

Church & State

An Irish History Magazine

And Cultural Review Of Ireland And The World

Egypt: *Hardly A Coup ?*

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Egypt: *Hardly A Coup* ?

Egypt had undemocratic liberal government for almost a century and a half, with a short interlude in the middle of that period. For about seventy years it was undemocratically governed by Britain. Then, following an interlude of a kind of national democracy, it had a couple of generations of military dictatorship supported and paid for by the West, mainly the United States.

Britain invented political Egypt of modern times. It cut it out of the Ottoman State in the 1880, recognised it as an independent country around 1920 but continued governing it until the early 1950s. Egypt was in Constitutional fiction an independent country. In Constitutional fact it was under British government. The fiction was maintained by having a puppet Government which acted on the advice of the British Ambassador. It was the diplomatic adviser who had the guns. Egypt therefore took part as an ally of Britain in both World Wars.

The pretence of Egyptian independence required the pretence of an Egyptian Army. A group of officers in the pretend-Army plotted to end the pretence. The pretence was ended and the puppet King (Farouk) was sent into exile in 1952. In 1956 Britain, France and Israel invaded independent Egypt. The British Prime Minister declared that the Government of Colonel Nasser, which was sustained by popular rallies of national enthusiasm, was Fascist.

The invasion was conducted slowly and ponderously. It was ended by an American threat to wreck the British economy financially. Egypt then moved into the American sphere.

In 1967 Israel launched a “*pre-emptive*” war on Egypt. That is, it defended itself against an attack that never happened, and occupied Egyptian territory up to the Suez Canal.

In 1973 the Egyptian regime launched a retaliatory attack on Israel. It succeeded in placing an army across the Canal, and was pressing the Israeli Army hard until America came to Israel’s support. Then the Egyptian Army was driven back across the Canal with the Israelis following it. The Israelis were recalled east of the Canal by Washington.

Egypt and Israel had become client States of the United States. In 1979 the Egyptian regime was compelled to recognise the Jewish nationalist colonisation of Palestine, and its expansion beyond the borders set for the Jewish State by the 1947 Resolution of the General Assembly, as legitimate. This affronted Egyptian national opinion. At that point the military regime, which had been substantially in harmony with popular opinion, became a dictatorship committed to the suppression of popular opinion.

Under the dictatorship, the Muslim Brotherhood, functioning as a welfare organisation, made life tolerable for

the millions. It has been said in defence of the recent military coup that electoral democracy failed because the dictatorship had prevented the growth of civil society. In fact, a very effective civil society organisation had developed under the dictatorship—the Muslim Brotherhood.

The dictatorship, run on American money, fostered the growth of a Western-oriented, secularist middle-class. It was not a middle-class in the literal sense, nor was it an elite in the proper sense, but there are no other words for describing it. It was not part of the structure of an organic society, a middle class lying between upper and lower classes and connected with both. Neither was it a elite in the sense of a vanguard of social development. It is an exclusive hot-house development, an enclave, under a dictatorship sustained by Western power and Western money.

It lived its liberal, secular life as an enclave, a gated-estate. Its mental and cultural world was Europe and America. But it lacked the trappings of political power as displayed in its lands-of-heart’s desire where well-established bourgeois hegemony ensured the acquiescence of the masses under conditions of apparently unrestricted freedom. So it demanded democracy. It went on the streets and demanded the right to elect the Government. And it demanded that the Dictator be put on trial for his crime of depriving them of their rights for so long. And Mubarak, who created them under the shelter of his dictatorship, had every reason for regarding them as spoiled brats.

Well they got their democracy. And the only responsible body in the society won the election and began to govern in accordance with its culture and philosophy. And then they began to squeal that this was not what they wanted at all. It was unfair. What they had wanted was what should have happened. And why did it not happen? Because the Brotherhood had hijacked “*the Revolution*” and imposed a dictatorship worse than Mubarak’s.

And the elected Government was, of course, worse than the dictatorship for them, because it brought the opinion of the majority to bear on the conduct of the State.

They had insisted on leaving their hot-house. And then they complained of the cold.

So they came out on the streets again, demanding the overthrow of the elected Government. They were articulate and English-speaking and attuned to the Western media. And the Western media was attuned to them. Suddenly everybody understood that democracy has hardly anything to do with elections.

And the Army understood completely. It flew its helicopters in the streets above the demonstrations and dropped leaflets of encouragement. It arrested and imprisoned the Government and hundreds of its active supporters. It closed newspapers and broadcasting stations. And everybody was happy again.

Crimes were attributed to the imprisoned Government. On the few occasions when representatives of the Brotherhood got on the Western media they asked for the crimes to be specified. They asked for the names of some of the political prisoners of the democracy. The interviewers then lost interest in the matter.

Human Rights Watch had fed the persecution mania of the *ersatz* middle class on the streets. But, when it came to giving factual details, in justification of the *coup* as a defence against persecution, it did not deliver.

The *Irish Times*, the long-standing supporter of liberal elitism against democracy in Ireland, has of course welcomed the restoration of the dictatorship. But it prefers to quibble semantically when doing so:

“...this was hardly a coup in the normal sense. A few tanks on the streets, not a shot fired, no seizing of public buildings, and limited arrests. A society at tipping point, whose people in unprecedented numbers were out demanding change, whose incompetent government had lost political authority and clung desperately to an evaporating electoral legitimacy, was tipped by a general’s tweet, the straw that broke the camel’s back. Little more. Hardly a coup.

“Power has passed to the head of Egypt’s constitutional court...” (5.7.13).

The Army could arrest the Government without a battle because the governing party was committed to the electoral process and did not have its own military force. The Army was not committed to the electoral process. It was the unreconstructed Army of the dictatorship.

The Judiciary, which participated in the *coup* was, likewise, the Judiciary of the dictatorship.

The Army and the Courts are never politically neutral. They are always part of a system of state, specific to that system. The Brotherhood tried to conduct democratic government in conjunction with the Army and Judiciary developed by the dictatorship.

That is why the Army and Judiciary were able to come to the assistance of the *ersatz* liberal elite, with a view to restoring for them their lost world of the dictatorship.

There was no Revolution. There was only an election held under the State apparatus of the dictatorship.

As to the unprecedented numbers on the streets—the highest claim puts them at no more than ten per cent of the population. And it can be assumed that virtually the entire *ersatz* elite was out on the streets.

As to “*evaporating electoral legitimacy*”: the most authoritative book on that subject published in Ireland is *1922: The Birth Of Irish Democracy* by Professor Garvin of University College, Dublin. Garvin said that the electoral majority got by the Provisional Government in the confused election of June 1922 gave democratic sanction to all that was done subsequently by the Free State to impose the Treaty system. An electoral majority is democratically good, regardless of the circumstances under which it was gained.

Active opposition to the Treaty at its lowest point was considerably more than ten per cent. We wonder how he will comment on the *Irish Times* view of the right of a minority with a superiority complex to overthrow an elected Government.

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Brendan Clifford

The Theology Of Liberalism

It is said that the Emperor Charlemagne, in a scientific turn of mind, ordered that a group of children should be raised without having any language imposed on them, in order to discover what the natural language of humanity was. The story is probably false. It has been well known for a very long time that children acquire the rudiments of what we call civilisation by imitation. If a child is not in contact with a language to imitate, he just won't have what we consider a language.

The origin of language is beyond the reach of thought. It cannot be thought about without presuming its existence. The philosopher Bergson said all there is to say about it with the title of his book *The Miraculous Birth Of Language*. It is unknowable and therefore might as well be treated as a miracle.

Every language that exists is biased. It is loaded with religion or philosophy which determines how one grasps the world.

The utilitarian philosopher, Bertrand Russell, had a scheme for a purely matter-of-fact language, that would take the ground from under philosophising. He thought the world might be divided up into a definite number of distinct facts, each of which would be given a sound. The connection between the fact and the sound would be arbitrary and futile speculation on meaning, beyond that association, would be done away with. Nothing came of it. Language was not reduced to a system of signs for things. People still revel in its ambiguity as much as they ever did. And even the stolid, clipped English of England has been loosened up by the waves of emigrants on which England now depends for the provision of services and the reproduction of the species.

What goes for language also goes in great part for religion. There is a term, Natural Religion, in philosophy, but it is a philosophical concept which has little to do with nature.

There is a demand knocking about that religion should be excluded from the educational system, or even from the home. The maximum demand is that introducing children to religion

should be treated as a form of child abuse. The minimum demand is that an educational system funded with public money should be allowed to have no truck with it. The way it is sometimes put is that the child's mind should be allowed its natural growth, uninfluenced by religion, until the child is old enough to decide for himself about religion. But there is no such thing as the natural growth of the child's mind. Children become human by imitation and assimilation of what is going on around them.

If a generation of children was raised out of contact with religion, or the cultural products of religion, that would possibly be the end of religion. And the purpose of keeping children out of contact with religion until they are old enough to decide for themselves about would not be to give the child a free choice of religion, but to cut religion out of human life.

I don't think it's possible to abolish religion. And I can't imagine what human life would be like if it was abolished.

The *Irish Times* carried an anti-religion editorial, *Enforcing 'Tradition'*, on June 13th:

"In the dubious spirit of protecting 'tradition'—like 'patriotism', often the refuge of the scoundrel—Russia's lower house, the Duma, on Tuesday unanimously backed laws that threaten up to three years for blasphemy and ban the promotion of homosexuality. The Bills prohibit the dissemination of information about 'non-traditional' sexuality and promotion of 'distorted notions of social equivalence of traditional and non-traditional sexual relationships' with fines for offenders. The blasphemy law sweepingly criminalises 'offending the feelings of religious believers'. Why the latter was thought necessary is unclear—last August prosecutors had no difficulty securing convictions and jail terms for 'hooliganism motivated by religious hatred' against members of punk band Pussy Riot after a protest in Moscow's Christ the Saviour Cathedral..."

Putin is "*championing a new breed of conservatism and nationalism to counter falling ratings*". And though

this has the support of 88% of the population, "*it will almost certainly call foul of the free speech provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights...*"

It is not long since religion and nationalism were encouraged by Western liberalism as means of breaking up the Soviet regime. The regime was broken up by these means, so it is not surprising that they have taken the place of the system that they brought down.

The minds of two generations of Russian children were not tainted by religious indoctrination in the educational system. At the peak of Soviet power, when it became a regular system under Brezhnev, it was reckoned that 50 million citizens were engaged in the Party/State apparatus—all products of the League of the Militant Godless, I assume.

It seemed to me at the time that subversion of the system internally began when Solzhenitsyn stopped writing little Khrushchevite novels about Stalinism, reverted to Christianity, and launched a religious assault on Leninism comparable with Dostoevsky's assault on Chernyshevsky's vision of a transparent rationalist society a century earlier.

Internal religious subversion combined with an external religious assault. A Communist movement came to power in Kabul. Brezhnev made the crucial strategic decision to assist it. That Soviet-backed regime had a modernising grip on Afghan culture such as Britain had never got in any of its invasions. But it was as unacceptable to the West that liberal secular culture should come to Afghanistan from Communist Russia—as it had been to Britain that it should come from Tsarist Russia. So the United States, the guardian of Western values in the world, raised a great religious war against the Communist Government that was engendering liberal secular values. Islam was developed into Islamism, its ambitions were reinvigorated, and it was made militarily effective.

The Soviet system could not bear the strain of internal religious subversion and external religious assault. It collapsed. The West destroyed the main bearer of its own values in eastern Europe and Asia. And then it began complaining that obscurantist forces which it had supported for the purpose of destruction filled the vacuum that was brought about and began constructive work.

One charge is noticeably absent from the *Irish Times* indictment: Anti-Semitism.

During the Cold War—from the late 1940s to 1990—the Western propaganda asserted that the Soviet Union had taken up the task of destroying the Jews that Hitler left half-finished. Israel, which probably would not have come into being without active Soviet support at the critical moment, backed the accusation. Why the Soviet Union supported the 1947 United Nations resolution awarding a segment of the Arab Middle East for Jewish colonisation and the formation of a Jewish state, remains a mystery. It not only backed the Zionist Resolution at the UN but supplied the arms to give it effect, largely in the form of ethnic cleansing. But, when the damage was done, Soviet policy changed, and Zionist developments within the Soviet Union were suppressed. That is the only clearly-identifiable form of Soviet 'Anti-Semitism'.

What happened in the Soviet economy at the moment of collapse refutes the Anti-Semitic charge and inclines more to the Jewish Conspiracy accusation made by Churchill and others in 1917 and echoed by Williams. The State economy was privatised under Yeltsin's Presidency, by being given in large chunks to a small number of individuals who were strategically-placed within the system: the Oligarchs. And many of the Oligarchs—perhaps most—were Jews.

Under Yeltsin and his Oligarchs the Russian economy was opened up to Imperialist capital. It became a resource chiefly of American capital. When Putin began to pull Russia together as a national state, supported by the rising force of religious sentiment which two generations of official atheism had not erased, and began to restore the undefended economy as a national economy, disappointed Western financial commentators began to deplore the revival of nationalism and religious obscurantism—and Anti-Semitism. They knew that many of the Oligarchs were Jews and therefore took it for granted that Anti-Semitism would form part of the revival of traditional culture. But it didn't, so that charge had to be dropped.

And, of course, it would not have been advantageous to draw attention to the fact that the expected had not happened.

So, no Anti-Semitism. Only Pussy Riot and blasphemy laws.

The Western world was shocked by the prosecution of Pussy Riot for disrupting a religious service with a pornographic performance. Religion, having helped to subvert Communism, has

become a bad thing. And pornography, having been a very bad thing until very recently, had now become a good thing, particularly as a means of disrupting the religion which disrupted Communism. But we have not yet heard of a theatre club being opened in Dublin for live sex exhibitions, or even a cinema for showing pornographic films—as distinct from last year's pornography which is now "*erotica*". So it must be concluded that we only approve of pornography when it is suppressed by the authorities in foreign countries which we regard as hostile. ("We" ? The *Irish Times*, of course! Have we not accepted this covertly-funded West-British remnant, editorially controlled by an Oath-bound Directory, as our national paper?)

In another recent editorial it asks "*A Pagan People?*":

"It was fitting that it should be reported yesterday, the feast of the birth of St. John, that a substantial number of the Catholic bishops now believe the Irish people 'have, to all intents and purposes, become pagan'. St John's Eve is still celebrated with bonfires in parts of Ireland... There is no doubt that attitudes to churches among Irish people, north and south, have undergone a dramatic change... Whether it be the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland or the Methodist Church in Ireland the trend has been the same..." (25th June).

West Britain seems to have lost its historical and theological bearings entirely. One of the central purposes of Protestantism has been to eradicate paganism from Christianity. For hundreds of years there were regular Protestant *exposes* of Papism as a form of paganism.

Whatever it was that happened in Palestine 2000 years ago, Christianity became a world force when it was made the religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century. For the purpose of being the state religion of the Empire it was combined with others which had followings among the peoples of the Empire, and many of the best-known features of Catholicism came from those pagan religions.

The serious Reformationists in Britain sought to pare down Christianity to whatever it was before it became entangled with Rome. One of the reasons the French Revolution was so popular in Presbyterian Belfast was that it abolished the Christian calendar, which the Presbyterians knew was pagan.

The fact that Cromwell abolished Christmas was in the news recently.

Christmas remained abolished in Belfast so long as the city was under Presbyterian cultural hegemony—that is, until the developments which accompanied the recent War.

Original Christianity—supposing there was such a thing—is out of reach. But it would seem that it must have had a Hippie flavour to it—*Behold the lillies* etc. But the pared-down Reformationism—Catholicism with the Paganism removed—was anything but Hippie. Thrift, industry, taking thought for the morrow, were its hallmarks.

The recent trends have not been back towards Paganism, but decisively away from it, towards Puritan individualism. Vatican 2 was an influence destructive of Catholicism as a Christian/Pagan combination that had shaped the life of Europe for 1,500 years.

A recent headline in our newspaper told us that maternity was one of the great barriers to female equality. One of the things that Paganism, in all its varieties, did was provide a culture in which it was satisfying to be born, to marry, and to die. But recent trends have carried us—insofar as we are diligent followers of our paper—beyond these primitive forms of satisfaction.

The Christian/Pagan combination was made for reasons of State by the Emperor Constantine. The Empire needed a culture, a religion, that would embrace the many peoples which had been gathered into the Empire. His nephew, Julian, tried to dis-Establish Christianity—to disentangle the specifically Christian element from the other elements and end its special status. He did so formally. But he found quickly that the combination had rooted itself and that his enterprise was hopeless. So he said—according to Ibsen's play—"*You have won, Gallilean*".

And he went off to invade Persia and get himself killed.

A thousand years later the Roman combination was attacked more successfully from the other end. Julian failed to exclude Christianity. Calvin succeeded in excluding the Paganism.

It seems unlikely that Reformed Christianity—Christianity wrenched out of its Pagan swaddling clothes—would have become much of a force in the world if its development had been left to Germany and Switzerland. Luther was half-hearted about the project, thinking that someone who was *against women, wine and song would remain a*

fool his whole life long. Zwingli, who was entirely in earnest, was killed in battle trying to carry his message beyond the borders of Zurich. Calvinism made some headway in France but was curbed for reasons of State. But England, whose Reformation was a political event in origin, adopted Calvinism in the course of becoming an Empire. It declared itself an Empire when Henry, for political reasons, made himself Pope of the Church in England, and then, as a follow-on, he made the Church Protestant.

England itself went through an extreme Calvinist phase, but it was found impossible to consolidate the state on that basis. Cromwell suppressed the Scripturalist revolution which he brought to supreme power and held the ring for the return of the Monarchy. Scripturalism, the leading light of the Revolution for more than a decade, became fanaticism, and the fanatics were given Ireland to govern.

Under the restored Monarch a ruling class of aristocracy/gentry developed. That class, which took command of the State during the generation after 1688, consisted of landowners and Bishops. For the most part they do not seem to have known whether they believed or not. They took it as their business to handle society in a way that was conducive to making the state a world power. And the way to do that was to give the energy of fundamentalist Protestantism its head in disrupting the world and subordinating it to the British State, from whose guiding circles it was excluded.

Around 1900, in the era of Liberal Imperialism, an ambitious sociologist, in those days when sociology was being founded and its decline into a routine academic subject was not envisaged, gave some thought to the part played in the course of history by Christianity and its theological disputes. He did not, from his secular viewpoint, treat all this theological stuff as mere gibberish, in which each side of the dispute was as nonsensical as the other. He took it that the Liberal Imperialist secular world, to whose development he was contributing, had been shaped in essential ways by theology.

He held that Christianity changed the nature of the world by displacing the purpose of life from the present in the here-and-now to another time or another place, thus giving rise to Liberalism and Progress.

In the pre-Christian world:

"All the wants, the desires, the passions, the ambitions of men were correlated with the things which men saw around them..." (*The Principles Of Western Civilisation* by Benjamin Kidd, 1908, p189).

The ancient world assumed—

"an equilibrium between virtue and existing nature, between the individual and the present, between the present and the untrammelled expression therein of the human will and of human desire" (p213).

Christianity established a relationship of antagonism between human existence and the world, and therefore within each individual, making it impossible for a virtuous life to be lived in compliance with the ways of the world. With this development:

"The conception of virtue as conformity to nature has absolutely vanished. 'Oh, the abyss of conscience', says St. Augustine, '...I am ashamed of myself and renounce myself'..." (p215).

But the ancient world did not give up the ghost without a struggle. Its influence gave rise to heresies within Christianity, which attempted to overcome the antithesis, or antinomy, within the individual which was generated by Christianity:

"Through a century of conflict, from the Council of Ephesus in 431 to the Third council of Valence in 530 we have the attempts to close the antithesis. But we have still the spectacle of religious consciousness set unchangingly against the doctrine of the normalcy of the individual, and therefore against the conception of virtue as conformity to his own nature in the conditions of the world around him. Once more we have the emphatic assertion of the antithesis in its most inflexible terms, in the doctrine of the entire insufficiency of the individual in respect of his own powers to rise to the standard required of him, or to fulfil, in virtue of his own nature the conditions necessary to his salvation" (p222).

Stoicism and Epicureanism, philosophies designed to facilitate harmonious life in the world, lay behind the Christian heresies. These heresies, particular Gnosticism and Arianism, became very influential at times in the theological disputes of Christianity. If they had become dominant, the essential feature of Christianity would have been snuffed out—and the world of Liberalism could not have come about. But heresy was always defeated:

"The conception of the innate and utter insufficiency of the individual gradually becomes visible in all its strength, as with the banishment of Pelagius in 418, and his condemnation by the Council of Ephesus in 431, it bears down all opposition..." (p216).

But the matter did not end there—not by a long way. Kidd, a Bandon Protestant by origin, maintains a tactful silence about the next thousand years, during which Rome kept Christianity going in a substantial combination with Paganism, culminating in the Renaissance, in which Christian symbolism supplied the iconography for a great resurgence of Paganism. He doesn't say that, but that is how he must have seen it. Then he hails the freeing of Christianity from the Pagan trammels of Rome by Calvin.

The World War launched by Britain in 1914—*Our War*—was a very strange event. It is thick with the atmosphere of the *Book of Revelation*. It was launched by the Liberal Imperialist element which had taken control of the Liberal Party, with the support at a crucial moment of John Redmond's Home Rule Party. Redmond, who had said previously that, if he was an Englishman, he would be an extreme Imperialist, felt that a Home Rule Act—in suspended animation, in the Statue Book—made him sufficiently British to warrant his losing himself in the Imperialist fervour of the moment. And the Liberal Party was saturated with thinly-secularised fundamentalist Protestants—Christianists?—who were hell-bent on saving the world.

Kidd, who was an influential ideologist on that ambiguous generation, was disillusioned by the course of the War. He tried to reassess the world, but died before he could do so.

It must be conceded that he understood a thing or two about the Liberalism of his own time—which remains the Liberalism of our time.

"In what, then consists the ultimate claim of Western Liberalism as the principle of progress", he asked. And he answered that it was not—

"the claim of the majority to rule. For to attempt to reduce the individuals, comprised even within our own civilisation at the present day, to the rule of the majority, would be to attempt to put the world's progress back a thousand years. Nay, it would be undoubtedly to provoke from the advanced peoples, and even from many of the advocates of universal peace

amongst them, a resistance as determined, as unhesitating, and as bloody as any of which history could furnish a record" (p98-9).

As far as the great majority of the people in the world are concerned, Western Liberalism, since its arrival in the world as an armed force, has been a

destructive force preventing them from living their lives in the present as they would wish to live them.

Where does the Irish middle class stand in all of this? It stepped out of line for a generation or two. Then it 'revised' itself back into line, and it now tags along behind.

Jack Lane

The Galileo Affair and Vatican II

The Irish Catholic of the 28th February had a series of articles on the Benedict Papacy and one was called *Benedict Memories Of Vatican II*. Benedict was clearly obsessed with Vatican II and its consequences and was forever trying to defend it—as well he might as he was a major inspirer of it.

The article described his initial enthusiasm for the Council and one aspect of his memoir concerned his initial audience with Pope John XXIII where the launching of the Council was first discussed—and the case of Galileo seems to have been a major reason for the Pope in launching it:

"The Pope then recalled his awareness "that the relationship between the Church and the modern period was one of some contrasts from the outset, starting with the error in the Galileo case". The idea, he noted, was to correct this false start, "to find a new relationship between the Church and the best forces in the world", and "to open up the future of humanity, to open up to real progress"....".

The implication here is that the Church was seen as having to start again after the "*error of the Galileo case*": the need to correct the '*error*' was a major driving force of the Council. This does not seem to have been highlighted before. It seems therefore to be a defining element in the *rationale* for the Council and now that it has been given that significance that necessitates another look at the issue.

