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Thomas Davis And His Detractors

Fanning Misses The Point

Je suis Charlie?

The Augustus Debate

No. 119

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Editorial

Bicentenary Of Davis

Thomas Davis And The Young Ireland Heritage

Thomas Davis, an Anglo-Irish Protestant gentleman who founded *The Nation* newspaper along with Charles Gavan Duffy in 1842, was born in Mallow, Co. Cork and died in Dublin in 1845. The centenary of his death was a major cultural/political event in nationalist Ireland. The bi-centenary of his birth was scarcely noticed outside of Mallow.

In 1945 Irish independence, both political and cultural, appeared to be so firmly established that the project of undermining it seemed futile. The English newspaper in Ireland, the *Irish Times*, therefore aligned itself with the Davis/Young Ireland strain in the national culture as a means of averting total isolation from Irish life and adopting a critical comment on it which stood a chance of being listened to. The tactic was to make use of Young Ireland as a lever against the rest. And it might even be that there were some in Anglo-Ireland who felt that they could live in Young Ireland culture.

A generation later it began to appear that the culture of independent Ireland was not as substantial as it appeared—that it was, in fact, brittle. This became apparent in the fluctuating attitude of the Establishment towards events in the North, which veered from one extreme to the other from 1969 to the early seventies. Red-hot anti-Partitionists became *de facto* Unionists under verbal camouflage. They came to hold a position which they were incapable of expressing coherently and if you can't express what you think, or what you have some vague notion that you might be thinking—then your thought process is aborted.

Conor Cruise O'Brien eventually went the whole hog—from professional anti-Partitionist who was inclined to treat the Ulster Unionists as being *colons*—the word used to describe the French settlers in Algeria—to member of an Ulster Unionist party. (Other Unionists dismissed him as a cuckoo in the nest.)

At a certain point on this journey he launched a venomous attack on Davis and Young Ireland.

Young Ireland had to be either the best or the worst thing in the history of the nationalist movement because it was the liveliest thing. It was in everyone's mind, even though they mightn't know it. It wrote the songs of the nationalist movement, and songs are as penetrating as water. The British Government thought of prosecuting them in the 1840s. O'Brien as Minister, did ban them from the state media, but they wouldn't go away.

When the Redmondites were recruiting for the Empire in the Great War, they had the bright idea of imperialising some of the Young Ireland songs. Stephen Gwynn and Tom Kettle wrote new words for them. But it was no use. Davis's words could not be exorcised.

Governing circles in Dublin had the extravagant notion that the cause of the War in the North was the way history was written in the South. They called for new history which would be a soporific influence towards peace, and went to England for it. Oxbridge was producing complicated Irish histories with little reach. Then Penguin Books came up with an obtuse and deadening pot-boiler (not really an oxymoron in the era when finance capital seems to determine taste) by Roy Foster, which was put into universal circulation. It was drilled into children.

Here is Foster's *Modern Ireland* on Davis:

"Young Ireland was a splinter of the Repeal movement grouped around the young journalists who started the *Nation* newspaper: principally Thomas Davis, John Blake Dillon and Charles Gavan Duffy. It also indicated what the Repeal movement, with its middle-class backing, gentry-merchant MPs and deliberate ambiguities was not appealing to. The strength of the alternative tradition is indicated by the runaway success of the *Nation*: the readership was possibly 250,000... Young Ireland's ideology bore a superficial resemblance to European romantic nationalism; but if it imbibed the cultural sense of nationality inculcated by German philosophy, this was via Carlyle rather than Herder... In many ways, the spirit of the *Nation* was as modernist and utilitarian as O'Connell. Irish circumstances made adoption of European-style nationalism impossible for one thing. Young Ireland could not define that Irishness linguistically, though Davis tried. This was one reason why Mazzini dismissed their cause as bogus...

"... 'The Sword' was deified in Davis's ballads and the rhetoric of T.F. Meagher...

"The banality and doggerel of *Nation* publicity helped to spread the message... Davis, a Protestant, adopted the necessarily pluralist ideology of the Irish Protestant nationalist... Thus, rather illogically, he emphasised the contribution of Norman blood and Westminster values to the Irish cause, while attacking 'sullen Saxonism and glorifying the racial violence of the Celt. In the end, though, his celebration of Irish history necessitated backing Catholic nationalism against alien Protestantism. Many of the other Young Irelanders arrived at the same destination more briskly: and the roots of the movement were culturally separatist, essentially Anglophobic and increasingly sectarian. They cherished a certain cult of Carlyle, reading *Sartor Resartus* while undertaking rapt tours of the Irish landscape. Young Ireland took to logical extremes the feelings that O'Connell alternately pandered to, and conjured away again: (pp310-313).

This refers chiefly to the years before Davis died. Soon after his death the Famine set in. Then:

"Extremist Young Irelanders... grouped around Mitchel's *United Irishman*..., set the tone of Francophilia, 1798 revivalism, and separation. The rhetoric was militaristic and republican; an insurrectionary ethic founded on an almost psychotic Anglophobia. the Famine was the rationale for accusing the British government of genocide, but the roots went deeper than that" (p315).

"Mitchel was sentenced to transportation, and enabled to follow a career of frantic Carlylean attitudinizing" (p316).

Who was this Carlyle, from whom Davis etc. got their romantic nationalist notion, and with whom they went on "*rapt tours of the Irish landscape*" while reading a book of his, *Sartor Resartus*?

Fifty pages later Foster tells the reader that Irish emigrant families in Britain maintained strong kinship ties with Ireland because they were confronted in England with a "*wall of anti-Irish prejudice, conveniently articulated by Carlyle, Kingsley and Elizabeth Gaskell*" (p361).

So Carlyle was a fierce anti-Irish propagandist! Even though he had close relations with the Young Irelanders, and taught them romantic nationalism! A very weird paradox!

In fact there is no paradox because Young Ireland was not a romantic splinter from O'Connell's middle-class Repeal movement; and it did not "*tour the landscape*" with Carlyle; and it did not get nationalism from him; and *Sartor Resartus* is a kind of anti-landscape book.

Young Ireland was a consistently middle-class development of the middle-class element in O'Connell's movement.

Carlyle, who was an enormous influence on British social development for almost a century, was anti-whingeing rather than anti-Irish, but he was aware of the Irish of O'Connell's movement as whingers. His relationship with the Younger Irelanders was based on their determination not to be whingers.

Carlyle regretted the passing of the mediaeval community, but he insisted that it was gone for good, and that there was a future only for those who faced up to the fact that heartless capitalism was here to stay and made themselves capable of dealing with it.

His tour of Ireland was made after Davis's death, and it was not a tour of "*landscape*" but a tour of the consequences of the Famine.

During the Famine there was a rupture in relations between Duffy and Mitchel. Mitchel wanted a revolution. Duffy saw that there was no possibility of revolution. If there had been, it was he rather than Mitchel who would have made it, but he had no patience with revolutionism, particularly when it threatened to disrupt such alleviating measures as were practicable.

Mitchel was convicted and transported and wrote the *Jail Journal*. Duffy made tenacious use of such legal resources as were available to defend himself in a series of trials, avoid transportation, and launch the tenant-right movement which undermined landlordism in two generations. But Mitchel has been much better remembered than Duffy by intellectuals, even revisionist ones.

However, Mitchel's characterisation of Government conduct during the potato blight as "*genocidal*" could only be described as "*psychotic*" (Foster) by somebody in the grip of hysteria. Isaac Butt, who was very much a member of the British ruling class in Ireland barely restrained himself from describing Government policy as exterminatory. Butt was an Imperialist. The resources of the Empire were vast. With the Act of Union Ireland had become part of the homeland of the Empire. But the Government let people starve by the million instead of feeding them from the Empire and consolidating Ireland as part of the state. But, in view of what the Government did, what use was the Union to Ireland? So Butt founded the Home Rule movement.

Foster does not trouble the reader (all too often a student) with explanations. He utters little dogmas that are to be believed, even when they are mutually inconsistent.

Davis set out with "*the necessarily pluralist ideology of the Irish Protestant nationalist*", but through "*glorifying the racial violence of the Celt*", he ended up "*backing Catholic nationalism against alien Protestantism*".

What was "*Protestant nationalism*"? The nationalism of the Protestant colony established in control of Ireland under

To page 4

Contents

	Page
Thomas Davis And The Young Ireland	
Heritage. Editorial	2
Listen Wilson John Haire (Holocaust/Famine Poem)	4
Islam In The West. Editorial on The <i>Charlie Hebdo</i> Affair	5
Free Speech? Report on Dieudonne Silencing	5
Vichy And The Holocaust: A New Book Cathy Winch	6
<i>Charlie Hebdo.</i> Nick Folley (Suppressed Letter)	7
Signed Plastered Of Paris: (Poem) Wilson John Haire	7
Vox Pat: Same-Sex Marriage; W.T. Cosgrave; Mary O'Rourke; Humanists; Kierkegaard; McCreevy's Mate; Population; Apples And Eggs; Fate Of King Billy; Pre-Nups; Bradlaugh; The Devil's Bark; Gogarty; Kieran Conway; <i>The Old Fenian</i>	8, 32
Against Ulster Nationalism: Some Clarification Brendan Clifford	9
A Tale of Two Synods D. Vincent Twomey SVD	10
Social Policy Of Pope Francis. Report	11
The Augustus Debate:	
1. Some Golden Apples. Stephen Richards	12
2. On Constantine And The Origins Of The German Catholic Church. Peter Brooke	15
Fanning Misses The Point Brendan Clifford	17
Cabeza de Vaca and What the Indians Wanted John Minahane (Spanish Colonial Policy, Part 6)	25
Róisín Dubh	31

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

The Heresiarch:

<http://heresiarch.org>

There is a great deal of interesting reading. Go surf and see!
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Westminster's sovereignty after the Battle of the Boyne, which in 1780 asserted its independence of Westminster. It was the Irish nation of the era when official Ireland consisted of the small Protestant colonial minority of the population. But Protestant nationalism was not "*necessarily pluralist*" in ideology. If it had been pluralist, the course of history in Ireland would have been fundamentally different. It remained exclusively Protestant up to the moment when England bribed it to abolish its Parliament.

When did Davis celebrate Celtic racial violence? Presumably when he wrote songs about the resistance of Celtic Ireland to English conquest.

This is very old-fashioned Imperialist ideology indeed: it is racist for a society to resist Imperial conquest!

When did Davis back "*Catholic nationalism*"? Presumably when he did not dispute O'Connell's forceful assertion of the fact that the great bulk of the population in the British Protestant state in Ireland was Catholic and gave way on the scheme which he had formed with Duffy for non-denominational College education backed by the Protestant State.

O'Connell certainly was Catholic nationalist in the sense that he set about developing a national spirit in the vast majority of the population that had been excluded from public life, and had much of its private life interfered with, under the regime of the Protestant British State in Ireland, whether colonial up to 1800 or Unionist after that. And, after he began to exert effective reform pressure on the regime, he was concerned that the regime would try to accomplish in the name of reform what it had failed to achieve by honest repression.

In doing this O'Connell had ruptured relations with Ulster Protestant reformers who had supported Emancipation. Davis and Duffy, basing themselves on what O'Connell had achieved in the way of national construction over thirty years, tried to re-build bridges that O'Connell had burnt. O'Connell didn't like this. He remained suspicious of the forces on the other side of the bridge. Though Davis could not carry the day against O'Connell, he continued with his efforts to build Bridges, as Duffy did after him. The comprehensiveness of their failure indicates that the Protestant communities in Ireland simply were not willing, even though they were in decline, to take part

in a common national life with the population at large.

If that outcome is to be called Catholic-nationalism, then the cause of it must be called Protestant Imperialism.

Was there "*illogicality*" in honouring the Normans while deploring the Saxons? There was a conventional English distinction between Normans (Cavaliers) and Puritans (Saxons). The Normans who came to Ireland had blended with the Irish and England had to be on the alert to ensure that it was not confronted with a Norman/Irish state. There was no danger of that with the Saxons/Puritan colonisation, following the conquests of Cromwell and William of Orange, by (in Edward Walsh's translation of Eoghan Rua O'Sullivan) "*the dull, plodding plunderers, Sean Buidhe*".

Davis himself was Welsh on his father's side, and on his mother's he descended from a Cromwellian and O'Sullivan Beare, which possibly accounts for his liveliness and the range of his sensitivity.

Foster wrote nonsense about him, but an educational system which had become disorientated existentially by the ignorant response of the Dublin Establishment to the War in the North, ensured that this nonsense levelled everything before it. Davis is now pretty well absent from Irish literature in print—apart from Aubane and Athol Books.

