IDEOLOGY OF LANDOWNERS IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY IRELAND

THE IDEOLOGY OF LARGE LANDOWNERS IN LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY IRELAND

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ABSTRACT

The ideology of the Anglo-Irish landlords in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century is examined using a structural approach and placed in the context of class conflict and changing class alliances. It was found that the formulation of ideology was influenced by the landlords' desire to maintain existing class relationships and by their desire to gain greater control over Ireland's economic and political developments while remaining within the British social formation.

PREFACE

This thesis is concerned with the nature of ideology and its role in maintaining existing systems of inequality. More specifically it is concerned with the relationship between ideology and the State and the way in which control of State power and the State apparatuses facilitates the reproduction of the existing relations of production and stability of the social formation. However, it is also interested in examining the ideological sphere as a center of class struggle and social transformation.

A structural approach is used to analyse the ideology expressed by the Anglo-Irish landlords in the political Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century. A qualitative analysis of the ideology was undertaken for the years 1781-1785 and 1794-1798. These two periods were chosen because they illustrate the changing nature of class alliances and class conflict and involve attempts to restructure the historic relationship between Ireland and Britain.

The body of the thesis includes the following chapters: Chapter One outlines the contributions of Mannheim, Marx and Engels and Althusser to the sociology of knowledge. Chapter Two discusses the historical

development of Britain. This is considered important since Ireland was part of the British social formation and Irish economic development took place within the constraints of the British mercantile system. In Chapter Three the historical development of Ireland is discussed, focusing on the nature of class conflict and class alliances in the last decade of the eighteenth century. The political ISA is dealt with in Chapter Four. Chapters Five and Six analyse the ideology expressed in the political ISA in Ireland in the periods 1781-1785 and 1794-1798, respectively. The last chapter presents a summary and conclusion.

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CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

An important problem in the sociology of knowledge and the central concern of this thesis is the role of ideology in maintaining and perpetuating existing systems of inequality. In an effort to further our understanding in this area this thesis will examine the ideology of the Anglo-Irish landlords in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century. A qualitative analysis of the Irish House of Commons debates and of the landlords' letters, speeches and pamphlets will be undertaken for two periods: 1781-1785 and 1794-1798. The formulation of ideology will be placed within the context of conflict of classes and class fractions for State power and control over the State apparatus.

Theoretical Framework

A discussion of ideology and the foundation of the sociology of knowledge rest on the assumption that consciousness is existentially determined and that ways of thinking must be examined in relationship to the particular socio-historical totality in which they emerge.

Mannheim saw the primary concern of a sociology of knolwedge as the influence of social relationships on

thought.[1] He examined the emergence of ideas in terms of social processes characteristic of certain socio-historical epochs[2] and regarded existential factors as having a pervasive effect not only on the genesis of ideas but also on their form and content. He considered certain forms of knowledge as possible only under given historical conditions.

Although Mannheim regarded social classes as important existential bases of thought and stated that "all other social groups arise from and are transformed as part of the more basic conditions of production and domination"[3], he also considered it significant to examine the influence of generations, status groups, sects, schools, etc. on the formation of thought.

Mannheim's work in the sociology of knowledge is important in that he stressed that existential factors are the bases of thought and emphasized the significance of the socio-historical situation in which ideology emerges. He also showed that thought systems may differ among social groups. However it was felt that a class analysis using a structural approach makes a greater contribution to our understanding of why ideology differs among social groups and how it can restrict or facilitate social change.

The foundation of a theoretical analysis of the

relationship between social classes and ideology was laid by Marx and Engels who saw ideas and consciousness as rooted in material human labour and perceived the social bases of thought as lying in the division of labour and the emergence of social classes.[4]

They stressed the ideological hegemony of the ruling class-the class determined by its ownership and control of the means of production and over the super-structure which consists of two levels-the politico-legal (law and the State) and ideology. As Marx and Engels put it the "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas; i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force...The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationship".[5] This ideological hegemony facilitates the acceptance by other classes of the existing relations of production and thus helps secures the stability of the social formation. New ideologies emerge with the rise of social classes and the emergence of classes competing for dominance is reflected in the emergence of competing ideologies.[6]

Althusser, a neo-Marxist, uses a structural approach to further clarify the role of ideology in the maintenance of existing relations of production. He regards ideology as the 'lived relation between men and their world.

As he put it:

> In ideology men express...not the relation between them and their conditions but the way they live the relation between them and their conditions of existence. This presupposes both a real relationship and an 'imaginary' or 'lived' relation.[7]

Althusser speaks of ideology in terms of 'structures' and as 'imposed' on men. He states:

> Ideology is indeed a system of representations but in the majority of cases these representations have nothing to do with 'consciousness': they are usually images and occasionally concepts but it is above all as structures that they are imposed on the vast majority of men not via their consciousness.[8]

Ideology is 'imposed' by the ruling class on other classes primarily through its control of State power and the State apparatus. The State is itself a product of the division of labour and the corresponding emergence of social classes. State power is exercised within the State apparatus which consists of permanent institutions.[9] All class struggle is oriented around gaining control of State power and the State apparatus.[10]

Althusser divides the State apparatus into the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). The RSA is made up of public institutions such as the government, the administration, the army, the courts and the prisons. The RSA functions primarily by violence and only secondarily by ideology.

The ISAs include:

the religious ISA
the educational ISA
the family ISA
the legal ISA
the political ISA
the trade union ISA
the communications ISA

The ISAs function primarily by ideology and only secondary through violence and repression.[11]

It is within the ISAs that the ideology of the ruling class is reproduced.[12] This ensures acceptance of the existing situation and the perception that the relations of production are normal and just. However, it must not be assumed that this ideology is not also accepted by the ruling class and as Althusser points out:

> The ruling ideology is indeed the ideology of the ruling class...the former serves the latter not only in its rule over the exploited class but in its own constitution of itself as the ruling class by making it accept the lived relation between itself and the world as real and justified.[13]

It is within the ISAs that the ruling class comes to grips with the ideology of other classes. These ideologies emerge out of class struggles and the relationship of other classes to the means of production. Thus one must assume that the ISAs are not completely successful in making the ideology of the ruling class the ruling ideology. However, Althusser is ambiguous with regard to

the origin and survival of these counter ideologies. It would seem very difficult for them to develop given the control by the State of most of the major societal institutions.

The ISAs, according to Althusser, can become centers of class struggle. He regards the ideological instance as one of the three practices making up the social formation. The other two are the economic practice and the political practice. Although the economic practice is determinant in the last instance, the political and ideological practices are relatively autonomous and can be centers of social transformation.[14]

This thesis will examine the ideology expressed in the political ISA in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century and place it in the context of class conflict and the struggle among classes and class fractions for greater control over State power and the State apparatus.

This conflict took the form of a struggle by the Anglo-Irish landlords to reduce the influence of the British bourgeoisie over Irish economic and political development. This struggle resulted in conflict in the political ISA in Ireland between the Irish administration and the patriot party which had the support of the majority of the landlords. The landlords demanded free trade and legislative independence. They mobilized other classes in

their support and organized a national militia, the Volunteers. It consisted mainly of merchants, manufacturers, tenant farmers and artisans. However, they also wanted to increase their political power in Ireland and sought an extension of the franchise and a reduction in the landlords' control over the elections. Their efforts to obtain a reform of parliament eventually led the landlords to advocate their suppression. However, these classes formed the United Irishmen in 1791 and led a rebellion in 1798. They were supported by the Catholic Defenders, a group of Catholic tenants on short term leases, cottiers and labourers.

The efforts of other classes to increase their political power were seen by the landlords as a threat to their economic and political hegemony. The ideology expressed in the political ISA was formulated as part of the desire on the part of the landlords to maintain the existing class relationships and to protect their privileged position.

Ideology will be defined in terms of Mannheim's notion of total ideology in which all though is considered to be existentially determined and the thought structures of collectivities rather than those of individuals are the primary focus of concern.

Mannheim refers to these thought structures as "dynamic historical configurations" and states that this concept implies a:

> type of objectivity which begins in time, develops and declines through time, and which is bound up with the existence of concrete human groups, and is in fact their product. It is nevertheless a truly 'objective' mental structure because it is always 'there' 'before' the individual at any given moment and because it always maintains its own definite structure.[15]

It is dynamic, constantly changing and historically conditioned.

The advice of Althusser is particularly relevant to the study of though processes as a totality . He points out that:

> A word or concept cannot be considered in isolation; it only exists in the theoretical or ideological framework in which it is used: its problematic...It should be stressed that the problematic is not a world-view. It is not the essence of the thought of an individual or epoch which can be deduced from a body of texts by an empirical generalized reading, it is centered reading, it is centered on the absence of problems and concepts within the problematic as much as their presence.[16]

Thus in examining thought structures one must examine the thought of the social class as a whole, rather than focusing on individuals and consider it as a theoretical framework. One looks not only for what is said but for what is not said.

The political ISA in Ireland will be regarded as part of the British state and Ireland as part of the British social formation. This is due to the control of the RSA and the ISA in Ireland by the British and the close economic ties between Ireland and Britain.

The Lord Lieutenant who headed the Irish administration, was appointed by and responsible to the British Privy Council. Ireland was required to contribute troops and supplies to the British army and navy and had no independent military. Appointments to the magistracy were supervised by the British government and the final court of appeal was the British House of Lords rather than the Irish House of Lords.

The religious ISA was the dominant ISA in this period. The British instituted the Anglican church as the offical church of Ireland and attempted to drive out the Roman Catholic clergy in order to deprive the Roman Catholic church of its leadership and cause its decline.[17]

However the educational ISA was also regarded by the British as a significant ISA. In her study of education in Ireland Helga Hammerstein found that the Irish public records contain "an overwhelming number of statements pointing to the promotion of state controlled education as the sine qua non for the protection of English rule and for a thorough religious conquest".[18]

Roman Catholics were forbidden to educate their children abroad and Roman Catholic schools were outlawed.

Roman Catholics were excluded from the legal profession. The administration controlled the communications ISA through the ownership of several newspapers and censorship.

The political ISA in Ireland consisted largely of Anglo-Irish landlords since Roman Catholics were excluded from participation in the Irish paraliament by the English Act of 1691 which was adopted in Ireland in the following year. In 1727 the Catholics were deprived of the right to vote. The franchise was only extended to a limited number of the Protestants in Ireland and their political power was limited by the control of the landlords over elections, through the use of bribery and corruption. Seats in the House of Commons were often bought and sold.

The Irish administration had a great deal of influence in the Irish House of Lords since they controlled the distribution of peerships and eclesiastical appointments. Although the members of the House of Commons were elected, the judicious distribution of pensions, sinecures* and appointments to the civil service increased their supporters. Large borough owners generally received a

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*Sinecure-office of profit or honour with no duties attached to it, i.e. taster of wines.

large share of the patronage for conducting the Irish administration's business through parliament.

Political parties tended to be interest groups organized in support of the administration or in opposition to it. Opposition members were not necessarily opposed to the administration on a question of principle; frequently they simply had not received sufficient patronage to ensure their support.

However in the last decades of the eighteenth century a 'patriot' party developed. It generally consisted of opposition members who favoured greater independence from Britain. They supported Catholic emancipation, an extension of the franchise, a reduction of the pension list, free trade and legislative independence, since the British Privy Council could suppress legislation passed in Ireland. In addition the Irish parliament could not initiate legislation, only approve or reject it. Ireland was also bound by the laws passed in Britain.

As a colony Ireland was subject to the restrictions of the British mercantile system, a system of state-regulated trade designed to protect British spheres of trade, manufacturing and agriculture. The role of the colonies was to act as a market for British goods and as a source of raw materials. The bulk of Irish trade was

was carried on with Britain and mainly involved the export of linen and provisions. The woollen trade had been restricted because it conflicted with British woollen manufacturer.

Although the landlords were in a privileged economic and political position in Irealnd they suffered under the restrictions placed on Ireland's economic development. Shipments of corn to Britain were restricted and the amount of revenue they could collect from their lands depended on the general prosperity of their tenants. In the late 1770s a movement developed among the landlords to remove British restrictions on Irish trade. The economic depression in Ireland caused by a decline in the linen trade and a British embargo allowed them to mobilize other classes in support of their demands. They formed a national militia consisting of merchants, manufacturers, tenant farmers, artisans and weavers called the Volunteers.

Britain was experiencing difficulties in the war with France and the North American colonies and faced with the possibility of losing the Irish market the British government granted free trade. However, the landlords realized that without legislative independence they could not have free trade and they demanded the right to initiate bills and an end to the British Privy Council's right to suppress bills. They attained legislative independence

in 1782. However, the king could still suppress bills.

Most trade was carried on with Britain and in 1784 there was an attempt by the members of the Irish House of Commons to renegotiate trade relations with Britain. They sought a removal of all restrictions on trade between the two countries. The British were only willing to grant these concessions if the Irish parliament agreed to enact all laws passed by the British parliament. This would have meant a loss of legislative independence and possibly of free trade and the Irish parliament rejected this proposal.

The landlords concern with maintaining the existing class relationships led them to grant some concessions to the Roman Catholics and eventually to advocate the suppression of the Volunteers who demanded a reform of parliament. The landlords were threatened by the Volunteers because they were moving out of their control. Their leadership was being taken over by the merchants and the traders and the Protestant lower classes-cottiers, labourers and servants-were being incorporated into their ranks.

This concern with maintaining existing class relationships became even more acute in the 1790s when the landlords were faced with a rebellion by the United Irishmen, an organization led by the Presbyterian merchants,

manufacturers and professional groups and consisting mainly of Presbyterian farmers, weavers and artisans. They advocated parliamentary reform and a complete separation from Britain. They integrated the Catholic defenders, an organization of Catholic tenants on short term leases, cottiers and labourers, into their organization. They sought the aid of the French and two French invasions were attempted.

The response of the landlords was to support the repressive measures used by the administration to suppress the rebellion. They refused to consider parliamentary reform and or further concessions to the Catholics. The administration received the support of the Yeomanry, a voluntary military organization and the Orange Order and organization dedicated to the maintenance of the protestant ascendancy and consisting mainly of Protestant cottiers, labourers and servants.

However in spite of the threat to their economic and political hegemony the landlords refused to give up any of the independence they had gained. They rejected the administrations proposals for a union of Great Britain and Ireland.

Conclusion

The sociology of knowledge rests on the contention that consciousness is existentially determined and that the formulation of thought must be placed within the context of the socio-historical conditions in which it emerges. A Marxist class analysis of ideology regards the social bases of thought as rooted in the division of labour and the emergence of social classes. The control of the ruling class of the State and its ideological apparatuses facilitates the acceptance of the existing relations of production by other classes.

It is within the ISAs that the ideology of the ruling class is reproduced. They are also the site for the formulation of the ideology of the ruling class in the context of larger class struggle. According to Althusser they can also become centers of class struggles since the ideological instance is one of the instances in which social transformation can take place.

This thesis will focus on the political ISA in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century and the formulation of ideology by the landlords in the context of class conflict and class alliances. The next section will examine the methodology used in this study.

Methodology

Although this thesis is concerned with Irish economic and political developments and the ideology of the landlords in the last three decades of the eighteenth century two periods were selected for intensive analysis: 1781-1785 and 1794-1798. These periods were chosen because they illustrate the changing nature of class alliances and of class conflict. In both periods there was an attempt to restructure the historic relationship between Ireland and Britain.

The Irish Parliamentary Register, a record of the debates in the Irish House of Commons, was the major source of data for the study. These debates allow us to examine the formulation of ideology by the landlords in the political ISA in response to the larger class struggles in which they were engaged and the conflict between the Irish administration and the landlords in their efforts to obtain greater independence from Britain.

One debate per month was selected by random sample during the times parliament was in session in the years 1781-1785 and 1794-1797. Unfortunately there was no record of the debates in the House of Commons for the year 1798 and data was obtained from other sources such as letters and pamphlets. Although this method provided a systematic sampling of the debates the possibility also

existed that key issues might have been missed since debates often centered around bills introduced into the House of Commons at particular times. In order to ensure that our study was comprehensive and included the significant concerns of the landlords in this analysis, other primary and secondary sources were used. It was also necessary to examine sources of data other than the parliamentary debates in order to study the ideology expressed in the political ISA. The political ISA is composed of more than just the parliament and a study of the House of Commons debates alone would have been inadequate. The political ISA is also composed of political parties and to understand the nature of these one must examine their ties to British political parties and the influence of large borough owners who although they were not themselves members of the Irish House of Commons, exerted considerable political influence.

The additional sources of data include secondary sources such as biographies and historical accounts of Irish economic and political development. Primary sources include collections of correspondence, pamphlets and speeches.

In analysing the data it was felt that quantitative analysis would not be useful and that a qualitative analysis would be more likely to permit us to gain a

theoretical understanding of the ideology of the landlords and to see it as an integrated thought system. The data was examined intensively to discern the major themes and concepts and their inter-relationship. This process required that the ideology be placed within the context of political and economic developments in Ireland and Britain and the class conflict and changing class alliances in Ireland.

Chapters two and three will examine the historical development of Britain and Ireland and the close ties between the two countries. Chapters five and six will analyze the ideology expressed in the political ISA and link it to the changing historical situation in Ireland. Chapter seven will present a summary and conclusions.

FOOTNOTES

1. Karl Mannheim, "The Sociology of Knowledge" in J.E. Curtis and J.W. Petras (eds.), The Sociology of Knowledge: A Reader. New York, 1970; p. 110.

2. J.E. Curtis and J.W. Petras (eds.) The Sociology of Knowledge: A Reader. New York, 1970; p. 10.

3. Karl Mannheim, op.cit; pp. 118-119.

4. Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels, The German Ideology, New York, 1947; pp. 13-19.

5. Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels, "Concerning the Production of Consciousness" in J.E. Curtis and J.W. Petras (eds.) The Sociology of Knowledge: A Reader. New York, 1970; p. 10.

6. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, op. cit., 1947, p. 291.

7. Louis Althusser, For Marx, New York, 1965; p. 252.

8. Louis Althusser, "Marxism and Humanism", in Louis Althusser, For Marx, New York, 1965; p. 233.

9. Ernest Mandel, An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory. New York, 1970; p. 5.

10. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses" in Louis Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays, London, 1971,; p. 140.

11. Ibid, pp. 141-143.

12. Ibid, p. 146.

13. Louis Althusser, "Marxism and Humanism" in For Marx, New York, 1965; p. 235.

14. Louis Althusser, For Marx, New York, 1965, p. 253.

15. Karl Mannheim, Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology. New York, 1953; p. 97.

16. Louis Althusser, For Marx, New York, 1965; p. 253.

17. F.G. James, Ireland in the Empire, 1688-1770. Cambridge, 1973, p. 24.

18. Helga Hammerstein, "Aspects of the Continental Education of Irish Students in the reign of Elizabeth I" in T. Desmond Williams (ed.), Historical Studies, Vol VIII, 1971; p. 137.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BRITAIN

This chapter will focus on Britain in an examination of world development and significant economic and political changes in the centuries leading up to the Industrial Revolution in Britain. In order to understand these developments it is useful to place them within the framework of a process of primitive accumulation and the establishment of the capitalist mode of production.

According to Marx, the establishment of the capitalist mode of production requires the concentration of the means of production in monopoly form in the hands of the bourgeoisie and the expropriation of the means of production from the producers who are reduced to selling their labour to those monopolising the means of production.[1] This process is referred to as the process of primitive accumulation and occurs in two stages: firstly, the accumulation of "capital claims" in the form of titles to existing assets-land, money, etc.; and secondly the realization of these claims in the transfer of bourgeois wealth into a form involving the exploitation of wage labourers and the accumulation of surplus value which can then be used to further expand capitalist production. Thus fundamental to this process of primitive accumulation is the separation of

the majority of producers from the means of production and their transformation into "free" wage labour.[2]

In the first stage the accumulation of capital claims occurred as the bourgeoisie gained greater control over land, and accumulated profit through money leading activities, pillage and piracy and trace.

Five mechanisms of land accumulation included: (a) usurption of church lands; (b) takeover of state lands; (c) enclosure of the commons and expropriation of peasant rights over this land; (d) expropriation of the land of peasants and small farmers and (e) the sale of land by large-landowners burderned with debt.

During the Reformation in the 16th century church property was given to royal favourites or sold at minimal prices to speculating farmers and citizens, and the monasteries were dissolved. According to Marx the "glorious revolution" in the 17th century brought into power "the landlords and the capitalist appropriators of surplus-value" who initiated "colossal thefts of state lands". "Estates were given away, sold at a ridiculous figure or even annexed to private estates by seizure."[3]

The expropriation of peasant lands was the major means of separating the majority of producers from the means of production. The rise of the Flemish wool manufacture was an incentive to extend pasture lands and encouraged the process of enclosure. Enclosure reached a period of

particular intensity during the Industrial Revolution in the second half of the 18th century. The State aided this process in the form of the Acts for the Enclosure of Commons. The decline of domestic industry due to the industrial revolution, taxes, the decline of real-wages of agricultural labourers attached to the land in the 17th and 18th centuries and the debt of small farmers resulted eventually in the small landholders being forced to give up their land. Large amounts of capital were required to practice the new methods of agriculture-i.e. draining lands, enclosure crop rotation etc. and small farmers were unable to compete with large capitalist farmers.

