Foreword

RAYMOND MOLEY is one of the more distinguished Americans of his generation. As an adviser to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and a member of his first administration Moley was one of the architects of the New Deal. For over thirty years he was an influential commentator on the public scene as the Editor of *Newsweek*. He dealt with politics at the academic level when Professor of Public Law at Columbia University.

Moley is unique among biographers of O'Connell in having known politics from the inside and at many levels. And the most interesting parts of his book are those in which he has brought that knowledge and understanding to bear on his subject. His explanation of why O'Connell claimed he could gain Repeal of the Union in 1843—that puzzle for all his biographers—is original and credible.

Moley is deeply concerned about the decline in O'Connell's reputation which set in toward the end of the nineteenth century and continued until almost our own day. This was caused in the first instance by the hostile writings of the Young Irelanders with whom he had quarreled in his last years. But the more general reason for that decline arose from his devotion to moral force and his hatred of violence as a political weapon. To a twentieth century which has (until fairly recently) seen violence as normally essential to the winning of their freedom for subject peoples, O'Connell's principles and methods seemed effete.

Moley regards O'Connell's teachings and example as

relevant not only to Ireland at the present time but to all democracies, and especially to all subject peoples struggling for their independence. A nation must develop self-discipline, respect for law, and a sense of politics if it is to achieve stable democracy. He sees O'Connell as having taught his people these lessons.

Though he is not a professional historian and though he insists that his work is not a comprehensive academic study, Moley has written a distinguished book. Of all the popular biographies of O'Connell it is, in my opinion, the most politically perceptive and, in many important respects, the most able.

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