Athol Books has Duffy's *Conversations With Carlyle*.

Aubane has Duffy's biography of Davis, and a selection of extracts from *The Nation* for the years 1842-44.

The editorial of *The Nation* on 29th October 1842 was *War With Everybody*:

The Empire was at war with everybody—as it is still doing its best to be, in alliance with its American offspring; And the centrepiece of its universal war in 1842 was, of course, Afghanistan! (See AHS selection from *The Nation*, p29).

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Wilson John Haire

The Dublin author, Hugh Travers, was invited by Channel 4 to write a sit-com on a subject of his choosing. He chose to do the comedy series on the Famine, leading to an online Petition to Channel 4 to drop the project gathering c40,000 signatures. There have been a few dissenting voices, however, such as Diarmaid Ferriter writing, *There Is No Shame In Laughing At Famine Satire* (Irish Times, 10.12.15).

Listen

We bones talk,
in Ireland we are everywhere,
everywhere you walk,
under fields, under buildings.
aware,
are you aware,
under the street you live in,
the house you live in,
the block of flats you live in,
we are bones,
under railway stations,
under stadiums
while games are played,
under hospitals – your palladium,
under prisons,
the same message relayed:
we bones have risen,
we are insulted:
why would you laugh at your relics,
your DNA,
we are in tumult,
one thousand year old families
lie here,
ended in that calamity,
never again to re-produce,
never again to re-appear.
You survivors tread over us
every day,
roll over us in the bus,
kneel on us
as you prayer,
why would you want to laugh
as we lie under lakes
beyond the diver,
under rivers
where cattle their thirst slake,
on a sunny day we are below
you in the park,
we might have been you there
but hunger was the death-blow
to the reedy song
of the hovering lark.
In the pub
when you order a round
know we are there
below the cellar,
so beware of the storyteller,
down here we hear and see
as you must hear and see,
for we are you,
we of the many,
you of the few.

6 January 2014

Editorial

The *Charlie Hebdo* Affair

Islam In The West

The *Charlie Hebdo* magazine appears to have been deliberately provocative (one issue was supposedly edited by the Prophet Mohammed while another one depicted him naked). The stand it took has been justified by the fact that it was also provocative to other religions including Christianity. But political satire is a particularly Western phenomenon, where the separation of Church and State enabled a perspective based on satire to evolve. In this sense Islam is a mediaeval religion where there is not a similar acceptance of the separation between religion and politics and consequently satire is not given the same license. And there is the further fact that Muslim opposition to idolatry forbids pictorial representation of Mohammed, even if it is reverential.

This is something that those who indulge in satire in the West do not appear to understand. On an instinctive level we all know that there is little chance that anti-Christian satire will result in a bloody attack (for the same reason the idea of Christian terrorism is viewed as a madness). Similarly we instinctively know that any anti-Islam satire has a good chance of provoking an extreme response. This makes Islam a particularly easy target for satirists and as such it has become the "go-to" religion for anyone seeking a tangible reaction. Press the button, get the predictable response and then ride the wave of indignation on the surfboard of freedom of expression. There is a very real responsibility on those who partake of this sport to get to know the nature of the sea in which they play.

We in the West are no longer in the world of the 1960s or 1970s where a culture of 'anything goes' is without its implications. Whether or not we like to describe it as such, globalisation has created a situation where what is described as "*Western values*" can no longer be exercised with impunity. Because of the combination of a highly dangerous foreign policy of destabilization in the Middle East, and the impact of increasing economic encroachment, there has emerged a very volatile relationship with Islam in the West.

Western foreign policy in the Middle East has created two things. Firstly, it has

provoked a particularly assertive version of Islam and secondly, it has stimulated an increase of population movement from the Middle East to the West which includes numbers of Muslims versed in this particular view of Islam finding their way to the home countries of the West (although, as with other implications of its foreign policy, the United States remains immune from this outcome). In some ways it could be said that the West's destabilization policy has now found expression beyond the geographical area in which it was meant to operate and has now assumed the capacity to destabilise the cultural values of Western society.

France, because of its historic relationship with Algeria, has had significant Muslim immigration from north Africa for many years and has dealt with them as French Algerians rather than as Muslims and, while this appears to have ensured relative levels of stability in the past, it is now struggling with the fact that many of these people now refuse to identify themselves as French Algerians but rather as Muslims—a development that is not separate from the new Islamic perspective of the Middle East.

Given the fact that the West has been responsible for the destabilization of the Middle East and the associative encouragement of a more assertive brand of Islam which has, as a result of this policy, arrived within its borders, the question needs to be asked: is it morally and socially responsible to attempt to continue to assert Western values in terms of freedom of expression in the way it was done in the past without taking responsibility for the inevitable reaction to this assertion in terms of the Islamic backlash?

The glorification of "*French freedom*", which followed the *Charlie Hebdo* assassinations, is spurious. The freedom to blaspheme against Jesus or ridicule Christianity is not a symptom of the tolerance which justifies doing the same to Islam. Christianity became intolerable to the French majority and State measures were applied against it in the systematic secularisation begun at the start of the 20th century. And to tolerate blasphemy against what you hate is not much of a virtue.

Islam has not sickened of itself as Christianity has done in so much of Europe. It has not undermined itself, and the attempt of Christian Imperialism to undermine it has not been successful. And the reason there are Muslims in France is not that Algeria invaded France but that

France conquered Algeria and, after the defeat of Fascism, fought a terrorist war, in which torture was freely used, in an attempt to hold it, but failed.

The "*freedom of expression*", which is guaranteed in France today, is chiefly a freedom to express Islamophobia. In things relating to French affairs proper, freedom of expression is severely limited by law or by an oppressive public opinion. The frank investigation of French conduct before, during and after the Second World War is taboo. The Holocaust has been transferred from the sphere of reason to the sphere of belief enforceable by law. And the Nuremberg Trials, which were conducted in travesty of law, even if they did hang some people who deserved hanging, have been made unquestionable by measures that put one in mind of Papal Decrees in the times when the Pope had both temporal and spiritual power.

France is not today the country of Voltaire. It is true that he wrote a play in ridicule of Mohammed, but that was before France set out on its campaign to overcome Islam by force. And his ridicule was mainly directed against the Catholic Church, when it was a major force in both the State and society.

The radical French Enlightenment seems to have run its course and to have settled down as a regime of secularist orthodoxy, protected by myths and taboos. It's a pity Voltaire isn't still around to ridicule it.

Report

Free Speech?

Dieudonné M'bala M'bala said on Facebook that he feels himself to be *Charlie Coulibaly*. The name combines the magazine title, *Charlie Hebdo*, with that of Amedy Coulibaly, a hostage taker in the kosher supermarket. The suggestion is that Dieudonné feels sympathy with both sides.

Facebook withdrew the post, but not before Minister for Interior threatened serious consequences to the Internet site. Moreover, an Interior Ministry investigation of Dieudonné for "*defending terrorism*" has been opened, said Agnes Thibault-Lecuire, a spokeswoman for the prosecutor.

Even before the *Charlie Hebdo* episode Dieudonné was prevented from working in France. A proposed trip to Britain in 2014 was banned by the British authorities.

Cathy Winch

Vichy And The Holocaust: A New Book

A historian of French origin, Alain Michel, argued in his 2012 book *Vichy et la Shoah: Enquête sur le Paradoxe Français* that "Vichy, although anti-Semitic and an accomplice in crime, sought to limit the impact of the Final Solution in France, and succeeded in doing so." According to Michel, occupied countries like France that had collaboration regimes were much more successful in protecting Jews in their territories than occupied countries like Belgium and the Netherlands whose Governments fled. This thesis, although balanced and in no way extreme, runs counter to the obligatory views in France, where, says Michel, unlike in the United States and Israel, discussion of the Holocaust is not free. Since the publication of his book, Michel has found his participation in various Holocaust-related projects in France cancelled.

A review of *Vichy et la Shoah* will appear in the next issue of *Church & State*; meanwhile here are two extracts from Alain Michel's blog; the first concerns a comment by Paxton, the hegemonic American historian of Vichy, and the second is a review by Paul Sanders.

Re a comment by Paxton:

"In his review of a book by French historian Jacques Semelin [*Jews : How Vichy Made It Worse*], *NYR*, March 6] Robert O. Paxton writes:

Even some present-day authors try to use the 'French paradox' to make a positive case for Vichy. The latest example is Alain Michel's Vichy et la Shoah: enquête sur le paradoxe français, a work Semelin denounces as an effort to "rehabilitate" Vichy.

This passage concerning my book calls for a response, which I propose to do in two distinct ways. First, I would like to state formally that Semelin's appraisal, which Paxton adopts as his own, is defamatory. "Rehabilitating" a regime implies not only a desire to sweep under the carpet its sins, but also adherence, however minimal, to its ideology, as well as an intention to promote its ideas.

I am a historian and a rabbi of French origin living in Israel. I have worked for almost thirty years at Yad Vashem, the

World Center for Holocaust Research, where I created French-language seminars on teaching the Holocaust in 1987. Nothing in my "pedigree" fits the description of a Vichy rehabilitator. My biography, which I have kept intentionally brief (but which I could supplement with further elements), demonstrates the baselessness of the accusation leveled at me by Semelin, and by Paxton.

The reader of *The New York Review* also deserves knowing that my book opens on the explicit affirmation that my research is in no way founded on nostalgia for Pétain and his regime, and that it concludes with a specific reminder of Vichy's anti-Semitism and complicity in mass murder. Therefore one has to be particularly malevolent to dare accuse me of any intention of rehabilitating Vichy.

If the accusation targeting me is nevertheless formulated the way it is, two questions arise: Why does Semelin feel a need to slur my research? And why does Paxton bother referring to that particular phrase in Semelin's book dealing with my work, in what is, after all, a very small passage in a nine-hundred-page tome?

The answer to this can be found in the title of Paxton's article. This article justly criticizes the downsides of Semelin's book, in particular the author's method of drawing general conclusions from a limited number of case studies, the representativeness of which is not convincingly established. Beyond this critique, however, Paxton's and Semelin's approaches rely on a common conception, that of a Vichy government as the "ultimate culprit", whose every single action expedited the implementation of the Final Solution in France and aggravated the situation of the Jews.

My approach, which, by the way, builds directly on the work of two widely respected Holocaust historians, Raul Hilberg and Léon Poliakov, adopts the exactly opposite stance. I argue that Vichy, although anti-Semitic and an accomplice in crime, sought to limit the impact of the Final Solution in France, and succeeded in doing so. I also argue that the first and foremost beneficiaries of these efforts were Jews of French nationality.

Both Semelin and Paxton have no interest in my hypothesis being presented, debated, and discussed. This is the reason why, rather than allowing for genuine historical debate among proponents of opposite views, they prefer eliminating their opponent, through calumny.

Is it because they have run out of arguments? The day Paxton, and his followers, accept a genuine debate on the role and attitude of the Vichy Government with regard to the Final Solution, we will see what remains of their conception of a Vichy that is still seen, by many, as an embodiment of absolute evil.

Alain Michel, Jerusalem, Israel"

Review of Michel's book by Paul Saunders, Professor of Geopolitics at NEOMA Business School (Reims, France):

"In his book *Vichy and the Shoah*, Alain Michel addresses the 'French paradox': why did the country that practically 'invented' the notion of 'state collaboration' with Nazi Germany have one of the lowest rates (approximately one-quarter) of Jews deported to extermination and concentration camps during the Final Solution? Surprisingly, historians have eluded this core contradiction, subscribing to the assertion, popularized by Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), that collaboration facilitated the Nazis' dirty work and was co-responsible for the Jewish catastrophe. Conversely, Arendt argued that bureaucratic chaos and disorder would have resulted in a significantly lower number of victims.

This point of view was adopted by Robert O. Paxton in his paradigmatic and highly influential history of Vichy France (1972). Paxton argued that the presence of the regime brought no benefits to the French; quite to the contrary, it made matters worse for them, and they would have been better off without Vichy. The low Jewish victimization rate in France was turned on its head, with Paxton arguing that the low rate would have been even lower, had it not been for Vichy. Under the weight of this 'learned opinion' the genuine driver of the Final Solution in France has remained in the dark.

