

Church & State

An Irish History Magazine

And Cultural Review Of Ireland And The World

WHAT HISTORY ?

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Editorial

No History or False History: *The Choice*

Joseph Lee, when he was Professor of History at Cork University, admitted that the specialist academic history magazine which was founded in the 1930s, *Irish Historical Studies* (IHS), was officially debarred from publishing material about affairs in the 20th century: "*The rules of the journal excluded any reference to Irish politics after 1900*" (Joseph Lee, *Ireland. 1912-1985*, Cambridge, 1989, p589).

That meant the history of the modern Irish state was out of bounds to it. But it also meant that the British state was very much within its remit. The state, in the era which it was allowed to concern itself with, leaving aside ancient times, was the British state. Apart from a handful of years in the 1640s (Confederation of Kilkenny) and a couple of decades under James 2nd, the state in Ireland was the English state until 1707 and the British state thereafter.

But IHS had little to say about the British state as the central force in Irish history during the centuries with which it was allowed to deal. And a magazine dedicated to Irish history which did not take the state which determined Irish affairs as its subject simply did not deal with Irish history.

The role of the British State in Irish history is not a matter of technical sovereignty. The State was not negligent in Ireland in those centuries, leaving social developments free to run their course. That was the case to a considerable degree in Antrim and Down, and the Plantation Counties, but in the rest of the country the State was an active social engineer, curbing spontaneous developments, systematically brutalising and debasing the populace, and maintaining a small English Protestant colonial stratum in subordinate power, with a monopoly of political office, a monopoly of land ownership, and an extremely privileged position in commercial affairs.

Irish history, in the sense of a history of the populace, is little more than the history of protest against the State, and of an occasional vain attempt at insurrection against it, until the early 20th century, when land agitation went beyond protest and achieved the substantial abolition of the landlord system of the colony, through an unprecedented collaboration between a unique Constitutional agitator, William O'Brien, and Balfour's Tory (Unionist) Government.

But the Land Act of 1903, which laid down the structure of Irish society that has been evolving ever since, could not be dealt with by IHS. And it has not been dealt with by any commercial publisher.

That Land Act is the sole constructive act of British policy in Ireland brought about through active collaboration between an Irish social force and the British Government. But we have no history of it—of the agitation that led to it, the opposition of Redmond's Home Rule Party to it, and the political and social repercussions of it. This means that independent Ireland has no history of itself. Those who commanded history-writing in the state decided that the writing of its history should not be undertaken by its paid historians.

The development set in motion by the 1903 reform now seems to be reaching the end of its tether. We are told that Ireland is becoming, or has become, something else. It is becoming something else without knowing what it has been. The decision of its academic authorities that it should not write its own history kept it in ignorance of itself; and now it is becoming something else, guided by a deluded view of what it was, written for it by Oxford and Cambridge, and inserted into its mind by the vast expansion of second and third level education during the past generation.

Being without an official history of its own which corresponded with basic facts of what happened, the educational system was open to the many histories of Ireland that have been busily produced for it in Britain in recent decades. British histories of Ireland are written in the British interest. It could not be otherwise in the era of democracy. The era of democracy, in which the populace is implicated, to one degree or another, in the conduct of the state, is inherently nationalist in tendency. Democracy generates nationalism—one people is not inclined to subordinate itself to another. And *vice versa*—nationalism generates the sense of community without which there can be no democracy.

Ireland has been declared to be post-national and post-Christian. If those statements corresponded fully with the reality of things—if everyone was thoroughly educated/indoctrinated according to the fashionable ideology of the moment—this could be summed up by saying that it had matured into being post-Irish.

This is at a moment when nationalism is on the rise everywhere else, and the illusion that there is a mode of post-national democratic existence is falling away.

Irish Historical Studies has loosened itself up a bit in recent years. This reflects the rise to dominance of Oxbridge history in Irish academia (i.e., revisionism). What was not allowed in it was Irish history of Ireland.

There is at present a little dispute going on among revisionists. The established revisionists are being challenged by some newcomers.

The condition of history-writing in Ireland was so dire twenty years ago that the revisionists felt that they could get away with anything, that they could invent facts without fear of being taken to task. The extreme instance of this is Professor David Fitzpatrick's "*History Workshop*" in Trinity College, and his star apprentice Peter Hart.

Hart, under the supervision of Fitzpatrick and English military historian Charles Townshend, wrote an account of the Cork Republican resistance to British rule after Britain had comprehensively lost the 1918 Election (not that he mentioned the Election) as a Catholic sectarian rampage of murder of Protestants. It became a best-seller of the Oxford University Press. Hart was acclaimed as a master historian, who had led us out of the darkness, by the personnel of the History Department of Cork University, who howled down an attempt at a critical intervention.

The centrepiece of Hart's book was his assertion that the British military convoy at Kilmichael surrendered and was murdered in cold blood. Why, in the kind of war that Britain was fighting in Ireland, this should have been a shocking event is not clear. But Hart's revelation was greeted with an interesting combination of shock and delight by "*post-nationalists*". Its great merit was that it contradicted the account of the famous

Irish commander in that battle, Tom Barry (who got his experience as a British soldier in the Great War before coming home and joining the Republican resistance), which said that during the battle a section of the British declared that they were surrendering, but when the ambushers relaxed, they picked up their guns and shot some of them. Barry's story of the false surrender was confirmed by many, including General Crozier, the Commander of the Auxiliaries. But Hart's assertion that there was a genuine surrender, which was accepted but that those who had surrendered were then murdered, was received as a gift of honey by the Cork University History Department, which was broadening its horizons.

When Hart's proofs were looked at—outside academia—it was found that they consisted of interviews with Republicans who had taken part in the ambush. These interviewees remained anonymous in Hart's book, and in the thesis on which it was based. But it was established that, if Hart had interviewed Republicans who had taken part in the ambush, he could only have done so by communicating with them in the other world, the Hereafter.

Hart's Kilmichael story was made so much of, not only in academia but in the newspapers, that discovery of the fraud brought not only Hart into disrepute, but the Trinity operation that produced him.

In recent years a British academic of Irish origin, John Regan, has begun to question the academic methods at play in Irish Universities, saying that they are bringing Irish Universities into disrepute abroad and making their history graduates unemployable. But this seems to be a dispute amongst revisionists. The slipshod methods inculcated by Professor Fitzpatrick in his proteges have become an embarrassment to the revisionist cause.

The most sensitive thing in the history of Anglo-Irish relations is the point of transition from the British State in Ireland to the Irish State.

The point of transition is not the Easter Rising. That was an armed rebellion and Britain is happy with that. Putting down rebellions is what Britain has done an awful lot of and is at ease with.

The point of transition is the election of December 1918, the meeting of the elected representatives in the Dail in January 1919, the *Declaration of Independence* by the elected Irish Parliament, the establishment of Dail Government Departments, and Republican Courts/policing system, and the refusal of the British Parliament to take any notice of the Irish election, and its support for the British Government to continue governing Ireland and smash down the elected Irish Government. That is *Constitutional*, and the great British myth is that it is the great Constitutional force in world affairs.

British conduct towards Ireland in 1918-19 is disgraceful in terms of Britain's own ideology or mythology—its ideal of itself. But Britain, as a healthy democracy, is not going to own up to having behaved abominably at that very delicate moment in world affairs when the world was looking to it to see if it had been in earnest about *anything* it had said in its Great War propaganda.

Since Britain cannot charge itself with *Prussianism*—not that Prussia ever did anything like that—the only thing to do is conjure away that critical 1918-21 period in Ireland, to drop it

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The Heresiarch: <http://heresiarch.org>

Athol Books: <http://www.atholbooks.org>

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out of history, to present the Irish defence of the elected Government in 1919-21 as a mere continuation of its 1916 rebellion, and to take the Agreement of December 1921 (the 'Treaty') as a handsome concession to a bunch of the rebels who undertook to behave themselves and were legitimised as a constitutional state.

John Regan criticises the established historians in Ireland for conferring impeccable constitutional democratic credentials on the Treatyites who constructed the Free State in 1922. He says that they have done this because after 1970 they undertook to write a false history of the origins of the Free State, presenting it as more democratic and constitutional than it was, so that the Provos in the North could not cite it as a precedent for what they were doing.

It is true that systematically false history began to be produced by the Universities after 1970, in accordance with the directive of the Lynch Government when it changed course in the Summer of 1970. False history began to take the place of no history.

In a remarkable delusion, Southern historians imagined that the way they had (or had not) written history was a cause of the war in the North and that, if they wrote it in a different way, they would undermine the Provos. They had never troubled to figure out what Northern Ireland was and therefore could not see that the way it was governed as part of the British state provided sufficient reason for what was happening in it. Or if some of them saw it they dared not describe it. The most they could talk about was discrimination. The fact that the region was excluded by Britain from the democratic system of the state, and that responsibility therefore lay with Britain was unmentionable.

This is also not mentioned by Regan, who says not a word about what Northern Ireland was as part of the British state. He turns a blind eye to the major infringement of democracy in Ireland in 1922, the infringement enacted by British democracy in that part of Ireland that it retained within the British state, while carping at certain irregularities that he sees in the conduct of the Treaty scheme; and he goes along with the notion that Southern "*irredentism*" was a major disturbing influence on the North:

"For most of his political life, de Valera appeared to foment a discontented nationalism by employing what John Bowman has called the

rhetoric of 'inevitable unification'. This sometimes raised partition as an electoral issue but did not at any time form constructive policies intent upon remedying it. Rather, de Valera's irredentism is best understood as an attempt to monopolise the issue, forestalling extra-constitutional ambitions in that quarter... Anti-partitionism reinforced the border by exacerbating unionist Ulster's paranoia, while the institutionalising of Roman Catholic theology and the Gaelic language in the Southern state widened the gulf between North and South. De Valera cannot have failed to notice this. But by uniting separatists in the belief of the border's injustice, de Valera manipulated partition as an issue transcending divisions existing between separatist-nationalists. Before 1969 the rhetoric of reunification, together with studied prevarication, helped neutralise partition as a nation-building grievance. 'The state', judged John A. Murphy in 1976, 'was much more real than irredentism'..." (IHS, Nov. 2010, p269).

"In 1970 suddenly the state required a new history equal to the radically altered circumstances. One thing was certain: any history legitimising renewal of 'the struggle' was unthinkable. But following fifty years of irredentist rhetoric, what could replace the 'old story'?" (p270).

In 1972 the secret sessions of the Dail in 1921-2 were published, showing that Dev had contemplated partition. "*No document did more to debunk de Valera's anti-partitionist rhetoric*" (p271).

"...The Northern troubles have given the final quietus to irredentism', Murphy adroitly observed in 1976, '[and] there is now a widespread Southern desire for non-involvement'. He continued: 'in this century... Irish identity has moved from a complacent assumption of one-nation Ireland, through waning irredentism to something like [its] outright rejection'. Aided by vox pop polls, Murphy anticipated Southern nationalism's direction, and with this in view two new textbooks appeared..." (p285).

"*Irredentism*" was an inert sentiment in Southern public life from 1923 to 1948. It was not De Valera who stirred it up in the late forties but Fine Gael when it returned to office after a long absence. Fine Gael propaganda of those years undoubtedly contributed to the IRA invasion of the North in 1956, which may be called irredentist with some degree of accuracy. The 1956 invasion met with little response within the North.

Jack Lynch's inflammatory speech

of mid-August 1969 was mere bandwagon-jumping onto the insurrection in the North, a revolt that had nothing to do with irredentism but was the product of the systematically undemocratic mode of British government of the North.

The final fling of irredentism as a popular force in the South happened in 1972, in response to the Bloody Sunday killings by the British State in Derry. The Dublin Government flirted with the idea of a great national convergence on Newry, but then called it off. (This was the Lynch Government, which had purged itself of 'republican' elements!) Jack Lynch let popular feeling satisfy itself with burning the British Embassy.

The irredentism of 1970 and 1972—if it deserves that name—was not causative but responsive. It was only an echo of what was happening within the North as a result of the way that Britain governed the North.

Irredentism is the claim by a nation-state to territory lying outside its borders on the ground that it is inhabited by people of its own nationality. Two irredentist claims helped Britain to bring about its first World War—the French claim on Alsace-Lorraine and the Italian claim on the Trentino and other regions. These irredentisms were supported by John Redmond's Home Rule Party, and the War which they fed is now officially declared to have been *Our War*.

The French and Italian Governments asserted that the people of Alsace and the Trentino were oppressed by the German and Austrian States respectively, but the oppression consisted only of exclusion from the French and Italian states. Germany and Austria did not do what Britain did in its Six Counties region. Alsace and the Trentino were not excluded from the political life of the German and Austrian states or subjected to informal rule outside the political life of the state by a hostile local community. *Au contraire*. The means of participation were available to them, and they were encouraged to participate, and they did participate, and there was no insurrection in Alsace or the Trentino by the people on whom the French and Italian States made irredentist claims.

The insurrection in the North in 1969 was not made in response to Anti-Partition propaganda from the South. It was caused by the British mode of government. And those who made the insurrection were not motivated by Anti-Partitionism. The Anti-Partitionism

came later for want of anything else. Is that properly described as *irredentism*?

Anti-Partitionism was not the cause of instability in the North over the decades. That instability was a function of the system by which Britain chose to govern the North, and it was the cause of the persistence of Anti-Partition sentiment in the South. If British democracy had not been closed to the Northern minority, and if that minority had participated in it and settled down, Anti-Partitionism would have become a dead issue in the South. This reckoning is so obvious that it is unrealistic in the extreme to suppose that it was not seen by Whitehall when it made its arrangements for the Six County region of its state.

Misrepresentation of the construction of the Free State as a development within Constitutional democracy, with the object of undermining the Northern insurrection, by historians following Lynch's demand for new history, deserves ridicule. What Regan delivers is quibbles about how the project demanded by the unmentionable Treaty ultimatum was actually put into effect. He takes issue with Dermot Keogh's denial that the Treatyites engaged in "*extra-judicial killings*". The Immaculate Conception killings of prisoners in December 1922 were indisputably the act of the Treaty Government without the intervention of a trial. Were they therefore unconstitutional—i.e., were they in breach of the Treaty? The British Government, the author and guarantor of the Treaty, didn't think so.

In July-August 1922 Collins renovated the Irish Republican Brotherhood to be a guiding force on the State he was constructing under the Treaty, and he ordered that the Parliament elected in June should not be assembled for the time being. Was this the establishment of military dictatorship, as suggested by Regan: "*a diarchy made up of public Free State and secret IRB governments*"?

Having made his separate private deal with Lloyd George and browbeaten the other delegates into signing the dictated Treaty in December 1921; having broken the unity of the Dail, which was sworn to the Republic established by two General Elections by getting it to sign up for the Crown; by having failed to carry the Army with him and having had to build up a new paid army alongside it, Collins still found himself in difficulty in June 1922 when the 'Treaty Election' was held. He made an Election Pact with the Anti-Treatyites

in order to confuse the issue in the Election. He had promised to present a Constitution which those who baulked at the Crown might vote for. He was summoned to Whitehall and ordered to break the Pact and accept a Constitution that accorded with the Treaty. He returned on the eve of the Election and made equivocal statements about the Pact, but did not issue a clear repudiation of it. The Constitution insisted on by Whitehall was only published on the morning of the election.

Were MPs returned at this thoroughly confused election the Parliament of Southern Ireland, or the Dail, or whatever, to be assembled to decide the course of events mid-way through the Treaty crisis?

The crisis was not an internal one in the 26 Counties. It was a crisis in the enactment of the Treaty dictated by Whitehall, in which Whitehall remained the dominant player, with the threat of Imperial reconquest, if things were not done as Whitehall required, still active. Britain still had an Army in the South and was threatening to use it.

Was the new Parliament to be allowed to meet, with its confused mandate, a strong and persuasive Republican presence, and a new, queasy Labour element, and have the power to decide what should happen next? Is it likely that the Treaty would have survived the meeting of such a Parliament?

With the British threatening to take over if he failed to do so, Collins made war on the Treatyites in the Four Courts on June 28th. The Parliament met in September and was dominated by the war situation. Collins was dead by then, killed by his inexplicable behaviour in an ambush during his wild adventure into West Cork. The Parliament met without the Republicans. The Labour members whinged. The Provisional Government—which was very much a second eleven without Collins—marginalised the IRB. In the absence of its extra-parliamentary guidance, the conduct of the war became a miserable, pedantic affairs of revenge and terror, which was prolonged in politics long after it had been won.

The word 'democracy' is misused when applied to that whole Treaty situation. The driving force was the British threat of fundamental Imperial reconquest. The Irish Treatyites could only hope to carry the project through by guile, deception and force.

The contrast between "*authoritarian*" and "*democratic*" is not always valid in any case. Democracy is one way of conducting a system of authority. Authority is usually prior—well prior—to democratisation. It seems probable that authority and democracy might have been established simultaneously in an Irish state, so that the two elements were scarcely discernible, if Britain had not used its power to prevent it. But the legitimacy of what Britain did after the 1918 Election seems to be unquestionable for Regan, as does Britain as the source of constitutional legitimacy in 1922. That reduces his criticism of Collins to evasive quibbling.

Vox Pat

Buddhism

University College Cork has become the first institute of its type in Ireland to establish a research post in Buddhist studies.

The post is funded by a European charity supported by The Dhammakaya Foundation, a modern Buddhist movement with over a million members in Thailand.

The researcher, Dr. Phibul Choompolpaisal, now at UCC, will conduct research onsite and in Thailand.

He will also organise an international conference in Cork in September on pioneering Western Buddhists. These include the "*Irish Buddhist*", U Dhammaloka.

Dhammaloka, a migrant from Dublin, arrived in Bangkok as a Buddhist monk in 1903 and opened a school which still exists.

He was known by several names, including Laurence Carroll and William Colvin. The name Dhammaloka was given to him at ordination.

From 1900 he attracted frequent press attention in Burma.

"Prof Brian Bocking, head of UCC's Department of the Study of Religions, said the last year has been a fruitful one for religious studies at UCC. "In September 2011 we appointed Ireland's first lecturer in Indian religions, Dr Lidia Guzy.

"In December, the Teaching Council of Ireland approved our Religions and Global Diversity BA programme for intending teachers of religious education. And now we have a full-time research post in Buddhist studies, the first ever in the Republic" (*Irish Examiner*, 6.2.2012).

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Eoghan Ruadh Ó Súilleabháin

Suantraí le hEoghan Ruadh Ó Súilleabháin
(Lullaby for a child left with him by the mother)

A Éigse an Aitis

Seó hó, a thoil, ná goil go fóill
Seó hó, a thoil, ná goil aon deoir
Seó hó, a leinbh a chumann 's a stóir
Atá ag sileadh na súl is do chom gan lón.

Chorus: Sho-ho, my love, do not weep
anymore / Sho-ho, my love, do not cry a
tear / Sho-ho, my babe, my dear, my
treasure / who are shedding tear-drops and
your belly without food.

A Éigse an aitis ó Chaisil go Dóinn
Is gach n-aon den aicme n-ar bhaithnid
mo shórt
Éistidh feasta lem theagasc le meon
Is féach mar casadh an aindeise in threo!

Cé gur gasta mo labhartha beoil
Ag déanamh ranna 's ag caitheamh mo
stóir
Is baoth do ghlacas-sa in easbhaidh gan
chóir
Ó bhéith gan charthannacht, leanbh beag
deóil.

Ar dtúis nuair chonnac a fhinne-bhean
óg
A súil be ghlaise 's bhí luisne 'na snódh
Níor dhiúltaigh mise nuair dhruideas
'na treó
'S mo chuma, níor thuigeas an tuirse
bhí romham.

A súil chum toirmisc cliste go leor
Chúilfhionn d'imreadh cluiche na bhfód
Is í dhúig mise fá iomarca bróin
Ag luascadh leinbh 's ag sileadh na ndeor.

Cad déanfadh feasta le dalta dhet shórt
Gan braon im bhallaibh ná beatha bhog
shóghmhail
Éist, a leanbh, is tearman gheobhair
Tá gréithre maithe agam beartuighthe
id chomhair.

Ye poets of merriment from Cashel to the
Blackwater / and everyone of the crew
who knows my kind / Listen anon to the
thoughts of my mind / and see how
affliction turned in my direction!

Though the utterances of my mouth are
witty / composing verses and wasting my
wealth / I foolishly accepted, in want
without provision / from a woman without
kindness, a suckling little baby.

At first when I saw the young beautiful
woman / her eye the clearest, with a glow
in her countenance / she did not refuse me
when I approached her / and, alas, I did
not understand the weariness in store for
me!

Her eye for mischief was truly artful / a
beauty who would play the game of the
young / It is she who left me in excess of
sorrow / rocking a baby and shedding tears.

What shall I ever do with a creature like
you / and I without a drop in my breast,
nor gentle nourishing food / Shush, my
baby, and you will get refuge / I have fine
toys prepared for you.

Do gheóbhair gan dearmad taisce gach
seóid
Do bhí ag do shinnsear ríoghda rómhat
In Éirinn iath-ghlais Bhriain is Eoghain
Ba mhinic le mian dá riar do shórt.

Do gheóbhair ar dtúis a t-ubhall id dhóid
Do bhí ag an dtriúr i gclúid it chomhair
Iolar sléibhe, caol-chruit cheoil
Is seabhac na seilge, ó Sceilg na seól.

Do gheóbhair a caol-each éadtrom óg
Do gheóbhair an srian 's an diallait óir
Do gheóbhair cloidheamh solais an
dornchlann óir
Do bhí ag Briain ag riar na slógh.

Do gheóbhair sleagh Aicill ba chalma i
ngleó
Is craoiseach Fhinn gan mhoill id dhóid
Éide Chonaill do b'ursa le treóin
'S an sciath bhí ag Naois i gCraoibh na
slógh.

You will get without default a store of
every jewel / that your royal ancestors
before you possessed / in green-meadowed
Ireland of Brian and Eoghan / often
supplying to your kind with a will.

First you shall get the apple in your fist /
that the three had set aside for you / a
mountain eagle, a graceful harp for music
/ and a hunting hawk from Skellig of the
sails.

You shall have the young, nimble, graceful
steed / You shall have the bridle and saddle
of gold / You shall have the shining sword
with hilt of gold / that Brian had when
directing the hosts.

You shall have the spear of Achilles who
was brave in battle / and the lance of Fionn
without delay in your hand / the armour of
Conall who was the mainstay of the
warriors / and the shield of Naoise of the
Red Branch hosts.

Do gheóbhair, a leinbh, dom thuigsint,
mar sheóid
An t-each caol donn bhí ag Conn 'san
ghleó

'S an bogha bhí ag Murchadh an urchair
mhóir

I gcath Chluain Tarbh ag trascairt treón.

Do gheóbhair culaith Fhinn ba líomhtha
i ngleó

'S an ga ag Diarmuid, triath na dtreón
Clogad curata Oscair Mhóir

Ar faithche na Féinne thraoch mac Treóin.

Do gheóbhaidh tú le stiúir fá sheól
Is corn glan cúltha cúinneach óir
Cruit Orpheus fá téadaibh ceóil
Do spreagfadh na béithe it dhéidh gan
smól.

Do Gheóbhaidh tú nídh nár mhaoideas
ort fós –
An dubh-brat d'ionnladh Dúnlaing Óg
Do cheileadh a ghnúis i gcumhangrach
slógh
'S é ag síor-chur laoch go faon dá dtreóir.