The question of Galileo had become, and still is, an iconic issue in the debate on science and religion. Like all icons, the way it is seen has become very black and white in the public mind. And, as with icons generally, it only survives by being deprived of context. John XXIII and Benedict clearly put themselves on the backfoot by regarding the treatment of Galileo as an '*error*' of such importance that it had to be corrected over four

centuries after the event, in order to "*restart*" the Church. The backfoot is a bad position from which to initiate new directions in any situation. In this case, it was accepting the common view that the Papacy denounced Galileo for his views about the movement of the earth around the sun. If that was the case, "*error*" is a weasel word to have used. If that was the case, the Pope then and Popes since until John XXIII were just plain stupid and this should have been said. There is no virtue in mincing words.

So were the Pope and Papacy so stupid for so long on this issue?

If they were then it needs to be explained why the original author of the theory that the earth moved around the sun, Copernicus, a century before Galileo, and other Churchmen who believed it even before Copernicus, did not come into conflict with the Church. It would also need explaining as to why Copernicus dedicated his major book on the theory to the Pope of the day, Paul III. Why did he delay publication of his book until he got the Pope's approval?

If the Pope in Galileo's day, Urban VIII, regarded his theory to be in "*error*", why did he provide Galileo with a pension after his condemnation by the Inquisition, a pension which he received until the day he died? So a bit of an explanation is needed about this Papal '*error*.'

A bit of context. In the Western world following the end of the Roman Empire, the Church had established all that existed in terms of learning, education and what would later be called science. Every University in Europe, including both Oxfords and Cambridge, were sponsored by the Papacy via its Bishops and Cardinals. All the science that Copernicus, Galileo, and others, acquired was a product of these institutions set up by the Church. Naturally there were

many theories that arose from this learning, wrong and right, and a regular problem for Church authorities was to accommodate new proven theories to existing theories that inevitably impacted on religion. This was their essential job. For example, in 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council taught that the universe had a beginning in time. In other words, it was contemplating an early version of the Big Bang theory. As far as I know, this still remains to be proven and the Church has yet to condemn or approve it and I would not blame Church leaders for reserving judgement.

But this type of problem was always assumed by the Church to be a soluble problem, as anything that was proved correct would inevitably make made sense in the eyes of God—as it was all his work in any case and so it was a case of simply proving a new idea correct or not. It was a case of joining up the dots of the new with the old. Therefore the Church could not automatically be considered anti-scientific.

As a result of this learning and discoveries the Bible was regularly 'losing the argument'. As a result it became less and less an authority as far as the Church was concerned. It could not compete with the development of Greek philosophy that was brought about by Aquinas and others: thinking which prided itself on being rational. This philosophy laid the basis for the scientific thinking of the era. That is why the Bible became, and has remained, a very dubious authority for the Catholic Church. The attitude was—the less said about it the better. It has been for centuries something of an embarrassment for the Catholic Church. It was the reformers who gave a new lease of life to the simple Biblical notions. For them, belief in the Bible became a relief from the complications of the world.

What is conveniently overlooked is that the majority of scientists of the time did not accept the Copernican theory and for good reason. It shattered the accepted Aristotelian idea of the universe, with the earth as the centre. And it was not then possible to make a totally convincing case for it. For example, why did the stars not change position if the earth moved around the sun? It was a theory, a hypothesis that could not be empirically proved at the time. Copernicus himself was well aware of this and was very modest in making his case. Lord Francis Bacon never accepted it and he is considered the father

of English science. The Protestant Kepler did, but was banished for teaching it in Wurttemberg and was offered a professorship by the Pope in Bologna. And of course Luther would not hear of such nonsense.

So it was very sensible for Copernicus to get the Pope, Paul III, to provide cover and the opportunity to state his theory in safety from ridicule. He had delayed his book years because of this fear. He judged that he could not have published it without the Pope's blessing.

What then was the difference in Galileo's case? In a word, Galileo himself. He was not able to provide totally convincing evidence for the theory either. And he had some things quite wrong, such as the idea that the rotation of the earth caused the tides and that the sun was the centre of the universe. But the crucial thing was that he insisted on the Church fully accepting the theory and wanted to emphasise how it contradicted the Bible. He brought theology into the issue and was not content to leave it as a matter concerning the planets.

He was first condemned by the Inquisition in 1616 for this behaviour but his theory was not condemned as heretical by it and afterwards he had an audience with the Pope, Urban VIII, who urged him to show some restraint in the way he was promoting his views and to stay away from theology. The Pope assured him of his support and he left Rome on the best of terms with him. He later dedicated an essay to him. This was the same Pope who was in place when the Inquisition later issued its condemnation.

The Pope also advised Galileo to put his case, not in a dogmatic form but in a question and answer form, not to simply propound it. The modern version is the FAQ approach which was a most sensible approach for such a theory and is good advice for the presentation of any new theory or indeed for explaining anything. The Pope also reminded him that he may not know everything there was to be known on the subject as that was God's prerogative. The Pope was in no way condemnatory of the theory and never pronounced it heretical nor did subsequent Popes.

But Galileo ignored the Pope's advice and was abrasive and sarcastic with anyone who questioned his theory. He added insult to injury by including a cartoon in his major book depicting the Pope as a clown, *Simplicio*, a simpleton.

He had a talent for getting people's backs up and this is what led to his second trial by the Inquisition.

He created a combination of enemies—those who did not accept his theory, of which there were many everywhere and in both religions (but not on the Chair of Peter); those who were offended by his insistence of bringing theology into the issue; and those who were offended by his insult to the Pope. These came together and they got their opportunity in the Inquisition in 1633. But the Inquisition was neither the Papacy nor the Church. Galileo tried rather opportunistically to claim he opposed the Copernican theory, which was not very convincing. There is a strong case that Galileo, and the Inquisition itself, were 'set up' and bounced into a decision by a forged document created by someone who really 'had it in' for Galileo. This document had never been seen by Galileo, even though it claimed he was condemned for teaching the Copernican theory 17 years earlier, which was not the case. This was all a bit incredible. But it was the document that was used to condemn him.

The Inquisition was like a court of today and had a similar relationship to the Papacy as a court has to the Government of the day. They are not the same thing and do not have the same powers and one does not speak for the other. We are currently well aware of Courts making rulings that do not tally with a Government's wishes and the Government is left to sort out the resulting confusion, which may take decades to do. The Government may disagree totally with a Court ruling but it is no easy matter for it to say so and get a court to reverse its decision.

The Inquisition condemned Galileo on a "*vehement suspicion of heresy*", which is not exactly the same as a condemnation of him for heresy, for the very good reason that only the Pope could do such a thing and he never did so. No Pope ever did condemn him as a heretic. Hence the use of the words "*suspicion of heresy*". It was a case of different interpretations; but the Pope was clearly on Galileo's side—hence the pension for life that he provided. And before he died in Florence in 1642, he received the special blessing of Pope Urban VIII.

It is therefore thoroughly misleading and simplistic to refer to the whole issue as simply an "*error*" by the Church. I

would guess that other issues broached by Vatican II to justify its calling were approached in a similar populist and simplistic way. It is little wonder then that a Council organised on such a basis should have foundered and the Church since then has been trying to pick up the pieces.

Best of luck to Francis I.

Report

The Magdalene Laundries
under British rule

The Magdalene Laundries and Queen Victoria's Drawers

During the 1900 Royal visit to Ireland the laundry work of the Viceregal Lodge was entrusted to the laundry of the High Park Magdalene Asylum. At the close of the Royal visit, by direction of Her Majesty, the following letter was addressed to the Superior of the Convent:-

"Viceregal Lodge, Dublin,
April, 1900.

I have pleasure in stating that during the Queen's visit all Her Majesty's laundry work has been carried out by "the High Park Laundry" in the most efficient manner, and has given entire satisfaction.

(Signed) N. Carrington.

To this the following reply was sent:-

"The Superioress of High Park Convent, Drumcondra, respectfully begs to thank the Right Hon. Colonel Carrington for his letter signifying the satisfaction given by the manner in which Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen's laundry work has been carried out during her visit to Ireland.

The Superioress begs also to say that since Her Majesty has been pleased to patronise High Park her condescension will ensure benefit to the institution, as well as the lasting gratitude of the inmates."

The Irish Times, 29 April 1900, "The Queen and the High Park Asylum"

Should Irish politicians not demand an apology from Buckingham Palace and *The Irish Times*?

Eoghan Ruadh Ó Súilleabháin

Ós Follus Do'n Chléir

Ós follus do'n chléir gur mé ná tabhrann sógh
Fiestas na féasta, béile, bainis ná póit
Má amharcaim bé, is clé mo theastas gan ghó
'S an aicme do ghéinn, táid saor, má bhreabaid an tÓrd.

1. Since it is clear to the clergy that it is I who does not contribute
comfort / entertainment or feasting, food, party or liquor / if I see a
lady, my reputation is wicked without doubt / and the crowd that does
- they're grand - if they bribe the Church!

A bhile gan chodam, gan chogal, gan chlaon-chéime
A choinneal na n-ollamh, is a eochair na suibhscéalta
Gan teimheal do folcadh i dtobar na Naoi mBéithe
Is deimhin gur follus an donas ar shíol Éibhir.

2. O hero without blemish, without weeds, without false standards /
O candle of the learned, and key to the gospels / without defect, who
was bathed in the well of the Nine Muses / certainly it is clear (to you)
the harm to the seed of Éibhear.

Tá síol Éibhir Fhinn fó cheas
Drong do chleacht gaois is oircheas
Saoithe suairce chanadh ceol
Laoithe is duanta deagh-eol.

3. The seed of Éibhear Fionn are under affliction / a tribe who
practised wisdom and propriety / pleasant sages who would sing
music / verses and learned poems.

Do b'eol dam Eaglais charthannach dhaonnachtach
Bhórdach bhainiseach fhreastalach shaor 'na dtigh
N-ar mhór a gceannas 's a gcaradas d'éigsibh sult
Is mo bhrón! Tá a malairt ar marthain dá éis againn.

4. I knew of a charitable humane Church / generous in provisions,
festive, provident, honourable in their house / Where great was their
affection and friendship to jovial poets / My sorrow! The opposite is
living after their passing from us.

Is again dá n-éis atá
Bárr fasnadha gach rilleáin
Díoscar daoithe is fiar gur feadh
Fá éide Chríost, mo dhíombádh.

5. We have, after their passing / the chaff of giddy people / a rabble
of churls and the flaw is found / in the apparel of Christ, alas.

Is díombáidheach dubhach liom cúrsa sleachta na nGaoidheal
Na buinneain úra chumhduigh Caiseal na Ríogh
Go cionn-árd congantach clúmhamhail calma is d'íoc
Bith-dháimh scrúdta ponncta go rathmhar 'san ríoghacht.

6. Melancholy, sad to me is the fate of the race of Gaels / the Chiefs
(fresh saplings) that built Cashel of the Kings / loftily, helpfully,
protectively, bravely, and who rewarded / the everlasting academy
that investigated difficult points successfully in the kingdom.

I ríoghacht 's i réimeas ríogh Fáil
Ba ghnáth an chléir i sítheach-páirt
Damhna ollmhain is druadh
Gur iompuigh mádh na míodh-chuard.

7. In the rule and sway of the Irish kings / the clergy were commonly
in peaceful alliance / with poets, learned folk and bards / until the
trump turned to ill luck.

Ag cuaird má castarar eagnach gear-fhriotal
Gan bhuar gan rachmas, ós dearbh an chléir mar sin
Stuaire chalice, is go mblaisidh a béal le sult
Sin ruagairt reatha air is eascaine chléire is chluig

8. On his travels if a sage of keen discourse should meet / he without
cattle or wealth, as the clergy know very well / a beautiful girl, and if
he should taste her lips in joy / he is expelled at a run, with the curse
of clergy and bell.

Clog ní baoghal ná coinneal-bhádhadh
Madh lán d'ionnmhar is d'eadáil
Do'n daoiste, gan reacht, gan riaghail
Tré ghnáthughadh cléir do bhith-riar

9. Bell, no danger, nor candle quenching / if full of wealth and profit
/ the clown, lawless, unruly / who is in the habit of constantly
entertaining the clergy.

Ag riar 's ag freastal ar Eaglais salm-ráidhteach
D'fhíor-stoc fleascach dá gcaitheadh an aicme ó dtánga
Trian a mbeathadh, is go mbainfeadh dham easbaidh fagháltais
'Na ndiaidh is searbh leo m'aiste ciodh blasta táithte.

10. Entertaining and serving the psalm-reciting Church / of genuine
peasant stock, casting off from themselves the class from which they
came? / with a third of their livings, and they would take causing me
loss of means / nevertheless bitter to them my poem though well
constructed.

Táithte it chroidhe nár chogail meang
Crábhadh, caoine is ollamh-ghreann
Tréithe treall nach feas do'n chóip
Ciodh tréan na hamhais ar altóir.

11. Firm in your heart that never concealed deceit / are piety,
kindness and love of poetry / qualities that are not usually apparent to
the multitude / though powerful are the mercenaries on the altar.

Séamas Ó Domhnaill

Eoghan Ruadh Ó Súilleabháin
1748—1784
Aspects of his Life and Work
Part 9

The Poet & the Priest

Hello dear Reader, in this article about the song “*Ós Follus Do'n Chléir*” you will come across a couple of references to King John of England, a phrase in the Hiligaynon language of the Philippines, Paul Simon, a little bit of Shakespeare, and a lot of Daniel Corkery. I hope to unlock the meaning of the song with help of key words that link one verse to the next.

A while back I was telling you about Eoghan Ruadh's lament for Fr. Con Horgan, the Parish Priest of Donoughmore. That song is the nearest Eoghan ever came to writing a true love song (in a “I love you, man!” kind of way). “*Os Follus Don Chléir*”, on the other hand, is a lament for the lack of appreciation shown by a different type of priest to poets in general and to Eoghan in particular.

It's a peculiar thing that the editors of Eoghan Ruadh seem to have missed the significance of the songs relating to priests.

Risteárd Ó Foghlúadh said he left out the *Lament* for Fr. Con Horgan just because it was too long. Even though we are grateful to Fr. Dinneen for presenting that song in his first edition he still seems to have underestimated its worth:

“Eoghan never composed anything that is not of first-class merit of its kind, if we *except the elegy on Father Horgan.*”

With all due respects to the reverend scholar, I think he is seriously wrong there. The song is a masterpiece which ought to be celebrated at least as much as the *Lament* for Art O’Leary. It must have been magnificent altogether for an educated audience to hear Eoghan sing it. We will not come close to comprehending the real meaning and depth of Irish literature until we know the airs of the songs, and come to an understanding of the language and gain the cultural knowledge of the people who first heard them sung. As John Minahane asks about the poems of the 1640’s, “...*what did these poems say to someone who could hear them fully?*”

Fr. Dinneen also seems to have missed the significance of *Ós Follus Don Chléir*:

“Eoghan was a great favourite of the clergy, who appreciated his learning and revelled in his vivacity. It has been sometimes said that he lashed them with fierce satire. The charge is false. Among the pieces that have come down to us in manuscript there is but one satire against the clergy, which is of a mild and humorous nature.”

At first glance it might appear that Eoghan is using his song-writing talents to hit back unfairly at a diligent if rigorous priest whose patience has been tried by the poet’s unruly behaviour. As a teacher and a local celebrity, Eoghan might set a bad example for younger people whose best interests the good priest had at heart. The priest had enough on his plate spending hours in the saddle every day traipsing over a huge country parish, tending to the diseased and dying amongst the poorest people in Europe. The thatched roof on what passed for a Church was leaking and he was pestered on the altar by the “*braon anuas*”. He had to deal with rogue friars carrying out clandestine marriages, drunken wakes, patterns and weddings, not to mention fending off Penal Law vultures. The Penal Laws hadn’t gone away, you know! It was only 10 years since Fr.

Nicholas Sheehy was hung, drawn and quartered above in Clonmel. And here was this vagabond poet teacher looking to scrounge off him and giving him lip!

To see no further than that however, is to miss the point of the song.

Firstly, as Fr. Dinneen points out, Eoghan Ruadh was a deeply religious person:

“Nevertheless, it is quite certain that he was a man of strong passions, and a led a reckless life; but the cast of his mind was orthodox, and his religious convictions were deep and clear. He was, as Dr. S.H. O’Grady says, “a strong theologian”; he is not without passages of pious sentiment that would do honour to an ascetic writer. Of his poetry which has come down to us, the portion which could be fairly pronounced indelicate is exceedingly small, and perhaps not all genuine, while the general lessons he inculcates are high and noble.”

While *Os Follus don Chléir* is a humorous song, it is not an attack on the Church. It is rather a plea for a return to the basis of Irish Civilisation.

The first verse of eleven syllables serves an introduction. In the second verse we see that the song is addressed to a priest (*eochar na suibhscéalta*) who is also a poet (*coinneal na n-ollamh ... do folcadh I dtobar na Naoi mBéithe*). It is probable that this is part of a song series with each poet answering the other in verse. The phrase “*A bhile gan chodam...*” is a mirror of the phrase Eoghan used when addressing Tadhg Críona Ua Scannail at the start of the satire on old men: “*A bhile gan chealg*”. It was quite a common practice for poets to answer one another using the same song air on a particular subject. In Pat Muldowney’s book of Eoghan Ruadh translations you will find a verse written by some poet to Eoghan:

Aindeise an tsaoghail go ndéanaidh díomsa spreas
Má fheadar i nÉirinn cé aca díobh mo leas
Ainnir dheas séimh na gcaobh-fholt gcíortha gcas
Nó aimid gan chéill go mbéith aici caoirigh is ba.

“May the wretchedness of the world make me a useless person / if I could somehow know which of these is better for me / a pleasant, lovely maiden of branching, curling, glossy tresses / or a silly foolish woman who possesses sheep and cows.”

Eoghan’s reply commences as follows:

Atá eadtortha araon an meid seo chimse

is feas
Go mbfhearra liom bé na gcaobh-fholt gcíortha gcas
Ar leabaidh lem thaobh nó ar aonach taoibh liom seal
'Na baile is leath hÉireann 's a mbéith le sraoil leamh

“I see that between the two of them there is this much, it is clear / that I would prefer the maiden of branching, curling, glossy tresses / to be beside mine bed or along with me for a while at the fair / than a house and half of Ireland with a silly slattern.”

Eoghan exhibits his verse-craft in this song by his dynamic use of metrical chain. This is where a certain word appears at the end of one verse and also at the start of the first line of the following verse. This device was used fairly often enough, by the Munster poets in any case. An example is the lament written by Seán na Raithíneach Ó Murchú, of Carraig na bhFear on the death of Seán Clárach Mac Domhnaill of Charleville. It builds momentum in a song, moves narrative forward and develops meaning.

In “*Os Follus Don Chléir*”, metrical chain appears from verse 2 onwards. Take a couple of seconds to have a look at verses 2 & 3 and you will notice that the chain word is “*eol* – knowledge”. Fr. Dinneen translates “*deagh-eol* (full knowledge)” as “learned”. This type of knowledge is however abstract. it is something to be worked for and sought through long study. The same word in verse 4 changes its meaning to a personal and concrete type of knowing. Eoghan is speaking here about someone he knew in his own life. He knew his voice, his gatch, his smell. He knew him like Hamlet knew Yorick :

“Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy; he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? Your gambols? Your songs? Your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? (*Hamlet*, V.i)”

Or to quote Paul Simon:

As if a didn’t know that
As if I didn’t know my own bed.
As if I’d never noticed
The way she brushed her hair from her forehead.

The chain word linking verses 6 and

7 is “*ríoghacht*”: Kingdom, the exercise of kingship. It is possible that in verse 6 the word simply means the country, the Kingdom of Ireland. Ireland had been formally a Kingdom since the passing of the Crown of Ireland Act in 1542. King Henry VIII of England became King Henry I of Ireland. Prior to that, the country was recognised by the English as Lordship. The first Lord of Ireland being the bold King John. I do not know if there was any objection from the Gaelic people to being in a Lordship or a Kingdom. Maybe it just didn’t bother them one way or the other. In any case in the 18th century the country of Ireland was commonly referred to as a kingdom, even by people of Gaelic Catholic background. Those people would probably never have thought in terms of independence or of a republic. Nano Nagle, for example, used the word Kingdom when referring to the country of Ireland in her correspondence: “*It was my uncle Nagle, who is I think the most disliked by the Protestants of any Catholic in the Kingdom*”.

Eoghan Ruadh himself used the term in this manner, with the understanding being that the Stuart was the true King:

Go háitreabh Chuinn dá dtagadh
 Spáinnigh ghroidhe le ceannas
 Is gárda Laoisigh farra,
 Táin do lucht faobhair;
 Níl sráid san ríoghacht ná cathair,
 Nár bh’árd a dteinntar ar lasadh,
 Lán-chuid fionta ‘á scaipeadh
 Is gáirdeachas piléar,
 Dánta ag buidhin na leabhar,
 Rás is rinne fada,
 Cláirseach chaoín dá spreagadh,
 Gártha ‘gus scléip,
 Ag fáiltiughadh an Ríogh tar calaith,
 Ní tráchtfar linn ar a ainm,
 ‘S a cháirde díogaidh feasta
 Sláinte mo Réics.

If there came to the abode of Conn / brave Spaniards with leadership / and the guard of Louis with them / a host of armed men / there is not a village in the **kingdom** or a city / whose fires would not be lit on high / full portion of wine distributed / and celebratory volleys / poems by the literary folk / racing and long dancing / gentle harps being plucked / laughter and delight / welcoming the King from over the sea / his name will not be mentioned by me / and, my friends, drink forever / the health of my King.

Whatever about the meaning of the word in verse 6, the word “*ríoghacht*” at the start of verse 7 refers to the exercise of Kingship in the old Gaelic order.

It is in verse 7 that we come to the heart of Eoghan Ruadh’s complaint:

Ba ghnáth an chléir i sítheach-páirt
 Damhna ollmhain is druadh

Eoghan is referring here to the special relationship between the poets and the priests in the days of the rule and sway of the Irish Kings. Daniel Corkery, in his book the *Hidden Ireland*, argues that Ireland was unique in Europe in having a secular stream of learning in tandem with the Church schools, a feature which added to the quality of Gaelic culture. I feel it is worthwhile to quote him at length:

“In Europe of the Dark and Middle Ages the universities were frankly Church institutions, with Churchmen ruling in their professoriates; whatever influence those universities wielded in European life and thought was, therefore, a Church influence, which means practically that whatever influence the higher learning exerted in Continental thought was a Church influence, for except in those universities where else was there any repository of that learning? In Ireland, on the other hand, the bardic schools, which obviously exerted great influence in the nation’s life, were a repository of learning, and were, at the same time, frankly a lay institution. The great monastic schools had, too, of course, much of the university spirit in them, and did also exert great influence on the life of the country; this influence, however, one may roughly equate with that wielded by the Church universities of the Continent. But one searches Europe in vain for the equivalent of our bardic school system. In this regard, then, European civilization was less varied than Irish civilization. That factor, which Europe lacked, a secular intellectual centre, who shall fathom its various promptings and achievements on its native soil? What part, great or little, exciting or assuaging, did it play in the local wrestlings of Church and State, if there were such? And in how much is it responsible for that non-European tang which one feels everywhere both in Irish life and in Irish letters in all the centuries down to the nineteenth?”