Alain Michel's book redresses the balance. He demonstrates how the Vichy Government was driven by an objective of protecting certain categories of integrated Jews, namely those with French

citizenship, and how, generally, it started dragging its feet as soon as the genuine meaning and purpose of the 'evacuations to the East' had become clearer, in late Summer 1942. The regime's 'protection' of Jews with French citizenship did not come without a 'price': in its negotiations with the Nazis the regime offered the minority of recently arrived foreign or stateless Jews in France as a pawn, and it was this group that would become the prime target for filling the deportation convoys.

While Michel condemns the regime's use of foreign Jews as bargaining material, calling this a 'crime', he stresses that, under the conditions pertaining at the time, collaboration did not, invariably, lead to worst possible outcomes (as argued by previous literature). In fact, the sacrifice of the few for the greater number was a 'lesser evil'. The overall indication is that, contrary to Arendt's assertion, the presence of collaboration governments in Europe moderated the impact of the Final Solution. In any case, the death rates were consistently higher in countries under direct German domination than in countries run by independent or semi-independent collaboration regimes.

This does not amount to a rehabilitation of such regimes; at the same time it shows that the black-and-white dichotomies characterizing the majority of studies on the role of collaboration regimes in the Holocaust require urgent revision. Michel's rigorous reappraisal of Vichy's role relies on quantitative material to support its central claims, in the light of which a number of chapters of French Holocaust history will have to be rewritten."

Alain Michel's blog (mainly in French):
<http://vichyetlashoah.blog.lemonde.fr>

Nick Folley

On 11th January the following letter was sent to *The Irish Times*, *The Irish Catholic*, *The Irish Independent* and *The Irish Examiner**. It had not appeared in any of them at the time we went to press

Charlie Hebdo

Je ne suis pas Charlie.

Here's why. I have only recently become familiar with Charlie Hebdo's work, thanks to the inexcusable act of

violence in Paris. I am a fan of satire, but Hebdo seems to focus its energies exclusively on provoking the Islamic community in the most vile way possible. Its writers worked hard to provoke a reaction, and it's a bit rich to 'cry wolf' when some fanatical nutcases finally gave them a reaction. Hebdo's cartoons have a lot in common with the depictions of the Irish in Punch cartoons of the 19th century. No doubt many non-Irish people found them funny at the time, too. Is this the Hebdo people identify with when they chant '*je suis Charlie*'? One would hope not. So is it about 'freedom of expression'? That's a bit rich in a country where even attempting to question official accounts of the holocaust will land you in jail, where the genocide in Armenia was recently added to the list of 'unquestionable topics'. Where was *je suis Charlie*, the mass protests then?

Ironic too, words of support from Obama—leader of a country where a journalist lost her job and her paper was censured for publishing a photo of the real cost of the Iraqi war in terms of US soldiers' lives. A country where the muzzling Patriot Act still holds sway, and there were 'free speech areas' under George Bush where one could voice one's criticism—away from public view. The other implication being of course, that outside those areas there is no free speech. A country where the media effectively self-censors and the public gets an almost entirely singular view of American foreign policy and its global effects.

And even Ireland, our words of support seem hollow when we recall that for thirty years any honest questioning of British policy in Northern Ireland was effectively stifled by Section 31. Where was *je suis Charlie* then? Some initial well-justified journalistic indignation aside, the media here weren't long knuckling under, to their shame. There are many ways to muzzle press freedom besides bombs and bullets, the heavy hidden hand of State apparatus disapproval often being far more effective.

My fear is—and commentators are already disproportionately calling this France's 9/11—all that will emanate from this sorry affair is a much heavier State suppression of French liberties in the name of 'security'. That will probably be the final ironic legacy of Charlie Hebdo. And the crowds chanting '*je suis Charlie*' will have contributed to their own curtailment of freedom—in the name of freedom.

Wilson John Haire

Signed Plastered Of Paris

They bomb you and call it
peacekeeping,
they jeer and sneer at your
faith and call it
satire,
now the reaping and the moralising
liar.

They demonstrate for free speech,
the free speech that can't be
yours,
be moderate they beseech while
backing those on bombing raid
tours.

By all means shoot and
kill
but not on French soil.
For this we opened the armoury and
the till!

So, as a secular nation you put other
seculars on the boil?

Excuse us if we appear
brazen
to you dissidents,
do our views
emblazon
the attitude of our
citizens?
No, we give them what they want
to hear.
Could we have enhanced Libya
if they weren't our
peers.

9 January 2015

So, for all those reasons, I am not going to join the ranks of the 'right proper Charlies'. I know I am swimming against the tide of media opinion here, but hopefully—in the interests of free speech and pluralism we are all supposed to be chanting for—this letter will make it unedited into print.

* *The Irish Examiner* published the letter in truncated form on 13th January, reducing it to five paragraphs, two of which were single lines. The point about the Irish media knuckling under Section 31 was omitted, as was self-censorship in the USA. The way the letter was edited leaves the illusion of free speech in Ireland was left intact!

V
O
X

McCreevy's Mate!
Population
Apples And Eggs
Fate Of King Billy
Pre-Nups
Bradlaugh
The Devil's Bark
Gogarty
Kieran Conway

P
A
T

McCreevy's Mate!

"Damien McBride, the mischievous spin doctor for the former British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, has written a hilarious, acerbic memoir of his tumultuous time in 10 Downing Street. Among many other things, he reveals how, when Brown was Chancellor of the Exchequer, had had former Finance Minister Charlie McCreevy eating out of his hand. Brown even wrote answers for McCreevy when Ireland held the Presidency of the EU—and McBride got British journalists to ask the required questions. Now that's what I call an Anglo-Irish agreement." (Joe Duffy, British provincial Edition of *The Irish Mail on Sunday* 30.11.2014).

Humanists!

The number of humanist ceremonies in Ireland has doubled in the last year.

More than a 1,000 such events took place up to October 2014.

The vast majority were weddings (650), compared to just 80 humanist weddings in 2007, the Humanist Association of Ireland said. End-of-life ceremonies are now running at 10 times what they were in 2007.

Professor David McConnell, President of the Humanist Association of Ireland, said up to 100,000 will have attended humanist events by year's end. (*Irish Examiner*, 13.10.2014)

Population

Deaths are falling faster than births this year, meaning the population is continuing to rise.

Some 16,502 babies were born in the second quarter of 2014, which was around 600, or 3.5%, fewer than the same time last year, new Central Statistics Office figures show (16.12.2014).

However some 7,197 people died in the period April to June 2014, which was 445 fewer than the same time last year, meaning deaths fell by 6%.

With over twice as many births as deaths, the natural increase in population,

excluding migration, was 9,305.

Mothers continue to have their babies later in life, with the average age of first-time mums rising to 30.5 years, which was up from 30.2 last year.

Those who had their babies outside of marriage tended to be younger, with an average age of 27.8 on their first child.

Some 36% of births were outside marriage or civil partnership, though this rose to 58.2% in Limerick city and was just 23.2% in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown.

Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown mothers are also the oldest in the country and are 50 times more likely to be in their 40s than they are to be under 20.

Countrywide, there are now very few teenage mothers, with only 100 born to mothers under 20 each month, compared with over 300 births to mums aged 40 or over every month.

Three-quarters of all babies born in the first quarter were to Irish mothers. And some 72% of babies born in the period were the mother's first or second child, with just 18% having their third child, and less than one in 10 born to larger families with four or more children.

Apples And Eggs

"Apple corporation has confirmed that a controversial, scheme allowing U.S. workers to freeze their eggs to delay pregnancy is not available to its Cork workers." (*Evening Echo*, Cork, 18.10.2014).

Fate Of King Billy!

"Strange how history repeats itself. King Billy's statue in College Green, Dublin, was blown up in 1836 (when Ireland was supposed to be 'prostrate') and had to be slowly and carefully put together again, after which Daniel O'Connell, to prove his loyalty to England, had the whole statue bronzed and made like new. A hundred years later it was beheaded, and the head taken away" (*Wolfe Tone Annual*, 1950).

Pre-Nups

"Marry Mary and you marry the mountain." Not anymore! Almost three quarters of farmers are in favour of introducing pre-nuptial agreements into Irish law.

The *Irish Examiner*/I.CMSA farming survey found 73% of farmers were in favour of pre-nuptials being recognised, with just one quarter of them against the idea.

This view was held across the gender divide and even among older farmers.

With divorce on the rise in Ireland, pre-nuptials are becoming increasingly popular

Currently, there is no legislation in place here surrounding pre-nuptial agreements and their enforceability in law.

As a result, courts here do not have to recognise a pre-nuptial agreement, although there is nothing preventing a couple entering into such an arrangement. The enforceability of a pre-nuptial agreement is decided on a case-by-case basis.

Commenting on the findings, ICMSA President John Comer said the idea that a man or woman can marry into a farm and then walk away with half the land in the case of a divorce fills farming families "with horror".

"In a situation where it has taken generations of back-breaking hard work to assemble a viable farm, it's very easy to understand a situation where the farm family wants to safeguard the farm that their forefathers spent their lives working on and improving," he said. (*Irish Examiner*, 6.10.2014)

In a Dublin court, in June 1972, in the course of an action for criminal conversation (by which a man could sue his wife's lover for damages), Mr. Justice Butler declared, "In this country a wife is regarded as a chattel, just as a thoroughbred mare or cow".

Bradlaugh:

"I was there on a November day. I was one of a troop to protect the law officers, who had come from the agent in Dublin to make an eviction a few miles from Inniscarra, where the river Bride joins the Lee.

It was a miserable day... and the men beat down wretched dwelling after wretched dwelling, some thirty or forty perhaps. They did not take much beating down; there was no flooring to take up; the walls were more mud than aught else; and there was but little trouble in the levelling of them to the ground.

We had got our work about three parts done, when out of one of them a

women ran, and flung herself on the ground, wet as it was, before the Captain of the troop, and she asked that her house might be spared—not for long, but for a little while. She said her husband had been born in it; he was ill of the fever, but could not live long, and she asked that he might be permitted to die in it in peace.

Our Captain had no power; the law agent from Dublin wanted to get back to Dublin, his time was of importance and he would not wait; and that man was carried out while we were there—in front of us—carried out on a wretched thing, you could not call it a bed, and he died there while we were there...

Three nights afterwards, while I was sentry on the front gate at Ballincollig Barracks in County Cork, we heard a cry, and when the guard was turned out, we found this poor woman there : a raving maniac, with one dead babe in one arm, and another in the other arm clinging to the cold nipple of her lifeless breast.

If you had been brothers to such a woman, sons of such a woman, father of such a woman, would not rebellion have seemed the holiest gospel you could hear preached?"

Charles Bradlaugh, aged 18, served with the Seventh Dragoon Guards in Ireland. In 1880 he was elected M.P. for Northampton; a professed atheist, republican and freethinker, he claimed the right to affirm his allegiance instead of taking the oath in the House of Commons, a stand which led to his being thrice re-elected before he was finally to take his seat, in 1886. He died in 1891.

The Devil's Bark

The bark of the cinchona tree—the origin of quinine, and an effective means to control fevers—was introduced to England in the 1650s. Because it had been brought from South America to Europe by Spanish missionaries, it was known as Jesuits' bark, and the ardently Protestant Oliver Cromwell refused to use it on the grounds of its Catholic associations, referring to it as 'the Devil's bark'. As a result, Cromwell suffered badly from the malaria he had contracted in his native fenlands of eastern England. (*History without the Boring Bits*, Ian Crofton, Quercus, 2007).

Gogarty

Oliver St. John Gogarty remarked on a fellow surgeon who was convicted of Criminal Conversation: "*never did a man gain so much with his knife and lose so much with his fork*".

Kieran Conway:

"Through my girlfriend I met people who were Labour Party or Official supporters [Democratic Left], people who had not the slightest respect for where I had been and were at best inclined to view me as an unfortunate dupe who had taken revolutionary rhetoric too seriously. I had extraordinary encounters with men my own age who told me they had joined the Officials to gain political experience, or because a future in the unions or the media was more assured than if they had joined Labour. I listened to such sentiments in disbelief, first that anyone could hold them, and secondly that they were unashamed to declare them. It seemed incredible that this world of role-playing could exist, while 60 miles up the road people were being shot and blown to pieces. The Provisionals were condemned out of hand while every two-bit Third World liberation struggle was lauded, no matter its methods, in an ongoing parody of college politics. The incidence of adultery within this circle also shocked and appalled me, and was one more indication of the moral swamp in which middle-class Dublin was sunk—though it was the mendacity rather than the sex that outraged me" (*Southside Provisional : From Freedom Fighter to the Four Courts*, Kieran Conway, Orpen Press, 2014).