You shall have, my child, as I understand
it, as a jewel / the graceful tan horse that
Conn had in battle / and the bow of
Murchadh of the mighty shot / in Clontarf
threshing the fighters.

You shall have the livery of Fionn who
was accomplished in battle / and the javelin
of Diarmuid / and the war-helmet of great
Oscar / who defeated mac Treoin on the
playing-field of the Fianna.

You shall have a ship to steer under sail /
and a clear-shaped faceted golden goblet
/ the harp of Orpheus, strung for playing
music / that will arouse the ladies for you
without reserve.

You shall have something that I have not
mentioned yet / the dark cape that swathed
young Dunlaing / which hid his counte-
nance in the press of hosts / and he ever-
knocking warriors senseless.

Do gheóbhair an staf bhí ag Pan 'na dhóid
'S an tslat bhí ag Maois ghníodh díon
dó is treóir
Is créithre meala dá scagadh fáth'chómhair
I gcoraibh ríoghda síor chum stóir.

Do gheóbhair, a leinbh, dom thuigsint,
mar seóid
An ga thug aonghus tréan 'na dhóid
Do mhac chalma Uí Dhuibhne á díon
ar thóir
Mar bha mhinic an Fhiann go dian 'na
dheóidh.

Do gheóbhair 'na fhochair sin, an
lomradh óir
Tug Jason tréan don Ghréig ar bórd
'S an t-each caol cuthaigh near cuma-
sach óg
Do bhí ag Coin Chulainn, ceann urraidh
na slógh.

Do gheóbhair, a leinbh, mar thuilleadh
leó
An tsleagh tug Aoife í féin don leóghan
Ler mhairbh Feardiadh bhí dian i ngleó

Is Conlaoch uasal uaibhreach óg.

You shall have the staff that Pan held in his hand / and the rod of Moses that gave him protection and direction / with honey-combs being prepared in readiness for you / in royal goblets always in store.

You shall have, my child, as I understand it, as a gift / the javelin that mighty Aongus placed in the hand / of that brave youth Ó Duibhne to protect him in the chase / as the Fianna were relentless in his pursuit.

You shall have as well as that the Golden Fleece / that mighty Jason brought to Greece on board ship / and the graceful, fierce, swift, powerful, young steed / that belonged to Cú Chulainn, leader of the hosts.

You shall have, my child, as a fitting complement to these / the spear that Aoife herself gave to the warrior / with which he killed Ferdia who was strong in battle / and noble, proud, young Conlaoch.

Do gheobhair an corn nár bh'folamh mar sheóid
Do gheobhair an adharc is gadhair chum spóirt
Do bhí ag Gruagach Dúna an Óir
Cé gur dochma leis siúd a dtabhairt dot shórt.

Do gheobhair dar liúm-sa cúirt gan smól
Fhaorsing, réidh-ghlan, aolmhar, chóir,
'S na fearainn sin Naoise chum tighis id nódhacht
Cé cailleadh le feall 'san Eamhainn an leoghan.

Do gheobhaidh tú, a leinbh, dom thuigsint, mar stór,
Ó mhac Airt mic Cuinn míle uinge óir
Do gheobhair le fonn leis tabharthas Eoghain
Is mír gan dabhat ó Chonn tig gleó.

Do gheobhair, a leinbh, dom thuigsint níos mó
Ná ar gheallas féin go léir duit fós
Saidhbhreas Fhinn ba líonmhar slógh
Is Bran dá dhíon le scím fát' chomhair.

You shall have as a gift the goblet that never emptied / You shall have the horn and hound to play with / that belonged to the Enchanter of Dún an Óir / though that fellow would be loth to give them to one such as you.

You shall have, I declare it, a palace without blemish / extensive, perfectly prepared, lime-white, fitting / and those lands of Naoise as a house-warming present / though this warrior fell at Eamhain through treachery.

You shall get, my darling, as I understand it, as treasure / from Mac Art son of Conn, a thousand ounces of gold / You shall receive the willing offering of Eoghan / and for sure a prize from Conn

You shall have, my child, as I see it, more / than all of what I have promised to you already: / The wealth of Fionn who abounded in hosts / and Bran protecting it for you fiercely.

Do gheobhaidh tú nídh nár mhaoidheas ort fós
Gloine den fhíon bhí bríoghmhar sóghamhail
Do tharraingeadh Hébe, an rélteann óg
Chum Iupiter réics na ndéithe ar bórd.

Do gheobhaidh tú bean chaoín, tais, mhodhamhail
'Na nbeidh lasadh 'na gnaoi tré Lí mar rós
A samhail de mnaoi ag mac Priaim bhí ar bord
Ar faithche na Traoi chuir mílte ar feodh

Do gheobhair saill uaim fíon is beoir
Is éadach 'na n-aice ba mhaise dot shórt;
Acht ó chím do bhuime chugham 'san ród
Ní gheallfad uaim duit duais ná seoid.

Do chím do bhuime go triopallach óg
Ag téarnamh im choinne is luisne 'na snódh
Cé dfhúig sí mise fá iomarca bróin
Ag luascadh leinbh atá ag sileadh na ndeór.

You shall have something I did not yet mention to you / glass of that wine that was sparkling and delicious / that Hebe, the young beauty, would bring / o the table of Jupiter, king of the Gods.

You shall have a gentle, kindly, beautiful

queen / with a glow in her rose-coloured countenance / Such a wife as the son of Priam had at his table / who caused the destruction of thousands on the field of Troy

You shall get fat meat from me, wine and beer / and clothing to boot that would adorn such as you / But as I see your mammy coming towards me in the road / I will promise you neither prize nor treasure

I see your nurse young and curly / gliding towards me with a blush on her features / she who left me with so much misery / rocking a baby who is shedding the tears

Do b'fhearra dhuit cácaí fáiscfidhe as beóir
Nó dá n-abrainn árthaighe lán dhíon leo
Banaltra bláth bhinn bháin-chíoch óg
'Na duanaireacht ghliogair ó fhile dhem shórt.

Do gheobhair tú fuighlach fíona is beóir
'S gach maithe ba mhaise dhot shórt
Acht ó chím chugham do bhuime 'san ród
Ní ghealladh duais duit, duain ná seoid.

You would prefer pressed cakes and beer / or if I were to mention a vessel full of wine / a blossoming sweet white breasted young nurse / reciting the prattlings of a poet such as me

You will get plenty of wine and beer / and every good to benefit the likes of you / but since I see your nurse approaching on the road / you'll not get a present neither poem nor treasure

Séamas Ó Domhnaill

Eoghan Ruadh Ó Súilleabháin
1748—1784
Aspects of his Life and Work
Part 6

Suantraí

A *Éigse an Aitis* is a song addressed by Eoghan Ruadh to his fellow poets about a day when he was obliged to mind a little baby while the mother was away. Appropriately enough it takes the form of Suantraí—a lullaby. This composition is a treasure trove of cultural riches and mysteries. I'd be delighted if you would come along with me as I take a look at the song from a number of angles, including: Eoghan's own ancestry, some thoughts on lullabies, the importance of mother's milk, (with a little bit of Shakespeare) and a detailed exploration of just one of the verses. With the help of Dinneen's Irish English Dic-

tionary, I will examine some important words to uncover some deep and hidden meanings.

Sliocht Mhic Craith Ruaidh

From the very kick-off, the line "*A Éigse an aitis ó Chaisil go Dóinn*" indicates strongly that the child is the poet's own son. Eoghan was very conscious and proud of his noble family background and he wants to celebrate this with his baby. The O'Sullivans originally came from the district around Caiseal (Cashel) in the Barony of An Trian Meánach (Middle Third) in Co. Tipperary. The head of the Clann had a

strong fortress at Cnoc Rafann (Knockgraffon) until the Norman invasion when the whole clan were forced to migrate to West Cork & South Kerry.

Pádraig Ó Duinnín, the first editor of Eoghan Ruadh's songs, gives the following account of his ancestry:

"Eoghan Ruadh O'Sullivan sprang from the branch of the O'Sullivans whose chief residence was at Ceapach na Coise, near Kenmare. The founder of this branch of this family was Mac Craith Ruadh, who was O'Sullivan Mór in his time. When he was succeeded in the chieftency by his brother Rory Donn, his son, Domhnall, had to content himself with twenty ploughlands, that is, eight in the parish of Templenoe, and twelve in Ballybog. This family was for a time distinguished for their learning, but that possessing only a small estate, many of them settled in other parts of the country".

Ó Duinnín proceeds to list all the lineal descendants of Mac Raith Ruadh from around 1400 AD down to Connor who died in January 1639. It is believed that Eoghan's own family moved from South Kerry to Sliabh Luachra in the 1650s. Ó Duinnín continues:

"Our poet was unquestionably proud of his high lineage, although in his songs he does not often refer to his ancestry. In one of his finest Aislingí, composed in England, while he was in soldier's uniform, he declares vehemently that there is not a drop of Saxon blood in his veins, and adds:

I gCaiseal mo thréad as caise d'fhuil Ghaedheal

I gCaiseal ba réacsa cúigídh.

And my tribe is of the strain of the blood of the Irish / in Cashel of the provincial kingship."

"An Dóinn" is a river the Barony of Dún Ciaráin (Dunkerron), known in English as "The Blackwater". It enters the Kenmare River at Blackwater Bridge about half way between Kenmare and Sneem. I remember about 15 years ago I had the pleasure of dancing sets in the local "Blackwater Tavern". I was taking part in a set dancing weekend organised by the renowned dancing master Timmy the Brit McCarthy. Timmy is full of love for the tradition and is a great man for reviving old sets from rural areas of Cork & Kerry which had not been danced for decades.

In terms of the ancestral lands of Eoghan and others of Sliocht Mhic Craith Ruadh, Templenoe is located to the east of the Blackwater and Ballybog to the west. Ballybog does not appear to

be recorded on the official placenames website, logainm.ie, but from what I can make out it is located in the civil parish of Cill Chrócháin (Kilcrohane). The *Topographical Dictionary Of Ireland* published in 1837, around 60 years after Eoghan Ruadh's death, gives the following information:

"Kilcrohane, a parish, in the barony of Dunkerron, County of Kerry, and province of Munster, 14 miles (S. W.) from Kenmare; containing 9,468 inhabitants. This parish is situated on the northern shore of the great, river or bay of Kenmare, along which it extends nearly 14 miles. It is bounded on the east by the river Blackwater, on the west by the bay of Ballinaskelligs, and on the north by a range of lofty mountains which separates it from the barony of Iveragh; and is computed to contain nearly 90,000 statute acres, the greater part of which consists of rocky mountain pasture, waste, and bog, there being but a very small portion in tillage, and that chiefly for potatoes, for which sea manure is used."

It is quite possible that Eoghan's people came to Meentogues from from Ballybog, perhaps from the very banks of the Blackwater—an Dóinn.

Suantraithe & Lulla Bye Byes

"*Suantraí*" is one of the three traditional classifications of music in Ireland. The other two are *geantraí* and *goltraí*. *Geantrí* is happy and pleasant music. *Goltraí* is sad or melancholy. *Suantraí* is lulling music. While the common word for sleep is "*coladh*", "*suan*" seems to encompass, in addition, restfulness or swooning:

Suanairm: a sleeping place or dormitory. Suanbhriocht: a sleep charm, a narcotic. Suan seachtaine: a sleep spell of a week's duration. Suaindhreac: a languid look. Suan choladh: slumber. Suanghal: a slow boiling. Suanghalar: lethargy, sleeping sickness. Suainlios: a sleeping garth, a dormitory. Suanphort: a lulling melody. Suanshliocht: a tranquil race. Suantróm: heavy sleeping. (Dinneen)

Lullabies are of course are found in every culture. They commonly show the mother telling the baby that the father will come home soon. The following is from the Philippines:

Meme an bunso ko
Ang tatay mo'y wala rito
Nagpunta sa ibayo
Bumili ng puto
Ipakakain sa iyo

Matulog ka na bunso
Ama mo'y malayo
Hindi ka masundo
At may buwaya sa pulo

Sleep, my child, your father is not here.
He has gone to buy rice cakes for you.
Sleep, my child, your father is away, he
cannot fetch you for there's a crocodile in
the forest.

The child is often promised fantastic or expensive gifts of which, in real life, the parents could only dream. Take this familiar American lullaby for example:

Hush, little baby, don't say a word
Papa's going to buy you a mockingbird

If that mockingbird won't sing
Papa's going to buy you a diamond ring

If that diamond ring turns brass
Papa's going to buy you a looking glass

If that looking glass gets broke
Papa's going to buy you a billy goat

Possibly the best known "Irish" lullaby is "*Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral*" from the 1944 Oscar-award winning film *Going My Way* directed by Leo McCarey:

Over in Killarney, many years ago
My mother sang a song to me
in tones so sweet and low
Just a simple little ditty
in her good old Irish way
And I'd give the world if she could sing
that song to me this day

Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Too-ra-loo-ra-li,
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, hush now, don't
you cry!

Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Too-ra-loo-ra-li,
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, that's an Irish
lullaby.

Now, dear reader, I know that you consider yourself to be real tough and would have no truck with such sugary sentimentality. But I dare ya, no, I double dare ya, to go down to HMV and buy that Bing Crosby DVD box set for eleven ninety nine and, on some wet Sunday afternoon when you have the house to your self, sit down and watch *Going My Way* and see of the old waterworks don't start to flow. But you gotta watch it right to the end, see.

"*Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral*" was written in 1913 by an American composer named James Royce Shannon (1881-1946). Shannon had a knack for composing songs of an enduring nature. Another of his lullabies entitled the "*Missouri Waltz*" is the official State

Song of Missouri:

Hush-a-bye, ma baby, slumbertime is
comin' soon;
Rest yo' head upon my breast while
Mommy hums a tune;
The sandman is callin' where shadows
are fallin',
While the soft breezes sigh as in days
long gone by.

Way down in Missouri where I heard
this melody,
When I was a little child upon my
Mommy's knee;
The old folks were hummin'; their
banjos were strummin';
So sweet and low.

Oiliúint

In modern Irish the word "*oiliúint*" refers to training or education. Irish people of certain age will remember with affection the state Training Council, An Chomhairle Oiliúna, better known as AnCO. *Oiliúint* has however other, deeper, meanings which Dineen opens up for us (don't be afraid of the old spelling):

"Oileamhaint: The act of nourishing, nursing, minding (as a baby), nurture, food; education, especially home education, upbringing, fosterage, culture. Cárdeas oileamhna: friendships from childhood. Luach oileamhna: fosterage fee. M'fhuil is m'fheoil mar oileamhaint duit: my flesh and my blood to be your food. Oileamhaint mic ríogh do ghabháil ar a iocht: to take upon himself the fosterage of a king's son..."

"*Oiliúint*" was a profound concept in traditional Irish society. The children of chieftains were fostered, breastfed, trained and educated by their clansmen and women, close friendships were built up. We will come across the tragic story of the *oiliúint* of Ferdia and Cú Chulainn later on.

Now, while "*A Éigse an Aitis*" is obviously a lighthearted account after the event, the opening verses give an idea of the pressure and anxiety felt by the poet during his ordeal while he was literally left "holding the baby" for he didn't know how long, with no milk:

"...féach mar casadh an aindeise im threo!"

"Is baoth do ghlacas-sa in easbhaidh gan chóir
Ó bheith gan charthannacht, leanbh beag deóil."

"... mo chuma, níor thuigeas an tuirse bhí romham."

"Is í dfhúig mise fá iomarca bróin
Ag luascadh leibh 's ag sileadh na ndeor."

There must be nothing worse than the inability to nurture a hungry child who is making himself sick with crying. In April 1945, when the Russian Army was approaching Berlin, the Nazi Government refused to allow the evacuation of women and children. This was despite the fact that Hitler had been informed that there were over 120,000 babies and infants left in the city with no provision for a supply of milk. One day in a bomb shelter a woman began to ask for help for her 18-week-old granddaughter. The day before the mother of the child stopped giving milk due to malnutrition and the little one had now been bawling for over 24 hours. Someone suggested that eating some wild vegetables might help bring on the mother's milk. There were of course no vegetables in season in April but the residents went out to search the wet grass in the garden and pulled up young nettle shoots and dandelions. The account does not say whether the little thing pulled through. (Anonymous)

In the days before powdered baby formula a child would not survive without her mother unless some other woman was found, who had borne a child and was still lactating, to act as a wet nurse. Breastfeeding is not often found as a theme in literature. However, one of the main characters in Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet* is Juliet Capulet's wet nurse. This lady had a daughter named Susan who died in infancy. It was possibly when she gave birth to Susan that she began to lactate and accepted the position in the Capulet household shortly afterwards (Although, there is a suggestion that she had nursed other children before Juliet). As little Juliet was unwilling to forego her nurse's breast past her second birthday, the resourceful lady was forced to discourage her by placing a bitter herb on her nipples which apparently did the trick. However it seems that the Nurse's timing was not the best as an earthquake hit the town on that very day! What were the chances of that, I ask you?

Scene III. Capulet's House

Enter Capulet's Wife, and Nurse.

Wife. Nurse, where's my daughter? Call her forth to me.

Nurse. Now, by my maidenhead at twelve year old, I bade her come. What, lamb! what ladybird! God forbid! Where's this girl? What, Juliet!

Enter Juliet.

Jul. How now? Who calls?

Nurse. Your mother.

Jul. Madam, I am here. What is your will?

Wife. This is the matter—Nurse, give leave awhile, we must talk in secret. Nurse, come back again; I have rememb'ed me, thou's hear our counsel. Thou knowest my daughter's of a pretty age.

Nurse. Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour.

Wife. She's not fourteen.

Nurse. I'll lay fourteen of my teeth—and yet, to my teeth be it spoken, I have but four—She is not fourteen. How long is it now to Lammastide?

Wife. A fortnight and odd days.

Nurse. Even or odd, of all days in the year, come Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen. Susan and she (God rest all Christian souls!) were of an age. Well, Susan is with God; she was too good for me. But, as I said, on Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen; that shall she, marry; I remember it well. 'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years; and she was wean'd (I never shall forget it), of all the days of the year, upon that day; for I had then laid wormwood to my dug, sitting in the sun under the dovehouse wall. My lord and you were then at Mantua. Nay, I do bear a brain. But, as I said, when it did taste the wormwood on the nipple of my dug and felt it bitter, pretty fool, to see it tetchy and fall out with the dug! Shake, quoth the dovehouse! 'Twas no need, I trow, to bid me trudge. And since that time it is eleven years, for then she could stand high-lone; nay, by th' rood, she could have run and waddled all about; for even the day before, she broke her brow; and then my husband (God be with his soul! 'A was a merry man) took up the child. 'Yea,' quoth he, 'dost thou fall upon thy face? Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit; wilt thou not, Jule?' and, by my holidam, the pretty wretch left crying, and said 'Ay.' To see now how a jest shall come about! I warrant, an I should live a thousand yeas, I never should forget it. 'Wilt thou not, Jule?' quoth he, and, pretty fool, it stinted, and said 'Ay.'

Wife. Enough of this. I pray thee hold thy peace.

Nurse. Yes, madam. Yet I cannot choose but laugh to think it should

leave crying and say 'Ay.' And yet, I warrant, it had upon it brow bump as big as a young cock'rel's stone; a perilous knock; and it cried bitterly. 'Yea,' quoth my husband, 'fall'st upon thy face? Thou wilt fall backward when thou comest to age; wilt thou not, Jule?' It stinted, and said 'Ay.'

Jul. And stint thou too, I pray thee, nurse, say I.

Nurse. Peace, I have done. God mark thee to his grace! Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nurs'd. An I might live to see thee married once, I have my wish.

Wife. Marry, that 'marry' is the very theme I came to talk of. Tell me, daughter Juliet, how stands your disposition to be married?

Tá gréithre maithe agam beartuighthe id chomhair

If you were to tell the story of all the mythological and historical characters referred to in this one work of Eoighan's you would end up with a fine book in itself. Take for instance the following verse on its own:

Do gheóbhair, a leinbh, mar thuilleadh leó
An tsleagh tug Aoife í féin don leóghan
Ler mhairbh Feardiadh bhí dian i ngleó
Is Conlaoch uasal uaibhreach óg.

The "*sleagh*" (spear) here is actually Cú Chulainn's famous *Ga Bolga* literally "*belly javelin*":

"Ga (genative: Gae): a javelin, a small spear, dart or arrow; a fishing spear (c.f. 'Ga gona éisc'—a spear for killing fish), a shaft or ray of light; a wheel spoke, one of the sharp roots of a tooth, a claw, a sting, a pang or dart of pain, membrum virile; Ga Bolga (or Boilg), harpoon like javelin used by Cú Chulainn; Ga Dearg, the red javelin of Diarmaid Ua Duibhne; Ga Gréine, a ray of sunlight; Ga Leabhair, a bookmark ... etc" (Dinneen)

The "*Leóghan*" is of course Cú Chulainn, the hero of the Ulster Cycle of stories, especially of the *Táin Bó Cuailnge*. It appears that Eoighan made a mistake here in his reference to Aoife giving the Ga Bolga to Cú Chulainn (Dear reader, I'd appreciate it if you could enlighten me on this). Cú Chulainn was given the Ga Bolga by a Scottish woman named Sgathach (Scáthach). She was the head of a family of martial arts instructresses who held school at her home, Dun Sgathaigh, An t-Eilean Sgitheanach (Isle of Skye). Among Cú

Chulainn's fellow students was Fear Diadh ("Man of Smoke"—Ferdia). They were best friends and were both taught the same fighting skills with the one exception that only Cú Chulainn was taught how to use the Ga Bolga. Aoife was Scáthach's sister and she conceived a child by Cú Chulainn. The child's name was Conlaoch. Cú Chulainn returned to Ireland before the baby was born but before he left he gave Aoife a ring. He decreed that when Conlaoch was big enough to wear the ring he was to come to Ireland. In addition the father put three "*geasa*" on the child.

"Geas (plural Geasa): a solemn instruction, especially of a magical kind, the infringement of which led to misfortune or even death, a tabu, spell or prohibition. Several tabus were commonly imposed, hence the word is often used in the plural—Geasa. Is geas dom gan: I am required to. Gan géis: freely. Fág gheasaibh: spellbound, under tabus: Cuirim geas ar dhuine: I place one under an injunction. (Dinneen)

The three *geasa* which the father placed on the son were: Conlaoch must not turn back once he starts his journey; he must not refuse a challenge; and must never tell anyone his name. These injunctions were probably meant to protect the child from enemies of his famous father but they resulted in tragedy.

At seven years of age Conlaoch came across Sruth na Maoile, the North Channel, from Scotland to Ireland. He performed skillful feats of weaponry and defeated two of the Ulster warriors who came to challenge him. Cú Chulainn was then called upon to defend the honour of Ulster. His wife Emer tried to tell him that the boy was his own son but he would not listen. Here is Thomas Kinsella's translation:

"'No matter who he is, wife,' Cúchulainn said, 'I must kill him for the honour of Ulster.' So he went down to meet him. 'Those were pretty games, boy,' he said. 'Prettier than the games I'm finding here,' the boy said. 'Two of you have come down here and still I haven't named myself.' 'Maybe you were meant to meet me,' Cúchulainn said. 'Name yourself, or you die.' 'So be it!' the boy said. The boy set upon him and the two struck at one another. The boy cut him bald-headed with his sword, in the stroke of precision. 'The joking has come to a head!' Cúchulainn said. 'Now we'll wrestle'...

"They went down to the sea to drown each other, and the boy submerged him twice. Then Cúchulainn turned and played the boy foul in the water with

the Gae Bolga, that Scáthach had taught to no one but him. He sent it speeding over the water at him and brought his bowels down around his feet.