Gaelic learning proved very resilient, lasting for more than 300 years after the defeat of the Irish kingship at the Battle of Kinsale. According to Daniel Corkery, the Bardic Schools managed to survive for three reasons. Firstly because they were built around a person rather than a building:

“...the chief poet was the school, not the sheltered hut or chieftain’s hall. Human bodies are frail tenements, yet in every age imperial civilisers have

found them more difficult to break than castles of stone. When the stone walls of the castles were blown to fragments, when their lords were fled over the seas, the poets, though greatly put out, of course, remained; and consequently the schools remained”.

The second reason why the schools survived was their feeling for poetry, rather than prose. I feel it is well worth while to quote Corkery at length in this regard:

“... at this time, the seventeenth century, the Gaels had not learned to look upon prose as an art-form. Prose, as opposed to poetry, concerns itself with the civic life of man, with the institutions he sets up to carry on the business of life. Had prose assumed among the Gaels of the seventeenth century the place we now think naturally due to it, Lecky’s story of Ireland in the next century would come near being the whole truth, instead of being, as it is, superficial and partial. For the Gaels would, have ceased to write at all (as Lecky appears to have imagined they did), their civic institutions having ceased to exist, and the ritual of their daily life become impoverished almost to the primitive. But their soul remained, and poetry, the language of the soul, was needed to express it. Indeed it may be that the vast distress in striking it quickened that soul into a new urgency of declaring itself, of uttering its cry. When the men of the world’s armies, in the Great War, went down into the agony of the trenches, so flinging off the multiple institutions that had all along regulated, more than they themselves were aware, their daily and even hourly existence, the new thoughts that began to stir and awaken in their souls yearned for a new mode of expression, a way that was not prose, which, they instinctively felt, would not serve their needs—and yearned in vain. It was for the intensity of poetry that their unwonted sensations longed; but it was only of the form of prose—mould for a less glowing metal—that they had command. For two whole centuries our people were, we may say, down in the trenches, suffering so deeply that they oftentimes cried out that God had forsaken them: their souls were therefore quick with such sensations as must find utterance in poetry or none. Fortunately for their needs, it was of verse-form that they had the better command. As long as there was this natural desire for poetry, there was, of course, a place for the schools that taught the craft of it.”

Finally, the schools of poetry survived the fall of the continental style monasteries because they had a separate

existence from them.

"...when, at last, its abbeys were destroyed, and its learning flung out upon the roads, the Church found itself shiftless and dismayed. The bardic schools, with their deep-rooted feeling for Latin, if not also for Greek, then found themselves, shattered and changed though they were, gradually called on to fulfill a new purpose : in the penal days they became the unofficial seminaries of the Church. By unpremeditated steps, although still a purely lay institution, they became a helpmate of the Church; and in return, again without premeditation, the Church became a helpmate of theirs."

This then is the reason why Eoghan wrote "*Os Follus don Chléir*" and the basis of his grievance. This relationship between the Church and the Poets was in no way theoretical or hazy. It was a real and living thing. It was the way the world was in Eoghan's lifetime. Again, I feel that it is well worth while to listen at length to what Daniel Corkery has to say:

"It was a good thing, in the end, for the Church, that its future priests, while they sat learning their Greek and Latin, should become at the same time saturated with the Gaelic learning which still, as always, held first place in the affections of the schools. All the evidence shows that this new function was undertaken. The number of priests who were themselves poets is very striking: Keating, that great soul, is now remembered as poet and historian rather than as priest; Blessed Oliver Plunkett, that most sterling of martyrs, at least wrote some verses in the mode of the schools; the poems of Fr. Padraigín Haicéad have been gathered into a book; the songs of Fr. Liam Inglis, after two centuries, are found to-day in newly-gathered anthologies of Irish poetry; Fr. Eoghan O Caoimh (O'Keeffe) is another poet whose light two centuries of neglect have not quenched; while not alone was Fr. Nicholas O'Donnell a writer of verses, but he seems to have presided at times over the School, or Court, of Poetry that assembled at Croom, in County Limerick. Many other poet-priests could be named; and then outside these we have the large number of priests whom we know of through the poets they associated with. On hearing of the death of Eoghan Ruadh Ó Súilleabhain—poor drunken wastrel as he was—it was a priest who exclaimed: "I would rather the best priest in the diocese were dead", and we may gather from the saying how much this fellow-feeling, forged in early manhood, must have meant for the poets. Between parish priest, fearful for

his flock, and strolling schoolmaster-poet, with his wild ways, there often arose bickering, and sometimes open war, as we know, yet on the whole the priests protected the poets when all other patrons had failed, and did so entirely for the reason that they themselves were learned in the same Gaelic lore. This good thing happened because the bardic schools, broken down though they were, were now the only institutions left where youths could be initiated into the classical languages : needless to say, their fulfilling of this need was of itself sufficient reason for their existence. How curiously it had come about, then, that for the reason that they had never become Church institutions, had never swapped their native for European traditions, those schools in the end were able to assist the Church in its distress!"

The chain word in verses 7-8 is "*cuard*" which in Dinneen's Dictionary is given as: a circuit, a tour, a visit, a revolution. *Miodh-chuard* is given as a "harmful visitation". Dinneen gives the meaning "ill-luck" to the phrase as used by Eoghan Ruadh in our song. The phrase compares to the English word "catastrophe" from the Greek "*katastrophē*", from "*katastrephō*, I overturn", from "*kata*, against" + "*strephō*, I turn". Pat Muldowney gives the meaning of the line as "until misfortune befell". In the next line Eoghan uses the chain word to shift focus from the general fortune of Irish civilisation to his personal individual experience. In verse 8 the word "*cuaird*" refers simply to his own travels.

The chain word for verses 8 & 9 is "*clog* – a bell". Bell, Book and Candle was a phrase used to signify excommunication from the Catholic Church. The ceremony used to involve closing the Book of Scriptures, quenching the candle, and tolling a bell, as for someone who had died. This phrase is used by a character known as "the Bastard" in Shakespeare's play *King John*. In real life, the Bastard was Philip of Cognac, the illegitimate son of King Richard the Lionheart and nephew of King John:

"**Act 3, Scene 3:** On the plains near Angiers after the battle. Alarums, excursions, retreat. Enter King John, Queen Elinor, the Bastard..."

King John: (to Queen Elinor) So shall it be; your grace shall stay behind so strongly guarded.

(to the Bastard) Cousin, away for England! haste before; and, ere our coming, see thou shake the bags of

hoarding abbots; imprisoned angels set at liberty; the fat ribs of peace must by the hungry now be fed upon; use our commission in his utmost force.

Bastard: Bell, book, and candle shall not drive me back, when gold and silver beck me to come on. I leave your highness. Grandam, I will pray, if ever I remember to be holy, for your fair safety; so, I kiss your hand.

Elinor: Farewell, gentle cousin.

King John: Coz, farewell.
Exit the Bastard."

You can hear the lovely ironinc tone of voice in the phrase "*Clog ní baoghal*". In English it could be "*bell by eye*" (or a little cruder) or as they say in Bacolod "*lingganay kada!*"

Wilson John Haire

The Vultures Hover

Obama enters Mandela's old cell
on Robben Island
and feels inspired
but by what – by hell
where lived the damned?
This whole episode
he has mired.

In his speeches he says:

("The world is grateful for the heroes
of Robben Island,
who reminds us that no shackles
or cells
can match the strength
of the human spirit.")

On he bays:

("We are humbled to stand
where men of such courage
faced
down injustice and refused
to yield")

Clichés!

Maybe Robben Island was more humane
than Guantanamo,
where the human spirit held,
so he upped the reign
of physical and psychological
pain
for his Muslim foe.
(not forgetting Bradley Manning)
This cold deliberate hypocrisy
for all humanity
is damning.

2nd July, 2013

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Pagans?
'Ireland new mission frontier'
Suicides
Births
Funeral Law
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Pagans?

Most Irish bishops believe we have become a 'nation of pagans' who bought in to the 'evils of materialism and consumerism' of the Celtic Tiger era" (*Irish Examiner*, 24.6.2013).

"A midwife manager at Galway University Hospital has identified herself as the person who told Savita Halappanavar that she couldn't get a termination 'because Ireland is a Catholic country'.

"Ms Halappanavar died in Galway University Hospital of septicaemia due to E.Coli on October 28th, 2012, a week after being admitted. At the inquest into Ms Halappanavar's death in Galway today, Ann Maria Burke said that she now regrets the remark but explained that it wasn't meant to be hurtful" (*Irish Times*, 10.4.2013).

'Ireland new mission frontier'

"The Church in Ireland urgently needs the resuscitating breath of the Church in the south in order to survive and grow." — African Church leader, Fr. Agbonkhanmeghe Orobator S.J., Jesuit Provincial of the East African Province, warned that unless the Church in Ireland is willing to learn from the rapid spread of Catholicism in the global south, Irish Catholicism will inevitably drift into "resentment and nostalgia".

"The dwindling missionary capital of the Church in Ireland lies beyond doubt. The question is: Is Ireland ready to harvest the fruits of its missionary labours on its own soil or will the Church simply opt to bear the burden of diminishment with resentment and nostalgia?"

"In practical terms, this new partnership for mission in the world Church places on the Church in the global south the duty of offering suitably qualified personnel and human resources to the Church in Ireland as well as the responsibility of learning to live in and adapt to an unfamiliar culture, just as Irish missionaries did in erstwhile foreign missions", Fr. Orobator said.

"For several centuries successive generations of courageous women and men sailed from the shores of Ireland to various parts of the world as ambassadors of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As we speak, the Church in Ireland urgently needs the resuscitating breath of the Church in the south in order to survive and grow" (*Irish Catholic*, 6.6.2013).

Suicides

"Cork City has the highest suicide rate in Ireland since the start of the economic recession in 2008, with levels more than 70% above the national average" (*Irish Examiner*, 24.6.2013).

A total of 114 suicides have been registered in the city since 2008. The annual number of suicides more than doubled in 2012—from 13 to 30 deaths—which resulted in Cork's suicide rate increasing dramatically to 25.2 deaths per 100,000 population last year—more than twice the national average of 11 deaths.

Only Limerick City had a higher suicide rate in 2012 with 26.3 deaths per 100,000. A total of 15 suicides were recorded in Limerick last year compared to the annual average of just over eight deaths in the city over the past five years. Very high suicide rates were also recorded in Wexford, Mayo, Leitrim, and Kerry in 2012.

Kilkenny: 9.6%; Sligo: 9.7% and Donegal with 10.4% are the counties with the lowest suicide rate.

CSO figures show 507 suicides were registered last year—down 3.5% on 2011 figures. Over 80% of these fatalities were men.

Fingal, which covers north Dublin, has the lowest suicide rate in the country—with a level less than half the national average.

Official figures show 2,576 people have taken their own lives since the start of the economic downturn in 2008—an increase of 187 on the previous five-

year period 2003-2007) with an annual average of 515 suicide deaths registered each year. In contrast, a total of 1,077 people were killed in road traffic collisions over the same period 2008-2012.

"Console, the national suicide prevention and bereavement charity, has expressed concern that the CSO figures do not give the full picture of the extent of suicide in Ireland. In particular, it has described above-average rate of suicides in places like Limerick and Cork as alarming" (*Irish Examiner*, 24.6.2013).

Births

"On a happier note, births outnumbered deaths by over two to one, with 72,225 babies born in Ireland in 2012, compared with 28,848 deaths. But this did indicate a slight waning of the baby boom with 2,400 fewer births than the previous year.

"The fertility rate fell slightly with the average woman now having 2.01 babies in her lifetime, which, though high by European standards, is below the 2.1 needed to replace the population." (*Irish Independent*, 1.6.2013)

The number of teenage births has nearly halved in the last decade—there were 1,639 babies born to teenagers in 2012 compared to 3,087 in 2001.

Mothers continue to get older, with the average age at birth now 31.9 years—and the oldest mums in the country are in Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown where they're 33.9 on average compared with Limerick city where they're 29.9

"More couples also tied the knot last year with 21,425 marriages which was 1,366 more than the previous year" (*Irish Independent*, 1.6.2013).

Funeral Law

"No pockets in a shroud" our forefathers used proclaim and would you believe it, if there was : by the time the current regime are booted out, it is doubtful if anyone would have anything left to put into the pockets of a shroud.

New regulations allowing burials without coffins could signal an end of expensive funerals for grief-stricken families. Yes, egalitarians spirits of Fine Gael and Labour have ensured that whatever it cost you in life's journey, at least you'll get the final stage on the cheap.

Bodies can be buried without coffins

from 1st June 2013 for the first time in more than 120 years under new regulations approved by Minister for the Environment Phil Hogan (FG).

Traditionally, shrouds are made of white cotton, wool or linen, though any material can be used so long as it is made of natural fibre. The Minister is still in consultation with his Labour colleagues on the issue of whether a corpse can be wrapped in a hair shirt or not.

It has been illegal to bury a body in any cemetery unless it was enclosed in a coffin since burial regulations were introduced in 1888.

A change to the regulations will mean that from June 2013 cemeteries will be allowed accept "*uncoffined bodies*". The Victorian rules stated that no burials could occur "*unless the body be enclosed in a coffin of wood or some other sufficiently strong material*".

The new rules have been introduced to help facilitate the growing number of Muslim funerals, where the body is generally buried without a coffin.

However, the regulations do not apply just to Muslims—anyone can be buried without a coffin.

Fanagans of Dublin Funeral Director, Gus Nichols, said his business offers coffins ranging in price from €500 to €3,500 but pointed out his company offers mourners a wide variety of additional services.

Dr Ali Selim, a spokesman for the Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland said there were three Muslim cemeteries across the country—in Gorey, Co Wexford; in Limerick; and at Newcastle in Dublin.

"If somebody passes away, we bring them to our mortuary and we shroud the body according to the Islamic way, and take it to the mosque where we offer prayer", he said.

"We do not bury in the coffin, but in the shroud. We lay the body in the grave facing Mecca, and then put pieces of wood on the body from the edge to the bottom so when we put dust into the grave it doesn't touch the body" (*Irish Independent*, May 7, 2013).

Soliciting

"The number of solicitors has passed 14,000 for the first time.

"At the end of 2012, there were 13,965 solicitors on the roll according to the Law Society. Admissions this year have taken that number past the 14,000 mark.

"In relation to barristers, there are

currently 2,261 members of the Law Library.

"Last year, 147 entered the library and 140 left. There were 205 students doing the Barrister-at-Law degree at the King's Inns last year, down from 240 the year before" (*Sunday Business Post*, 19.5.2013).

C of I

"Now we have a ban on Church of Ireland people seeking to enter Trinity as primary teachers", stated Mr. Adrian Oughton speaking at the Church of Ireland general synod in Armagh on Friday, May 11, 2013.

"Trinity by its actions in effect refused to accept as undergraduates Protestant young men and women who wish to be primary teachers", Mr Oughton said.

He said that Dublin City University was willing to accept "*our intake and our ethos*".

"Traditions die hard, but a tradition is something that someone once started and that does not mean that it cannot be changed. he said.

"Better to be cut free from that tradition and seek new and more promising roads than to be emasculated," he said.

"About 60 per cent of Church of Ireland schools would be forced to close if a recommendation that a minimum school roll of 80 pupils and four teachers is accepted." (*Irish Times*, 10.5.2013)

Presenting a report by the Church's Board of Education, Adrian Oughton said that the loss of so many schools would hasten the assimilation of Church of Ireland members into the local community.

"The word I used was 'assimilation' and not 'integration'. Our people are very much integrated into their communities, but they do not wish to be assimilated."

He also lamented the lack of Church of Ireland education at second level. Of the 26 counties in the Republic, he said only 13 had a Protestant second-level school. Of the 26 second-level schools, 19 charged fees.

"We cannot afford a further reduction, but many of our families cannot afford fees either and there is no basis for the statement that in tuition-free education, the maintenance of quality teaching could be a problem."

Archbishop of Dublin Dr Michael Jackson told a synod press conference on Thursday of his personal fears that no school could survive without at least two teachers.

Marriage

"A radical journalist who campaigns for the complete abolition of marriage has been commissioned to write the first major book on the two suspects in the Boston Marathon bombings" [15.4.2013].

"Masha Gessen, a Russian-U.S. reporter, has already written a controversial biography of Russia's President Vladimir Putin.

"But marriage defenders claim that she revealed the real agenda behind same sex 'marriage' when speaking at a writers' festival in Sydney, Australia last year.

"Gessen argued that homosexuals like herself 'should have the right to marry', but this would only be a stepping stone on the path to the total destruction of marriage.

"She admitted that 'fighting for gay marriage generally involves lying about what we are going to do with marriage when we get there, because we lie that the institution of marriage is not going to change.'

"And that is a lie," said Gessen. "The institution of marriage is going to change, and it should change. And again, I don't think it should exist" (*Alive*, Catholic monthly newspaper, June, 2013).

Viagra

One of the country's most affluent areas is spending more on Viagra than any other region.

"Figures show that the cost to the State of funding erectile dysfunction drugs last year decreased by 7% from €10.24 million to €9.46 million.

"And a breakdown of the figures show that the largest spend on Viagra and other erectile dysfunction drugs was in the Dublin South area, where the total was €834,562 in 2012.

"The total spend in the Dublin area last year was €2.1m, while the spend in Cork was €1.1m" (*Irish Independent*, 21.5.2013).

Despite the large cost, the President of the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) said that it was money well spent as the drugs have improved men's health and saved marriages.

"*Saved Marriages!*"—that's one for the "Irish Catholic"?

More VOX: back page

The Dreyfus Affair

France in 2013 is divided on the subject of same sex marriage, between the socially conservative—who can be Left or Right—and the socially non-conservative, also of either political side. Neither side necessarily disapproves of homosexuality, as the arguments against Gay Marriage do not involve an objection to homosexuality. However, on the conservative side there is a loud if tiny minority who refuses Gay Marriage because it objects to Homosexuality as such. On the 26th May 'anti' demonstration, that minority became ever more vociferous and prominent, to the extent of almost intimidating the main-stream organisers. At the celebration of the first same-sex marriage, in Montpellier, there was a large police presence, and cafés in the vicinity of the venue were told to close for the time. The organiser of the main movement had publicly wished the couple all the best and called, in vain, for no demonstrations. The number of calls to a helpline for homophobic crime has doubled since the time of the controversy.

There is a parallel with the Dreyfus affair. At that time, too, France was divided between conservative and non-conservative, and the conservatives were 'seconded' by a vociferous and hostile group. The affair is now remembered for the activities of this hostile extremist group. But it is as wrong to lump together the groups which refused to reopen the trial of Alfred Dreyfus and describe them as all motivated by anti-Semitism as it would be, in a hundred years time, to describe the anti-gay marriage movement as motivated by homophobia, even though homophobia increased at the same time.

There are other parallels: the unconditional support for the army and for 'national security' is as strong today in England, and America, as it was then in France. People in England are meant to support, 'right or wrong', British soldiers deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Newspapers like the *Daily Mirror* might not support those wars, but they support unconditionally 'our boys'. They are heroes. The military charity set up recently is called 'Help For Heroes'. There are contradictions, even within

the *Daily Mirror* mentality: how can heroes make possible a great wrong, like these wars? And how could heroes kill the civilian Baha Mousa, not in the heat of battle, but in custody? But that is the point of unconditional support, right or wrong.

It is this sort of unconditional support that was given to the army in France in the late 19th century.

In the same way, in England and America today, people don't enquire too closely at the guilt or innocence of prisoners accused of terrorism: they trust the Government to get on with the War On Terror on their behalf, and are prepared to overlook mistakes. Reasons of State and national security trump Truth and Justice, as in 1894 in France.

There is one big difference: in England today the Government, the political parties and the press are in agreement on the important things, and the population follows. In France in 1894, the Government was a fragile entity, there were no political parties as such, the press was out of control, and the population was in a state of great excitement. Writers on the subject have pointed this out: N. Halasz says that "*curiously, it was a happy life, ...because it became elevated and meaningful*"; he quotes Melchior de Vogüé:

"The bravest hearts of France rushed upon each other in the dark with equal nobility of sentiment, exasperated by the awesome conflict."

Another contemporary, Alexandre Zevaes, spoke of "*a drama of heroic grandeur*".

Uncertain State

In 1894 the French Army was gripped by spy mania, with a fear of secrets being lost to the Germans. Dreyfus was hastily picked out as a possible spy, and wrongly convicted. Once the mistake had been made, and discovered the question was whether to admit the error or not. For the sake of its national reputation and authority, the Army decided not to admit the mistake. The politicians supported the Army. It would have been unpatriotic not to. Dreyfus himself, it is said, would not have been a Dreyfusard, because he would have put his country before himself.

All sorts of wrongs are committed 'for reasons of state'. But for such *realpolitik* to work, you must have a united ruling class, agreed that 'for reasons of state', this wrong must not be righted. As Brendan Clifford has pointed out, France did not have a ruling class. This is paradoxical: how can a capitalist developed nation not have a ruling class? You can put it a different way, and say, that the French ruling class was divided, but that amounts to the same thing: rulers are united or they don't rule. The phrase used above, '*a united ruling class*' is pleonastic: a ruling class is united, or it's not a ruling class. Speaking of a united ruling class is like speaking of a fair-haired blonde.

At the time of the Dreyfus affair, the State was still not solidly established. Only a little over twenty years earlier, in 1870, Napoleon III had provoked a war with Bismarck and lost catastrophically. He was taken prisoner; his removal from power created a vacuum where the State should have been, and a revolution took place. This was put down with ferocity by every element that was against revolutions. That conservative force then had to establish a new State, and it had to find a form for that new State.

The form of that State was not a foregone conclusion. If you wanted to follow precedent, you could choose between: Monarchy (pre-1789), Monarchy with Parliament (a longish restoration, 1815-1848), Republic (only two short episodes, 1790-93 and 1848-1850), Consulate (1799-1804) or Empire (one short and glorious, 1804-1815, one long and bourgeois, 1851-1870). That century had seen all those forms of government. In 1871, there were supporters for a Constitutional Monarchy (there was a serious Pretender to the throne); supporters for the Republic; and also supporters for a Bonapartist-style Empire. Monarchists were given first choice, and France would today be a Constitutional Monarchy if the Pretender to the throne had played the game. He did not, so eventually the Republic was declared, with its first President, a man of Irish descent, Maréchal Mac Mahon, who was an aristocrat and a royalist. He was Head of State from 1873 and President of the Republic from 1875.

Things did not settle then. To establish a modern Democracy in the English or American model, you need to recruit the population into political parties, preferably just two, which can then gently alternate, creating no waves. The population was not ready to be recruited

in that way, and clearly-defined parties did not exist for them to be recruited into.

The two opposing factions present in 1875 could not henceforth coexist, much less alternate. After the Republic was declared and Monarchy was off the agenda, the monarchists had no place in Parliament or in society: they were not an acceptable 'other party', but enemies of the State. But they could not vanish immediately. They retained their positions of influence in the civil service, the judiciary and the army. Politically a diminishing and ever weaker group in Parliament, they took refuge outside Parliament, in leagues and mass movements, and in the press.

War Of Ideology

The State had not taken the population in hand, did not control opinion, and in particular did not control the press. The Republican press was much smaller than the anti-republican.

The press was massively involved in spreading anti-Jewish material, there is no doubt of that. The press however was not controlled by the State, or by parties, but by various factions and individuals, and it is not always clear what they represented. Some newspapermen were anti-Semitic monomaniacs, like Drumont. One religious order, the Assumptionists, spread anti-Semitic ideas in their paper, *La Croix*, despite the disapproval of some Bishops, who were unable to suppress it.

Such freedom from control by Government, Party or Church had an interesting consequence: it meant that people, influenced by an anarchic press, made up their minds on an individual basis. It may have been the first individual political choice people made; it was a dilemma of conscience. People decided issues for themselves, they did not stick together, families did not decide together, political groupings did not decide together. Families were split; members of political groupings chose one way or the other.