The Old Fenian

I'm growing old, my hair is white,
My pulse is dull,
I know no more the fierce delight
Of life, when full

The frail bark of my life sweeps on
To that dark sea
Whence murmurs the dread monotone—
Eternity!

And nothing stirs the withered leaf,
Wrinkled and sear;
I smile not, and the keenest grief
Declines a tear.

I'm dead, but for the fluttering breath,
My marble smiles
Down the long lines of conquering death
In twilight aisles.

And yet, dear God! if the glad day
Should dawn for me
When I should catch the first faint ray
Of liberty.

If thwart mine eyes the light did flash
From Freedom's flags
Borne in the wild, tempestuous dash
That downward drags.

The Hell-rag, black with blood—the thirst
Of Britain's hosts—
If once mine ears could hear the burst
That drowns their boasts.

And I could list the thrilling tramp
Of armed men,
Echoed from serried camp to camp
In dell and glen.

And if the emblazoned bannerets,
Of Freedom shone
Above the snowy minarets
Of Slievenamon.

I'd catch one gasp of fading breath
From Time's grim claw,
And send along the gulfs of death
One wild Hurrah!

Canon Patrick Augustine Sheehan (1852-1913), from the 1938 *Wolfe Tone Annual* published by Brian O'Higgins, which that year was dedicated to The Fenians.)

Brendan Clifford

AGAINST ULSTER NATIONALISM:

SOME CLARIFICATION

Stephen Richards, in his obituary on Paisley in the last issue, made a puzzling comment on a pamphlet I published forty years ago:

"I was bowled over by *Against Ulster Nationalism*. I had never come across anything like it. It was funny, exotic, arrogant, unapologetic. The sinister doings of Irish Nationalists were the subjects not of fear or suspicion but of mockery. In my third year at Cambridge I used to burble away to people about it, and one of them, after reading it, remarked sagely to me: '*C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre*'".

I take it that the meaning of that piece of French that it wouldn't get met anywhere in politics, journalism or academia.

I was never at Cambridge. I was at Oxford once. In the early seventies I seconded Brian Faulkner against John Hume in a debate at the Oxford Students Union. I suppose this was arranged by Lord Bew. (But his Lordship was at Cambridge, so it might have been Cambridge. It was one of them anyway, and I was never at the other.)

As soon as I saw the tiers of stuffed shorts, I knew I had no business there. It was not a situation in which communication could occur about the facts of the Northern Ireland matter. The audience was the next generation of what remained of the ruling class. It wanted to be entertained. The entertainer, if he aspired to be part of the system, might attract some attention, some patronage, to help

him along in British politics or media. I had no business there. So I played the fool for a few minutes, got an ovation, and had nothing more to do with Irish politics as English entertainment—or as Irish entertainment either.

Against Ulster Nationalism is a dry list of facts stated bluntly. The facts it states, with regard to the central matter it deals with, have never been disputed as far as I know.

Of course Rory Bremner had a comedy programme on television at the time of the invasion of Iraq, and the most hilarious thing on it was a factual account of the history of the British handling of the Middle East since the time the Empire conquered it. The serious programmes carried nothing but propaganda fiction, so the audience rolled over in the aisles in response to Bremner's factual satire. But Bremner at least indicated that the audience should take a recital of historical facts to be funny. I'm sure I did nothing of the kind.

The pamphlet went through a number of editions and became a small book. I assumed it was readable in Northern Ireland because it related so directly to the situation that was being experienced.

Its purpose was to counter the attempt of the Government to sectarianise the War by describing it. Merlyn Rees wanted "*Ulsterisation*". He wanted a communal war of Catholics and Protestants over which Whitehall could posture as a benevolent arbitrator. My pamphlet had some effect in preventing this. But it was chiefly developments within the Provo leadership that prevented it.

I don't, on the spur of the moment, recall much about the detail of Paisley's 1977 Strike. William Craig's pre-1974 Vanguard Strikes were fascist in intent and it was advisable to keep out of the way of the Tartan Gangs. That was the only time when I took care of where I went in central Belfast. When Vanguardism subsided Craig was a spent force, though he ticked over electorally for a while.

Craig was a Stormont Constitutionalist in political origin, as far as I recall. He belonged to the lawyers' group which held that Stormont had acquired a degree of sovereign status through the precedent of Westminster inaction towards it during two generations after 1921. He lost his bearings on the tricky British Constitution, took a stand on an illusion, and was lost. (His *Ulster A Nation* meant

Ulster is sovereign.)

Paisley represented something beyond constitutional illusions, and throughout all the twists and turns of events he remained representative of it. And, if he led by "*mesmeric*" influence on a population saturated by the culture of the 1859 Revival, what other kind of

leadership could there be in a community that made a "*supreme sacrifice*" of itself in 1920 to facilitate the Empire in the game it was playing against Sinn Fein, and agreed to semi-detachment from Britain—detachment from British politics, and subjection to the anti-political influence of literalist Scripturalism.

D. Vincent Twomey SVD

The following article was rejected for publication by the *Irish Times*. It refers to a preparatory Synod held in Rome in October 2014. In the weeks leading up to that Synod, Francis married 20 cohabiting couples, signalling his wish for a more pastoral approach to prevail. The self-styled "*paper of record*" was happy to publish an earlier article of Fr. Twomey's, entitled *Synod Feeds Secular Agenda, Hostile To The Traditional Family* (18.10.14), written after the first phase of the Synod and criticising the way the Pope denied public expression to majority episcopal views and appointed his own representatives to prepare reports, rather than allowing the elected moderators to do this. In response to that article, Archbishop Martin denied that the Pope "*sowed seeds of confusion*" and criticised those who "*fail to see how Pope Francis shows that his concern for people who suffer is far from being a sign of dogmatic relativism, but rather is a sign of pastoral patience*" (see *Irish Catholic* 6.11.14). Fr. Twomey revised his views in the light of a report produced after the second phase of the Synod, and submitted a version of the article below but the *Irish Times* rejected that article for "*reasons of space*"!

A Tale of Two Synods

Last Saturday, the synod closed with the voting on the final report and with a final address by the Pope, which was greeted with a prolonged standing ovation. The week of high drama ended with a great sigh of relief: schism, which seemed imminent, had been avoided.

On most issues, a near unanimity had been established. The final report, with the exception of three paragraphs out of 62, had been approved by an overwhelming majority. The report is an impressive document, considering that it was the product not just of one but of several committees. Even more impressive was the closing message from the Synod fathers to families, which is almost poetic at times. It is Franciscan in tone. Both it and the main content of the final report were almost totally ignored by the media.

Instead, the secular media highlighted the three paragraphs that did not achieve the required two thirds majority: in particular, the one dealing with same-sex relations (number 55). Some media coverage gave the impression that the Extraordinary Synod was primarily

devoted same-sex relations. The one paragraph that did mention the topic rejected discrimination, as could be expected, and rightly called for sensitivity in dealing with persons in such relationships, but it also reiterated Church teaching on the matter, including the rejection of any attempt to equate same-sex unions even remotely with marriage.

What the media ignored was paragraph 56, which was approved by an overwhelming majority. It rejected, in effect, the attempt to intimidate Church pastors with regard to this question, as well as taking international organisations to task for linking aid to poor countries with legislation for so-called "marriage" of people of the same sex.

In a sense, there were two Synods taking place over the past week, one inside the Synod Hall and the other in the media. And the media, whether secular or Catholic, cannot be entirely blamed for this. They had to interpret the selectively leaked information from what should have been an open synod—and naturally each side chose whatever fitted their own particular agenda or concern.

Catholicism and sex is a heady mixture that fascinates the western media.

Media coverage can be like a hall of distorting mirrors. The distorted images of the Synod deliberations fed into the public's expectations and/or fears. They fuelled the initial confusion caused by the way the first week of the Synod was manipulated by those who were convinced that they were acting according to the mind of Pope Francis. Inside the Synod, things were, by all accounts, quite different.

The actual situation was summed up by the Pope in his closing address. The Synod was an exercise in real collegiality and rare frankness. He referred to the ups and downs, the tensions and excitement of a sometimes very heated debate between committed pastors, albeit coming from different perspectives, some radically different. It was a battle of the titans. Some of the drama leaked out and made the headlines. The final report came as a real surprise. It is not a great literary masterpiece, but it is a document rooted in good theology and sensitive to the myriad problems that beset marriage, the family, children, and single people today.

Pope Francis concluded his address by quoting his immediate predecessor extensively. The supreme rule of conduct for all the ministers of God is, Benedict XVI wrote,

"an unconditional love, like that of the Good Shepherd, full of joy, given to all, attentive to those close to us and solicitous for those who are distant {...}, gentle towards the weakest, the little ones, the simple, the sinners, to manifest the infinite mercy of God with the reassuring words of hope {quoting St Augustine}."

The Pope, in Francis's own words,

"is not the supreme lord, but rather the supreme servant the servant of the servants of God; the guarantor of the obedience and the conformity of the Church to the will of God, to the Gospel of Christ, and to the Tradition of the Church, putting aside every personal whim, despite being by the will of Christ Himself the supreme Pastor and Teacher of all the faithful {...} and despite enjoying supreme, full, immediate, and universal ordinary power in the Church {quoting Canon Law}."

And then he added the most telling sentence of all: *"And this should never be seen as a source of confusion and*

discord." But it was.

The well-meaning campaign by Cardinal Walter Kasper, backed by most (but certainly not all) German and Italian bishops, to promote his own novel proposal to grant (some) remarried divorcees admission to the sacraments was the cause of that confusion and discord. The Cardinal claimed that he had Pope Francis's backing. That campaign and the media coverage it received, particularly by more so-called "progressive" Catholics, caused acute distress to those others, who, at no little personal cost, try to remain true to the *Magisterium*. They feel that they are ones who are marginalised in the Church. One priest confided to me that his faith has been severely tested over the past 18 months. He was not alone.

Yet there must be some truth to Cardinal Kasper's assertion. And I think it is to be found in the Holy Father's intense desire to embrace the sinner as Christ did. His whole pontificate manifests that love. It is the love of the anxious father waiting for the Prodigal Son to return to his loving embrace. Many who went astray, and who for years felt lost and abandoned by the Church, or many outside the Church, who (falsely but understandably) perceived her moral teaching as rigorous, have come back to receive forgiveness and absolution in Confession. Considering this alone, the price those who have tried to remain true to the *Magisterium* of the recent Popes have had to pay, in terms of being marginalised within the Church, has been worth it.

The final report quotes from the *Magisterium* of St John Paul II and Benedict XVI. It also more faithfully to *Humanae Vitae* than the mid-term report. At the beatification last Sunday, Francis praised Paul VI's courage. He said: *"When we look to this great pope, this courageous Christian, this tireless apostle, we cannot but say in the sight of God a word as simple as it is heartfelt and important: thanks!"* And then he exclaimed, as the faithful applauded: *"Thank you, our dear and beloved Pope Paul VI! Thank you for your humble and prophetic witness of love for Christ and his Church!"* That was the only reference to *Humanae Vitae*, but, oblique though it was, it was hugely significant.

Pope Francis, it seems, is aware of the tendency to self-righteousness and rigorism in those who, at times all too

vociferously, defend the Church's highly contentious moral teaching and so he uses every opportunity to exercise fraternal correction towards them, as he did in his concluding Address to the Synod. He also seems to be aware of the tendency among priests and bishops who, out of sympathy for hard cases, reject the recent Papal *Magisterium*. In the same concluding Address, Pope Francis warned them of *"{t}he temptation to come down off the Cross, to please the people, and not stay there {on the Cross}, in order to fulfil the will of the Father"*, and he further warns them about the tendency *"to bow down to a worldly spirit instead of purifying it and bending it to the Spirit of God"*.

The special Petrine mission of the present Holy Father could be summed up in Jesus' High Priestly Prayer: *"Thee all may be one"* (Jn 17:21). And that is the purpose of the whole process of this unique Synod of Bishops extending over twelve months, which, paradoxically, thanks to the media, has now involved the whole Church in a way that can only be dramatic and risky. But it is a risk that is worth taking.

Fr. Twomey is Editor of *The Word*, published by the Divine Word Missionaries.

Report

Social Policy Of Pope Francis

When Rush Limbaugh accused the Pope of having social views that are "pure Marxism". To which Francis replied: *"The ideology of Marxism is wrong. But I have met many Marxists in my life who are good people, so I don't feel offended."* Criticising the 'trickle-down' theory of economics, he added:

"There was the promise that once the glass had become full it would overflow and the poor would benefit. But what happens is that when it's full to the brim, the glass magically grows, and thus nothing ever comes out for the poor ... I repeat: I did not talk as a specialist but according to the social doctrine of the church. And this does not mean being a Marxist."