The bourgeoisie were able to take over the land of large landowners due to their increasing wealth and the increasing debt of the landowners accompanied by a fall in land values. The Price Revolution in the 16th century resulted in an increase in the supply of precious metals and a rise in bourgeois incomes. The price of land remained relatively stable as did incomes from rent. The bourgeoisie were able to buy land at reduced prices and sell it later at a time when market values were higher thus realizing "an increment in the capital value of property from the phase of acquisition to the phase of realization".[4]

The system of public credit appeared in Genoa and Venice as early as the middle ages. However it was the

competition for colonies initiated by Spain and Portugal in the 16th century and entered into by England, Holland and France in the 17th and 18th centuries, which provided the main impetus for the development of public credit. The lending of money to the State in the form of public debt because the most significant form of financial activity and the founding of the Bank of England in 1694 is indicative of their full development and importance in Britain.

The early banks were formed by merchants belonging to large trading companies who had been the recipients of special privileges from the Crown in the form of charters and monopolies and who were now in a position to lend money to the State. As public debts increased it became necessary to institute taxation in order to pay the interest payments. The banking institutes were not, however, deprived of the use of their money during the time it was lent to the State. They were able to issue public bonds that were easily negotiable and functioned as cash.[5] Money was also lent to joint-stock companies and large landowners.

Brigandage and piracy were important sources of commercial capital as well as of merchant capital. For example the pirate expeditions against the Spanish fleet in the 16th century did a great deal to eliminate the shortage of capital in England.[6]

British trade was dominated in the 17th century by great trading companies receiving charters from the Crown and operating in a monopoly situation overseas. By restricting the volume of trade merchants were able to keep prices and profits high. Trade until the industrial revolution was primarily international trade and internal markets remained undeveloped. It consisted mainly of trade in luxury goods brought back for a bourgeoisie that was increasing in numbers.

Trade is based on the fact that merchants are able to "buy cheap and sell dear" due to the uneven development of productive forces throughout the world. This means that the amount of socially necessary labour involved in producing a product varies. This socially necessary labour depends on the average level of productivity of labour and thus "from the moment that market differences exist between the average levels of productivity in a number of countries, the value of a commodity may differ markedly between countries".[7] As manufacturing developed merchants sought to suppress any development of the productive forces in the colonies and attempted to keep them as markets for manufactured goods and as sources of cheap raw materials. The use of slavery and forced labour helped keep costs down in the production of the raw materials in the colonies.

The Industrial Revolution strengthened Britains dominance in the production of manufactured goods. The new

technology, increased division of labour and organization of production within factories and the improved transportation networks reduced the period of capital realization and permitted labour to be exploited on a vast scale. The internal market also became much more important since production for internal consumption was no longer carried on by individual producers connected with agriculture. The process is described by Marx who states

> Modern Industry, alone, and finally, supplies in machinery, the lasting basis of capitalist agriculture, expropriates radically the enormous majority of the agricultural population and completes the separation between agriculture and rural domestic industry... It therefore also, for the first time conquers for industrial capital the entire home market.[8]

The second phase in the process of primitive accumulation involves the realization of these "capital claims" and requires the expropriation of the means of production from the majority of producers and the creation of wage labourers. This process was particularly rapid in Britain during the 18th century but was already beginning in the 13th century. Prior to the creation of a large landless proletariat the majority of agricultural labour was carried on by peasants tied to the land who worked on large estates part of the time or by independent labourers who received access to a plot of land as part of their wages.

During periods of labour scarcity compulsion was used to obtain labourers and to keep wages down since real wages had risen considerably during the 13th and 14th centuries. Maximum wage laws were enacted and harsh penalties were imposed on workers attempting to improve their conditions of employment. Those with no independent means of support were compelled to work and freedom of movement was restricted. During the Tudor period (1485-1603) entrepreneurs were sometimes given the right of impressment and workers who escaped were subject to hanging.[9]

Some of the forces resulting in the creation of a large landless proletariat have been mentioned in the discussion on the first phase. They include: the disbanding of feudal retainers; the dissolution of the manasteries; the spread of enclosure; the decline of the cottage industry; the fall in real wages during periods of labour surplus and especially during the Price Revolution; and the inability of small farmers to compete with large capitalist farmers.

The process of primitive accumulation will be examined in more detail through an examination of the transformations that occurred in the spheres of agriculture, trade and industry. This process also led to changes in the relative strengths of classes, to competition between colonial powers and to struggles between the colonies and the mother country.

Agriculture

The 18th century was a period in which significant changes took place in agricultural production. These included the introduction of new crops, techniques and methods of organization. One of the most important factors affecting agriculture was the spread of the enclosure system.

During the process of enclosure common lands were divided into individual plots suitable for single tenants. Prior to enclosure the system of landholding had been one of open fields surrounding a village. Although individuals had farmed individual strips of land, the agricultural products had been owned and controlled by the community.[10]

Enclosure facilitated the extension of capitalist relations into agriculture. Large profits were made by capitalist farmers who leased land and produced for the home market and the expanding export market. Agricultural improvements also increased profits and enclosure encouraged the draining of wet lands, the cultivation of waste and moorland, more intensive methods of agriculture involving fertilizer and the hedging and ditching of the land. However, in order to carry out these improvements large amounts of capital were required.[11] The land tax increased the difficulty of the smaller gentry in obtaining the necessary capital. The smaller freeholders were also at a disadvantage when competing with leaseholders possessing larger resources.

Their competitive position was weakened after 1730 with the fall of rent and prices.[12]

Enclosure reduced the incidence of infectious disease among livestock and allowed for the improved breeding of sheep and cattle. Animals that had formerly been slaughtered yearly were now kept alive through the winter due to the introduction of new grass and root crops. New soil techniques extended the growth of wheat throughout England.[13]

The rapid expansion of the British population in the second half of the 18th century increased the demand for this wheat and resulted in higher prices. The need for provisions for British and allied soldiers abroad added to this demand for wheat. Meat prices rose and pasture lands were extended. Farmers and landlords were affected favourably by these developments and they increased their profits even more by raising rents to unprecedented levels[14] and by switching from a system of tenancy involving long leases to one of short leases.

The extension of enclosure occurred at a much faster rate from 1750 onward as the following table shows:

Number of Enclosure Acts per Decade[15]

1700-1710.....1	1750-1760.....156
1710-1720.....8	1760-1770.....424
1720-1730.....33	1770-1780.....642
1730-1740.....35	1780-1790.....287
1740-1750.....38	1790-1800.....506

This resulted in poor people being "driven wholesale from their tiny holdings, deprived of their rights of common geese or pigs, driven to become hired labourers or to seek work in the towns and in the coal mines".[16] By about 1780 this transformation was completed and the independent peasants had been replaced by large capitalist farmers employing wage labour.[17]

The creation of a large dispossessed rural poor was aided by the developments of the industrial revolution and the decline of domestic industry. Peasant families who had combined weaving and spinning with farming could no longer compete with production organized in factories and utilizing machines such as Kay's flying shuttle and Hargreave's spinning jenny. The cottagers and agricultural labourers experienced a severe fall in their standard of living when deprived of earnings from spinning and weaving and they were driven to the parish for poor relief.[18]

In the beginning of the 18th century over one-fifth of the population was receiving poor relief. As these numbers increased conditions became more difficult for the poor. After 1722, paupers who refused the workhouse could be denied relief. Those who entered the workhouse could be hired out to any manufacturer as cheap labour.[19] In the 1730s and 40s harsh penalities were instituted against those who committed offences against property. In 1740 it became a capital offence to steal property worth 1 shilling.[20]

Trade

The discovery of America and of a sea route to the far East led to an increase in world trade in the 16th century. However, the most important market was still Europe. Textiles were the most important British export and Cloth exports increased rapidly in the first half of the century. When this market collapsed in 1550 Russia replaced it. The Mediterranean area and areas in Africa increased the demand for cloth, but this cloth was of a new variety that was much lighter-the New Draperies. By 1640, half of London's cloth exports were going to the Mediterranean and Spain.[21]

Trade in these early years was concentrated in the hands of a few rich merchants and great trading companies. Joint-stock companies were first formed in Edward VI's reign (1537-1533). Several great chartered companies received monopolies from the monarch and they dominated foreign trade. These companies included the East India, the South Seas, the African and the Levant.[22] Joint stock companies were a means of gaining access to the savings of persons not engaged in trade or industry and by the early 17th century many landowners were investing in overseas trade ventures. These included a large number of M.Ps.[23] Due to the need for charters and their ability to lend money, these companies worked in a close relationship with the

government. Their directors were frequently directors of the Bank of England.[24]

The concentration of trade in the hands of a few merchants is revealed by the fact that in James I's reign (1566-1625) fifty percent of the cloth export was controlled by ten percent of the London merchants. These monopolies allowed the trading companies to make a large profit on a small amount of goods by forcing the buying price down and the selling price up.[25] This was resented by lesser merchants.

The Navigation Acts of 1651 marked a new stage in the organization of trade. After the Revolution of 1688, many older trading companies lost their exclusive privileges and individual merchants began to play a more important role than previously. The State entered a new role of regulation and support for trade. According to the Navigation Acts the colonies were subordinated to Parliament and English ships were to carry all trade to the colonies. The British empire was closed to foreign shipping allowing British and colonial trade to be controlled by British merchants.[26]

The passing of the Navigation Acts indicate the increased importance of trade with the colonies. The colonies initially were sources of cheap raw materials such as as cotton, sugar and tobacco.which were processed and re-exported from Britain. Later, however the colonies became

even more important as markets for British manufactures. By the end of the 17th century fifteen percent of England's trade was with the colonies and thirty-three percent by 1780.[27] In 1789 Britain's trade with America alone, amounted to one third the value of her commercial operations.[28]

Although internal trade was not well developed a group of traders who acted as middlemen emerged. They supplied domestic industry clothiers with raw materials and carried consumer goods from larger towns to outlying villages[29] and became a very strong force by the early 18th century. The creation of canals and the improvement of roads, particularly in the second half of the 18th century increased the extent of internal trade.[30] This process was aided by the rise in the population and a rising standard of living which increased demand.[31]

The 18th century was a period of particularly rapid expansion of trade. Restrictions were removed on the export of English manufactured goods and raw materials were allowed into the country duty free. Competitive industries in the colonies were restricted. For example, the Irish were forbidden to make cloth or export their wool anywhere except England.[32]

Trade was dominated by France, England and the United Provinces. England's merchant fleet expanded from 3,000 ships with a tonnage of 260,000 in 1702 to 9,400 ships with a tonnage of 695,000 in 1776. France's trade with other

European countries increased nearly four-fold between 1716 and 1788.[33]

War was a stimulus to trade since it increased colonial possessions and markets.[34] It also increased the amount of available capital. Between 1585 and 1603, British privateers captured prize goods worth ten to fifteen percent of the value of all imports.[35]

Industry

The making of wool and worsted stuffs was the most significant industry in England prior to the industrial revolution. It formed the basis of England's foreign trade and large parts of the cultivated areas consisted of pasture lands. The landed aristocracy formed a close relationship with the merchants who bought the wool from the farmers and exported the surplus not consumed at home to world markets. Other industries that were important in the early 1700s were the lead and copper trades, brewing, coal-making, ship-building and textiles such as linen, hosiery and silk.[36]

The most widespread form of production was domestic industry which developed as merchants put work out to craftsmen working at home in an effort to avoid guild regulations and the high wages of craftsmen.[37] The domestic worker often rented the knitting frame from capitalist owners or had it supplied by the capitalist who put out the work. The materials were also often supplied by the

merchant and the domestic worker was virtually a piece - working wage-earner.[38] The putting-out system illustrates the penetration of capital into production and the development of capitalist relationships.[39]

The large manufactures that existed in the 17th and 18th centuries prior to the Industrial Revolution were generally extensions of the domestic system and simply enabled the concentration of workers in greater numbers under the supervision of the State or the private employer.[40] The factory system was, however, to have long-term consequences for the organization of production. It became possible to subordinate each craft and each production process into numerous individual operations that could eventually be mechanized. A labour force that was unskilled and consisting of women, children and old people could be substituted for skilled craftsmen.[41] The old guild system in which production had been organized under masters, journeymen and apprentices and regulated by strict requirements, lost its viability under this new system.[42]

The process of mechanization and the introduction of the factory system was particularly rapid in the second half of the 18th century. Its progress is linked with the availability of capital, expanding markets, the invention of industrial techniques and the creation of a large dispossessed rural poor.

According to Mandel there was an accumulation of money capital, usurer's capital merchant capital and commercial capital in the hands of the bourgeoisie between the 10th and 18th centuries.[43] Although some of these funds were invested in lands and titles, there was also a large amount of capital available for investment in industry.

Both foreign and domestic markets increased during this century. The laws regulating trade mentioned in the previous section apply here. The colonial markets were reserved for English manufacturers and industrial production in the colonies was restricted. Government contracts resulting from needs arising out of Britain's numerous wars stimulate industrial production.

Wars increased the demand on the heavy metal industries and allied manufacture of ships, munitions and textiles. Related industries such as coal-mining, copper mining, the production of chemicals and engineering were affected as well.[44]

The home market was expanding due to the destruction of domestic workshops and the commercialization of farming.[45] The resulting cheapening of the cost of products when mechanization and the factory system was introduced also extended the market among the expanding population.

Technological advances occurred in many industries. The most significant of these emerged in the cotton industry, the iron and steel industry and the heavy chemical industry.

These technological developments were combined with the introduction of large scale production.

Prior to the industrial revolution the cotton industry was unable to compete with Indian calicoes, or muslins in either price or quality. Like wool it was a domestic industry and often subsidiary to agriculture and most weavers were also farmers. It was supplied by raw cotton from Levant, the southern states of British North America and West Indies.

Significant changes occurred in the weaving of cotton cloth with the introduction of Kay's flying shuttle in the 1730s and Paul's carding machine in 1748. These created a marked shortage of yarn and several spinners were required to keep one weaver in yarn. Several spinning inventions helped to alleviate this. They included: Arkwright's water frame (1769), Hargreave's spinning jenny (1770) and Crompton's mule (1779). These inventions were utilized within a factory system and were powered first by water and later by steam. In 1785, the Bolton and Watt steam engine was used for the first time to operate a spinning mill. Whitney's ginning machine, introduced into the United States in 1790s reduced the price of cotton. Improvements were also effected in the areas of bleaching, dyeing and carding.

A market for textiles had been previously established by the sale of Indian calicoes and muslin by the East India Company in Britain and British markets. British cottons moved into these markets in the 1750s when the East India Company experienced difficulty in maintaining an Indian supply. The improved quality of cotton also allowed it to compete with linen and silk and as its price fell it became possible for more of the British population to buy it.

Between 1780 and 1800 there was an eight fold increase in raw cotton imports and by 1815 exports of cotton textiles accounted for forty percent of the value of British domestic exports and woollen exports for only eighteen percent.[46]

The introduction of a technique using coal instead of charcoal made from wood in the production of iron vastly expanded the production of iron vastly expanded the production of iron and steel. Iron production had been held back by a scarcity of fuel since most of Britain's forests had been destroyed in order to extend the areas of cultivation and pasture lands. The demands of the iron industry had also led to the depletion of this resource. England had been forced to import large quantities of pig and bar iron, mainly from the Baltic countries. England had abundant resources of coal located in some cases in close proximity to the iron. Thus the utilization of coal in the production of iron was

a significant step forward. Iron and steel began to replace wood in the machinery used in factories, for bridges and in the hulls of ships.[47]

Developments in the heavy chemical industry at this time depended upon the linking together of the manufacture of sulphuric acid and the synthesis of soda alkali from common salt. The manufacture of textiles, hand soap and glass rested upon an adequate supply of alkali. Natural sources of alkali failed to keep pace with this demand and this led to the artificial development of alkali.[48] Alkali synthesis in the latter half of the 18th century acted as a source of technological material.

The enclosure system, rising prices, a reduction in the real wages of agricultural labourers and the decline of the domestic system were all factors influencing the creation of a rural proletariat. The expansion of the population further contributed to this process. The emerging industries were able to incorporate this new group of dispossessed poor into the factories. Their supply of labour was supplemented by women and children as the new mechanized, simplified tasks required only unskilled labour.

As the guild system began to break down and the workers no longer received its protection, they began to form combinations in order to secure their interests. These developed first among the skilled and semi-skilled trades

whose workers were attempting to protect their privileges an and to maintain established working conditions. These combinations were severely restricted by Acts of Parliament. In 1720 combinations among journeymen tailors were forbidden, in 1726 among weavers and wool-combers and in 1749 among those working in silk, linen, cotton, fustian, iron, leather and other industries. In 1719 workers were forbidden to take their skills into other countries and in 1726 it was decided that those using violence in labour disputes would receive fourteen years transportation; those who engaged in machine-breaking would be put to death.[49] Although workers combinations were outlawed, employer combinations were not and by 1777 the Midland iron-masters were holding quarterly meetings to fix prices and conditions of sale.[50]

By the end of the 18th century industrialization was well underway. It was aided by the improvements in transportation and communications. By 1815, 2,600 miles of canals had been built in England and 500 in Scotland and Ireland. The introduction of the mail coach in the last quarter of the century was a strong stimulus to road repair and road building.[51]

It became easier to finance industrial enterprises after the 1750s when country banks became widespread. Between 1770 and 1815 they increased in number from less than 300 to over 700.[52]

The industries most advanced and most prosperous in 1800 were coal-mining, iron manufacture and cotton. They were operated on a large scale and many processes were mechanized. Steam engines were beginning to replace water-power in some cases and the factory system was well established. However, other areas such as the wool trade had been scarcely touched by the machinery and steam.[53]

Politics

These economic changes were accompanied by political developments. The traditional power of the landowning classes was beginning to be challenged by that of merchants and traders and the rising industrialists.

The merchants and traders had to some extent, integrated themselves into the landed aristocracy through marriage, the purchases of offices and estates, the acquisition of titles and distinctions or through control of municipal governments, guilds or administration. Large landowners in turn, became involved in trade and invested in docks, mines and real estate.

The landowning class was still an extremely powerful force in Britain. At the end of the 18th century, they controlled the Houses of Parliament and in the House of Lords held almost all of the Cabinet Posts. The lord lieutenants of the counties and the justices of the peace were selected from among them and they controlled most local

governments.[54] They owned many of the boroughs and were able to influence elections to the House of Commons. It was common knowledge that election boroughs were bought and sold. Although the great financiers were able to buy themselves seats in Parliament the landed and agricultural interests remained the dominant political force up to 1815.[55]

The combination of the merchant and the landowning classes had been to some extent able to maintain a check on royal authority and they had carried out the "glorious revolution" in 1688. This alliance broke down with the rise of a group of merchants seeking to challenge the traditional monopoly of the merchants in the large trading companies receiving charters.[56] The new industrialists differed from the merchants in their interests. The industrialists involved in iron, coal and cotton favoured unregulated competition at home and liberalizing commercial restrictions in order to encourage British exports. The merchants involved in the wool trade demanded protection from domestic and foreign competition.[57]

The new political influence of the merchants and the industrialists was reflected in government policy. Walpole's fiscal policy in the 1720s favoured manufacturers in the sense that it removed most export duties on English manufactured goods and import duties on certain raw materials. Sugar refining and the manufacture of silk were stimulated by bounties. The restrictions placed on the forming of

combinations of workers were mentioned in the previous section.[58] British wars also benefited manufacturers and merchants since they frequently extended colonial possessions and markets. In 1783 the value of Britain's annual trade with her Caribbean possession equaled £4,250,000, with India a little over £2 million and with Canada and Newfoundland £882,000.

British wars could, however, also result in losses of British possessions to her rivals France, Spain, and the United Provinces. The war of 1775 to 1783 resulted in the loss of the American colonies.[59] Britain acknowledged the independence of the United States and its sovereignty as far west as the Mississippi. She also ceded Florida and Minorca to Spain and minor possessions in the West Indies and Africa to France.[60]

Challenges arose to the dominant position of the landed aristocracy in the form of movements aimed at reform of parliament. The Wilkites favoured shorter parliaments and a more equal representation of the people. This movement was supported by parliamentary members who wished to control the influence of the Crown. Although these members were in favour of limiting the control of the Crown over pensions and sinecures, they were not willing to make major changes in the system of representation or to eliminate rotten boroughs.[61]

In 1782 the "economical reformation" bills were passed. Distributable sinecures and pensions were limited to 90,000 per year thus limiting some of the King's control over Parliament. It was hoped that these bills would alleviate some of the discontent of the lower orders.[62]

With the French Revolution and the transformations that occurred in France, any attempt at reform was suppressed. For example a motion to reform parliament that had received 174 votes in the House of Commons in 1785, received only 41 votes in 1793. In 1793 aliens were placed under severe restrictions. The habeas corpus was suspended from 1794 to 1801 and suspects were held in prison for years without trial. The Treasonable Practices Act was extended to writings or speeches that incited contempt of the sovereign, the authorities or the constitution. Meetings of more than fifty persons required a license of a magistrate and freedom of the press was restricted.[63]

The British government had to deal, however, not only with internal insurrection but with attempts by the colonies to obtain national independence. These movements arose out of a desire to free the colonies of restrictions on trade and manufacturing resulting from the British mercantile system.

