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To subvert the tyranny of our execrable government, to break the connection with England, the never-failing source of all our political evils, and to assert the independence of my country, these were my objects.
To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of all past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishmen in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic, and dissenter. These were my means.
So those, Tom Holland, are the words of Wolf Tone, and last time on the Rest is History, when we were doing an epic sweep through the interwoven histories of Ireland, England, and Britain, who were joined by Paul Rouse from University College Dublin, and it's delightful for us, isn't it? Paul is back, and we're still in the GPO.
We're still in the GPO.
Yes.
In the centrepiece of the Easter Rising. So Paul, welcome back to the Rest is History.
Thanks a billion dollars.
I mean, for everybody else, you've been gone for three days. For us, I mean, it's actually three minutes.
But we ended last time with the 1798 rebellion, Wolf Tone, the interplay of republicanism, romanticism, revolution, and religion in Irish society, and the act of union.
So Ireland is now part of, as a reaction to that, failed uprising. Ireland is now part of a united kingdom of Britain and Ireland.
And, well, why doesn't it work? Or does it work, actually, in a way that we perhaps don't appreciate today?
Well, there were a lot of attempts to make it work. And a lot of really interesting and progressive things happened over the sweep of 120 years.
But ultimately, there was a complete disconnect right at the heart of the act of union, which was this idea of Catholic emancipation.
And that idea, from the very beginning, the promise that after the act of union, Catholics would be allowed to sit in the parliament in Westminster.
And of course, this was rejected, and it was essentially rejected, even though William Pitt supported it.
It was the king, is it? It was the king. It was George III.
And this goes back to coronations and his coronation oath at his disastrous coronation, which we talked about, Dominic, where everyone was falling over and having breakfast and all kinds of shenanigans going on.
But actually, it has this very, very serious consequence that he refuses to allow Catholic emancipation to go ahead.
And he was unmoved on it and could not be moved on it. And it was only in the 1820s when Daniel O'Connell won a fascinating figure in Irish history.
And we're here in the general post office, the GPO, the seat of Irish Revolution. But the street that's outside it is now called O'Connell Street.

So tell us about Daniel O'Connell.
So Daniel O'Connell is the liberator. He began, born in Kerry, right down in Corsivine.
The furthest part away from here you could possibly be and not be wet.
And he came to be a really brilliant barrister, one of the leading barristers of his day.
But he also was a politician who wished to stand in parliament. He wished for Catholic emancipation.
The idea, and he founded in 1823 a Catholic association based on the counties of Ireland where they collected things and organized those counties,
which had been shired by the English and which are now such an important part of Irish administrative life still.
And a huge part of people's identity in Ireland is a county identity.
I am from Galway. I am far more than in England. I mean, it's not vaguely comparable. It really matters in Ireland, doesn't it?
It really matters. It really matters and it matters because of sporting allegiance in the Gaelic-Atletic Association,
but it matters as a basic thing of constituencies for which people are elected to parliament.
It matters for local government all across the place. It is fundamental to identity for very many people in Ireland.
So it was organized in that and there were showdowns through the 1820s, but it ended ultimately with O'Connell standing for a seat in County Clare
and being elected as the MP for County Clare Bull, of course, then it was up to the government.
Right. He can't take a seat.
So eventually he sought him down and in 1829 a Catholic Emancipation Bill was passed through the House of Commons.
And that is passed by the Duke of Wellington, who is Prime Minister.
And the Duke of Wellington is also, in a sense, I mean, he is Irish.
I mean, he notoriously said that just because he, you know, being born in a stable doesn't make you a horse, which is not the best way.
Apparently he didn't say that, Tom. Did he not say that? Apparently this is apocryphal, is that right, Paul?
Yeah, it's apocryphal.
Oh, it is apocryphal. OK, so much about the Duke of Wellington is.
But so the Duke of Wellington is a fascinating example of an Irishman who becomes synonymous with Britain, with British victory.
Britain's greatest general.
Oh, and more than that, Tom, he will go there later.
I will show you the pitch, one of the oldest cricket pitches in the world, where the first ever organized cricket match in Ireland was played between the gentlemen of Ireland and the military.
And the Duke of Wellington was playing in that game.
And there was a monument.
It's not even higher in my opinion.
There was a monument at the gates to the Phoenix Park.
If people have been to Dublin, the Phoenix Park is just, it's hugely important public space to the city and has been for centuries.

