**Parnell, Charles Stewart (1846-1891)**

Charles Stewart Parnell was the first President of the Irish Land League (1879) and the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party (1879-1891). Born to a Protestant landowning family in County Wicklow, Parnell was first elected to the House of Commons as a Home Rule League MP in 1875. Throughout his career, Parnell sought limited Home Rule for Ireland and a constitutional end to tenant farmer agitation through compromises with the English Liberal party. The Kilmainham Treaty, negotiated by the imprisoned leaders of the Land League in April 1882, secured both rent concessions for tenant farmers and the release of Parnell and other Land League leaders from Kilmainham Gaol. The treaty also precipitated a split within Irish nationalism between those who favored physical force aggression over constitutional agitation within Parliament. Parnell’s speeches in favor of Home Rule in the House of Commons were highly influential, but ‘the uncrowned king of Ireland’ was cast out of Irish political life when he was named a respondent in the divorce of Captain William O’Shea and his wife Katherine. Parnell’s political enemies and the Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland condemned the adulterous affair and drove Parnell from power. Parnell and Katherine married, but he died of a heart attack a few months later, in October 1891.

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