'There is something Scáthach didn't teach me,' the boy said. 'You have wounded me woefully.' 'I have,' Cúchulainn said. He took the boy in his arms and carried him away from the place and brought him down before the people of Ulster. 'My son, men of Ulster,' he said. 'Here you are.' 'Alas, alas!' said all Ulster."

Cú Chulainn was forced to fight his dearest friend, Ferdia, during the war of the Táin Bó Cuailnge. The place where they fought is known today as Átha Fhirdhia (Ferdia's Ford—Ardee, Co. Louth). Here again is an excerpt from Thomas Kinsella's translation:

"... while they were busy with the sharp swordedges, Ferdia got a single fatal chance at Cúchulainn, and dealt him a stroke of his ivory-hilted straight-sword and buried it in his breast. The blood gushed over his belt and the ford grew crimson with the battle-warrior's body gore. Cúchulainn could bear it no longer—all Ferdia's ruinous strokes of strength, his strokes downward and across. And he called out to Laeg Mac Riagabra for the gae bolga. Ferdia heard Cúchulainn calling for the gae bolga, and he dropped his shield to cover his lower body. Then Cúchulainn took his short javelin and hurled it from the middle of his palm over the rim of Ferdia's shield and the edge of his horn-skin, driving it through him so that it pierced the heart in his breast and showed half its length out through his back. Ferdia raised up the shield to cover the upper body, but it was too late. The charioteer sent the gae bolga down the stream. 'Beware the gae bolga' he said. Cúchulainn caught it in the fork of his foot and sent it casting toward Ferdia and it went through the deep and sturdy apron of twice smelted iron, and shattered in three parts the stout strong stone the size of a millstone, and went coursing through the highways and byways of his body so that every single joint filled with barbs. 'That is enough now,' Ferdia said, 'I'll die of that. There is strength enough in the thrust of your right foot. It is wrong that I should fall at your hand'."

All that and more lies behind just the four lines I have selected above. It may seem highly inappropriate, to say the least, that Eoighan Ruadh would offer his baby such an accursed artifact as the Ga Bolga but we are far removed from that time and those people whose ancestors had told and retold the stories of the Gael from time immemorial and who

saw meaning in them at which we can only guess.

Before I finish up it is worth remarking that the verse I have chosen is a beautiful example of Eoghan Ruadh's craftsmanship. See how the alliteration of the letter "L" (*Leinbh ... thuilleadh leó ... tsleagh ... leóghan ler ... ngleó ... Conlaoch uasal ...*) produces a lovely lyrical effect even when spoken without the music.

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David Morrison

Some Facts About Iran's Nuclear Activities

No nuclear weapons programme

According to the US Intelligence services, Iran hasn't got a nuclear weapons programme, let alone a nuclear weapon [1].

That has been their consistent view since November 2007, when they first published it in the National Intelligence Estimate *Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities* [2]. This view has been reiterated every year since then in reports to the US Congress by the US Director of National Intelligence.

On 16th February this year, for example, giving evidence to the Senate Armed Services Committee, the present Director, James Clapper, was asked by the committee chairman, Senator Carl Levin, to confirm that in his opinion Iran has not yet decided to develop nuclear weapons. The Director replied unequivocally: "*That is the intelligence community's assessment*" [3].

According to the US Intelligence services, the Israeli Intelligence services "*largely agree*" with their assessment of Iran's nuclear activities. The Director said so in later evidence to the Committee [4].

A Reuters Special Report, dated 23rd March 2012, entitled *Intelligence shows Iran nuclear threat not imminent* [5], came to the following conclusions:

"The United States, European allies and even Israel generally agree on three things about Iran's nuclear program: Tehran does not have a bomb, has not decided to build one, and is probably years away from having a deliverable nuclear warhead."

The Report says that those conclusions were "*drawn from extensive interviews with current and former US and European officials with access to intelligence on Iran*" and "*contrast*

starkly with the heated debate surrounding a possible Israeli strike on Tehran's nuclear facilities". Indeed, they do.

No breach of NPT obligations

Iran is not in breach of its obligations as a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) [6].

As a "*non-nuclear-weapon*" state party to the NPT, Iran is obliged under Article II of the treaty "*not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons*"—which it hasn't done—and, under Article III, to subject its nuclear facilities to IAEA inspection to ensure that nuclear material is not diverted for the production of weapons—which it has done.

As regards the latter, Iran has declared to the IAEA 15 nuclear facilities, including its uranium enrichment plants at Natanz and Fordow, and 9 other locations (LOFs) where nuclear material is customarily used. All these sites are being monitored by the IAEA. In his latest report to the IAEA Board on 24th February 2012 [7], the IAEA Director General confirmed for the umpteenth time that there was no diversion of nuclear material from these facilities:

"... the Agency continues to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material at the nuclear facilities and LOFs declared by Iran under its Safeguards Agreement ..." (Para 50)

Enrichment an "*inalienable right*"

It must be emphasised that Iran is not breaching the NPT by enriching uranium. On the contrary, uranium enrichment for peaceful purposes is "*the inalienable right*" of all parties to the NPT, Article IV(1) of which states:

"Nothing in this Treaty shall be inter-

preted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of this Treaty." [6]

Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Germany, Japan, Netherlands and South Korea, which like Iran are "*non-nuclear-weapon*" state parties to the NPT, have uranium enrichment facilities (as have the 5 "*nuclear-weapon*" state parties to the NPT: China, France, Russia, the UK and the US) [8].

Iran is not in breach of the NPT by engaging in uranium enrichment, so long as this activity is under IAEA supervision to ensure that no nuclear material is diverted for military purposes. That is the case at Iran's uranium enrichment plants at Natanz and Fordow—and the IAEA has verified that no material is being diverted and that each facility is operating as declared by Iran in the relevant design document.

In order to produce fissile material for a nuclear weapon, uranium has to be enriched to over 90% U235. At the moment, enrichment has not gone beyond the 20% figure, which is required to fuel a research reactor in Tehran (supplied to Iran by the US in the late 60s). This has been verified by the IAEA, which in each of its reports on Iran's nuclear activity gives an inventory of the amounts of uranium enriched to 5% and 20% at each facility (see, for example, paragraphs 10 to 27 of its latest report [7]).

If Iran were to proceed to enrich uranium to a level above 20%, that is, towards the 90% level required to produce fissile material for a nuclear weapon, this would be immediately apparent to the IAEA.

(Iran would not be in breach of the NPT, even if it produced fissile material. The NPT requires "*non-nuclear-state*" parties "*not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons*", but it doesn't forbid the acquisition of the materials, or the technical knowledge, required to manufacture nuclear weapons).

US denying Iran rights

So, what's the problem with Iran's nuclear activities? Why are the US and its allies imposing ferocious economic sanctions on Iran and are contemplating a military assault on its nuclear facilities?

These days, the message from the US and its allies is that Iran is failing to meet unspecified international obligations. Speaking alongside President Obama at the White House on 15th

March 2012, British Prime Minister, David Cameron, put it this way:

"We also discussed the continuing threat posed by Iran's failure to meet its international obligations. On this, we are fully united. We are determined to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. We believe there is still time and space to pursue a diplomatic solution and we are going to keep coordinating closely with our P5+1 partners. At the same time, we are going to keep up the pressure with the strongest US sanctions to date and the European Union preparing to impose an embargo on Iranian oil. Tehran must understand that it cannot escape or evade the choice before it: meet your international obligations or face the consequences." [9]

But, if the US Intelligence services are to be believed, Iran hasn't got a nuclear weapon, or even a programme to develop nuclear weapons. And its nuclear facilities are being monitored by the IAEA as required by the NPT. So, how can there be a "*continuing threat posed by Iran's failure to meet its international obligations*"? What are the "*international obligations*" which Iran's failure to meet warrants ferocious economic sanctions and possible military attack?

These days, the US and its allies rarely specify the "*international obligations*" that Iran is evading, understandably so, because they are obligations that no other state in this world is being asked to fulfil.

First and foremost, as we will see below, Iran is being asked to cease uranium enrichment on its own soil and cease it permanently. This is a transparent attempt to deny Iran its "*inalienable right*" under Article IV(1) of the NPT "*to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination*". It demands that Iran accept permanent treatment as a second-class party to the NPT, with fewer rights than all other parties.

That is why, despite having to endure economic sanctions of increasing severity and being threatened with military attack, Iran continues to refuse to meet what the US and its allies term "*international obligations*".

No Enrichment

A little bit of history. In October 2003, the Foreign Ministers of the UK, France and Germany visited Tehran and initiated discussions with Iran on a broad range of issues, including its nuclear programme. In a statement issued with Iran at the time, the three EU states said:

"Their governments recognise the right of Iran to enjoy peaceful use of nuclear energy in accordance with the NPT." [10]

This was a clear statement that these EU states accepted that Iran had a right to uranium enrichment on its own soil like other parties to the NPT. This clear statement was repeated in the later *Paris Agreement* signed by Iran and the three EU states (aka E3/EU) on 15th November 2004 [11], which said:

"The E3/EU recognise Iran's rights under the NPT exercised in conformity with its obligations under the Treaty, without discrimination."

The Paris Agreement set the scene for negotiations between the E3/EU and Iran, which were supposed to lead to a long term comprehensive agreement.

In the Paris Agreement, Iran agreed "*on a voluntary basis*" to suspend "*all enrichment related and reprocessing activities*". In turn, the E3/EU recognized that "*this suspension is a voluntary confidence building measure and not a legal obligation*".

The final agreement was supposed to "*provide objective guarantees that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively for peaceful purposes*", that is, arrangements over and above the requirements of the NPT for monitoring Iran's nuclear activities so as to give confidence to the outside world that they are not for military purposes.

The UK, France and Germany published proposals for a final agreement on 5th August 2005 [12]. These demanded that Iran make "*a binding commitment not to pursue fuel cycle activities other than the construction and operation of light water power and research reactors*", in other words, all enrichment and related activities on Iranian soil had to cease for good. Iran was required to make permanent its voluntary suspension of these activities.

The UK, France and Germany had negotiated in bad faith and broken their commitment at the outset to "*recognise the right of Iran to enjoy peaceful use of nuclear energy in accordance with the NPT*". Iran was to be the only party to the NPT that was forbidden to have uranium enrichment on its own soil.

The EU states made no attempt to devise "*objective guarantees that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively for peaceful purposes*", as required by the Paris Agreement. In the course of the negotiations, Iran made a number of proposals in this regard [13], for example,

* immediate conversion of all

enriched uranium to fuel rods to preclude the possibility of further enrichment

* continuous on-site presence of IAEA inspectors at the conversion and enrichment facilities to provide unprecedented added guarantees.

Iran also suggested that the IAEA be asked to devise appropriate "*objective guarantees*". All of these suggestions were ignored by the EU states.

In a speech at the UN on 17th September 2005, President Ahmadinejad made a further proposal:

"As a further confidence building measure and in order to provide the greatest degree of transparency, the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to engage in serious partnership with private and public sectors of other countries in the implementation of uranium enrichment program in Iran. This represents the most far reaching step, outside all requirements of the NPT, being proposed by Iran as a further confidence building measure."

[14]

This offer by Iran to have its enrichment programme managed by an international consortium was also ignored. US Under Secretary of State, Nicholas Burns, went so far as to describe Ahmadinejad's speech as "*excessively harsh and uncompromising*" [15].

The EU states (and the US) were not interested in "*objective guarantees that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively for peaceful purposes*". Their goal was to halt permanently the core elements of the programme—uranium enrichment and related activities.

Real object

That this was the goal of the US and its allies in 2005 was confirmed recently by Peter Jenkins, who was the UK Ambassador to the IAEA from 2001 and 2006 and was involved in these negotiations. Looking back, he regrets that Iran's offer of additional safeguards was not taken up. Writing in the *Daily Telegraph* on 23rd January 2012, he said:

"My hunch is that this gathering crisis could be avoided by a deal along the following lines: Iran would accept top-notch IAEA safeguards in return for being allowed to continue enriching uranium. In addition, Iran would volunteer some confidence-building measures to show that it has no intention of making nuclear weapons.

"This, essentially, is the deal that Iran offered the UK, France and Germany in 2005. With hindsight, that offer should have been snapped up. It

wasn't, because our objective was to put a stop to all enrichment in Iran. That has remained the West's aim ever since, despite countless Iranian reminders that they are unwilling to be treated as a second-class party to the NPT—with fewer rights than other signatories—and despite all the evidence that the Iranian character is more inclined to defiance than buckling under pressure.

“But that missed opportunity need not prove lethal if the West can pull back now and join the rest of the world in seeing an agreement of this kind as the prudent way forward.” [16]

This is persuasive evidence that the obstacle to a settlement with Iran on the nuclear issue at that time was the refusal of the US and its allies to recognise Iran's right under the NPT to uranium enrichment on its own soil.

There is no reason to believe that this policy has changed.

Security Council sanctions

Understandably, Iran rejected the August 2005 proposals from the UK, France and Germany and over the next six months or so resumed the various activities which it had voluntarily suspended during the negotiations. As a result, the US and its allies persuaded the IAEA Board to pass a resolution on 4th February 2006 [17] demanding, *inter alia*, that Iran “re-establish full and sustained suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development” and referring the matter to the Security Council.

Subsequently, the Security Council passed a series of resolutions demanding that Iran cease uranium enrichment, amongst other things. Four of these resolutions included tranches of economic sanctions against Iran.

These UN-approved sanctions were relatively mild. However, in December 2011, legislation was passed by the US Congress at the behest of the Israeli lobby (and accepted by President Obama, who dare not offend the Israeli lobby), which may do significant damage to the Iranian economy.

The legislation requires the Obama administration to bully other states around the world to stop trading with Iran, specifically, to stop buying Iranian oil, by threatening to cut off foreign financial institutions from the US financial system, if they conduct transactions with the Central Bank of Iran or other Iranian financial institutions. (Whatever happened to the US commitment to free trade?) Its own trade with Iran will be

unaffected since it has been negligible since the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

The EU has meekly followed the US lead, even though this may be economically painful for some EU states (eg Greece and Italy) who get a significant amount of their oil requirements from Iran.

On 20th March 2012, the US graciously conceded that the financial institutions in 11 states would, for the next 180 days at least, be exempt from US sanctions, because they had obeyed Washington's edict. In a statement, Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, said:

“I am pleased to announce that an initial group of eleven countries has significantly reduced their volume of crude oil purchases from Iran—Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and the United Kingdom. As a result, I will report to the Congress that sanctions pursuant to Section 1245 of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2012 (NDAA) will not apply to the financial institutions based in these countries, for a renewable period of 180 days.” [18]

The degree to which this US bullying will succeed remains to be seen. For instance, will China reduce its substantial oil purchases from Iran? And, if it refuses to do so, will the US cut off Chinese financial institutions from the US financial system—which has the potential for disrupting trade between the US and China?

Double standard

What a strange world we live in! The US and its allies, which claim they want to see the Middle East free from nuclear weapons, are applying ferocious economic sanctions, and threatening military action, against Iran, which hasn't got a single nuclear weapon—and its nuclear facilities are open to IAEA inspection.

However, they are utterly opposed to applying any sanctions to Israel, despite its possession of perhaps as many as 400 nuclear warheads with the ability to deliver them by aircraft, ballistic missile and submarine-launched cruise missiles and wipe any capital in the Middle East (and probably much further afield) off the map—and its nuclear facilities are almost entirely closed to the IAEA.

Far from sanctioning Israel, the US gives it over US\$3 billion a year in military aid and, despite an enormous budget deficit, the amount has increased every year under the Obama administ-

ration, as the President was at pains to emphasise in his speech to AIPAC on 4th March 2012 [19]. More US tax dollars go to Israel than to any other state in this world.

One could be forgiven for thinking that a double standard is being applied to Iran and Israel in this regard.

The US and its allies frequently say that, if Iran acquires nuclear weapons, this would inevitably lead to widespread proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. That, they say, is one of the reasons why Iran must not be allowed to acquire them.

What is rarely mentioned is that, because of Israel's acquisition of nuclear weapons, Iran and other states in the region would at this moment be within their rights to withdraw from the NPT and develop nuclear weapons as Israel, which never joined the NPT, has done, without breaching any international obligations.

Article IX of the NPT says:

“Each Party shall in exercising its national sovereignty have the right to withdraw from the Treaty if it decides that extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this Treaty, have jeopardized the supreme interests of its country. It shall give notice of such withdrawal to all other Parties to the Treaty and to the United Nations Security Council three months in advance. Such notice shall include a statement of the extraordinary events it regards as having jeopardized its supreme interests.” [6]

By any objective standard, Iran and other states in the region have good grounds for withdrawal, because, since they signed the NPT, Israel has acquired a large nuclear arsenal, which is sure to be targeted on them. There could hardly be a better example of “*extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this Treaty*”, which “*have jeopardized [their] supreme interests*”.

It might not be wise for Iran or other states in the region to withdraw from the NPT at the present time but there is no doubt that such an action would be within Article IX of the NPT.

(Saudi Arabia is usually mentioned as being certain to acquire nuclear weapons, if Iran does so. In this context, it is worth drawing attention to remarks by Jack Straw, the former British Foreign Minister, in the House of Commons on 20th February 2012 [20]. He questioned whether there would be a race for nuclear capability in the region and quoted a senior Saudi diplomat who told him: “*I know what we're saying publicly, but do*

you really think that having told people that there is no need for us to make any direct response to Israel holding nuclear weapons, we could seriously make a case for developing a nuclear weapons capability to deal with another Muslim country?"")

Nreaching "obligations"

The US and its allies are forever lecturing other states about living up to their "international obligations".

The UN Charter contains a set of international obligations, which all UN members are supposed to fulfil. The most fundamental of all is in Article 2.4, which requires that all UN member states "shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state" [21].

By threatening military action against Iran, the US and Israel and other states (including the UK) are in flagrant and continuous breach of Article 2.4.

The US and Israel should be expelled from the UN under Article 6 of the Charter, which provides for the expulsion of a member which "has persistently violated the Principles contained in the present Charter". That's not going to happen, of course, since the US is a veto-wielding member of the Security Council (which must recommend any expulsion) and the other is its close ally.

That's the way the UN system works, or rather doesn't.

25 March 2012

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Jenny O'Connor

The following is a short extract from an article which can be read in full in *Irish Foreign Affairs* (First Quarter, 2012)

'NGO': The Guise of Innocence

In December 2011 Egyptian prosecutors and police raided 17 offices of 10 groups identifying themselves as "pro-democracy" NGOs [Non-Governmental Organisations], including 4 US based agencies. 43 people, including 16 US citizens, have been accused of failing to register with the government and financing the April 6th protest movement with illicit funds in a manner that detracts from the sovereignty of the Egyptian state.

The US has applied massive pressure on Egypt to drop the case, sending high-level officials to Cairo for intense discussions and threatening to cut off up to \$1.3bn in military aid and \$250m in economic assistance if the US citizens are tried...

The Egyptian authorities stated that the matter was firmly in the hands of the judiciary and out of control of government and accused the US of unacceptable meddling. The international community has expressed outrage at the affair and accused the Egyptian military of inciting paranoia of foreign interference so as to deflect attention from the slow pace of political and democratic reform a year after the revolution. Amid the high-profile diplomatic strife there has been an almost total global journalistic silence on the nature and funding of these 'NGOs', rarely even mentioning them by name.

State sponsored bodies, not NGOs

The people standing trial are repeatedly referred to by Governments and the media as 'NGO workers'. The 43 defendants worked for five specific organisations: *Freedom House*; the *National Democratic Institute* (NDI); the *International Republican Institute* (IRI); the *International Center for Journalists* (ICFJ) and the *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung*. Only one of these organisations, the ICFJ, can be considered as non-Governmental in that it does not receive the majority of its funding either directly or indirectly from a Government.

The National Democratic Institute, chaired by Madeline Albright, and the International Republican Institute, chaired by Senator John McCain, represent the US Democratic and Republican political parties. The NDI and IRI—together with the Center for

International Private Enterprise, which represents the US Chamber of Commerce; and the Solidarity Centre, which represents the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)—make up the four "core institutions" of the *National Endowment for Democracy* (NED). NED is a non-profit, grant-making institution that receives more than 90% of its annual budget from the US Government. While Freedom House claims to be independent it regularly receives the majority of its funding from the NED.

The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, sometimes referred to as the German NED, is a non-profit foundation associated with the Christian Democratic Union. It receives over 90% of its funding from the German Government. This means that the IRI, the NDI, Freedom House and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung—four of the five accused organisations—are State-sponsored institutions and can not be defined as NGOs.

Freedom House has long been criticised for its rightwing bias, favouring free markets and US foreign policy interests when assessing civil liberty and political freedom 'scores' in countries around the world... a 1996 *Financial Times* article revealed that Freedom House was one of several organisations selected by the State Department to receive funding for "clandestine activities" inside Iran, including training and funding groups seeking regime change, an act that received criticism from Iranian grass roots pro-democracy groups.

The most nefarious of these organisations by far, however, are the IRI and the NDI. They receive NED grants "for work abroad to foster the growth of political parties, electoral processes and institutions, free trade unions, and free markets and business organizations". On March 6th a protest march was organised by American civil society organisations at the offices of the NED in Washington, demanding; "NO ATTACKS ON DEMOCRACY ANYWHERE! CLOSE THE NED". Union members and labor activists have protested and campaigned for years demanding that the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center break all ties to the NED...

Egypt and the Arab Spring

The NED works in democratic

Turkey but does not provide "*democratisation grants*" to civil society organisations in Western-allied absolute monarchies such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman or the United Arab Emirates. A number of NED-backed activists have taken centre stage in the Arab Spring struggles and US-supported candidates have risen to occupy leading positions in newly-established transitional Governments. The most glaring example of this is Libya's transitional Prime Minister, Dr. Abdurrahim El-Keib, who holds dual US/Libyan citizenship and is former Chairman of the Petroleum Institute sponsored by British Petroleum, Shell, Total and the Japan Oil Development Company. He handed the job of running Libya's oil and gas supply to a technocrat and, according to the *Guardian*, has passed over Islamists expected to make the Cabinet in order "*to please Western backers*". Tawakkul Karman too, of Yemen, who became the youngest-ever recipient of a Nobel Peace Prize in 2011, was leader of a NED grantee organisation, "*Women Journalists without Chains*".

In 2009 sixteen young Egyptian activists completed a two-month Freedom House 'New Generation Fellowship' in Washington. The activists received training in advocacy and met with US Government officials, members of Congress, media outlets and think tanks. As far back as 2008, members of the *April 6th Movement* attended the inaugural summit of the Association of Youth Movements (AYM) in New York, where they networked with other movements, attended workshops on the use of new and social media and learned about technical upgrades, such as consistently alternating computer simcards, which help to evade State internet surveillance. AYM is sponsored by Pepsi, YouTube and MTV and amongst the luminaries who participated in the 2008 Summit, which focused on training activists in the use of Facebook and Twitter, were James Glassman of the State Department, Sherif Mansour of Freedom House, National Security Advisor Shaarik Zafar and Larry Diamond of the NED. This is rather ironic considering that in September 2009 the US authorities arrested Elliot Madison (a US citizen and full-time social worker) for using Twitter to disseminate information about police movements to G20 Summit street protesters in Pittsburgh. Madison, apparently in violation of a loosely defined federal anti-rioting law, was accused of "*criminal use of a communication facility*", "*possessing instruments of crime*", and "*hindering apprehension*". Given that heavily-

armed police officers were using tear gas, sonic weapons and rubber bullets on protesters, Madison's actions were hardly unjustified. Further demonstrating the hypocrisy of Madison's arrest is the fact that in June 2009 the State Department had requested Twitter delay a planned upgrade so that Iranian protesters' tweets would not be interrupted. Twitter Inc subsequently stated in a blog post that it had delayed the upgrade because of its role as an "*important communication tool in Iran*"...