And standing tall over its entrance is an obelisk, which is a massive monument to the Duke of Wellington, which was constructed in his honor.
And while we're on the subject of monuments, just outside us here was the most famous monument in the city.
To Nelson.
I say was, because it was Horacio Nelson.
Paul, for us, this is a very tragic story, because Nelson is very much a friend of the rest of his history.
He's probably one of our favorite.
I mean, one of our two or three favorite historical characters.
Yeah.
So Tom, in particular, is pumped about Nelson.
And it's a big deal for Tom to come to a city that blew up the statue of Nelson.
Let's get back to this O'Connell, the Liberator, the Duke of Wellington, the Iron Duke, the man who defeats Napoleon at Waterloo.
Are we seeing two sides there of the Anglo-Irish relationship in the 19th century?
What you see in Ireland across the whole of the 19th century is a country which is slowly.
It's changing.
It has people within it who are absolutely loyal to Emperor, who are extremely happy to be part of the United Kingdom.
And Catholics, including?
Including Catholics, a very certain class of Catholic ordinarily.
But the broad suede of the population were rural and extremely poor.
That will come to be of enormous significance later in the century.
A lot of them joined the British Army.
Yeah.
There is huge Irish recruitment to the British Army.
And this is sometimes presented as evidence of being comfortable within Empire and evidence of identification increasingly with what is the Army of the Empire.
But of course, it's rooted often in poverty.
People who joined the Army for adventure and for excitement or to get away from home or for all the many reasons why people do everything.
It's very often very difficult to judge that.
But there's epic poverty across rural Ireland and urban Ireland too.
And Ireland at this point.
So the early 19th century has about half the population of Great Britain.
Is that right?
So the population of Ireland grew from about 3 million in 1750 to on the eve of the famine in 1845, it had risen to about 8.4 million.
Yeah.
And the famine, perhaps even more than Cromwell's invasion, is perhaps the kind of the darkest blot on the history of Anglo-Irish relations.
You cannot talk and or understand modern Ireland in any shape or form without understanding the famine.

You must understand it from what it did in cultural terms, in economic terms.
Its political legacy is immense.
And how it reshaped the population of the country.
So can you talk just talk a street why it is so devastating?
Why it has the impact that it does and how culpable the British government is in the devastating effects that it has?
Okay.
And in talking about culpability, you have to be clear that what we're not trying to do here is project back standards and values from a new millennium onto the actions of a government in the middle of the 19th century.
We must enter that caveat at the beginning.
But we judge them by the standards of the mid 19th century.
Of the period.
So the growth of population in Ireland to 8.4 million in 1845 is a massive explosion.
And it's an explosion which is driven across the entirety of the West of Ireland and the midlands and in rural areas by the subdivision of land and by the spread in the use of the potato.
So about one and a quarter million families were living on farms of fewer than five acres in land, which is exceptionally tiny, tiny, really small farms, not to call them farms.
And these, these were farms and this really matters.
These were farms which were essentially taken and they were tenants of landlords of the 5,000 landlords, more or less who are Anglo Irish or not always.
So because there are, we have to be very careful not to be absolute on that.
But largely speaking, there are 5,000 families who own this land.
So by the 1840s, there are about 3 million people who depend on the potato for more than 90% of their calorific intake in any given year.
By the way, the potato was not brought to Ireland by Sir Walter Raleigh.
It's a product of the exchange of commerce and culture from Ireland and Spain and Britain and everything to do with that.
Just say that in passing.
Blight descended on Europe and in Ireland, hit the potato crop of 1845.
That crop lost about half of it was destroyed.
And there are these extraordinary, just vivid accounts of the smell of rotting potatoes and of the absolute despair of people who put their hand into the soil to pull up a potato plant and to feel that disgusting squelch of rotten potato where it had died in the ground as the withering, as the withering goes on.
The impact then in 1846 was devastating.
The entire crop failed in 1847.
There was some improvement, but there was so much limited seed potato available because of the previous two years that not as much had been sold and more was lost.
So there's marginal recovery again in 1848, but it was only in 1849 that a normal crop of potatoes was harvested in Ireland in the course of these four years.
And we'll take a few months either side of it and years either side of it.
About one million people died of starvation of illness in a country that is the richest in the world.
Yes.

And about over a million people emigrated some emigrated to Liverpool to that already developing Irish community in Liverpool or that Irish community along Tottenham Court Road in London.
Right.
So people went on ships, later renamed coffin ships to America and to Canada.
They stopped at Grossel or in Ellis Island and these become extremely important places in Irish history.
The Irish emigrants who go to America take with them the absolute conviction that the British are responsible for this.
Oh, yeah.
This really matters.
See it as a deliberate act of genocide.
This really matters.
So is that true?
Well, you have to see what happened during the famine.
So the prime ministers who held office during the famine were Sir Robert Peele and Lord John Russell.
So in the beginning, the government offered for reliance on the provision of employment through public work schemes in Ireland, the building roads, etc.
The cost of which was to be split between local tax players and the central government.
And at their height in the spring of 1847, there were about 700,000 people or one in 12 of the population were employed in these schemes.
So there's no denying that.
So it's kind of like workhouses or operate in England.
And the workhouses come into this story in a minute.
Then the public work schemes were displaced in 1847 by publicly financed soup kitchens.
And these soup kitchens during 1847 were feeding 3 million daily, which is an enormous undertaking.
But the government retreated from the provision of those by the October 1847.
Every soup kitchen was gone and it was left to the workhouses.
And is that because they can't afford it, they say?
That was the logic. We're not spending money on this.
But is this kind of ideological conviction that it will encourage welfareism?
And this is where we get into it.
This is where we get into the weeds of to what extent there's culpability in all of this.
So there is an understanding of the gravity of the crisis and the gravity of the crisis is such that there are bodies such as the Quakers and there are charities who are sending money and arms.
And they do incredible work.
And there is English people who send huge sums of money to help in this.
It goes to America where there are Irish emigrants already there because emigration to America was already enormous before the famine.
And they are collecting money.
And the Choctaw Indians most famously made a donation of the equivalent of about 5,000 pounds.
It's the Choctaw Indians who had their own trail of tears from the 1830s.
So they send money so everybody understands through this, through the reportage in their