Although the restrictions placed on trade had been alleviated in the American colonies to some extent by smuggling and illicit trade with France and Spain, the colonies dependence on England for manufactured goods had led to an adverse trade balance, a shortage of bullion and an inflated paper currency. Certain sectors of trade particularly the tobacco trade, were dominated by London merchants.

In the 1760s an attempt was made to limit the expense of military defense in the colonies and movement westward was restricted in order to prevent Indian wars. The customs system was reorganized to facilitate the collection of revenue and an attempt was made to suppress smuggling and to enforce the Navigation Acts. A stamp duty was imposed in 1765. This was greatly resented. However, the British Parliament confirmed their right to tax the colonies by passing the Declaratory Act and in 1767 a number of import duties were passed. Due to opposition in the colonies all these taxes were withdrawn except the tax on tea. This was perceived as a move on the part of the British toward providing the colonies with cheap British manufactured goods and undermining native industry. A reduction in the price of tea threatened to make smuggling unprofitable and lead to the Boston Tea Party.[64]

War with the colonies began in 1775. France entered war in 1778 and was followed by Spain in 1779. When it

ended in 1783 Britain had been forced to grant independence to the colonies and ceded land as far west as the Mississippi. Spain gained possession of Florida and Minorca and France was granted some possessions in the West Indies and Africa.[65]

Conclusion

This chapter examined the historical development of Britain placing it within the context of the process of primitive accumulation and the development of the capitalist mode of production. Fundamental to this process was the creation of a class of free-wage labourers separated from control over the means of production and forced to sell their labour to capitalists.

Britain's colonial possessions played an important part in this process and their development took place within the mercantile system. In the 1770s there was a movement by the bourgeoisie in the American colonies to break out of the restrictions of this system by obtaining independence and establishing free trade.

In 1778 the landlords in Ireland demanded free trade and in 1782 legislative independence. Their efforts to attain independence were supported by the merchants and manufacturers and the general population. In the 1790s the Presbyterian bourgeoisie founded the United Irishmen and attempted to effect a complete separation of Ireland from

Britain. They were aided in their efforts by the French and the Catholic Defenders, an organization of Catholics on short term leases and of Catholic cottiers and labourers.

Chapter three discusses these struggles for independence in Ireland in light of the historic development of the Anglo-Irish relationship and the nature of class alliances and class conflict in the last decades of the eighteenth century.

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CHAPTER III

IRISH ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

This chapter examines the historical development of Ireland, focusing particularly on the nature of Anglo-Irish relations and the constraints the British mercantile system imposed on Irish economic development. The interrelationship of religious, ethnic and class factors in Ireland is analyzed. Attempts to restructure the historic relationship between Ireland and Britain are discussed in the context of class conflict and class alliances and the changing political and economic conditions in Ireland and Britain.

In the late 1770s and early 1780s the Irish landowners formed an alliance with the Protestant merchants, manufacturers, artisans, weavers and large tenant farmers in the form of the Volunteers, a voluntary militia. The Irish parliament's demands for control over Irish trade and for legislative independence were reinforced by a show of force by the Volunteers and by widespread support from the population and the British government made some concessions. However an attempt by the members of the Irish parliament to renegotiate Anglo-Irish commercial arrangements in 1784 and 1785 failed This failure may be partly attributed to the disintegration of the alliance between the landlords and the Volunteers.

The reform of parliament desired by the Volunteers had not been carried out nor had religious equality had attained.

In the 1790s, the Presbyterian merchants, manufacturers and professionals formed the United Irishmen, an organization dedicated to a reform of parliament that would increase their politcal power and reduce British control over Irish trade and commerce. They supported religious equality and Roman Catholic emancipation. Their membership consisted largely of Presbyterian weavers, artisans and tenant farmers.

When the repressive tactics of the administration made reform appeared unlikely the United Irishmen formed an underground military organization dedicated to armed rebellion and complete independence from Britain. They sought aid from France and began to recruit the Catholic Defenders, an organization of Catholic tenants, cottiers and labourers, to the United Irishmen.

An alliance of the British administration, the Irish landowners and Protestant cottiers, labourers and servants developed in opposition to the United Irishmen and the Rebellion was suppressed.

This chapter will enable us to place the ideology of the landowners in Ireland within the context of changing class relationships and the political and economic developments in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century.

The Political Sphere

As a British colony, Ireland was subject to British political and economic domination. The King was able to nominate all the political and judicial offices in Ireland on the advice of the British Cabinet. These offices and all renumerative offices in the Church and Army were placed in English or Anglo-Irish hands.

The House of Lords was composed of bishops of the Church of Ireland (Anglican) appointed by the British government and of temporal peers enjoying governmental favours. The House of Commons was largely under the control of landed aristocrats who owned boroughs and who received political patronage in return for maintaining a pro-government majority.[1]

According to Poyning's law and subsequent modifications, the Irish legislature could not meet or initiate bills without the prior support of the English Privy Council. In addition, the British Declaration Act of 1719 stated that Ireland was subject to the legislation of the British Parliament.

The Irish Parliament had very little direct control over Irish finance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Two thirds of the revenue was by law the property of the crown and this Hereditary Revenue existed in perpetuity. It included quit-rents, Crown rents, hearth money, customs,

excise and licenses for selling ale, beer and "strong waters".[2] During the seventeenth century the Hereditary Revenues had paid for all civil military services and remaining funds had been remitted annually to the King. However due to Britains increasing involvement in wars between colonial powers and financial abuses of the Irish revenue, further taxes had to be raised in the eighteenth century. This gave the Irish parliament greater discretion with regard to the granting of funds to Britain.

The military establishment was a heavy burden on Ireland. The war between France and England in North America, the difficulties with Spain, the American Revolution and the war with France in the last decade of the eighteenth century were very expensive and Ireland was threatened with bankruptcy. Even in peace time military costs were generally three times that of the civil establishment.[3]

Pensions and sincecures were an additional burden. These were given out by the King and often distributed to persons living in England who were not contributing any service to the country.

Irish Economic Development

The British mercantile system was well established by the second half of the seventeenth century and as a British colony Ireland was subject to British mercantile laws controlling imperial economic policy. This system was based on

the importation of raw materials from the colonies to the mother country and the exportation of manufactured goods. The state regulated trade and passed legislation aimed at protecting British trade, agriculture and manufacturing.

Trade

Irish soil was well suited to pasture farming and during the seventeenth century Ireland established a large export trade in live stock. However Irish breeders faced opposition from English breeders who felt that they were being undersold by Irish cattle since land was cheap and plentiful in Ireland. Prices of livestock were declining in England and causing a fall in rents.[4] British opposition resulted in Ireland's being forbidden to export anything except servants, horses and provisions in 1663. In 1667 the English parliament prohibited the importation of Irish cattle into England.

These laws encouraged in the growth of the provision trade. Ireland began to rival England in the supply of butter, hides and tallow to foreign countries. Irish merchants could sell these articles at half the price of English provisions because of the low cost of labour in Ireland. Salt beef, butter, salt pork and cheese were shipped to British America, the United States and colonies of continental powers. Wars stimulated the demand for military and naval provisions.

The success of the Irish provision trade resulted in a decline in trade with England. Before the Cattle Acts three-quarters of Irish trade had been with Britain. By 1672, it had fallen to one-quarter. This was largely due to the fact that Ireland was able to buy commodities directly from foreign countries and the colonies. England attempted to hinder this trade by passing the Navigation Act of 1671 which declared that enumerated articles such as cotton, wool, sugar, tobacco, coffee must be shipped exclusively from the colonies to England. The importation of unenumerated articles from the colonies was also prohibited in 1696.

Although prior to the Restoration, Ireland had exported all her manufactures of wool, silk, gold, silver, lace and hats to England, prohibitory duties ended this practice. The woollen industry was Britain's major industry and it was protected and maintained at the expense of Irish production of woollen goods. The English Act of 1660 imposed prohibitory duties on the importation of Irish woollen goods into England and the Woollen Act of 1699 forbade the exportation of Irish wool or woollens to the colonies or to any foreign countries.[5] This resulted in the smuggling of wool abroad and the emigration of Irish weavers to France, Holland, Spain and Portugal where they helped establish woollen manufacturies.

The linen industry was initially encouraged by the British since their linen industry was not well developed at the end of the seventeenth century. In 1705 the English legislature gave Ireland permission to export coarse white and brown linens to the colonies. However, since Ireland was prohibited from bringing anything back in return this was not a great stimulus to production. Ten years later, Britain placed prohibitive duties on the importation of coloured linens and created bounties on the exportation of coloured British linens. This encouraged English and Scottish linen manufacture. An import duty of thirty per cent on Dutch linen caused an upsurge in linen production in Ireland but German and Russian linens provided increasing competition for Irish linens. In spite of these disadvantages Irish linen production increased enormously during the second half of the eighteenth century. In 1720, Irish linen exports equalled 2,637,984 yards and in 1790, 37,322,126 yards

The linen industry was centered mainly in the northeast and carried on by small farmers and craft workers who combined spinning and weaving with farming.[7] A large proportion of these farmers and craftsworkers were Presbyterians, English and Scottish settlers who had been emigrating to Ulster since 1170.

Agriculture

Agriculture was also affected by British colonial policy. In the early eighteenth century there was a substantial increase in pasture lands at the expense of tillage. This process was encouraged by the success of the provision trade and by the British government since British wool manufacturers were interested in obtaining raw wool. The English Corn Laws discouraged the cultivation of corn in Ireland and protected British farmers. Heavy duties were placed on the importation of corn into Britain. However, this process was reversed to some extent in the second half of the eighteenth century due to an increase in the British population. After 1784, England imported corn in large quantities and the French Wars increased the price in Great Britain to nearly famine rate. These developments in conjunction with the Irish Corn Laws of 1784 placing bounties on the exportation of corn, stimulated Irish corn growth.

There was an extension of capitalist relations into agriculture involving the production of grain for a world market, the use of cottiers and labourers, the rationalization of agriculture and the extension of enclosure due to an increase in pasture lands.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing in Ireland generally took the form of domestic industry combined with agricultural activities. However in the latter part of the eighteenth century the centralization of production in factories began to occur and technological innovations were introduced. The first power-driven textile machinery in Ireland was introduced in 1784. This process was especially apparent in the cotton industry which expanded rapidly after the advent of free trade and the opening of direct trade with North America, its main souce of raw materials. Bounties and protective measures passed by the Irish parliament stimulated the cotton industry and by 1800 and it had surpassed the linen industry.[8] These productive techniques were used less extensively in the linen industry.

The Irish Social Structure

British conquests of Ireland in the twelfth, fourteenth and seventeenth centuries resulted in the confiscation of most Irish lands. They were placed in the hands of large land monopolists who were British, Anglican, and frequently absentee landowners. The bulk of the indigenous, Roman Catholic population became tenants on short term leases, subject to eviction on six months notice. In the early part of the seventeenth century Scottish Presbyterians came

came to the north of Ireland as settlers. Unlike the Roman Catholic peasants were allowed long leases and tenant rights.*

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*Although the Ulster Custom provided tenant-right in the north east it only here and there in the South. Tenant-right gave the tenant security of tenure, a moderate and fixed rent and compensation for improvements. The terms of the lease might be as long as several lives and when a tenant right was sold,the incoming tenant paid a sum that might be as high as forty years rent for the improvements. In much of Ireland leases were for a short term and were often for a year with six months notice. Tenants who improved their property could expect to pay a higher rent or face eviction.

Native Irish in Ulster had been expelled beginning in the seventeenth century. The English and Scottish settlers created a homogeneous community based on strong religious beliefs. They settled on land which had been transferred to British land owners and aristocrats by the Ulster Custom and subsequently rented out to farmers. The Ulster Custom gave them security of tenure and other privileges. In 1609 large numbers of lowland Scots who were also Presbyterians flooded into the north east Ireland.

These farmers faced the hostility of displaced Irish and attempts were made to force them to conform to the established church. In addition, they suffered from the legal prohibitions England placed on Irish farming and manufacturing.

See H.C. Pentland, Labour and the Development of Capitalism in Canada, Toronto, University of Toronto, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of Political Economy, Microfilm, pp. 212.

In the eighteenth century the Irish rural social structure was made up of six strata: landlords, leaseholders, middlemen, annual tenants, cottiers and labourers. The leaseholders held land in perpetuity or for two or more lives. They were mostly Protestants since the Penal laws forbade long leases to Roman Catholics. Middlemen were the agents of the landlords and they let land to the annual tennants, cottiers and labourers. Annual tenants were settled mainly on lands valued at less than £15 and were liable to eviction on six months notice.

A cottier usually hired a patch of conacre (land hired by auction) for eleven months if it was to be used for crops and for seven months if it was pasture land.[9] Lecky describes the cottiers as "living in mud hovels" and "half naked, half starved, uttterly destitute of all providence and all education, liable at any time to be cut a drift from their holdings, ground into the dust by three great burdens - rack rents paid to the middlemen, tithes paid to the clergy - often the absentee clergy of the church to which they did not belong and dues to their own priests".[10]

Labourers (a) lived with farmer employees; (b) discharged the rent of a plot of land in labour to the tenant master; (c) rented plots of land for cash; or (d) participated in wage employment.[11]

The growth of large capitalist farming in Ireland supplying wool, livestock, butter and grain for the world market, along with the rapid rise in population at the end of the eighteenth century resulted in an increasing number of cottiers and labourers.

In the urban sector the various strata which developed included professionals, merchants, manufacturers. artisans, servants and labourers.

When examining the Irish social structure it is important to analyze the interrelationship of religious, ethnic and class factors. The British placed economic and political restrictions on the indigenous Roman Catholic population to prevent them from regaining possession of their lands and to keep them from competing in the professions or in trade and commerce. The Anglican colonizers were placed in a privileged economic and political position.

The Anglicans

The Anglicans made up approximately ninety percent of the landowning class, many were absentee owners who lived in England. Arthur Young estimated in 1779 that £.732,000 was spent by absentees in England. They collected revenues in the

form of rents from their lands. The revenue increased in the second half of the eighteenth century as rents began to rise steeply with the population increases and the extension of lands. A considerable number of landowners also drew supplementary income from capital invested in funds or received money from government debentures. A few owned mines in Ireland and a small number possessed plantations in the West Indies. A small portion also invested in the East India Company.[12]

The majority of parliamentary seats were held by Anglicans since land ownership determined political power.[13] They also held many political and military offices and dominated the professions.

The Roman Catholics

The Treaty of Limerick and royal clemency left a portion of land in Catholic hands and it was estimated that they still possessed twenty-two percent in 1688. In 1640 they had owned sixty percent. The Williamite confiscation reduced the land owned by Catholics even further and by 1775 they possessed only five percent.[14]

The penal code passed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, imposed civil disabilities and religious restrictions on all those who did not belong to the Church of Ireland. These laws prevented Catholics from buying and inheriting land or even renting large amounts on long term

leases. Catholic estates were to be divided among all the male heirs unless the eldest son turned Protestant in which case primogeniture prevailed. Another law forbade all Catholics except those covered by the Treaty of Limerick from bearing arms or owning horses worth more than £5. Catholics were forbidden to have their children educated abroad and a prohibition was placed on any Roman Catholic keeping a school in Ireland.[15]

Catholics were not allowed into professions in law, the army and navy or positions in central and local government. The only careers open to them were the church and the continental armies, especially that of France, and medicine. However, the provision trade was carried on chiefly by Catholics and they retained the largest share of the coarse woollen industry which was an important commodity on the home market. English legislation in 1699 had destroyed the manufacture of fine woollen which had been carried on largely by members of the established church.[16]

They were excluded from political participation by the English act of 1691, which eliminated Catholics from Parliament. Another act in 1704 deprived Catholics of the right to vote and the Irish Act of 1727 disenfranchised Protestant voters married to Catholics. The Dublin parliament also took steps to drive out the Roman Catholic clergy hoping to deprive the church of its leadership and cause its decline.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, some attempts were made to alleviate restrictions on Catholics After 1782, there was an effort to secure for Catholics the right to acquire mortgages and longer leases and under George II parts of the Penal Code preventing Catholics from investing money in the economy of the country were relaxed. In 1778 Catholics were permitted to take long leases and in 1782 to buy land. The Act of 1793 extended the franchise to Catholic forty-shilling freeholders, but Catholics were still not able to become members of Parliament.[17]

The Presbyterians

By 1715, 50,000 Scotch Presbyterians had settled in Ulster. Most became tenant farmers and combined linen production with farming. They were able to obtain long leases and had security of tenure. Presbyterians dominated the linen trade and later became involved in cotton production. Some Presbyterians were artisans and a few entered professions such as law and medicine.

Presbyterians were subject to a number of restrictions on the basis of their religion. The passing of the Test Act in 1705 meant they were expelled from the magistracy, excluded from corporations; and deprived of the right to hold positions of trust under the crown. Their exclusion from corporations reduced their political power. However, even before its passage they had only a few members in parliament due to the

fact that the elections were controlled by the landowners.

Presbyterian education was officially restricted during the early part of the eighteenth century and most Presbyterians who wished to receive a higher education went to Scotland. Many of the Irish emigrants in the eighteenth century were Scotch Presbyterians from Ulster due to the fact that the linen production was in a decline in the 1770s.

The different positions of the religious groups in the economic and political structure in Ireland influenced the part these groups played in the struggle for independence from Britain and for greater political participation in Ireland at end end of the eighteenth century.

Free Trade and Legislative Independence

During the second half of the eighteenth century a struggle developed in Ireland for greater control over Irish political and economic development. This took the form both of an internal struggle and an attempt to attain national independence for Ireland. The nature of the struggle varied depending upon class alliances within Ireland and political and economic developments in Ireland and in Britain.

The American War of Independence resulted in a period of actue economic crisis in Ireland and a demand for Free trade. Ireland was forbidden to trade with the colonies and thus lost one of her chief markets. In addition the provision trade was damaged by an embargo on the export of

provisions from Ireland. This embargo was imposed without consulting the Irish Parliament and was intended as a means of preventing provisions from reaching the American colonies and the French. The feeling of discontent in Ireland was increased by their sympathy for the American colonies. Ireland was perceived to be in a similar situation relative to Britain.[18]

The destruction of Ireland's commercial activities occurred at a time when Ireland was in a general economic depression. The linen trade had been declining since 1771 and 10,000 weavers had emigrated to North America. The national debt and the Pension list were rapidly increasing. Between March 1773 and September 1977 it had risen from £79,099 to 89,095. Although loans were raised and new taxes imposed, bankruptcy appeared inevitable. There was widespread unemployment and emigration. All classes were affected by the embargoes including the peasants, the farmers, the provision merchants, the linen merchants and the landed gentry. Petitions for relief were received from artisans, traders, woollen drapers, master clothiers, and from linen and cotton weavers.[19]

It appeared that the French were about to attack Ireland in 1778 and a militia was organized under the direction of the landed gentry. This seemed necessary since Irish troops were involved in the war with the colonies and without a

militia, Ireland was defenseless. The Irish Volunteers numbered 40,000 by the end of May 1779 and they consisted mainly of Protestant merchants, weavers, artisans and peasants. The Volunteers were supported by the Catholics although Catholics were not allowed to join. The Volunteers' demands for free trade (trade controlled by Ireland rather than Britain), for legislative independence of the Irish parliament, religious equality and parliamentary control over the army, appear to have received a strong support from the general population.

Non-importation leagues were formed. They advocated the use of only those goods manufactured in Ireland and were intended as a means of shutting out British manufactures. Due to the closing of trade with the colonies in North America, the leagues were fairly successful in effecting a decline in British exports.

The demands at the Irish parliament for free trade were reinforced by a show of force by the Volunteers. The British were at war with Spain and France as well as with the colonies and they needed additional supplies from Ireland. The Irish parliament voted to extend supplies for six months only. Unwilling to loose the Irish or to risk a rebellion in Ireland Britain granted some concessions.

By the end of 1779 acts forbidding the export of wool, woollen goods and glass from Ireland were repealed and in January 1780 an act was passed permitting Ireland to trade

with British settlements in Africa and America on condition that the Irish parliament impose duties equal to those in force in Great Britain. In March 1780 the export of gold and silver to Ireland from England was approved, foreign hops could now be imported and the Turkey company was opened to Irish merchants.[20]

The control of the Irish landowners, merchants and manufacturers over Irish economic affairs remained precarious, however, due to Britain's control over her legislative apparatus. A declaration of independence received strong support in the Irish House of Commons in April 1780. This declaration stated that only the King and the lords and commons of Ireland had the power to enact laws binding Ireland. Sympathetic magistrates began to refuse to convict deserters from the army declaring that no Irish statute compelled them to obey military law.

In 1781 the Volunteers declared at a convention of all Ulster companies that : (a) Ireland was independent legislatively of Britain; (b) the power exercised by the Privy Councils under Poynings' Law was unconsitutional; (c) the principle of the recently passed mutiny act should be condemned;and (d) limited support should be given to religious equality.

By 1782 the Volunteers had increased in strength to 80,000. Volunteers all over the country were adopting the

resolution that the "power of any other than the King, lord and Commons of Ireland to make laws to bind this kingdom" was repudiated. They also advocated parliamentary control over the army, religious equality and freedom of trade. At the same time, the Irish Parliament passed a resolution demanding legislature independence for Ireland.