The Augustus Debate

Readers are invited to contribute to the discussion on *Augustus And The Imperial Over-Achievers*, the editorial in the last issue of *Church & State*

Stephen Richards

A Reply to the Editorial,
Augustus And The Imperial Over-Achievers
(*Church & State* 118)

Some Golden Apples

The apples I'm thinking of here aren't of the Yeatsian variety, but the ones that distracted Atalanta, the Sonia O'Sullivan of the ancient world. You'll remember that, if you could beat her in a straight race you would get to marry her, but the price of failure was instant execution, which concentrated the minds of her admirers. The successful candidate's strategy involved these golden apples, possibly supplied by Aphrodite, and every so often when Atalanta was streaking ahead (probably streaking in every sense of the term!) he would throw one of the apples across her path and she couldn't forbear but to chase it down, magpie-like, and grab it for herself.

So, I feel a bit like Atalanta, whenever I come across the sparkling aphorisms of Brendan Clifford, who I think must have been the editorialist in *2000 Years of Augustus*. His sentences sparkle and shine irresistibly, and I feel the need to chase them down and corral them, but the aim is to hold them up as fools' gold.

I'm intrigued above all by his description of pre-Constantinian Christianity as "*a formless welter of things*". Sometimes when I look at my life it appears to me like a formless welter of things, and I now find the same wonderful phrase coming unbidden to me when I'm rummaging around in our hot press looking for socks. If you're trying to picture a formless welter of things, I say to myself, look no further.

An Outshoot Of Empire?

"*What Christianity might have been without the Roman Empire is altogether unknowable.*" Indeed, but, as Brendan often says, these parallel universes just aren't available to us. We could spend our whole lives speculating about circumstances that didn't apply and so didn't have any consequences. Why Christianity in a non-existent context is more unknowable than anything else in a non-existent context is a matter of mystery to me. If it's no more un-

knowable, then it's hardly worth saying.

"Without the Roman Empire" is in any case an ambiguous phrase. It could mean "without the Roman Empire being there" or it could mean "without the prestige that the Roman Empire being lent to it". Of course it's significant that Christianity happened in the Roman Empire, but far less significant than to say it happened in the world, which is the big significant thing. And the genesis of that happening was the Jesus community, which became the Christian Church.

It had originated among the Jews, who were the prepared people. The two thousand years of Augustus are less important than the two thousand years from Abraham to the birth of Jesus. The Jewish development being what it was, it would have been providentially perverse if the Christian faith had sprung up in one of the other great civilisations of that time, the Indian or Chinese. The preaching of the apostles centred on the fact that Jesus had come as the fulfilment of Old Testament promises and prophecies. This historical grounding was the key feature, and, it just so happened that the happening happened when Palestine was the province of an Empire at the very peak of its power and stability, and with Greek as the *lingua franca* of the eastern Mediterranean, and pretty familiar to the people of Italy as well. As the Marxists used to say, it was no accident. It wasn't that Christianity was somehow parasitic on the Empire, but that the apostles and their successors were able to benefit from the *pax Romana* and the comparative ease of communications. If for example the Jesus phenomenon had happened when the Eastern Mediterranean was in the throes of the Athens-Sparta War, humanly speaking it might have been stillborn. Does Brendan not think that God might use secondary causes?

"{Christianity} wove itself around the Empire from its earliest stage". I'm not sure what that means. We don't think

usually of things weaving themselves around things but into and through things. I think Brendan implies that Christianity was a parasite on the Empire, a cuckoo in the nest. But that is historically not sustainable. However receptive many of the inhabitants of the Empire might have been to the message of the Cross, the powers that be (to whom Paul urged submission in Romans 13) certainly were not, at least not by the time they had realised it wasn't just a strange flash in the pan. The apostles were a bit like Richard Hannay in *The Thirty Nine Steps*, fleeing one kind of persecution, the Jewish, only to find themselves within a generation exposed to a State-directed persecution, from which there was no escape, a bit like Christians in North Korea or some Muslim states today. As soon as the Roman authorities realised that they were dealing not with a Jewish sect but with a radical new thing, they set their faces against it. The Christians were atheists who committed the cardinal sin against the State of refusing to burn incense to Caesar as a god. They could have been forgiven some of the other things.

Christ Triumphant

So, this led to 250 years of persecution, which came in different waves, of varying intensity, alternating with intervals of relative calm, but with Christians at no stage being allowed to settle down as regular citizens. 250 years is a long time. Even the Penal Laws were more or less burned out within 70 years, and the persecution was less violent; whereas the Soviet system was also a 70-year-long Babylonian captivity.

Why did the gods of Greece and Rome become inadequate? Brendan doesn't tell us. Confusingly, he also argues that the human impulses that lay behind the classical pantheon were also provided for by Christianity as it developed. If these gods had grown stale and lost their power (see Milton: *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*), how was it that they were also the product of robust and natural human impulses, later expressed through Christianity? Did the Roman Empire renew itself by adopting the Christian religion? Gibbon didn't think so. Julian didn't think so. Diocletian

and Co. no doubt were convinced that the moral and spiritual health of the Empire depended on them being able to crush the subversive Christians. Augustine in *City of God* spends a lot of time trying to refute those who are claiming, quite plausibly, that the fact that the Empire was on its last legs was down to the Christians.

What does renewal mean here? Spiritual renewal? Yes, I think so, but that's not usually what Empires are looking for. And how did the Roman Empire stabilise the Christian faith? Of course I accept that the patronage of Constantine meant that Christianity was no longer on the fringes of the Establishment but began to take over and then become the Establishment. That was a very dangerous place to be, and if Christianity hadn't had its own independent source of energy and expansion within itself, or within the Holy Spirit (which it had amply demonstrated during the three centuries when the civil authorities were against it) that kind of worldly prestige could have been fatal to it.

I disagree with the assertion that the Emperors called the shots at the Ecumenical Councils. Constantine was a bewildered semi-layman at Nicaea and just wanted them all to agree on something. Which are the Councils Brendan is referring to? I believe the Empress Irene played some part in the final anti-iconoclast decision of Nicaea II in 787 but she could hardly have achieved this on her own without there being a huge popular and theological reaction against the iconoclasts. Arcadius and Eudoxia didn't really manage to have the last laugh over St. John Chrysostom: he had the (posthumous) last laugh, like Thomas Becket.

Brendan does concede the independent "*cultural content*" of Christianity which had built up and wasn't malleable to Emperors but doesn't explain what this consisted of. In fact he also says it was a formless welter of things. Take your choice! If you read Pliny's letters to Trajan you don't get the impression of a group of people who were making it up as they went along.

St. Paul Re-Imagined

Paul "*emphasised the fact that he was a Roman citizen, not a Jewish drop-out*". He freed the nascent religion "*from the Temple and from circumcision*". I think the Roman armies had something to do with the end of the Temple, exactly forty years after its downfall had been predicted by Jesus. (Schweitzer's chief idea of Jesus was as an end time prophet,

so presumably he too saw these predictions as being authentic, though, as I've never read anything by Schweitzer, I can't be sure). As I've pointed out before, John Robinson of *Honest to God*, not exactly a fire-breathing fundamentalist, dated all four Gospels prior to AD 70, probably causing more of a fluttering in the academic Anglican dovecotes than his popular version of Tillich had done.

The main New Testament writer who has a carefully worked out theology involving the demise of the Temple (while it was probably still going) was the author of *Hebrews*.

As for Paul, he worshipped in the Temple and doesn't seem ever to have explicitly preached against it, though one could argue that its supersession was at least implicit in his theology. In one of his last letters he states to Timothy that he served the God of his fathers with a clear conscience. On more than one occasion he states in public argument that he is, not was, a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, who was being called out because of his commitment to the (pharisaic) doctrine of the resurrection of the body. That was not a teaching found commonly in the Roman Empire. It had no echo in Greek thought. And it was disputed among the Jews too, but maintained by the purist Pharisees. If you're trying to integrate your teaching with what would be acceptable to a cultured Pagan audience you wouldn't emphasise an intellectually embarrassing belief such as that. Paul was listened to with interest in Athens until he started talking about Jesus and the Resurrection. Most of his listeners found this nonsensical. Luke faithfully records this. Elsewhere Paul says that he is a Hebrew of the Hebrews. J.G. Machen in his *Origin of Paul's Religion* demolishes the late 19th century German theory that Paul was a Hellenist. Paul specifically was not a Hellenistic Jew.

The earliest followers of Jesus were all Jews, and the distinction was between the Hellenistic Jews (referred to in the Authorised Version as "*the Grecians*") and the more traditional Palestinian Jews. The former would have had much more cultural exposure to the Graeco-Roman society around them and to some extent would have adapted, at least linguistically. Paul, contrariwise, would probably have spoken Hebrew or Aramaic in the home. He was aware of Pagan thought but just enough to despise it. His letters to Gentile Churches are full of Old Testament references.

Marcion was the anti-Hebraist of the

early Church, who wanted to suppress the Old Testament, and much of the New Testament except for the Pauline letters, but was condemned as a heretic. Incidentally, the canon was fixed long before Constantine came along. And, if Paul and the anti-Jewish faction were determined to suppress the Jewish part of the Christian faith, they didn't do a very good job of it. So it was that 1850 years later the young Lloyd George knew all about the Kings of Israel and Judah (a bit like, somewhat more improbably, Bertie Wooster in *Right Ho, Jeeves*), and not much about the Kings of England.

"*His efforts as a Roman to suppress the Christian cult in Palestine*". Yes, Paul was a Roman citizen, in the same way that Gerry Adams is a British citizen. In fact Adams is a lot more culturally and politically British in his outlook than Paul was Roman. West Belfast is a British sort of place, unlike Sliabh Luacra. If Paul's attitudes, imbibed from his family, were culturally antithetical to the Greek influence, the Roman political Establishment would have meant even less to him. Some of his family had obviously deserved well of the Empire at one time and been granted citizenship, but Paul made use of this privilege just enough to claim his rights (for example not to be flogged, though he was flogged by the Jews, possibly illegally, from time to time). The flogging story shows a sense of humour maybe, or at least a fine sense of timing. He's stretched out in the position to be flogged when he innocently enquires: "*by the way, is it legal to flog a Roman citizen?*"

Paul was an educated man, whether at the University of Tarsus nobody knows, but the New Testament Greek people say that his Greek is replete with Hebraisms, compared with the almost classical Greek of the Letter to the Hebrews. He was certainly aware of Greek culture, but apart from his citizenship he owed nothing culturally to Rome. As for his persecution of Christians emanating from some Roman orientation . . . well, I give up. He was determined to preach the Gospel in Rome as it was the capital of the Empire! He had previously believed, reasonably enough, that he was persecuting a crowd of blasphemers, just as the Muslim zealots in Pakistan believe when they persecute Christians or aberrant other Muslims. His Roman citizenship had nothing to do with that.

Paul, it is true, made it a plank of his evangelism that you didn't have to become a Jew before you could become a

Christian. But he circumcised Timothy for pragmatic reasons, and exhorted circumcised believers not to make themselves uncircumcised (apparently medically possible, maybe like a reverse vasectomy!) to make themselves acceptable to pagans. Gentile believers were urged not to offend Jewish sensibilities, even if the Gentiles were, so to speak, right.

Hard Promises To Keep

There was a huge number of Jews in the Roman Empire. Judaism wasn't really a cult religion. It was a mainstream religion which had protected status of a limited kind in the Empire. You can find this in the Psalms and in Isaiah, even in Genesis 12. "*In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed.*" It claimed to be a universal religion, a claim that looks plausible when we consider the sheer variety of ethnic groups present in Acts 2 for the Feast of Pentecost. There were Jews of course scattered widely through the Roman Empire but also many God-fearers who attended synagogues all over the place but didn't want to take the step of circumcision to become full converts. There was the further problem that, even if you were prepared to be circumcised, the multitude of Jewish dietary laws would make it difficult for you to live a normal life among your family. Yet Jesus says that the Pharisees will cross land and sea to try to make one convert. They did want converts and were not going to insist on ethnic purity. They had a lot of goodwill among the Gentiles if not many complete converts. They did proclaim that their God was for everyone. This message is all through the Old Testament, not hard to find.