newspapers.
Nobody can possibly say that they don't know.
And the internal British correspondence flowing from Dublin Castle week after week over to England makes clear that there is an extraordinary crisis which is leading to daily death on an epic scale across Ireland during these years.
And two aspects of this which really matters.
The first is you have somebody like Charles Trevelyan who is the chief of famine administrator in Ireland who expresses desire that permanent good could come out of transient evil.
And that's this idea of famine as an austerity measure.
And I don't wish to use a trite modern analogy for it, but it's the idea of Providence.
And the idea that it's Malthusian basically that a famine will clear out a population to make it more sustainable.
And he is the forebearer of Laura Trevelyan, BBC correspondent who has now given money and reparations to people in the Caribbean because her family had presentations there.
And she's talking about doing it with this.
And features in one of the most popular Irish ballads, the Fields of Atten Rye where you stole Trevelyan's corn.
So the young might see the barn.
Trevelyan's corn was understood to be what was taken away.
Now it has to be said there were Irish farmers and Irish businessmen exporting food from Ireland during this thing.
This is not a simple narrative and that matters too and must be said.
But when it comes down to it, you have the Lord Lieutenant in Ireland writing to the British Prime Minister Sir John Russell to say in a letter very clearly,
I do not think that there is another legislature in Europe that would disregard such suffering as now exists in the west of Ireland and coldly persist in a policy of extermination.
Now that is the leading British official in Ireland writing to the Prime Minister.
That thing about a policy of extermination suggests a, I mean, at the very least, a genuine desire.
I mean, extermination is a big word.
So there's a genuine desire among some English or British policymakers, you know, to pursue the line that you were just describing,
the idea that this is a necessary providential course that will, you know, I mean, I don't know how they would have put it.
We know out the wheat from the chaff or get rid of the dead wood or they would have used some equally kind of horrific expression.
Or would they? Or are we being unfair? I mean, is this what they thought?
That is boldly, as you can see it written, what I've just read out to you there.
These ideas are current at the time.
This idea of Malthusian ideas of population and what a population can be sustained on a place and what it means to a place to have a population.
And how much of that?
So in the last episode, we were talking about the 17th century and the stereotypes and the anxieties that Cromwell's troopers took with them when they crossed the RSC.
So how much of, I mean, I guess a lot of people would call it racist, wouldn't they? How much of that

plays into this?
In other words, the fact that the people who are suffering Irish, does that make the British government's response qualitatively different from if it had been in Yorkshire or in Wales or wherever?
Well, I would say that within, to be frank about it, within the ruling classes of Britain at that time, there was a disdain for working people,
which can be seen through some of the treatment through the Industrial Revolution, etc. However, the fact that it was in Ireland matters.
And it was separated by the sea. It's a different land mass. And there is centuries of just this idea that the Irish are not quite civilized or not civilized at all.
And you can see it. It endures through the 19th century.
Over the last couple of weeks, I've been going back reading newspapers before you guys came over and looking at punch, for example.
Right. So the cartoons and punch.
And they bring you into a world of what can only be understood as popular representations of what the Irish were.
By the way, those cartoons, I mean, or images like that are still appearing in British tabloid newspapers in the 1970s, when people are drawing Republican paramilitaries or something.
They're drawing them in exactly the same way as wild, savage.
Simianized almost, isn't it?
Simian, exactly. Yeah, absolutely.
And it is extraordinary when you look back at it and it's jarring.
And it's why there was a recent column by a cartoonist in the London Times, which again just got a really bad reaction from here because it brought people back to that idea of the representations of the Irish in the British popular press.
And it matters, though. The famine matters, obviously. And the story of the famine isn't a million dead.
The story of the famine is people dying on a ditch in the side of the road while they walked the Delphi Lodge looking for food.
Because they're starving and being turned away and dying on the way back.
It's people being tossed over into the Atlantic Ocean where they die on a coffin ship on the way of cross.
And it matters for political reasons because it created a community of Irish people who were abroad who could not be reconciled to the idea of the United Kingdom.
And the scale of those numbers of emigration are extraordinary.
You see, I had the impression that the aftermath of this coming on top of Cromwell and plantations and everything was that in the wake of the famine, that Irish nationalism was Republican, was virulently anglophobic,
was absolutely committed to the overthrow of the Union and that this was essentially the Easter Rising and then the Revolution was expressive of majority opinion in Ireland in the wake of the famine.
And I was kind of amazed to discover that wasn't the case at all.
That actually the Republican nationalism that ends up founding independent Ireland is a very, very minority pursuit and that actually majority Irish nationalism does accept the function of the Union.

