

# **THE IRISH INFLUENCE ON THE INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT**

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## CONCLUSION

An attempt has, thus been made to analyse the extent of the Irish influence on the Indian National Movement through Irish leaders, their tactics and ideology and important Irish events. It may be emphasised here that as far as culture, language and religion are concerned, Ireland and India are worlds apart. There are nevertheless some elements of unity. One can see considerable unity and continuity in matters pertaining to a common colonial past of exploitation and oppression. The central or primary contradiction between the colonial peoples (in this context Ireland and India) and colonialism or the colonial state was clearly perceived first in the economic sphere and then gradually in the political, cultural and social spheres. <sup>1</sup> Though Ireland is European and India an Asian country situated at two corners of the world, Said specifies Ireland's colonial status which it shared with a host of non-European regions; cultural dependence and antagonism, <sup>2</sup> and assumes that, Irish people can never be English any more than Cambodians or Algerians can be French', <sup>3</sup> finding confirmation in the Irish protest against

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<sup>1</sup> Bipan Chandra, "Nationalist Historians Interpretation of the Indian National Movement", in S. Bhattacharya and R. Thapar (ed.) *Situating Indian History*, P. 196

<sup>2</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 266

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

British Government. Irish protest against the British Government began when Irish nationalists regarded the Union as tantamount to colonial annexation and felt that the promise of freedom lay in its destruction. This interpretation shaped the behaviour not only of Irish rebels, but of many subsequent 'anti - colonial' movements for which the Irish experience provided a 'pathfinder'.<sup>4</sup> Four great modes of exerting Irish pressure upon the 'mother country' predominated since the struggle for reforms had begun on 1 January, 1801. These were pressure through a parliamentary party and the British political system, passive resistance and civil disobedience, the gradual suppression of the existing British Government in Ireland by a native substitute; and armed insurrection.<sup>5</sup> One can perceive a similar parallel or continuity in the Indian national movement. One linking element, a political one (colonial annexation) forged ties of unity between the two colonies and it was hardly surprising when the Indians looked towards Ireland for 'operational hints' in their struggle against the British as the Irish agitators, who had been fighting against the Union since 1801, were more experienced. The present theme of the thesis as can be gleaned from the chapters

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<sup>4</sup> David Fitzpatrick, "Ireland and the Empire", in Andrew Porter (ed.) *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, p. 505

<sup>5</sup> Oliver Macdonagh, *Ireland : The Union and Its Aftermath*, p. 82

written so far, has been primarily dealt with from three angles - Indian reaction <sup>to</sup> the Irish struggle and also the extent to which they emulated the deeds, activities, tactics of Irish leaders and the impact of Irish events as well as the absorption of Irish ideas; the Irish interest in Indian nationalist developments, the contacts between Irish and Indian revolutionaries and the role of Sister Nivedita and Annie Besant in fostering the spirit of patriotism in Indian youths; and lastly, the British reaction to the seeping of Irish ideas into the Indian soil and whether their policies were determined by ground realities or by a paranoia of India converting into a turbulent Ireland.

Even before the Indians had started to react to the Irish struggle, Indo-Irish links were first established by colonial citizens of Irish origin in British services who flooded into India helping to win, to administer and hold on to India. Many of them serving in various capacities - as policemen, administrators, civil servants and soldiers were sympathetic to the appalling plight of the Indians under British rule. As far as the filtering of news of developments in Ireland were concerned, the Press, at an earlier stage and books on Irish nationalist struggle, after Ireland's independence, played an important role in shaping the thinking of many an Indian. The cases of Dadabhai Naoroji and latter Vithalbai Patel and Subhas Chandra

Bose have already been mentioned. After graduating from Cambridge Nehru visited Ireland in the summer of 1910 where he was 'attracted' by "the early beginnings of Sinn Fein".<sup>6</sup>