History, Cults, And Philosophy

When did Paul say "*he had never met Jesus*"? The whole basis of his claim to apostleship was that he **had** met him, on the road to Damascus! Latterly, as of one born out of due time. Yes, he said he was the least of the apostles, not worthy to be called one, but still an apostle, because commissioned by Jesus. Brendan keeps quoting Schweitzer as if *ex cathedra*. I'm not at all sure that the quoting of Schweitzer closes down the argument about the historical Jesus. I'm sorry that Schweitzer had that frustrating experience, but really there's a lot more we know about Jesus, about how he went about his life and relationships, than we know about Julius Caesar or Augustus Caesar, or Queen Elizabeth I.

The Gospels do give the pungent flavour of a real man who says and does the most extraordinary and unexpected

things, things that nobody could possibly have invented. And who goes to a death that no hagiographer would ever have invented for him? Why would his followers have endangered and eventually lost their lives over the head of something they didn't just suspect, but actually knew, was a cock and bull story? They went to their deaths as witnesses of a resurrected Jesus they had in fact not seen and were lying about!

How did the Pauline Christianity "*adapt itself to the needs of the Roman Empire?*" By providing gory entertainment in the arena perhaps? How exactly did it combine with elements of Mithraism? It's interesting that one of the most remarkable Churches in Rome, San Clemente, with the tomb of a Donegal man, John Boyle, in the crypt, is built over an older Mithraic temple, but the fourth century inscriptions there are wholly Christian. It was fashionable during the heyday of theological liberalism for scholars, with an agenda of their own, to claim that early Christianity in the Empire was parasitic on Mithraic beliefs and practices; and for this there was some support from the leading Belgian archaeologist Franz Cumont. However, as I learn from the June 2013 issue of *Catholic Answers* most of these supposed identifications are now seen as spurious.

The relationship of the Jesus movement to Greek philosophy from Justin Martyr onward, maybe from Paul onwards, is too big and complex a subject for me to attempt to address here. My own very basic understanding is that the Gnostics of the second century onwards were largely inspired by Greek philosophical ideas, and they, like the neo-Platonists were really diametrically opposed to the Christians, as was the great philosopher/emperor, Marcus Aurelius. The teaching of the resurrection of the body and *ergo* the importance of matter was anathema to the Greek way of thought. That isn't to say that Christian teaching wasn't at times affected, even infected by Greek ideas that were alien to the New Testament, and that even giants like Augustine weren't over-influenced.

Pre- And Post Constantinians

"It was as the religion of the Empire, Roman Catholicism, that Christianity made an impact on the affairs of the world". I would say there was no such thing as Roman Catholicism till much later, maybe the time of the Lateran Council in 1215. Up to then it was just

the Catholic Church. But from the time of the sixth century *filioque* dispute onwards there was a tension between West and East, that finally came to a head in 1054. The Easterners thought of themselves as the Catholic Church, as did those in the West. The Bishop of Rome wasn't a dominant figure even in the West for a few hundred years, maybe not till the time of Leo the Great. In the East, even before the split, the Westerners were looked upon as being theologically a bit unsophisticated and were not heavily represented at Nicaea in 325 AD and indeed at some of the later Ecumenical Councils.

If I could return to the "*formless welter of things*", it would be a bold man who would accuse Irenaeus, Ignatius, Tertullian, Origen and the early Christian martyrs as being apologists for a formless welter of things. Tertullian was quite clear that Marcion for example, the anti-Old Testament Hellenist was a heretic, while it was later concluded that the hero of orthodox apologetic, Tertullian himself, later fell into heresy among and beyond the Montanists. Origen for all his brilliance was also condemned for heresy. It might be more plausible to say that that the **post-Constantinian** Church was in danger of becoming a formless welter of things. The pre-Constantinians knew very much what and why they believed. They had to, for it was life and death.

The Baptism Of The Classics

I can't understand the reference to Virgil being "*pagan to the bone*". In the pre-Christian era I'm not sure what else he could have been. What is the definition of pagan here, and why was he more markedly pagan than anybody else? If Virgil was to some extent baptised by the mediaevals I think that's rather nice, and it didn't just happen accidentally. They saw something of Christian fortitude and restraint in his verse. He was quite some man to be able thus to bridge the gulf from pagan civilised Rome to Christian maybe not so civilised Western Europe and into the Renaissance Protestant Universities as well, ending up in the public schools and the grammar schools. Of course there's a famous passage in *The Eclogues* that's supposed to be a prophecy of the coming of Christ, thus making Virgil a kind of proto-evangelist.

Cicero and Virgil are the two great Roman men of letters who made that transition. I think the mediaevals also baptised the Silver Age poet Statius for

some reason. I'm still annoyed at the lack of emphasis on Latin (and the absence of Greek) in my schooldays at Ballymena Academy. I studied it up to 18 and read a fair amount of Virgil, Caesar, Livy, Pliny and Cicero, plus various bits of Horace, Ovid, Catullus, and, my favourite of the poets, Tibullus. The average schoolboy of a hundred years ago would have mocked my paltry achievements. But it gave me a great sense of satisfaction to know that I was, however feebly, in a great European tradition, a sort of common stream; and even to think that inky fingered schoolboys for generations had puzzled over the same passages. (I get the same feeling when I'm trying to play Irish fiddle tunes, that these tunes are well worn by generations of left hands that have been making the same shapes as I'm trying to make.)

All that classical heritage has gone now, of course. The connecting cord has been broken. It's a great feat of European Christian civilisation that it was able to absorb and benefit from the classics, without being subverted by them. England was just one of those Western cultures. I don't know, but I suspect that the sway of the classics may have been even more marked in 19th century Germany. The banishment of the classics and the deliberate marginalisation of the Christian faith over the last fifty years has made our contemporary culture the clueless morass that it is.

England wasn't unique in seeing herself as the successor of Rome. The Elizabethans may have loved the classics but there wasn't much other good literature for them to read. The best of the Elizabethan churchmen also were into their Hebrew, Aramaic and Syriac. But Charlemagne and his successors also saw themselves in the same tradition, as did the Russians; as did the Austrians with their "*kaiserlich und koniglich*", and their multi-national empire; as did the French, the torch carriers for civilised values in Europe. The whole of Western Europe looked to classical Rome.

The Via Media

England was Roman Catholic up to Henry VIII, up to a point yes, but there was a history of mediaeval English Kings resisting the claims of the Papacy. A Catholic country more than a Roman Catholic country, one might say. Louis XIV had his moments too, when he was fighting against the temporal interests of the Papacy, and furiously persecuting the Huguenots whom the Pope might have preferred to let be. He was at times literally more Catholic than the Pope.

The Anglican settlement wasn't too much different from that in several of the German states, under *cuius regio, eius religio*. The Church of England was (and to some extent still is) a real Church, not a potemkin construct from the 16th century. There was a massive Anglican revival in the 18th century, to such an extent that the Church couldn't contain it, but plenty of those affected by the Revival, such as (John) Newton, Venn, and Simeon, stayed. They were not exactly Vicar of Bray types. I'm very open to harsh analysis of the flaws of the religious settlement in England and the subsequent Anglican decline and fall, but I do object to this tendency to demonise the English State as being some sort of monstrosity with a fake Church attached, a bit like the Beast and the False Prophet in the Book of Revelation!

Credo

There are really two sets of reasons why I'm a Christian, however pathetic a specimen: first, I'm persuaded by the

historical claims of the Gospel and especially by the fulfilment of prophecy; and, secondly, I find that the New Testament view of human nature is true to what I understand of myself and to what I see of human nature both in my day to day experience and in the big world of war and politics outside my immediate experience. It makes sense of things otherwise inexplicable. So, the faith is, in brief, historically credible and consonant with experience, leaving totally to the one side the whole united testimony of the saints. As Brendan used to acknowledge (see *Against Ulster Nationalism*), there is a sort of M1 of the faith. Certainly there are a lot of weird and wonderful marginal figures that can be exhibited in the pageant, but if you had Athanasius, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Calvin, John Newton, C.H. Spurgeon, and C.S. Lewis all in the one room, they would find a lot more in common than what they would have to argue about, though argue no doubt they would!

Peter Brooke

On Constantine And The Origins Of The German Catholic Church

The editorial on *Augustus and the Imperial Over-Achievers* (Church & State 118, Last Quarter 2014), gave an impression of Church-State relations in the Roman Empire that seems to me in some respects misleading. Chiefly, I think the successor of the Church established by Constantine is the Eastern Orthodox Church. The 'Roman Catholic' Church is, I would argue, the successor of the Church established by Charlemagne.

Far be it from me to underestimate the importance of "*Saint Constantine, equal to the apostles*", as he is known in the Eastern Church, but I don't think one can say he combined Christianity "*with the symbols of a rival religious cult, Mithraism*". The elements which Christianity holds in common with Mithraism—initiation (baptism), the ritual eating of bread and wine (identified in Mithraism with the body of the Mithraic bull), belief in the resurrection of the flesh—were well established before Christianity was "*taken in hand by the Emperor Constantine*". I think Mithraism had a doctrine of the pre-existence of souls similar to that of the Christian commentator, Origen (and, in our own day,

of the Mormons) but this was abandoned in the orthodoxy of the imperial Church. Mithraism I think also celebrated the Winter Solstice, 25th December, as the birth of the Sun, but so did Rome generally. Constantine may have been instrumental in persuading the Christian Bishops to adopt this as a suitable day to celebrate the birth of Christ.

The toleration, then adoption, of Christianity by the Empire brought about huge administrative and intellectual changes and St. Constantine presided over them but not all the consequences would have been pleasing to him. The Council of Nicaea in 325 is mainly remembered for ruling that Christ as the second Person of the Trinity was Himself uncreated and fully God. This was a doctrine particularly favoured in Egypt and opposed by the two Eusebii—Eusebius of Nicomedia and the historian, Eusebius of Caesarea—who were Constantine's main Christian advisers. Constantine's sympathies were with the Arians who held (like the present day Jehovah's Witnesses) to the apparently much more reasonable proposition that Christ was the first of created beings.

He tried to have Arius himself received back into the Church (he was foiled when on the appointed day Arius died after his bowels exploded in a public lavatory, at least so we are told in the Orthodox account).

St. Constantine's Arian sympathies were continued by his successors, and the period through to the Council of Constantinople in 382 under Saint Theodosius I is remembered by the Orthodox as a period of persecution. (Julian 'the Apostate' amused himself by bringing the Orthodox Bishops out of exile then watching the ensuing struggles with the Arian, or 'Semi-Arian' Bishops who had replaced them.)

But the great change that swept over the Christian Church after the conversion of Constantine was something that must have pleased him even less—the retreat into the desert and the rise of monasticism, which can be interpreted as a wholesale rejection of the new respectability conferred by state recognition. The monks and hermits were an anarchic and riotous element, quite outside State control, the storm troopers of Egyptian Orthodoxy before Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria took them in hand with a policy of massacre at the turn of the fourth/fifth centuries.

The Church & State editorial rightly ridicules the English idea that the Germans were uncivilised because Augustus failed to incorporate them into the Roman Empire. But it leaves untouched the notion that the English themselves had ever been incorporated into the Roman Empire. The part of Britain that has since become England was of course part of the Roman Empire but Roman Britain was subsequently taken over by the pagan Anglo Saxons. The only population in modern day Britain that could claim descent from the Roman Britons are the Welsh who somehow seem to be the least 'Roman' of the lot, though it should never be forgotten that both 'Britain' and the 'Church of England' were the inventions of a Welsh dynasty—Welsh Norman as opposed to Anglo-Norman.

The point here is important when we want to think about the nature of the 'Roman Catholic' Church. The article states that "*Augustus failed in Germany. Charlemagne succeeded*". As if what Charlemagne did was to incorporate Germany into the Roman Empire. But by that time the Roman Empire had long ceased to exist in Western Europe. It continued in the East, and Western

princes who still for political reasons pretended to be part of it recognised the Emperor in Constantinople, 'New Rome', as their titular head, on the safe assumption that he wasn't in a position to interfere with anything they might want to do. The Papacy could be described as an outpost of the Empire in the barbarian West. Charlemagne put together a new Empire made up mainly of peoples who had never been part of the old one—Germans, Franks, Visigoths, Anglo Saxons, Irish. He put an end to the last, purely formal, connection with Constantinople. All that was left by that time of the old Western Empire were parts of southern France and Italy, long accustomed to barbarian rule. North Africa of course had fallen to Islam.