In fact, these few years paved the way for democracy, where individuals make up their own mind, unhindered by family or home loyalty. The reign of the supremacy of the individual could start, which paradoxically meant in fact the moulding of the individual by the State could start, as the individual on his own is much easier to mould to the necessities of the state than family and clans.

The Republicans set about destroying

as much of the bastions of the conservative forces as they could—the Church, religious schools, social services given by religious orders. They started purging the civil service, the judiciary and the army. To give an example of their success, by 1904, the Minister for War, General André, had the upper hand in the promotion of republican officers: he was favouring or hindering the promotion of officers on the strength of reports on their political and religious affiliations provided to him by Masonic networks. (This was going a bit far, and he had to resign when he was found out.) Punitive legislation was the main instrument used against the old non-republicans; an example was the proposal that candidates to the civil service must have done three years in a state school: that would have removed at a stroke any pupil from a Church school. While indicating a trend, this particular proposal was not adopted, however.

Since the 'other party' was not to be allowed to exist, that created two difficulties. Firstly those who gave allegiance to the Monarchists, and more vaguely did not like the modernisation of France, had to find other outlets, in extra-parliamentary groups and in a mass-circulation press; they attacked their winning opponents because they were taking France down the wrong road, and were doing so because they were Jews, Freemasons, Free-thinkers and Protestants. Correspondingly, the winning side had to organise itself as a functioning parliamentary machine at the same time as managing opposing trends within itself—not least the Monarchists who had rallied to the Republicans (at the encouragement of the Vatican). And all these groups had yet to organise themselves into parties. The political leaders were upstarts, people who would not have come to power before.

Modernisation

As well as a political transformation, an economic and social transformation was taking place. The Republicans' aim was to modernise the country, and transform it from a rural to an industrial and commercial Power, from a country where the population is attached to a place and to a way of life, to a country where the population is mobile and flexible. The ideology that accompanied this transformation was anti-Clericalism, an almost purely negative idea. Some of the leaders of the movement had a source of positive thinking, Freemasonry, but that was a private affair. Closed to women, it did not penetrate

the family; it was not meant to be transmitted or to become a large movement.

All these transformations were happening on a background of economic crisis: in particular in 1895 wine growers were ruined, and trade agreements favourable to America and Argentina allowed the beef trade to be ruined.

To be added to the context is the 1870 defeat and the need to reform the Army to make it capable of regaining Alsace-Lorraine from Germany. The Army was reforming itself, by imitating the successful Prussian model; for example, the Prussians had an 'open' model for the recruitment of the army staff, so the French dropped their restricted mode of recruitment and adopted this open model—which allowed entry to Dreyfus and other 'outsiders'.

In 1894 the Army was almost universally respected and popular. When the General Staff sentenced Alfred Dreyfus for treason, condemnation of the traitor was practically universal and it was taken for granted that the charge was well-founded. Men who would eventually defend him joined in the censure at the time. Clemenceau, for example, regretted that the death penalty for treason had been abolished and the guilty man able to escape execution. Afterwards, when it was found the Army had been wrong, the view was that it was a Frenchman's patriotic duty to put the Army before justice for one individual.

Dreyfus Divisions

The family of Dreyfus chose to leave Alsace when it was taken over by Germany after the 1870 defeat, leaving two brothers in Mulhouse to run the family firm. The family, and Alfred Dreyfus himself, spoke the local German dialect, spoke French with an accent, and were deeply patriotic (for France).

Evidence had come to light that there was some spying within the General Staff; General Mercier, the Minister for War, having been accused of incompetence in matters of Intelligence, wanted to see an arrest. Analysing the content of one document, taken from the German Embassy, in 1894, high-ranking officers reasoned that the culprit must be someone who had been privy to the information it contained, and drew the wrong conclusion, that Dreyfus must be the guilty man.

The brother of Alfred Dreyfus set about establishing his innocence. Later Picquart, then head of Army Intelligence, and incidentally also from Alsace, found evidence that the conviction against Dreyfus did not stand up and that the

original reasoning did not bear scrutiny. He talked. The General Staff and the Minister of War decided that for reasons of State, the new evidence should not be acted upon.

When Zola wrote his famous Open Letter to the President in January 1898, the press redoubled its campaign and the country divided between defence of the Army and public interest, as against defence of the individual. There was a Second Court Martial in 1899.

The best outcome at that retrial, from the point of view of the internal peace of France, was arrived at, in the sense that neither side could claim victory. Dreyfus was again condemned, but soon pardoned. (In the same year, the Government prosecuted and put in prison the most prominent of the anti-Semitic Nationalists, and in 1900 closed down the religious order of the Assumptionists who had supported them.) In 1906 Dreyfus was finally declared innocent and given honours. He took an active part in the Great War.

Anti-Semitism?

What place did anti-Semitism play in this affair? Hostile claims against Jews played a big part in the 'anti-revision' campaign, with an enormous outpouring of anti-Jewish material, newspapers, pamphlets, pictures, even playing cards and other games. But what effect did that have, how was it received by the population, and how did it connect with pre-existing feelings, and with political opinion? Just because material is disseminated does not necessarily mean that it is accepted by the public.

Herzl, the first modern advocate of Zionism, said after the event that the Dreyfus Affair had convinced him of the necessity of Jewish nationalism, but in fact he entertained the idea before the Affair. It is not clear also what worried him more when he arrived in Paris in 1891, anti-Semitism or the high degree of Jewish assimilation. He thought that Jewish nationalism was the only alternative to assimilation. Moreover his contention that Jews were not safe in France does not stand up. They were well represented for example in the privileged classes—in business, the arts or academia. The young Ilya Ehrenbourg, in his native Russia in the 1890s, drew an optimistic conclusion from the Affair: he felt hopeful, because he read that so many people in France were devoting their lives to the defence of one Jew.

In a France of 38 million, half of which lived in the country, there were

71 000 Jews, all urban dwellers (of which 45,000 lived in Paris); that means that most French people had never met anyone Jewish in their life: what did the word "Jew" mean to them?

There isn't one answer to that but many.

The Socialists for example used the word in their propaganda in the 1880s and 90s.

Heirs of Marx, Babeuf and Blanqui, and of the Revolutions of 1848 and the Commune of 1871, they inspired fear in the hearts of politicians and the propertied population. They called for the expropriation of capital and the putting property in common. The enemy was the "feudality of finance" (*la féodalité financière*), meaning that, with the French Revolution, the feudal system had been replaced by another feudality, this time of a financial kind. In 1894 they were against parliamentary politics, and did not form a party in the modern sense. They attacked Jews, for example, "the Jew Léon Say", from a sugar manufacturing family, with the words "The Jew Léon Say is a Protestant". In fact, Say was a Protestant, but not of Jewish descent—the term is used to denote his financial position. Thus they spoke of Catholic financiers as "Jews as all the others"; a capitalist like Rothschild was "a Jew twice over", because he was actually Jewish. They wrote:

"When we speak of Jews we mean the Jewish mentality—the mentality of gain, of profit, of exploitation, the mentality of enterprise and monopoly: in a word, the mentality of banking."

The great socialist leader Jean Jaurès, heckled in a meeting, said: "Let's not speak of the Jews! There are too many Christians who are Jews".

These quotations come from *Intent And Consequences: The "Jewish Question" in the French Socialist Movement of the Late Nineteenth Century* by Victor M. Glasberg in *Jewish Social Studies*, (Jan., 1974). Glasberg mentions one socialist writer, Chirac, who wrote to Drumont, the author of the often mentioned 1886 book *Jewish France* to denounce his anti-Semitism as mediaeval savagery, which would not help the working class or the country. Glasberg wrote:

"As for Chirac, time and again he insisted that his opposition to the Jews constituted "not a religious war at all, but an economic war". In an open letter to Drumont published in the *Revue socialiste* in 1887 he expressed himself clearly:

"No, my dear friend, the religious and reactionary doctrines which make up your monarchical system are far from antagonistic to Jewish parasitism I can only imagine that boiling with passion as you are, turning to sentiment when logic fails you, you have not dared to refute my demonstration that the noble {aristocratic} or bourgeois clerical-monarchists, in whose favor you wish to despoil the Jews, are just as Jewish as those whom you call 'Semites'. You want a race war for the profit of a caste; I want a war against jewing {*agissements juifs*}, for the profit of the nation. Now, jewing, that is, usury, parasitism, theft—in a word, anti-social activity—is practiced as much by Christians as by Jews. One judges the artisan by his work, and a thief by his crudeness, but a man does not choose his father, nor is he compelled to follow in his father's footsteps. Your race war is medieval savagery, that is all!"...

Glasberg concludes:

"It is not only inaccurate but also confusing to use the term anti-semitic to describe the socialists' *anti-juif* language.'

And:

"In fact, the *anti-juif* socialists, far from indulging in antisemitism, clearly and categorically repudiated it. Amazingly enough, no attention at all has been paid to this most crucial point by previous scholars. And yet, Malon and Chirac, the two most prominent representatives of the *anti-juif* school alive in 1886, the year Drumont's *France juive* was published, were quite explicit. In an article that appeared in the *Revue socialiste* in 1886, Malon wrote : {Drumont} appears to us to be a sixteenth-century crusader, a fanatic of the faith ever ready to go out to war against the enemies of God and the oppressors of the down-trodden. We, believers in human solidarity and aspirants to the duty of universal bounty, share neither his faith nor his hatreds ..."

And he adds:

"To put the men who expressed themselves in these words into the same camp with the very man they so vigorously condemned is surely to stretch historical categorization beyond all useful limits. It is an inescapable conclusion that the French socialist movement of the late nineteenth century, in its intellectual shoddiness, its ideological blindness and its naiveté, gave aid and comfort to the developing antisemitic movement. And if it condemned, it also tolerated within itself a minor and insignificant trend of pure

and simple antisemitism manifest in such works as the ones named above, by Tridon and Regnard. But the main spokesmen of the *anti-juif* school—the very men accused of leading the anti-semitic camp within the socialist movement—cannot be called antisemites. The use of the term antisemitism to describe the *anti-juif* notions of late nineteenth-century French socialists obscures, besides much simple truth, precisely those aspects of the matter that make it of greatest interest and give it its actual historical significance."

Glasberg makes a distinction between men like Drumont and men like the Socialists of the time. That distinction is often blurred today. Yet it is important if you want to describe correctly the relationship between Jews and the rest of the population. What sort of a relationship was it? Were people able to live together, socialise, intermarry? Or was it a relationship as between the early settlers and the indigenous population of America? Or between Blacks and Whites in the Deep South, or in the old South Africa?

There was anti-Jewish feeling among some members of the French Army, apparently Picquart had such feelings; that did not stop him from making public what he discovered regarding the innocence of Dreyfus, at great risk to himself: his private feelings did not interfere with decent behaviour. And that did not stop the Army authorities from disgracing him: dispatching him to Tunisia as a punishment and later dismissing him from the Army and putting him in prison. (Subsequently he was released and was promoted.) Jewish officers were sometimes at the receiving end of insulting remarks. They challenged the men who insulted them to duels (duels were relatively common then). What does that say? That they were considered gentlemen; you don't fight duels with your social inferiors.

Class Views

Socialists at first had stood aside from the Dreyfus Affair, "*that bourgeois civil war*" designed to draw attention from the class struggle. Gradually they sided with the Dreyfusards, following Jean Jaurès, and against Jules Guesde. They then abandoned the *anti-juif* way of speaking. At the same time they watered down their programme and joined the race for success at elections. One socialist, Thivier, wrote in *Le Tocsin* of 1st June 1895:

" that capitalism, not Judaism, created bankers, and that the same

problem would exist without Jews. He also reminded readers that most of their exploiters were not Jewish. "Is it necessary under these circumstances", he added, "to accuse the Jews"..."

On the other side of the political spectrum, the landowners found their power waning, with their wealth undermined by international commerce against which they felt helpless; their political power depended locally on them being the '*notable*', elected because their father had been elected before them, because they were the 'important' people in the locality, for whom people voted without regard for what they might advocate. They wanted to hold on to their privileges, but had no programme with which to woo the population. They sometimes resorted to anti-Semitism as one way to attract votes, whether or not they had any such feelings themselves. One of the early defenders of Dreyfus, Bernard Lazare, wrote:

"Landed capital, in its struggle with industrial capital, has become anti-Semitic, because the Jew is, for the landed proprietor, the most typical representative of commercial and industrial capitalism."

For their part, the small bourgeoisie and small peasant proprietors could attack the rich without siding with the working class or entertaining the idea of class struggle, by directing their attacks on Jews.

Daniel Halévy noted that anti-Semitism allowed conservatives to function politically without forming a true conservative party.

In the 1911 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* entry on Anti-Semitism, Lucien Wolf, then Vice-President of the Jewish Historical Society of England, puts *fin de siècle* anti-Semitism in historical context; he says:

"In the political struggles of the concluding quarter of the 19th century, an important part was played by a religious, political and social agitation against the Jews, known as anti-Semitism."

In summary he explains that Jews were modern Europeans; they belonged, in Europe, only to one class, the industrial bourgeoisie, where they occupied a leading place. The vanquished enemies of the bourgeoisie then pointed out the prominence of Jews. The vanquished reactionaries exaggerated their apparent domination and created modern anti-Semitism. Jews flocked to financial and distributive (not productive) fields of

industry, and to universities. They crowded the professions, especially medicine, law and journalism. (This was written in the section dealing with German anti-Semitism, but it applies to France as well.)

Lucien Wolf concludes in an optimistic way that—despite the continuing danger from the situation of Jews in Russia—anti-Semitism, by 1910, had played its role in the establishment of modern societies in Europe, as accompanying the last gasp of landed power; settled modern countries would have no need of it. The enemy from now on, in Germany at least, would be socialism. According to him, "*anti-Semitism has left no permanent mark of a constructive kind on the social and political evolution of Europe*". And—

"So far from injuring the Jews, it has really given Jewish racial separatism a new lease of life, given new spirit and new source of strength to Judaism, at a moment when the approximation of ethical systems and the revolt against dogma were sapping its essentially religious foundations."

Wolf could not foresee the earthquake of the First World War, which turned everything upside down, destroying old countries and creating new countries, which would once again have to establish a viable State from fragmented elements, to the great detriment of previously settled Jewish middle classes.

Conclusion

So, what part did anti-Semitism play in the Dreyfus Affair?

It played no part in its beginning: no one was setting out to persecute a Jew. It played no part in the cover up: the intention was to save the honour of the army. It played no part in the Trials themselves. The Anti-Dreyfusards who rejected a retrial did so because they put the army and the nation first. Anti-semitism was not their principal motivation.

In the absence of political parties with a membership and a programme, anti-Semitism for politicians served as a replacement for politics, as something to say and a way of rallying people. Anti-Semitism occupied the space that was eventually filled by politics. The anti-Catholicism of the Republicans was also 'something to say and a way of rallying people', a substitute for a political programme.

It was very possible to see the monarchist/republican struggle in religious terms: pre-Revolution France was Catholic and placed restrictions on

Jews. Republican France afforded a large place to Jews, Protestants, Freemasons and free thinkers; monarchists therefore attacked them as such, and were attacked in turn through the Catholic Church.

The struggle, being on a religious level, was much more emotional and exciting than mere politics. When in the Dreyfus Affair that struggle became

also a struggle of Truth and Justice against the Nation, the result was an explosion of passion, which certainly cannot be reduced to just one element. The excitement died down quickly after the second Court-Martial and the pardon, because nobody won: Dreyfus walked free, but still guilty, the cold shower of political compromise. The Republicans, the real winners, needed the Army and could not afford to alienate it too much.

decades. Near the end of his life his standpoint was effectively anti-colonial, since he was calling for the Incas and Aztecs to be restored under a loose Spanish over-kingship, but he reached this position at the end of a long development. As for his principal opponent, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, we can say that his justifications for colonial intervention became classics. Whether or not his thinking was actually transmitted beyond Spain, he can be seen as the first specimen of a type. His main arguments were commonly used afterwards by the ideologists of Britain and other colonial Powers.

Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, publishing Sepúlveda's most elaborate work in favour of colonisation through war in 1892, made these interesting comments:

"Sepúlveda, a peripatetic classicist, one of those who were called Hellenists or Alexandrians in Italy, treated the problem with all the crudity of pure Aristotelianism, as expounded in the philosopher's *Politics*, inclining with more or less rhetorical circumlocution to the theory of natural slavery. His mode of thinking in this part of the book does not differ much from those modern empirical sociologists and positivists who proclaim the extermination of the inferior races, as a necessary consequence of their defeat in the struggle for existence".

Menéndez y Pelayo thought that Las Casas was genuinely the more Christian, though Sepúlveda had made efforts to show the contrary. Nevertheless, "*there is also a foundation, based on the philosophy of history and sad human truth, in the new aspect under which Sepúlveda considers the problem*".

I think there are indeed moments when Sepúlveda (and also the historian Oviedo and some other Spanish writers of his time) expresses himself in ways quite like the English Social-Darwinist writers of the late 19th century—not to mention leading English politicians such as Sir Charles Dilke, who once proudly proclaimed that "*the Anglo-Saxon is the only extirpating race*". But Sepúlveda does not mainly take this attitude. More usually he reminds one of Rudyard Kipling and Lord Curzon, insisting that the Spanish have a burden that they are morally obliged to take up: the duty of civilising and christianising peoples who not capable of becoming civil or Christian by themselves.

Immanuel Wallerstein, reviewing the Las Casas/Sepúlveda polemic some years back, observed that no one since

John Minahane

Part 1: Erasmus, Luther and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda

The Spanish Polemic On Colonialism

The Irish history industry has marked the new millennium with a spate of publications that have *Making Ireland...* in their titles. Nicholas Canny established the trend with *Making Ireland British*. Then there was *Making Ireland Roman* by the Latinists of University College, Cork, plus articles by Hiram Morgan on "*Making Ireland Spanish*", about Philip O'Sullivan Beare, and by Brendan Kane on "*Making Ireland European*". Now finally we have Jane Ohlmeyer's *Making Ireland English* (which would have been a better title for Canny's book).

This peculiar focus on the past is, of course, connected with the present. It seems that modern society could not exist at all without its missionary initiatives, aimed at making or remaking the populations. Not all of the missionaries agree with one another's aims, but overall there is sufficient rough consensus for things to keep going without breaking down. It is open to historians, as it is to sociologists, psychologists, economists and others, to think of themselves as social makers. They will find a welcome in some one of the missionary factions. And they won't necessarily have to be as frenetic as the well-known TCD Professor of History, whose mode of directing his graduate students (as reported to me) resembles a military operation: find evidence for this, undermine that, prove X, disprove Y.

Nowadays quite a lot of the making is done peacefully, with words and pictures instead of weapons. (Peace must be understood to include a great deal of denigration, humiliation, harassment and bullying.) It is believed that the process will proceed more successfully if people can be got to *take responsibility* for their own remaking. However, we know that

another, more violent, kind of social making was much practised in Ireland and large parts of the world from the 16th century, and is practised in many places still. To my mind, the most interesting thing about Ireland is how doggedly the majority population resisted being remade.

The attempt to remake foreign populations as something different—essentially, as Christians and "civil people"—was launched by the Spanish, after an expedition financed by their monarchs had happened upon the islands now known as the West Indies. Spain was the pioneering colonial power. It represented a model for the other strong maritime states of Western Europe, and first of all for its neighbour Portugal, which soon snapped up Brazil. But the Spanish did not merely occupy vast territories, aiming to destroy the local political structures and the local cultures, and causing a devastating population decline in Central and South America, mainly but not entirely by importing new diseases against which the locals had no immunity. They actually discussed what they were doing. They sustained fierce controversies and polemics into the second half of the 16th century. And somehow, in the economy of colonialist culture, the Spanish discussion sufficed, because nobody else had a really animated debate after that. Even Marx was ambivalent on whether colonialism was a good thing or a bad thing.

The polemic in Spain was about what was good and proper practice for the Spanish in their newly-occupied lands. The main reformist campaigner, Bartolomé de las Casas, did not take an anti-colonial position during his first few

the mid-16th century had added very much to the two basic standpoints set out, on how peoples with cultures differing from ours should be dealt with. He also said that after 1945, with the great wave of decolonisation, there was a moment when it seemed that Las Casas' standpoint had finally triumphed, but the picture looked very different in the 2000s. I would agree with all this.

However, before considering the polemic of the two Spaniards, one must note that at precisely the same time there were other, quite independent movements which aimed at the remaking or reformation of European culture. It is interesting that Sepúlveda, like the Italian Hellenists he attached himself to, did not sympathise with those movements. In fact, he developed as a writer by opposing them.

I am thinking of Lutheranism and Erasmianism—Erasmus of Rotterdam, that phenomenal writer who was the first international literary sensation of the age of printing, with fans from Ireland to Poland, can be regarded as a movement all by himself. Erasmus is usually taken as an example, and Luther as a product, of what is called "*humanism*". But the "*ism*" is misleading. A better term might be one that was wasted on some mediocre French thinkers of the 1970s: "*new philosophy*". The new philosophers of the 15th/16th centuries focused on the study of classical Greek and Latin literature, which gave them a stimulus to take a fresh approach to thinking generally.

Erasmus of Rotterdam

There are literary giants who fare badly with the passage of time, and Erasmus is a prime example. A single book of his remains famous, the one you've a fairly good chance of finding in a bookshop's Classics section: *In Praise of Folly*. There he speaks in the voice of a woman, the goddess of foolishness, who is powerful wherever there are human beings. However, as Marcel Bataillon says, that's like reducing the man's whole working life to the entertainment he invented during a week's holidays. Erasmus was a deeply serious writer, and without that seriousness he could hardly have sustained his super-human productivity or kept his independent position to the end of his life. Even when he was joking, which he did quite a lot, he pursued his serious purpose. He used humour to undermine everything in European Christian culture that he thought was ossified and "*Jewish*" (or mechanically ceremonial). Bataillon remarks how *In Praise Of Folly* is "*so aggressive, under the veil of irony, against*

everything he considered dead in Catholicism". Some people were shocked that he had translated Lucian, a Greek writer who mocked the colourful stories told by the poets about the gods and therefore had a reputation as an atheist. Luther taunted him about this. And Erasmus replied: *Lucian, if he were living today, had it in him to be an excellent Christian!*

"A single thought gives life and contemporary relevance to everything that he wrote. So what was the nature of this message so avidly received? It is summed up in two words, Christ's Philosophy" (Bataillon).

For Erasmus, the perfect thinking was to be found in the Gospels. The high point of his career came in 1516, when he produced a Greek edition of the New Testament (used by Luther when producing his German version), with a new Latin translation, notes and commentary. He followed this up with paraphrases of the four Gospels, highlighting what he considered the essentials.

Erasmus believed that the divinely-created order of the universe was in harmony with the law of Christ, as expressed in the Gospels. By nature everything tended to be Christian, but human beings had taken a wrong course. Nevertheless, the best minds even among the pagans, the greatest philosophers, had said many things which accorded with Christianity. Our natural reason steered us towards living the right way, the Christian way. But reason needed an adequate and reliable guide, and we could find that only in the Gospels. Erasmus said that every woman, every labourer, absolutely everyone without exception, ought to read the Gospels. They should be translated into all the languages of the world, so that not just the Scots and Irish but even the Turks and the Moors could read them. Everyone could find good guidance in them, suitable to his/her level of mind. The point was to discover sound principles for living. Real Christianity was not about scholastic subtlety: it was something that had to be lived. It was the perfect philosophy of life.