The first traces of the Irish influence on Indian nationalist developments can be found in the Indian Association formed in July, 1876 by Surendranath Banerjee and Ananda Mohan Bose who claimed to represent the *raiyats*. Banerjee urged the formation of political associations modelled on the Catholic Association of Daniel O'Connell. The Indian Association also send its agents into the rural areas to ascertain the grievances of the *raiyats* as, like the Irish they wanted to create agrarian disturbance as there was a marked similarity in the extreme poverty of the peasants in Ireland and India. When the Indian National Congress was founded in 1885 Hume aimed at the assembling of a political convention of delegates on the lines adopted by O'Connell previous to Catholic emancipation. In 1887 Hume tried to mobilize grassroots support among Indian peasant proprietors just as Daniel O'Connell had done. This was misinterpreted by the British as an attempt to start a Parnellite type of agitation in India. To stay on the safe side,

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<sup>6</sup> J. Nehru, *Towards Freedom* pp 34 - 36, 38 cited in Sugata Bose, "Nation, Reason and Religion India's Independence in International perspective", in *Economic and Political Weekly* August 1, 1998

Surendranath Banerjee assured the British that the Congress did not aim at the Home Rule of the Irish pattern. As the Congress appeal for the redressal of 'grievances' through 'prayers and petitions' failed, it *turned to the English Parliament and electorate. It began to seek its* presidents from England especially MPs such as Dadabhai Naoroji, who was supported by seventy to eighty Irish MPs. Naoroji was well-known to the members of the Irish Party and had a close relationship with Michael Davitt, the Irish MP. The Congress, in its early stages chose to follow Isaac Butt's policy of moderation. As a result, the British did not pay much heed to the Congress and it took the provocative policies of Lord Curzon to infuse a new spirit into it.

Lord Curzon partitioned Bengal in 1905 and provided the Extremists with an opportunity to experiment with Irish techniques of resistance. The Irish ideas of Sinn Fein had a decisive influence on the minds of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Aurobindo Ghosh. So did Parnell's methods of agrarian agitation and passive resistance. The insurrection of Wolfe Tone and the revolutionary vision of Thomas Davis, famous for his ballad, 'A Nation once Again', and who believed in the union of all people in Ireland, also influenced Indian thoughts and deeds. Tilak championed the cause of *raiyats* and tried to experiment with a no - tax campaign like Parnell, in Maharashtra.

He was a subscriber of Patrick Ford's *Irish World* and also borrowed its language and ideas to spread 'light' among the Indians meaning to create political awareness. Aurobindo wanted that the Congress instead of making long speeches and appealing to the British sense of justice should appeal to their own manhood as in Ireland. The Sinn Fein prospectus, as mentioned earlier was smuggled into India through copies of Griffith's own *United Irishman* and John Devoy's *Gaelic American* and supplied much of the fine - tuning on ends and means that proved elusive to the Swadeshi movement in India.

The non - co-operation resolution which Gandhi adopted on 1 September, 1920 had much in it for the Indian advocates of Sinn Fein. It consisted of the boycott of schools and colleges, foreign cloth, law courts, non - payment of taxes and boycott of councils. Vithalbhai Patel while in England had been much influenced by Sinn Fein methods and the Irish weapon of obstruction. Gandhi, however, objected against obstruction as used by Parnell which he regarded as 'incomplete boycott'. He was of the opinion that by boycotting the Councils, Ireland under Parnell's leadership gained nothing out of it. In the formulation of his non - co-operation resolution, Gandhi had been much influenced by his reading of Arthur Griffith. Gandhi never rejected the Irish model outright. He even admired de Valera

apart from being influenced by the Sinn Fein idea of boycott. What he abhorred was the violence associated with Sinn Feinism later on. He also felt that the Irish model was unsuitable in the Indian political context. When Gandhi suspended the non - co-operation movement, few of the Congressmen comprising mainly of C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Vithalbhai Patel by taking their lessons from the Irish movement tried to bring a deadlock in the Legislature and overthrow the Dyarchy in their provinces through their method of obstruction. Again like Parnell, C. R. Das kept the revolutionaries on his own side and tried to increase the power of the Swarajya Party.