There appeared to be widespread support for legislatative independence. The Lord Lieutenant's report stated:

> It is no longer the parliament of Ireland that is to be managed or attended to. It is the whole of this country. It is the church, the law, the army...the merchant, the labourer, the catholic, the dissenter, the protestant, all sects, all sorts and descriptions of men who...unanimously and most audibly, call upon Great Britain for full and unequivocal satisfaction.[21]

The British parliament repealed the 'Sixth of George' thus establishing the sole right of the Irish Parliament to legislate for Ireland and the final jurisdiction of the Irish house of lords. Bills originating in the Irish parliament could no longer be altered by the chief governor or his council in Ireland or by the British parliament. The king retained the right to suppress bills but could not alter them. Other reforms included the replacement of the perpetual mutiny act by a biennal act, the granting of the same tenure to Irish judges as granted to English judges and the establishment of the final jurisdiction of the Irish courts.

Irish independence was still limited by the fact that the British parliament continued to control the Executive Government and to influence the English ministers to whom the Lord Lieutenant was responsible. Irish bills required royal sanction and were submitted to a committee of the English Privy Council before being reported on to the King.

The King and his representative in Ireland, the lord lieutenant, retained considerable power in Ireland, The Chief secretary of the Lord Lieutenant led the House of Commons and introduced Government business. Irish ministers were responsible to the Lord Lieutenant.

Pensions and sinecures continued and the number of placemen and pensioners in Parliament still equalled one third of the members. Boroughs continued to be bought and sold. The Irish parliament remained influenced by pro-British government supporters and persons owing their position to the king.[22]

The vulnerable nature of Irish independence and free trade was made clear during an attempt by the Irish parliament in 1784 and 1785 to renegotiate Anglo-Irish commercial arrangements. Although free trade increased Irish trade with the colonies, the majority of trade was in fact, carried on with Britain. Nine-tenths of Ireland's linen and provisions were sent to Britain. However, many Irish commodities were totally excluded from Britain by prohibitory duties. Almost all British goods, in contrast, were admited to Ireland at

moderate rates of duty. British industries were in many cases more developed than the Irish and Irish merchant and manufacturers demanded protective duties but the Irish parliament was reluctant to agree since it feared British retaliation.

In 1784, there was an attempt by the Irish parliament to work out a new commercial agreement with Britain. The commercial propositions worked out between the British executive and the Irish administration proposed:

> a free interchange between the two countires of foreign and colonial goods without the imposition of additional duties, neither country was to prohibit the import of any product of the other and the duty if any levied on every article should be the same in one country, or in the other; where the higher was to be reduced to the lower; there was to be mutual preference for the produce of either country over foreign imports; in any one year in which the hereditary revenue of Ireland exceeded a certain sum (later fixed at 656,000) the surplus was to be devoted to the maintenance of the navy.[23]

The Irish parliament accepted the propositions only after it was agreed that the additional revenue would only be granted to the navy in years in which the total revenue exceeded the national expenditure. However the commercial propositions faced considerable opposition in Britain. British manufacturers were afraid that lower wages and rates of taxation in Ireland would result in cheap Irish goods dominating the British home market. The British parliament accepted the propositions on the condition that

the Irish parliament enact all laws that had been or could be passed by the British parliament with respect to colonial trade, navigation and foreign trade. This condition revoked the independence and free trade agreement of the late 1770s and early 1780s. The Irish parliament rejected completely the commercial propositions. The Irish parliament's failure to renegotiate Anglo-Irish commercial arrangement may stem in part, from the disintegration of the alliance of the land-owners and the Volunteers. The demands of the Volunteers for reform of parliament and religious equality were not satisfied by the Irish parliament. The Volunteers were breaking away from the leadership and control of the landlords and their ranks were being filled by labourers, cottiers and servants.

The United Irishmen

The struggle for independence from Britain's control over Ireland's political and economic development began to take new forms in the early 1790s with the development of the united Irishmen. The Presbyterian bourgeoisie who founded the United Irishmen in Belfast in October, 1791 and in Dublin a month later, at first perceived this independence as arising out of a reform of Parliament involving an end to pensions and sinecure abuses and the inclusion of Presbyterians and Catholics in a Parliament based on a broader base of the population. Later, as the possibility of reform began to appear remote and the government tactics became more repressive

they began to advocate complete independence from Britain and sought aid for a rebellion from France. They also began to recruit the Catholic Defenders. United Irishmen membership consisted mainly of Presbyterian weavers, artisans and large tenant farmers in the north of Ireland. Their leaders were Presbyterian professionals and the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie.*

The United Irishmen gained their greatest support in areas where small-scale commodity production was declining while manufactures showed no particularly rapid development.[24] This decline and the failure of industrial growth was probably seen as arising out of prohibitory British duties and the inability of small-scale commodity production to compete with the rapidly expanding British factory system. British control over the Irish parliament through pensions and sinecures

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* The occupations of some members of the United Irishmen listed in the minutes of the Dublin Society of the United Irishmen included: currier, tallon, chandler, merchant, silk manufacturer, silk throwster, builder, attorney, distiller, tanner, counsellor at law, attorney, apothercury, woollen draper, bookseller, iron monger and hardware merchant, linen draper, cotton manufacturer, factor, barrister at law, clothier hosier, silk weaver, cooper, mercer, printer. See R.B. McDowell, ed., "Proceedings of the Dublin Society of the United Irishmen", Analecta Hibernia, Vol. 17, 1949.

meant that the Irish parliament was reluctant to impose prohibitory duties on British imports or bounties on certain Irish exports. Only manufacturing and trade which did not threaten British merchant and manufacturers could be encouraged.

The United Irishmen perceived that political participation of Roman Catholics and Presbyterians in the parliament would ensure that the interest of the Irish merchant and manufacturers were taken into consideration. Universal suffrage was advocated. A reform of parliament, involving a reduction in the pension list was seen as a means of reducing the influence of the British administration.

The United Irishmen were well educated and the weavers, in particular, had participated in reading societies which acted as centers of political, economic and theological debate. Gibbon has suggested that the radicalism of these weavers stems from their high level of literacy and education and their exclusion from politics.[25]

A number of the United Irishmen had received their education in Scotland and helped found societies such as the Society of United Britons and the Society of United Scotsmen, in Scotland. These societies were founded on a belief in the need for reform of Parliament and in the rights of man.[26]

The philosophy of the 'rights of man' embodied in the U.S. constitution states that "all men are created equal,

that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just power from the consent of the governed, that whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter and abolish it, and to institute new Government."[27] This philosophy presented a challenge to hereditary privilege and authority.

These ideas were widely accepted in England and among the Presbyterians in Ireland. By 1793, the legal sales of Paine's book Rights of Man had reached 200,000 copies. Many Presbyterians in Ulster were sympathetic to the rebels in the United States and widespread sympathy had been expressed for the colonists in newspapers, pamphlets and at public meetings and addresses.[28]

The French Revolution was also looked upon favourably by the Presbyterians. In 1791, the anniversary of the French Revolution was celebrated in Belfast. The Revolution was considered to be an example in the proclamation of religious disqualifications and the removal of tithes. The drastic changes made in the church establishment were also approved. Frequent reports of the developments in France debates of the constituent and legislative assemblies in the Convention and the Jacobin club filled the Irish newspapers.[29]

After 1794, the reforms advocated by the United Irishmen began to appear very unlikely. The Viceroy, Fitzwilliam who favoured Catholic emancipation was recalled and the Government adopted measures intended to diminish internal threats. Meetings of assemblies representing large sections of Irish opinion were outlawed. The Volunteers who were no longer under the control of the landed gentry were suppressed. In their place the Government set up a paid militia. Two United Irish leaders were arrested and the United Irishmen were outlawed. The United Irishment formed an underground society and turned to the Defenders and to France for aid. France was at war with England and the site of a recent revolution.[30]

The Catholic Defenders

During the second half of the eighteenth century there was a rise in the number of cottiers and labourers due to increased competition for land resulting from the rapidly rising population*, and the extension of pasture. The separation of agriculture and commodity production was also

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* In 1767 the population equalled two and a half million, by 1821 to 6,802,000. Although there is some disagreement among demographers the population increase has been attributed to (a) the falling death rate due to improvements in the quantity, quality and distribution of food supplies beginning in 1740; (b) the rising birth rate resulting from earlier and more frequent marriages; (c) higher fertility resulting from the improvement in diet, the exhaustion of some killer diseases and increased cultivation of the potato which provided a diet high in nutrition, and a crop

beginning to occur with the extension of the factory system and of technological innovations into cotton and linen manufacturing in the north.

This situation led to agrarian violence between Roman Catholics and Protestants. Attacks against Catholics were particularly severe in Armagh where there had been a rapid separation of linen production from small scale commodity production and weavers were becoming proletarianized. Prior to this Protestant tenants had combined farming and linen production and With their security of tenure been able to maintain a position superior to that of the Catholics. Now they were faced with competition from Catholics for work in factories and as labourers and servants. Attacks by Protestants spread to mill owners and linen manufacturers who continued to employ Catholics.[31]

The Protestant Peep O'Day Boys and later the Orange Order, emerged out of this situation. In response to Protestant hostility the Catholics organized the Catholic Defenders. Membership in the Defenders increased rapidly with the repressive tactics used by the Yeomanry (the government militia) and the Orangemen during the rebellion and the Defenders formed branches throughout Ireland.

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capable of supporting a family on a small holding.

See K.H. Connell, The Population of Ireland, 1750-1845, West Port, Conneticut, 1950.

The original aims of the United Irishmen had been to reform Parliament and to obtain religious equality. They now advocated the complete independence of Ireland from Britain and incorporated the peasant grievances into their platform. These included unequal taxation, tithes, non-resident clergy and landlords and the price of land.[32] They distributed leaflets to the Defenders urging them to join against the Protestant Ascendancy. Agents were sent into the countryside from Belfast and Dublin to recruit Catholic peasants. By 1796 the United Irishmen had a membership of 500,000.[33] The Society spread out from Ulster and Dublin and by 1796 it extended widely through Leinster. By 1797 it had become a powerful force in Munster and had gained a slight hold in Connaught.

The Rebellion

The United Irishmen's Rebellion was on the whole, not particularly successful. The leaders of the Ulster section were arrested in September 1796. France sent 43 ships and 15,000 men in December but the ships were scattered by heavy gales and some never reached Ireland. Bad weather prevented the rest from landing and they eventually returned to France. In August, 1798, a small French force landed at Connacht, but even with local support they were outnumbered and defeated. Another small expedition was defeated in October at Lough, Swilly and County Donegal.

On November 19, 1798, Theobald Wolfe Tone, a prominent member of the United Irishmen was captured and court martialed. He commited suicide. In March several of the United Irish leaders were arrested and co-ordination of the rebellion was left to local leaders. A number of sporadic outbursts occurred but the rebellion was only widespread in the south-east. In Wexford a group of about five hundred peasants led by local priests rose up and rebellion spread throughout the county and in the last week in May the United Irishmen rose in Kildaire, Meath and Carlow.

In the north an insurrection broke out in Antrim on June 7 but it was easily overcome by troops from Belfast. An attempted outbreak in Derry was prevented by General Knox. A rebel encampment in county Down managed to hold out for three days against government forces but the Ulster rebellion was suppressed in a week and did not become widespread in the north.

The forces opposing the United Irishmen included the British Colonial administration, the Protestant landed gentry and the Protestant farmers, cottiers, labourers and servants who joined the Yeomanry and formed the Orange Order. The members of the Orange Order allied themselves with the British in hopes of maintaining their privileged position. The original oath of the Orange Order stated that the Orangemen would defend the King and his heirs as long as he or they supported the Protestant Ascendancy. Gibbon found that the

Orangemen tended to develop in areas where manufacturing had eliminated small scale agricultural production, thus placing Protestants in direct competition with Catholics. Protestants also participated in the Yeomanry which assisted the Government in disarming the United Irishmen. The Protestant gentry lead the Yeomanry and many of its members were Orangemen. The disarmament involved many abuses of power on the side of the Yeomanry and provoked a reign of terror.[34]

In 1798 the British administration proposed a union of Ireland and Britain as the most effective means of strengthening the country against foreign invasion and of ensuring internal stability. The Anglo-Irish landlords objected to a union because they saw it as a threat to the economic prosperity of Ireland and to the economic and political independence they had gained in 1779 and 1782. They rejected the idea of a union when it was put before them in the House of Commons in 1799. The proposal was eventually passed in 1800 due to the exertions of the Irish administration. The distribution of peerages, pensions, and sinecures and the use of bribery and threats helped ensure its passage. Although they were unable to defeat the bill many landlords remained opposed to a union and resented it as an imposition by the British government.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the historical development of Ireland, focusing on the relationship between Ireland and Britain and on the nature of class conflict and class alliances in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century. The demands of the Anglo-Irish landlords for free trade and legislative independence were placed in the context of their desire for greater control over the Irish parliament and over Irish economic and political development. The demands of other classes for greater political power were also discussed. These eventually culminated in a rebellion and led the British administration to propose a union of Ireland and Britain.

Chapter four discusses the nature of the political ISA in Ireland and chapters five and six link the ideology expressed by the landlords in the political ISA to political and economic developments in Ireland and to changing class relationships.

FOOTNOTES

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18. J.C. Beckett, op. cit., 1966; p. 218.

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CHAPTER IV

THE IRISH POLITICAL SYSTEM

This chapter will examine the nature of the political system in Ireland focusing particularly on the House of Commons. This is necessary since the debates of the House of Commons will be examined in the analysis of the ideology of the Irish landowners. The discussion will focus on several areas: (a) the historical development of the Irish political system; (b) its overall structure; (c) the religious and class composition of the House of Commons; (e) the British administration and (f) the nature of Irish political "parties" and their relationship to British political parties.

It is argued that the House of Commons was controlled by and acted in the interests of the landlords in Ireland. Their control of the House of Commons was facilitated by the fact that they made up the majority of its members and by their control of the elections. However, decisions made within the House of Commons were influenced by the ability of the British administration to distribute patronage and by the connections of Irish political "parties" to British political parties. The latter became particularly significant after 1782 when a change in the British administration began to be identified with a change in the Irish administration. It came to be assumed that the support of a particular

British party would result in an increased share of patronage in Ireland when that party came into power in Britain.

The Historical Development of the Political System

The Irish parliament met every second year from 1692 to 1782. After 1782, it met annually. A parliamentary session usually lasted approximately six to eight months. Prior to the Octennial Act of 1768 the Irish parliament could be terminated only by the death of the sovereign and between 1727 and 1760 only two general elections were held. Before Lord Townsend's arrival as lord lieutenant in 1767, the lord lieutenant resided in the country only during the times when parliament was in session. However after Lord Townshend, lord lieutenants resided continuously in Ireland.

The Structure

The Irish parliamentary system was modeled after the British parliamentary monarchy and consisted of an executive centered around the lord lietenant, the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The lord lieutenant was appointed by and responsible to the English privy council rather than to the Irish legislature.

The House of Lords was composed of temporal peers and bishops of the Anglican church. The bishops were a stronger force in the Irish House of Lords than in the British since the number of Irish peers (142 in 1775) was small relative to the number of bishops and many peers were absentees living in

England having no connection with Ireland. Due to the importance of episcopal appointments, the British administration favoured the appointment of Englishmen who would represent English interests within the Irish House of Lords.[1] The lord lieutenant's ability to control the House of Lords was increased by the fact that the British administration was influential in the creation of peers and bishops. However, the House of Commons was more independent politically since the members were elected and influence depended on patronage.

The House of Commons consisted of 300 members; 64 of these were elected by thirty-two counties; 234 by cities and boroughs and two by Trinity College Dublin. However less than one tenth of the population was involved in the election process. The majority of the population, the Roman Catholics, was excluded from participation.

The Religious and Class Composition of the House of Commons

Roman Catholics were excluded from membership in parliament by an English Act of 1691. This act declared that members of parliament must take an oath declaring the pope's deposing power to be impious and heretical. They also had to declare against transubstantiation*.and in 1727 they were deprived of the right to vote. The sacramental test act of 1704 excluded the Protestant Dissenters from participation

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* Transubstantiation is the conversion of the eucharist into the body and blood of Christ.

in corporations thus reducing their control over elections. Although still eligible to participate in the electoral process they seldom became members of parliament since the elections were controlled by the landlords and most Protestant Dissenters were tenants, artisans, labourers, or linen merchants. Even prior to 1705 there were no Protestant Dissenters in the House of Lords and only a few in the House of Commons. They did, however, form a large part of the electorate in the north, the area where most English and Scottish immigrants settled.

The members of the House of Commons consisted mainly of Anglicans, the majority of whom were landlords. Although the shortening of parliamentary sessions by the Octennial Act of 1767 resulted in more opportunity for members of the professions or merchants to become members, the House of Commons continued to be dominated by landlords. The few members who were bankers or in professions such as law or medicine generally came from landowning families, were connected to landowning families through marriage or were, in fact, landowners themselves. Most acted in the interests of a 'patron',usually a wealthy landlord who owned the borough and to whom they owed their election success. Irish hisotirans generally agree that "throughout the eighteenth century, the parliament remained an assembly of landlords and the allies of landlords and there is little reason to

doubt that...it represented fairly accurately the outlook of the whole landlord class."[2]*

The Electoral System

The electoral system in Ireland was very corrupt. Boroughs such as Clonmines consisted of a single house. Barrow in county Wexford was merely a mountain of sea sand with-

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* A study of the members of the House of Commons undertaken at the end of the eighteenth discusses the occupations and affiliations of some of the members of Parliament. Several examples illustrate the close ties between members who were not landlords and the landlords:

Arthur Dawson Esq. is described as "A banker in Dublin attached to Mr. Ponsonby and brought in by Mr. Burton-married to a niece of Lord Tyrone". This description tells us that Dawson has allied himself with Mr. Ponsonby, a large landowner and is married to the niece of a large landowner.

James Chatterton Esq. is described as "A lawyer-was much connected with the late Lord Traction-by means he came into Parliament in the course of the last session he supported Lord Carlisle". Thus although Chatterton is a lawyer he obtained his seat in parliament through a landlord and allied himself with Lord Carlisle during the last session.

The Honourable Richard Annesley is described as the "Nephew to Lord Tyrone who has half this borough-at the Bar- and Customer of Youghall, with a salary of 400 a year, which was given him by Lord Buckingham". Although he is at the bar he comes from a landowning family and is supported by a landowner.

A description of the background and alliances of members of the House of Commons in 1782 can be found in G.O. Sayles "Contemporary Sketches of Members of the Irish Parliament in 1782", Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Vol. 56, C., pp. 227-286.

out a single house.[3] Even in boroughs with a larger population a 'patron' who was frequently a large landlord controlled the elections and the franchise was limited to a small number of people. Many boroughs were bought and sold.[4]

A report of 1784 states that "116 seats were at the disposal of 25 proprietors; ...Lord Shannon sent 16 members to parliament; the Ponsonby's 14; Lord Hillsborough 9; the duke of Leinster 7; and the Castle 12.[5] This report indicates the control of a large portion of the seats in the House of Commons by a small group of landlords.

The buying and selling of seats indicates the extent to which they had in fact become the property of a patron. In 1753, a correspondent of Lord Charlemont mentions £4000 as the current price for a seat in the House of Commons.[6]

Elections could be influenced in a variety of ways depending on the type of election district: corporation, freeman, potwalloper or manor. In corporation boroughs the right to vote was vested in the free burgesses, a small and self elected body which carried on municipal government. In these boroughs it was relatively easy for the patron to influence the election since he had only to control the corporation.

In freeman boroughs elections could be influenced by: (1) admitting no freemen to the franchise even though this was illegal according to the constitution; (2) creating large numbers of non-resident freeman; (3) creating forty-shilling

freeholders; and (4) restricting the number of freemen.

In the potwalloper boroughs (there were only 11) every protestant householder could participate in the elections. Bribery in the form of entertainment, food and wine was an effective means of influencing the voters choice. In the seven manor boroughs the franchise was limited to freeholders and many of the tactics used in the freeman boroughs could be applied in the manor boroughs.

The provost generally acted as the returning officer in the university borough and he exercised considerable influence over the elections. Between 1717 and 1795 only three men held the office.[7]

The control of the landlords over the elections was enhanced by the fact that many of the voters were under financial obligation to the patron or to the candidate.

The political hegemony of the landlords was reinforced by the length of parliament-only two elections were held between 1727 and 1760. A seat in the House of Commons could be vacated only by death, expulsion, elevation to a peership or judgeship, or by taking holy orders. It was also possible for one member to represent more than one constituency; in 1727 fourteen members were returned for two constituencies and one for three.[8]

The Control of the British Administration over the Irish House of Commons.

The extent to which the House of Commons members supported or opposed the administration depended on the distribution of places, titles and pensions.[9] No great distinction existed between the parliament and the civil service. Many members held pensions or occupied positions in the civil service.* Often they did little or nothing to obtain the pension or salary they received.

Prior to 1767 control over patronage rested in the hands of a small number of wealth landlords known as 'undertakers'. These undertakers received a share of the patronage in return for conducting the business of the British administration through parliament. However, as Johnston has pointed out "The undertakers governed solely in terms of the interest of the Anglo-Irish ruling class. They did not represent the English government; they merely made the best possible terms with it in the light of their personal interests".[10] When the lord lieutenant began to reside continuously in Ireland after 1767 there was a move by the 'Castle' to regain control of the distribution of

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* Some of the positions held by members were: Register of deeds, clerk of permits, paymaster of corn premiums, receiver general of stamps, master of horse, commissioner of barracks, clerk of the paper office; under-secretary of the civil department, under-secretary of the military department and surveyor of lands for life. See Edith M. Johnston, ed., "Members of the Irish Parliament, 1784-87", Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, 1971, Vol. 71, Section C, pp. 139-246.

patronage. This led to conflict with the undertakers.

