

A Greater Ireland: The Land League and Transatlantic Nationalism in Gilded Age America

Ely M. Janis

University of Wisconsin Press (February 2015)

Hardcover \$34.95 (290pp)

978-0-299-30124-8

Scholarly examinations of a political movement delve into the nature of the Irish American identity.

A Greater Ireland: The Land League and Transatlantic Nationalism in Gilded Age America, by Ely M. Janis, is a concise, meticulously researched examination of one specific thread in a shared Irish and Irish American history: the Irish National Land League of the 1880s. This organization spanned the globe, uniting citizens of both Ireland and the United States in pursuing Irish land reform and self-rule, and had lasting repercussions for Irish American identity and political involvement.

The concept of a “Greater Ireland” refers to the interchange of ideas and support between Irish and Irish Americans in a single transatlantic community, and the contributions of that community to the definition of Irish American nationalism. Focusing on leaders of that Greater Ireland, including Charles Stewart Parnell, Michael Davitt, and John Devoy, Janis follows the birth of the Land League, which offered unique and unprecedented opportunities for input from two important groups: working-class radicals and Irish American women. Janis also tracks three divergent strands within the movement: conservatism, physical force, and radical nationalism. The Land League in the US sent both financial and political support back to Ireland, and the stateside organization fought for self-determination rather than full Irish control, setting a precedent for future groups. Although the Land League itself was short-lived, the inclusion of women and the working class would shape their future contributions to social issues and activism in the US—for example, Irish-American Catholic women's participation in the public sphere—and have an impact as well on Irish immigrants' assimilation in their new country.

Janis's thesis is clearly stated and well supported, and his notes provide ample occasion for further reading. Chapters are organized conceptually, with a thorough introduction explaining their format. *A Greater Ireland* is decidedly academic in nature and in writing style, heavy with references to the literature and accompanied by exhaustive notes and a comprehensive bibliography. Janis communicates an impressive body of scholarship, with a level of detail that will be of great use and interest to students of Irish heritage, world history, and land-reform movements.

JULIA JENKINS (Spring 2015)

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