To get at the really valuable things in Scripture, the principles for living, it wasn't enough just to read things literally. You had to find the allegories behind the stories. Erasmus explains this in the extraordinarily-popular handbook he wrote for young Christian noblemen, *Enchiridion* (1503). The Old Testament especially, one gathers, is a waste of time unless one can get beyond the literal meaning. If you read "*without the allegory*", Erasmus says, the story of how

Adam was formed from clay and a spirit was breathed into him; how Eve was formed from his rib; how the two of them ate the fruit of the forbidden tree, urged to do so by the snake; how they tried to hide but were found by God; how they were evicted from Eden and an angel with a flaming sword was posted at the entrance to see that they didn't get back in—then you might be as well off reading about how Prometheus stole fire from Heaven. Indeed, "*a poet's fable in the allegory shall be read with somewhat more fruit, than a narration of Holy Books if (you remain) in the rind or outer part*". For example, when you read about the labours of Hercules you might reflect that "*Heaven must be obtained with honest labours and (tireless efforts)*", in which case you'll have gathered a piece of sound philosophy from the fable. That's a lot better than reading about Esau selling his birthright for a mess of pottage, David killing Goliath with a slingshot, and Samson having his hair cut off, if you can't see beyond the colourful stories.

The apostle Paul, and other early Christian writers such as Origen, had explored the allegories. Why was it, Erasmus asked, that Christian thinkers were not doing that still? There were two reasons. First of all, the 16th century Christians didn't have the gift that Paul and Origen had, of bringing Christian thought to life. And secondly, preference had been given to Aristotle as a philosophical guide instead of Plato, who was much better at training the mind for allegories. Christian writers had degenerated over time and currently they tended to be anything but clear.

"It is a great shame... for lawyers and also physicians, that they have... (deliberately) made their art and science full of difficulty... (so) that both their gains and advantage might be more plentiful and their glory and praise among the unlearned people the greater: but it is a much more shameful thing to do the same in the philosophy of Christ."

In these circumstances, essentially the young nobleman is told to learn to do the work for himself: ensure "*that the literal sense little regarded, you look chiefly to the mystery*". (But Erasmus, of course, would help him.)

It follows that Christianity, as Erasmus preached it, is very much Christianity for readers. (He was a great educator, producing any number of books with titles like *How to Write Letters*, *The Point of Studying*, *A Little Book of Good Manners for Children*, *The Best Style of Speaking*, and so on.) But what if you belonged to the great majority, the non-

readers? Very well, you could have your superstitious prayers, practices, customs and ceremonies! Erasmus didn't want to abolish all those, or not immediately. When someone advances in knowledge, this ought not to mean "*he should hurt his brother who is yet weak*". But the Christianity of the illiterate is very much a second-class version: there are times when one feels that it isn't much more than a means of keeping them quiet and orderly. Erasmus acknowledged that there was no more useful class in the community than the peasants and he hated to see them cruelly treated by their lords, but he didn't have much taste for lower-class culture. (Mikhail Bakhtin expresses an opposite opinion in his book on Rabelais: *In Praise of Folly* is "*one of the most eminent creations of carnivalesque laughter in all of world literature*". I think he could not be more wrong. Erasmus wasn't in any sense whatever a carnival creature.)

If Europe were to become truly Christian, the ordinary person would work at his or her Christianity, not just go through the motions of mechanical devotion like a Jew; the priests would concern themselves with promoting Christ's philosophy rather than making money; rulers would seek the welfare of their subjects rather than aggrandising themselves; and the nations of Christians Europe (ideally all mankind, though one might have no option but to fight the Turks) would live in mutual peace. The existing institutional religion would be gradually reformed in a number of ways. For example, the cult of the saints would be de-paganised, getting rid of the superstitions and bad behaviour that accompanied it currently. The numbers of idle, good-for-nothing monks would be drastically reduced. The Church's material demands on the people would be reduced also. A more reasonable and flexible attitude would be taken to practices like not eating meat on Fridays. Rather than rely entirely on the Popes with their varying characters, a General Council would set the Church firmly on a reforming course. And hopefully there would never be another Pope like Julius II, who had plunged Europe into war in pursuit of his interests as a secular ruler.

Erasmus was optimistic (in this Bataillon compares him to Jean-Jacques Rousseau). All over Europe, from England to Rome, he had friends and admirers in high places, as he loved to boast. He felt part of a Europe-wide movement of enlightenment that was growing in power.

"The reformed and genuine study of literature and the liberal disciplines... is now pursued with equal enthusiasm in different regions of the world, in Rome by Pope Leo, in Spain by the Cardinal of Toledo, in England by King Henry who is something of a scholar himself, in our country by King Charles, a divinely gifted young man, in France by King Francis,... in Germany... especially by the Emperor Maximilian, who in his old age, wearied by so many wars, has decided to relax in the arts of peace, which will prove both more appropriate to his time of life and more beneficial to the Christian world" (26.2.1517, letter to Wolfgang Capito).

But he had scarcely written that letter when things began going wrong.

Erasmus and Luther

When Martin Luther challenged the institutional Church with his *95 Theses* in Wittenberg in 1517, Erasmus agreed with most of what he said. As Luther's movement developed, this essential agreement did not change. Even in 1523, when the conflict was very sharp indeed, Erasmus wrote to a friendly Cardinal in Rome: "*Luther's accusations against the tyranny, the rapacity, the corruption of the Roman court—I wish to God that they were false!*"

But Luther was launching frontal assaults at a series of points (confession, indulgences, pilgrimage, fasting, the cult of the saints, monasticism, papal power) where Erasmus had probed and queried, or indeed protested and condemned in his literary Latin. What effect would such a challenge have in practice? What were the implications for the movement of Christian enlightenment? Erasmus wanted an orderly reform of the institutions.

"I see that the monarchy of the Roman high priest, as it is now, amounts to a plague in Christendom... And yet I do not know if it is advisable to touch this ulcer openly. That would be a task for the princes, but I'm afraid they're together with the Pope under one quilt, taking their share of the booty" (Letter to Johann Lang, 17.10.1518).

Erasmus urged moderation on all sides and refused to take any side. He didn't trust Luther and wouldn't support him. What sense would it make, to be burdened with responsibility for a movement he couldn't control? At the same time, he didn't want to line up with Luther's enemies. Hoping against hope that the Lutheran movement would eventually produce some positive outcome, Erasmus put his head down and used all his arts to avoid having to

choose.—(Well, I wouldn't know what to write about Luther, good or bad, because I'm not familiar with what he's been saying. I haven't got round to reading his books: I've never had the time! My work, my work—have you any idea how busy I am?)

But his enemies (principally those theologians "*whose brains are the most addled, tongues the most uncultivated, wits the dullest, teachings the thorniest, characters the least attractive, lives the most hypocritical, talk the most slanderous, and hearts the blackest on earth*", to quote his own description) began to identify him with Luther and to treat him as Luther's trail-blazer. Some German Franciscan came up with the formula: "*Erasmus laid the egg and Luther hatched it!*" A Spanish monk living in Rome went through all the works of Erasmus and came up with some thousands of places where he said things that seemed to be unorthodox; he presented this dossier to the Pope, who was spurred to action. Erasmus could have been faced with a choice between a humiliating self-criticism and condemnation as a heretic, if that particular Pope had not died.

At the same time, some of the Lutherans were producing abusive pamphlets (Ulrich van Hutten, *Expostulation*), denouncing him as someone who didn't have the courage of his own convictions. The last straw was when his friends at the court of Charles V, wanting only to help him, came up with the idea of making him an Imperial Grand Inquisitor, with full powers to sort out the Lutheran Question! Erasmus, living at that time in Louvain, didn't fancy the role in the least. He decided he had to become unavailable. So he moved to Switzerland.

But the Pope, his good friend King Henry VIII of England, and others kept pressing him to take a stand against Luther. And Erasmus was beginning to feel that the German cure might be worse than the Roman disease. At the very least, Luther had gone to an opposite extreme: he was plunging into confrontations which were making it less likely that there could be agreed reform for Christian Europe as a whole. To argue the point, Erasmus chose one philosophical issue where Luther seemed to have drawn his conclusions recklessly, with incalculable implications. This was the question of Free Will.

Giving philosophical force to his campaign against indulgences, pilgrimages, fasting, prayers to the saints etc., Luther declared that everything hap-

pened by necessity. There was no free will. And since there was no free will, there could be no human merit before God, so one couldn't build up credit by "doing good works". Faith, not works, was what God demanded from the few whom he had decided to save—not because of their merits (since they didn't have any) but arbitrarily, for unknowable divine reasons.

Erasmus's short book *On Free Will* appeared in 1524. There are questions which overstretch the capacities of the human mind, he begins, and free will is one of them. Nothing can be gained by forcing deep and bitter divisions over matters like these. What benefit has anyone had from the furious conflicts over whether the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son or only from the Father, or whether the Virgin Mary was conceived immaculately? If we discuss such things at all, we should do so calmly and temperately. In the present case I am not coming forward as a judge, inquisitor or dogmatist; I am simply a participant in debate. And I am sure that Luther will acknowledge my right to disagree with him, since he himself has asserted his right to differ with the most eminent teachers of the Catholic Church over thirteen centuries.

There are certain things we should not say in public in front of everyone, even if we believe they are true. "To tell the truth is allowed, but it isn't judicious to tell it to anyone, anywhere, anyhow." The apostle Paul had deliberately not preached certain things to certain audiences.

"Even if we were to accept that in a certain sense what Wycliffe taught and Luther has proclaimed is true, that everything which originates with us is done not on the basis of our free decision but from plain necessity, what could be more inappropriate than to communicate this paradox to the world?... Or Saint Augustine's statement that God himself works good and evil within us, rewarding us for his good deeds and punishing us for his bad deeds. What a huge entrance-gate to godlessness words such as these, given out to everyone, would open up for countless people! ... What feeble creature would still commit himself to the long hard struggle with his own flesh? What wretch would try to live better?"

But we should hesitate, Erasmus says, before accepting that Luther's doctrine is true. Apart from him, there are only three writers of the past thirteen centuries who have completely denied free will: Mani (leader of the Mani-

chaeans); Wycliffe; and a comparatively insignificant Italian writer of the 15th century, Lorenzo Valla. On the other side, the Greek Fathers of the Church, the Latin Fathers, the scholastic theologians, Popes, Councils and universities, have all acknowledged that free will has some agency, however limited. And what should persuade us to side with Luther against all of those? Has he perhaps worked miracles?

"The apostles worked miracles, and even then they had hard work to make people believe them, because they were preaching things that went against human reason. Today there are advocates of a still more paradoxical teaching, but so far none of them have been able even to cure a lame horse."

Of course, the Lutherans say that the time of miracles is past and today the sign of the truth is the spirit. But "how is it possible that the spirit of Christ would have kept his church in darkness and regarded so many holy men over 1300 years as unworthy of this insight, which according to the Lutherans is the climax of all his evangelical teaching?"

Erasmus then turns to a presentation of statements from the Old and New Testaments which support free will. He goes on to present other statements which seem to reject free will, but argues that in fact they are compatible with a limited belief in free will, such as he himself holds. Then, in the last section of the book, he returns to the argument that what Luther is saying is culturally and socially destructive. Luther's doctrine seems to remove the basis for any kind of moral sense. It makes nonsense of good and evil, right and wrong, Heaven and Hell, and turns God into a monster.

"If human efforts are entirely vain, how can those who seek to keep God's commandments be praised and how can those who break them be condemned? ... Why should God want us to keep asking him for something he has already once and for all decided to give or not to give?"

The Lutherans make God cruel. When he punishes, what does he punish for?

"It is hard to explain how it can be just (not to mention merciful) to condemn to eternal punishment all those others in whom God has not permitted good to operate, when they are not able to do anything good by themselves, since they have no free will, or if they have any, it only serves for committing sins..."

"What ruler could be regarded as

just and loving if he lavishly rewarded a successful commander whom he had sent to war with abundance of siege machinery, soldiers, money, and all auxiliary materials, while he had someone else, whom he sent to war unarmed and with none of the proper resources, hanged for his failure? ... And what would anyone think of a master who had his slave whipped because he was physically underdeveloped, or his nose was too long?"

I cannot see how Luther could have made a reasonable reply to this. But he did produce a reply, *On The Enslaved Will*, and he himself thought it was one of the best things he had ever written. It is one of the great destructive pamphlets. Luther sets out systematically to demolish the opponent's self-respect, if possible, but in any case to discredit him in the eyes of readers. For this purpose all is legitimate. The aim is to show that Erasmus is a moral bankrupt, and the very best he can do is to recognise the fact, repent publicly, and hereafter humbly follow where Luther leads him. And if he doesn't, the public will have been shown what Erasmus is. His high culture is sometimes cunningly praised ("You've put a fox-skin over your lion's skin, and you smear me with poisonous honey", Erasmus complained), only then to be viciously trampled on and degraded: what is it but a golden vessel full of shit? As for Luther himself, "I am but a barbarian and do all things barbarously" he says, with mocking self-deprecation.

The book can be summed up in a few words: if the Spirit inspires you, and therefore you believe, well and good; and if you don't believe, to Hell with you—quite literally.

Erasmus had asked whether anyone would try to live better if he didn't believe in free will. "Who (you say) will endeavour to amend his life? I answer, No man! For your self-amenders without the Spirit, God regards not, for they are hypocrites. But the elect, and those that fear God, will be amended by the Holy Spirit; the rest will perish unamended."

And again, Erasmus had asked why we needed to preach the non-existence of free will. Answer: God has willed it, and that is enough for those who fear him. But there are two other reasons. Our human pride must be humbled, and this cannot be done thoroughly until we know that salvation is beyond our own powers. And secondly, to make room for faith we must confront the *apparent iniquity* of God.

"This is the highest degree of faith—

to believe that he is merciful, who saves so few and damns so many; to believe him just who, according to his own will, makes us necessarily damnable, that he may seem, as Erasmus says, "to delight in the torments of the miserable, and to be an object of hatred rather than of love". If, therefore, I could by any means comprehend how that same lord can be merciful and just, who carries the appearance of so much wrath and iniquity, there would be no need of faith. But now, since that cannot be comprehended, there is room for exercising faith, while such things are preached and openly proclaimed: in the same manner as while God kills, the faith of life is exercised in death."

What is called for here is a kind of lunatic faith. At least, if one doesn't have this special faith which despises all human notions of right and justice, I think it is difficult not to regard these statements as lunatic. The course that Luther had set out on implied that, if Christianity were still possible, it would be a Christianity of lunatic self-righteousness.

Or it might take a social tack. While the Lutherans were accusing Erasmus of not following through the logic of his own convictions, Thomas Münzer was making the same charge against Luther himself. Didn't he know that Christianity had to be lived—collectively, in real human society? Luther suddenly found himself confronted with a spreading rebellion of peasants who were identified as a wing of Reformed Christianity, with a spokesman who was preaching Christian communism. There was a danger that Luther would be blamed for it, as indeed Erasmus blamed him, in his reply to *On The Enslaved Will*: "This vehemence of yours, which in vain I tried to restrain, has shaken the whole world with fateful discord... events have gone to the point of bloody carnage, and one fears still worse... It seems to me you don't want to know anything about these rebels, but they want to know something about you!" And the princes who had protected Luther and his movement... how long would they continue to do so?

Luther saved his position with a most ferocious and bloodthirsty book. "I think there is not a devil left in Hell; they have all gone into the peasants." The rebels had committed terrible sins against God and man. They all had to be killed, and it didn't matter who killed them: anyone was entitled to kill a rebel. "There is no place for patience or mercy. It is the time of the sword, not the day of grace." Luther says quite plainly that he is prepared to support Catholic rulers in

putting the peasants down. "Stab, smite, slay, whoever can!"

"You've written an angry book against the peasants to remove suspicion from yourself," Erasmus said, "but you aren't able to make people believe that you gave no impetus to this revolt". Luther's approach to all things was disorderly, including the question of free will. "I would never have taken up the issue", Erasmus told him, "if you hadn't transferred the discussion of free will from the universities to the pubs... Nowadays even the tanners discuss free will when they meet for a drink."

As for the book denouncing the peasants, it was "not unjustified, but immoderately cruel". But Luther, having shaken the foundations of Europe, had decided to be a pillar of order, and he never did things by halves. Having declared in an earlier book that Christians could not fight the Turks, rather they must meekly accept whatever the heathen inflicted, he now revealed that they would have to fight the Turks after all—only not as Christians, merely as subjects of the state, which it was their Christian duty to obey.

Sepúlveda and Erasmus

Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda became part of the third main current of what is called "humanism": the Italian variant. His credentials as a "humanist" have been challenged, but as Richard Tuck pointed out, really he is a perfect specimen of the type.

Sepúlveda, born in 1490, studied at the University of Alcalá and then got a scholarship for further study in Italy, at the Spanish College in Bologna. There he became one of the leading translators of Aristotle. He also proved to be an able writer who could produce impressive short books on topical issues. "I spent 22 years in Italy", he later explained to Philip II, "8 years in Bologna studying at the Spanish College, and 14 years in Rome in the service of the Pope". But he did not serve the Pope only. Sepúlveda was always looking out for a chance to serve Spain and Spain's king, the Emperor Charles V. His first book (leaving aside translations) was a dialogue where a Spanish soldier discusses some events from his country's military history and justifies the pursuit of glory.

But it could be difficult serving the Pope while remaining friends with the Emperor. As a Spaniard resident in Rome, Sepúlveda had an uncomfortable time in 1527, when the city was sacked by Spanish troops. Afterwards, with both Pope and Emperor anxious to heal the

breach, he did what he could to help. For example, in 1529 he wrote an exhortation to Charles V, calling on him to commit himself to a war against the Turks. Two years later he produced a book on *The Rite of Marriage and Dispensation*, which ends with a brief reference to King Henry VIII's application for a divorce from Catherine of Aragon, the Emperor's aunt. The central argument presented in Henry's favour was that, since Catherine had previously been married to Henry's brother Arthur, she should not have been allowed to marry Henry, and Pope Julius II had erred when he gave her a dispensation to do so. Sepúlveda says briskly that the Pope is the duly appointed, fully competent, final authority on the question of marriage dispensation. He can give any dispensation he likes, and there is no appeal against his judgment, then or ever after.

One of the threads that can be seen running through Sepúlveda's early writings is a controlled criticism of Erasmus. Sometimes he criticises the ideas without mentioning their source, for example when confronting Christian pacifism. In *The Complaint of Peace* (1516) Erasmus denounced the bloody wars between Christians as a travesty of Christianity. Christ, he said, had come on earth as the Prince of Peace and had consistently preached peace to his disciples, telling them to put up their swords even when their lives were threatened. Let the kings, not to mention popes, cardinals, bishops and priests, prove that they were Christians! If they absolutely needed to fight, then they ought to have a war against the Turks, though it would be better to find peaceful ways of dealing even with those as fellow human beings. "I urge (all Christians)... to unite with one heart and soul, in the abolition of war and the establishment of perpetual and universal peace". These thoughts found an echo in Spain. Several Spanish writers produced works in the same vein, and a decade later, according to Sepúlveda, there were convinced pacifists among the students at the Spanish College in Bologna.

Sepúlveda, in his dialogue on the pursuit of glory (*Gonsalus*, 1523), deliberately chooses as his key speaker a Spanish soldier who has won distinction in a war against the French. The soldier, named Gonzalo, speaks mainly about glorious incidents in the centuries-long struggle against the Moors, but at intervals his partners in the dialogue insist on recalling his own fine achievements in a war between Christians. Confronting the (unnamed) writers who despise the

pursuit of glory and claim that it is unchristian, Gonzalo says that what is valid for the monk is not valid for the soldier.

"The monk bears affronts with absolute patience; he will not take vengeance or even say a word against those who commit injustice against him; if anyone threatens him with injury he should simply flee, not try to respond with arms. That is what is honest for the monk, that is what is glorious, that is what is worthy of praise. But would any general worthy of the name approve this behaviour in an able-bodied soldier? Or rather, who would not revile such a man and denounce him as a betrayer of the soldier's duty and honour? "But it is pious and in conformity with the doctrine of the Gospel not to resist those who do us evil": I admit this, and I say it is the best and most appropriate for perfection in piety; but this perfection is least of all desirable in the soldier, in whom a fierce, haughty and indomitable spirit, ready to face any violence, is what is mainly required. Accordingly, we should accept that it is enough for the soldier to comply with the general precepts of the Christian religion...

"If anyone expects that literary scholars or statesmen will achieve anything great not only without desiring other things but even without the hope of glory, it seems to me like demanding that a cargo ship should travel the high seas without sails, using only oars...

"Do these people want to brand the human race as vain and stupid for stimulating men's spirits to try to achieve glory, encouraging them with incentives which take various forms but all point in the same direction?... Would it not be better to revere and praise the wisdom of those who understood that the appetite for glory is implanted and innate in all the most noble and excellent spirits, and who reserved whatever was most exalted, whatever would most strongly motivate spirits of that kind, as the recompense for the most illustrious actions?...

"It seems anti-religious and contrary to the public good to say that the appetite for glory, which has its place in the sequence of virtues, is contrary either to religion or to the public good."

Some of these arguments are re-elaborated in the exhortation to Charles V to fight the Turks, and especially in Sepúlveda's most ambitious attack on Christian pacifism, *Democrates* (1535). In these works, where the more or less explicit target is Luther, Erasmus is not mentioned, but his ideas are confronted nonetheless. However, there were times when it was impossible not to mention the man's name. Shortly after Luther

replied to Erasmus on free will, Sepúlveda, probably at the Pope's urging, produced a book on the same subject.

In the foreword Erasmus is given some carefully measured praise. He has defended Catholic doctrine against Luther learnedly and acutely, but unfortunately he has been "*too restrained, not to say shrinking and timid*". Besides, by drawing exclusively on the Bible and the Christian writers he has omitted an important part of the subject. Just because the issue concerns religion, that does not mean we can forget about the Greeks! The philosophers as well as the theologians have something to contribute here, and all the resources of culture must be brought to bear against Luther, particularly on this point: his other doctrines have been refuted adequately, but the denial of free will "*latently threatens not only the Christian religion but every kind of divine worship, the freedom of human beings, and all laws, human and divine*".

Sepúlveda then develops his argument with reference to Greek philosophy. Against the inconsistent Stoics, who denied free will theoretically but (being less shameless than Luther) could not avoid smuggling it back into their thinking, he relies on the great anti-determinist Aristotle, for whom "*man is the originator and cause of his actions*". Only on this basis can human reason have any worth. "*What use is reason if, having considered any number of possibilities, you can no more affect your given destiny than a stone can rise in the air?*"

The philosophical mode of argument is so well established in the first two books that it continues fairly fluently even when, in the final book, he turns to consider passages from the Scriptures.

Erasmus is mentioned only occasionally, usually positively. Luther, on the other hand, is referred to with fierce hostility. He is portrayed as personally depraved and for practical purposes atheistic, a conscious enemy of the Christian religion, who will go to all lengths to damage it, no matter what else he damages in the process. His ideas are noxious to the State as well as to the Church. While Sepúlveda's crowning argument is essentially that of Erasmus, it is much more sharply expressed. The fight against Luther is a fight for "*hearth and household gods*", religion and human liberty. Without free will all laws would be superfluous and life would be a farce; virtues would be extinguished, and praise and blame would disappear; and "*I do not see by what means the power of deliberation could continue maintaining the human condition in men*".

On the surface, then, the author is fairly kind to Erasmus and certainly does not imply that he has contributed to Luther's misdeeds. But the Foreword also contains an astonishing attack on Germany's "*humanism*". What happened was that the Germans had learned advanced Latin and Greek from infected sources (from "*certain frivolous men*"), and it was this which ultimately left them vulnerable to Luther. Without naming Erasmus, the Italianised Spaniard sees a *continuum* of Erasmianism and Lutheranism.