The sudden suspension of the Non - co-operation movement led to the development of two separate strands of revolutionary terrorism in India - one in Punjab, U. P. and Bihar and the other in Bengal. The north Indian revolutionaries formed the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (Army). Its public wing was the *Naujawan Bharat Sabha* which was conceived on the pattern of the Young Ireland Organisation. The *Naujawan Bharat Sabha* was influenced by the example set up by the youths of Ireland, de Valera and Sinn Fein movement. It emphasized on the Irish Revolution and the methods adopted by it like collecting arms and throwing bombs. It was in pursuance of the decision of the Central Committee of the

HSRA and the Irish precedent of murdering unpopular British officials that Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Jaigopal and Chandrashekhar murdered Saunders. Again, when Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt threw a bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly on 8 April, 1929 in protest against the passage of the Public Safety Bill which would have reduced civil liberties, it was the Irish example they had in mind. In the statement which Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt made in the famous Assembly Bomb case, a reference was made to the Irish Revolution and also the Bolshevik Revolution. The Bengal revolutionaries around the same period were also inclined towards following the Irish technique of resistance which included surprise attacks on police posts, guerrilla warfare on models given in Dan Breen's *My Fight for Irish Freedom* and violent actions involving exemplary bravery and sacrifice. They were inspired by the Irish Revolution (Easter Rising of 1916) and the words of Patrick Pearse who had said that with his death would spring a hundred heroes who would triumph over death and who with their fresh blood would prepare the steps to independence of young Ireland in the next era. <sup>7</sup> This became the philosophy underlying the Indian

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<sup>7</sup> I. M. Sharma, *Freedom Struggle - a critical study of the Indian revolutionary movement 1918 - 1934*, p. 286

revolutionary movement from 1929 onwards. The revolutionaries were aware of the limitations of the programme of terrorism and assassinations which they knew would lead to more repression and yet they persisted in pursuing such a programme as they felt that, 'more repression, in its turn, would lead to a greater consciousness for freedom in the country. All these were calculated to bring about conditions which would make an uprising possible'.<sup>8</sup> The revolutionaries were men of dedication. Nationalism was their religion and the liberation of the Motherland was their single aim.<sup>9</sup> This was reflected in the daring deeds of Surya Sen's group which carried out the Chittagong Armoury Raid, being inspired by the Easter Rising in Dublin on 24 April, 1916. Irish patriots such as James Fintan Lalor, Padriac Pearse, Dan Breen and de Valera were their favourite heroes. As one is well aware, the main objective of the Chittagong revolutionaries was not to free the whole of India or even Bengal but to inspire new generations to fight for their motherland. It was keeping in mind Lalor's words (a favourite quote of Surya Sen) that somewhere (Chittagong), someday (April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1930) somehow, somebody (the Chittagong group of revolutionaries) had made a

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<sup>8</sup> Nagendranath Sengupta, *Repentent Revolutionary*, p. i

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

beginning in the form of a 'premature, imprudent, unwise and dangerous act,' by committing the armoury raid.

The activities of the young revolutionaries in Bengal were influenced by the conviction that it was the violent actions of Irish revolutionaries which had culminated in the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1921. It was especially after 1921 that the Indian revolutionaries started to take a keen interest in the freedom struggle of Ireland. As the Irish Free State was established only after a guerrilla war in Ireland, Indian freedom loving men and women felt that only the use of force and violence would pressurise the British Government into granting India its independence. This was especially true in Bengal where 'recent Irish books were studied and several Irish characters literally worshipped in many a home'.<sup>10</sup>

The Irish Influence was very evident in the life and activities of Subhas Chandra Bose. When the Second World War broke out, Bose, who believed in the wisdom of the old Irish cry - 'England's necessity is Ireland's opportunity', tried to convert Gandhi and other Congress leaders to his policy of securing the aid of England's enemies to fight against her, but failed. Bose was a great admirer of de Valera and not only did he advocate the setting up of a shadow