According to the NED's 2009 Annual Report, \$1,419,426 worth of grants was doled out to civil society organisations in Egypt that year...

But this is just the funding that is transparently made known to us on the NED's official website. After the revolution, the NDI and IRI massively expanded their operations in Egypt, opening five new offices between them and hiring large numbers of new staff. The Egyptian authorities claim that they have found these organisations' finances very difficult to trace. According to Dawlat Eissa—a 27-year-old Egyptian-American and former IRI employee—the IRI used employees' private bank accounts to channel money covertly from Washington, and an IRI accountant stated that Directors used their personal credit cards for expenses. Eissa and a number of her colleagues resigned from their posts with the IRI in October, and Eissa filed a complaint with the Government after Director Sam LaHood reportedly told employees to collect all of the organisation's work related paperwork for scanning and shipping to the US.

It is clear that NDI, IRI and Freedom House were training and funding the youth movement in Egypt while the US Government and its Cairo Embassy were fully aware that the youth movement aimed to remove Mubarak from power. Critics claim that the defendants are being charged with a law that is a "relic of the Mubarak era". But, it may be replied, in what country does the law allow foreign Governments to fund and train opposition groups with a stated goal of regime change? It is common sense to assume that if China or Cuba were funding similar oppositionist groups in the US, those involved would be facing far harsher sentences than the 43 now standing trial in Egypt. Yet they continue to hide behind the tattered guise of being 'NGO' employees, claiming independence because their US government funding is channelled through the National Endowment for Democracy.

The term 'NGO' is used deliberately to create an illusion of innocent philanthropic activity. In this case the Egyptian government is investigating the operations of organisations in receipt of US State funding which have a proven history of covertly funding political parties, influencing elections and aiding *coups* against both autocratic and democratic non-compliant and left-leaning Governments around the world. Yet one mention of the Egyptian Government's raid on the offices of so-called 'pro-democracy NGOs' in Cairo was enough to spark an international outcry. The result has been an almost complete failure by the Western press to investigate at all the history of the organisations involved or the validity of the charges being brought against them.

Jenny O'Connor is a graduate of International Relations and Communications Volunteer at the European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland.

A shorter version of this article appeared in the New Statesman in mid-March under the title, *The shadowy world of Egypt's NGOs*

WILL MOTHER NATURE PLAY FTSE?

Foxes run free, why are they free.
Birds sing but to listen pay a fee
to the minister for ornithology.
They collect honey the poor wee bee
but each flower can cost money,
don't you see,
do you share the cargo
when the owner high-fives with glee.
Taxing the hives could limit this spree,
leaving them the option
to be or not to be.
See, democracy means freedom of choice
for the apiary.
Watch the cuckoo as it offloads its
offspring
on any Tom, Dick or Harry,
as cuckoo families dump their kids on
welfare,
there are no jobs they plea.
A bad example that bird to the
human aviary.
The farmer harbouring it is the key,
giving it a safe house out of gallantry,
he/she must be taxed to penury.
Too many wild things practice usury,
got to be caged for cash-and-carry.
Mother Nature in her
hegemony,
needs taken in for
degeneracy
to face a Stock Exchange exploratory.

Wilson John Haire.
20th March, 2012

V
O
X

Priorities?
Haughey Legacy
Derrynane
Mass In Moscow
Dean Stacey
James O'Donnell
Joe Foyle
Women Clergy
Pioneers

P
A
T

Priorities?

"Apple is currently selling more iPhones every day than there are babies born in the world" (*Evening Echo*, Cork, 25.1.2012).

Who is going to buy the bloody iPhones, so?

Haughey Legacy

Former Taoiseach, Charles Haughey regarded the law he introduced to prevent husbands disinheriting their wives as one of his most important legacies.

"The former Taoiseach told journalist and broadcaster Cathal O'Shannon he introduced the legislation after being lobbied on the issue by the Catholic hierarchy, which was concerned about farmers leaving property to the church instead of making provision for their families" (*Irish Times*, 20.3.2012).

Mr. Haughey said that "when people write to me they most often mention the free travel" (which he introduced for all pensioners) but believed his "family law change" was "most important".

When he was Minister for Justice in the 1960s, Mr Haughey introduced legislation, the *Succession Act*, which gave a wife the automatic right to inherit assets even if her husband had written a will excluding her. Children's automatic rights to a share of the inheritance were also recognised.

Mr. Haughey claimed the Catholic hierarchy had "begged" for the change citing the fact that "old farmers dying used to leave money, maybe the farm, for Masses to be said in Killarney Cathedral" instead of making provision for their wives and children.

He had been told that "they had so many demands for Masses in Killarney that they just couldn't cope with the sheer numbers".

Derrynane

"The way has been cleared for the transfer of land on historic Abbey Island, in the Derrynane National Historic Park, to Kerry County Council

to allow for the extension of a unique island graveyard" (*Irish Examiner*, 8.3.2012).

The site houses the tombs of the famed O'Connells in South Kerry. For centuries coffins were walked across a sand spit at low tide.

The most unique burial ground at Aghavore or Abbey Island may only be accessed when the tides are not full across the blue flag beach of Derrynane.

The coffins are traditionally preceded by a dark suited man with a white sash.

The island holds the remains of a tenth century monastery, Aghavore.

No new spaces have been available for at least a decade at the cemetery.

With many locals being buried elsewhere, the extension has been sought for years by the county council.

Interment in existing old family graves has continued.

In January of this year, part of the ashes of Dr. Una O'Connell (nee Scorer), the 85-year-old widow of the late Dr. Daniel O'Connell—a great-great-great-grandson of The Liberator and a Harley Street surgeon—was interred in the O'Connell family tomb alongside her husband.

Also buried in the family tomb is Mary O'Connell, wife of the Liberator, who died in 1836.

Mass In Moscow

"When I lived in Moscow during the Soviet period, I used to attend Mass at a Catholic church which was close by the Lubyanka prison.

"That church had remained active and open, in the heart of Moscow, during all of the Soviet period, and I was told by Russians that the main reason for this was because the church's forerunners—who were Catholic French-speaking priests—had shunned Napoleon's army when Napoleon captured Moscow in 1812, and had remained loyal to Russia.

"Their heroic action was noted and appreciated by Russians ever since, including Joseph Stalin."

Michael O'Cathail, Dublin. (*Irish Times* letters, 12.11.2011).

Dean Stacey

The new Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin is Canon Victor Stacey (67), currently rector of Dún Laoghaire.

St Patrick's is the national cathedral of the Church of Ireland. Its Dean is elected from the Cathedral Chapter, by its members. Canon Stacey's election followed four secret ballots involving 25 members of the Cathedral Chapter, which took place on 28th February, 2012.

The Very Rev Victor Stacey is expected to be installed as Dean towards the end of next month. He succeeds the Very Rev Robert MacCarthy, who retired in January.

Born in Bunclody, Co Wexford, on March 19th, 1944, Dean Stacey said his election was "a bit of a shock". He said he hoped "to bring a sense of harmony" and "build up a sense of community in the cathedral, the diocese and the Church of Ireland".

Dean Stacey went to Kilkenny College, as did two predecessors, the Very Rev. Jonathan Swift and the Very Rev Victor Griffin. He then went to Mountjoy School and UCD. He worked in insurance before entering ministry and was ordained in 1972.

James O'Donnell

"James O'Donnell is the first Catholic since the Reformation to hold the position of organist and master of the choristers at Westminster Abbey in London. Born in Dundee, Scotland in 1961, but raised in England, O'Donnell claims Irish descent, with roots in Co Roscommon" (*Irish Examiner*, 7.2.2012).

In his office overlooking the great west door of Westminster Abbey, O'Donnell has planned the music for some great national and international occasions: last year's royal wedding, the service of evening prayer attended by the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury, a visit by Barack Obama and many others.

Before taking up his current post in 2000, O'Donnell was master of the music in Roman Catholic Westminster Cathedral (1895) at the other end of Victoria Street, leading to him being dubbed "the master of two Westminster traditions".

Then, as now, he was sustaining a tradition of sung daily worship that stretches back into antiquity and indeed

into the abbey's own origins as a Benedictine monastery. It is a theme he warms to readily. *"We perform music written a matter of weeks ago and music from the monastic period. The structure of the services is old and incredibly strong, but also really versatile. It won't snap. As a musician, this is inspiring."*

The Abbey, founded 960, has been the coronation Church since 1066 and is the final resting place of seventeen monarchs.

Another unique facet of music at the Abbey is its Choir School. It is the only remaining Choir School in England in which all of the pupils are also choristers.

His passion for his job is palpable, unquenchable it seems. *"You can never put your feet up, however good you think you are. You have never turned over every stone. There is always something to address, something not quite right. But there are also no limits to the directions we can go in."*

Joe Foyle

"In Joe Foyle's thought-provoking book, 'Succeed Despite Greed', he quotes both the Taoiseach's and the President's statements on their personal Catholicism in a formal sense. The Enda Kenny quotation is:

"I am a spiritual person. I attend Catholic ceremonies. So, when you say to me 'Are you a practising Catholic?' I wouldn't know what it was. I don't believe in Heaven or Hell. What I think about it is that they don't enter into my thinking very much. Does life end in the physical moment of death? We'll continue to speculate on it, but I think that there is a spiritual dimension to our existence that is not turned into physicality. That's as far as I would go."

"President Michael D Higgins is slightly more pragmatic:

"I am a Catholic and I am a Christian. I wouldn't be the best Catholic in the world—I am probably a better Christian than a Catholic! I will go to Mass on Sunday morning at 10 o'clock, if I am at home. I do believe there is something out there. Whether you go from spirituality to God, I think I will end up on someone's lap sooner or later! I don't think there is a Heaven or Hell in that sense—there is probably a state of being, a state of mind."

"An outsider could be forgiven for thinking these statements were made by two people who had never received any formal Catholic doctrine, and whose depth of religious knowledge was almost basic. Knowing the identities of the men in question and the roles they have been elected to perform

on behalf of a Catholic people leaves one almost in a state of total unbelief." *(Irish Independent letters, 7.2.2012, John Herriott, Co. Dublin)*

Women Clergy

More female priests are joining the Church of England than male ones for the first time ever, it can be disclosed as it takes another step towards the introduction of women bishops.

Official figures show that 290 women were ordained in 2010, the most recent year for which figures are available.

By contrast, just 273 men entered the priesthood.

The watershed moment comes less than 20 years since the Church first allowed women to be priests, in the face of opposition from Anglo-Catholics and conservative evangelicals who believe that only men can be church leaders.

Back in 1994, just 106 women were ordained compared with 299 men.

Overall there were still more than twice as many ordained men (8,087) as women (3,535) in 2010.

Detailed breakdown of the figures, published in *The Church of England Yearbook 2012*, shows that most of the new women priests are "self-supporting" rather than having full-time clergy jobs.

Among men, 173 chose when they entered theological training colleges to be stipendiary priests and 100 decided to take other jobs alongside unpaid work in parishes.

By contrast, 111 women chose to be stipendiary priests and 179 went for self-supporting ministry.

The figures on ordination come on the eve of another critical meeting of the Church of England's governing body, the General Synod.

"The week-long gathering in Church House, Westminster, will hear four debates on the draft legislation to introduce women bishops.

"If substantial revisions are suggested, making either greater or lesser provision for opponents of the move, then the plans could be sent back to each of the 44 dioceses for further consideration.

"However if the proposals remain largely unaltered they will proceed to the Synod meeting in York in July for the crucial vote, which must be passed by a two-thirds majority in each of the 'houses' of laity, clergy and bishops" *(Daily Telegraph, London, 4.2.2012)*.

Pioneers

The Pioneer Association has been saved from almost-certain closure, after thousands of generous teetotalers responded to a last-ditch appeal and donated more than €150,000.

Leaders of the ailing organisation—the full title of which is the Pioneer Total Abstinence Organisation—admitted last April they didn't expect to survive until Christmas due to a chronic lack of funds and a mounting six-figure debt.

They were forced to issue an urgent appeal to their estimated 200,000 members, pleading with them to dig deep in their pockets to help plug the hole in their €100,000 deficit.

"But yesterday Pioneer chief Pdraig Brady said the temperance group would be around "for at least another 10 years", after generous donations boosted their finances to €50,000 in the black.

"Mr Brady said, but for the response to the appeal, the first in the organisation's 104-year history, the country's pioneer centres would have closed their doors for the final time by Christmas. He said the six-figure deficit, added to a huge decline in the group's *Pioneer* magazine's circulation, made the future of the still hugely-influential association untenable.

"But he said yesterday: "Our future now looks very bright and we're here to stay, I'm delighted to say"... *(Irish Independent, 2.2.2012)*.

The Pioneers say their mission—to address the problems in society caused by excessive alcohol consumption and drug usage through prayer, faith and self-denial—is more relevant than ever in modern-day Ireland.

Founded in 1898 by Jesuit priest Fr James Cullen, the iconic Pioneer Pin soon became a ubiquitous symbol of teetotalism, set against an alcohol-fuelled culture.

Successive surveys have found that around 20 per cent, or one in five, of Irish people describe themselves as non-drinkers—the highest in Europe.

But those statistics are overshadowed by the amount of alcohol consumed by the non-teetotalers, which again tops the list of European countries.

According to recent figures, the average Irish person aged over 15 drank 11.9 litres of pure alcohol in 2010.

That's the equivalent of 44 bottles of vodka, 470 pints or 124 bottles of wine in the space of just 12 months.

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Brendan Clifford

Book Review: Paul Bew's Parnell

Parnell And The Narodniks

Lord Professor Bew's old book on Parnell has been recycled expensively for the market under the title *Enigma*.

It is hard to see what there is enigmatic about Parnell's political career. The blurb tells us that the "myth" of Parnell "has obscured the man and makes it difficult for us to see Parnell as he really was", suggesting that Lord Bew has revealed what he really was.

What does that mean: "as he really was"? As a politician what he really was what he did and said as the leader of a political party, and what he did and said when his party rejected him and he refused to relinquish the leadership. That is something that can be described. But, if what he "really was" was what he was in the secrecy of his own mind, leaving aside his actual political actions—or darting to and fro between the public and the private—that is something that can never be described adequately. It is *Ulysses* territory, or *Finnegan's Wake*.

The blurb tells us that "His fall was as dramatic as his rise. The affair of Mrs Katherine O'Shea, the mother of his three children, destroyed him". It did not. He destroyed himself in the way he coped with it.

He had misled the Party about the affair, giving it to understand that he had everything under control in the matter. In the Divorce Court it turned out that he had nothing under control. In the light of the Divorce Court evidence it was not surprising that the Protestant fundamentalism that had become an irresistible force in the Liberal Party obliged Gladstone to tell the Home Rule Party that if Parnell remained Leader the Home Rule alliance was off.

It was Parnell who had constructed the alliance with the Liberals. His lieutenants wanted to maintain the alliance with the Liberals and to keep Parnell as Leader. They suggested that Parnell should stand down as Parliamentary leader for the time being in order to appease the Protestant fundamentalists, but remain leader of the Party. He refused.

He had always treated his lieutenants with disdain. He now treated them with contempt. Living in a delusion about his position, he tried to brush them aside

and rouse the people against them in rejection of the Gladstone alliance of which he himself was the architect. The failure of his first appeal to the people against the Party did not disillusion him. It was not compatible with his sense of his own importance—his uniqueness—that he should climb down off his high horse and negotiate terms. It was all or nothing with him. When the Party would not obey his will he set about wrecking it.

The lieutenants had put up with his aloofness and his disdain, but when he set about wrecking the Party, they thwarted him. One of them, Tim Healy, remarked that, while Parnell thought he had created them, they knew they had created him. And that was the truth of it. O'Brien, Dillon, Healy, Davitt etc. were all capable and substantial political figures. They would all have been something without him: he would have been nothing without them. He found this out the hard way. He found that the mass of the people were not the mob that Pearse described them as being in O'Connell's time, and that he could not exercise supreme power over them demagogically as O'Connell did.

The Catholic Bishops did not second the ultimatum of the English Protestant fundamentalists in response to the Divorce Court proceedings. If Parnell had agreed to a temporary and partial retreat, they would have helped him through the difficulty. It was only when he denounced Gladstone and set about wrecking the party that they turned on him. And condemnation by the Bishops came long after condemnation by Michael Davitt.

Parnell, in the face of failure, flailed out in all directions, and tried to draw out support from elements that he had previously antagonised, including the Ulster Protestants. Lord Bew tells us that these speeches were of "historical importance" and that they—

"often represent his genuine convictions. With Nationalist unity now a thing of the past, he was able to give vent to suppressed beliefs" (p180).

I would have thought that what was of historical importance was what he said and did as chairman of the united

party, not what he said after he had split the party, when what he said didn't matter.

We are told that during these months—

"his opponents seized upon any stick with which to beat him. Divisive themes in Irish politics suddenly became prominent. Irritations that had lain dormant were no longer suppressed: there was no home truth—on either side—so frank that it could not be spoken. That gives the last year of Parnell's life a unique interest" (p177).

Are these "home truths" worth the breath it takes to utter them? Are they even true? They are hot-house truths at best, serviceable in *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Wolf?* domestic dramas. But even in the home I imagine that most home truths wither on the vine. In lively politics they usually have a very brief life-span. And inexpressible beliefs very quickly cease to be beliefs.

"There is no doubt that at this juncture Parnell ceased to be the "tame" Protestant leader of the Home Rule movement" (p182). This statement must be true as he ceased to be the leader.

He cast a line towards the Ulster Protestants. Why not? He was losing everything else. But he didn't hook them. Some of these appreciated the gesture, but—

"That is not to say that the northern Unionists became *sotto voce* Parnellites. The reality of uneven economic development ruled that out" (p184).

A frozen Marxist fragment from the distant past resurfaces here.

The change of the Bishops from support to opposition is described as follows. At the moment of the Divorce Court hearing:

"Parnell was at the height of his power, and it was difficult for any Irish force to move against him. The bishops were silent—some explicitly declaring the issue to be purely political. (This was a fact Parnell was later to exploit in 1891 when the bishops rediscovered their capacity for moral leadership.) It was rather the 'nonconformist conscience' in England which openly rebelled first against Parnell" (p168).

That's a cute way of putting it.

It should be well known to any Protestant writer on 19th century affairs that Rome was a political Church. It was praised, or blamed, for being such by Macaulay himself, the great Liberal

ideologue of the age. Rome, as the inventor of the distinction between Church and State, carried politics with it. In Ireland the Roman Church was closely involved in the national development. The national development was Catholic because it originated in struggle against the Protestant oppression maintained over centuries by the British State in Ireland and its small colonial stratum. Parnell made allowance for this fact in his reconstruction of the Home Rule Party. He could not have done otherwise with any prospect of success, because he was *not* the leader of his own people—of the colony.

If the colony had become national, either then or in Grattan's time, it is probable that the course of Irish history would have been very different. But the colony remained colonial and exclusive and Parnell became the leader of the national development of the Catholic people in a situation in which Protestant Ascendancy was far from defunct. He adopted an aloof, disdainful, would-be dictatorial attitude towards the people he led. And, although his own people rejected him, it was no doubt his intention to do what he could for them in any settlement that was reached.

The people he led, including their Bishops, put up with much from him because of his arrogant style in Parliament. And the Bishops and his capable lieutenants would probably have seen him through the crisis caused by fundamentalist English Protestantism in the relations between the Home Rule Party and the Liberal Party if he had not asserted mastership over the Party, and made a destructive appeal to the populace against it when it proved to be disobedient to his will.

Bew's suggestion that the Bishops bided their time, waiting for him to be weakened—to weaken himself—before striking against him, is very wide of the mark. They struck at him because, out of a sheer sense of self-importance, he set about wrecking the project in which they had given him considerable help.

Lord Bew reminds us that our Uncrowned King told Queen Katherine that he "*would rather die than give in now—give in to the howling of the English mob*" (p176), and that the cities of Dublin and Cork remained blindly "*loyal*". And he says that the Uncrowned King, in his last year, "*did break with what might be called Catholic nationalism—as opposed to a broader non-sectarian conception which had always existed uneasily with*

it" (p183). In fact he broke with the thoughtful substance of national society, whether clericalist or not, and the blind loyalty that remained unconditionally attached to him was not expressive of an actual political force that was going anywhere.

Nationalism changed its character by rejecting Parnell's assertion of dictatorship, Lord Bew tells us:

"Whereas it is true to say that the Land League had been remarkably free of anti-urban, *narodnik* or overtly sectarian Catholic sentiments, all these came to the fore in the opposition to Parnell... A new emphasis began to be given to the claim that rural Irishmen were the only reliable Catholics and patriots" (p179).

Parnell's ineffective but destructive campaign to establish his dictatorship—"to regain his lost ascendancy", as Lord Bew puts it (p177)—broke the Party, but did not dissipate it. It broke into three parts, one of which emphasised Catholicism (led by Tim Healy), another emphasised Independence (led by John Dillon), and a Parnellite rump led by John Redmond, coquetted with Fenianism. After a few years of conflict the three were brought together, as the United Irish League, under pressure from a powerful agrarian agitation conducted by William O'Brien, who had also conducted the land agitation under Parnell.

O'Brien had done his best to persuade Parnell to manoeuvre against the English Protestant ultimatum, but had refused to go along with Parnell's anti-Liberal Manifesto or his stand against the party, and he ensured that Parnell would have an honoured place in the culture of the new party, with the "*home truths*" of 1891 brushed under the carpet—which was the proper place for them.

A few years after the party unification of 1900 the substance of the land conflict was settled. O'Brien worked up a strong land agitation with the aim of establishing ownership of the land by the tenant-farmers, connected up with a Protestant tenant-farmer agitation in the North, and negotiated a deal with Balfour's Tory (Unionist) Government, whereby the landlords were made an offer they couldn't refuse and the tenants got the land by subsidised land purchase.

About a dozen years earlier, when Balfour was Irish Secretary (head of the Irish Department of the British Government), he had imprisoned O'Brien for his activities in the land agitation. And, when Parnell's divorce fiasco outraged the Protestant conscience of England,

O'Brien was on the run in the USA. He met Parnell in France with an appeasement policy, but Parnell would not be appeased. When the dust settled O'Brien came back, worked up another land agitation, and made the deal with Balfour as Prime Minister which brought about the most thorough reform ever conducted in Ireland.

The two greatest leaders of the land agitation were Davitt and O'Brien. Davitt, having set the Land League in motion, attempted to do with the English workers what he had done with the Irish peasants. He found that the English proletariat did not have the will to command their own destiny that the Irish peasantry had. He was the first to say that Parnell had to go, and it was in his English socialist paper that he said it.

If there was a *narodnik* leader in Ireland, it was O'Brien. My Lord Bew does not say quite what he means by *narodism* in Ireland, but I can think of no other movement than O'Brien's to which the term might be applied. Shortly after the 1903 Land Act was put into effect the Land & Labour movement was launched in North Cork, in Kanturk, which was an O'Brien stronghold, and soon the landscape was covered with publicly built Labourer's Cottages, each with an acre of land attached, making the labourer enough of a property owner to raise a family, and altering the terms of the labourer/employer relationship. That was the reality behind De Valera's much-ridiculed description of rural Ireland a generation later.