"I am prepared to state firmly what some people may find surprising: it was through the study of eloquence and the humanities that this most pernicious plague was transmitted to the Germans ... In effect, while the Germans, relying on tradition and the most serious disciplines, kept addressing fundamental questions and seeking solid knowledge of those, not hollow charlatanism and the pleasures of discourse, they produced acute mathematicians, penetrating philosophers, and very respectable, honest, pious theologians. They possessed not only sound knowledge but also exemplary customs, ideal for educating men and inculcating true piety. But afterwards, when once they had abandoned these good disciplines, certain frivolous men began cultivating a more advanced knowledge of the Latin and Greek language and the potentialities of expression. Some people of bad and depraved character appeared who, reading malign and impious writers, easily assimilated all their impiety and cynicism and showed themselves much more inclined to the worst vices of conduct than to the virtues of eloquence... The oratorical capacity they acquired was not much, but such as it was, they began to use it to abolish all religiosity."

And this was the origin of Lutheranism.

By "*certain frivolous men*" Sepúlveda unquestionably has in mind Erasmus. As the source of the theory which he is propounding, he mentions Alberto Pio, Prince of Carpi, who at that time was compiling yet another dossier to prove that "*either Erasmus lutheranises or Luther erasmianises*". Alberto Pio was a central figure in Italian "*humanism*". He had been taught by some of the leading Italian scholars and was a friend or patron of many more (and Sepúlveda's patron also). During his boyhood his uncle, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, had been accused of heresy and driven into exile, which is said to have made a strong impression on his nephew. Pio's polemic with Erasmus was "*a faithful reflection of the differences which separated the*

humanism of the Nordic countries from that which predominated in Italy" (J. Solana Pujalte). Certainly this is a point which Sepúlveda makes over and over again: the Italians have little admiration for Erasmus, compared to the Germans or indeed the Spanish. One can well imagine that the Italian scholars, seeking trouble-free symbiosis with the institutional Church and faced with the nuisance of events to the north, might have welcomed Pio's initiative. As a well-known champion of "humanism", he would not just vouch for their orthodoxy but also help veil the fact that Christianity only had a small place in their thinking. (One sees it in Sepúlveda: he's a good deal happier writing about Aristotle than about Jesus Christ.)

Striking back at the Italians, Erasmus portrayed them as neo-pagans. He wrote scathingly of "the professors of the pagan sciences at Rome", whose thinking had no Christian content. "How can you use religious language if you never take your eyes from Virgil, Horace and Ovid?" The Dutchman was insistent that Christianity must be brought into everything: "It behoves every speech of Christians to be centred in Christ... The liberal arts, philosophy and oratory are learned to the end that we may know Christ, that we may celebrate the glory of Christ."

Granted that Erasmus made these comments with the aim of embarrassing some of his Italian critics, they do highlight a difference between his thinking and theirs. So far as the Italians were concerned, Christianity was whatever the institutional Church said it was. In secular affairs, on the other hand, one could follow Aristotle, who was the almost infallible voice (as Sepúlveda claimed) of the Natural Law that was common to Christians and pagans alike. Christianity as such didn't have to be brought into areas such as politics, war, logic, and so on.

Alberto Pio was an ally of the Pope and the French. The victorious Spanish drove him out of his Italian city-state and forced him to take refuge in Paris. There, egged on by doctors of the Sorbonne, he published his challenge to Erasmus. Pio maintained that, in powerfully-written works like *In Praise of Folly*, Erasmus had attacked the religious orders, the sacraments, the cult of the saints and the Virgin, and so on, all of which opened the way for Luther. When Erasmus quickly replied, rejecting the charges, this only spurred the dying Pio to produce a larger book, "the most severe and comprehensive attack delivered against Erasmus in his lifetime", which in turn provoked "one of the most

savage compositions Erasmus ever wrote" (M.P. Gilmore).

Understandably enough, since this pedantic prince was determined to corner him, Erasmus didn't feel like being gracious in his *Defence against the Slandrous Rhapsodies of Alberto Pio*. The critic was represented as an old fool who hadn't even read the works that he condemned, relying instead on "shitty bits of paper brought to him by monks and servants". He was also a fraud, because he pretended to be the author of books which he personally was incapable of writing. In reality, the research had been done and the style had been polished by scholar-servants whom he kept in his household. Erasmus mentioned one such person by name: Sepúlveda, "a good Latinist", whom "everybody knows".

At that point (1531) Pio died. Sepúlveda felt it his duty to uphold the good name of his patron and friend, so he produced an *Antapologia* (anti-defence). Using the occasion to establish direct contact, he sent Erasmus a copy of the book. In the accompanying letter Sepúlveda says that he wrote it reluctantly, motivated only by the duty of friendship. He says the same in the book itself: he is not writing in order "to prejudice the reputation of Erasmus, a very acute and elegant writer, for whose talent I feel a great liking and whose wisdom in many things I esteem, but rather to oppose the efforts of anyone who would bring disgrace on my loving and generous patron". I do not believe that. I think he was delighted to have the chance to cross swords with the most famous writer of the age, on ground where he himself had some notable advantages.

About half of the book is concerned with making two points at length. Firstly, Alberto Pio was a considerable scholar, as not only Italy but all Europe knows. Latin learning was the passion of his entire life, and he certainly didn't need anyone to write his books for him. Secondly, Sepúlveda, the only person whom Erasmus identifies as a ghost-writer, could not possibly have performed that function, because he was living in Rome while Pio was in exile in Paris. Sepúlveda spins out the argument skilfully, keeping firm control of the tone. To Erasmus he is friendly but reproachful, disappointed, just faintly mocking; when he uses terms of denunciation they are aimed at the unknown slanderers who (surely) deceived Erasmus and made him believe things that are the opposite of the truth.

Then finally he turns to a summary

discussion of what Pio actually said, and the tone hardens. "What is at issue is not your intention, because we must believe that it was always (as you keep on saying) the best, even if your writings give evidence to the contrary; the question is about the perversity and sarcasm of your language, and also about your prudence." What is one to make of a sentence like this from *In Praise of Folly*: "All of the Christian religion seems to have a certain kinship with folly"? Erasmus constantly falls back on the lame excuse that Folly must speak foolishly.

"But if somebody, not content with all secular spaces, introduces this insane beast, equipped with such a vocabulary, into churches and sacred buildings, there to launch insolent assaults against priests, monks and the sacred rites, and to proclaim that the Christian religion is akin to itself, in other words full of stupidity and error, must we not regard that person as having committed a crime, or at least an imprudence?"

Sepúlveda follows this up by quoting a series of "imprudences" from other books and discussing their implications. Inevitably, the discussion ends with the question of how all this relates to Martin Luther.

"The worst fault that Pio and many others have accused you of is not that you criticise openly and clearly what our forefathers rightly established and handed down, but that you have contributed to spreading certain dangerous scruples, so much so that it seems the Lutheran heresy would never have arisen if the jokes or morose complaints of Erasmus had not preceded it, or supposing it had arisen, it would not have found men's minds so easily predisposed to accept it and would not have been propagated so widely..."

"In summary, your critics say that Luther puts into practice whatever Erasmus suggested. Erasmus complains of the excessive number of monasteries; Luther demolishes them all. Erasmus mutters I don't know what about the cult of the saints; Luther condemns it. The former wants to impose a limit on ceremonies, chants and feast-days; the latter suppresses them completely. Erasmus raises some question or other about the primacy of Peter and the Roman Church; Luther reduces Peter to the ranks, makes all the apostles equal and does not allow the bishop or Church of Rome any greater dignity than the others. If Erasmus points out some aspect of the Church's decrees that can be changed for the better, Luther denies that the decrees of the Church and Councils have any authority at all..."

You were too anxious to be original in your teachings, Sepúlveda tells him, and too keen on revolutions, which you didn't think would go so far... If Alberto Pio reproached you for all this, it was not because he hated you, but because he wanted to warn the simple Christians about doubtful and dangerous things in your writings. However, he also did you personally a friendly service. And it would be better to take note of what he said and *"attentively revise all your writings with a calm mind, as if they were somebody else's, caring only for the truth and the common benefit of Christians, the wise and the ignorant alike"*. It's not impossible: Saint Augustine did something of the sort! You're a man who thinks of posterity, and you wouldn't like your books to be banned; well, you have influence enough to protect them during your own lifetime, but after your death your critics will achieve their goal. You yourself know what hornets' nests you've disturbed . . .

After this urgent piece of advice and this prophetic warning, the book ends mildly, with declarations of friendly feeling. *"There are no grounds for hatred or hostility between us.* Even if I agree with some of Pio's criticisms, I still think of you as an outstanding man. But however great you may be, you are also human, and that means you can err . . .

Pope Clement VII read the book and *"praised the moderation I had shown towards Erasmus"*. Sepúlveda, writing long afterwards, explained that during Erasmus's lifetime the strategy of the Popes was to keep him within the Catholic Church, because he would be more damaging outside it. And it was as a papal agent that he personally entered into correspondence with Erasmus, soon after the publication of his book. Sepúlveda offered himself as an intermediary between Erasmus and one of the harshest critics of his Greek Testament. That critic's posthumous manuscripts, instead of being published in a hostile spirit, could now be sent to Erasmus privately, and hopefully they would help him to improve the next edition.

All the indications are that Erasmus detested Sepúlveda and what he had written. But he replied with restraint: there were too many books like that in the world already, and he didn't intend to add to their number by writing a reply. The Spaniard, expressing his delight at this, repeated his advice that Erasmus should carefully censor his works. Erasmus accepted the offer of manu-

scripts, and the two had some civil exchanges on questions of translating Greek. Sepúlveda was proud of his correspondence with the great Dutchman, and in later years he couldn't help boasting of it, even imprudently.

Apart from papal policy, there was another reason why Sepúlveda might have wanted to temper what he said. Some of the leading figures at the court of Charles V were great enthusiasts for Erasmus. Marcel Bataillon's astonishing book tells the story of how this enthusiasm gripped Spanish culture. But the cult of Erasmus was already on the wane by the mid-1530s, when Clement VII, the Medici pope who had been Sepúlveda's patron, died. Sepúlveda needed another patron, and he deftly managed the move from Pope to Emperor. Evidently, as one of the Pope's diplomats and author of the *Let's-fight-the-Turks* book, he had made an impression on Charles V. Charles appointed him Imperial Chronicler and brought him back to Spain. Some years after that, he became the tutor in history and geography of Charles's son Philip (later Philip II).

The Dispute on the New Laws

This review of Sepúlveda's early writings is intended to avoid some possibilities of confusion. He opposed the ideas of Erasmus, but that was during his Roman period. America didn't come into it. Where Erasmus himself was concerned, one could say that America was an irrelevance. What concerned him was Christian Europe, as it had developed through the ages, and the classical antiquity behind it. He had no time for another continent.

In the *Cambridge History of Latin America* we are told that *"Fr. Bartolomé de Las Casas himself (was) deeply influenced by the humanistic spirit of Erasmus and by Thomas More's Utopia"*. Even Juan Friede, a much more informative writer, jumps to similar conclusions. Noting the support which Las Casas received at the Imperial court, Friede attributes it to humanist revulsion against the creation of a kind of serfdom in America: *"(Charles V) and his advisers had grown up in the atmosphere of Renaissance humanism, a "modernism" of broad European vision in which the encomienda, with its medieval features of lordship and paternalism, must have seemed strange if not repugnant"*. If there was evidence for such statements, one might have expected Bataillon to discover it. He mentions Las Casas a couple of times, but never as an Erasmian. In fact, he specifically says that none of the Spanish Erasmians

took up the cudgels against Sepúlveda, and one does not find them getting involved in the debate about war with the Indians. (As for Thomas More, his Utopian humanists justify wars of conquest against peoples who are thought to be making insufficient use of their lands—the Cambridge writer appears not to know this.)

In short, in the Spanish polemic *"humanism"* was represented by Sepúlveda, who advocated violent colonial conquest. His opponent Las Casas, who stood for peaceful cooperation and mutual respect between peoples, took his intellectual inspiration from quite different sources, as I will show later on.

For some years after his return to Spain, Sepúlveda seems to have written little. Possibly he was giving more attention to economics. He spent much of his time on the family estate near Córdoba, where *"I am almost become a farmer"* (1544). Besides that, he was on the lookout for ways of enriching himself by trafficking in Church sinecures. According to Angel Losada, *"a visit to the Public Archives in Córdoba would make anyone believe that Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda did nothing else in his life except buy, sell, rent out and accumulate ecclesiastical benefices"*. (Erasmus would have been disgusted!)

But in the early 1540s a tremendous controversy flared up in Spain about the government of the American colonies. What provoked it was the New Laws for the colonies, which Charles V, under the influence of Las Casas, issued in 1542. Juan Friede gives a succinct description of what was at issue. The New Laws—

"rigorously prohibited Indian slavery, with no exceptions; they abolished the Indian's personal service in all its forms; and they established regulations of decisive importance concerning the encomienda, the basic regulatory institution between the Spaniards and the Indians. In the relation between these two social groups, the encomienda was (highly important)... by forcing their coexistence, it created permanent contact between two races, civilisations and cultures. Its legal content might vary, but in colonial practice, and especially in the first half of the sixteenth century, it allowed the Spaniard to exercise direct and practically unlimited power over the Indian..."

"The New Laws of 1542 all but abolished the encomienda and envisaged a plan that would make all encomienda Indians direct vassals of the crown." (Encomienda might perhaps

be translated as "labour trust": a given number of formally free Indians were entrusted to a Spanish colonist for compulsory labour and christianisation.)

The colonists responded to the New Laws with fury (and in Peru with outright rebellion) and launched a frantic campaign in Spain for their abolition. Sepúlveda, who had met some of the returned colonists including Hernán Cortés, thought he could make a decisive intervention in the dispute and win intellectual eminence in his homeland. Proud of the dialogue he had written against Christian pacifism (*Democrates*, 1535), he had the idea of writing another with the same three characters: "Leopold, a German, somewhat influenced by Luther, Alfonso Guevara, a Spaniard and an old soldier, and *Democrates*, a Greek, to whom I give the principal part in the discussion". Now was the time to exploit the superior training in philosophy he had gained in Italy: Aristotle must be given his say! He thought he could pretty well decide the point at issue, as he explains in his dedication: "I have thought it useful to bring the same three characters together for a discussion in my garden... so as to offer a crowning and conclusive contribution to the controversy we have engaged in over the right of war". However, it was not as easy to settle the mind of Spain as he imagined.

(To be continued)

SOURCES

I have used works by Erasmus that came my way at different places and times, eventually including some volumes of the *Collected Works* (CW) published in Toronto. Also, a selection of correspondence: *Briefe*, ed./tr. W. Köhler (Leipzig 1938); *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* ed. Anne M. O'Donnell (Oxford 1981); *The Complaint of Peace* tr. T. Paynell (Chicago 1917); *Paraclesis*, included in *El Enchiridion o manual del caballero cristiano* tr. D. Alonso (Madrid 1932); on free will, *O svobodné v'li* tr. K. Korteová (Praha 2006); replying to Luther's reply, *Schutzschrift (Hyperaspistes) gegen Martin Luthers Buch "vom unfreien Willen" Teil I* tr. O.H. Mehl (Ditzingen 1986); *Ciceronianus*, or *A Dialogue on the Best Style of Speaking* tr. I. Scott (New York 1908). The general view of Erasmus presented here is based on Marcel Bataillon's *Erasmus et l'Espagne* (Paris 1937). Translations are mine where the originals used are not in English.

Two books of Luther's are referred to. *Enslaved Will = De Servo Arbitrio / On the Enslaved Will*, tr. Henry Cole (Camberwell Grove 1931). *Murdering Peasants = Documents of Modern History* ed./tr. E. J. Rupp and B. Drewery (London 1970), "Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants".

For Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, the basic facts of his literary life are conveniently given in Aubrey Bell, *Juan Gines de Sepulveda* (Oxford 1925). Most of his works were collected in *Joannis Genesisii Sepulvedae cordubensis opera* (Madrid 1780) in four volumes in Latin, currently online (*Opera*). But now his home town of Pozoblanco, near Córdoba, has sponsored his *Obras Completas* (OC) in 17 volumes. In those that I've seen the introductions are sometimes excellent, sometimes badly flawed. B. Cuart Moner, introducing the *Exhortation to Charles V*, says it contains "heavy artillery directed against Erasmus". Sepúlveda

condemns an unnamed writer who has said that Christians may not fight the Turks, declaring firstly that he must surely be in Turkish pay, and secondly that he's a worse enemy of Christianity not only than all the heretics previously known but even than the Turks themselves. Moner assumes that this writer is Erasmus (OC Vol. 3, Pozoblanco 2003, pp. cccv, cccxi). But even if Erasmus is indirectly being got at, he is certainly not the direct target here. The heavy artillery is being pointed at Luther.

NOTES

"Sepúlveda, a peripatetic...": Menéndez y Pelayo, M., *J. Genesisii Sepulvedae Cordubensis Democrates Alter, sive de justis belli causis apud Indos*. Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia, 1892, p. 259.

"there is also a foundation...": *ibid.* pp. 259-60.

"the Anglo-Saxon is the only extirpating race": Sarkisyanz, M., *Hitler's English Inspirers* (Athol Books Belfast 2003) p. 9.

"so aggressive, under the veil...": Bataillon, M., *Erasmus et l'Espagne* (Paris 1937) pp. 78-9.

Erasmus believed: Based on Bataillon pp. 80-2 and *Paraclesis*.

Scots, Irish, Turks etc. should read Gospels: *Paraclesis* p. 455.

"without the allegory": *Enchiridion* p. 108.

"a poet's fable...": *ibid.* pp. 108-9.

"Heaven must be obtained...": *ibid.* p. 109.

"It is a great shame...": p. 8.

"that the literal sense...": p. 108.

"he should hurt his brother...": p. 130.

"one of the most eminent creations...": Bakhtine, M., *L'oeuvre de François Rabelais et la culture populaire au Moyen Age et sous le Renaissance* (Paris 1970) p. 23.

"the reformed and genuine...": CW Vol. 4 (Toronto 1977) p. 263.

Erasmus mostly agreed with Luther: e.g. *Briefe* p. 219, "I believe those theses have been well received by everyone, except for the few items about Purgatory..." (to Johann Lang, 17/10/1518).

"Luther's accusations against the tyranny...": Bataillon p. 157.

"I see that the monarchy...": *Briefe* p. 220.

"whose brains are the most addled...": CW Vol. 1 (Toronto 1973) p. 138.

"Erasmus laid the egg...": *Briefe* p. 337—to Johann Caesarius, 16/12/1524.

"To tell the truth...": *O svobodné v'li* tr. K. Korteová (Praha 2006) p. 119.

"Even if we were...": *ibid.* pp. 119-121.

"The apostles worked...": *ibid.* pp. 129-131.

"how is it possible...": *ibid.* p. 131.

"If human efforts are entirely...": *ibid.* pp. 233-5.

"It is hard to explain...": *ibid.* p. 235-7.

"You've put a fox-skin...": *Hyperaspistes* p. 11.

"I am but a barbarian...": *Enslaved Will* p. 6.

"Who (you say) will endeavour...": *ibid.* p. 50.

"This is the highest degree...": *ibid.* p. 51.

"This vehemence of yours...": *Hyperaspistes* p. 21.

"I think there is not a devil...": *Murdering Peasants* p. 122.

"There is no place...": *ibid.* p. 123.

"Stab, smite, slay...": *ibid.* p. 124.

"You've written an angry book...": *Hyperaspistes* p. 21.

"I would never have taken you...": *ibid.* pp. 72, 36.

"not unjustified, but immoderately...": *ibid.* p. 62.

"I spent 22 years...": Losada, A., *Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda a través de su epistolario y nuevos documentos* (Madrid 1973) p. 574.

The Rite of Marriage and Dispensation: cf. Part VI, pp. cxvii-cxx, of introduction to OC Vol. 6 (Pozoblanco 2001) by J. Pérez-Prendes Muñoz-Arraco.

"I urge (all Christians)...": *The Complaint of Peace*, online.

"The monk bears affronts...": OC Vol. 6 pp. 2243, 244, 246, 249.

"too restrained, not to say...": OC Vol. 15 (Pozoblanco 2010) p. 2.

"latently threatens not only...": *ibid.* p. 3.

"man is the originator...": *ibid.* p. 34.

"What use is reason...": *ibid.* p. 31.

"I do not see by what means...": *ibid.* p. 79.

"I am prepared to state...": p. 4.

"either Erasmus lutheranises...": Cited in introduction to OC Vol. 7 (Pozoblanco 2003) p. xxi.

"a faithful reflection...": *ibid.* p. xiii.

"the professors of the pagan...": *Briefe* p. 333—to Philip Melancthon, 6/9/1524.

"How can you use...": *Ciceronianus* p. 119.

"It behoves every speech...": *ibid.* pp. 120, 129.

"the most severe... one of the most savage...": Cited in OC Vol. 7 p. xxvii, notes 51, 58.

"shitty bits of paper...": *ibid.* p. 133.

Sepúlveda, "a good Latinist": *ibid.* p. 126.

"to prejudice the reputation...": *ibid.* p. 114.

"What is at issue...": *ibid.* p. 137.

"But if somebody...": p. 139.

"The worst fault that Pio...": p. 158.

"attentively revise all your writings...": *ibid.* p. 159.

"There are no grounds...": *ibid.* p. 161.

"praised the moderation...": *Opera* Vol II pp. 467-8 (*De Gestis Caroli V*, lib. XV c. XXXI).

Sepúlveda/Erasmus correspondence: OC Vol. 9, I, (Pozoblanco 2007) pp. 54-92.

"Fr. Bartolomé de las Casas...": Bethell, L. ed. *Cambridge History of Latin America* Vol. 1 (Cambridge 1984) p. 515.

"(Charles V) and his advisers...": Friede, J. and Keen, B. eds., *Bartolomé de Las Casas in History*, De Kalb, Illinois 1971 p. 142.

No Spanish erasmians opposed Sepúlveda: Bataillon pp. 673-4.

Utopian wars of conquest: *Utopia* tr. P. Turner (London 2009) p. 61.

"I am almost become a farmer": Bell p. 17.

"a visit to the Public Archives...": Losada op. cit. p. 154.

"rigorously prohibited Indian slavery": *Bartolomé de Las Casas in History* p. 169.

Sepúlveda met Cortés: Losada op. cit. pp. 237-8.

"Leopold, a German...": OC Vol. 15 p. 225.

"I have thought it useful...": OC Vol. 3 (Pozoblanco 1997) p. 40.

Philip O'Connor

Film Review

Birth Of A Nation

I finally got around to watching D.W. Griffith's famous film *Birth of a Nation*. Released in 1915, it is generally regarded as the first ever Hollywood film intended as a "historical epic", and was hugely popular in the USA for at least a decade. It was the favourite film of President Teddy Roosevelt. It can be said to be the first popular film history of the US.

Birth of a Nation has suddenly gained a new relevance as it seems that the new Spielberg epic *Lincoln*—which I haven't seen yet but is receiving rave reviews—is a rewriting of the same story for a 21st century purpose.

Birth of a Nation tells the American story in a way that is inconceivable today—through racialist eyes (it is based on a novel called *The Clansman*). It can be assumed to reflect a widespread understanding of the Civil War and post-Civil War period, during which it claims the American Nation was given its modern form. It was America's myth for the 20th century, presenting American society in its 'pure' form before its confusing dilution in the North by all those huddled masses of Italians, Irish, Germans and Jews who arrived in the later decades of the 19th century.