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<sup>10</sup> Letter dated 7.12.33 Subhas Chandra Bose to Mrs. Woods in Sisir and Sugata (ed.), *Netaji Collected Works*, Volume 31 pp. 40 - 41

cabinet of a Free India just as what President de Valera's Republican Government did when it was fighting the British Government and was on the run, but while escaping from Calcutta to Germany, he referred to de Valera's escape. In Germany Bose tried to imitate another of his Irish heroes, Roger Casement. In his previous visit to Germany, Bose had read in the German Archives decoded versions of telegrams exchanged between the German Government and the Irish Republicans, details of the Easter Rising in Dublin, Roger Casement's secret submarine voyage and the German attempt to land huge quantities of arms and ammunition on the Irish coast during the Easter holidays. Bose formed the Indian legion in Germany from Indian prisoners of war as his less successful hero had done several years ago, Later he carried out the freedom struggle from East Asia rather than Germany. Echoing the words of Patrick Pearse (bloodshed is a cleansing and sanctifying thing), Bose implored the Indians to boldly smash the British chains and attain freedom by means of "shedding our own blood" and "through our own sacrifice and toil" and by undergoing "baptism of fire". Following the footsteps of de Valera, Bose formed the Provisional Government of Free India in East Asia, which was given formal recognition by Eamon de Valera who had become the President of

Ireland. Like de Valera Bose drummed up support and money for his cause. When the INA men were retreating Bose was found to be reading a book on Irish independence where at the beginning all the patriots were killed but later on their deeds inspired people to follow their example and achieve freedom. Bose saw a similar predicament in the situation that he found himself. Even though the INA men fought bravely against heavy odds, they had to surrender eventually. However, the trial of the INA men was much publicised at the Lal Kila or Red Fort and soon thereafter widespread strikes amongst the Royal Air Force and revolt in the Royal Indian Navy (RIN) broke out. Once the British realised that an important pillar of their administration the armed forces, had collapsed, they had to concede to the Indian demand for independence. Thus, Irish deeds, tactics, activities of Irish nationalists and finally their ideology cast a strong influence over the course of the Indian National Movement. When constitutional agitation failed and revolutionary activities petered out, it was the Irish ideology that ultimately stood the test of time and ushered India's independence. A beginning had been made somewhere, someday and by somebody, an unwise act had been committed, but it nevertheless inspired future generations to arise and wrest boldly their freedom from foreign rulers.

The Irish protest against the British government started much earlier than the Indians. It has already been mentioned that the earliest recorded instance of an Irish nationalist taking interest in Indian affairs is that of Daniel O'Connell. Foremost amongst the Irishmen who had a very real interest in promoting the cause of Indian nationalism was Frank Hugh O'Donnell. He was the first to suggest that Indian political leaders should co-operate with the Irish and in 1879 championed the political rights of India in the House of Commons. He was also in touch with many of India's press lords. It was mainly through the initiative of O'Donnell and G.M. Tagore that the 'Constitutional Society of India' was founded in 1875. He also campaigned unavailingly for the nomination of Naoroji for an Irish Constituency. Patrick Ford, an Irish journalist also advocated close co-operation between Ireland and India. When Margaret Noble (Sister Nivedita), a woman of Irish background came to India, she played an important role in fostering the spirit of militancy in *Swadeshi* Bengal. Nivedita flung herself heart and soul into the *Swadeshi* Movement. Her *Kali the Mother* was a bible of the revolutionaries in Bengal. It reflected strong revolutionary fervour. Nivedita was one of the members of the Central Council of Aurobindo's revolutionary organisation. Through her writings and

lectures at meetings, she tried to inspire the young men of Bengal to resist British rule as the latter only understood the language of force. Another prominent Irishman, who took a keen interest in Indian affairs was George Freeman. Freeman hated England and swore that he would injure England whenever he could. He was a member staff of the *Gaelic American* newspaper and took a keen interest in the publication and distribution of several papers of the Indian revolutionaries such as that of Syamaji Krishnavarma, Madam Cama and Taraknath Das. The *Gaelic American* had a wide circulation in the major presidencies of India and employed propaganda as its main weapon to spread anti - British feelings. Annie Besant, a lady of Anglo - Irish descent also took a keen interest in Indian affairs and started an agitation in India modelled on British Radical and Irish Home Rule Movement. Through her articles published in *New India*, Besant tried to spread national consciousness among Indians and also create anti - British feelings. In September, 1916 Besant started her Home Rule League. She aroused the student community mostly in Madras Presidency and propelled them to work for Home Rule. College students read *New India* with avidity and got hold of Besant's pamphlets whenever they could. *New India* often made comparisons between the Irish and the Indians. Like the Irish, it