It wants home rule, it wants a kind of a parliament, but one that would be subordinate to the Westminster parliament.
So in a weird way, the famine leaves a massive political and cultural scar and one that will never heal, I guess, or one that will never disappear anyway.
But why doesn't it lead to greater political...
Why actually is it so quiescent?
Is it because the famine is so awful that people too exhausted to...
Why isn't there a revolution and uprising, massive political turbulence?
Well, you had Chris Clark on talking about the rebellions of 1848.
There was a rebellion in Dublin in 1848 by young Irelanders, a movement who drew on ideas of a newspaper called The Nation and they drew on ideas that exact thing we were talking about earlier about Republicanism and Romanticism and ideas of Ireland
and nationality and art and culture and music and it had no support.
It was happening in the middle of famine and partly that's it.
So there is a huge dislocation in Ireland caused by the famine and which endures after the famine.
Ireland is the only country in Western Europe which continued to decline in population for 100 years after the famine.
The rest of the population of Europe, everywhere is exploding.
Britain goes from 10 million to 40 million in the 19th century.
Ireland goes from 8 million to 4 million and it continues in freefall.
Because of emigration?
But just to repeat, that makes it all the more extraordinary, doesn't it?
I agree, but you have to think about it.
How do you win a rebellion?
How do you hold and stage and organize a rebellion that will defeat the largest empire the world has known?
Who have huge numbers of soldiers garrisoned here?
And that is it to presume that you want rebellion.
But there are people everywhere who live hand to mouth and who accommodate themselves to an environment in which they find themselves and must live.
Well, isn't that the issue that if you're living hand to mouth, the thought of joining an armed rebellion is so potentially disruptive to your already embattled existence
that you just think, listen, I'm just going to crack on and make the best of it.
Is that what it is?
I think it's a bit of everything.
I think it's a bit of everything.
There is a revolutionary tradition which runs after 1847.
So to answer your question, there is an attempt to found an Irish Republican brotherhood sometimes called the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood in 1848.
And it's founded in Dublin and New York because New York is the biggest Irish city in the world by the middle of the 19th century.
And there are people all over the place there who all around the world, you know, eight million people left Ireland between 1801 and 1921.
But that's an extraordinary figure.

Lots of them are going to Britain, right?
Oh, yeah.
A lot of them are going to Britain.
And is that part of what's also going on?
Is that actually the fact that Irish people can move to Britain because they are citizens of a single kingdom?
Is kind of generating a sense of the Union being something more than just a kind of political expediency?
I mean, is that also part of what's going on?
But I think that's inevitable.
It's this idea of these ties of kin and commerce, this kind of flow of culture, of education, of jobs, of money.
There was a common market between Britain and Ireland from the 1820s onwards.
And there was a displacement of Irish industry within that.
And the reconstitution of the Irish agricultural experience, for example, an Ireland profoundly rural country at this stage.
Ireland wasn't industrializing the way Britain was.
Yes, Belfast was, but the rest of the country was largely speaking, staying in rural areas.
It was dependent on clearances from the land of people.
So they could raise cattle who were then exported behind us as the River Liffey.
Twelve sailings a day bringing live cattle across the Irish Sea for slaughter and for sale in the expanding conurbations of the north of England and down into London.
So Ireland became a country in which it was deeply dependent on the export trade for agricultural projects to England.
So there's that tie as well.
And you get flows of emigration, money coming back.
You still have people organizing though, 1858, they organized Republican Brotherhood.
They staged a rebellion in 1867, which is a disaster.
They were riddled by informers and it may as well not have happened.
In the wake of that, they pass a resolution that they will await the decision of the Irish nation as expressed by a majority of the Irish people as to the fit hour of inaugurating a war against England.
So basically the idea that you have to have an opinion poll to find out whether you should have a revolution, which seems to the most unrevolutionary approach to revolution that I've ever heard of, and seems to have acted as a kind of inhibiting factor on the actual plotting of revolution, this resolution for lots of the Irish Republic.
I'm not sure it had an inhibiting factor.
I think it was the idea that you have to have a chance of success.
1867 was lost on an epic scale.
It was so poor.
Presumably one of the consequences of that is that they remain a kind of this tiny minority and actually the energies of Irish people who are interested in politics goes into something very different, which is a drive for home rule.
So I think we should take a break at this point.
And when we come back, let's talk about that, about how the process of home rule, the impact that it