Even with the centralization of patronage under the British administration the influence of a small number of large landowners remained considerable owing to their domination of the elections. The increase in the number of elections resulting from the Octennial Act made the British administrations influence over the House of Commons less secure since it increased the instability of the membership.

It should be emphasized that a member's support was not guaranteed by the receipt of patronage. It varied depending upon whether a desire for further patronage was likely to be satisfied and whether they believed the administrations stand on a particular issue was detrimental to their interests. Some members also opposed the administration if they felt that they could move into positions of prominence and power with the next change of the British administration.

The belief that a change in the British administration meant a change in the Irish administration became particularly strong after 1782 when Rockingham replaced North in Britain and new persons came into power in Ireland. Scott, the attorney-general, and Browne, the prime sergeant, were replaced by Yelverton and Burke and although the solicitor general remained in office, Lees the under-secretary for war, was dismissed.[11] The ties of various landlords and their

allies, to British political parties became more important as a result.

Irish Political 'Parties' and their Relationship to British Political Parties.

Ireland became important as a political issue in Britain only in the last three decades of the eighteenth century. In the 1770s party conflict at Westminister centered around the struggle between Great Britain and the British North American colonies. The whigs condemned tory policy with regard to the colonies and attempted to make use of the growing Irish nationalism to create difficulty for the administration. They expressed sympathy for Irish grievances and an alliance developed between the British whigs and the Irish 'patriot' party.[12]

The Irish patriot party can be seen to have been developing as early as the 1720s with the insistence of a small number of opposition members that the constitutional rights of Ireland be protected. The patriots could not be considered to be a real political party at that time since they had no regular leader or fixed policy and did not form a coherent group. The composition of the patriots varied from one parliamentary session to the next. However, the principles they put forward began to gain wider acceptance in the protestant population as a whole, particularly with the development of a commercial class which resented British

restrictions on Irish trade. With the decline of the influence of the undertakers after 1767 the patriot party obtained greater support in the House of Commons and its demands were reinforced by the support of the Volunteers. In the 1760s demands were made for "limitation of the life parliament by a septennial act, reduction of the pension list, establishment of a national militia, a habeas corpus act and security of tenure for the judges."[13] In the 1770s their strongest demand was for freedom of trade and in the early 1780s for legislative independence. The Volunteers and the patriot party were encouraged by the British oppositon. During 1779, Rockingham and Shelburne urged the easing of trade restrictions on Ireland. In the House of Lords, the Duke of Richmond questioned the right of the British parliament to legislate for Ireland and Fox did the same in the House of Commons.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the House of Commons was controlled by and acted in the interests of the Irish landlords. Although not every member of parliament was a landlord the landlords controlled the elections and the few members who were professionals or bankers had close ties to landowning families.

However, the administration in Ireland which was appointed by and responsible to the English Privy Council

was able to exert influece over the decisions of the members of the House of Commons through the distribution of patronage. Unsatisfactory decisions could be modified through the operation of Poyning's Law which gave the English Privy Council the right to approve, amend, or suppress the bills the Irish parliament intended to examine. According to the Sixth of George, the British parliament had the right to legislate for Ireland and the British House of Lords was the final court for appeals from the Irish law courts. Thus the independence of the Irish House of Commons was in fact severely limited.

Chapter five will examine the ideology of the landowners in Britain focusing particularly on the political ISA and the debates in the House of Commons during the periods 1781 to 1785. The formulation of ideology will be linked to the political and economic developments outlined in Chapters two and three. Chapter six will examine the transformations in ideology which occur between the first period 1781 to 1785 and the second period 1794 to 1798.

FOOTNOTES

1. J.C. Beckett, "The Irish Parliament in the Eighteenth Century", Belfast Natural History Society Proceedings, No. 4, 1950; pp. 21.

2. Ibid., p. 18.

3. J.L. McCracken, "Irish Parliamentary Elections, 1727-68", Irish Historical Studies, Vol. V, 1947; p. 209.

4. J.C. Beckett, op. cit., 1950; p. 22.

5. J.C. Beckett, op. cit., 1947; p. 210.

6. Ibid., p. 211.

7. Ibid., p. 230.

8. Ibid., p. 212.

9. J.C. Beckett, op. cit., 1950; p. 18.

10. E.M. Johnston, "The Career and Correspondence of Thomas Allen, 1725-98", Irish Historical Studies, Vol. X, 1956/57; p. 298.

11. R.B. McDowell, "The Fitzwilliam Episode", Irish Historical Studies, Vol. XV, 1966; pp. 115-130.

12. Theresa O'Connor, "The Conflict Between Flood and Grattan, 1782-3", in H.A. Crone, T.W. Moody and D.B. Quinn, eds., Essays in British and Irish History in Honour of J.E. Todd, London: 1949; p. 171.

13. J.C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1923, London: 1966; p. 198.

CHAPTER V

LEGISLATIVE INDEPENDENCE AND ANGLO-IRISH COMMERCIAL NEGOTIATIONS

This chapter examines the ideology expressed in the political ISA in Ireland during the period 1781 to 1785 and focuses particularly on the House of Commons debates. The content of these debates must be placed within the context of Anglo-Irish relations and political and economic developments in Ireland. It is particularly important to understand the nature of class alliances and class conflict which developed in Ireland at that time.

It is argued that this ideology reflects the struggle of the Anglo-Irish landlords in Ireland for greater economic and political independence from Britain while remaining within the British social formation and the British state. There is also inherent in the ideology a desire to maintain the privileged position of the landowners in Ireland by stabilizing existing class relationships and preventing the outbreak of a rebellion.

The granting of free trade in 1779 and 1780 did not alleviate Ireland's economic depression. British restrictions on Irish trade, manufacturing and agriculture were perceived as responsible for Ireland's lack of prosperity and legislative independence was considered by the members

of the Irish parliament to be a prerequisite for Irish control over economic development.

The support of the Volunteers, a militia established by and under the control of the landlords enabled the members of Parliament to articulate a demand for legislative independence in 1782. The landlords attempted to extend their base of support by granting concessions such as the right to bear arms, to educate their children and to freely practice their religion, to the Roman Catholics. They hoped that this would unite the Catholics with the Protestants and ensure their loyalty.

The possibility of attaining legislative independence was strengthened by the change in the British administration in 1782. The Whigs who were sympathetic to the patriot party and to Irish legislative independence replaced the Tories. The patriot party now made up the government party in Ireland* and it was relatively easy to ensure the passage of

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*In April, 1782 Fox wrote to Lord Charlemont, a leading member of the patriot party and of the Volunteers and asked "why should not those who used to compose the opposition in Ireland, become the principal supporters of the new administration there, on the same grounds which they opposed the old one? In short, why should not the Whigs... unite in every part of the empire to establish their principles so firmly that no future faction will be able to destroy them? See Francis Hardy Esq. ed., Memoirs of the Political and Private Life of James Caulfield, Earl of Charlemont, London, 1810,; p. 217.

resolution in the House of Commons declaring Ireland's independence. It was unanimously passed on February 22, 1782.

The landlords attempted to incorporate other social classes and religious groups into their struggle for economic and political independence. They granted a number of concessions to the Roman Catholics in the hope of uniting them behind their demands. These concessions were also perceived as a means of generating loyalty among the Roman Catholics and an acceptance of existing class relationships.

The concessions were designed mainly to benefit Catholic landlords and merchants and to appease the clergy, since the Roman Catholic church had managed to survive in Ireland in spite of the restrictions placed on it by the British. Roman Catholics were granted the right to bear arms, to educate their children, to own land, to freely practice their religion and recognition and support was given to the clergy. The right to own land was a concession designed to benefit the impecunious landowners as well as the Catholics since the wealth possessed by the Catholic provision merchants had been previously prohibited from being invested in land.

The landlords felt relatively secure with respect to the Catholics. There had been no rebellion since the 17th century and Catholics were not organized into any collective force. In addition, the landlords had the support of the

Volunteers, a Protestant, armed militia organized on a national basis. However they remained reluctant to grant Catholics any control over the parliament and Catholics were refused the right to vote or to participate in Parliament.

While the Volunteers were still under the control of the landlords and supported their efforts to obtain free trade and legislative independence, the members of Parliament were willing to consider a reform of parliament involving a reduction in the pension list and an extension of the suffrage. They saw the integration of the Protestant merchants, manufacturers and tenant farmers into the political process as reducing the ability of the administration to influence the House of Commons through the distribution of patronage to a few influential landlords.

However the incorporation of the 'lower classes' including cottiers, labourers and servants into the Volunteers and the militancy of their demands for parliamentary reform came to be perceived as threatening by the landlords. They were reluctant to extend the suffrage to the mass of Protestants and as one member put it "Formidable as the idea of an aristocracy is esteemed, a democracy is much more injurious and dangerous".[1] They began to advocate the suppression of the Volunteers and in November, 1783 the House of Commons resolved by a large majority "to maintain its just rights and privileges against all encroachments

whatsover" and emphasized its "perfect satisfaction" with the "present happy constitution".[2]

The granting of free trade in 1779 and 1780 and legislative independence in 1782, did not resolve Ireland's economic difficulties. As part of the British social formation and under the British state Irish trade agreements were still negotiated and enforced by Britain since Ireland had no independent army. An awareness of the inability of the Irish parliament to act independently of the British administration became apparent during a debate on trade with Portugal. Although it was felt the British minister was not adequately representing Irish interests in trade negotiations it was clear that it would be almost impossible for Ireland to negotiate independently.

Also the majority of Irish trade was carried on with Britain and the terms of trade were felt to be unfavourable to Ireland. Many Irish goods were prohibited or were subject to high duties. British goods were usually admitted free or with only modest duties. In 1784 and 1785 the Irish parliament attempted to work out new commercial arrangements with Britain. Basically the proposed terms of trade included a relatively free exchange of commodities between Ireland and Britain and equalization of duties. Preferential treatment was to be given to the goods of the other country. The British parliament would only agree to accept the new

terms if the Irish parliament agreed to enact all legislation passed by the British parliament. This rendered freedom of trade and legislative independence meaningless. The landlords resented this attack on their political and economic independence and they voted to reject the new trade agreements.

Having examined briefly some of the political and economic changes in Ireland as well as changes in ideology, this chapter will now discuss in greater detail the ideology expressed in the political ISA in Ireland. It is important to note the interrelationship of economic and political issues and the way these are linked to the maintenance of existing class relationships and the stability of the social formation.

Economic Concerns

The majority of debates in the House of Commons between 1781 and 1785 revolved around the need to ensure economic prosperity in Ireland. This concern relates directly to the class interests of the landlords since they were involved in the production of corn for export to Britain and were affected by British restrictions on the importation of corn prior to 1784 when the English Corn Laws were repealed. As landlords the revenue they derived from rents varied depending on the prosperity of their tenants. In the north many of their tenants were involved in the production

of linen for export to Britain and in the south with the production of wool for internal trade.

They were also concerned by the financial difficulties of the Irish administration. These had increased due to the need to support Britain in her wars with France, Spain and the colonies. The number of pensions and sinecures had risen as well,since it was more difficult to control the House of Commons now that parliaments were annual, elections every eight years and the frequency of changes in the British administration had increased. Most taxes came from duties and excises. The landlords did not pay a land tax and did not want one imposed.

Economic prosperity was regarded by the landlords, as one means of protecting their privileged economic and political position in Ireland. The economic depression had resulted in numerous petitions being sent to parliament from all social classes and in some food rioting. The link between economic prosperity and internal stability was made explicit by one member of parliament who stated that "misery and distress are printed in the countenances of every man we meet in the streets. Are the people obedient to the laws? No; and wherefore? Because they have lost all respect for their rulers".[3]

Government strategy for facilitating trade and commerce included the development of a supportive infra-

structure. Money was granted for the upgrading of harbour facilities[4], roads[2] and canals[6]. The establishment of a bank was considered "essential to the prosperity of the merchants"[7] and it was stated that it would "be highly beneficial to trade... [it would] extend commerce and promote the agriculture of Ireland".[8] It was also suggested that the legal system be made more efficient since the rise of Ireland in commercial consequence would lead to an increase in commercial agreements.[9]

Loans were granted to manufacturers attempting to establish large factories and to introduce machinery into the production process. These manufacturers were described as 'patriotic' and as acting in the national interest*. Special schools were set up to train spinners for work in these factories.[10]

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*Mr. Foster moved that the sum of 25,000 be advanced to Robert Esq. Huffrey Burgh lavishedly praised on Mr. Brooke who he maintained "from a motive truly patriotic had attempted to benefit the nation by the LATE GLORIOUS EXTENSION OF ITS TRADE...had established a manufacture for the MACHINES used in the various and extended branches of the Cotton, Linen, Silk and Worsted business". He was also enthusiastic about "the great works which Captain Brooke had constructed for his extensive manufactories-a handsome town built by him near the Grand Canal and many other improvements useful to the nation". (Irish Parliamentary Register,1781 pp. 33) Mr. Arbuthnot later presented a report on his visit to Mr. Brooke's manufacture where "he found buildings had been erected since the 11th of October last, which had cost by the builders estimate, 2833, the principal of which was a house 300 ft. in length, 15ft in breadth and three stories high, capable of containing 300 looms, for the purpose of giving employment to weavers of Dublin out of work". See Irish Parliamentary Register, November 27, 1783, Vol. II, 1783, 84; pp. 217-218.

It was considered of the primary importance to trade and commerce to establish internal security. Referring to previous disturbances Mr. Grattan asked "who will restore to their country her union, her tranquillity and her credit? What compensation can be made for the capital which has been drained, for the manufacture which has been deterred and the character of the nation which has been sunk.[11]

Internal disturbances were also seen directly interfering in the landlord's internal trade in corn. Mr. Toler reported that:

> in the southern counties there is the greatest abundance of grain and...an ample supply would be afforded them to the north if the trade were free and open but while mobs assemble to regulate the corn trade by their own caprice, both the farmer of the south and the consumer of the north will suffer.[12]

Mr. Colwill suggested that the "Government...interfere with a bold hand and check the boldness of those rioters that had plundered the mills at Clonmell...scarcity did not arise from any want of provision but from want of freedom of trade".[13]

Thus internal disturbances were perceived as both arising out of and as resulting in a lack of prosperity and economic development in Ireland.

The government also attempted to encourage trade, manufacturing and agriculture by the application of bounties and the imposition of duties. However the Irish parliament was restricted in the use of this device since the decisions they made could be modified or suppressed in Britain. Legislative independence was considered essential to the establishment of a strong economic base in Ireland and as a means of ensuring the control of the Anglo-Irish landlords over Irish economic development, since it was felt that decisions made in the British parliament frequently favoured British merchants, manufacturers and landlords at the expense of those in Ireland.

Legislative Independence

Legislative independence was supported by the patriot party and the Volunteers. The patriot party attempted to get a declaration of independence passed in the Irish House of Commons in 1781 but failed due to the strength of the government party. The question was postponed by a vote of 127 to 68. However, the arrival of a Whig ministry in 1782 in Britain meant that the allies of the patriots controlled the Irish administration and a resolution passed unanimously in April, 1782 in the Irish House of Commons.[14]

The inter-relationship of the questions of legislative independence and of Irish economic development can be seen in Mr. Yelverton's statement in the House of Commons

in 1781:

> at present the Constitution of England Inverted-Bills originated with the British Minister, and with this House it only remained to REGISTER or REJECT them. This was the miserable state of Ireland and in this state it would remain as long as a MONSTER unknown to the constitution, a BRITISH ATTORNEY GENERAL, through the influence of the law of Poynings had power to alter our bills...[it had been asserted that there was no harm in this but] an altered Sugar Bill annihilated our trade to the West Indies.[15]

The loyalty of the Irish during the American Rebellion was used as a justification for granting of independence to Ireland and it was stated that "If this kingdom had been even a colony, it would be rank injustice to refuse to her loyalty what had been tendered to America in rebellion.[16]

However, members of the House of Commons did not advocate complete independence from Britain. They merely sought legislative independence (through the repeal of Poynings law). The chief governor and council in Ireland were to loose the power to originate bills and this was to be the sole responsibility of the Irish Parliament. The British parliament could no longer alter bills, although the King retained the power to suppress bills he could not alter them. In addition the decisions of the Irish courts were no longer to be appealed in the British House of Peers. The latter was based on the rationale that:

> as the right of making laws to bind Ireland lay in our KINGDOM AND COMMONS to the total exclusion of all foreign intervention, it was idle to suppose that any appeal ought to lie from the law courts here...and that as the right of making laws binding the subjects of this realm, lay in the legislative body of Ireland only, so the power of explaining and dispensing those laws could only reside in the Irish courts with appeal to the Peers of Ireland.[17]

A second proposal for ensuring the independence of the Irish House of Commons involved the disenfranchising of revenue officers. However, this proposal did not receive unanimous approval. It was opposed by members who were presently receiving political patronage and who were in positions of power in the administration. The members of the opposition who put this measure forward felt that it would aid in "securing the freedom of parliament and lessening the influence of the crown".[18] According to Mr. Hartley "by removing a number of persons under the influence the number of independent elections were increased".[19]

An important argument against disenfranchishing the revenue officers was that by attempting to reduce the influence of the crown they might also weaken their own political strength. Lucius O'Brien pointed out that it was "narrow and impolitic to lessen the number of electors where they were so few in comparison to the body of the people".[20]

It can be seen that the struggle for legislative independence was bound up with the desire of the landlords for greater control of Irish economic and political development. Economic and political questions were inter-related and the articulation of the landlords' demands was made possible by the support of the Volunteers. The landlords also attempted to encourage Roman Catholic support for their cause by granting them certain concessions in 1782.

Roman Catholic Emancipation

Strong support was expressed in the House of Commons for emancipation and the majority of the debate took place in the first four months of 1782. The Roman Catholic bills were passed in April with fifty-seven members voting in favour and only eleven against. Some concessions had already been granted to the Roman Catholics in the 1770s. In 1771 Roman Catholics were allowed to hold a lease of sixty-one years on bogland if they intended to reclaim it. An act of 1774 allowed them to testify allegiance to the crown without violation of conscience and in 1778 Roman Catholics were allowed to take leases for lives and for any fixed term not exceeding 999 years. They could also inherit and bequeath land on the same terms as protestants.[21]

In 1782, debate centered around whether Catholics should be allowed to own land in perpetutity, to possess arms to educate their children, to have religious freedom

or to vote and become members of parliament. This discussion took place at the same time as the Irish parliament and the Volunteers were discussing legislative independence and support for Roman Catholic emancipation on the part of the landlords can be seen as arising out of their desire to unify all classes and religious groups in an effort to obtain greater economic and political autonomy. They were also seeking to secure their position in Ireland and thought that by easing some of the restrictions on Catholics they could ensure their loyalty and prevent rebellion.

The major rationale presented for emancipation was that it would unite the people and strengthen the country. Mr. Burgh stated that "he wanted to see the country united, strong in itself by this combination".[22] Mr. Montgomery suggested that giving Papists landed property would "incorporate them with Protestants - that they have the same habits, and by imbibing a mutual confidence, blend and unite into one body of people".[23]

Roman Catholic emancipation was directly linked to free trade and legislative independence by Sir Lucius O'Brien who stated; "When the honour and commercial interest of the nation are attacked is the proper time to unite every Irishman in support of his country's rights and nothing could more tend to this purpose than repealing laws which every man despised and condemned...[it was a matter of]...

the highest importance to the commercial interest and national rights of Ireland".[24]

The restrictions placed on Irish trade, manufacturing and agriculture by the British mercantile system were seen as negatively affecting not only the Roman Catholics but the Anglo-Protestants as well. According to Mr. Forbes, "The great object of the penal laws was to break the power of Papists in Ireland, that object they accomplished but they also ruined and destroyed the country".[25]

The significance of the rise of nationalist sentiment and a desire for freedom of trade and legislative independence for the support of Roman Catholic emancipation is illustrated by Major Hely Hutchinson remarks on the similarity of the Roman Catholic demand for emancipation and the demand of Ireland for their rights as a nation: "Permit me now to exhort you by that same spirit of freedom which taught you to demand your right from another country, not to suffer yourselves to be reproached; that whilst you were clamorous for your privileges as a nation, you refused to restore a great majority of your fellow subjects to their liberties as freemen; and to their great common law rights as members of the British constitution".[26]

The emancipation of Catholics was favoured by the British administration and the passing of the Roman Catholic bills was perceived to be means of securing the

approval of the British and a more tolerant attitude to the Irish parliament's demands. General Cunningham stated that "a full and liberal toleration to Catholics...would...give us a weight and consequence among the nations, and ensure to us kindness and generous treatment on the part of Great Britain".[27]

Protestant landlords also regarded the emancipation of Catholics as a means of securing their position. Sir Hercules Langrish pointed out that "by allowing Catholics to possess the fee of lands, they for ever bar the claim of old proprietors, and interest every Catholic who enjoys such possession in the support of the established church".[28]

It was considered better to try to placate the Catholics rather than to govern them by force. As Mr. Forbes put it "the superior wisdom of the present age ...attempts to bind CATHOLICS to the state by BENEFITS and to obtain by generosity what we could not accomplish by force".[29] Mr. Burgh added:

> You cannot interest men to become protestants who have not an interest in the soil, nor can you appeal to the senses of those whom poverty and ignorance have armed against any appeal of reason. On the other hand, while you continue such a cruel system, you put it in the power of any minister to oppose an irritated people against the lives of their persecutors.[30]

It was argued that Roman Catholics had demonstrated sufficient loyalty to be trusted not to overturn the

establishment if granted additional rights. One example given of this exemplary loyalty was the case of Father O'Leary who according to Grattan had,

> even though under censure of the law which, in his own country made him subject to transportation or death, from religious distinction urged his own communion to a disposition of peace and to support the law which had sentenced him to transportation...he humanely undertook the task of conveying duty and instruction to the lowest class of people.[31]

This feeling of security with regard to Catholics may have been related to the fact that the last major Irish rebellion had occurred in the 17th century. Since then there had been little opposition to the government. The Catholic Committee, the only organized body representing Catholics, consisted of Catholic landowners and the upper ranks of the Roman Catholic clergy. Both groups were interested in appeasing the administration and their most militant activity was petitioning parliament.