I grew up in the social environment of property owning farmers and labourers with sufficient property to keep the spirit of independence alive. Labourers were not servile, even though they continued to be called by a name carried over from the past—*servant boys*. And, with the best will in the world, I was never able to feel that Dev's description of rural Ireland was absurd.

Application of the term *narodism* to the vigorous and successful reform agitation after the fall of Parnell must be a hangover from the stringent Marxism in which Lord Bew once lived and which he abandoned without explanation.

Narod is the Russian for people. There was a People's Movement in Russia in the late 19th century which was rejected by Marxists on the ground that the idea of the people obscures the conflict of classes through which alone social development occurs. Lenin constructed a party based on the small

industrial working class, and in the crisis of 1917 gained control of the State with it. But the peasantry constituted the great bulk of the society, and it was by means of the slogan "*Land to the peasants*" that he gained power. And I seem to recall that Rosa Luxemburg criticised him for having become a *narodnik*. And he certainly went into alliance with the *narodnik* party of the time, the Social Revolutionaries.

About ten years earlier the Tsarist Prime Minister, Stolypin, contemplated a land reform somewhat on the lines of the Irish reform, and Lenin saw that if that reform was enacted thoroughly the revolution for which he was preparing would be off. The application of some *narodism* in a revolutionary situation had been in his mind long before 1917. It is said that he was resigning himself to the dissolution of the *narod* by capitalist reform, and was contemplating emigration to America when the Tsar, in alliance with the British Empire (and of course with us, because it has now been officially made *Our War*) started the Great War with the object of conquering Istanbul (which we said it might have), and Lenin knew he was in business.

Narodism, in the sense of subduing incipient class antagonisms amongst the people was certainly effective in some degree throughout Ireland, and to a considerable degree in the central area of O'Brien's activities. But "*narodnik or overtly sectarian*" won't do at all. The strong Catholic developments occurred in the cities—which had also been indifferent, or hostile, to the land reform which established small landowners as the most numerous and purposeful class in Ireland. The Home Rule paper, the *Freeman's Journal*, actually opposed the 1903 reform and tried to persuade the tenant-farmers that its object was to swindle them out of their savings.

The *Catholic Truth Society* was formed in proletarian Belfast and the *Ancient Order of Hibernians* was refounded there as an urban Catholic society, and was blended into the structure of the party led by the loyal Parnellite, John Redmond. And it was in the stronghold of *narodism*, rural Cork, that a movement developed against this blending of nationalism and religion and took eight seats off the Redmondites in 1910.

If a strong working class movement had developed in the cities during those years, my Lord Bew's impatience with rural *narodism* for obscuring the class issue might be understandable. But that was very far from being the case.

So where does his skewed view of post-Parnell Ireland come from? From half-forgotten fragments of the stringent Marxism-Leninism of his youth certainly. But also from his broodings on "*the lovely land of might-have-been*". He has done much of that in recent decades, and this book ends with a "*Counterfactual*" chapter. What actually happened is unacceptable. A bigoted peasantry brought down the great man, who if he had succeeded might have pulled something out of the hat for his class, which is also Lord Bew's actual class. Therefore, even though one is a historian, it is more pleasant to dwell on what didn't happen rather than show what did, and perhaps make the grandchildren of the populace ashamed because of what their bigoted ancestors prevented.

Parnell becomes the leader who was lost and was irreplaceable. In 1918, when the country was shifting irresistibly towards Sinn Fein, a play was written by Lennox Robinson called *The Lost Leader*. What if the Lost Leader had not really been lost at all? What if he had withdrawn to concealment and was re-emerging now that his moment had arrived, and would be lost without him?

It was an interesting fantasy. But it related to a state of affairs that had ceased to exist. The caricature Parnell, John Redmond, had died, discredited, and as far as I know there was no pining for the prototype. The parties that had been thrown up by the splits of 1891, and the conflicts that had gone on after the unification of 1900, had all been conducted without gentry leadership, and the absence of gentry gave rise to no disabling feelings of inadequacy.

In my area, only a generation later, the gentry was forgotten, except as a remote fact of history, and I could not envisage them as having ever been a presence.

As to Parnell—Poor Parnell! Pity about Parnell! He served a turn, but then lost his bearings. In his moment of difficulty he made a vain appeal to the populace and destroyed the Party that would not be servile to him, and he ended the role of the gentry in national political life. I fail to see the enigma. But it seems that Lord Bew himself is a bit of an enigma:

"Any attention the Official IRA continues to attract is thanks to the prominence of some of its former members and its reputation as a forerunner. Old members include the current leader of the Irish Labour Party, Eamon Gilmore...; his predecessor, Pat Rabbitte; several prominent trade unionists; the historian Paul (now Lord) Bew; and many writers and journalists

..." (*London Review Of Books*, 7.10.10. Review by Daniel Finn of *The Lost Revolution* by Brian Hanley).

I expected this statement to be followed quickly by an apology for defamation. Some years ago the *Irish Times* apologised for describing Bew as a Unionist, and a description of him as an IRA man would surely merit a stronger apology. But no apology followed. So it must be that Lord Bew is the first IRA man in the House of Lords, having been the first IRA man to act as adviser and speech writer to a leader of the Ulster Unionist Party. What a topsy turvy world he lives in.

Brendan Clifford

PS: To make certain that I had not missed a retraction and apology in the *London Review*, I looked it up again and found that I had overlooked this item in the Letters Page on 21st October:

"*Mistake*. An editorial misunderstanding led to a mistake being introduced into Daniel Finn's review of *The Lost Revolution* in the LRB of 7 October. In the third paragraph, the sentence beginning 'Any attention the Official IRA continues to attract' should have read: 'Any attention the Official republican movement continues to attract is thanks to the prominence of some of its former members and its reputation as a forerunner'. We apologise to those 'former members' the paragraph goes on to mention."

I suppose it was necessary to explain to the London middle class readers that the IRA was not just a militarist body but had a political organisation attached to it which was under its control. This body went under a succession of names. As I understood it some members of the political body were not members of the Army but were under its control, but all members of the Army were members of the political body.

The LRB apology is ambiguous and unspecific. If any of those named as being in the Army had not been in the Army, I'm sure they would have required the LRB to publish a specific retraction and make a specific apology. The published apology strikes me as the Editor standing by what was published, but throwing some dust in the eye as a gesture of kindness.

The 'Cork Free Press' In The Context Of The Parnell Split, The Restructuring Of Ireland, 1890-1910, by Brendan Clifford. Aftermath of the Irish Big Bang: Redmondism; Fenians; Clericalism; The Land War; Russellites; Land & Labour League, and All-For-Ireland League—an Irish pluralist political development, originating in County Cork. 168pp. Jan. 1998. €13, £9.99.

Jack Lane

An Exchange Of Letters

Land Ownership: A Curious Statistic

The following is a correspondence with Simon Coveney, the Minister for Agriculture, Marine and Food and is self-explanatory.

12 December 2011

Simon Coveney,
Minister for Agriculture, Marine and Food,
Dail Eireann

Dear Mr. Coveney,

I was very interested in a point you made in your address to the I.C.M. S.A. [Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association] General Meeting in Limerick on 19th November, 2011.

You said that the typical field in Ireland changed hands/was sold, on average, every 400 years compared with France where it happened, on average, every 70 years.

As I and other local historians are very interested in such issues as the history of land and farms I would be grateful if you could elaborate on this and indicate how you came to that conclusion. It would be of immense interest to very many people if the ownership of typical farms and fields can be traced so clearly across 400 years.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
Jack Lane

15 Dec 2011

Jack,

Thank you for emailing Minister Simon Coveney TD.

From memory that statistic came up in the course of a meeting on farm partnerships but I've asked the officials present to check out where it originally came from.

I'll come back to you as soon as I have that information. Regards,
Caitríona Fitzpatrick

3rd January 2012

Dear Catriona,

Thanks for your reply of 15 December.

Happy New Year to you and your colleagues.

I wondered if there had been any clarification forthcoming from officials on the query I raised a few weeks ago about the continuity of land ownership in the country as stated by the Minister, Simon Coveney. I was reminded of it again when I noticed that Mr. Coveney returned to the issue in his last statement in the Dail before Xmas which was a

sort of summing up of his Department's work and policies. He clearly thinks this is a very significant matter and so much so that it is made a basis for a very important part of the Department's future policy towards farming and agriculture—as he explained. I think that alone makes it important that the matter is clarified so that any Government policy can be seen to be soundly based.

May I quote what the Minister said:

"The budget has done a significant amount to reshape the system, particularly in terms of reforming the land mobility market in order to get land moving. I often point out that the average field in Ireland is sold once every 400 years, while the average field in France is sold once every 70 years. That is because land remains in the ownership of families in an inter-generational way in Ireland. There is almost an obsession with land ownership. That is an issue we are seeking to address in this budget." (14 December 2011, Vol. 750, no.1)

Apart from the 'high policy' implication involved, I am interested in this at a more mundane level—local history and identifying sources for tracing the history of such things as fields, farms, families, businesses, etc. This type of work is our 'bread and butter' and I think it might be very helpful if I and colleagues knew the methodology that established such amazing continuity of land ownership at the micro level across 400 years, i.e., since 1611 and before. It would also be of great value to the 'genealogy tourism' industry which has become such an important feature of the tourism industry itself.

As I doubt that I could establish such continuity of ownership for a single field or farm that I know of, I am keen to know of any method(s) that could assist in doing so. The Department's clarification of how this interesting statistic was arrived at would seem to be, potentially, a very useful tool in this regard.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
Jack Lane

Strange History!

It was disappointing that neither Mr. Coveney or his officials saw fit to continue this discussion.

I think it's worth considering what the Minister is actually saying. He is asking us to believe that on average—which means a very large number of Irish farms—farms have been in continuous family ownership effectively since the beginning of the of the 17th century. Before that we had the Plantations of Philip and Mary, the Plantation of Munster. The period that Minister Coveney is talking about covers—

—the Ulster Plantation,

—a Plantation in Connaught,
—the 1641 Confiscations,
—the Cromwellian and Williamite Settlements,
—the Penal Laws which entailed massive land transfers by a simple declaration of Protestantism,
—the Tithe Wars and resultant evictions,
—the Famine/Holocaust and in particular the Gregory Clause,
—the evictions and resultant Land War of the late 19th century,
—the buying-out under the Wyndham Land Acts

and the normal land transactions since then.

Not only have the vast majority of farms changed hands numerous times in that period but so have whole towns, churches, castles, river beds, forests and mountains. Only the sky has remained immune. I reckon the amount of land in Ireland that has remained in continuous family ownership during that period could be measured in square metres. What planet does Mr. Coveney live on?

Seán McGouran

Not A Game Of Two Halves

In April 2011 the Manager of Glasgow Celtic Football Club (Neil Lennon) and three others were sent letter bombs. This led to hand-wringing articles in the press, mostly to the effect that one urban tribe (Celtic) was as bad as were the other (Glasgow Rangers Football Club).

That is not an accurate assessment. The next time team-members, officers or supporters of Rangers get letter bombs or bullets in the post will be the first time. Neil Lennon has a growing collection of the latter. He resigned from Northern Ireland's 'national' squad, mainly because every time he scored a goal he was the object of abuse, including death threats, from a bloc of 'fans' in Windsor Park (the 'national' football stadium).

There was, (prior to the arrival of the letter bombs), a controversy in *Morning Star* (daily journal of the Communist Party of Britain) about Celtic and Rangers. Writers of Letters to the Editor dismissed any real difference between the teams: the 'Old Firm'. They are both commercial enterprises. Martin O'Neill distanced the enterprise from identification with the Irish tricolour and 'Rebel' songs. A group of fans have defied this, brandishing the Irish tricolour, singing Republican songs and taking a defiantly (anti-imperialist) political line.

One MS letter writer observed that

Belfast Celtic wound itself up in 1948. But not why—a Celtic player was shot dead in mid-match. The killer was never found. The next time a Rangers player is shot dead, or that some youngster in Glasgow gets his throat slashed simply for wearing a 'blues' strip, will be the first time.

Journalists commenting on the latest incivilities claimed both sets of supporters sing sectarian songs. Since when have 'Rebel' songs been sectarian? Do Celtic fans censor their repertoire to avoid mentioning Wolfe Tone and the rest? It would be disingenuous not to acknowledge that much of this is engaged in because it winds up the opposition. But there seems to be too much substance to the politics of some Celtic fans for it to be just a wind-up.

The 'on the one hand; on the other hand' balance is disingenuous too. There is an imbalance in the behaviour of the 'ultras' following the teams. MS's correspondents did not acknowledge some relevant matters. The National Front and the UDA (Ulster Defence Association), did a roaring trade at Ibrox (Ranger's ground), selling their journals, Loyalist tat, or collecting money. Rangers' management claims this has declined due to their efforts. It is probably due to Unionism in Scotland being in (possibly terminal) decline.

This article is not a denunciation of the 'blues'. Rangers fans were horrified by the letter bombs. Northern Ireland supporters were horrified at Lennon's treatment. It is not healthy to argue with those barracking him. They constitute a solid bloc in stadiums. Or when beating-up those less Loyal than themselves.

There has been a follow-up to the above, partly the *pro forma* declarations of indignation and distaste by Scotland's Establishment. More to the point, Neil Lennon received yet another bullet in the post. He was physically assaulted in the course of a match by a Hearts (Heart of Midlothian) fan. Hearts is Edinburgh's equivalent of Rangers, Hibernian taking Celtic's role. Edinburgh is disdainful of Glaswegian crudity, but the sectarian beast is slumbering, not dead.

The Glasgow-based composer James MacMillan in the 1999 Edinburgh Festival lecture, said sectarianism was Scotland's dirty little secret. The Review's response (I wrote it) was 'on the one hand; on the other hand' balance. But this sequence of events is eye-opening. The London media have been detached about these matters. There has

been an implication that Neil Lennon attracted his bullets, letter bombs (some put 'bomb' in quotes—the police described it as 'viable') and assaults, whether on the grounds of being red haired, "Northern Irish", or manager of Glasgow Celtic, it's difficult to assess.

Some bloggers—those who don't denounce Glasgow Celtic and its fans in grossly sectarian and racist language—accuse them of supporting 'terrorists'. This meaning the IRA (and its predecessors all the way back to the United Irish—Scottish Loyalists have long memories). It's 'whataboutery'—but—(some) Rangers fans support the UDA and UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force) and not just by cash in collection tins. The UK Government (to which they are 'Loyal') has negotiated with the IRA which put away its guns long before the Loyalists. Where does all this come into their arguments?

If the recipients of these bombs had been Jewish it would have been front-page news for days. Even African or Afro-Caribbean people would have been the objects of sympathy, 'think pieces', and possibly even some action. Unless they happened to be Muslim. Why is the official response to these acts of aggression so sluggish? Is sectarianism systemic to Scottish (or British) society? Nobody wants retaliatory violence. But that is likely unless the Establishment from Parliament (Westminster as well as Holyrood) down indicates that sectarianism is history.

Pat Maloney

Releases , 2010

From The State Papers

Archbishop Tomás Ó Fiaich visited the United States in May 1979. He was invited to stay at the Irish embassy in Washington by Ambassador Seán Donlon, but he initially declined the invitation.

"I have maintained contact since he taught me history at Maynooth in 1958-60," Mr Donlon reported.

Nevertheless, the Archbishop and his secretary Fr. Jimmy Clyne arrived on Donlon's doorstep on May 8th, 1979 and stayed for two days.

Donlon said:

"He wished to visit, inter alia, the House of Representatives and Senate and arrangements were made for him through the Speaker's office. Once the Speaker found out about the Archbishop's visit, he arranged to meet him privately for 15 minutes for a general discussion on the Northern Ireland

situation. This was the only meeting which the Archbishop had during the visit."

On going to New York the Archbishop met privately with members of the Irish National Caucus, but the highlight of the visit was a dinner organised in Ó Fiaich's honour by Eoin McKiernan and the Irish American Cultural Institute (IACI) organised in Paramus, New Jersey, on the evening of May 21st, 1979. About 1,200 people attended. Some 50 organisations were represented at the 109 tables.

The Consulate in New York supplied the list of organisations to be involved—those included "*IRA front organisations*":

"I stressed that the Irish Northern Aid Committee and Irish National Caucus Organisation, if they were represented, should not receive any recognition either orally at the dinner or in the printed programme, as this could be taken out of context and used politically against the Archbishop or in pro-IRA propaganda," the consul-general warned the IACI. "Nevertheless, all organisations—including Noraid and the Caucus—were listed in the official programme for the dinner."

Archbishop O Fiaich spoke for 45 minutes, mainly about the achievement of the IACI. Rather appropriately in the circumstance, he "referred to the tendency of the Irish to have 'splits' and said how gratifying it was to see all of the Irish organisations joining together in honouring him on this occasion".

Two days after returning to Armagh, news came from the Vatican that Pope John Paul II was elevating Tomás Ó Fiaich to the College of Cardinals on 30th June 1979.

Contraception Bill: Ireland would "*cease to be one of the last outposts of moral society*" on the removal of the contraceptives ban, one of many letters of objection sent to Taoiseach Charles Haughey said.

On 1st November 1980, contraceptives became legally available in Ireland for the first time in 45 years but only on prescription from a doctor. These regulations enacted the Family Planning Act 1979, described by Haughey as an "*Irish solution to an Irish problem*".

It sought to meet the Supreme Court's ruling on the right of married couples to privacy and to appease Catholic Ireland.

A group of women from Ballaghadereen, Co Roscommon, wrote of the "*abhorrent inevitable consequences*" of the Bill, including that Ireland would "*cease to be one of the last outposts of moral society*", there would be sales

pressure "on our children" backed by the contraceptive industry and eventually legalised abortion.

The writer, Mary T. Geever, recalls former Fine Gael Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave as a "man of moral conscience".

"Would you want the people of Ireland to remember you as the Taoiseach who introduced contraception, facilitating sin among weak-willed teenagers?" she wrote, and imposing a financial burden on taxpayers who would have to finance the treatment of "venereal [sic] disease".

The letter is signed by Mrs. Mary T. Geever, Patricia Moynihan, Nuala Frain and Mary F Durkin and is accompanied by a petition with 50 signatories, mainly from Ballaghaderreen.

Jack Lane

Academic Freedom Reaches New Heights

John M. Regan gave a talk at Kings College, London, on 28th March to the *Contemporary British History Seminar*. His subject was: *The Dilemma of the Historian of Contemporary Ireland (Revisited)*.

The dilemma he posed is essentially that Irish historians have disgraced themselves in recent decades by twisting historical facts to suit the political needs of the Southern Establishment's views on the War in Northern Ireland. His view is that the academics did not maintain some form of independence from these political needs and have therefore disqualified themselves from being taken seriously as historians.

This would be more convincing if it could be established that Irish historians were making sense of the Northern Ireland situation in the many decades before the 'Troubles', when they had every opportunity *not* to be influenced or distracted by a live political situation. They were hopeless on the issue before and during—and all evidence indicates they will be useless for as long as Northern Ireland exists.

Neither did these historians produce anything worthwhile on the War of Independence or the 'Civil War', or even on topics like the Famine/Holocaust. By far the best books on these events were written by people outside academia, like Dorothy McArdle and Cecil Woodham Smith.

I studied under Professor John A. Murphy and I cannot recall anything I learned from him that I was not aware

of at primary school age. The above non-academic writers, with others, plus the participants themselves, produced the history of the country in the 20th century. But to Regan these people "hijacked" the history of Ireland and their history was something that was simply used and abused by Fianna Fáil and other politicians for propaganda purposes—with the implication that there was no real history at all available in Ireland. In fact the history of the country was written and discussed *ad nauseam* in the greatest detail all over the place—but all outside academia. Academia was simply not at the party, but the history of the country most certainly was.

Regan seemed to argue that there could be objective history produced, and by historians who could in some way remain indifferent and unaffected by such things as the Cold War, the 'War on Terror', the War in Northern Ireland, and such events. But this is cloud-cuckoo-land. The best one can hope for is that one of the antagonists in such conflicts has a valid cause and, if that is the case, 'their' historians are likely to produce the most valid history. Both sides may have some validity and this may change over time but in any case that is what determines the writing of history for good or ill, always and everywhere.

The Irish State was totally unprepared for the conflict in Northern Ireland, misjudged the forces involved, and made itself look ridiculous with the Arms Trial débâcle. The State was not able to cope. The State's view became that whatever it had known about Northern Ireland was wrong: it opted out and allowed the internal forces in the North to decide the issue by war while it adopted a Pontius Pilate approach. That is the State orientation that Irish historians had to relate to and they followed suit as historians always do, but by themselves they were irrelevant to the development of events. That is what made, and makes, them despicable and useless and why they have a 'dilemma'. The State had and has a 'dilemma' and so they have a 'dilemma.'

The discussion inevitably touched on Peter Hart's work whose main book is apparently the best-selling book ever published by the Oxford University Press on Irish history and encapsulates the 'dilemma' faced by Irish historians. With some distinguished academics present, I was curious to get their views on Hart's extensive use of anonymous sources for events more than 70 years earlier, now about 90 years after the events being

written about. How was this methodology regarded within the groves of academe in Britain? Hart said he interviewed about 60 people and that the majority wanted to remain anonymous and so he complied. Should his academic supervisors, Messrs. Fitzpatrick and Townshend, be expected to have verified these sources and satisfied themselves as to their reliability and trustworthiness and that the need for anonymity was justified?

John Regan agreed that the use of anonymous, i.e., unverifiable, sources was problematic and created very obvious problems and he pertinently asked the other academics present how they regarded such a practice. It quickly became very clear that this created no dilemma whatever for British academics. Mary Hickman, Professor of Irish Studies and Sociology at Liverpool, said it would be almost amusing in her profession that anyone would query research based on anonymous sources. It was the norm. It was explained by others that, in research in many other areas, such as psychology and criminology, anonymity was also the norm. If there had been a Professor of Journalism present, no doubt he/she would have agreed wholeheartedly with all this. The Chairman of the meeting said he was a historian of Banking and he would not be able to write *anything* if it was not based on anonymous sources that were not recorded or attributable in any shape or form. Professor Vernon Bogdanor remained silent. takes academic freedom to a whole new level.

There was a contribution by an academic from Liverpool who was highly critical of the Bureau of Military History Witness Statements for the methodology used. She dismissed them as "State sponsored" and "structured" and therefore suspect. There was nodding agreement. The statements are, as readers will know, direct first-hand accounts by over 1700 participants in the War of Independence. They can be checked against each other and are verifiable in numerous ways. There could hardly be a greater contrast with anonymous sources. Yet here, without any sense of irony, we had full academic acceptance of anonymity as being legitimate but aspersions cast on this first class, first-hand, source.

I would suspect that the subconscious objection to this great archive is that it was created independently of academia. It was State-sponsored of course, but what archive, or University for that matter, is not state-sponsored? If State

sponsorship of such things is suspect our academics might as well all pack up. The Bureau Statements, plus the pension award statements, plus the many histories and memoirs produced by participants, plus the files of the Irish Bulletin, *An t-Óglach*, the evidence to the American Commission, and much else makes the Irish War of Independence one of the best recorded events in the world. Yet our academics are not happy with any of these sources, or all of them together. They clearly prefer the freedom that goes with anonymity and speculation. No doubt that gives them the thrill of creativity and playing God with history. That's irresistible if you can get away with it and, as no serious objection will be raised within academia in Ireland or Britain, we can only expect more of the same.