has not just on Ireland, but on Britain as well.
Gladstone spent his declining years trying to guess the answer to the Irish question.
Unfortunately, whenever he was getting warm, the Irish secretly changed the question.
So Dominic, you will recognize that.
1066 and all that.
1066 and all that, published in 1930.
So Tom, I don't want to embarrass you, but a few weeks ago, when we were talking about this episode, there was a sense of dread, I think, in the Holland household,
because you had very foolishly the idea that home rule was a quite boring and dry topic.
But now, in typical Tom Holland fashion,
I'm all over it.
You get up on it and you're full of excitement.
It's a completely fascinating topic because of the seismic impact it has on the whole of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.
And Paul, you still with us?
So you haven't run off out into the streets to look for scenes of cricket matches in Easter Rising and so on.
Talk us through the process by which home rule becomes the focus of Irish political energies in the second half of the 19th century.
I suppose it begs the question to what extent Irish people were accommodating themselves to empire,
or to what extent the empire was so powerful and so ubiquitous in its culture,
in the spread of its railways, in everything that flowed to leave it in a way that you couldn't imagine an alternative reality,
that this was Ireland's reality and you should accommodate itself to it.
But there is also a sense in which the empire is accommodating itself to Ireland,
because that passage that I quoted about Gladstone trying to solve the Irish question.
I mean, Gladstone is the key figure here because he is the leader of the Liberal Party,
which is the hegemonic party for much of this period.
And he says, yeah, we accept home rule is a cause that we should be getting behind clearly.
But there's also a massive political dimension here, which is there is an Irish parliamentary party.
So Ireland has a stake in the empire in a way that no other part of the empire has, right?
It has a presence at Westminster and I don't want to say a powerful lobby,
but it has a group that can become powerful based on electoral dynamics.
Oh, it's episodically powerful if it's organized in a particular way.
It has to be organized and it has to be organized into a party.
And that's what happened in the 1870s, where a home rule association,
which ultimately became the Irish parliamentary party,
became the dominant force of the 100 MPs that were sent to the House of Commons in any given year.
Now the 100 MPs, but the way the populations were shifting meant overrepresentation in reality of the Irish bullet gave some a presence in parliament,
if it's so wished to put on the agenda the idea of a home rule parliament.
So despite the fact that the empire is thriving,

despite the fact that there are these ideas that this is the richest country in the world,
there are still a group of people who wish for a separate parliament under a monarch.
The idea of a home rule that, say, Gladstone signs up to and backing,
what would a home rule have meant?
Well, a home rule meant a limited amount of powers, for example,
not extensive powers of defence, not expensive powers of taxation.
It shifted at different stages.
You could not say it was independence or you could say it's a distant cousin,
but you couldn't say a huge amount more than that,
but it was considered by nationalists a stepping stone.
Right. So it is seen as a stepping stone.
It's not an end point. It's a stepping stone.
There's another thing that really matters. It's a stepping stone,
but it also really matters that you can go a long way here to creating a problem for yourself
if you imagine that there's a hard wall between revolutionary Irish separatists
and the broad suede of the Irish parliamentary party, because that's not how it ended up.
There are people in the Irish parliamentary party who are Fenyons.
Right. And remain Fenyons.
And at different stages. Now, they may age.
That may temper the extent of their Fenyonism or their desire for revolution,
but it is real and there's a shared space there which is not discreet.
The image that the home rulers have of a parliament in Dublin,
an Irish parliament, their own sense of a degree of self-determination,
I mean, a limited degree.
From the outset, does that take into account that there are a lot of people
in the north-eastern corner of Ireland who they know will be unhappy about this
because they're Protestants?
No, and I'm very cautious here about stepping on Dan Jackson's territory for later on,
but it has been one of the great enduring failures of Irish nationalism,
which arguably is still the case, that there is an underestimate of just how profoundly
Ulster Unionists and Loyalists rejected the idea of an independent...
The passage from Wolf Tone, the famous passage that Dominic read at the beginning of this episode,
makes reference to the fact that Catholics, Protestants and dissenters are all Irish men and indeed women.
And the passage from the proclamation that you read at the first episode by Patrick Pierce,
likewise, massive emphasis on the fact that there will be no kind of sectarian character to this Irish republic.
So they're aware of the problem, but do they just think it's not a massive problem
that just by uttering fine-sounding sentiments, it will all be solved?
It comes down to the impossibility of conceiving of Ireland as anything other than a united island.
Problems on the island have been created by the presence of the English stroke British
that they have sold dissent and if they leave, will be fine.
Number one, number two, it doesn't really matter if there's a section there who disagree,
they're in a minority and we are the majority and numbers matter.