The alliance of the landlords with the protestant Volunteers strengthened their position. This body of armed men received the general sympathy and support of the Roman Catholics although they were not allowed to join. In spite of this restriction some Catholics did join the Volunteers and one member of the House of Commons, Mr. Moffan praised those "very respectable gentlemen of that religion whose zeal...for their country go the better of restrictions of

law...and who had armed in its defense when threatened with invasion"*.[32]

The strategies proposed for emancipating Roman Catholics involved the repeal of oppressive laws. Catholics were to be allowed to own land on a permanent basis,[33] to bear arms,[34] to educate their children,[35] to freely practice their religion,[36] and to vote and participate in Parliament.[37]

Although there was general agreement on the need to grant certain concessions to the Catholics there was some disagreement as to which rights should be granted. The greatest opposition arose in response to: the granting of landed property, admission to the elective franchise and membership in Parliament.

Mr. St. George said "that it was necessary that the Protestants who were so much inferior to the Papists in number should have some check over them, which would be entirely taken off, if the clause granting perpetuities to Papists was to pass".[38] According to Mr. Rowley "Toleration should be granted in religious matters and confined to that only, as otherwise it armed Papists with a power to return members to Parliament".[39]

The opposition to Roman Catholics owning land on a permanent basis and to their voting is not suprising since the

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*The invasion he refers to in this passage is the threatened French invasion in 1778 which was the reason for the creation of the Volunteers.

economic and political hegemony of the landlords rested on the confiscation of Irish lands and the restriction of the indigenous population from owning large areas of land on a permanent basis. The Anglo-Irish landowners were able to dominate the House of Commons, to obtain pensions and sinecures and positions in the civil service and to pass legislation in their own interests.

Concessions such as the ability to bear arms, to practice the Roman Catholic religion or to educate their children were not particularly significant since it had proved impossible to enforce restrictions in these areas in the past. As the Right Honourable Thomas Connolly pointed out "many of the laws against Papists remain merely a dead letter, disgraceful to your statute books".[40]

The question of Roman Catholic emancipation was bound up with larger issues of the Anglo-Irish relationship and the desire of the landlords to maintain their political and economic hegemony in Ireland. Emancipation was seen as a means of uniting Roman Catholics behind the demands of the landlords for independence and of ensuring social stability. They were, however, reluctant to grant Catholics any influence over the Irish parliament and Catholics were refused the right to vote or to participate in parliament. They were only allowed to own land on a permanent basis in areas that were not parliamentary boroughs.

The ideology formulated with regard to Protestants in other classes also varied depending on the changing class interests of the landlords in the parliament. The Volunteers were supported and encouraged while they united with the landlords in a demand for free trade and legislative independence. However after the granting of independence in 1782 and the incorporation of the lower class into the Volunteers, their demands for parliamentary reform were regarded as threatening. The House of Commons refused to consider reform and it was suggested that the Volunteers disband and a national militia under the control of parliament be formed.

The Volunteers and Parliamentary Reform

After the attainment of legislative independence in 1782 the Volunteers increasingly militant activities in support of parliamentary reform led to their condemnation in the House of Commons. The landlords were particularly concerned by the Volunteers incorporation of the lower classes, the cottiers, labourers and servants into their ranks and by the takeover of leadership positions by the merchants and manufacturers. The changing class composition of the Volunteers and their militant activities resulted in the landlords refusal to consider the question of parliamentary reform and to a severing of the alliance between the landlords and the Volunteers.

Prior to 1782, the Volunteers received the praise and encouragement of the landlords. The officers of the Volunteers were mainly landlords and their commander-in-chief was Lord Charlemont, a large landowner who was also influential in the Irish parliament. The support of the Volunteers for legislative independence was gratefully received by the patriot party and in 1780 Mr. Grattan, the acknowledged leader of the patriot party, wrote to Robert Day stating that he intended to:

> return thanks to our worthy representatives [the Volunteers] for their virtuous conduct, particularly in supporting a Declaration of Right, and an alteration of the Law of Poynings; to assure them that we their constituents...hope they will persist to secure the independency of the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland.[41]

However in 1783, the activities of the Volunteers began to be condemned in the House of Commons. Members were disturbed by the establishment of a National Convention of Volunteers in November 1783 to discuss parliamentary reform. Protestants of all classes were invited to this convention. A plan of reform was drawn up over a period of three weeks and on November 29, Flood, a leading member of the Volunteers went from the meeting to the House of Commons and requested permission to bring in a bill 'for the equal representation of the people in parliament'.[42] He was granted permission to bring in the bill but reform was overwhelmingly rejected.

Statements made by the members of the House of Commons indicate the extent to which it was the militancy of the Volunteers and the incorporation of the lower classes into their ranks which made them reluctant to grant parliamentary reform. As Sir Boyle Roche put it "the friends of parliamentary reform have cause to regret that constitutional and legal means were not tried to obtain it". He added:

> What will the other nations think of us when they hear that the parliament of Ireland is insulted by a mock representation, the offspring of faction and origin of discontent...the people of this country who have property to defend the constitution to support and the religion of their ancestors to protect should come forward and speak out...The House was called upon ...to surrender its own authority and to sign its death warrant.[43]

Grattan stated that he "would now wish to draw the attention of the House to the alarming measure of drilling the lowest classes of the populace, by which stain has been put on the character of the Volunteers. The old, original Volunteers had become respectable, because they represented the property of the nation; but attempts had been made to arm the poverty of the kingdom".[44] He pointed out that these classes had no right to demand changes. "When men say the majority of the people, they mean constitutionally that they are the origin of power, but the populace differ much and should be clearly distinguished from the people. I must condemn the appeal made to every class of the people without distinction".[45]

Other members of parliament were also concerned by the arming of the "dregs of the people" who were not to be confused with the "original Volunteers"[46] who had been the "saviours of their country"[47]. The new Volunteers invited "men of all descriptions-tinkers, taylors, hackney coachmen and chimney sweepers" to their National Congress concerning the reform of parliament.[48]

It was declared that the Volunteers intended to subvert the established legislature[49] and to incite the common people[50] to rebellion and sedition[51]. Their activities were refered to by Grattan, a former supporter of the Volunteers, as "violent and unconstitutional". He pointed out that:

> they had petitioned the king to dissolve the Parliament and call another not according to the laws but according to that plan which a congress should frame. What! that his Majesty should break the charter of the land by his own perogative ...Did those men know that they were petitioning the King to exercise more than a dispensing authority? that if the King followed their advice he might have lost his crown?[52]

The Volunteers were seen as comprising a standing army that could act in opposition to the government and Flood protested that as a representative of the Volunteers he was seen "as being in opposition to government; and... held up as a leader of sedition and threatened with 60,000 men in arms".[53] Grattan asked "Did these men know that a

pledge of life and fortune to support the plan of Congress was an engagement to rise in arms and a transfer of allegiance".[54]

It was feared that the Volunteers might unite with an external enemy and overthrow the current establishment and it was stated that their activities would eventually lead to "licentiousness, turbulence and anarchy", plunging the country into "confusion" and deluging it with "blood"[55]. This fear was probably related to the recent British war with France, Spain and the colonies when there had been a threat of French invasion.

The Volunteer's activities were perceived as not only a threat to the political hegemony of the landlords but as leading to negative economic consequences as well. According to one member of parliament, "to continue a number of persons under arms is not likely to give an advantage to the trade of this country".[56] The Speaker linked internal stability to trade as well. He stated:

> The great revolution which has taken place in America and the consequent changes in the commercial policy of Europe, must give new direction to commerce; the situation of this country, so favourable to navigation, affords reasonable hopes that a considerable portion of it may be diverted into this kindom...but this advantage will avail us little if we do not exert our industry at home and establish abroad that our people are at peace amongst themselves and obedient to the law.[57]

It was argued that the Volunteers had outlived their usefulness and should disband and turn their "attention to manufactures and industry".[58] They were also refused permission to bear arms.[59]

Although the Volunteers were almost universally condemned in the period 1783 to 1785 there was some attempt made to demonstrate that the Volunteers were in fact loyal and useful to the government, Mr. Smith pointed out that "when there was a demand for troops elsewhere the Volunteers had cheerfully undertaken to do garrison duty".[60] Mr. Molyneux also felt they might have need of the Volunteers in the event of another war; "I wish to know if any gentleman covets to see that illustrious body annihilated. When another war comes on, you will call in vain".[61]

The Volunteers were also supported by Mr. Todd Jones who felt parliamentary reform was necessary and the efforts of the Volunteers justified. He stated,

> The Volunteers have been aspersed for meddling in politics; but I hope that institution will never cease, until as citizens and in co-operation with the whole Irish people, they have restored to their country a real representation of the people in parliament; - that they will never lay down their arms 'till they have rescued their country from a baneful aristocracy. Their interference in political subjects is constitutional because they are also citizens.[62]

Support for the Volunteers appeared to come mainly from members in the Irish opposition who were not influenced by pensions or sinecures. They also appear to be independent members and not under the control of a patron *. These members were more likely to support parliamentary reform. However, supporters of the Volunteers were a small minority.

In conclusion the demands for parliamentary reform by the Volunteers led to their breaking from the control of the landlords. Their development of a mass base through the incorporation of the lower classes was perceived as a threat to the state and to the political hegemony of the landlords in Ireland. The landlords refused to grant parliamentary reform and began to advocate the suppression of the Volunteers.

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*An assessment of the members of the House of Commons carried out by a government supporter in 1787 describes Todd Jones as being in violent opposition to Government and as a "violent patriot". George Molyneux was described as a lawyer and "in opposition because nothing can be given to him on his application". Mr. Smith "came in upon petition for the County of Westmeath against Mr. Malone on popular interest". See E.M. Johnston, "Members of the Irish Parliament 1784-1787" Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Vol. 71, C. 1971; pp. 139-246.

Trade with Portugal

The attainment of free trade and formal legislative independence resulted in a certain ambiguity with respect to British-Irish relations. It soon became apparent, however, that Irish independence was in fact, limited. The lord lieutenant was still appointed from Britain and responsible to the English Privy Council rather than to the Irish parliament. The King retained the right to suppress legislation passed in the Irish parliament and the Hereditary revenue continued to be granted automatically to the British government. Ireland had no independent army or navy. Ireland's ability to negotiate commercial arrangements with other countries was also limited. This became clear in the debate on trade with Portugal.

Some members of the House of Commons in 1785 were concerned by the refusal of Portugal to import Irish woollen and linen manufactures. The British minister was currently negotiating a trade agreement with Portugal and some members suspected that Irish interests would not be taken into consideration, particularly if they clashed with those of British merchants and manufacturers. Sir Lucius commented on the trade negotiations saying, "He

was sorry to see the business conducted in a timid manner and in the hands of persons not interested in our welfare, but with a secondary view, who at most would only promote it when it did not clash with the convenience of a neighbouring nation".[63]

There was also some uncertainty as to whether Britain would even include Ireland in British treaties now that Ireland had gained free trade and legislative independence. As Mr. Molyneux put it "I imagine that we have either been totally neglected and our interests overlooked; or that we are now...an independent kingdom without a single treaty with any power whatever".[64]

The neglect of Irish interests by the British was considered serious since Ireland's ability to negotiate commercial arrangements was restricted by her obligations to Britain. Mr. Corry pointed out the dangers of even imposing a tax on Portuguese wines imported into Ireland: "Suppose Portugal was in a war in which England is by treaty bound to support her and now suppose Ireland imposes the present tax and that Portugal in revenge imposes a tax upon her commodities which are exportable to Ireland and while the two nations are in a state of commercial warfare, you will be called upon to support Great Britain".[65]

It was argued that Britain ought to support Irish trade since Ireland had always supported Britain in her struggles and had no independent army or navy. Mr. Longfield observed that they had "been promised that England shall look upon an injury done to us as though it were done to herself; and indeed if we are to take part in her quarrels which we ever do and must do, whenever she pleases to be in a passion and resent any real or supposed injury, it is as just and proper that she should take part in ours".[66] Mr. Corry asked, "Why is the nation told of common interests if treaties are not to be looked into? Ireland might be included or not, in treaties without regard to her interests or wishes?"[67]

The debate on the negotiation of a commercial treaty with Portugal reveals a growing awareness of the limitations of the independence attained in 1779 and 1782. The precarious nature of Irish independence was made clear when the Irish attempted to renegotiate commercial arrangements with Britain.

British-Irish Trade

In spite of the opening of trade with the colonies and foreign countries the distressed state of manufacture continued in Ireland. This situation was perceived as arising out of the unequal terms of trade between Ireland and Britain. Many Irish manufactures were

prohibited from entering Britain by high duties while British manufactures were admitted to Ireland with minimal or no duties imposed on them. In 1784, it was proposed in the House of Commons that a system of commercial arrangements placing Ireland and Britain on equal terms be worked out.

Lord Sheffield in a pamphlet published in 1785 indicates why this was considered necessary. He stated, "Ireland had been placed by the hand of Providence in an advanced situation between the two Continents...but she had nevertheless long laboured under an inefficient and helpless poverty, under a system of restraints equally pernicious, unwise and unjust".[68]

The House of Commons sent an address to the King entreating his Excellency "to take into consideration the distressed state of manufacture of this country... to lay the same fully before his Majesty's ministers in England and to co-operate with them in forming a more liberal arrangement of commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland on the basis of reciprocal advantage".[69]

The new commercial arrangements were worked out between the Irish executive and the British administration and basically consisted of an equalization of the duties on articles imported into either country from the

other and a removal of prohibitions on imports from either country to the other. More specifically they included:

1) The importation of all goods not manufactured in Great Britain or Ireland into each country under the same duties. If subject to duty when imported directly from the place they were manufactured, the original duties were to be drawn back on there being exported to the other country.[70]
2) No article produced in either country was to be prohibited from being imported into the other country and the duties levied on an article were to be the same in both countries except if it was necessary to impose an internal duty.[71]
3) If the duties on any article differed in the two countries they should be make the same by lowering them in the country imposing the highest duties.[72]
4) The produce of either country was to be given preference over foreign imports.[73]

In exchange for these concessions on the part of the British, the Irish parliament was to grant the British navy the surplus if the hereditary revenue exceeded £656,000.

The strong support for the new commercial arrangements in the House of Commons was linked to the desire on the part of the landlords to increase the

general prosperty of Ireland. Opposition to the new arrangements arose on the basis that they would result in a loss of protecting duties for Irish manufacturers. Although Irish manufacturers needed to expand their market they feared the competition of British industries since the factory system was expanding rapidly in Britain and machinery was being introduced into the production process.

> Mr. Molyneux strongly condemned the
>
> folly and ruin of treaty of equality. Considering the differing situation of each country-the wealth, the capital of one-the wretchedness of the other; is it not folly to suppose we shall ever send a yard of woollen to any other country? When England can undersell us abroad: If therefore we have neither a foreign market for our woollens, will not that line of trade be totally annihilated?[74]

He also suggested that instead of attempting to increase exports to Britain, Ireland should consider exporting her products directly to the colonies and bringing back raw material in order to build up Irish manufacturing. He asked, "Does it not stand to reason that if England can send to a foreign market with advantage to herself our linens, but we should be great gainers by exploiting our own harbour to foreign markets and bring back the raw materials of those countries which we might manufacure at home?"[75]

The commercial propositions faced opposition in the British House of Commons from members who felt that British industries needed protective duties since labour in Ireland was cheaper. However the propositions were eventually accepted with only slight modifications but on the condition that the Irish parliament agree to enact "immediately and without alteration, all measures which had been or should be passed in Great Britain concerning navigation, the colonial trade, and certain branches of foreign trade".[76] Thus the Irish legislature's freedom to regulate trade was to be severely curtailed.

Reaction in Ireland to the British resolution was bitter and widespread. This was expected by the Irish administration and in 1785 Lord Tyrone wrote to Beresford, first commissioner of the revenue, saying "the nation appears to me likely to be inflammed and that inflammation not likely to subside but to bring on other claims for adjusting to the Constitution".[77]

The British parliament's stipulation was seen as a direct attack on the legislative independence of the Irish parliament. Mr. Grattan refered to it as "subversive of the rights of the parliament of Ireland".[78] Mr. Flood said "he considered it as the most infamous attack upon Ireland, an independent nation to demand of her to abdicate that independence, yet that demand was

made in the fourth resolution of the British parliament".[79]

The extent of British control over the Irish parliament and the unequal power relationship between Britain and Ireland was revealed by Mr. Flood who asked "How could Ireland negotiate with England upon equal terms? With England! who names her ministers, her negotiators - With England who influences her cabinet, her privy council, and who has influenced every parliament of Ireland".[80]

Browne argued that the British resolution was a step towards a union between Britain and Ireland and that such a union would be harmful to Irish interests. He said "we had previous to it a Free Trade to all the ports of the world, subject only to our own restrictions. But Sir, this arrangement has suggested an idea in another country...I mean a union. Good God Sir, what union could we have with Great Britain but a union of debt and taxation? a union depriving us of our liberty and ruinous to our country".[81]

The Irish House of Commons voted to reject the commercial propositions and to "maintain in full and undiminished force the legislative supremacy of the parliament of Ireland to legislate for Ireland in all cases, internally, commercially and externally".[82]

It was proposed by some members that the mass of the people be mobilized against the resolution. Mr. Browne "laughed at the idea of pretended apprehension lest what was said should alarm the people; they could not be too much alarmed and awakened at present...He hoped they would...in public assemblies declare their disapprobation of this ruinous system". According to Mr. Corry, "There is an alarm amongst the people; there is just alarm and the people in general oppose the proposition".[83]

These statements are interesting when placed in the context of the suppression of the Volunteers. They indicate that the members of the House of Commons were willing to mobilize other classes if they felt they could form an alliance with them against the British administration.

The debate on the commercial propositions demonstrates the inter-relationship of economic and political issues. The members of parliament felt it was necessary to maintain political independence from Britain if they were to control the economic development of Ireland. They were also willing to forego the advantage of the new commercial arrangements rather than agree to enact British legislation and thus reduce the independence of the Irish parliament.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the ideology expressed in the political ISA in Ireland during the period 1781 to 1785. The desire of the landlords to secure political and economic independence and to maintain the stability of the existing class relationships was seen as influencing the articulation of ideology. The nature of class alliances was examined and changes in these alliances related to changes in ideology.

The interrelationship of economic and political issues was significant. The landlords saw their interests as distinct from those of the landlords,merchants and manufacturers in Britain and sought greater control over Irish economic development while remaining within the Brit British social formation and the British state.

The economic depression in Ireland allowed them to mobilize the support of other classes in their struggle to gain free trade and legislative independence. They formed an alliance with the merchants, manufacturers, large tenant farmers and artisans in the form of the Volunteers. However the Volunteers increasingly militant demands for parliamentary reform began to appear threatening to the landlords. Their apprehension was increased by the incorporation of the Protestant lower classes-cottiers, labourers and servants-into the ranks of the Volunteers and the movement of merchants and manufacturers into leadership

positions. The landlords began to advocate the suppression of the Volunteers and refused to grant any parliamentary reforms.

The landlords sought to gain the support of the Roman Catholics in their struggle for independence by granting them some concessions such as the right to own land in perpetuity, to possess arms, to practice their religion freely and to educate their children. They also hoped these concessions would reconcile the Catholics to the loss of their lands during British confiscations and prevent an uprising on the part of the Catholics.

The independence gained by the granting of free trade in 1779 and 1782 and legislative independence in 1782 was limited. British influence over political decisions was perpetuated by the fact that the administration in Ireland was appointed from Britain and the King still had the power to veto Irish legislation. In addition it was difficult for Ireland to negotiate commercial treaties independently due to her obligations to Britain and the lack of an autonomous army or navy.

In 1785, there was an attempt by the Irish to renegotiate commercial arrangements with Britian. The British stipulated that in return for concessions Ireland was to agree to enact all legislation passed in Britain with respect to navigation, colonial trade and foreign

trade. Rather than submit to this restriction the Irish House of Commons rejected the new commercial arrangements. The British resolution was seen as an attack on their independence and as negatively affecting their control over Irish economic and political development.

FOOTNOTES

1. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. IV, January 21, 1785, p. 36.