The tension between Church & State as represented by Pope and Emperor was not an inheritance from the system established by Constantine. In Constantine's arrangement the Church as an administrative structure was thoroughly subordinated to the Emperor. Individual churchmen, up to the level of Patriarch—and of course the monks and hermits with their authority as 'holy men'—might defy the Emperor from time to time, but the Church as a structured body had no independent authority of its own in any way equivalent to that later claimed, and at times exercised, by the Pope. Western advocates of the primacy of the secular arm—Emperor or King, including the theorists of Anglicanism in the seventeenth century—often claimed to be wanting to restore the original Roman Imperial system, citing the Eastern Empire as a model to be followed.

The Papacy had developed the sense of its own independent authority in the absence of an Emperor when it was surrounded by pagan or heretic barbarians (the Ostrogoths who held Rome in the fifth century had, like the Visigoths in Spain, been converted by Constantinople at a time—the fourth century—when Constantinople was Arian). The court of Charlemagne and his successors developed an intellectual and ecclesiastical life that was largely independent of the papacy and of the Roman tradition generally. The Anglo-Saxon Alcuin, the Irish Scotus Erigena, the Visigothic Theodulf were barbarians receiving what they could get their hands on of classical culture and philosophy as a new, vastly exciting discovery. Old Rome was still part of the old Imperial system—albeit losing contact as the Eastern Empire too began to fall apart under the impact of

Islam, and increasingly having to come to terms with the new Imperial system and the new Church that was developing in the west. The Germans finally got control of Rome in the eleventh century and that produced what is conventionally described as the final schism between the Eastern and Western parts of the old Roman Church.

The Church/State—Pope/Emperor—tension that characterised the 'Roman Catholic' Church could, then, be described as a tension between the Papacy as the last remnant of the Roman Empire in the West and the German Imperial Church. The German Imperial power might have established the sort of monopoly of State authority that was enjoyed by the Eastern Emperors and Russian Tsars (and in the West later on by the German Lutheran princes and, later still, the English Parliament) but this development was obstructed by the overweening sense of his own importance that the Patriarch of Old Rome had developed after the collapse of the Western Empire. (Interestingly, Calvinism shared the papist view of the proper relations that ought to exist between Church & State, with the Church exercising juridical authority in matters of faith and morals and the State in everything else.) So was established the space in which that anarchic and destabilising force known as 'European culture' could develop, eventually spawning that even more anarchic and destabilising force known as 'British culture'.

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preparations were made behind the back of Parliament by a Tory/Liberal ruling class circle. That circle approached the point of disruption in 1912-14 as the difference over Home Rule became increasingly antagonistic. But, even when civil war began to be freely spoken on as possibly the only way the party conflict could be resolved, the preparations for war made by the Liberal/Tory inner circle continued. (See, for example, *The Supreme Command* by Maurice Hankey, who was at the heart of the thing.)

The final touches were given to the War Book produced by the secret Committee of Imperial Defence early in July 1914. The opportunity for war came a few weeks later, when a decision on Home Rule could not be delayed much longer. And the recoil from the probability of civil war certainly contributed to the feeling of relief with which the declaration of war was experienced by many—exuberantly by Robert Brooke, as escape from the filth into which party-politics had sunk.

Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour,
 And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,
 With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,
 To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping,
 Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary,
 Leave the sick hearts that honour could not move,
 And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,
 And all the little emptiness of love!

Oh! we who have known shame, we have found release there,
 Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep has mending,
 Nought broken save this body, lost but breath;
 Nothing to shake the laughing heart's long peace there
 But only agony, and that has ending;
 And the worst friend and enemy is but Death.

The War, was, I think, the last act of high policy, of integral ruling class action. The medium in which politics was conducted changed in the course of the War. Democracy set in.

"...the high politics of how physical force can prevail over democracy" ?—but what was democracy in 1914?

It was, as Aspasia explained it long ago with regard to the Athens of Pericles, whose speeches she is said to have written:

"our government was an aristocracy, a form of government which receives various names, according to the fancies of men, and is sometimes called democracy, but is really an aristocracy or government of the best which has the approval of the many..." (as reported by Plato).

It was government by a ruling class which had, over the centuries, managed to elicit the consent of the governed.

The electorate in 1914 was about a third of the adult population, having been increased considerably a generation earlier. The system was still just about compatible with Aspasia's ideal of aristocratic democracy, but a literal democracy of the populace was pressing on it. The Liberal elite was holding out in defence of the *status quo* but the ranks of the party were filled with enthusiasts for popular democracy. Pressure from this quarter drove the Home Rule conflict to the point of rupturing the ruling class consensus behind the scenes, on which the actual British Constitution was based. The ruling class still had sufficient influence to ward off civil war by means of world war, but its influence was broken in the conduct of the War. And Britain emerged from the War as an enraged literal democracy that was incapable of making a functional peace in Europe—such as the ruling class had made after earlier wars—or of dealing with the startling outcome of democratisation in Irish politics.

Fanning refers repeatedly to the damage done to democracy by the way the Government handled the Opposition in the Home Rule conflict. And he quotes an English historian, in a book published in 1964:

"the system of parliamentary democracy, so long accepted as the traditional method of politics in England was shaken to its foundations" (p118).

It's all very well for ideologues of English politics—which is what most English historians are—to call the aristocratic system of representative government established by Walpole democracy, but it is not so well when an Irish historian of the rupture with England does so.

The illusion of continuity is an important element in the ideological medium of English political life. The representative system was actively anti-democratic throughout the 18th century and for most of the 19th. Democratic movements which tried to force the issue

of democratisation were all faced down. The Parliament franchise was extended in small degrees from 1832 onwards in order to split the democratic movement by taking its leading social element into the system. In the late 19th century ruling elements began to think that, because of the scope of the Empire and the rise of the popular Imperialist movement at home, the introduction of a democratic franchise might not endanger the system. Democracy was introduced in 1918 by the greatest of the Reform Acts, which is scarcely noticed as a milestone in history because it was introduced under cover of the War, in a situation of mass enthusiasm for the War, without conflict between the mass and the elite.

It was important for political continuity that democracy was introduced as a kind of ruling class patronage rather than through conflict between the mass and the elite. And, because it was not introduced through conflict, the idea that the representative system of the aristocracy had been democratic, at least implicitly, could pass muster in British politics.

And, if the Home Rule conflict had happened in a constitutional system of popular democracy, rather than in Aspasian democracy, there would be grounds for some of Fanning's extremist statements.

He makes a great thing of the Curragh incident of March 1914, which "*endangered the proper relationship between government and army*" (p111). He appears to insist that it was a mutiny, even though no orders were issued which were disobeyed.

It seems to me that he not only misunderstood what the British state was in 1914, but that the point of reference at the back of his mind was the propaganda of the Treaty faction in 1922.

The British Army was not a blind instrument of the Government of the day in March 1914, any more than the IRA was in the Spring of 1922. The Treaty faction raised a mercenary Army, with British support, to make war on the Republican Army, but the British Government in 1914 could not do likewise. The British Army was a citizen army as much as the IRA was. It was an active component of the State, historically second only to the Navy—and the British State in the 18th century had little substantial existence apart from the Navy and the Army.

Army officers in the early 20th century still came from ruling class

families, who paid for their commissions, and they kept up a genteel life-style at their own expense.

Britain would not have been what it was in 1914 if it had for centuries been a parliamentary democracy with a separation of powers. It would possibly have been a European state of the second rank. But it was what it was—a ruling class state, which G.B. Shaw said in 1914 might reasonably be called a Junker State, in which the ruling class ran the Navy, the Army, and Parliament, somehow supervised an intricate financial system, and made space for a wild development of capitalism of a kind not seen elsewhere.

It was the business of the Irish “*constitutional nationalists*” to gain a measure of subordinate self-government from this State. The Home Rule Party, relying on constitutional fictions which had recently become fashionable, aimed to get this self-government by manipulating a Parliamentary situation in which the two ruling class parties were more or less equal and it could make one of them the Government in exchange for a guarantee of a Home rule Act.

William O'Brien (who the present crop of historians, whether revisionist or not, are determined to remove from the historical record even though his movement split the Home Rule Party in 1910 and took ten per cent of its seats) explained that Home Rule could not be got by Irish manipulation of British party antagonisms. He had been imprisoned as an agrarian radical by a Unionist Government, and he had achieved an extensive social reform in collaboration with that same Unionist Government after further agitation a dozen years later. He understood the British State through having been jailed by it and carried out a fundamental reform in collaboration with it, and he was certain that Home Rule could not be got by Redmond's methods. But Redmond, a House of Commons man even before he entered politics, believed in Constitutional illusions, as did his colleagues Dillon and Devlin. They did not apply the maxim “*Know your enemy*” because they had wished themselves into a belief that the Liberal half of the enemy was no longer an enemy and that the Unionist (Tory plus Reform Liberal) half was disabled by a Constitutional straitjacket.

The Parliamentary straitjacket, like the circle of fire protecting Brunnhilde, was illusory and only worked on the gullible. The foremost Constitutional lawyer of the time, A.V. Dicey, joined

the Unionist Opposition and published a book explaining what the real Constitution of Britain was, and how the Liberal Party, hungry for Office, had joined a foreign Party to overthrow that Constitution. Fanning does not mention this, or the fact that the Unionists were winning the constitutional argument with the only Constitutional authority in the British state, the electorate. So Redmond's failure comes to be explained in personality terms, centring on Lloyd George. But what was Lloyd George? A weather vane. (Keynes, who was close to him at the Versailles Conference, was asked what he thought Lloyd George was like when he was alone in a room. He replied that, when Lloyd George was alone, there was nobody there.)

Fanning mentions “*the graphic contrast between the British government's response to Unionists and nationalists running guns*” as undermining Redmond's position (p128). For more than forty years I have been pointing out that the Larne gun-running was secretive and businesslike, while the Howth gun-running was flamboyant and provocative.

He quotes, from a recent English history, a statement that Carson had admitted to a Tory backbencher in July 1913 that he had long known “*that the government would not force Home Rule on Ulster. So it is all playacting*”. And he comments: “*And so it was*” (p54). I would have thought the playacting was in the Redmondite gun-running. And Fanning seems to forget, as the book proceeds, that the Unionists were only play-acting, because he soon has World War averting Civil War.

The judgment of whether it was playacting or not was of some consequence in 1912-14, and I would have expected a historian of 1912-14 to treat it as such. In August-September 1969 I had to make a practical judgment about Ulster Unionism. It seemed to me to be a stubborn force that would not collapse if it was called names or given a tap on the head. The prevailing nationalist view in the South was that it was a product of Tory influence operating on obsolete religious bigotry and would collapse under a combination of physical pressure and a loss of Tory protection. I took part in many debates around the country, of which I particularly remember one with Front Bench Fine Gaeler Richie Ryan, and others with Frank Prendergast of the Labour Party Front Bench, and Eoghan Harris, who was Leninist guru

of the Official IRA at the time. All assured me that I was completely mistaken. But I wasn't—and for that I have never been forgiven. And I suppose the fact that it has been demonstrated that I was not mistaken then influences my estimate of the 1914 situation.

But Fanning does not concern himself at all with what Unionist Ulster was, and so how could he judge whether it was in earnest?

Another matter of some importance which he doesn't concern himself with is the possibility of establishing an independent Irish state without military conflict with Britain. His language sometimes suggests that it was possible and at other times that it wasn't. I suppose that comes of “*not identifying with the political uses of violence then or now*”. To judge that it wasn't would, I suppose, in terms of academic life as we find it in Ireland, be tantamount to supporting the IRA. But you would insult your commonsense by saying that it was.

On page 26 there is reference to “*the physical force separatists*” of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. And on page 95: “*The IRB, an oath-bound secret society... dedicated to the establishment of an independent Irish republic by force of arms*”. If independence was only achievable by war, it would have been foolish to spend effort trying to achieve it by Parliamentary jabbering. Physical force separatists were only separatists who took Britain in earnest when it declared that Irish independence was out of the question. And, if preparation had to be made to meet British force with Irish force, it could only be done in secret in a country honeycombed with political police by the British administration. And secrecy could only be maintained by use of sanctions.

The Home Rule MPs were, in large part, Home Rulers instead of separatists because they took in earnest the British message to Ireland that it could only gain independence by means of war, and they didn't see how an Irish Army could be raised under the all-seeing eyes of the RIC.

And then, oddly enough, it was the Home Rulers' decision to become a recruiting force for the British Army, in the hope of being rewarded by the implementation of Home Rule, that made it possible for the Army to be raised and drilled which made war on Britain in 1916. The Irish Volunteers were not interfered with lest that should subvert the recruiting efforts of Redmond's

Volunteers at a moment when Britain needed cannonfodder by the million.