So there we go. And there is no talk of partition on the island before the 1880s.
Well, because first of all, you've got a past home rule, right?
So the process by which home rule comes to be brought to the imperial parliament in Westminster and then to be rejected. So talk us through that process.
To talk it through, you have to step out of parliament and out of parliamentary politics
and understand land in Ireland and understand that the land of Ireland was owned
not by those who farmed it, but by the landlords who made money from the rent that was being paid to them.
And who were building all these wonderful house, state-of-the-homes.
And we're still talking about maybe 5,000 people?
Yeah, 5,000 families and you're looking then at a great swale of often very poor people
who were farming that land and who were unable to pay rent
and sometimes there were some evictions, but they desired to own their land.
And from the 1879 onwards, there was first of all 1879 to 1881,
there's what's called the Land War, led by an unbelievable figure called Michael Davit
who wrote a brilliant book called The Fall of Feudalism in 1904,
which tells the story of the creation of this Irish landly.
And this is the famous introduction of the word boycott because there's captain boycott, isn't there, who people refuse to pay rents to him or whatever.
And so that's where the word boycott comes from.
It does and it's remade.
This is a story that's remade around Ireland where local landlords,
and there were good landlords, again in the cartoon version of Irish history,
every landlord is evil.
But there were good landlords who looked after their public who gave alms during the famine,
who were progressive in trying to create a system of agriculture on their lands,
but there were others who were absentees who just took their stuff with them to Westminster
and gave nothing in return.
And the other thing, I mean, the cartoon version is that the role of the conservatives in this in Britain,
the Tories, is unremittingly negative.
But I was amazed to read that actually, what is it, the Windham Act of 1903
gave Irish tenant farmers better rights than tenant farmers had anywhere else in the UK.
And that this is what, a kind of part of a policy on the part of the conservatives
to basically shoot the nationalist foxes, to kind of clear up the grievances,
to kill the desire for home rule with kindness.
Yeah, in that great cliche of Irish history, kill home rule with kindness.
But the idea of land reform, the first land act is 1881,
and the idea is that the country is ablaze,
and there are agrarian atrocities happening everywhere.
There is murder, there is farms being set alight,
there is anti-eviction campaigns going on.
It happens again with the plan of campaign in 1887 into 1888,
and you have a complete disconnect in the countryside.

And what you have is, first of all, Gladstone converted to the idea of home rule as a way,
I'll fix the land question, and as part of that, we need to do something different in Ireland.
Ireland is different. There's an acceptance that Ireland is different.
It's not Wales, and it's not Scotland, and it's certainly not Northern England.
So we must find a way to do this.
So Gladstone puts it onto the books, and he tries in 1885 and then into 1886,
and it's defeated in the House of Commons through the Tory party who lead a campaign against it,
and liberal MPs don't walk with Gladstone.
Well, he splits his own party.
He splits his own party, exactly.
And you go on into the 1890s, it's tried again.
And then this time it's passed by the House of Commons,
because the liberal stand firm bullets blocked in the lords.
So just on the lords for a second, just to explain that to our listeners.
So, obviously, Westminster Parliament has two houses, the House of Lords, unelected peers.
Now, these are, I mean, I don't know what the proportion is,
but these are by an absolutely overwhelming majority, conservative peers, not liberals.
There is always this issue of how much they would use their power to block the House of Commons.
But of course, a lot of these people are landowners in Ireland, aren't they?
So they have a dog in the fight. They have a vested interest.
I mean, they're not just conservative peers.
They are intensely conservative peers, many of them.
Yes, and it matters in a different way, actually, when we come on to the opposition
to Home Rule for Ireland after 1912, when that's all tied into the super tax of the rich,
which is so much a part of post-people's budget, British political culture,
and the divide, extraordinary when you read those debates in the House of Commons,
just how vitriolic those divides came.
But it begins in the 1880s, with the idea of Home Rule for Ireland,
led by Charles Stuart Parnell, his statue at the top of the street here.
So it's O'Connell at one end, and it's Charles Stuart Parnell at the far end,
with Nelson gone from the middle.
Right, so...
But Parnell is what I... That's because Joyce was obsessed by him.
He is the kind of the great leader of...
The uncrowned King of Ireland.
The uncrowned King of Ireland, the Irish parliamentary party in Westminster,
and working cahoots with Gladstone.
And then he has this scandalous affair with, in Joyce, he's called Kitty O'Shea,
Catherine O'Shea.
You can't call it Kitty O'Shea, Tom.
That's a terrible fact.
Well, I'm merely quoting Joyce there, and Gladstone refuses to work with him
because he's an adulterer, which is very Gladstonean behaviour.
It is the story of Parnell, and known as Parnell, called himself Parnell.