2. J.C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1923, London: 1966, p. 232.

3. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. III, May 11, 1784, p. 201.

4. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. lV, February 23, 1785, p. 310.

5. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. V, March 24, 1785, p. 92, 95.

6. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. V, June 13, 1785, p. 250.

7. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. I, February 27, 1782, p. 294.

8. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. I, March 5, 1782, p. 320.

9. Irish Parliamentary Register, op. cit., October 29, 1781, p. 21.

10. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. V, May 11, 1785, p. 187.

11. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. IV, January 21, 1785, p. 42.

12. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. II, February 16, 1783, p. 237.

13. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. II, January 26, 1784, p. 348.

14. J.C. Beckett, op.cit., 1966, pp. 222-223.

15. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. I, October 29, 1781, p. 15.

16. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. I, May 4, 1782, p. 353.

17. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. I, May 4, 1782, p. 350.

18. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. I, June 10, 1782, p. 402.

19. Ibid., p. 402.

20. Ibid, p. 401.

21. J.C. Beckett, op. cit., p. 213-214.

22. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. I, February 27, 1782, p. 288.

23. Ibid., p. 287.

24. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. I, January 31, 1782, p. 201.

25. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. I, February 27, 1782, p. 293.

26. Ibid., p. 288.

27. Ibid., p. 285.

28. Ibid., p. 283.

29. Ibid., p. 284.

30. Ibid., p. 288.

31. Ibid., p. 292.

32. Ibid., p. 294.

33. Ibid., p. 287.

34. Ibid., p. 286.

35. Ibid., p. 289.

36. Ibid., p. 286.

37. Ibid., p. 284.

38. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. I., January 21, 1782, p. 199.

39. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. I, February 27, 1782, p. 287.

40. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. I, January 31, 1782, p. 200-201.

41. Henry Grattan, Memoirs of the Life and Times of the Rt. Hon. Henry Grattan, Vol. II, London: 1839, p. 128.

42. J.C. Beckett, op. cit., 1966, p. 231.

43. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. IV, January 31, 1785, pp. 30-31.

44. Ibid., p. 34.

45. Ibid., p. 41.

46. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. IV, February 16, 1785, p. 238.

47. Ibid., p. 268.

48. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. IV, January 21, 1785, p. 28.

49. Ibid., p. 27.

50. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. IV, February 16, 1785, p. 238.

51. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. IV, January 21, 1785, p. 40.

52. Ibid., p. 40.

53. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. I, June 10, 1782, p. 400.

54. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. IV, January 21, 1785, p. 40.

55. Ibid., p. 38.

56. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. IV, February 17, 1785, p. 266.

57. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. V, March 24, 1785, p. 97.

58. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. IV, February 16, 1785, p. 266.

59. Ibid., p. 266.

60. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. II, November 27, 1783, p. 217.

61. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. IV, February 16, 1785, p. 267.

62. Ibid, p. 267.

63. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. I, October, 29, 1781, p. 16.

64. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. IV, January 22, 1785, p. 138.

65. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. IV, February 22, 1785, p. 308.

66. Ibid, p. 306.

67. Ibid., p. 307.

68. John Hobroy, Lord Sheffield, Observations on Manufacture, Trade and the Present State of Ireland Dublin, 1785, p. 2.

69. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. III, May 11, 1784, p. 201.

70. Irish Parliamenatry Register, Vol. IV, January 22, 1785, p. 184.

71. Ibid., p. 185.

72. Ibid., p. 185.

73. J.C. Beckett, op. cit., 1966, p. 238.

74. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. IV, January 22, 1785, p. 166.

75. Ibid., pp. 186-187.

76. J.C. Beckett, op. cit., p. 238.

77. John Beresford, The Correspondence of the Right Hon. John Beresford, ed. W. Beresford., Dublin: 1854, p.

78. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. V,

79. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. V, August 2, 1785, p. 309-310.

80. Ibid., p. 310.

81. Ibid, p. 306.

82. Ibid, p. 310.

83. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. V, June 13, 1785, p. 245.

CHAPTER VI

THE IRISH REBELLION

This chapter examines the ideology expressed in the political ISA in Ireland during the period 1794-1798 and relates the formulation of ideology to political and economic developments in Ireland and to changing class relationships. Although the parliamentary debates are the major focus of the discussion other historical documents have been incorporated into the analysis where relevant.

The dominant factor influencing the ideology of the landlords during this period was their desire to maintain existing class relationships in the face of the rise of the United Irishmen and the rebellion. The Presbyterian merchants, manufacturers, tenant farmers, artisans and weavers who comprised the United Irishmen advocated parliamentary reform and their emergence as a national military organization dedicated to a separation from Britain and a rebellion was seen as a threat to the economic and political hegemony of the landlords. Their attempt to incorporate the Catholic tenants on short-term leases, cottiers and labourers into their organization was regarded by the landlords as particularly disturbing

since their greatest fear was a mass uprising of the Catholics in an attempt to regain the lands confiscated by the British.

In response the landlords allied with the British administration and encouraged the suppression of the rebels. They were supported by the Protestant tenants cottiers, labourers and servants who joined the Yeomanry and the Orange Order. They saw themselves as facing increasing competing with Roman Catholics for land and employment due to the expansion of pasture lands and the decline of domestic industry.

The landlords became increasingly intransient with regard to granting further concessions to Roman Catholics and on the question of parliamentary reform. They advocated strengthening the British connection and were generally opposed to any conciliatory gestures on the part of the administration to the rebels.

However, in spite of the fact that the rebellion and the French invasion increased their military dependence on Britain the landlords were reluctant to give up any of the political and economic independence they had gained 1779 and 1782. They strongly opposed the union of Britain and Ireland proposed by the British administration in 1798 since they perceived the recent prosperity in Ireland as having arisen out of freedom of

trade and the ability of the Irish legislature to regulate trade, manufacturing and commerce without restriction from Britain.

Economic Concerns

The economic prosperity in Ireland in the 1790s was linked to the expansion of the British market for Irish goods, the removal of British restrictions on Irish trade, manufacturing and agriculture after 1782 and the opening of direct trade with North America.

By the end of the eighteenth century Britain had become the most significant market for Irish goods. Whereas in 1720 only 44.4 per cent of Irish exports were sent to Britain this figure equalled 85.4 per cent in 1800. Corn, linen and provisions comprised the majority of the exports.

In the last decades of the eighteenth century there was an expansion of tillage in Ireland. This expansion was related to an increase in the export of corn to Britain due to the rising British population, the wars and industrialization. In Ireland, the population increased from 2½ million in 1767 to 4 million in 1781 and by 1800 it had reached five million. This resulted in an expansion of the home market for grain.

By 1798 the total value of exports of grain, flour and meal to Britain equalled 291,010. In 1778, it had

been only 72,211.[1] The British government no longer restricted grain imports and the independence of the Irish parliament allowed it to place bounties encouraging the export of corn. Foster's Corn Law in 1784 placed an export bounty on wheat when the price did not exceed 27 shillings a barrel and a heavy import duty while the price was below 30 shillings a barrel. If the price rose above 30 shillings the export of corn was prohibited. Barley and oats were subjected to similar regulations.[2]

In spite of the increase in tillage there was no corresponding decrease in the amount of pasture land and the provision trade continued to prosper. The British Cattle Acts had been suspended in 1758-9 thus permitting Irish provisions into Britain. Britain became a major customer for Irish butter, pork, bacon and live cattle.

Between 1720 and 1790 Irish linen exports grew from 2,637,984 yards to 37,322,126 yards and in 1798 linen accounted for 58.2 per cent of all Irish exports. The major market was Britain where they were admitted duty free and then re-exported.[3]

Significant developments also occurred in the cotton industry in the 1780s and 1790s. Cotton manufacturing was encouraged by the opening of direct trade with North America, the main source of raw materials and by the bounties placed on domestic sales of cotton in

1783 and on exports in 1784. In 1794 a protective tariff restricted the importation of British cotton as well as cotton goods from other countries. The incorporation of power-driven machinery into the production process and the organization of production in factories allowed cotton manufacturing in Ireland to compete with British cotton industry.

The economic prosperity in Ireland was of benefit to the linen and provision merchants and the cotton manufacturers as well as the landlords who were able to increase rents. However, manufacturers of commodities such as hats, gloves, carpets, soap, candles, paper and crockery were unable to compete with British imports which were lower in price and generally better in quality. The woollen industry also declined during this period. Short term tenants, cottiers and labourers were faced with increased rents, tithes, low wages and a rising cost of living.[4]

The House of Commons debates in the period 1794-1797 contain relatively little discussion of economic issues compared to the debates of 1781-1785 examined in the last chapter. This was probably due to the pre-occupation of the members with the rebellion and to the economic prosperity in Ireland. Trade relations with Britain were now relatively satisfactory and legislative

independence ensured protection from British restrictions on Irish trade, manufacturing and commerce.

Discussion of economic issues revolved around the improvement of transportation facilities by building bridges,[5] canals,[6] roads[7] and improving harbours[8] and the regulation of trade. There was concern with maintaining a bank capable of providing loans to trade and manufacturing sectors and the simplification of regulations governing industries, particularly the brewing industry. As Mr. Vandeleur put it "Revenue laws...were so complex at present, so contradictory and so unintelligible that they operated in many instances, highly oppressive to Merchants and Traders".[9] Members were also involved in the granting of bounties[10] and the imposition of duties[11] in an effort to encourage Irish trade, manufacturing and agriculture.

Absent from the debate were the demands for independence characteristic of the discussions in the period 1781-1785. The improved trade relations with Britain and the increased control of the Irish Parliament over trade gained in 1779 and 1782 reduced the need for economic and legislative independence. Although a close trading relationship with Britain was seen as economically beneficial by the landlords they were reluctant to enter into a union with Britain. They saw Ireland's economic

prosperity as resulting from their ability to regulate trade without restrictions from Britain.

The rebellion and the French invasion increased the reluctance of the landlords to separate from Britain since it heightened their awareness of the insecurity of their position in Ireland and of their military dependence on Britain.

The Rebellion

In 1796, the United Irishmen set up a military organization and by 1797 they could count on the support of 100,000 armed men in Ulster, 100,000 in Munster and 68,000 in Leinster. They actively recruited Catholic peasants and solicited aid from France. An expedition of French troops led by Wolfe Tone, an United Irish leader, arrived in Ireland in December, 1796. However it was forced to return to France without landing due to bad weather and disagreements among the commanders of the fleet.

The administration endeavoured to counteract the efforts of the repressive measures. They created a national militia composed mainly of Roman Catholics and a Yeomanry consisting largely of Protestants recruited by the landlords from among their tenantry. In February 1796, the insurrection act was passed and habeas corpus suspended in the same year. In an attempt to break the

United Irishmen in the north the government used brutal suppression. The "yeomanry and the militia acted almost without restraint: in the search for arms, houses were burnt down, suspected persons flogged or tortured to make them reveal what they might know, and hundreds were sent off to the fleet". In addition, United Irish leaders were arrested and their papers seized.[12]

In spite of the government's efforts to counteract it the rebellion broke out in May, 1798. It consisted mainly of isolated incidents in Leinster and Ulster and became widespread only in Wexford where it was led by local priests. On the whole it was easily suppressed.

The members of the House of Commons and the landlords in general supported the government's repressive policy. It is clear from the ideology of the landlords that they saw the insurrection not as a form of religious conflict but as an attempt to overthrow existing class relationships and as a threat to their political and economic hegemony.

The landlords' greatest fear was a mass uprising of the Irish in an attempt to regain their confiscated lands. Beresford, a member of the Irish administration, pointed this out in a letter to Auckland in 1796.

He said:

> The great danger we were in was from the common people who were certainly all wanting to plunder if the French should land. The United Irishmen of the north, alias Dissenters and the Defenders and the Papists would join them; these two classes are bound by oaths etc.; whilst the mobs and common people, not sworn would take advantage and plunder everybody and commit murders and such extravagences as are always the consequences of letting loose the rabble.[13]

He added in another letter that "the hopes of plunder, non-payment of tithes and rents and a recovery of the ancient forfeited properties animates the minds of the lower orders of people"[14] (my emphasis). He thus recognized the very real grievances of the mass of the population and the danger presented by their mobilization.

Members of parliament repeatedly mentioned the need to defend private property and to maintain the subordination of the lower classes. As the lord lieutenant put it "It is peculiarly our duty to support the security of private property and to maintain the principles of justice when doctrines have been advanced and attempts endeavoured to be carried into execution, for the destruction of both".[15]

In their address to the King in 1794, Parliament asserted its satisfaction with "the suppression of these outrages and insurrections which so recently disgraced

some of the lower orders of the people...We trust that all future attempts to seduce the lower classes from their usual subordination and loyalty will be defeated".[16]

The United Irishmen and the French were regarded as the human agents responsible for 'deluding' the mass of the 'common' people into rebellion. As Beresford put it "The utmost pains have been taken by these devils, the United Irishmen to prepare the minds of the different classes of the people for mischief. The public prints are of the most seditious and inflammatory species. They have a vast number of emissaries constantly going through the country, to seduce every person they can and swear them".[17]

The United Irishmen were seen as intending to "destroy individuals, servants of the Crown, the King and all kings, to massacre Protestants and overturn the State and break off all connection with England".[18]

It was reported in the House of Commons that the government had also obtained evidence that "the emissaries of France had worked so successfully upon the deluded minds of the lower orders of them people that the common oath was...to aid and assist the French (the enemies of the state) when they should invade Ireland".[19] A French invasion was feared more in the 1790s than it had been in the early 1780s due to the recent revolution

in France. As one member of the House of Commons put it "The French had fabricated for themselves a new system of politics...[and when France] made a conquest [she] imposed her new constitution on the conquered and thus incorporated her new acquisition with her property territory".[20] In their address to the King in 1794 Parliament asserted its determination to "resist those attacks which threaten the subversion of every principle that gives security to our persons and properties".[21] The Lord Lieutenant stated that in a war with France you are "contending for your liberty, property and religion".[22]

Although the landlords considered the rebellion to be a form of class conflict they also perceived that insurrectionary activity would differ among the various religious groups in Ireland. Presbyterians and Roman Catholics were suspected of disloyalty because they did not belong to the state-dominated church of Ireland (Anglican). As Beresford put it "the Dissenters are another set of enemies to the British Government. They are greatly under the influence of their clergy and are taught from their cradle to be republicans".[23] These groups were also suspected because they faced restrictions on the basis of their religion and were seen as likely to seek redress and access to greater political power.

The class composition of the different political groups also varied. The Roman Catholic were predominantly tenants on short term leases or cottiers and labourers, while the majority of the landlords were Anglican. It was a mass uprising of the Catholics to regain their lands that was most feared by the landlords.

The privileged position of the Anglicans was protected by the British administration and all those belonging to the Church of England were considered to be "loyal subjects and true to the British connection".[24]

As mentioned previously the government's major tactic for averting and suppressing the rebellion was repression. However the administration was not adverse to a conciliatory policy if it appeared that continued repression would only spark further insurrection. As Castlereagh put it: "It would be unwise...to drive the wretched people who are the mere instruments in the hands of the more wicked to despair".[25] He regarded the lord lieutenant as in favour of pushing "the principle of pardon...as far as may be at all compatible with the public safety"*. It was however still "necessary for the

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*Exceptions to the pardon included "persons in custody previously to the Lord Lieutenant's message, persons guilty of murder or conspiracy to murder...the yeomanry ...such as have deserted their corps and joined the Rebels; also those who have administered illegal oaths since they became yeoman...persons having had direct communication or correspondence with the enemy...the

safety of the State to keep the Leaders under restraint of law".[26]

Several members of the House of Commons also suggested that a policy of conciliation might be more effective than one of repression. As Grattan put it "coercion had uniformly failed of its effect, redress as yet untried; would it not be wise of the Irish Parliament to adopt some measures of that kind?" He suggested that one way of ensuring peace was to alleviate the distress of the poor by raising wages and he pointed out that "The Parliament of England had thought this a subject worthy of their consideration and while we were punishing our poor, they were alleviating the distress of theirs".[27]

Curran pointed out that the activities of the Orangemen were driving the Catholics into the arms of the United Irishmen and to insurrection. He begged the other members of the House of Commons to consider the disastrous consequences that might arise if "the people were taught to believe that members of that House were relapsed into a total indifference with regard to their grievances and their interests".[28]

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the members of the Executive, Provincial and County Committees of the United Irishmen? For a more detailed outline see Castlereagh, Memoirs and Correspondence of Viscount Castlereagh, Second Marquess of Londonderry Vol. I. ed., Charles Vane, London: 1848; p. 246.

Charlemont felt that "the melancholy and alarming state" of the country resulted "not only from wretched mismanagement of others, but in a great measure from her own fault".[29]

Although the members of parliament were generally in favour of strong repressive tactics some government measures were opposed by a minority of members in the patriot party because they were perceived as increasing the British administration's power in Ireland and as reducing the independence of the Irish parliament by curbing opposition. The suspension of the habeas corpus was one measure which aroused oppostion.

The need for a habeas corpus act was first asserted by the Anglo-Irish landlords in 1693 along with suggestions that Poynings Law be repealed. In the 1760s the demand for a habeas corpus act was again put forward along with recommendations such as a limitation of the life of the parliament by a septennial act, a reduction of the pension list, establishment of a national militia, and security of tenure for judges. The British administration finally conceded in 1781 and passed the habeas corpus act.[30]

The government's decision to suspend the habeas corpus in 1796 was seen as a direct attack on the independence of the landlords. It was felt that its suspen-

sion increased the influence of the British administration in Ireland and control over the members of Parliament.

Mr. Fletcher refered to the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act as an attempt "To lay under the feet not of the English Minister, but of the agents and factors of an Englaish Minister the personal liberty of every man in the country".[31] Mr. Ponsonby stated that he "was aware that the present members of the administration were men of vindictive spirit and he did not wish to entrust the whole personal liberty of the subject to lovers of vengeance...it was designed as an instrument of terror and vengeance in the hands of the Ministers".[32]

According to Mr. Grattan "you give up the personal liberty of the people of Ireland...You give an Englishman without residence or stake in Ireland and therefore without responsibility a power to send the Irish to Newgate of his own true will and pleasure... Any active citizen, any offensive Catholic or Presbyterian, any friend to Parliamentary reform and enemy to the abuses of government.[33] Mr. Duquery "saw the bill as directly pointed against the lawful and constitutional efforts of the Catholics to effect their emancipation" and as intended "to drive the country gentlemen into the measures of the administration".[34]

Some members questioned whether the threat of invasion and rebellion was sufficient to justify the suspension of the habeas corpus and accused the government of exaggerating the danger in order to increase its power. Mr. Grattan stated that he doubted "whether a treasonable conspiracy exists and to a degree as to become dangerous to the state and which coupled with the alleged probability of invasion renders the suspension of the Habeas Corpus necessary".[35] Mr. Curran added that "of the administration's industrious reports of invasion...he was convinced they had no apprehension".[36]

The arguments against the suspension of the habeas corpus act indicate the landlord's reluctance to give up any of their independence and their determination to restrict the control of the British administration over Irish affairs.

In general however, the landlords supported the government's repressive measures and the administration exercised caution in carrying out conciliatory measures lest they should alarm the landlords. Castlereagh suggested that the indemnity bill he worked out prior to its presentation in the Irish Parliament in order that "much of the warmth inseparable from a detailed discussion [would] be avoided".[37]

Roman Catholic Emancipation

The outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 increased the apprehension of the Anglo-Irish landowners with regard to the security of their privileged position in Ireland. As in 1782, granting concessions to the Roman Catholics was perceived as a means of securing their loyalty and of strengthening the country in the face of the danger of an invasion from France.

Roman Catholic emancipation including the extension of the franchise to Catholics was favoured by the opposition in the Irish House of Commons. They hoped that an extension of the franchise and a reform of parliament would limit the influence of the British administration over the Irish parliament.

In 1791 much of the penal legislation in Britain was repealed and the British administration supported the repeal of similar legislation in Ireland. The Irish executive was willing to agree to minor concessions and in 1792 a relief bill was introduced into the House of Commons. Restrictions on marriages between Roman Catholics and Protestants and on Catholic education were lifted and Catholics were admitted to the practice of law. However a proposal to extend the country franchise to a small minority of Catholics was rejected.

The refusal to extend political rights to the

Catholics resulted in the Catholic Committee calling a convention in Dublin in December, 1792. It was attended by delegates from all over Ireland. This militant activity reflected the change in the leadership of the Catholic Committee that occurred in 1791. Formerly the Committee had been controlled by conservative landowners and clergy unsympathetic to the French Revolution*. Under the leadership of radical merchants and shop-keepers it now sought not only an extension of the franchise but a reform of parliament. A delegate from the convention was sent directly to the King with a petition.

The militancy of the Catholics and the imminence of war with France led the British cabinet to the conclusion that further concessions were necessary if a rebellion was to be averted and the country strengthened.

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*The address of Dr. Edward Dillon, Roman Catholic Bishop of Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora to the Roman Catholic Laity on April 6, 1975 clearly illustrates the conservatism of the Roman Catholic clergy. Dr. Dillion states "you are bound, both by the law of God and the law of nature, to obey the ordinances of the State in all civil and temporal concerns...The law of God commands us to obey the rulers of the land". With regard to the French, he adds "witness the atrocities which have marked their steps in every country into which they have intruded themselves ...churches pillaged and profaned, our holy religion proscribed". For the complete address see F. Hardy, Memoirs of the Political and Private Life of James Caulfield, Earl of Charlemont, Dublin: 1812, pp. 172-176.