Catherine Winch

Review: *The Value of Nothing* by Raj Patel (Portobello Books, 2009)

Markets

Q. "How many Chicago School economists does it take to change a light bulb?"

A. None. If the light bulb needed changing, the market would have already done it.

Raj Patel writes in light-hearted way, including jokes as in the above, but he makes serious points.

Raj Patel is an academic at both KwaZulu-Natal University and the University of California, Berkeley. He has worked for the World Bank, interned at the World Trade Organisation, consulted for the UN, and protested against his former employers. His first book was *Stuffed And Starved: The Hidden Battle for the Global Food System*.

"Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing." (Oscar Wilde)

Big corporations have turned everything into commodities, things that can be bought and sold. They have done more than that: they have made us see the world in terms of commodities.

We think as consumers even in situations when it is not appropriate. For example the press has told us that mobile phones contain an element, coltan, mined in the Congo; access to the mines is controlled by military units, involving a high degree of violence. We also know that the cheap clothes we buy are often

produced in appalling circumstances. Yet we do not stop buying these clothes or using mobile phones. We think of in terms of money, and in terms of "what everybody else has". This happens through the normal daily operation of the way market-society values the world. For the spirit of capitalism to thrive, different ways of thinking and valuing the world need to be smothered.

When in England common land was enclosed, and those who used it previously for free were expelled, two things happened. There was the obvious appropriation (theft) and expulsion, but also a change in thinking. People had from then on to think of the world in terms of rent for land and wages for labour. Karl Polanyi detailed this in his book *The Great Transformation* (1944), which Raj Patel admires. Polanyi explained that the Government and the market were not separate; they both make up "Market Society".

Times of crisis show this up very clearly: the so-called 'free market' in fact depends on the rest of society: "Capitalism can no more bail itself out than it can stand on its own shoulders." Corporations also receive large subsidies, directly or indirectly, for example MacDonald's sell beef raised on subsidised corn. The low wages they pay are compensated for by State benefit payments, another form of state subsidy. Corporations do not pay for "negative externalities", for example if the beef comes from cattle raised on land created from deforestation, which in turn creates desertification which in turn causes poverty: MacDonald's will not be made to pay for a remedy. In general corporations squander and do not pay for the "free" goods, that is the common resources they appropriate, like land, rain, oil, coal, forests, rivers, seas.

Thinking that markets can work on their own is like thinking you can see when you are blind, as in Anton's Syndrome; sufferers are blind but their brain still "sees" and nothing can convince the sufferers that the visions are not reality, even when they fall over. It is pure ideology to think that the best way for society to function is to let markets seek profit with minimal interference. In fact it is the powerful who set the way markets operate, and we have let this happen. We did that because the corporations have clever ways to shape our desires and because we profit from the situation, with cheaper clothes and food and gadgets. We don't see that the cheaper we can live, the lower the wages that are

paid to us.

Free market thinking has ideologues, like the Chicago School economists mentioned above, who promote the idea that all human beings are "maximisers": everybody all over the world wants the greatest amount of goods possible, and this is the natural way to be. In fact corporations, not people, always behave like that. Raj Patel gives the example of fishermen off the coast of Pakistan who have fished the same sea for centuries; the Pakistani Government has given permission for foreign industrial trawlers to fish just off their area, day and night with gigantic nets, and condoned so-called joint ventures that allowed foreign industrial ships to fish local waters under the guise of being jointly owned by "locals". The maximisers are in the process of ruining the fishing grounds, which the locals had not done.

Marx defined capitalism as "the process of transforming money into commodities that can be sold for more than the wages paid to the workers and the cost of machines and material, to make a profit. The capital thus generated takes on a life of its own as finance capital". This definition explains capitalism's constant need for growth and expansion, and the central inequality in power between those who control capital and those who have only their labour to sell. Capitalists collectively fight to lower the price of labour power and Governments shape the terrain on which corporations operate. Military spending is the one area of the most blatant use of public money to line private pockets, but generally Government govern in the interest of big corporations, as seen in the rates of taxation for example, which favour the rich. "Our supposedly democratic government has been captured by corporate interests." This explains among other things why bankers, having brought the world to the edge of disaster in 2008, are allowed to continue as before, after receiving astronomical sums from the State.

"People who were driving a school bus (blindfolded) and crashed it should never be given a new bus."

"The problem is that because both our economy and to a larger extent our politicians aren't really subject to democratic control, the bus drivers are always going to be graduates of the same driving school."

Enclosures, and the question of property, are central themes in the book. (Raj Patel reminds us that it was that question that "radicalised" the young

Karl Marx when he observed parliamentary debates over the customary wood-gathering rights in the forests of the Rhineland.) Land property rights had their historical defenders (such as Locke), who were used to justify taking the "unused land" in America and elsewhere by all colonisers. Appropriation of land that is not "legally owned" is taking place all over the world today by big corporations in search of maximum profit.

What to do? According to Raj Patel, "There is no position from which, untainted by the world around it, some everlasting truth can guide us to a brighter future". This means that we have to start with where we are. In connexion with Polanyi and the enclosures, Patel details the idea of the "countermovement" which, while not reversing the process of the enclosures, made the new situation bearable; the counter-movement at the time was the Speenhamland laws of Parish poor relief.

The parallel is that we have to remain within the capitalist system, but we should rub our eyes and see the process of commodification for what it is and resist it. Patel quotes Rousseau, who disagreed that human beings were inherently machines of infinite want. It is possible for people to feel that they've got "enough". Being sated is something that people can learn, unlike artificial people like corporations and Governments who can never have enough and are like modern ogres. Polanyi's countermovement was "spearheaded by a failing sliver of the landed aristocracy" yet it was significant. The 'commons' is a resource, most often land, and refers both to the territory and to the ways people allocate the goods that come from that land.

In the second part of the book Raj Patel gives examples of contemporary movements that go back to ideas of "public domain" and find sustainable and equitable ways to share the "free" goods, "reinventing the commons".

to project its atmosphere of fear into the reader. The concentration camp is one great fear for the average German who may in former times been a social democrat or socialist or a communist.

The March, 1933 German Federal Election result that brought Hitler and his National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), to power:

NSDAP.....	17,277,180
Social Democratic Party	7,181,629
Communist Party.....	4,848,058
Centre Party.....	4,424,905
Black-White-Red Struggle Front*....	3,136,760
Bavarian People's Party.....	1,073,552

*The Black-White-Red Struggle Front was an alliance of the German National People's Party, the Stahlhelm and Agricultural League.

Another eight parties took part in the election and got votes ranging from just under half a million to a paltry 1,110.

Despite getting 43.9% of the vote Hitler had to go into a coalition with the conservative German National People's Party in order to control his majority of seats. (This 1933 election would need a article itself in order to sort out the wheeling/dealing of the NSDAP)

A confusing time for the working-class, what with copycat Leninist sloganising and the red border around the Swastika flag to denote the blood of the German worker sacrificed in production and previous wars.. Then there is the promise by the NSDAP of an economic recovery of the economy, which was realised, and the regaining of German dignity.

Fallada has Otto Quangel say: "Hitler pulled the chestnuts out of the fire after the Great Depression." This honesty is too much for some of today's literary critics and anyone saying that is under suspicion as having Nazi sympathies by not taking the propaganda line that the economy was artificially stimulated by the manufacture of armaments, rather than by the rebuilding of the infrastructure and a massive re-jigging of German industry through employer/employee cooperation overseen by the state. A hard thing to have to admit to for any anti-fascist, never mind a British patriot still stuck in WW2.

Hans Fallada decided to stay in Germany when some writers were fleeing to other countries. A British publishing company organised for him to leave for England. He was already packed and ready to go with his wife when he changed his mind. He decided to stay and write non-political stuff, or else write novels based on German history. In one such novel Goebbels asks him to continue it into the 1930s, which will

Wilson John Haire

Book Review: *Alone In Berlin* by Hans Fallada, Penguin Classics, 2010. £9.99. Also as an E-Book published by Amazon Kindle, £4.99

Alone In Berlin

Rudolf Ditzen, 1894—1947, wrote under the name of Hans Fallada because by the time he had his first book published he had, at the age of 17, shot his best friend dead when they took part in a suicide pact arranged as a duel. (His family forbade him to use the family name due to his past and continuing notoriety.) His friend missed him but he didn't miss his friend. He was put in a psychiatric hospital. Later he served terms of imprisonment for embezzlement and theft. He was addicted to morphine, cocaine and alcohol but despite this he became a writer of bestsellers which continued to be read after WW2 in both the DDR [Democratic Republic of Germany, East Germany] and West Germany by huge numbers of people. His major novel is *Alone In Berlin*.

It tells the story of Otto and Anna Quangel (based on the true story of Otto and Elise Hampel) who, having lost their son in the invasion of France, decides to write anti-Nazi slogans on postcards and stick them in the stairwells or on the windowsills of office blocks in Berlin. The difference is Elise Hampel lost her soldier-brother, not her son, in the invasion of France. They are arrested in October, 1942, tried in January, 1943, and eleven weeks later are guillotined in

Plotensee Prison in Berlin.

As the story develops more and more characters appear. This is basically about the working-class of Berlin. Otto Quangel is a foreman carpenter in charge of a furniture-making factory which is now producing crates for conveying bombs and shells. The war continues and the factory has now switched to making coffins for the dead German troops abroad and the civilian victims of the mostly RAF bombing.

The population is so frightened of these postcards that they are being handed in to police stations. Only something like eighteen cards out of about two hundred and fifty are either kept or destroyed by the finders, but are most likely destroyed for to possess one is to be charged with treason. The Gestapo play a crafty game as the cards are handed in.

The real Hampels are eventually picked up by the Gestapo and end up before a People's Court and sentenced to be beheaded, as are the Quangels in the novel. There is a vivid description of their imprisonment and interrogation and of that of their friends and acquaintances at 8, Prinz Albrecht Strasse, Berlin – Gestapo headquarters. The novel is liable

bring in the Nazi era. On another occasion he is asked what he is doing about the Jews.

Under extreme pressure he now decides to write about some financial scandal concerning a couple of Jewish bankers in the 1920s. It was already a well-known story before the Nazi period. Britain had been identifying people in the dock as Jews from the beginning of the 20th Century, along with anyone who turned out to be foreign as well as being Irish. Most of us now look back with hindsight and shudder after this post-war *enlightenment*. Critics today of this major novel sneer at Fallada's inclusion of the fate of an elderly Jewish woman, who is being sheltered by a judge who was forced to step down from the law after Hitler came to power. Some critics call it possibly opportunistic.

They sneer at the Hampels' change of heart about the Nazi Government after Elise's brother is killed during the invasion of France, saying they supported Hitler previous to that. But Hitler was popular, as indicated by the giant support rallies seen on old newsreel film. The Germans fought to the end against the Russians, especially in Berlin, causing thousands of Russian casualties when that city was already doomed. The critics are never quite sure if the population supported Hitler and are therefore the *bad* Germans or totally rejected him to be the *good* Germans. But they will never forgive them for not resisting *en masse*. I wonder what the same critics would do if they had of lived in wartime Britain under Nazi occupation. I would think the English, being a clever people, would have opted for the French solution under German occupation: sue for peace and go on to watch Germany destroy itself in its assault on Russia. In the end Britain sent saboteurs into occupied France that caused savage retaliation against the French people while at the same time watching Russian as she bore the brunt of the fighting that caused her to have up to 26 million deaths.

Falada's life during the Nazi period continued to be an uneasy one not only politically but with his continuing addiction to drugs and alcohol. In one incident in 1944 he shoots and wounds his wife during a drunken argument. She in turn wrestles the gun off him and smashes him over the head with it.

Again he is in a psychiatric hospital which is there not to heal but to sort out those *not worthy of life*. It is a hospital where the staff regularly beat up the patients and give others a lethal injection. He was said to have had a narrow escape as a *decadent*.

He instils into us the fact that the concentration camp was originally for the German dissenter and that he himself was never very far from its grim entrance.

Then the Russians come and make him mayor of Carwitz and its surrounding area, a townland outside Berlin where he is now living. The Soviets have lost no time in setting up their administration. Johannes R. Becher, a poet and friend of Fallada, is made Minister for Culture. He gives him the files on the Hampel's case which have been recovered from Gestapo headquarters. Fallada writes an account of their interrogation, trial and execution for the Soviet-sponsored German magazine *Reconstruction*. In October, 1945 he signs a contract with *Reconstruction*, the publishing company, again a Soviet-sponsored German body, to write a novel based on the Hampels.. His health is deteriorating through years of addiction and he ends in hospital again.

Eventually he writes *Alone In Berlin* in 24 days shortly before his death in 1947 at the age of 53. He sees it as his greatest work. It's hard not to agree despite a few flaws involving sentimentality and religion. But these are minor points as the novel is on the side of the resurgence of human spirit under dire conditions. The Quangels start off in timidity and fear but after their arrest they grow resistant to physical and psychological violence from the Gestapo. One of the interrogators cannot knock the look of defiance out of Otto Quangel's eyes. In the end he starts to feel the lesser human being.

Of course some of today's critics are critical of the Goebbels incident. They forget that most of today's writers in Britain are supporting their country's adventures abroad and seem to agree with the locking-up of Muslims on very flimsy grounds at home. They don't have to fear the concentration camp, though

not being published could destroy some of them in the end. An earlier generation unashamedly supported the worst excesses of British colonialism. Today the new generation of writers mostly see the British Empire as a taboo subject and justify their neglect as *moving on*, as they have *moved on* from Iraq and Libya and are preparing to *move on* from Afghanistan while supporting the destruction of yet a another secular state like Syria. That too can provide a *moving on*. Like consumer goods, great chunks of history have become throw-aways.

One academic in an Afterword to the book describes the Hampels as being working-class and ill-educated with their illiterate postcards frightening the population and being in the end unsuccessful. I wonder then why *Alone In Berlin*, based on this *dull couple*, has sold hundreds of thousands of copies and is still selling well all over the world.

This academic prefers the university-educated group called White Rose which operated, according to him, on a more sophisticated level from 1942 – 1943. He doesn't enlarge on their activities or tells us what happened to them.

He is even more intrigued by the aristocratic Claus Schenk Graf Stauffenberg, the key figure in the 20 July, 1944 plot to assassinate Hitler. Much more potent than the Hampels's effort of course. He doesn't pause for a moment to think that maybe Stauffenberg, after the news of D-Day on 6th June, 1944, might want the Nazi administration, without Hitler, to make a deal with the US/UK/France forces. They could then occupy Germany before the Soviets entered with a vengeance.

Read *Alone In Berlin* and feel the fear and anguish as it rises from the pages.

Stephen Richards

The McCabe Experience

It's great to have an outlet where I can rant on about how dreadful everything is. I suppose it's like a safety valve for me, preventing a complete internal nuclear meltdown; and for as long as my public is prepared to indulge me I'll continue to engage in this therapeutic activity. In my private life I'm serene and well-adjusted. It's the *zeitgeist* that's driving me crazy. I'll listen to the *Schubertfest*, or *Schubertiade*, on Radio

3 while I type this, instead of *Any Questions* (or the country music show on Radio Ulster), in the hope that it might temper my inner rage, so give Schubert the credit for any gleam of reason in what follows.

Now, I have to say that I don't think it's always a good idea to read a book before sitting down to criticise it. In this I think Sidney Smith was quite right; it only prejudices the mind, and I'm usually

prejudiced enough to begin with. So I'll make no apology for never having read *The Butcher Boy* by Patrick McCabe. I think I read the blurb on the back cover many years ago, and concluded immediately it wasn't for me, just as at a banquet in a sheikh's tent I might decide to pass on the sheeps' eyes without actually sampling them. There's a sort of instinct that tells me what's good for me. I haven't thought much about it since, and certainly don't believe my life has been impoverished by the lack of the McCabe experience. Not all experiences in life are rewarding, and literary experiences can be toxic as well as positive.

The world of letters hasn't shared my view. I find that this novel was a contender for the Booker Prize in 1992 (now the Man Booker prize: in my innocence I initially thought that this particular award was going to be restricted to male novelists. But Man has nothing to do with men, just as the Booker people, I would say, are only tangentially interested in books).

Responsible Parent

I was confronted with Mr. McCabe lately in the context of trying to advise daughter number three, Eva, on options for a fourth "A" Level, or "AS" Level, to be more precise. The other three subjects were sorted but would it be English Lit., Classical Civilisation (Class Civ.) or Religious Education for the coveted fourth slot? I won't bore you with the details, which I found a bit boring too, but there was quite a lot of dithering over this. Year one English Lit. looked pretty good: *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *The Great Gatsby* were among the set books I think.

My ideal English Lit. school syllabus would feature a couple of Shakespeare plays, some Milton, some Chaucer, and no novels after about 1960. We don't know yet if any of them are any good; and even if we did know we're too close to them to be able to understand them properly. Best stick to the nineteenth century for novels. No, I don't really mean that, but I'm veering towards that view.

Anyway, enquiries revealed that McCabe's book is also on the syllabus, which had me choking over my green tea. The first passage that Eva came across on flitting idly through it, she says, nearly made her physically sick. It's certainly a far cry from that time in the late seventies when Ian Paisley created a rumpus about a book called *The Little World of Don Camillo* on the ground that it portrayed a Catholic priest,

in Mexico I think, in a good light. In 2012, in the decent world of middle class Protestant Ballymena not a dog has barked.

Literary Research

So, I decided to remind myself of the plot, in Wikipedia of course. All I'd remembered was that it dealt with some nasty goings-on in County Monaghan in the 1950s. Wikipedia filled in the rest. Given that one would rather enjoy life than otherwise, I'm unable to imagine who could possibly enjoy reading McCabe or indeed do so willingly, quite apart from the fact that it's apparently written in some kind of tedious 'stream of consciousness' format without much in the way of punctuation or inverted commas. One is up against this problem of what is literature, but just as I refuse to accept that the heavy metal music that you feel churning around in your stomach instead of hearing with your ears. is really music at all, so I equally refuse to accept that novels which attack you in the gut for the sake of some kind of sensation are really novels.

I wonder is McCabe's book really a picture of rural life in the border counties a generation or so ago, or anywhere else for that matter. I've spent many days walking back and forth in Monaghan and the adjacent districts of Cavan and have been struck by the sheer unassuming pleasantness of it all. Little did I suspect this same region was infested with psychopaths. This is really a cartoon world. Real people have a complexity about them that results in unexpected kindnesses breaking out where we would least expect it, and *vice versa*, as many years in the legal profession have taught me. The whole point about the fictional hero is that we somehow identify with him or her. So, even in relation to "bad" heroes like Macbeth we feel that, but for the grace of God, there go I, and the result is added self-knowledge.

Calvinism With A Human Face

It's a funny thing but, when Calvinists and other Christians start talking about the hopeless depravity of "*the natural man*", and about the proper regard we should have for the reality of Hell, they're literally laughed to scorn in the non-judgmental world we now inhabit, where, if God exists, we can shape him as we see fit so that he's in no way threatening to us or our lifestyle. How dare anybody suggest that our basic orientation as human beings is to deviate from the conduct that we know in our consciences to be true. How dare anybody suggest we're sinners! And as

for a wrathful God . . .

No, we're children of infinite possibilities, held back from realisation of them only by the structural faults of the socio-economic systems we inhabit, and by the vestiges of superstition with which we're still surrounded. That theory was tested to destruction in the late 1960s by the middle class college kids in California who instituted the Summer of Love. A couple of summers later we were in Charles Manson territory and the Altamont concert of 1969.

And if we look at the literature produced by the elite that has banished God from the cosmos what do we find if not the most depraved conduct of all, and societies that are hellish in the extreme? We have Brett Easton Ellis and the film-maker Quentin Tarantino who have, like the Aztecs, refined the most excruciating violence into a (supposed) art form. We have some guy called Jim Crace, whose novel, *Being Dead*, apparently charts the decomposition of the bodies of a couple who have died as a result of taking a wrong turn in the desert. We have the art of Francis Bacon, Damien Hirst and others. At a less extreme end of the spectrum comes a soap opera called *East Enders*, which has been running on the BBC since about 1986. I've never seen an episode, but a letter-writer to a national paper was complaining recently that no one in it ever seems to smile. Instead it's full of snarling, anger, lust, betrayal and backbiting, from beginning to end. Even St. Augustine, Calvin's mentor, acknowledged the virtues of the pagans, even if he did call them *splendida vitia*! As G.K. Chesterton might have said, the cult of gritty realism has got to the stage that it's no longer realistic. Part of the human dilemma is that we can perceive the good though we don't do it. That window has been closed for us. It's not that we can't see the good, rather that there's no good to perceive. The search for it is a nonsense.

The Good, The Bad, & The Ugly

But the fish rots from the head down, and it's the literary elite that has set the course we're now sailing in our joyless voyage through a non-Calvinistic if even more deterministic sea of human depravity. Now I'm quite prepared to accept that literature should be challenging, uncomfortable, and that it might even be harrowing at times in a sort of cathartic way. There has been extreme violence embedded in the dramatic and, later, novelistic tradition from the beginning. One of the great popular historical

novelists of our day is Bernard Cornwell—no relation of the dreadful Patricia!—and you'll find plenty of violence there, but also a kind of proper narrative context for the violence which sets up appropriate ethical dilemmas. Bernard Cornwell's heroes are men of action, Saxon warriors and mediaeval English bowmen, with consciences of a sort, even if operating only fitfully. The novels don't set out to churn up your stomach for the sake of it, and you can immediately sense the difference. And while my admiration for the *oeuvre* of John Le Carré is qualified, I would say the same about him.

There's a huge difference between what I would call the proper use of fictional violence, shock and horror, between that and having the knife repeatedly twisted in your imagination with malice aforethought. The purpose is to desensitise the reader to normal human reactions, because these normal human reactions shouldn't really exist. It doesn't take all that much ability to achieve a kind of pornographic effect, and it doesn't much matter if it's sex or violence, because the "sex" is just as stomach churning and indeed violent. Brendan Clifford pointed out many years ago that the State has long since given up trying to police verbal pornography, so I believe it's up to us to do some self-policing, if only to preserve our sanity. The people who make the rules must possess chromium-plated imaginations but the rest of us need to watch out.

I can't think why schools with the supposed freedom to choose have prostrated themselves before books that seem to lack literary or any other kind of merit, but I think I do have some idea of the agenda of those who have decreed that these are the kind of books that should be in line for the patronage and the prizes, whereas the likes of Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy*, contemporaneous with McCabe, wasn't even shortlisted for Booker.

The C.S. Lewis Angle

It wasn't enough to banish God from the sphere of normal human discourse, as a reality to be taken account of. That was however a necessary means to a further end, an end which was identified by C.S. Lewis many years ago as the abolition of Man. Man is the real target. It is intolerable to the intellectual mandarins of our time that there should be people going about thinking that their lives have some purpose. Intolerable that there should be people who, at least in principle, hold to a real hierarchy of values or to objective criteria of merit in

literature, music and art. Even if I know what I like, my inability to get the same pleasure out of Schubert as I get from Emmylou Harris is really a reflection on my stunted musical development. But even in the University Music Departments these days it's a case of Roll Over Beethoven, before the onward march of the ethno-musicologists.

Dennis Kennedy in his memoir, *Climbing Slemish*, illustrates nicely the search for meaning among the nuts and bolts of life, drawn from his first experience of climbing that remarkable mountain, and of course this holds good for whatever mountain you choose:

"On the way down my brother and I took a shorter, steeper route... As we came down I could see the chaos of it all—rocks strewn at random, bits of heather, some scrawny bushes. Nothing had any shape to it, just disorder. Looking back over my shoulder there was nothing but a misshapen piece of ground.