wanted that the Indians should be more manly and show a spirit of independence in their dealings with the British. The Friends of Irish Freedom in America formed by Irish Americans were major supporters of the Indian nationalists who veered towards the more violent Sinn Feiners faction in the Friends of Irish Freedom, holding joint rallies and exchanging speakers, Just like the Friends of Irish Freedom, a similar organisation had been formed by the Indians in America called Friends of Freedom for India (FFI). They had great reverence for Irish leaders like de Valera and invited him for dinner in the Central Opera House at San Francisco which de Valera accepted. It was there that he gave his famous speech, 'India and Ireland', lambasting the record of British Imperial system in India and Ireland and advising them to rely on themselves and use physical force to get rid of the British 'Vampire'. De Valera took a keen interest in Indian affairs. It was at his invitation that Vithalbhai Patel visited Dublin in 1933. De Valera suggested to Vithalbhai that he should adopt in India the same methods as those which he had adopted in Ireland. Irish freedom fighter - Maud Gonne MacBride took the initiative along with Vithalbhai Patel to form the Indo - Irish Independence League in Dublin in 1933. De Valera cast a spell over Subhas Chandra Bose and when the latter visited Dublin in 1936

interrupted his busy schedule to have three meetings with Bose. Several things were discussed and Bose was advised by de Valera not to depend on foreign powers for help in attaining India's freedom. During the Bengal Famine of 1943 de Valera offered to send aid through the Irish Red Cross but it was refused by the British Government.

From the above discussion which has dealt with the whole theme from two angles on the basis of the preceding chapters, certain conclusions can be arrived at. Firstly, there was no united Indian reaction and also imitation of the Irish model. The responses to the infiltration of influences from Ireland on the Indian national movement was confined to the western educated middle classes of the society and did not percolate to the grassroots level. Nor did it touch the upper state of the society such as ruling chiefs or landlords. Further, the responses to the possibility of Ireland as a model for Indian nationalist struggle were various and depended on the perceptions and ideologies of the Indian nationalists - constitutionalists and revolutionaries. The Irish struggle represented two models for the Indians to emulate - one, non-violent struggle broadly encompassing constitutional agitation, boycott, home rule, self - reliance, establishment of indigenous enterprises and foreign

propaganda and violent inclusive of armed acts, insurrections and revolutionary terrorism. Thus, while early nationalists like Surendranth Banerjee, Dadabhai Naoroji, Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das and even Gandhi to a certain extent opted for the former and Syamaji Krishnavarma for foreign propaganda; Bhagat Singh, Surya Sen, Tilak, Aurobindo, Subhas Chandra Bose, Taraknath Das and Madam Cama were advocates of the latter.

Secondly, the influence was both direct and indirect. Direct influences refer to those instances when Indian nationalists came into direct contact with Irishmen and women and were in turn influenced by their thinking such as Dadabhai Naoroji, Michael Davitt and Parnell; Siter Nivedita (Margaret Noble), Annie Besant and the young men of Bengal and Madras presidencies; George Freeman, Syamaji Krishna Varma, Taraknath Das and Madam Cama; De Valera, Vithalbai Patel and Subhas Chandra Bose; Madame MacBride and Subhas Chandra Bose. The indirect influence refers to the Irish influence in terms of news of the developments in the Irish freedom struggle through newspapers such as the *Irish World*, *Gaelic American*, *Irish Student* and *Irish Independent*; and after 1921 several

books on the Irish freedom struggle <sup>11</sup> as well as memoirs <sup>12</sup> and autobiographies such as Dan Breen's *My fight for Irish Freedom*. It was the exposure to such a medium that influenced the Indians either to opt for constitutional agitation such as boycott, petitions and prayers and self - reliance, or physical violence. It was on the imitation of the latter that young Indian revolutionaries took to the killing of unpopular British officials, cutting of telegraph and telephone wires, armed raids, guerrilla warfare, as also seeking foreign assistance for an armed struggle depending on the support and money of the Indians residing abroad.