The story starts with an idyllic portrayal of southern life pre-Civil War and a blunt statement that the introduction of the "African" was what brought disunity for the first time to this idyllic society. The

Some further thoughts on Hugh Trevor-Roper in light of
the recent biography by Adam Sisman

The Search For Meaning

Somewhere around security at Belfast International Airport may be seen a striking advertisement placed by a well-known firm of Belfast solicitors. It features a long line of heads in silhouette facing one way, with one, presumably particularly insightful, head looking the other way. The message is that these aren't people who are content to peddle the stale old answers but will look for innovative, imaginative, indeed counter-intuitive, ways to tackle the distressing problems that commercial folk in Northern Ireland encounter. The term "conventional wisdom" (more recently "received wisdom"), uttered with disparaging intent, originated with J.K. Galbraith. And maybe of no field more than in economics has the massacre of the shibboleths been more characteristic. This is because there are few laws in economics: it's mostly guesswork, more or less inspired; and if a real economy happens to behave in accordance with an economic model that's usually mere coincidence.

In the British state government operates in an adversarial context. It's assumed that some sort of coherent way forward will emerge from the ideological bunfights, the catcalling, the factions and the bitterness. The same goes for the legal system. The truth will emerge like the juice from a squeezed orange out of the stresses of cross-examination. There seems to be something functional in the chaos. As Brendan Clifford observed many years ago, a collective stupidity comes over the British political class when it's in one of its fits of sweet reasonableness and unanimity: in other words when politicians are pretending to be statesmen, even, dare one say, when they feel the hand of history on their shoulder.

The Progressive History

This is how it often is in the world of the Universities, and this is how it was in British History Departments in the late 1940s. History was a science, and the science had been cracked. The process of development of the English and then British state from the sixteenth century onwards, encompassing the Reformation, Puritan movement, Civil Wars, Glorious and Industrial Revolu-

tions, had been the model *par excellence* for the understanding of how the modern world came about. Britain was the laboratory of the whole world. The things that could be seen only through a glass darkly elsewhere were shining clear in the British experience. Economic determinism was the key.

In a sense it could be said that all the great minds who had addressed these issues had ended up singing from the same hymn sheet: Adam Smith, Macaulay, Marx, John Stuart Mill, Weber, and that kindly Christian Socialist R.H. Tawney. Voltaire said that if you want to find out what are the powerful forces in society, you can figure it out by noticing what and who you're not allowed to criticise. In the Oxford of sixty years ago it was Marx. These days I suppose it's Darwin and the neo-Darwinians.

Trevor-Roper too had taken it for granted that he was among that number. By 1950 he had really only published his study of Archbishop Laud, which was conformable to the thesis that Laud was engaged in a doomed attempt to set up a new kind of Anglican hegemony along what one might (anachronistically) call High Church lines, at a time when the old Anglican hegemony was already shot to pieces. In this he appeared to Trevor-Roper to be behaving like an officious and unpopular Public School housemaster.

The religious broadsides that were being fired back and forth may have been full of sound and fury but the real battle was that going on at a more subterranean level, as the tectonic plates of the old economic order were grinding up against the new. A new economic class was emerging, and it was predestined to succeed. "Nothing's inevitable until it has happened" the later Trevor-Roper would grumble at pupils who made airy declarations of inevitability.

The problem with University teaching in the Humanities, especially in the hothouse tutorial and supervisory system of Oxbridge, is that as a tutor you probably need some sort of framework to help you develop an approach to your subject, and in the context of which you can assess and find wanting your pupils' efforts. It's very easy then for something which starts off as a working hypothesis

radical element in Congress is portrayed as consisting of honest idealists manipulated by devious "mulattoes" (i.e. mixed race elements). They pushed for the extension of federalist power over the autonomy of states, thus precipitating the Civil War.

Lincoln's decision to end slavery was his concession to these naive radicals but, the film implies, Lincoln would have held the line there and never have permitted the rot that followed. His assassination opened the door to the radicals (which the film calls the "party of Negroes and Carpetbaggers") who drove a catastrophic agenda of "race equality" and enfranchisement.

In the chaos in the South after the Civil War the "Party of Negroes and Carpetbaggers" seized power across southern states and instituted a regime of terror against "honest whites", who were disenfranchised and subjected to ritual humiliation and abuse. What the film describes as "honest souls" among the blacks (faithful servants) rejected the equality-mongers. There are scenes of chaotic parliamentary meetings dominated by ape-like black men with their bare feet on tables, drinking from flagons of liquor etc. and speechifying about racial equality, with their most sinister demand being the right to marry white women.

White society began to regroup through its "hidden empire", led by disenfranchised Civil War officers. This society created the Ku Klux Klan as a noble army of resistance to the radical/negro terror. According to the film, there were soon 400,000 men organised in it. Acts of defiance and resistance follow. There are showdowns between whiskey-crazed black mobs and upright white working men. In the struggle, differences between Union and Confederate—an artificial divide caused by the negroes and radicals in the first place—dissolved as white society united to resist the alien takeover. Thus was the modern Nation born. The film ends with valiant images of the Klan enforcing control over elections that followed and overthrowing the "negro terror".

The film moves at a cracking pace and is well worth a look, given the new Spielberg version. It is a credible representation of how pre-New Deal mainstream American society saw itself, a self-view that persisted across much of the country until the 1970s.

A comparison of Spielberg's myth for the 21st century America with Griffith's for the 20th would be a very worthwhile and enlightening endeavour.

Getting films to view has become very easy. *Birth of a Nation* can be found to 'stream' on a computer through any of the free movie sites that now exist or simply by googling "birth of a nation streaming", which will turn up a version that works. *Youtube* carries it too.

to develop into an article of faith. The Marxist interpretation in history, or some variant on it, acted like one of those *memes*, beloved of Richard Dawkins. It was something that was in the air, in the intellectual current, and you caught it just as you might catch flu.

Dogma Or No Dogma?

After a brief dalliance in his undergraduate days with the newly respectable Catholicism (and the upper-class Catholics and Catholic converts) that had emerged in 1930s Oxford, Trevor-Roper had taken a scunner to it all, to “*the whole apparatus of God and sin*” as he succinctly stated it, and he was determined not to be taken in again. He approved of formal religion, or a certain sort of lukewarm Anglicanism, as conducive to social pleasantness, and he was a frequent reader of the lesson at Christchurch, but he had no intellectual comprehension of, much less fellow-feeling with, anybody who would admit to taking it seriously. At the bottom of this may have lain a refusal to be enslaved by dogma in any form. Well before 1945 he had begun to wonder how Marxist theory could really explain the rise of Fascism.

For many of the returning and new undergraduates there were no such musings. As a beneficial side effect of the war there had been fatal damage done to what had been left of the old deferential society. The War had been won by a great effort of national will, not unlike a five year plan, or so it was imagined. State propaganda was to project this theme forward into the post-1945 years when austerity was its own reward. The new order was symbolised by the National Health Service, the Welfare State, and the nationalised industries. Some of the brightest, like Denis Healey, were Communist Party members. The young Harold Wilson joked about how he hadn't got beyond the footnote on page 3 of *The Communist Manifesto*, but that was somehow a necessary joke. You had to claim some kind of kinship with Marx to be a credible person, intellectually or politically. Frank Pakenham left Christchurch for the House of Lords and a seat on the Labour cabinet. Patrick Gordon Walker, another History Don at Christchurch, became a Labour MP following a by-election in 1945, and a Labour Minister thereafter. The Conservatives duly fell into line, having no alternative thesis to offer.

We know that over the past fifty years this consensus has fractured. It

may be that in the area of sociology (that dismal progeny of Marxism) the citadel remains untaken, but the Marxist perspective has now been shown to fail the stress tests of historical credibility.

Trevor-Roper deserves a lot of credit for being among the first to throw a grenade into the cosy circle, even if the fact that this act of rebellion happened at all owed more to the dynamics of personal vendetta than to dispassionate scholarship.

Harmless Beginnings

It all began innocently enough. Before the Ear he had been rooting around in an antiquarian bookstall in Newcastle-upon-Tyne when he came across a seventeenth century tract called *England's Grievance Discovered*, dealing with the misdemeanours of the local coal merchants. His own discovery was that Thomas Sutton, the founder of Charterhouse School, had been happily profiting from monopolistic practices to keep the price of coal high. Strangely enough, as Trevor-Roper found out from Nef's *History of the British Coal Industry*, Sutton had lived at that time in Alnwick, Trevor-Roper's home town. Nef had also alerted Trevor-Roper to the significance of the Elizabethan records of the Recognisances for Debt, held in the Public Record Office in London. It was 1946 before he had the opportunity to examine these for himself and he was intrigued by what he found.

But, as so often with Trevor-Roper, other things got in the way. In particular he was preoccupied with the writing and publication of *The Last Days of Hitler*, the book that made his reputation well beyond Oxford and academia, published in 1947. (By a strange symmetry Hitler from the grave inflicted a near fatal wound to that reputation many years later.) All that came out of his researches at that time were a talk subsequently published in the Durham University Journal, and an article in *The Carthusian*.

This is where Lawrence Stone comes on the stage. Five years younger than Trevor-Roper, he was a mature undergraduate at Christchurch, with a distinguished war record in the Navy, and a captivating personality. He was universally identified as a man with a brilliant future, with the sort of dash and verve about him that appealed to his tutor Trevor-Roper. The fact that tutor and pupil were both Carthusians provided a further link, and Sisman comments that they would both have relished finding out that their revered founder was far from the admirable character fondly

imagined by successive headmasters.

It seemed perfectly natural then for Stone to ask to borrow the transcripts Trevor-Roper had made at the PRO. The latter wasn't to know of Stone's tendency, as admitted in later life, to go into a new field of study “*with a pickaxe and digging out the gold and getting out fast*”. There was no further discussion between them on the subject until Stone's mammoth article was published in the *Economic History Review* in 1948 (no doubt after a nudge from Tawney who was President of the Economic History Society), taking up the whole of the issue. In it he demonstrated, on the basis of his own extensive researches in the PRO, that the late Elizabethan aristocracy was as a class on the road to ruin, and ripe for being supplanted. The article even included an obliging footnoted reference to Trevor-Roper for having stimulated his interest in this fascinating material etc etc.

Reaction And Retaliation

Trevor-Roper's first reaction was to try to be mannerly, praising Stone for the originality of his research and supporting his application for a fellowship at Wadham. But it wasn't long before the iron entered his soul. Stone was winning the academic honours while he himself was the subject of snide put-downs for having (like C.S. Lewis) achieved fame for authorial success in the wider world. So he sat down to study his former pupil's work more closely and

“realised that it was riddled with errors. In working so fast Stone had paid the price of his haste. He had not taken the trouble to understand the system of loans by recognizance; his figures were therefore misleading; he had seriously misinterpreted the documents; and, worst of all, he had often mistranscribed the, perhaps deliberately ... In the circumstances Hugh decided that it was his duty to reply to the article and expose its falsity. One of his undergraduate pupils, Alastair Parker, was startled to find his tutor, ill with sinusitis, sitting up in bed and clutching a file labelled Death of Stone”.

In a letter he announced his intention to “*liquidate Stone....to blow this pirate ship out of the water in order to make the seas of 16th century historical scholarship safe for legitimate commerce*”. The rebuttal, when it finally appeared in the same journal as *The Elizabethan Aristocracy: An Anatomy Anatomised*, was excoriating, subsequently described as “*a magnificent if terrifying work of*

destruction”, and as “one of the most vitriolic attacks ever made by one historian on another”.

According to Trevor-Roper, Stone’s charlatanry was disguised by the specious appearance of careful scholarship:

“The parade of footnotes and appendices is so impressive that people are easily persuaded of their solidity, and I am continually bothered by their effect of good undergraduates.”

Stone in a rejoinder attempted to make the best of a bad job, conceding some errors of detail while defending the integrity of his overall argument. He concluded by saying that the truth was more likely to emerge from “lengthy research, rather than by the cultivation of a fierce polemical style”. With Trevor-Roper no one could tell if the fierceness was an innocent by-product of a mind fully engaged with the issue in hand or was the product of an underlying “nastiness”.

This was a breach that took a long time to heal, and maybe never did. Stone spent the latter part of his career at Princeton, but throughout the 1950s both men were lecturing at Oxford, urging diametrically opposed analyses of the position of the aristocracy in late Elizabethan and early Stuart England. If Stone’s prospects of advancement in Oxford were being continually blocked by Trevor-Roper and his lieutenants in the History Faculty his departure for America is all the more explicable.

This was however only a minor skirmish. It was to lead on to a more significant conflict, this time with the great man himself.

Tawney In The Crosshairs

“I am critical of Tawney, whom I also greatly admire, and I have contested him on one point in my article. You will see whether you agree with him or with me on that. But I don’t believe that anyone will be able to do to him what I am doing to Stone, i.e. proving (as I submit) that he is neither honest nor a scholar.”

It was inevitable (sorry!) that the exposure of the falsity of Stone’s analysis in one particular research area would lead to a challenge to Stone’s mentor. Here is Sisman:

“Hugh’s experience was leading him to scrutinise his early Marxist assumptions. Like almost every other historian of his generation, he had accepted certain fundamental tenets of Marxist dogma, believing in the omnipotence of economics and the inevitability of class struggle. Tawney’s

thesis fitted neatly into this orthodoxy. By 1950 it was becoming more difficult to subscribe to the Marxist creed. The intellectual dishonesty of Communist ideologues had become lamentably evident. An approach that had once seemed progressive and modern now seemed tired and clichéd.

“Tawney was no Communist of course, but he had explained the upheavals of the seventeenth century in Marxist terms. He had identified the gentry as the ‘middle class’, enabling him to depict the upheaval in the mid-seventeenth century as a ‘bourgeois revolution’. Hugh was now ready to break with the faith.”

This whole gentry/aristocracy dichotomy was riddled with holes. They were all to a great extent landed proprietors anyway, subject to the same economic flux. Even if they could be clearly distinguished, there was no clear pattern of decline and fall in one class or rise and rise in the other. Many of the “gentry” in fact were under severe financial stress, and it was this that in many cases made them politically obstreperous, especially if they had failed to obtain preferment for themselves or their families at Court. So the Puritan revolution if interpreted in economic terms could be seen as the last fling of a decaying class. The Court/Country distinction was a more telling one for Trevor-Roper.

By Summer 1952 his critique of Tawney was ready for publication, once again in the *Economic History Review*, Tawney’s home patch.

The very long article was headed entitled *The Gentry: 1540-1640*, and contained assertions like the following:

“The rise of aristocracy under the Stuarts is far more significant than any decline they may have experienced under Elizabeth... the decline of the declining gentry in the early seventeenth century is at least as significant as the rise of the rising gentry.”

This controversy caused a storm not just in Britain but around the world, and not just in academic or historical circles. The Tawney century “just ain’t there any more” commented U.S. historian Jack Hexter. Tawney’s response in the next issue contained the following classic passage:

“An erring colleague is not an Amalekite to be smitten hip and thigh... My correction of some of Mr. Trevor-Roper’s misconceptions has, I trust, been free from the needless and unpleasing asperity into which criticism, to the injury of its cause, is liable on occasion to lapse”.

The columns of the *Review* were then closed to any further riposte from Trevor-Roper. He commented as follows:

“Having just reviewed the last four volumes of Arnold Toynbee’s pretentious Study of History which is similar in its dishonest method I feel that the whole science of history is being vitiated by these methods whereby theories are first stated as facts on the basis of illustrations arbitrarily selected and then, when challenged, defended by dishonest tricks and a deferential editorial guillotine”.

Christopher Hill seems to have been nothing daunted by the furore, and continued until his death to be in denial about the impossibility of fitting real historical events and movements into the Procrustean bed of Marxist theory.

Plots And Prizes

By 1957 Trevor-Roper was campaigning in his own inimitable way for to be appointed as Regius Professor of Modern History. This was a royal prerogative appointment and therefore lay in the gift of the new Prime Minister, Harold McMillan, who just happened to be Trevor-Roper’s publisher. With his old tutor and wartime colleague J.C. Masterman now Vice-Chancellor at Oxford, it was a very safe bet that Trevor-Roper would come first in the three horse race, with A.J.P. Taylor and A.L. Rowse the other contenders.

This all makes for very entertaining reading. Sisman can withstand a second or even subsequent reading, which not many biographies can. There are surely few topics as compelling as academics bitching about one another and plotting. As we proceed though Sisman’s Life of Hugh we then come to Trevor-Roper’s ill-fated migration to Cambridge to become Master of Peterhouse. One gets the impression that a coven of vampires would have behaved a lot better than the senior Fellows of that college. The toxicity was terrific, as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh might say.

A Turbulent Spirit

About Trevor-Roper himself, one might say that he in an especial sense was born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. His wit tended to override his judgment and discretion. He derived particular pleasure in making abusive, lacerating remarks. Yet there was a kind of admirable integrity about the man. He was a schemer but not a hypocrite; and when he wielded the dagger he didn’t try to make out that he was doing it more in sorrow than in anger. Nobody would have believed him anyway.

But the final impression this reader had was of a wasted life. Maybe the excitement of his special wartime operations unsettled Trevor-Roper for a life of serious historical research thereafter. Certainly he was attracted by the *beau monde*, as he called it, and seduced by an Establishment with which he easily hobnobbed while perhaps at bottom feeling that he wasn't really part of it. The life of a gentleman scholar or man of letters was what he really aspired to. It wouldn't do to stay in Oxford as a single-minded inky-fingered academic when he could be part of the pulse of a great society.

He had a remarkable gift of being in the right place at the right time and to get noticed there. His debriefing work among German military figures at the end of the war proved to be the catalyst for *The Last Days of Hitler*. He happened to be in America at the time of the publication of the Warren Commission report following John F. Kennedy's assassination (of which we're approaching the 50th anniversary), and was soon embroiled in controversy in that febrile field of enquiry. He managed to obtain all the transcripts of evidence which he pored over for weeks. His article in the *Sunday Times* of 13th December 1964 was entitled: *Kennedy Murder Enquiry is Suspect*. This quite predictably led to a whirlwind of abuse, from the likes of Bernard Levin, and from the Warden of All Souls, John Sparrow, whose temperament was equally acerbic to Trevor-Roper's

This puts me in mind of the great aphorism that somebody uttered after Sparrow was appointed to the office in succession to Sumner: One Sparrow doesn't make a Sumner.

So, part of the problem was that Trevor-Roper was too easily diverted or seduced from his real work in analysing the true dynamics of that great century from 1540 to 1640. Seduced by Hitler at the end of the War and the fame that emanated from the *Last Days*. Later, and repeatedly, seduced by the many and lucrative journalistic offers that came his way. His wife Xandra probably was another unsettling influence as he found it very hard to please her, although he developed very good relations with the step-children.

Marxism Today

I think he earns his own place in history though by virtue of his thorough exposure of the dodgy foundations of the Marxist historical analysis. Marx as a historical dialectic is exploded. Com-

munism as a practical method for the ordering of life in any given society has not been demonstrated to work, unless, like Christianity (*per* G.K. Chesterton) it hasn't been tried. But there is a mutual intractability between collectivist economics and human nature. Getting and spending we no doubt lay waste our powers, but getting and spending is what we do, for better or worse. At least we're making our own stupid choices instead of having other people make even stupider choices on our behalf. China, the only successful Communist society, is in most ways more capitalist now than the West. Why do the Chinese save so much? The answer apparently is because there is no safety net for when things go wrong, except your savings and your family.

What does that leave then? Marx as

a credible description of how capitalist society works. That may be the only redoubt left to the Marxists.

Sixty years on and no one pays even lip service to the idea of class struggle any more. The liberal left, having lost the struggle, utters the odd whimper about the activities of the multi-nationals who are the real powers in the modern world, but not with much conviction. Its energies are concentrated on the destruction of the British landscape by means of giant useless wind turbines that stalk the land, decimating our bird life; on the destruction of the traditional structures of society, especially the family; on futile and hugely expensive foreign interventions, both militarily and in the form of "foreign aid"; and on the marginalisation of the Christian religion. What the meta-narrative is I can't begin to guess.

Julianne Herlihy

Lies, Disinformation & Propaganda

—Qui Bono?

"Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities."

Voltaire.

"The propagandist naturally cannot reveal the true intentions of the principal for whom he acts ... That would be to submit the projects to public discussion, to the scrutiny of public opinion, and thus to prevent their success... Propaganda must serve instead as a veil of such projects, masking true intention."

Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda*.
New York. Knopf. 1965.

"They who have put out the people's eyes, reproach them of their blindness."

John Milton.

What makes debate regarding change today in Ireland difficult if not outright impossible is the total lack of credibility of the political establishment, the media and the usual 'talking heads'. The *Protection of Life During Pregnancy Bill*, with its distinctly Orwellian nature, is being debated as it goes through the various stages before it becomes law. It would be hard to guess from the name of the Bill that it will—as it stands—bring abortion on demand to this country.

The Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, Fine Gael, has stated on the Irish news and elsewhere that it will not bring about a change in the law. Senan Molony, the political columnist for the *Irish Daily Mail*, 4th May 2013 wondered if

Taoiseach Kenny knew that a Bill was a legal instrument of change and added that the latter should really be entitled the *Protection of Life During Abortion Bill*. He deplored the "doublespeak" nature of the intended change and wanted some honesty to enter into the discourse. That was the only media intervention on the side of plain speaking that I have noticed during the whole *imbroglio* that started with the death of Savita Halappanavar and is continuing right up to the present day.

A Coroner's Inquest directed by Dr. Ciarán MacLoughlin, and with a jury, brought in a verdict of "death by medical misadventure" into Ms Halappanavar's death. During the Inquest we heard of a catalogue of incidents, among which the outstanding were: the failure of the latter's consultant obstetrician, Katherine Astbury, to read the notes at a critical junction—thus causing a critical delay in diagnosing sepsis, and the failure of the attempts of a midwife to get the attending doctor on call, Dr. Inkechukwu Uzockwu, to see the patient, which as far as she knew he never did (though at the Inquest he said he saw Ms Halappanavar but as she was asleep he didn't examine her). Along with other such miscalculations, these led to the death of the young woman.

The notion that Ms Halappanavar was denied treatment because of Catholic

doctrine was put paid to by the testimony of the Consultant Obstetrician who stated: "I made no mention of religion". The issue of Catholicism arose only when a discussion took place between the patient who said she was a Hindu and a midwife who talked about Ireland as "a Catholic country" but who never, as she herself stated, had or could have had anything to do with a decision about a termination as it "was not within my remit". And from this innocent conversation came as the Coroner noted the resulting hue and cry from around the world.

The Catholic country comment prompted international controversy on the independence of the healthcare system here. This was reported all around the world, but "public hospitals here do not follow religious tenets or dogma of any persuasion" stated Dr. Ciarán MacLoughlin.

I found a couple of things interesting about what transpired in the Coroner's Court. The Coroner at one stage cautioned Dr. Astbury "not to use the 'emotive term' of 'termination' which he said evoked the killing of the foetus". And the coroner's use of the former Master of Holles Street Hospital Dr. Peter Boylan as an expert witness was rather strange. Since then of course Dr. Boylan has rarely left the airwaves and is the most vociferous campaigner for abortion on demand. What is not stated ever is that he comes from a hospital ethos of Protestantism. He even recently attacked Cardinal Brady, calling his entry into the 'debate' nothing but "mischief-making"!

