the lord
lieutenancy. Daniel O'Connell had demonstrated himself adept at exploiting
executive divisions within Tory administrations, and in using his influence
over liberal viceroys such as Wellesley, Mulgrave and Bessborough to promote
his own political ends. A political pragmatist, he regarded the office as one that
created opportunities which might be turned against Westminster. His politi-
cal lieutenant Dillon Brown made this explicit in 1844, stating that following
the repeal of the Union the office of viceroy would survive, but be nationalised
under the influence of a restored Irish Parliament. O'Connell's blunt warning
in 1830 that any attempt to proceed to abolition would anger the people of the
country, was cited by the chief secretary in 1844 as a continuing reason for
inaction. Significantly, Russell committed himself to act only after O'Connell's death in May 1847, leading to charges of hypocritical expediency
from the bill's Tory opponents. With the Repeal movement fragmenting the
timing might have proved right, but constitutional nationalism had not disap-
appeared, and O'Connell's son Maurice continued to argue that the institu-
tion was capable of reform, and that abolition would merely strike the first blow for
complete separation.

Ultimately neither the Irish Conservatives nor the Repealers were responsible
for the survival of the lord lieutenant. It is evident that the intellectual
case for removing the symbol of colonised status was won, so far as Parliament
and the British public were concerned, by Hume, Roebuck and their allies.
Once Russell declared himself converted to the principle of integration in 1850,
most of the political elite openly endorsed the correctness of the 'coli-

Nationalists might be expected to be more hostile towards an institution
that could indeed be seen as symbolising Ireland's colonial subjugation; yet here

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1830 was quite simply the overwhelming sense that, however embarrassing Ireland's colonial administration might be to an idealised image of the United Kingdom, in practical terms administrative assimilation was too dangerous. The Liberal chief secretary in 1837, Edward Horsman, declared that with the Famine only eight years in the past, Ireland was still too unstable for such an experiment. The prime minister, Lord Palmerston, cited both Carlyle's personal popularity in Ireland and, more ominously, the need for a strong local government to defend the status quo. Russell himself in 1838 hacked away from his previous commitments, unable now to see any practical way of proceeding.\(^{21}\)

Lying behind this failure of nerve was a damning speech made by the kingdom's most revered figure in 1850. In the Lords' debate on abolition, the Duke of Wellington had spelled out explicitly the ultimate rationale for the continuance of the office of lord lieutenants - as the resident civil authority with whom the military could not act in the event of rebellion. Security was the bottom line: with many urban corporations now under nationalist control and the home secretaries (or putative Irish secretaries) far away in London, only the viceroy could secure the permanence of British rule.\(^{22}\) This was a defence that Wellington had maintained since at least 1834, when he had feared that the Whigs and O'Connell were conspiring to abolish the office as an impediment to their anti-Protestant political agenda. He had also seen his role in the Repeal crisis of 1843-44 as that of bolstering the then lord lieutenant into taking decisive military and judicial measures to put down O'Connellism.\(^{23}\) Wellington's strictures concerned members of Russell's Cabinet in 1850, and continued to underlie government reluctance to act subsequently.\(^{24}\)

The 'national security' defence of the office appealed not only to Tories, but also to many centrist Liberals. Attempting to dissuade his friend Clancland from accepting abolition in 1849, Charles Greville, the clerk of the privy council, voiced an opinion about Irish government and the country's place in the empire that was widely shared (and echoed on occasion by Clancland himself):\(^{25}\)

Ireland is unfit for 'constitutional' government as the Punjaub, and attempts ... to put Ireland and England on the same level is a mockery and delusion, and practically leads to nothing but confusion and disorder in every shape ... and impunity for every species of outrage. What Ireland requires is such a government as Stafford's or Drummond's, or the rule of a Nicholas I or a Napoleon, who could legislate as well as administer, and who would be not only deputed to defer to public opinion and what are called popular feelings, which mean pride, bigotry, obstinacy, and the perpetuation of the most monstrous abuses.\(^{26}\)

Such attitudes appeared so fully justified by the emergence of Fenianism as an active force in the mid-1860s, even The Times, an enthusiastic supporter of Reobuck's motion up to 1864, was by 1866 looking to a new lord lieutenant as 'a model ruler of Ireland - dispassionate, firm and persistent'.\(^{27}\) For a defender of the institution nearly half a century later, it remained axiomatic that the best viceroy was not the most popular or the most 'imposing', but one, like Lord Spencer, who demonstrated greatest firmness in the face of rebellion and agitation.\(^{28}\)

In conclusion, what does the lord-lieutenant debate tell us about the 'problem of Ireland' in the early and mid-nineteenth century? Unquestionably I believe it reveals much about the unresolved discrepancy in British thought between the constitutional (and social) theory of the Union as the engine of assimilation, and the pragmatic imperative of retaining control through the maintenance of colonial (or quasi-colonial) instruments of governance. It also says much about the predominant Irish tendency (paradoxically conservative as well as nationalist) to utilise or subvert the very emblems of conquest to retain a sense of historical nationalities. The romantic novelist Charles Lever spoke for both these constituencies when he wrote in 1864 of the symbolic significance of the vicerecy, this one remnant that recalls a time when we used to fancy ourselves a people'. He articulated a feeling that many theorists have identified as one of the distinguishing strategies of resistance to colonisation, the inversion of imposed symbols: 'Why, therefore, might not we Irish like to wear as a badge what was instituted as a penalty, and culminate from pride what took its rise in repression'?\(^{29}\)

NOTES

Was Ireland a Colony?

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61. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

62. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

63. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

64. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

65. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

66. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

67. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

68. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

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70. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

71. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

72. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

73. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

74. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

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87. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

88. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

89. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

90. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

91. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

92. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

93. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

94. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

95. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

96. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

97. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

98. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

99. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

100. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].

101. Hamas trousers, Travers, first series, XVII, 520 [20 June 1850].