"After a tea of boiled eggs, soda bread and raspberry jam, my brother and I wandered out of the house, round the corner and up to the gate. There was Slemish, put back together again, as magnificent as ever. But I knew that it was not what it seemed; it was just a heap of rubble. Or was it? Which was the real mountain—the one everybody could recognise, or the one only those who had gone to climb it knew about?

Will The Real Slemish Stand Up?

The biblical authors, especially in the Old Testament, know all about disorder. They spend a surprising amount of time bemoaning the lack of meaningful narrative—let alone meta-narrative—in their own lives, the life of the nation, and in the history of God's treatment of them. But the very bitterness of the complaints gives a clue to the need we have for meaning in our lives. That's why "*the human heart is a factory of idols*" (Calvin). Worship of something, of somebody or other, is a psychological necessity for us. "*You gotta serve somebody*" sang Bob Dylan in one of his previous lives. "*Freud or Calvary, take your pick*" (Betjeman). That's the way we've been made.

And the lovely outline of Slemish isn't an illusion either. It's just as real as the wasteland of stones. The Oxford-based Armagh man John Lennox says somewhere, though I can't find the passage, that the mark of the reductionist is the incessant use of the word "*only*". So, the virtues that we praise in others, whether courage, self-sacrifice *a la* Captain Oates or whatever, are really

"*only*" evolutionary survival mechanisms, counter-intuitive though this may seem. Our individual and collective bad behaviour is similarly just down to us dancing to the music of our genes. Whatever the question, Darwin/Dawkins is the answer. For example, a sexual free-for-all is Darwinian, but so is the marriage custom.

And of course the mind itself is regarded with supreme suspicion as it has been known to operate in an unpredictable fashion. So the existence of the mind is denied, which leaves us wondering what part of us is the real person. No expressions of opinion are to have any validity in and of themselves. Instead they have to be put down to some innate ideological or social bias. More fundamentally than that even, our whole outlook can be explained in terms of neuroscience.

Making Sense Of The World

For those who think they can get by without God, the need for some coherent explanation of things, not necessarily at a philosophical level but just at a day-to-day level, is just as pressing. Even if we can't make any sense of the world around us we can't give up on the hope that one day we will, so our lives typically oscillate between hope at one extreme and, not perhaps despair, but a pervading sense of futility at the other. The young Jackson Browne put this memorably in *For A Dancer* (from his 1973 album *Late for the Sky*), his elegy for the untimely death of a friend.

Keep a fire for the human race,
Let your prayers go drifting into space;
You never know what will be coming
down.

Perhaps a better world is drawing near,
Just as easily it could all disappear,
Together with whatever meaning you
might have found:

Don't let the uncertainty turn you
around,
Go on and make a joyful sound.

Just do the steps as you've been shown,
Like a seed somebody else has sown;
Go ahead and sow some seeds of your
own,
And somewhere, between the time you
arrive and the time you go,
May lie a reason for your life that you
will never know.

Those who call the shots in the world of literature don't want there to be any hope at all, not even the glimmer of a

hope. But our spirits need the possibility of hope, the possibility of meaning, in the same way our bodies need oxygen. If, as we're constantly being told, we're all living lives of quiet desperation we know who to blame.

Sub-Humans Not To Blame

Dostoevsky said that once God is banished then everything is permissible. All behaviour becomes somehow decoupled from accountability. We're just a sophisticated kind of animal. There's nothing special about us. We share 98 per cent of our genes with chimps etc. (We also share nearly as many with fruit flies I think.) So, if we're just a clever type of animal, then we have *carte blanche* to behave like animals, indeed in ways that would make any self-respecting animal hang its head in shame. That is all consistent with the project, that each of us should exist in his or her unaccountable universe.

Back in 1968 there was a progressive Dame called Lady Wootton who argued that the purpose of penal policy should not be penal. The criminals were not really criminal, just people whose actions were not compatible with social harmony, so we shouldn't punish them, but treat them, and it would be even better if we predicted who they were going to be because then we could give them remedial treatment before they had committed any crimes, sorry, offences. I came across a variant of this in a recent news item in the paper, where it was reported that anti-social tendencies could be detected in infants as young as two, so no doubt the treatment should start early.

The Glasgow coma scale may still exist, but the spectrum of moral values is looking like an increasingly cloudy phenomenon. Certainly, like those Gentiles described in Romans Chapter 2 we still go about accusing and excusing one another. That tendency has been hard-wired into us, and old habits die hard, but the moral categories are getting hard to discern.

A Designer Universe

This lack of meaning in our lives has a depressive effect on us. I've been following the Dawkins debate in this magazine with interest. One of the hate figures in the world of Dawkins is Michael Behe whose 1996 book *Darwin's Black Box* was if not the earliest at least the most lucid example of the Intelligent Design hypothesis. His background is biochemistry at Leigh University Pennsylvania, where the authorities

have pointedly distanced themselves from him. I guess he must be near retirement as far as one can judge. I went to a talk he gave in Belfast about a year ago. In many areas he doesn't have a huge problem with Darwinian theory, but his big idea is that there is unmistakable evidence of design in the human and animal world, most evident for him at the biochemical level, which he illustrates extensively. He refuses to go beyond this. For him to do so would be, as he says, above his paygrade. He has no theological or philosophical training. For these modest observations Behe has been savaged by the neo-Darwinians, as any search engine will evidence.

It's an article of faith that there should be no evidence of design in the natural world because that might smuggle God back in and, who knows, he might turn out to be the God of the Christians. This shows that Dawkins and his followers are ultimately more interested in anti-God propagandising than they are in science. To respond to the fairly obvious points that Behe is making they have come up with ever more elaborate explanations of why it is that the universe displays the illusion of design. This all goes to show that if you wilfully close your eyes against the light for long enough you get to the point where you lose the ability to see.

Who Planted The Illusion?

Joe Keenan

The Politics Of Darwinism – Part Five

A Scientific Digression, Part Two

Fleeming Jenkin & The Matter Of Proof

The first part of this scientific digression from *The Politics Of Darwinism* appeared one year ago, in issue 104 of this very busy magazine. There I attempted a brief demonstration of the shoddiness of the science of Darwinism as practised by Darwin himself. I hope that succeeded at least in raising questions about the matter.

In its aspect as ideological construct, Darwinism was almost immediately victorious in England. Certainly by 1871, when, with publication of *The Descent Of Man*, Darwin made it clear that his revelation, like that of the evangelists, prophesied Universal Dominion to the children of Albion, almost all cultural objections to the theory had faded away.

It also reminds me of Philip Gosse, naturalist father of Edmund. His discoveries in the fossil realm clashed with the "young earth creationism" which he felt had to be part of his Christian faith. He therefore began to speculate about whether God had deliberately planted the fossils so as to convey the illusory impression of age, as a test of faith, just as we have high quality "distressed" reproduction antique furniture. Predictably Gosse was ridiculed, and the ridicule hasn't let up. But here we find the impartial seekers after truth doing exactly the same in refusing to admit the possibility of design. Like the Dutch boy with his finger in the dyke they know that, if they were to give way at this point, their defences would be swamped.

We've come a long way from Patrick McCabe. I don't know if there's any way of escaping from this dungeon of the soul, where the walls are covered in demonic images. It's an example of what the theologians call realised eschatology, hell before its time. If, like the sparrow, we come out of the darkness and disappear again into the darkness, it's a pity that we have to endure such undiluted nastiness in between.

And in the end Eva plumped for Economics, i.e. none of the above. I'm sure that's where the real meaning of life can be found.

(A few years later, in 1878, writing to the eugenicist G.A. Gaskell, opposing artificial checks on the Malthusian mechanism of unrestrained population growth, Darwin wrote "Suppose that such checks had been in existence during the last two or three centuries, or even for a shorter time in Britain, what a difference it would have made in the world, when we consider America, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa! No words can exaggerate the importance, in my opinion, of our colonization for the future history of the world." What scientifically-minded Englishman could resist a science that gave him the solace of such encouragement?)

Darwinism was originally developed within the scientific wing of the British establishment to carry its Imperial

mission over the hurdle of a failure of specifically religious enthusiasm for it. And it worked. Darwin's evolutionary mechanism of natural selection (the constant war of all against all) proved to be a perfect tool for mediating the transition from a religious to a scientific justification of, and imperative to, English world domination.

However, it succeeded just at the moment when the old religious impulse to Empire was reviving. Disraeli's 1867 Reform Act brought the Methodist lower-middle and working classes into the body of the English Constitution and propelled them, Wesleyan hymn-books in hand, out into and against the world. Though the biological case for England did not thereby become unnecessary, its necessity was no longer so pressing, so urgent, so intellectually overwhelming: consequently a great deal of the energy which Darwin and his promoters had lavished on providing suitable propaganda for the social breadth around them was turned inward, to their lives, their careers, and other interests. And so the science of it all languished; without unravelling exactly it sort of . . . unwound.

People began to notice that the phrase "*survival of the fittest*"—which Darwin borrowed from Herbert Spencer ("*our greatest living philosopher*", he called him) as a racier, altogether sexier, synonym for "*natural selection*"—unwraps as a circular argument embodying the emptiest of trivial tautological truths: the fittest survive because they are the fittest, who are fittest because it is they who survive.

I've read more than any man should have to of Darwinian tracts denying that; because Darwin didn't mean it in respect of individuals, and anyway meant nothing moral by it, and, in any event, no judgement was thereby inflicted on the undeserving unselected.

But, among much else of a similar bent, Darwin wrote, in the *Recapitulation And Conclusion*, in the last pages of the sixth and final edition of his *Origin Of Species*:

"...as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection.

...from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows."

(And, by the by, why "*higher*", why always up? If evolution has to proceed

in a direction, could it not be south, or east? I suppose its because of the *desiderata* of the notion of progress that impels the object of progress ever onwards and upwards: like RAF bombers shouting "*Per Ardua Ad Astra*" as they murder the undeserving unselected being blown to bits below. Development, thankfully, proceeds in no particular direction, it just occurs generally, and bears, perhaps in consequence, no similar genocidal imperative. Let's give up this nonsense about evolving up, all this mess of progress, and agree among ourselves just to develop! And that in a more rounded kind of a way)

All that endowment and exaltation, all that perfection leaves no doubt but that Darwin meant his fittest to survive in that most splendid of logical tangles, a teleological tautology.

Then, with the tautological glamour peeling off an increasingly tawdry edifice, the charm of its science began to fade.

And so, in June 1867, an anonymous article appeared in the *North British Review* (articles in which were usually unsigned), entitled *Darwin and the Origin of Species*; a review of Darwin's book which put a very fit cat among a group of rather flabby Darwinian pigeons.

Within a year or so the author of the article was known to be Henry Charles Fleeming Jenkin (1833-85), a young, but very accomplished, engineer. According to the *Memoir* by his friend and pupil, Robert Louis Stevenson (which prefaces the posthumous edition of his papers (*Papers & Memoir of Fleeming Jenkin*, in two volumes, London, 1886)) Jenkin was at the age of 15 a sympathetic eyewitness to the early phase of the Paris Commune; at the age of 17 he "*passed his Master of Arts degree with first class honours*" at the University of Genoa, having gone "*deeply into electromagnetism*". Early in the 1860's Jenkin became friendly (and a business partner) with the physicist William Thomson (later Lord Kelvin) and through him became interested in the scientific basis of Darwinism.

In the *North British Review* then, Jenkin gave a *precis* of Darwin's *Origin Of Species* and proceeded to review it, beginning...

"...if all beings are thus descended from a common ancestry, a complete historical record would show an unbroken chain of creatures, reaching from each one now known back to the first type, with each link differing from its neighbour by no more than the several

offspring of a single pair of animals now differ. We have no such record..." (Papers, p.216).

He then argued against Darwin's ideas on variability.

"...(The) theory rests on the assumption that natural selection can do slowly what man's selection does quickly; it is by showing how much man can do, that Darwin hopes to prove how much can be done without him. But if man's selection cannot double, treble, quadruple, centuple, any special divergence from a parent stock, why should we imagine that natural selection should have that power? When we have granted that the 'struggle for life' might produce the pouter or the fantail, or any divergence man can produce, we need not feel one whit the more disposed to grant that it can produce divergences beyond man's power. The difference between six years and six myriads, blinding by a confused sense of immensity, leads men to say hastily that if six or sixty years can make a pouter out of a common pigeon, six myriads may change a pigeon to something like a thrush; but this seems no more accurate than to conclude that because we observe that a cannon-ball has traversed a mile in a minute, therefore in an hour it will be sixty miles off, and in the course of ages that it will reach the stars..." (ibid, p.219).

The point being that there is a necessary limit to the "*improvement*" which selection, be it human and artificial or natural, can impart to any species.

"We all believe that a breeder, starting business with a considerable stock of average horses, could, by selection, in a very few generations, obtain horses able to run much faster than any of their sires or dams; in time perhaps he would obtain descendants running twice as fast as their ancestors, and possibly equal to our race-horses. But would not the difference in speed between each successive generation be less and less? Hundreds of skilful men are yearly breeding thousands of racers. Wealth and honour await the man who can breed one horse to run one part in five thousand faster than his fellows. As a matter of experience, have our racers improved in speed by one part in a thousand during the last twenty generations? Could we not double the speed of a cart-horse in twenty generations? Here is the analogy with our cannon-ball; the rate of variation in a given direction is not constant, is not erratic; it is a constantly diminishing rate, tending therefore to a limit..."

"We are thus led to believe that whatever new point in the variable beast, bird, or flower, be chosen as desirable by a fancier, this point can be rapidly approached at first, but that the rate of approach quickly diminishes, tending to a limit never to be attained" (ibid, pp.219-220).

In Jenkin's view...

"A given animal or plant appears to be contained, as it were, within a sphere of variation; one individual lies near one portion of the surface, another individual, of the same species, near another part of the surface; the average animal at the centre. Any individual may produce descendants varying in any direction, but is more likely to produce descendants varying towards the centre of the sphere, and the variations in that direction will be greater in amount than the variations towards the surface. Thus, a set of racers of equal merit indiscriminately breeding will produce more colts and foals of inferior than of superior speed, and the falling off of the degenerate will be greater than the improvement of the select...

"...This limit to the variation of species seems to be established for all cases of man's selection. What argument does Darwin offer showing that the law of variation will be different when the variation occurs slowly, not rapidly? The law may be different, but is there any experimental ground for believing that it is different?" (ibid, pp.221-222).

Jenkin began his discussion of the

"Efficiency of Natural Selection" by making the clear point that if it operates at all it is vastly more likely to act to conserve the current state of the species it is acting upon than it is to disrupt it:—

"Those individuals of any species which are most adapted to the life they lead, live on an average longer than those which are less well adapted to the circumstances in which the species is placed. The individuals which live the longest will have the most numerous offspring, and as the offspring on the whole resemble their parents, the descendants from any given generation will on the whole resemble the more favoured rather than the less favoured individuals of the species. So much of the theory of natural selection will hardly be denied; but it will be worth while to consider how far this process can tend to cause a variation in some one direction. It is clear that it will frequently, and indeed generally, tend to prevent any deviation from the common type. The mere existence of a species is a proof that it is tolerably well adapted to the life it must lead; many of the variations which may occur

will be variations for the worse, and natural selection will assuredly stamp these out. A white grouse in the heather, or a white hare on a fallow, would be sooner detected by its enemies than one of the usual plumage or colour" (ibid, pp.225-226).

He then distinguished between—

"...two distinct kinds of possible variation {...which...} must be separately considered: *first*, that kind of common variation which must be conceived as not only possible, but inevitable, in each individual of the species, such as longer and shorter legs, better or worse hearing, etc.; and, *secondly*, that kind of variation which only occurs rarely, and may be called a sport of nature, or more briefly a 'sport', as when a child is born with six fingers on each hand." (ibid, p. 226)

—and went on to allow in respect of common variation...

"...that if an accumulation of slight improvements be possible, natural selection might improve hares as hares, and weasels as weasels, that is to say, it might produce animals having every useful organ of their ancestors developed to a higher degree...

"...Thus, it must apparently be conceded that natural selection is a true cause or agency whereby in some cases variations of special organs may be perpetuated and accumulated, but the importance of this admission is much limited by a consideration of the cases to which it applies: first of all we have required that it should apply to variations which must occur in every individual, so that enormous numbers of individuals will exist, all having a little improvement in the same direction; as, for instance, each generation of hares will include an enormous number which have longer legs than the average of their parents, although there may be an equally enormous number which have shorter legs; secondly, we require that the variation shall occur in an organ already useful owing to the habits of the animal. Such a process of improvement as is described could certainly never give organs of sight, smell, or hearing to organisms which had never possessed them. It could not add legs to a hare or produce a new organ, or even cultivate any rudimentary organ which was not immediately useful to an enormous majority of hares...Admitting, therefore, that natural selection may improve organs already useful to great numbers of a species, does not imply an admission that it can create or develop new organs, and so originate species" (pp.227-228).

Which only left the mutation, the

sport of saltation as a possible source, when worked upon by natural selection, for new species to originate from. Jenkin produced a complicated mathematical demonstration of the impossibility for a sport to serve as the origin of a new species which can safely be ignored here; especially as it is illustrated by his infamous "*shipwreck*" story.

"Suppose a white man to have been wrecked on an island inhabited by negroes, and to have established himself in friendly relations with a powerful tribe, whose customs he has learnt. Suppose him to possess the physical strength, energy and ability of a dominant white race, and let the food and climate of the island suit his constitution; grant him every advantage which we can conceive a white to possess over the native; concede that in the struggle for existence his chance of a long life will be much superior to that of the native chiefs; yet from all these admissions there does not follow the conclusion that, after a limited or unlimited number of generations, the inhabitants of the island will be white. Our shipwrecked hero would probably become king; he would kill a great many blacks in the struggle for existence; he would have a great many wives and children, while many of his subjects would live and die as bachelors; an insurance company would accept his life at perhaps one-tenth of the premium which they would exact from the most favoured of the negroes. Our white's qualities would certainly tend very much to preserve him to a good old age, and yet he would not suffice in any number of generations to turn his subjects' descendants white. It may be said that the white colour is not the cause of the superiority. True, but it may be used simply to bring before the senses the way in which qualities belonging to one individual in a large number must be gradually obliterated. In the first generation there will be some dozens of intelligent young mulattoes, much superior in average intelligence to the negroes. We might expect the throne for some generations to be occupied by a more or less yellow king; but can anyone believe that the whole island will gradually acquire a white or even a yellow population, or that the islanders would acquire the energy, courage, ingenuity, patience, self-control, endurance, in virtue of which qualities our hero killed so many of their ancestors, and begot so many children; those qualities, in fact, which the struggle for existence would select, if it could select anything?

"Here is a case in which a variety was introduced, with far greater advantages than any sport ever heard of,

advantages tending to its preservation, and yet powerless to perpetuate the new variety" (ibid, pp.229-230).

The automatic racism of that is offensive, also instructive. At least it was not deployed, like Darwinism, in a theory designed to embed it eternally as the ideology of World Empire.

Jenkin went on to show that the most recent experimental physics, William Thomson's work in thermodynamics, overthrew the 'steady state', uninformatarian geology of Whewell and Lyell and undermined the notion of countless former ages which Darwin required for 'natural selection' to work in, accumulating innumerable small changes that would eventually produce new species.

Of Darwin's very questionable method of going about the business of science, he wrote:

"The chief arguments used to establish {...Darwin's...} theory rest on conjecture. Beasts may have varied; variations may have accumulated; they may have become permanent; continents may have arisen or sunk, and seas and winds been so arranged as to dispose of animals just as we find them, now spreading a race wildly, now confining it to one Galapagos island. There may be records of infinitely more animals than we know of in geological formations yet unexplored. Myriads of species differing little from those we know to have been preserved, may actually not have been preserved at all. There may have been an inhabited world for ages before the earliest known geological strata. The world may indeed have been inhabited for an indefinite time; even the geological observations may perhaps give a most insufficient idea of the enormous times which separated one formation from another: the peculiarities of hybrids may result from accidental differences between the parents, not from what have been called specific differences.

"We are asked to believe all these maybe's happening on an enormous scale, in order that we may believe the final Darwinian 'maybe', as to the origin of species. The general form of his argument is as follows:—All these things may have been, therefore my theory is possible, and since my theory is a possible one, all those hypotheses which it requires are rendered probable. There is little direct evidence that any of these maybe's actually have been" (ibid, pp.257-258).

In the first part of this scientific digression I quoted Darwin in full flood with all his maybes and howandsoevers proving that, since it may perhaps have

been the case that the eye evolved under the direction of natural selection, why, then, it most assuredly had done so. Anyone who may be disposed to doubt Jenkin or myself about Darwin's feet of clay, perhaps, or maybe concrete, might possibly read that, if not perhaps the *Origin Of Species* itself.

At the finish Jenkin concluded...

"These arguments are cumulative. If it be true that no species can vary beyond defined limits, it matters little whether natural selection would be efficient in producing definite variations. If natural selection, though it does select the stronger average animals and under peculiar circumstances may develop special organs already useful, can never select new imperfect organs such as are produced in sports, then, even though eternity were granted, and no limit assigned to the possible changes of animals, Darwin's cannot be the true explanation of the manner in which change has been brought about. Lastly, even if no limit be drawn to the possible difference between offspring and their progenitors, and if natural selection were admitted to be an efficient cause capable of building up even new senses, even then, unless time, vast time, be granted, the changes which might have been produced by the gradual selection of peculiar offspring have not really been so produced. Any one of the main pleas of our argument, if established, is fatal to Darwin's theory... A plausible theory should not be accepted while unproven; and if the arguments of this essay be admitted, Darwin's theory of the origin of species is not only without sufficient support from evidence, but is proved false by accumulative proof."

Jenkin was arguing against Darwin on the basis of the science of the time, the same science that Darwin was appealing to. And on that basis, Darwin could not reply to him, and didn't attempt to.

Susan Morris wrote a commentary, *Fleeming Jenkin and "The Origin of Species": A Reassessment* (see *The British Journal for the History of Science*, Vol. 27, No. 3. September, 1994). She deals with the "*problem of swamping*", which is raised by the story of the shipwreck, where the wonderful white mutation disappears in the mass of the surrounding population. Darwin's need to "*accelerate the evolutionary process*" stemmed from the loss of his "*countless ages*":

"Darwin came to believe that 'negative selection', the increased destruction of non-adapted creatures,

would not only help overcome the problem of swamping but, more important, would accelerate the evolutionary process. Negative selection consequently became more prominent in the later editions of the *Origin*. We see this change in Darwin's thinking most clearly if we look back at Darwin's explanation to Kingsley, in June 1867, of how he would modify his wording in describing variation and selection. Darwin had then written,

"I would now say that of all the birds annually born, some will have a beak a shade longer, & some a shade shorter, & that under condition or habits of life favouring a longer beak, all the individuals, with beaks a little longer would be more apt to survive than those with beaks shorter than average.'

"Eighteen months later, however, for the fifth (1869) edition of the *Origin*, Darwin had altered his example, from an emphasis on increased survival to one on increased destruction:

"If... a bird of some kind could procure its food more easily by having its beak curved, and if one were born with its beak strongly curved, and which consequently flourished, {from this would follow} the preservation of a large number of individuals ... curved beaks, and...the destruction of a still larger number with the straightest beaks.'