How the myth was spun

The narrative of how this Galway Hospital death became a global news item came originally from Kitty Holland who broke the story in the *Observer* newspaper. That story was predicated almost entirely on the testimony of Savita's husband Praveen Halappanavar and his solicitor—as Holland agreed in a radio interview when challenged about significant inconsistencies in what was being said. Initially Praveen stated that his wife was refused a termination by her obstetrician and Holland says:

"All one can surmise is that his recollection of events—the actual timeline and days—may be a little muddled ... we only have Praveen and his solicitor's take on what was in or not in the notes ... we are relying all the time on their take on what happened."

(The notes as read in the Coroner's

Court did not contain any request for a termination as we now know.)

On 7th December 2012, *The Catholic Herald* outlined how the story hit the world. Journalist Rory Fitzgerald claimed that

"leaked emails show that pro-abortion groups were aware of the story's imminent publication days in advance. Three days before publication by the *Observer*, a message appeared on an online discussion group used by members of the Irish Choice Network calling an emergency meeting and saying: "There are rumours that a major news story related to denial of abortion access is going to break in the media early this coming week".

Another activist replied two days before the publication of the story, stating: "Have also heard rumours but details are scant ... a protest has been called for this Wednesday at 6 p.m. outside the Dáil. I am sure I'll see some of you there."

Holland writing in the *Observer* noted:

"Last Wednesday evening, a spontaneous protest took place outside the Irish parliament, organised on social media with about eight hours notice. Up to 2,000 people were there, some weeping, others holding placards with 'I have a heartbeat too' written on them. The reaction to Savita's death was instant, phenomenal and universal. Here in Ireland the feelings were of anger, deep sadness and shame. Outside Ireland, the reaction seems to be of horror, concern and bewilderment."

In New York two prominent writers Colum McCann and Belinda McKeon called on Americans to "boycott Ireland by not visiting..." This rage and hatred was also evident here in Ireland and I found elements of fascism—not to put too fine a word on it—had entered into the controversy. To go back to the *Catholic Herald*, Fitzgerald wrote:

"Logic and facts gained little traction amid the worldwide media frenzy that the Savita story became. This was global online hysteria in full cry. Twitter, the omniscient obstetrician, had given its diagnosis, and anyone who dared contradict its findings would feel its wrath. Richard Dawkins, who claims to base his beliefs on empirically proved facts, confidently tweeted: "Irish Catholic bigotry kills woman". Torrents of online abuse were poured upon those who ventured to suggest that people should wait for the facts before rushing to judgement."

But there is the objective statistical fact that Ireland has one of the *lowest*

maternal mortality rates in the world. It is 4.1 per 100,000 births. By way of comparison, the British rate is 12 per 100,000 and that of America 21 per 100,000. India on the other hand has one of the worst in the world at 200 per 100,000 and that is only what is officially recognised. Rural India is far away from even the worst of the slums of Mumbai with abortions for the poor creating a high rate of maternal death and then there is female infanticide which is a widespread practice not just in rural India but in urban India too.

Professor William Reville, (Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry and Public Awareness of Science Officer at UCC) has written lucidly on the science behind the controversy of when human life begins. He writes:

"Conception is the start of a continuum of an individual human life that ends eventually in death. Under normal circumstances the unfolding along the biological continuum is automatic and self regulating. Some of the various successive stages along the continuum are termed—zygote-embryo-foetus-baby-child-teenager-adult-elderly person. The developing entity is unambiguously alive and biologically and genetically Homo sapiens from the moment of conception and at every point along the continuum it has the human properties characteristic of and appropriate to that stage. The full human essence is present everywhere along the continuum. Professor Reville reveals that he is persuaded by the argument of the American Catholic theologian and philosopher Peter Kreeft. The latter argues that "claims that the personhood argument is based on functionalism and confuses being with doing". Kreeft derails the pro-abortion argument that views the early embryo and foetus as a potential person but not yet an actual person. Personhood is understood by the pro-abortions as "an ability to do certain things". Kreeft says the foetus is a person because the proper definition of something is a definition of its essence, not a description of its behaviour. Being is actual, functioning is potential. Potential refers to behaviour and not essence. Thus, according to Kreeft's analysis, a zygote or a foetus is a person who is a potential musician, swimmer, singer etc" (See *Human Personhood Begins At Conception* by P. Kreeft, Medical Ethics Monograph, Castello Institute, Virginia, USA).

Legislation

The Savita story broke just as the Irish Government's "expert group" report came back with suggestions as to how the Government might comply with the

Supreme Court and the European Court of Human Rights rulings on abortion. Though neither are binding on legislators—they of course pretend otherwise. And so the ruse goes on . . .

And it is helped in every way by an accommodating media, both print and radio/television. It is the brave person who dissents from the prevailing view. In their innovative book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky (Vintage, 1994) write:

"Perhaps this is an obvious point, but the democratic postulate is that the media are independent and committed to discovering and reporting the truth, and that they do not merely reflect the world as powerful groups wish it to be perceived. Leaders of the media claim that their news choices rest on unbiased professional and objective criteria, and have support for this contention in the intellectual community."

The author's footnote for this statement is thus presented:

"Herbert Gans, for example, states that: 'The beliefs that actually make it into the news are *professional* values that are intrinsic to national journalism and that journalists learn on the job... The rules of news management call for ignoring story implications...' And he might have added that the voices of the *other* should be—if not silenced—then harassed and jumped upon so that what they have to say is effectively masked and their arguments therefore go unheard."

Joe Duffy of RTE 1 often presents himself as "*Uncle Joe*", or even more egoistically as in *The Irish Mail on Sunday*, as the 'Voice of the Nation'. But Duffy is as Establishment as they come and knows a prevailing wind if anyone ever does. In the *Irish Daily Mail* on 28th June 2013, there was a report of a very unusual snub to Duffy's show 'Live-line', when two complaints against his programme were upheld by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI). The complaints were made in relation to a broadcast on 5th March 2013 in which the presenter was accused of "*harassing the editor of the Catholic newspaper 'Alive'*". A listener also claimed that callers to the show had abused Fr. Brian McKeivitt. The priest, according to the account given by the *Irish Daily Mail*—had written an article in the newspaper in which he compared Enda Kenny to King Herod. (I thought Kenny had self-adverted to Herod in the Dáil?)

The BAI found a number of unrelated topics were brought up during the show

—including clerical sex abuse. The complaint was upheld and the BAI found that some issues highlighted in the programme were raised by the presenter alone, rather than callers. It is highly unusual for the BAI to administer the slightest tap-on-the-wrist to the powerful Duffy—and I think in this case there had to be a hefty number of people who had complained, which necessitated *some* response because it is widely known just how much Duffy gets away with in his show: by the kind of vetting that operates with regards to callers to his show. If you are with Joe—you get on, but if you are *not*—well you will be holding for a long time before you ever do.

Mary Kenny and Sectarianism

Writing in *The Irish Catholic*, 25th April 2013, Kenny said she was amazed to hear that the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Micheal Jackson had said:

"Sectarianism, although polite in speech and smile, is alive and well in instinct and prejudice. It is for this reason that I am slow to agree that the bad old days are behind us".

Dr. Jackson was the one who said of the scandal of the Bethany Homes that it had not "*crossed my radar*" and naturally he got away with his negligent and hurtfully patronising remark because no Irish journalist would dream of calling him out on it. Anyway back to sectarianism which Dr. Jackson, at a "*mere 56*", was recalling and which Mary Kenny who at a "*decade older than him*" can remember with more acuity.

"In 1958, when I was a teenager, Catholics and Protestants did not engage in sporting activities together in Dublin, and that was largely at the behest of the Protestant sports clubs. I was turned away from a Sandymount tennis club because I was an 'RC'. The Irish Times carried advertisements with the tag 'Protestant preferred' or even 'Protestant only' and it would have been impossible for the newspaper itself to appoint a Catholic editor. In the 1960's the outstanding candidate for the editorship of The Irish Times was Donal Foley, but it was obvious he couldn't succeed Douglas Gageby because he was a Catholic. In the late 1960's I complained to my brother that there were no women on the board of the Bank of Ireland. 'There are no Catholics either' he replied. Until the late 1960's companies like Guinness did not promote Catholics to senior management positions."

Kenny thinks all of this has now gone

but here in Cork there are still many stories that can be told of good old Protestant bigotry. One that I can instantly recall was about the Garryduff Sports Centre in the late 90s, where a Catholic parent was given a membership form to fill out by one of his children who wished to play tennis there. There on the form was a notice that took him aback. It stated that Catholics who gained membership need not aspire to be members of the Committee. He tore up the form and told his child that he wasn't going to sign such a piece of discrimination. And believe me when I say that is only one story that I could tell you because there are lots of others. And one never knows when someone can be persuaded to put pen to paper and detail the real sectarianism that still exists for Catholics here in the south even if some of it is done by the 'castle Catholics' that are still flourishing in these good old times.

©

Nan Magennis

Letter to Editor

The Vatican's strange and contradictory policy on Abortion!

I am fed up to the back teeth with all those belly-aching do-gooders. These anti-choice people are not interested in the child after it is born—they're merely only interested in a bunch of cells, with no conscious life, with no brain function, with no viable life. A bunch of cells are just a blue-print, like paper plans for a concrete house. Rejecting the plan does not constitute the destruction of your house, but that's their equation. I usually don't even discuss or engage in dialogue with so-called pro-lifers as it is futile.

I am a Catholic teacher and I am very, very much pro-choice. I believe it is a legal/lawful right that should be enshrined in law. It may not be your personal answer but it remains in law a legal right. They have no or limited interest in the living child, just a bunch of cells—a very strange interest which smacks of something infinitely deeper, infinitely more complicated and infinitely more frightening. It is not about a child, it is about control. That is a word, a condition, a state of affairs, a state of being : that religious people are very, very uncomfortable with. So this is really about them. They need to control something inside of you because of something uncomfortable within themselves. It's a state of being. DIS-AT-

EASE within themselves. That's the real core issue but that's not what I plan to explore further.

The following are some examples from across the world that demonstrate the chasm between public and private attitudes to pregnancy and abortion practised by the Catholic church.

The Congo—1960s

I want to give the reader a bit of history about the Catholic church and its real attitude towards abortion. A little bit of history will clarify things in a very big way. First, the Congo! In the 1960's, especially in 1966, there was serious civil unrest in the Congo in Central Africa. At that time, marauding black soldiers over-ran and took control of many convent and other Catholic institutions. After a long siege and prolonged occupation, a number of white nuns were pregnant. Many of them were from European countries, of Dutch and Belgian origin. Apologies for the language in advance but the serious problem for the Vatican was : how could the convents explain bunches of black babies born to white nuns and what would they do with these babies?

The Vatican was informed and their solution was this: take all the said nuns, young, mainly novitiates and under the guise of a small medical procedure, for example an appendicitis, a hernia, a D & C or some other small gynaecological problem and in doing so get rid of the pregnancy. The term "abortion" would never be used. But the sad and strange thing here is that those nuns were not even given the right to choose. Some might not even have known what was going on. They had no choice. At least pro-choice gives you a choice. (I know personnel in the Medical Corp who were in the Congo when this happened.)

British Columbia, Canada—1970s

Studies in America have shown that the two groups of women who have the most problems with abortion are Catholic women and Jewish women. I know when I lived in Canada in British Columbia, (BC), especially in the 1970s, a number of people in the men's Catholic organisation called the Knights of Columbanus. This was essentially an anti-Communist group and the big wigs, the top brass, used to travel around B.C. especially to far reaching small rural communities. They would stay overnight and put the young Catholic men of the community through an initiation ceremony called the Third Degree. This was staged to show how a small group (Communists, Socialists, etc.) would infiltrate and influence a community.

One of the top persons I knew very well, would ask if there were any good-lookers in the next community they were due to visit, especially the wives of the local Knights of Columbanus. There was often a lot of drink taken after the Third Degree was enacted and a few unwanted pregnancies occurred.

In one scenario, involving this man (known well to me) who was married with a number of children got the dreaded phone call one month later—the unwanted pregnancy of the local member's wife. What to do? The usual, of course! He used to wail to us about how much money and trouble these trips for the said woman to go to one of the Scandinavian countries to get rid of the pregnancy. So the said woman would "take a little trip" (ostensibly) to her friend for a few days but was sent off to Europe to have a 'secret' abortion. This word abortion was never ever used for all these men, who were staunch Knights of Columbanus opening and publicly vowed and fought for pro-life, No Abortion here, Man! This man said these trips (to do good) cost him thousands of dollars many times. And so the charade goes on as does the increasing public white-wash. *This is how Catholics, by and large, service the personal is so and so different even contradictory to the public persona.*

Newry, Northern Ireland—1970's

Even when I taught in Catholic schools around Newry and this goes back decades, when the subject of young girls getting pregnant, came up, the standard Catholic parent/teacher response was "I would not allow my teenage daughter to have a baby—no way, ever!" There were at least 30 pregnancies that I know of, in one large Catholic school in the Newry area. I was there one day when a girl returned to school after her trauma (she had the baby and had been off for months). At least one teacher declared loudly when some of us were looking for sympathy for her : "The little dirty bitch—she deserved what she got and I certainly will let her know in my classes how dirty and disgusting she is."

Another local example. A family just across the border had a daughter who was considered to be 'dull'. Today, we call the condition "not able to understand life". She had an unplanned baby and the grandmother feared there would be yet another unwanted pregnancy so the granny fled to the local priest whose administration straddled Newry/Omeath parishes and again one of the same false procedures—some gynaecological exploration where her tubes were tied with her knowledge or consent. That same

priest, used to sit in public places in Newry with his rosary beads hanging out praying profusely and publicly polluting our air in the healthy town of Newry.

I used to work with teenagers in the local schools and teenage girls would be required to wear badges of little golden feet on their school uniform. This was the symbol of a very public anti-abortion campaign. It was very sickening and offensive and the young girls often didn't even know what it was all about.

Conclusion

So to conclude, tell all those do-gooders to look to themselves for it is really all about them. It has absolutely nothing to do with the other women and a bunch of cells. They need to look at themselves—no doubt about it. It could be painful, even tragic, but it is their problem. Stop making it ours. Stop pushing your personal pain, tragedy, problem, onto others. And finally, if men, especially priests, could themselves become pregnant you can be sure abortion would be elevated to the state of being a sacrament, and more especially, there would be no second pregnancy or birth. So grow up, get real!

Their equation seems to be that a bunch of fertilised sperm is equal to a living human breathing woman. This defies belief!

Editorial Note:

While it is unsatisfactory for people not to practise what they preach, their failure to do so does not necessarily invalidate what they have to say.

The Dublin/Monaghan Bombings, 1974

A Military Analysis

by

John Morgan
(Lt.Col. retd)
248pp

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American Reader

Letter to Editor

Texas Child Abuse

Strong circumstantial evidence suggests that Jack Graham, Pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church, Texas, one of America's largest Churches, and other pastoral staff and members of the Church, and Church attorneys, have covered up child sexual abuse at Prestonwood, have broken the law, and should face the courts for fines and jail time.

Jack Graham and others have provided no explanation as regards how their conduct with respect to John Langworthy and others, did not break Texas's 1971 law requiring the reporting of child abuse to law enforcement. Child abuser John Langworthy was expelled from the Church in 1989, has never been arrested for crimes associated with Prestonwood, and Jack Graham has never explained why Langworthy was not arrested.

This situation has been ignored by Prestonwood management and members, Dallas and Plano law enforcement, the cities' district attorneys (who are responsible for criminal prosecution), and the leading newspaper of the area, the Dallas Morning News.

Coverage of the issue has kept alive by Internet bloggers, an online Baptist newspaper, and a nationwide campaigning organization:

<http://www.google.com> via a searches for 'Prestonwood Baptist Church abuse' and 'Prestonwood Baptist Church coverup' shows many Internet links regarding the 1989 John Langworthy case.

<http://pbcsilentnomore.wordpress.com/> is a detailed nine section report by Brad Sargent on the Prestonwood 1989 Langworthy case.

<http://stopbaptistpredators.org> at http://stopbaptistpredators.org/collusion_individuals.html documents Jack Graham as one of many Pastors who have at the least been deceptive, and at the worst colluded in keeping child abusers away from the courts and prison. The website is a blog by Christa Brown.

<http://watchkeep.blogspot.com/> is a blog by Amy Smith, a former intern at Prestonwood, and the Houston leader for SNAP [Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests (and other clergy)]. Twitter @watchkeep. Amy Smith was responsible for exposing John Langworthy, who was later prosecuted for child abuse crimes in other places. Her

blog has multiple articles on Langworthy, including <http://watchkeep.blogspot.com/2013/03/prestonwood-baptist-church-silent-no.html>.

<https://www.facebook.com/PBCSilentNoMore> is a Facebook website by Chris Tynes, started after his experiences when asking Prestonwood about the Langworthy case. Twitter @crtynes.

<http://snapdfw.org> is the website for the DFW branch of SNAP {Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests (and other clergy)}. Twitter @snapdfw. The national organisation can be found at <http://www.snapnetwork.org/> Twitter @SNAPNetwork. SNAP's focus is on enabling the best long term recovery for victims, along with preventing future abuse.

<http://www.abpnews.com> via a search for 'Prestonwood' shows articles on the case published by Associated Baptist Press, a news service for Baptists. Twitter @abpnews.

Texas's 1971 law requires all persons to immediately report suspected child abuse, and states that privileged communications (such as those that pastors,

attorneys, and teachers might encounter) are not valid exception cases. The 1989 Langworthy case involved Prestonwood Pastors Jack Graham, and Neal Jeffrey, attorney Randy Addison, administrative Pastor Bill Taylor, and deacon Allen Jordan (father of Amy Smith), along with young and old members of the congregation. Langworthy has never been arrested for abuse at Prestonwood, nor has any person associated with Prestonwood been arrested for covering up abuse.

New report <http://www.wapt.com/news/central-mississippi/jackson/Langworthy-pleads-guilty-avoids-prison/-/9156912/18223036/-/114jkfj/-/index.html> details Langworthy's plea agreement as regards abuse in other locations as follows:

"... John Langworthy avoided prison Tuesday after pleading guilty to five of eight counts of gratification of lust. Langworthy was sentenced to 10 years on each of the five counts, but under the plea agreement, he will not go to prison. Hinds County Circuit Court Judge Bill Gowan suspended the 50-year sentence."

Donal Kennedy

Letter to Irish Post

When Did WW2 Start?

I was bemused by Richard S Grayson' article of May 18 and particularly his references to "*Ireland's Second World War*" and of "*amnesia*".

The Professor's "Google" profile reveals he was born in in 1969, too late to remember Britain's 1939-1945 War or even the wars conducted by Britain in Malaya and Kenya in the 1950s and officially described as "Emergencies" which involved industrial-scale hangings and other official barbarism not notably more humane than the German campaigns in Poland and Russia.

As an academic specialising in the history of the 20th Century the Professor might be forgiven ignorance of one British "Emergency" but ignorance of two suggests carelessness.

I believe that the Second World War can properly be dated to December 1941 when the Empire of Japan overran territories previously seized from their inhabitants by Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands, and attacked the United States in territories seized by the Americans from the natives in Hawaii and from Spain in the Philippines.

The Indian civilians who died prematurely from famine arising from British war measures in 1942 and 1943 outnumbered total British and Commonwealth fatalities, civil, military and naval, of the 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 wars combined.

It's anachronistic to call the "Phoney War" from Sept 1939 to May 1940 "World War II" or to include the period before Germany's attack on the Soviet Union under that description.

And it is nonsense to pretend that powers quite happy to deal with Mussolini's dictatorship from 1922 until 1940 were motivated by crusading zeal for freedom and human rights.

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British Cannibals
Blackrock College, Dublin
Foreign Garda
Professor Alfred O'Rahilly

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British Cannibals

"Archaeologists have found physical proof that some of the earliest British settlers in America resorted to cannibalism to survive" (Daily Telegraph, U.K., 2.5.2013).

The bones of a 14-year-old girl discovered at Jamestown in Virginia showed clear signs that her flesh was stripped for food. Her remains, including part of the skull and a leg bone, dated back to the deadly winter of 1609-1610, known as the "starving time", when hundreds of early colonists died.

The settlers arrived during what is thought to have been the worst drought in 800 years. After the "starving time", only 60 out of hundreds remained at Jamestown.

Captain John Smith, the colony's most famous leader, had documented a case in which a man was executed for killing, salting and eating his pregnant wife. He wrote:

"One amongst the rest did kill his wife, powdered her, and had eaten part of her before it was known, for which he was executed, as he well deserved.

"Now whether she was better roasted, boiled or carbonado'd (barbecued), I know not, but of such a dish as powdered wife I never heard of."

Blackrock College, Dublin

"One of the country's elite private schools, Blackrock College, has received \$2.3 million (€1.77 million) in grants from a US-based philanthropic

organisation in the past five years, new figures show" (*Irish Independent*, 25.3.2013).

Figures provided by the American Ireland Fund (AIF) show that, in 2011 alone, the fee-paying school received \$2.27m from the fund—far and away the highest grant to any school in the Irish school system from the AIF in 2011.

The AIF is part of the Ireland Funds, set up in 1976 by Sir Anthony O'Reilly and former US ambassador to Ireland Dan Rooney.

The contribution to Blackrock College accounted for 13% of the AIF's total grants of €17.3 million to organisations across the island of Ireland in 2011.

AIF chief executive Kieran Mc Loughlin said that the money received by Blackrock College in 2011 "was just one of 40 gifts made in the education sector by the AIF in 2011".

"Blackrock College, whose former pupils include Brian O'Driscoll and Bob Geldof, declined to comment" (*Irish Independent*, 25.3.2013).

Foreign Garda

Foreign nationals comprise more than half of the new reservists to graduate from the Garda College in Templemore, Co. Tipperary.

"This will boost the overall strength of the Reserve up to 1,242 members, including a further 135 currently in training.

"The 125 graduates include 78 foreign nationals from a total of 31 countries of which the biggest group is Polish" (*Irish Independent*, February 14, 2013).

Also included on the list are seven each from India, Romania and Lithuania, four from China, and two each from the

United States, Belarus, Cameroon, Latvia, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

Other countries represented are Albania, Austria, Australia, Brazil, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Italy, Iran, Japan, Moldova, Morocco, Pakistan, Russia, South Africa, Syria, and Ukraine. The group is divided equally between men and women.

"Recruitment into the Reserve has continued despite the ban on new admissions to the full-time force. The Garda Representative Association is continuing to oppose the Reserve until the full-time force is properly resourced" (*Irish Independent*, February 14, 2013).

Professor Alfred O'Rahilly:

"I have no use for ideas in themselves—they must be translated into life or literature. Too many of us are quick on the uptake but might be slow on the output" (Professor Alfred O'Rahilly, October 10, 1927, lecture to the members of the Economic and Literary Society of the Cork Municipal School of Commerce).

"Professor O'Rahilly's lecture in one sense gives an insight into his personal thoughts on the problems of the Irish Free State. Indeed, much of what he noted in his lecture has echoes in any age of Irish history, no mind in his time. Some of his ideas are thought provoking at any rate to refer to especially in building the story of the more social theory side of technical education in Cork. In his lecture entitled 'Efficiency' he noted that he was not much of a believer in brains, which he had found "did not count for very much in life at all".

"He believed in character, grit, will power, and 'spunk'. He believed not so much in the man but in his capacity for getting out what was in him. He commented that most people only owned a very small bit of themselves, and that bit they had no control over.

He noted that he had met printers to carpenters, who were as good "as any man", but they lacked power of concentration. Some people he noted "just go along with half minds on the jobs". What was required he commented was to be all there—the majority of the people, he believed, were "half-witted and need to have their minds mobilised for the work in hand" *Our City Our Town*, Cllr. Kieran McCarthy, www.corkheritage.ie, *Cork Independent*, 24.1.2013).

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