In February, 1793 Hobart the chief secretary introduced another relief bill into parliament. It passed by an overwhelming majority and Catholics were admitted to the parliamentary and municipal franchise on the same terms as Protestants. Most civil and military posts were opened to them and the remaining restrictions on land holding removed. However Catholics continued to be excluded from membership in parliament and the attainment of the franchise was not particularly significant without parliamentary reform.[38]

In 1794 political events in Britain increased the oppositions optimism with regard to both parliamentary reform and the further extension of political rights to the Catholics. In July, 1794, the Portland whigs joined Pitt's administration. Portland had close ties with the Ponsonby's, a landowning family in Ireland with considerable political power. In 1789, the Ponsonby's had broken the Pitt and along with Grattan formed the Irish whig party which centered its programme around administrative reform and catholic emancipation.

As head of the home office Portland was responsible for Irish affairs. Fitzwilliam, the Irish viceroy appointed by Portland was sympathetic to the concerns of the Irish whig party. He favoured catholic emancipation and "thought it vital to encourage the Irish catholics

to obey their conservative instincts and rally to the established order by sweeping away their disabilities".[39]

Although his instructions from the British cabinet were to refrain from taking action on the Catholic question without first consulting the cabinet, Fitzwilliam went ahead with proposals for further emancipation. He also removed several prominent members of the Irish administration intending to replace them with members of the Irish whig party. The evicted members appealed to Pitt and he ordered them reinstated. Fitzwilliam was subsequently ordered to return to Britain. His departure destroyed all hope for parliamentary reform and catholic emancipation.

At the same time as they were granting concessions to Roman Catholics, the government in Britain and in Ireland was passing repressive measures. In Britain, corresponding societies were outlawed and in 1794 the Habeas Corpus suspended. With the outbreak of war with France in February, 1793 it became a crime to associate with the French.[40] In Ireland an arms act passed in 1793 prohibited the importation or distribution of arms, ammunition and powder except under license. The convention act outlawed representative assemblies.

The increasingly repressive tactics of the government in Ireland and the loss of all hope of

attaining parliamentary reform and catholic emancipation led the United Irishmen to become more militant. After their suppression in 1794, they re-emerged as a military underground organization. They began to advocate complete independence from Britain and to recruit the Catholic Defenders to their cause. They also sought aid from France. In response the government passed the insurrection act in February, 1796 making it a capital offence to administer an oath. The lord lieutenant was given the power to proclaim any district as disturbed. The habeas corpus act was also suspended in that year.

The rise of the United Irishmen represented a direct threat to the political hegemony of the landlords. They were disturbed by the United Irishmen's attempts to organize the Catholics into a revolutionary force. They became adamantly opposed to any further concessions to the Catholics and rejected Grattan's relief bill in February 1795, by a large majority.

A member of the House of Commons argued that the relief bill "came from a set of men most dispicable and dangerous in society-not from the respectable body of Catholics whom all men revered...Petitions...brought forward by the body in mass, meant something more than supplications. There was no difference...between the highwayman and the beggars but in the mode of asking".[41]

Sir Langrishe pointed out the "ill effects of agitating inflammatory subjects at this time and particularly those of parliamentary reform and catholic emancipation".[42] It was advocated that Catholics be kept out of the yeomanry corps and out of all state military organizations. As one speaker put it "would gentlemen in their senses put arms into the hands of these people at a moment when...it is become the duty of the executive to take from them all the arms they have".[43]

The Anglo-Irish landlords saw their privileged economic and political position in Ireland as dependent upon the subordination of the Catholics,the maintenance of the Anglican church as a dominant ISA and on British support. According to Mr. Duigenan "the repeal of the penal laws could only go to the overturn of the present church establishment, to erect a democratic republic and tear this country from its connection with Britain".[44]

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*The Irish administration also perceived the mobilization of the mass of Catholics around demands for emancipation and reform as dangerous. The lower classes were considered to be untrustworthy and uncivilized. Beresford, chief commissioner of revenue wrote to Auckland on August 9, 1798 that "the whole body of the lower order of Roman Catholics of this country are totally inimical to the English Government; ...they are under the influence of the lowest and worst class of their priesthood...and as barbarous, ignorant and ferocious as they were then (a century ago) See the Beresford Correspondence; The Letters of the Rt. Hon. John Beresford, ed. William Beresford, London, 1854, p. 171.

Colonel Blaquiere stated that "the members of the House (the Protestants he meant) would never support a measure so dangerous, so hazardous to property to the Protestant religion-to the existence of that House".[45]

In conclusion, the landlords were initially willing to endorse catholic emancipation as long as it was limited and did not threaten their political hegemony. They hoped that concessions would increase the loyalty of the Catholics and strengthen the country. However their support for concessions began to decline with the rise of the United Irishmen as a national military organization dedicated to a complete separation from Britain. They were particularly disturbed by the incorporation of the Catholic Defenders into the United Irishmen since they feared a mass uprising of the Catholics in an attempt to regain their lands. The danger of a French invasion after the outbreak of war between France and Britain in 1793 increased their apprehension. It was feared that with French support the United Irishmen would be able to overthrow the political and economic hegemony of the Anglo-Irish landlords.

Parliamentary Reform

The landlords increasing unwillingness to grant concessions was also reflected in their intransigent

attitude to parliamentary reform. The recall of Fitzwilliam, the lord lieutenant favourable to reform, dampened the hopes of the Catholic committee and the patriot party. In 1797, Grattan made one last attempt to introduce a reform bill into parliament. It was overwhelmingly defeated and Grattan withdrew from the Irish House of Commons.

The opposition had hoped that reform would be a means of concilliating the population and preventing further insurrectionary activity. Charlemont, a leading member of the patriot party,in discussing the rejection of parliamentary reform said:

> The last effort in favour in Parliamentary reform was made in the House of Commons by Mr. Ponsonby. The opposition hoped that if even then adopted it might be the means of drawing off reconciling numbers... The mass of the people could not be called traitors and though Parliamentary reform could not be tranquillize as far as might be wished such language was calculated to throw all conciliation to an immeasurable distance...If a measure good in itself is to be forever exiled from Parliament and frowned out of society, because it may be perverted by mischievous and designing men what is to become of us?[46]

His statement indicates that the majority of the members of the House of Commons feared that a conciliatory attitude would encourage insurrectionary activity and lead to

radical changes in the political system. In response to one opponent of parliamentary reform Grattan stated "that Gentleman had gone beyond truth when he asserted this measure would throw open the way to French Government - it was one thing to have full and fair representation and quite another to open the Government to the madness of French politics".[47]

The British Connection

The insurrectionary activity of the United Irishmen and the lower classes and the threat of a French invasion led to an assertion by members of parliament of the need to preserve and strengthen the Irish connection with Britain.

However, the landlords had no intention of voluntarily giving up their political and economic independence. This was indicated by their resistance to the union of Great Britain and Ireland proposed by the administration.

Members of the opposition and the patriot party joined government supporters in stressing the need to maintain the British connection. In Mr Grattan, a leader of the patriot party stated that they should "stand with Great Britain" and he maintained that there was one great principal...to preserve our connection with Britain".[48]

This new emphasis on strengthening Irish relations with Britain was linked by another speaker to the changing political situation. As he put it "I shall declare, we were united in opposition to Mr. Pitt, till the urgency of public affairs called for the assistance of every man that loves his country, we then coalesced with him without any stipulation whatsoever".[49]

Mr. Grattan pointed out the need to differentiate between dissatisfaction with the administration from disloyalty to the British connection and stated that he wished "most ardently to distinguish between the British nation and the British administration...problems with the British administration never shall damp the national affection for Great Britain which I hope will be immortal".[50]

In exchange for their loyalty to Britain and for supplying the British army and navy with troops and supplies, the members of parliament expected that the British would defend Ireland against external attacks and protect the Anglo-Irish landlords from insurrectionary activity.

The lack of British support during the French invasion in 1796 led members of the opposition to question whether Britain could in fact be depended upon in times of crisis. Mr. Ponsonby brought forward a

motion of censure on the administration for their neglect of the defense of Ireland and stated that "Ireland had as good a right to demand protection from the navy of Great Britain as Great Britain herself and the Commons of Ireland had as good a right to complain of neglect or mismanagement of that naval force as the Commons of England".[51] Mr. Grattan pointed out that "In '79 your army was sent away and you had no naval protection from England and yet then as now you voted large sums and poured out your population to man the fleets and armies of Great Britain. Your volunteers then, as your yeoman now, were assigned as your sole protectors".[52] According to Mr. Corry, "There had been upwards of twenty invasions since the Norman conquest, of which many had been effected without any hindrance from the fleets of England".[53]

It was becoming apparent that Irish support would remain unreciprocated and that Irish resources were being squandered for the commercial benefit of Britain. Mr. Ponsonby declared that the war was aimed at a "monopoly of all the great commercial stations in the East and West Indies".[54] Mr. Grattan stated that "he did not believe the minister had been sincere [in attempting to end the war]" and he emphasized "the absurdity of expecting that the French should give up Belgium for the

insignificant consideration of St. Lucia or St. Tobago".[55]

The landlords clearly saw their security as dependent upon their connection with Britain and felt they had a right to demand and receive military protection from Britain. The threat of a French invasion and an insurrection increased their awareness of their dependency on Britain. However, they remained reluctant to give up the independence they had gained and were strongly opposed to a union of Ireland and Britain.

The Union

The rebellion in Ireland led the British cabinet to propose a union of Britain and Ireland in order to prevent a complete separation or the conquest of Ireland by the French. In spite of the fact that the landlords in Ireland were throughly frightened by the uprising and advocated using repressive measures, they were strongly opposed to the idea of a union.

The government began to take tentative steps toward a union in 1798 and although we have no record of the House of Commons debates for that year the ideology of the landlords with regard to the union has been extracted from historical documents and secondary sources.

The Irish administration saw the union as a means of strengthening the country against foreign attack and of preventing an insurrection. The threat of rebellion

on a massive scale revealed the dependency of Ireland on the British military. As Castlereagh put it "We at present require and shall continue, I fear, to require a larger military force than our own resources can supply. There is little doubt that...Ireland would be more secure were the resources of England pledged to her by incorporation than as they are at present, but as a favour".[56]

It was also argued that a union would allow the extension of political rights to Catholics without diminishing the political hegemony of the landlords since Protestants would continue to be a majority in the united parliament. According to Castlereagh "United with England, the Protestants, feeling less exposed, would become more confident and liberal; the Catholics would have less inducement to look beyond indulgence which is consistent with the security of our establishment".[57] The British administration also thought that the promise of emancipation would secure the support of Catholics for the union.

In general, the Anglo-Irish landlords did not share the Irish administration's enthusiasm for a union. Although they realized the danger of rebellion and the need to maintain the British connection they were unwilling to loose their control over Irish economic and

political development. They saw their interests as distinct from the British landowners, merchants and manufacturers who controlled the British parliament and felt the recent prosperity in Ireland was due to the legislative independence Ireland had acquired in 1782. This view was pervasive among merchants, manufacturers and bankers in Ireland, as well as among the landlords. Merchants and manufacturers also objected to the union because they felt protective duties were necessary to protect Irish interests from British competition.

The majority of lawyers were hostile to a union because it would deprive them of the opportunity for a parliamentary career and would result in a decline in legal business arising out of commercial, land and governmental transactions.[58]

The general Protestant population appeared to be against the union and Beresford reported that at a meeting of the freemen and freeholders in Dublin "the universal opinion of every person was against the measure and violently against it, except for one Alderman Jones".[59] His impression of the Orangemen of Dublin was that they were also adverse to the measure.

The government expected violent opposition to a union and Castlereagh admitted that if it were not for the unstable political situation in Ireland and the

possibility of a French invasion the administration would not have proposed it. As he put it: "Nothing but the strongest sense of duty would induce the government of either country to encounter a measure of such difficulty at such a moment".[60] He advocated that the British regiments not be returned to Britain even though the rebellion appeared to have subsided and pointed out:

> the alarming effect of withdrawing from this country; where the treason is rather quiescent than abandoned, the flower of its army, at a period when the King's Ministers have in contemplation a great constitutional settlement,...it would expose the King's interest in this kingdom to hazard a measure which, however valuable in its effects cannot fail...to agitate the public mind and upon which the well disposed part of the community may be expected warmly to be opposed to each other".[61]

In 1799 the question of an union was put before the Irish House of Commons and in spite of the administrations attempts to mobilize support through the distribution of patronage, the vote went against the union. There was no clear majority on either side and the issue was hotly contested. Reporting on the debate Beresford states: "When the division came the numbers were 106 and 105 many disserters on the side of the government and the greatest violence on the part of the Opposition. I never was witness to such a scene...Direct treason spoken, resistance to law declared, encouraged and recommended.

I never heard such vulgarity and barbarism".[62]

The motion was eventually passed in January 1800 in the Irish House of Commons as a result of firm determination on the part of the Irish administration which was given full authority by the British Government to use peerages, places and pensions and to make it apparent that a refusal to comply meant exclusion from government patronage forever. There was also an attempt to get rid of opposition members; and votes were gained by threats and promises or by purchase. Some members who were not in favour of union gave up their seats to government supporters. Where there was a disagreement between the patron of a borough and the nominee, the nominee was required to resign. Between January 1799 and January 1800 one-fifth of the membership of the Irish House of Commons was changed. The corresponding increase in government support enabled them to get the bill passed.[63]

The landlord's opposition to the union indicates a fierce determination on their part to retain economic and political independence from Britain. They were willing to oppose the British administration in spite of the fact that they had recently been faced with a rebellion and had no independent militia, such as the Volunteers, under their control. However they were unwilling to break completely away from Britain and

stressed the need to maintain the British connection.

Although the union would have resulted in free trade between Ireland and Britain they were, as in 1785, unwilling to give up independence in exchange for commercial concessions. They had even less reason to do so in 1798 since Ireland was in a period of prosperity and trade relations with Britain were relatively satisfactory.

Conclusion

The 1790s were a period of prosperity in Ireland. This prosperity was linked to an increase in exports of corn, linen and provisions to Britain and the opening up of direct trade with North America and foreign countries. The Irish parliament now possessed the right to regulate Irish trade, manufacturing and agriculture. There were no demands by the members of the House of Commons for greater independence from Britain and they allied with the administration in suppressing the United Irishmen who advocated a complete separation from Britain.

The landlords saw the rebellion as a form of class conflict and as a threat to their political and economic hegemony in Ireland. They advocated the use of repressive measures by the administration to suppress insurrectionary activity were opposed to proposals for a reform of parliament or the extension of political privileges to Catholics.

Only a minority of the opposition members favoured conciliatory measures in the hope that it would avert further insurrection.

Although the rebellion and the threat of a French invasion led to the assertion on the part of the landlords of the need to strengthen the British connection they were reluctant to give up their political and economic independence and were strongly opposed to a union of Britain and Ireland. They saw the recent prosperity in Ireland as linked to the ability of the Irish parliament to regulate Irish trade, manufacturing and commerce and felt that prosperity would be threatened by a union.

FOOTNOTES

1. Gearoid O'Thathaigh, Ireland Before the Famine, 1798-1848, Dublin: 1972, pp. 2-5.

2. J.C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1923, London: 1966, p. 244.

3. Gearoid O'Tuathaigh, op. cit., 1972; pp. 2-3.

4. J.C. Beckett, op. cit., 1966, pp. 243-246.

5. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. XV, February 5, 1795; p. 61.

6. Ibid, p. 72.

7. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. XV, May 7, 1795, p. 362.

8. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. XIV, March 25, 1794; p. 119.

9. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. XVI, March 15, 17 1796; p. 193.

10. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. XVI, January 21, 1796; p. 27.

11. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. XIV, March 25, 1794; p. 117.

12. J.C. Beckett, op. cit., p. 260.

13. Beresford to Auckland, 1796, in William Beresford, ed., The Letters of the Rt. Hon. John Beresford, Vol. II, 1854; p. 128.

14. Beresford to Aukland, October 24, 1797, in William Beresford, op. cit., Vol. II, 1854; p. 149.

15. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. XIV, March 25, 1794; p. 120.

16. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. XIV, January 22, 1794; p. 5.

17. Beresford to Auckland, 1796, in William Beresford, op. cit., Vol. II, 1854.

18. Beresford to Auckland, March 5, 1796, in William Beresford, op. cit., Vol. II, 1854; p. 121.

19. Irish Parliamentary Register, Vol. XVII, October 14, 1796; p. 64.

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CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis examined the ideology expressed by the Anglo-Irish landlords in the political ISA in late eighteenth century Ireland, focusing on the years 1781-1785 and 1794-1798. A qualitative analysis was undertaken using the structural approach outlined by Althusser, a neo-Marxist.

In keeping with the sociology of knowledge perspective Althusser views thought as existentially determined by the socio-historical situation in which it emerges. However, he regards social classes as the existential bases of thought. According to Althusser the dominant ideology in a class society is the ideology of the ruling class. Through its control of State power and the State apparatus the ruling class is able to reproduce the existing relations of production. It is within the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) that the ruling class ideology is reproduced. This ideology is formulated in the context of larger class struggles and is intended to ensure the maintenance of existing class relationships. According to Althusser the ideological instance like the economic, the political and the theoretical instances, can

be a center of social transformation and the ISAs centers of class struggle.

In examining the ideology articulated in the political ISA in the light of class conflict and changing class alliances it was found that the ideology centered around the landlords' desire to maintain existing class relationships and to acquire economic and political independence from Britain. In Ireland, the latter took the form of a conflict between the landlords the members of the Irish administration and their supporters in the political ISA. The landlords demanded free trade (the ability of the Irish parliament to regulate trade) in 1779 and legislative independence in 1782.

They were able to mobilize other classes around these demands due to the economic depression in Ireland. The depression was seen as resulting from the restrictions placed by the British on trade, manufacturing and agriculture. The landlords formed a national militia which consisted mainly of Protestant manufacturers, merchants, tenant farmers artisans and weavers. The general population was urged to join Non-Importation societies. which advocated a ban on the importation of all British goods.

The landlords sought to gain the support of the Roman Catholics for their cause by granting them

concessions such as the right to practice their religion freely, to educate their children and to bear arms.

The granting of free trade and legislative independence did not immediately resolve Ireland's economic difficulties and in 1784 the Irish parliament made an attempt to re-negotiate commercial relations with Britain. The British were only willing to remove restrictions on trade between the two countries if the Irish parliament would agree to enact all laws passed in Britain. The landlords saw this as a threat to their independence and they rejected the commercial propositions.

This struggle for legislative independence can be seen as a struggle between the British bourgeoisie and the Anglo-Irish landlords for control over the political ISA. However the landlords did not want a complete separation from Britain due to the insecurity of their position in Ireland. They feared a mass uprising of the native Roman Catholic population in an effort to regain the lands confiscated during the British invasions and saw the maintenance of their privileged economic and political position in Ireland as dependent upon the British connection.

The desire of the landlords to preserve the existing class relationships was clearly expressed in their condemnation of the Volunteers who were moving out

of the control of the landlords and becoming more militant in their demands for a parliamentary reform. The incorporation of Protestant cottiers, labourers and servants into the Volunteers was especially disturbing to the landlords since they now saw the Volunteers as an armed body organized in opposition to them and as a threat to their political hegemony.

The landlords' concessions to the Catholics were regarded not only as a means of gaining their support but as a way of averting insurrectionary activity and of strengthening the country against external attack.

Economic and political issues were closely interrelated. Internal stability was considered to be a prerequisite for economic prosperity and a continuation of the economic depression was seen as likely to lead to rebellion. The desire for legislative independence was linked in the ideology to economic issues.

While the strongest factor influencing the articulation of ideology in the first period 1781-1785 was the desire for economic and political independence, in the second period, 1794-1798, it was the desire to maintain existing class relationships. The economic and political hegemony of the landlords in Ireland was threatened by the emergence of the United Irishmen as a military organization dedicated to a reform of parliament,

the unity of all religious groups in Ireland and to a complete separation. The appeal of the United Irishmen to the French for aid meant that the landlords faced not only the possibility of internal insurrection but of an invasion from France. Their apprehension was increased by the incorporation of the Catholic Defenders, an organization of Catholic cottiers, labourers and tenants on short term leases, into the United Irishmen. This heightened the possibility of rebellion on a mass scale.

In response the landlords supported the repressive measures instituted by the Irish administration to suppress the United Irishmen. They became intransigent with regard to concessions to the Catholics and to parliamentary reform and advocated strengthening the connection with Britain. However, they were reluctant to give up any of the legislative independence they had won in 1782 and rejected the British administrations proposal for a union of Britain and Ireland in 1799.

Conclusion

The articulation of ideology in the political ISA varied according to the nature of class conflict and class alliances. However, it was centered around preserving the existing class relationships and securing the hegemony of the Anglo-Irish landlords in Irealnd. As a State ideological apparatus the political ISA facilitated the

reproduction of the existing relations of production. However, it was also the site for the struggle between the landlords and the British bourgeoisie for control over Ireland's economic and political development. An important outcome of this struggle was the attainment of legislative independence which increased the landlords' control over the political ISA.

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