"The element of increased destruction of the original creatures appeared to solve the problem of swamping. More necessary for Darwin, however, was that it shortened the time required for a variant organism to become successful. And by the time Darwin introduced this change to the *Origin*, shortening the time had become of paramount importance. This one idea, therefore, simultaneously helped solve two of the problems raised by Jenkin: swamping by large numbers, and the short age of the earth..." (pp.341-42).

However, the idea of "*negative selection*". as Morris explains it adds nothing to the original idea of "*natural selection*", which described a war in which all the winners lived and all the losers died. Natural selection involved just as much negativity by way of destruction and extinction in the First edition of the *Origin Of Species* as it did the Fifth. And I can't find any trace of the term "*negative selection*" in (admittedly the sixth edition of) the *Origin*.

The problems which Fleeming Jenkin raised in 1867 were unanswerable at that time. Twenty and a few years

later they could be answered, but in no way thanks to developments within Darwinism.

The discovery of the earth's fluid mantle and of radioactivity and the development of radiometric dating permitted reliable calculations of the age of the earth; from 2 to 3 billion years in 1895, to current estimates of 4.5 billion, give or take a billion here or there. None of those calculations owe anything to the shoddy science which characterised Darwin.

The problem of swamping was insoluble within contemporary theories of inheritance by blending, which may be defined as the intermingling of the characteristics of the parents so that the offspring are intermediate in form between their parents. That is the theory with which Darwin was working when he first wrote the *Origin Of Species*. It is also the theory Jenkin used in his criticisms of the book.

When he realised that 'natural selection' and 'blending inheritance' were incompatible, Darwin (in 1868, in his *Variation Of Plants And Animals Under Domestication*) developed the theory of Pangenesis which harked back to Lamarckian ideas of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Experiments by Francis Galton disposed of the hypothesis, to Galton's satisfaction if not to Darwin's.

The problem of inheritance had in fact already been solved by the Augustinian monk Gregor Mendel, whose controlled breeding experiments with peas led to the science of genetics. Mendel published his results, embodying his Principles of Heredity, in 1865-66, to little notice and no acclaim. His work owed nothing to Darwin.

Some 30 years after the publication of Mendel's paper, *Experiments On Plant Hybridization*, when chromosomes had been seen in microscopes, his work was rediscovered to some notice and, eventually, universal acclaim.

It still owed nothing to Darwin. Science, including the science of biology, was proceeding without benefit from Darwinism and without unforced reference to Darwin. That's the blunt way of putting how the world went on about its business after the initial, unscientific, enthusiasm for the *Origin Of Species* had passed.

Darwin scholarship, which is practically synonymous with Darwinist apologetics, prefers to put it differently. Like this, from Peter Bowler (*Revisiting The Eclipse Of Darwinism, Journal of the History of Biology*, Vol. 38. No. 1, Spring 2005):

"...More importantly in the long run, Darwin's mechanism also focused attention onto problems of inheritance, variation and speciation which, while not solved within the developmental paradigm, nagged away in the background until they became central to the transformation of ideas about heredity and the variability of populations at the turn of the century."

Ah yes, the developmental paradigm, the theory, Darwinism.

Still, to be fair to Bowler, he did at least notice that the initial enthusiasm for the *Origin Of Species* owed nothing to the science of the book. Its a pity he couldn't have stopped there. Unfortunately for him he goes on to claim that, in his *The Non-Darwinian Revolution*...

"...I wanted to argue that the transition to an evolutionary perspective was much less dramatic that it would have been if (as in the traditional view) Darwin's supporters had all been advocating a non-progressionist, non-teleological vision of evolution along the lines favored by twentieth-century Darwinians. Darwin was a catalyst whose theory shocked everyone into action, but was far too radical to be accepted in the form which Darwin himself intended and in which it was later taken up. The Origin was hijacked by the prevailing enthusiasm for a progressive and purposeful developmental trend in nature, with even the idea of struggle being taken over and seen as either a Lamarckian stimulus to self-improvement, or as a purely negative process for weeding out evolution's less successful efforts. On this model, the emergence of modern Darwinism required a second revolution to destroy the developmental worldview, which in science was associated with the emergence of Mendelian genetics... Here the metaphor of Darwin as a catalyst breaks down, because his more radical insights—associated not just with natural selection, but also with the theory of branching evolution driven largely by the demands of local adaptation—turned out to be central for this second revolution. Ideas that had been seen merely as a challenge by the first generation of developmental evolutionists were now exploited to the full. Put together, the two episodes mark a truly revolutionary transition in science and more generally in the way we think about the world."

He certainly should have stopped before going on to claim that the Darwinism of the *Origin Of Species* and *The Descent Of Man* wasn't real Darwinism; that real Darwinism only started with Mendelian Genetics. Though it is, I suppose, . . . inventive.

And Bowler's not the worst, not by a long chalk.

Try this, from Raphael Falk, Professor of Genetics (emeritus) at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, published in *Poetics Today*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (an issue dealing with "*General issues in the Philosophy and Sociology of Science*"), 1988:

"All {...a scientific theory...} strives for is to increase both the coherence of the observations and our capacity to explain them in a way that might suggest new and fruitful theories. Not every theory does this and, thus, there are not many theories that do it better than Darwin's theory of evolution. And if we extend predictions not only to single experiments but also to research programs, as should actually be done (see Lakatos 1970), we may agree with Jacques Monod's statement that 'the predictive power of Darwin's theory of evolution' is unique in its efficiency. At least on two occasions did Darwin's theory 'predict' or anticipate major developments of new theories, which both considerably increased our understanding of nature (Monod 1975).

"Shortly after Darwin published his book on the origin of species, he had to confront one of the most eminent physicists of his time. Lord Kelvin, the founder of modern thermodynamics, calculated that our planet could not be more than twenty-five million years old. He assumed that the sun was a huge coal furnace and when he applied the most liberal estimates available to him to the prevalent theories, he concluded that the amount of coal in the sun could not suffice for a period exceeding twenty-five million years. Darwin was left with an acute feeling of failure, since it was obvious to him that, under these circumstances, the time for evolution as he envisioned it was insufficient. Monod suggested that Darwin inadvertently 'predicted' the inadequacy of Kelvin's explanation as well as the formulation of a new physical theory whose explanatory power would supersede the theory of the preservation of energy. It can be argued that Darwin's theory actually included premises that would have refuted Einstein's theory if they had not been answered by it, as Popper demanded of scientific theories. Eventually, the falsifying argument was turned into an impressive corroboration.

"Similarly, Darwin 'predicted' or anticipated the theory of particulate entities of inheritance. Already in 1867, the mathematician Fleeming Jenkin {sic} demonstrated that Darwin's theory collapsed if it were built on the basis of Darwin's own theory of heredity. Jenkin indicated that a precondition for Darwin's theory of evolution was

the existence of a theory of inheritance of discrete particles that keep their individuality and hereditary potential from one generation to the other. The Mendelian theory of inheritance is such a theory. Formulated in 1865 and rediscovered only in 1900, it eventually 'saved' the Darwinian theory of evolution from refutation."

That is simply wonderful. Darwinism is great science, not despite its shoddiness, all its misconceptions and errors, not despite being wrong, but because of all that. By virtue of being utterly wrong Darwin predicted Mendel and predicted Kelvin. There is one phrase there that try as I may I simply cannot understand. "*Darwin's theory actually included premises that would have refuted Einstein's theory if they had not been answered by it*"—I think it has to mean Darwin works magic from beyond the grave.

And that is what science, since Darwin, has become. Because of the followers of Darwin and their continuing success in dragging his racist, genocidal, influence into everything we do. Because of which we all are devalued, and science itself is degraded. And that's not wonderful at all.

Pat Muldowney

After the wilful libel of Fr. Reynolds on RTE, Pat Muldowney wrote to Kevin Dawson, a commissioning Editor at RTE and currently head of Corporate Communications, drawing his attention to other wilful misrepresentations that were televised. Below is his letter, along with the correspondence conducted over the Coolacrease programme which travestied historical events during the War of Independence.

RTE: Kevin Dawson's Sins

25 November 2011, Pat Muldowney:
Dear Mr Dawson,

Reynolds/Dillon controversy: Lest We Forget

The recent controversy about RTE broadcasting lies about people, living and dead, should be put in the context of other similar exploits to which you are no stranger.

This seems to be a good time to bring to mind your defence (see below) of the ludicrous Coolacrease propaganda programme broadcast 23 October 2007, with

repeat broadcast in 2008. This was the programme that you, as Head of the comically named "RTÉ Factual", famously trumpeted as "Ethnic Cleansing in the Midlands".

It was eventually broadcast as "The Killings at Coolacrease", and declared, as fact, that two innocent Protestant farmers were shot in the genitals by the Irish Republican Army. It alleged this was done as part of a sectarian landgrab and attempted ethnic cleansing. When this was challenged, RTÉ's defence was that it had found hard evidence for a sectarian land grab in Land Commission documents.

The programme's propaganda was exposed. The IRA acted on the authority of the elected government against loyalist gunmen. A British Military Court of Inquiry listed the injuries received by the two loyalist gunmen, and none of the injuries were to the genitals. The "RTÉ Factual" programme concealed this evidence and instead broadcast a lie.

When the Land Commission Archive was contacted, they declared that RTÉ had never been given access to the relevant documents. Those documents were published in full in the book which exposed the propaganda ("Coolacrease: the true Story of the Pearson Executions" Aubane Historical Society, 2008, <http://aubanehistoricalsociety.org>).

The Land Commission documents actually confirm that there was no sectarian land grab.

To put the matter plainly, Mr Dawson, you have form.

(Pat Muldowney is the Co-author: "*Coolacrease: the true Story of the Pearson Executions*")

The correspondence below took place in October 2007 in connection with the RTÉ documentary "The Killings at Coolacrease" which was broadcast at the end of that month.

18 October 2007, Pat Muldowney:

Dear Mr Dawson

Re: October 23 Hidden History: The Killings at Coolacrease

I am sending you for information the two letters below, which may be circulated at your discretion.

They relate to possible bias in this documentary, and a potential breach of the Broadcasting Act. The issue is discussed in greater detail at

<http://www.indymedia.ie/article/84547>

1.

To: Ms Niamh Sammon

Mint Productions

205 Lower Rathmines Road

Dublin 6

Date: 17/10/2007

Dear Ms Sammon

Hidden History documentary October 23 2007

Pearson Executions 1921

You telephoned me yesterday to inform me that my contribution to your programme will not be broadcast, but you did not tell me why.

The essential points of my contribution were:

(1) William Pearson's declaration that he was a collaborator ("I assisted the Crown Forces on every occasion", April 14 1927, Pearson Application to Distress Committee); and

(2) the official RIC report, confirming the IRA Court Martial report, that the Pearson brothers were shot because they had fired on an Irish Army road-block and wounded two of the soldiers ("the two Pearson boys a few days previously had seen two men felling a tree on their land adjoining the road, had told the men concerned to go away, and when they refused, had fetched two guns and fired and wounded two Sinn Feiners, one of whom it is believed died." Court of Enquiry, July 2 1921).

These points establish that, in a war provoked by the military suppression of the democratically elected government, the execution of the Pearsons was a legitimate war-time action.

Can you please tell me why my contribution will not be broadcast?

Yours sincerely, Pat Muldowney

2.

Mr Cathal Goan, Director-General, RTE, Date: 17/10/2007

Dear Mr Goan

Hidden History documentary October 23 2007: Pearson Executions 1921

Many thanks for your letter dated 2 October 2007 which I received by email on 11th and by post on 13th, delayed by UK postal strike.

My primary purpose and ambition was to be proved wrong in my concerns about bias in the Pearsons documentary, and that a breach of the Broadcasting Act could be averted. And failing that, to alert viewers to the bias. The trailer for this programme which followed last night's Hidden History of De Valera/Churchill was consistent with and reinforced the message (ethnic cleansing/ atonement/ sectarian atrocity/ land-grab) of the earlier publicity and announcements. There has as yet been no mention of an alternative explanation of the executions. Your comments on the prejudiced and unbalanced publicity and announcements do not amount to a justification.

Suppose for the moment that this publicity is by way of provocative hypothesis to be subjected in the actual broadcast to balancing comparison with alternative views. The simplest way to do this would be to include in the broadcast the relevant bits of my interview. That is, (1) William Pearson's documented acknowledgement that he was a collaborator; and (2) the RIC confirmation of the Irish Court Martial's reason for the executions—that the Pearsons had shot two Irish soldiers. Earlier interviewees from Offaly did not have this documentation to hand at time of interview, and anyway they were entitled to expect that a well-resourced and fair-minded production would itself gather and present all such relevant (though not readily accessible) evidence.

My contribution will not be in the documentary. So will this evidence be presented at all, and, if so, who will present it? Somebody who is convinced of the opposing view and who will diminish the force of this evidence

and declare it irrelevant or unimportant or even false? That is what Niamh Sammon tried to do when she interviewed me, but I believe that I overcame this challenge in debate. I believe that is the reason why my contribution will not now be included.

Contributors such as Alan Stanley have been given a preview of the documentary, but nobody from the opposite side of the argument has been allowed to see it.

I request from you a preview. And I suggest that contributors from Offaly be offered a preview, just like those from the opposing side of the argument. If not, why not?

Yours sincerely, Pat Muldowney

The letters to Sammon and Goan accompanied the email to Dawson, and resulted in the following exchange:

Kevin.Dawson wrote on 18/10/2007:

Dear Mr Muldowney,

Thank you for your mail. There has been an extensive correspondence on this subject, and contact with you by the programme as you say. The programme-makers have reached their view of the best and proper mix of elements to include in their production. The finished programme will broadcast next week.

I appreciate the points you make now, as you have made them in the past, and I recommend to you that you give the programme a fair and reasonable viewing, taking into account the many points of view which exist about this narrative in addition to the point of view which you have yourself, over time, come to adopt. You may then assess the programme as you see fit.

I need to say, with all due respect, that I will not be pursuing a correspondence on this subject beyond this point.

*With best wishes, Kevin Dawson
Commissioning Editor, Factual.*

Pat Muldowney, 18 October 2007:

Re: October 23 Hidden History: The Killings at Coolcrease

Dear Mr Dawson

From enquiries, other contributors to this programme were involved in many hours and days of discussion, preparation and investigation. Apart from a two-hour interview, my contact with the programme during production consisted of three one-minute phone calls (one of which was initiated by me), three one-page letters, and a written report.

I cannot help it if the programme makers found it taxing to have to interact to such an extent with someone who was aware of, and disagreed with, the working title:

Atonement: Ethnic cleansing in the Midlands

as a description of those events in an official RTE document.

Just one issue remains, and this is a question which, since yours was the name

on the document, only you can answer. So I address it now to you.

Under what circumstances, and for what reason, did you come to publicly present the programme's working title in Clontarf Castle last May as : *'Atonement: Ethnic Cleansing in the Midlands'*

Where did you get the idea that this title was a fair summary of the proposed programme content?

Yours sincerely, Pat Muldowney

Kevin.Dawson replied on 22/10/2007,

Dear Mr Muldowney

The working title of this production was never as given in your mail below. This is a mistaken perception on your part. From correspondence over a period, you appear to rest much weight on this. I will try to clarify the point and hope that you accept your error.

The project for a period had a working title of Atonement. This was never adopted by RTE as the intended final title. The phrase 'Ethnic cleansing in the midlands' was neither part of the title nor of any subtitle, temporary or otherwise. It was a bullet-point for a speaking-note and referred to one of the key issues of controversy within the Coolcrease story subject itself. It was used as a slug in a power point presentation (at Clontarf) to independent programme producers preparing to offer new History (and other) programme ideas. The point at issue was that strong narratives with an issue of controversy at their heart were proving successful within the series remit of our Hidden History strand. As our current on-air promotional trailer makes clear, the issue of controversy in this programme centres on whether the incident at its heart resulted from real fears of Loyalist spying or from sectarian/ agrarian tensions, or some mixture of these things.

I would hope that this particular windmill need be tilted at no longer.

Yours, Kevin Dawson

Pat Muldowney, 22 October 2007:

Dear Mr Dawson

Thank you for your reply. The words "ethnic cleansing" appear first in an RTÉ document of May 30 2007. The publicity drive this weekend highlighted ethnic cleansing. See for instance Sarah Caden's Sunday Independent article "Speak it in a whisper: Irish ethnic cleansing".

This is just one of the numerous bogus atrocity myths that the RTÉ document, the programme announcements, trailers, working titles, propaganda articles and radio interviews are giving legs to.

The RTÉ description "Ethnic cleansing in the midlands" was attached by you to this programme in a public way in Clontarf Castle on May 30 2007, five months ago. The link between this long-

held RTÉ interpretation of the programme and the current pre-broadcast propaganda drive is clear and obvious.

The current atrocity-propaganda drive is comprehensive. I cannot possibly go through all the current bogus atrocity stories now, but here is an example. Shooting in the genitals has been trumpeted. The medical reports prove that this is false. Richard Pearson received superficial wounds to the right groin and left shoulder. This where the torso joins the right leg and left arm, respectively. There were no medically reported injuries to the genitals.

But the central dishonesty of the programme is clearly expressed in the following statement in your letter of what this documentary is all about: "whether the incident at its heart resulted from real fears of Loyalist spying or from sectarian/ agrarian tensions, or some mixture of these things."

This is the central piece of misdirection which is at the heart of the programme. I experienced it directly myself when I was interviewed by Niamh Sammon in Kinnitty Castle on July 28. I had been alerted to this tactic and gave no quarter to it. I believe that is the reason why my contribution has been censored.

In fact the Pearsons were NOT sentenced to death for spying. They were sentenced to death by Irish Court Martial for shooting two Irish soldiers on duty, and this is corroborated by the RIC report given to the British Court of Enquiry into the deaths. That is what the "incident" resulted from. There is no mystery, no puzzle as to why they were executed. The authorities on both the Irish and British sides were in agreement on this. Nearly a century later, and with no grounds whatever to doubt the well-documented reasons given by both sides at the time, Hidden History and RTÉ have invented a mystery in order to insert a new and bogus explanation of "sectarian/agrarian tensions".

The programme and its associated propagandists—which, from your Clontarf Castle slide and the above quote from your letter, include RTÉ—pose the red herring of whether or not the Pearsons were spies and informers - a lesser crime. Thus deliberately obscuring and concealing the actual, valid and officially documented reason for the executions.

RTÉ's responsibility for the current wave of sensationalist myth-making is perfectly obvious. Your Clontarf Castle slide and the above quote from your letter prove this.

Yours sincerely, Pat Muldowney

The RTÉ documentary was broadcast the following day (23 October 2007), and re-broadcast in 2008. Complaints about it were rejected by the Broadcasting Complaints Commission. "Coolcrease: the True Story of the Pearson Executions" was published by the Aubane Historical Society November 2008.

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Commission Needed? Protestants

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Commission Needed?

"I cannot accept either the view that a high rate of emigration is necessarily a sign of national decline or that policy should be over-anxiously framed to reduce it. It is clear that in the history of the Church, the role of Irish emigrants has been significant. If the historical operation of emigration has been providential, Providence may in the future have a similar vocation for the nation. In the order of values, it seems more important to preserve and improve the quality of Irish life and thereby the purity of that message which our people have communicated to the world than it is to reduce the numbers of Irish emigrants. While there is a danger of complacency I believe that there should be a more realistic appreciation of the advantages of emigration. High emigration, granted a population excess, releases social tensions which would otherwise explode and makes possible a stability of manners and customs which would otherwise be the subject of radical change. It is a national advantage that it is easy for emigrants to establish their lives in other parts of the world not merely from the point of view of the Irish society they leave behind but from the point of view of the individuals concerned whose horizon of opportunity is widened." (Alexis Fitzgerald, *Commission on Emigration and other Population Problems*, 1948-1954, Reports).

Alexis FitzGerald, Snr (1916-1985) was a solicitor and Fine Gael party politician. He was elected in 1969 to the 12th Seanad Éireann and re-elected in 1973 and 1977. He retired from politics in 1981.

In 1947, FitzGerald was one of the founding partners of the Dublin solicitors' firm *McCann White & FitzGerald* (now known as *McCann FitzGerald*, one of the state's largest law firms. He was the practice's Senior Partner until he died in 1985. From 1981-1982 he was a special adviser to Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald (no relation).

"The terms of reference of this Commission, as set out in the Warrant

of Appointment, were:—

"To investigate the causes and consequences of the present level and trend in population; to examine, in particular, the social and economic effects of birth, death, migration and marriage rates at present and their probably course in the near future; to consider what measures, if any, should be taken in the national interest to influence the trend in population; generally, to consider the desirability of formulating a national population policy."

The Commission was appointed by Labour Party leader, William Norton, Minister for Social Welfare on the 5th of April, 1948.

It was chaired by James Beddy, an economist and later head of the Industrial Development Authority (IDA). It met 115 times.

Others on the Commission included Aodh de Blacam; Fathers Thomas Coyne and Edward J. Coyne, both Senior Jesuits; Bishop Cornelius Lucey; Peadar O'Donnell and Ruaidhri Roberts.

"The late age of marriage and high rate of female emigration attracted attention. The Irish Housewives' Association attributed the latter to the inferior status of women in Irish society, conditions on small farms, and the 'marriage bar'; this was rejected by Bishop Cornelius Lucey, whose minority report argued that urban society was corrupt and advocated a back-to-the-land alternative" (*The Encyclopaedia of Ireland*, 2003, Gill & Macmillan).

"The St Vincent de Paul is claiming it has been told not to feed or house destitute migrants from Eastern European countries and they will "go home".

Southern Regional President of the SVP Brendan Dempsey said he believes there is an unwritten policy to urge homeless EU migrant workers to go back to their homelands.

"We are housing destitute migrants though I think the State would prefer if

we did not," he said.

"It has been said to me by state employees who work in the area: 'Do not feed or house them, then they will go home. If you feed them they will not go home.' They don't want them here" (*Irish Examiner*, 26.3.2012).

Is it time for a Commission on Immigration and other Population Problems?

Protestants

"In an Ireland of much greater diversity, Irish Protestants participate fully in society nowadays in a way that wouldn't have seemed possible 50 or 60 years ago. They have friends throughout the community. They are involved in sporting organisations including the GAA and social bodies. They participate fully in all aspects of life.

Well-known recent or current examples of such people are judge Catherine McGuinness, Senator David Norris, former Green Party leader Trevor Sargent and ex-GAA president Jack Boothman.

As an elected public representative myself, I can testify that those who voted for me are concerned that I represent them effectively, irrespective of their religious attachments or lack of them. The fact that I'm a Protestant is, at most, a minor curiosity or a complete irrelevance

This is in contrast to the Ireland of 50 or 60 years ago with the operation of the hated *ne temere* decree, which obliged the children of a Roman Catholic/ Protestant couple to be brought up in the Catholic Church. That was a different world.

Protestants, at that time, tended to stick to their own. Their friendships and social life tended to be within their own community. There was interaction with the world of business and commerce as well as organisations such as the Irish Farmers' Association and the teaching unions which represented their sectoral interests.

However, this interaction was usually kept to a minimum. In addition to deep fear and suspicion of the Catholic Church, there was a lingering unionism, a sense of wanting to remain within the United Kingdom, amongst most, but not all, of the older generation. That has largely gone now" (*Irish Times*, 21.3.2012).

Robert Dowds, Labour TD for Dublin Mid-West in response to an article by Brian Walker: "*Watching the fate of the southern Protestant*" (12.3.2012).