Thirdly, the Irish influence on the Indian national movement may be assessed from the point of the extent of its success as far as India was concerned. At almost all the stages, imitation of the Irish model appeared to have met with failure. The early Congress by following Isaac Butt's model of prayers and petitions practically faded into insignificance. The Sinn Fein tactics of agitation followed by the *swadeshi* agitators and the activities of revolutionary terrorists petered out and the Home Rule movement gradually dissolved. The

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<sup>11</sup> To cite a few examples, De Valera's biography was found in Ganesh Ghosh's house and Michael Collins biography Volume II which has been found at Sarat Bose's Library at Elgin Road.

<sup>12</sup> See Brigadier General F. P. Crozier's *The Men I Killed* a copy of which is located at Sarat Bose's Library at Elgin Road.

non - co-operation movement was withdrawn. The Swarajists has reached the limits of politics of obstruction. The efforts of both the North Indian Revolutionary Association (Army) and Indian Republican Army ended in repression - imprisonment and death sentences, the activities of Indian revolutionaries abroad became defunct after 1921 due to the formation of the Irish Free State, the Quit India movement was brutally suppressed and the INA movement ended in a military defeat. Yet, it was all these activities taken together which created national consciousness among the Indian people. The Swadeshi Movement made a major contribution in taking the idea of nationalism in a truly creative fashion to many sections of the people, hitherto untouched by it. <sup>13</sup> Revolutionary terrorism gave back Indians their pride of manhood. <sup>14</sup> The Home Rule Movement popularised the idea of Home Rule which generated a widespread pro - nationalist atmosphere in the country. It created a generation of ardent nationalists who formed the backbone of the national movement in the coming years. The non - co-operation movement involved greater participation of masses. The Swarajists for a while kept alive the political interest of the people and inspired

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<sup>13</sup> Bipan Chandra et. all., *India's struggle for independence*, p. 138

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid* p. 145

political persons. The deep patriotism, of the North Indian and Bengali revolutionaries stirred the Indian people. The trial of the INA men caught popular imagination. The high pitch or intensity at which the campaign for the release of INA prisoners was conducted was unprecedented. <sup>15</sup> While the cities of Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras and the towns of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab were the nerve centres of the agitation, what was noteworthy was the spreading of the agitation to places as distant as Coorg, Baluchistan and Assam. <sup>16</sup> Finally, the RIN revolt marked the end of the British rule in India. Thus, the Irish influence on the Indian national movement can be regarded as one of the numerous factors contributing towards India's independence.

Fourthly, an interesting angle to the Irish influence on Indian nationalist development is the British way of reacting to it. Had there not been evidence of the infiltration of the Irish influence in British Intelligence reports and observation made by British administrators, it would have been difficult to construe that there was indeed an influence. As mentioned earlier, the British regarded India as a larger Ireland as they perceived a striking similarity between the two. Keeping

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid p. 476

<sup>16</sup> Ibid p. 477

this in mind they transplanted many of the administrative set-ups from Ireland, which they introduced in India. The political stirrings in India in the 1880s came to be regarded with alarm by British administrators. Ulster Viceroy, Dufferin accused Surendranath Banerjee and his Bengali followers of trying 'to ape the tactics of Irish revolutionists' when as an outcome of the political stirrings in Bengal, Banerjee formed the Indian Association intended to be modelled on O'Connell's Catholic Association. It was not without justification as Indian journals and newspapers were quick to perceive the political ramifications of charting an Irish course or creating an agrarian disturbance, and Indian nationalist leaders were exhorted to take up the peasant cause and establish linkages with the countryside. The circulation throughout the Bombay and Bengal Presidencies of Parnell's 'No Rent Manifesto' also substantiates the fact that Dufferin's accusation was not entirely groundless. When A. O. Hume founded the Congress in 1885 he informed Dufferin that he was about to assemble a political convention of delegates on the lines adopted by O'Connell previous to Catholic emancipation. Dufferin complained that, 'all arts of Irish agitation had come into India such as associations, sub - associations and caucuses', and 'mass meetings of *raiyats*', which were given, 'wide publicity by newspapers'. When Hume tried to mobilize grassroots support among