There was a brilliant documentary on RT Radio where they talked to somebody
who was a groundskeeper when Parnell was there, and he talked about how he called him Parnell, and all that.
It was a recording from the 20s, possibly the 30s.
And he used the land agitation, got support, and blurred that line between
the Irish Republican Brotherhood and the Irish parliamentary party to present himself as
the dominant figure in Irish politics, and got Gladstone to agree to home rule.
By the way, amazing decade, if you look at it, 1882, the two leading British officials
in Ireland were murdered by Republicans when they walked...
This is Phoenix Park.
...in the Phoenix Park murders.
They're really shocking, leading to the creation of the special branch and that development
and that part of policing.
Number one, number two, there were bombs sent into Downing Street later in the decades,
where the revolutionaries are still there, even if some of them are part of the home rule movement.
And so Parnell, there's huge attempts to undermine Parnell as the decade moves on.
So there are forgeries used to discredit him and claim that he was always a violent man,
really, and that he's really a Finian dressed up as a politician.
But then he is undone entirely by a scandal which flows from Catherine O'Shea,
whose husband, Captain O'Shea, was an Irish MP.
And what it ignores, of course, is that this was something that had been going on throughout the 1880s.
They were essentially living together.
They had two daughters together.
And it was only when there was a dispute over a bequest and the sharing of bequests
between Catherine O'Shea and Captain O'Shea that had emerged into the public.
And what you had immediately was the forces of people who opposed home rule.
They could come straight into the middle and they split the party.
And you have things like Archbishop Thomas Croke, the most important Catholic cleric in Ireland in the 19th century,
describing Parnell as the measly runt who infected the litter.
And you have the party split down the middle where you have some people who stay with Parnell,
but the majority go against him and he goes chasing this in an election campaign.
And he drives himself around the country and he drives himself basically to death.
And the fall of Parnell is kind of a salutary tale on the whole of religion and Irish politics.
And his funeral, though, is one of the most extraordinary sites.
At the end of 19th century, there's 2,000 men walking with hurlies, hurling sticks,
the symbol of Irish nationalism as well as being a sporting implement, draped in black crepe paper.
It's one of those things that those images which is held and he's walked through and he's lamented as this figure.
And in the world of Yeats, Tom that you mentioned earlier, it leads in his view to a turning away from politics
and a resurgence of an interesting culture which ultimately leads him to ask,
30 or 40 years later, did that play of mine send out certain men the English shot?

So Paul II, Home Rule bills fail and we're now into the 20th century.
Home Rule is still kind of on the agenda, but you have a massive liberal landslide in 1906.
So actually the Liberals are now back in, split themselves over Home Rule,
opening the door to 20 years of Tory hegemony.
Then the Liberals are back in, but they don't need the Irish Parliamentary Party, do they?
They've got a massive majority.
So Home Rule, they don't really care about Home Rule.
I mean, Asquith and Co, they're not massively signed up to it as Gladstone was.
I mean, it's fascinating because of developments in British politics,
because they fall out with the House of Lords,
where the Tories about their own economic and kind of social welfare plans,
they're regarded as revolutionaries by the Tories, the Liberals.
There are two elections.
They lose their majority effectively.
Now they're dependent on the Irish Parliamentary Party
and now Home Rule is back on the agenda with a vengeance.
The dream scenario for the Irish Parliamentary Party is exactly this.
The Liberals and the Conservatives are stuck on almost exactly the same number of seats after two elections.
And there is the Kingmaker in John Redmond, who was a Parnellite in the 1890s,
stuck with him after the split, the Irish Parliamentary Party split,
was divided for 10 years, reunited under Redmond.
But the question is what they would do.
Tom, you mentioned earlier the Wyndham Act,
which on top of the 1903 and the 1909 acts are extraordinary gestures and attempts
introducing compulsory purchase of landlord-held land in Ireland
and making it be sold to the tenant farmers.
It's redistributed by the Tories initially,
and then topped up by Augustine Burrell's driving of the Irish Parliament.
So Augustine Burrell is the Liberal Representative in Dublin basically.
Yes, he's the Chief Secretary, sits in the cabinet, comes over,
and so this is where we get into John Redmond.
So John Redmond is a fascinating figure.
He's the head of the Irish Parliamentary Party,
he's the man who's replaced Arnell,
and has been largely written out of Irish nationalist history.
His statue is not on O'Connell Street,
despite the fact that he is the Home Rule leader
who got the act eventually onto the statute books,
and a Kingmaker in British politics
who's now been completely written out of British history.
We talked about this in the first episode.
I'm astonished that John Redmond is not part of the teaching that you got
because of his seminal role in allowing for the Parliament Act of 1911,

which basically limited the amount of time that the House of Lords could stop a bill,
which had huge implications for him.
So talk us through that.
I'll take that.
Just as I think I said to you before we were recording,
in 18 years or so as the history obsessed schoolboy,
I don't think I ever heard the words John Redmond or even saw them written down.
I mean, he's just not part of the...
This whole thing is not part of Britain's story of itself.
Is it Tom at all?
I mean, you could be really interested in history in Britain,
and this would simply be a black hole as far as your consciousness is concerned.
Although, having said that,
I think that there is a sense that something ominous is brewing,
connected with Irish politics in the years that build up to the Great War.
I think there is that sense,
but I think it's so complicated that I can't really get my head round it.
I just know that things are heading towards a smash.
We will be talking about this, but England,
not just Ireland, but England,
was being pulled to civil war by virtue of the crisis in Ireland
and how that crisis was dealt with in England by British politicians
and what they chose to do during these years is hugely important,
not just for Ireland, but for Britain.
And some of the stuff that went on makes the shenanigans post-Brexit
look utterly meaningless and irrelevant to the prerogating of parliament,
the stuff on the judiciary irrelevant
besides the scale of the current mutiny to name but one thing,
and we'll come back to this.
So John Redmond, who is...
I mean, he dreams of Home Rule.
This is his chance.
He's been the leader post-Panel,
and he and Asquith, the Liberal Prime Minister,
so they go for the third Home Rule Bill.
Now, complicating...
I mean, it's a very complicated story,
but because of the stuff about the budget in Britain
and the fight over what's seen as the Liberal's revolutionary
kind of welfare state legislation
and because of the massive constitutional ructions around that,
the Conservatives regard the Liberals as a kind of revolutionary,
almost illegitimate government.
Andrew Barnelard, the leader of the Conservative Party,