the Indian peasant proprietors, Lieutenant Governor Colvin accused Hume at aiming at a, 'Parnellite Irish National League in India, not unlike that recently suppressed in Ireland'. Dufferin attacked the Bengali Baboos and Mahratta Brahmins for wanting to start Irish - type revolutionary agitations in India. His Secretary, MacKenzie Wallace thought that Hume's strategy was more like Daniel O'Connell's. It must be pointed out here that in the 1870s and 1880s period in Ireland, Parnell's Land League agitation associated with boycott and violence was at its height. Already aware that Irish news were filtering into India and at least the Indian media, if nobody, were interested in Irish developments in Ireland's freedom struggle the British apprehensions, though not unfounded, hinged on a paranoia. The possible extent to which the Irish model if tried in India could threaten the very foundation of British rule led the British authorities to suppress a number of extremist newspapers like the *Gaelic American* and the *Indian Sociologist* which were prohibited entry into India. When Anine Besant and Tilak started the Home Rule Movement modelled on the Irish Home Rule Movements and galvanized Indians into active participation, the British failed to see that even though the idea of Home Rule was taken from its Irish precedent, yet, instead of following the 'Irish precedent in several phases of the movement', Tilak and

Besant's was very Indian in its essence. Its very objectives and organisational programme included the use of vernacular language, essay writing, village work etcetera not to be found in its Irish counterpart. The British Government was afraid that news of the Irish nationalists organising opposition to conscription would be exploited by Indian agitators for their own purpose, such was the British paranoia of Indians following the example of the Irish. Even the close ties between Indians and Irish Americans was suspiciously watched by British Intelligence Agencies in America as they were well aware that the two had joined hands in anti - British propaganda and activities. After the formation of the Irish Free State in 1921, when the tide of Irish agitation subsided, it was decided that the Indian Intelligence Organisation in America would be closed down. It is interesting to note that when the Easter Rising took place in Ireland, the British authorities in India were apprehensive of the repercussions it would have on the Indian political scenario. They heaved a sigh of relief, when nothing happened and concluded that it must have only been a 'salutary' impression. It was but a temporary illusion for them. A note written by the D.I.G. of Police, Bengal to the Bengal Government No. 13750 dated the 28 November, 1929 made a reference to the branch of the Hindustan Republican Association conspiring to fight as the Irish rebels did in the

Easter Rising in Dublin. A special watch on the Chittagong ex - detenus was kept and twenty - four constables were detailed to maintain a twenty - four hour watch. But it came to nothing. The rebellion did take place and as searches revealed the Chittagong Rising was not only a re-enactment of the Easter Rising but the result of a great deal of reading of Dan Breen, Patrick Pearse, James Fintan Lalor and de Valera. The result was Dan Breen's book confirmed to have an injurious effect on young impressionable minds was proscribed by the British Government. Many other books dealing with Ireland's fight for freedom were banned. Thus, the British attitude towards the Indians were determined by the extent of the Irish influence on Indian minds and the kind of threat it posed for the British Government. Their fears were not totally unfounded, though at times there was an element of exaggeration. This was clearly evident in the 1880s, in the Swadeshi Movement and the Home Rule Movement. The two movements even though influenced by the Irish Home Rule and Sinn Feinism developed more as a result of colonial exploitation and oppression and had a very Indian character.

The Swadeshi Movement was a direct result of the British policy of

There was no other movement which had a similar character.

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What has been observed so far pertains to the Indian National Movement as synonymous with the Indian National Congress. The question that may arise pertains to whether there was any Irish influence on the Muslim League. As far as separatist politics was concerned the activities of the Muslim League bore a striking resemblance to the Protestants of Northern Ireland. Just as the Ulster Unionists were eager to retain ties with Great Britain on the basis of a Protestant majority, the Muslims though wanting an independent state, preferred to have a Muslim majority separate state called Pakistan. While Carson, a lawyer was hell bent on a Protestant Ireland, Jinnah also a lawyer was determined on the creation of a Muslim majority state.

Thus, the themes which were intended to be developed at the outset have been included within the parameters of what has been discussed so far. We may therefore conclude that keeping in mind the colonial context and the reaction to colonial rule, it is an undeniable fact that there was indeed an Irish influence on the Indian National Movement, though it maybe regarded as one of the many <sup>foreign and western</sup> influences.