described a government which had won three elections, by the way,
described them as a revolutionary committee
which has seized by fraud upon despotic power.
Yeah.
And the despotic power here is that...
Basically, because the King has...
It's hard to say he's sided with the...
He hasn't quite sided with the Liberals,
but in attempt to find a compromise, they have...
Oh, he did, Dominic.
I think you can say he did because...
Sided with the Liberals.
Because he gave...
Just so people understand,
why would the House of Lords pass a law
which would limit its powers of veto to three years
rather than making it absolute?
Why would they do that?
And the only reason they did it was because Asquith received from the King
from news that he would flood the House of Lords...
Yeah, with Liberal peers.
With Liberal peers.
Therefore, Conservative peers took the view,
well, we better take this compromise or we lose power entirely.
So just to simplify it,
so basically what's happened is that the House of Lords' veto power
over Home Rule has been largely removed.
So now, actually, Asquith and Redmond can dream,
if they...
If dream is the right word,
of a world in which an Irish Home Rule Bill
will get through the House of Commons,
the House of Lords will eventually approve it.
And that then raises the issue of...
There are actually people in Ireland who don't want the Home Rule Bill.
Well, it's a deal.
It's more than they can dream of it.
They've done a deal.
Whereas Redmond will support the Parliament Act.
Right.
Redmond previously supported the people's budget,
even though it increased things like the cost
of having drink licenses in Ireland
and put a tax on drink, et cetera, et cetera,

which did not play well with the publicans of this island,
which were fundamental to the Irish Parliamentary Party
around the place.
And it introduced things like Social Welfare Act
and Old Age Pensions,
which had a huge long-term cost
for what Redmond top would be in Irish Exchequer.
So we swallowed things he didn't want
to support the Parliament Act in a deal
that there would be a Home Rule Bill brought in in 1912,
giving Home Rule to Ireland.
But as I understand it,
the bill is brought in in 1912
that by the terms of this new act,
the government has to reintroduce the bill three times
in exactly the same phrasing,
and then it's passed.
Then the House of Lords can no longer block it.
So by introducing it in 1912,
they're basically saying that it will be passed in 1915.
It will become law in 1915.
No, it's 19...
Bring it in in 1912, April 1912.
That's the first way.
It goes again in April 1913.
Right.
But then it's April 1914.
Okay.
So now the possibility is there
for Ireland at last to have Home Rule.
The legislative mechanism has been as it were prepared.
But there are a group of people in Ireland
who are...
It's not just that they don't want Home Rule.
They are vehemently opposed to it,
and they are prepared to take up arms to fight against it.
Oh, they're prepared to take up arms.
And I know Dan is going to talk about the idea of this unity
and the impact that the idea of Home Rule had on British society.
We in Ireland like to think it just affected
the Irish society a bit.
Of course, it was a huge popular enthusiasm for empire
and the prosperity of their society being based,
rooted in this empire.

And there were connections with people in Ulster.
And within Ulster, there were people who were prospering.
And they saw that prosperity and their freedom
as being intrinsically linked
to the idea of remaining part of the United Kingdom.
They could not countenance any measure
to change or dilute their position within the United Kingdom.
And again, there was a failure on the liberal behalf
and an absolute failure in the Irish Parliamentary Party
about to understand just the depth of that feeling.
And Paul, you mentioned these words earlier on,
so it's not an exaggeration to talk of it.
At this point in 1912,
it's fair to say, is it, that Britain and Ireland
are heading plausibly towards civil war?
It is some statement to say that events in Sarajevo
actually were said by Herbert Asquid,
wrote that they were the luckiest thing that happened in his career.
Correct. So, Tom, we'll be back next time, won't we?
Not with Paul, but with a different guest,
friend of the show, Dan Jackson,
who will be talking about the home rule crisis,
the implications in Britain, how close we came to civil war.
And then Paul will be back to talk about the Easter Rising.
So, finally, Tom, we'll get back to the proclamation
with which we began the first episode.
So, Paul, thank you so much, and we look forward to speaking to you
very shortly about the Easter Rising.
My pleasure.
Goodbye.
Bye-bye.
Goodbye.
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