In the aftermath of the Rising, Whitehall tried to get the Home rule Act implemented. The War Minister, Lloyd George, took time off from the War in an effort to do it. He met the Ulster Unionists and Redmondites separately, knowing that if they were brought together to reach an agreement what was certain was that they would disagree. He got Unionist agreement to Home Rule with the exclusion of the 6 Counties, which would simply remain part of British politics, and apparently thought he had also got Redmondite agreement. But when these terms were published, the Redmondites claimed they had only agreed to the exclusion of the 6 Counties for six years. And they claimed, furthermore, that the Unionists had agreed to the six-year exclusion, until this was overruled by Westminster Unionists, especially by the malevolent Lord Lansdowne—the man who was trying to sell out civilisation to Prussianism by urging a settlement of the World War.

A Home Rule Government might have been set up in the Summer of 1916, minus the 6 Counties and without the tyrannical Northern Ireland system, if Redmond had not insisted that the exclusion of the North should be temporary. It was abundantly clear by this time that a large part of Ulster was not going to be included under an Irish Home Rule system. The claim that the Ulster Unionists had agreed to temporary exclusion but were over-ruled by the Government is fantasy. And the insistence on the formula of temporary exclusion was face-saving at best. The probability that the Ulster Unionists, after taking part in British political life for six years without the weight of the Irish nationalist majority bearing down on them, while the Home Rule Party governed the 26 Counties, with Sinn Fein rearing up at it, would voluntarily place themselves under Dublin rule when the six years were up, or would be forced under Dublin by Whitehall, was zero.

Fanning says: "*The story of Lloyd George's unsuccessful 1916 negotiations with Redmond and Carson is well known*" (p145). In my experience it is hardly known at all. The interesting and enlightening political literature it gave rise to at the time has never been reprinted. And it does not appear among Fanning's references.

He just follows the Redmondite story

of Lloyd George duplicity in the negotiations in which he deceived either one side or both. And: "*It was Lansdowne who delivered the coup de grace when he attacked the compromise*", in the Lords (p147). He neglects to say what that "*compromise*" was. Both sides insisted they had *not* compromised.

The moral he draws from the incident is that it showed:

"the stranglehold Unionist ministers exerted on the Irish policy of the coalition governments of 1915-22... For Irish Unionists and their English fellow-travellers, unlike the other groupings attached to the coalition, Irish policy ranked in importance with the conduct of the war. If their wishes on Irish policy were disregarded, they were ready to threaten to bring down the government, whatever the state of the war. Such blackmail was a most potent weapon, which greatly deterred the coalition leaders—and Lloyd George in particular—from undertaking Irish initiatives" (p147).

What this blackmail consisted of was Unionist insistence that the terms of the 1914 agreement, that Home Rule would be put in the Statute Book and its implementation be taken off the political agenda for the duration of the War, should not be broken. The Liberal Government assured the Unionist Party that the Bill, though enacted, would not be implemented as it stood, but would be amended after the War.

The Liberal Party was put in Office by the Home Rule Party as part of a political bargain. That bargain split the body politic of British Aspasian democracy. As the split was reaching crisis point, the crisis was deferred by the opportunity for World War. The Liberal Party found it could not carry on in wartime as a minority Government, particularly as the Home Rulers, though recruiting for the War, refused to take part in government. In 1915 the Liberals formed a War Coalition with the Unionists and suspended the electoral basis of government until after the War. Unionism in government guaranteed themselves against the breaking of the 1914 agreement. The Home Rulers made some complain about Unionists being in government but themselves refused to join the Coalition as a counterweight for the Liberals.

Then, after the Rising, the Unionists withdrew their general opposition to Home Rule.. They agreed to it on condition of the exclusion of part of Ulster. The Home Rulers, in a last grasp

for power without Partition, claimed there had been an agreement for temporary Partition. They could not deliver the Unionists who were said to have agreed to that, and they would not agree to indefinite Partition. And that was that.

The "*blackmail*" consisted of sticking to the terms of the war agreement of 1914, and of not giving away the Ulster Unionist position in the interest of the War.

Now it might be said that Unionism was an illegitimate force, and had no right to anything, but in the politics of reality if had become the strongest political force in the state, and had secured its position by joining the Government, and the conduct of the War was coming to depend on it.

How important was the War? Was it a war in defence of civilisation against barbarism, as the British and Home Rule propaganda of the time, and the centenary propaganda, depict it? If the Home Rulers believed what they said about it, why did they refuse to join the Government for it, thus making the Liberals dependent on the Unionists? And why did *they* not agree to indefinite 6 Co. Partition in the interest of the War, since it was clearly an inevitability of the actual situation?

And the situation could only get worse for the Home Rule Party as the conduct of the War became ever more dependent on the spirit of the Curragh Mutiny, whose officers were the core of the Army.

Lord Lansdowne suggested later in 1916 that the time had come for a negotiated ending of the War. The Prime Minister, Asquith, who had launched the World War, was finding it increasingly difficult to keep pace with it. He seemed to incline towards Lansdowne's proposal. And that seemed to be the signal for his ousting.

The Unionists took over, with Lloyd George as Prime Minister, splitting the Liberal Party. They did not merely "*threaten to bring down the government*". They brought it down. And the War was prosecuted more fiercely and effectively as a consequence.

Redmond refused Home Rule on the only terms on which it could be got. He would not consent to Partition. But he organised a great Home Rule Conference which agreed to temporary Partition. He thereby branded himself as the man who was responsible for Partition. The evasive distinction between temporary

and indefinite was rightly not taken to be operative in the real world. So, with his customary Westminster mentality, he got the worst of both things.

And Fanning, who cannot take issue with Britain on the real ground of things, recirculates that futile sense of grievance in the medium of illusion.

The Home Rule Act in the Statute Book was suspended for the duration of the War, as was electorally-based government. The War ended for electoral purposes in November 1918 and a General Election was held in December. But the Home Rule Act was not implemented. For that purpose it was held that the War had not yet ended. And, indeed, the Armistice, and the removal of the German Navy, had provided an opportunity for intensifying the wartime blockade by stopping trade across the Baltic between Germany and Scandinavia. Many thousands of Germans were starved to death between the Armistice of November 1918 and the signing of the Treaty with Germany in June 1919. The starvation blockade was kept up until the ineffectual revolutionary Government, established to appease the victorious Allies, agreed to sign a confession of War Guilt on behalf of the German people in June 1919.

And, after that, there was the Turkish Treaty. The Turkish Government, pleading helplessness (like Treatyite Sinn Fein three years later), signed the Treaty presented to them but it was repudiated by a military rebellion. Britain instigated an invasion of Asia Minor by Greece (in which it had set up a puppet Government during the War) to put down the Turkish rebels, and to add a slice of Turkey to the Greek state. The Turkish rebellion (not mandated by an election) went on during the Irish war in defence of the electorally-mandated Republic. So the war on Turkey, for which the Home Rulers had been enthusiastic in 1914, went on until 1922. And Treatyite Sinn Fein, installed as the Government of part of Ireland by Britain, found that its first foreign policy task as a member of the British Empire was to agree to the ending of its war on Turkey (with which it did not know it was at war until Whitehall instructed it to call it off), and to the recognition, as the legitimate Turkish Government, of the militaristic rebels who had repudiated the Entente Treaty and made war on it successfully. (See *Ireland's War On Turkey* by Pat Walsh.)

(Or maybe it isn't relevant to bear in mind what Britain was doing elsewhere in the world after it repudiated the Election result in Ireland following its victory in the Great War for democracy and the rights of small nations?)

Fanning barely mentions the 1918 Election. Indeed, what is there to be said about it? Sinn Fein won it. Everyone knows that. It doesn't need saying. And as for thinking about it—well, I ask you . . .

In the 1970s I took British democracy in earnest. I spoke to a great number of Labour Party Branches and GMCs explaining in detail how the Northern Ireland region of the UK state was cut out of the democratic life of the state, and suggesting that this fact might have some connection with the War that was going on there. The Northern Ireland electors had not chosen to support peculiar parties that had nothing to do with the governing of the state: they had been refused membership of those parties, which did not contest elections there. In the course of this I discovered how unpolitical, and of course unhistorical, the Labour mind in Britain is. It is purely ideological in character, and operates with a handful of maxims or shibboleths. And Britain is such a soundly constructed democracy—still largely Aspasian despite the universal franchise—that that suffices. But there were usually one or two people in a Branch who would make the effort to grapple intellectually with the elementary political fact I was describing, and think about the implications.

But if the British Labour mentality was obtuse with regard to everything that did not have to do with party slogans at the next election, it was sprightly and inquisitive by comparison with the mentality of the Southern Irish academic intelligentsia on the subject of the 1918 Election with relation to the War of Independence and fortunes of the League of Nations. It is a mind that closes itself by reflex action when it gets near a range of basic issues, lest it become Provo.

So Fanning glides over the Election which mandated the establishment of independent government:

"Sinn Fein had meanwhile [i.e., while the War Cabinet marked time on Irish policy because of the absence of Lloyd George at Versailles] seized the opportunity to capitalise on its stunning victory in the general election" (p193).

And that's that!

Dev escapes from jail; a delegation

from the Dail is locked out of Versailles; a National Loan is raised "*to bankroll a revolutionary war*"; the RIC is ostracised and its barracks burned; there was sectarian murder of tramps, ex-servicemen and Protestants, "*most notably in Cork*"; Lloyd George and his mistress had "*a happy time*" in Paris; Lord French predicted that the Sinn Feiners would soon be in Westminster; the Dail had the audacity to meet in public session during the visit of the American Commission, causing "*outrage at republican bravado*"; "*some discharged soldiers*" were employed in the RIC; some detectives were killed by a "*team of IRA assassins*"; a Vice-Regal garden party was held; the Dail was criminalised; all the Peace Treaties were signed but it was decided to devise a new Bill imposing Partition instead of implementing the existing Act; a Cabinet Committee decided that Partition would take the form of two Parliaments; a magistrate searching for the bank account where the National Loan was kept was taken from a tram in Ballsbridge and shot: "*What had become the first of Britain's 20th century urban guerrilla wars*" {—*urban!*}—was, like all such wars, a vicious and squalid business" (p221).

How many "*such wars*" has Britain fought? Wars against electorates which voted in indisputably democratic elections to part company with it?

And "*vicious and squalid*"? Well that's war when it isn't seen in the light of purpose. Decomposing corpses and mangled bodies of survivors. And that's why the squalid business of killing and being killed is suffused with a culture of honour and glory—as was the Great War in which Britain made a shambles of Europe and beyond.

That Irish War, which Fanning sees only with his Cambridge eyes, might easily have been prevented. All that was needed was that the first actual democratic Parliament at Westminster, elected at the moment of victory in the war for world democracy and the rights of small nations, should have taken account of the Irish vote and begun negotiations with the Dail, or, alternatively, should not have vetoed the admission of the Irish delegation to the Versailles Conference.

There was war in Ireland because democratised Britain decided to rule Ireland by naked force after the Irish electorate deprived it of the Home rule prop.

On the rare occasions when British-oriented academics are cornered into applying their minds for a moment to the conduct of the British Parliament towards Ireland in the Winter of 1918-19, the apologetic pleading is that it would have been undemocratic to coerce Ulster. But, by this time, Partition had been decided on *de facto* in Whitehall, and it was implemented in 1921, and Westminster was no more willing to recognise 26 County independence than 32 County.

The Aspasian democracy had thoroughly Imperialised the sentiment of the mass of the British populace, so that the transition to actual democracy in 1918 made no difference to the fate of Ireland.

Fanning sometimes writes as if democracy was a fundamental value in these matters, while at other times he treats it as a matter of no consequence. He quotes Charles Townshend—which seems to be obligatory for Irish writers these days. Townshend, an academic English propagandist on Irish affairs, left morality and democracy aside when writing his book on the British war in Ireland. Fine. Morality counts in the conduct of war only insofar as it is an influence on morale. The English State is the conscience of English armies and knows how to prevent transcendental notions of morality from undermining morale. But Townshend knows on other occasions how to inject a spurt of morality against the Irish. And he was allowed to get away with beginning one of his books with the outlandish statement—*"The Irish propensity for violence is well known"* (*Political Violence In Ireland*, Oxford 1983).

Ireland was rendered helpless for 200 years after the breach of the Treaty of Limerick by a regime of effective oppression that made it incapable of political violence—of concerted violence for a political purpose. An occasional attempt by rack-rented tenants to shoot an evicting landlord is not political violence. Ireland was dominated for two centuries by the British monopoly of political violence, broken only by an occasional, short-lived, outburst from the tormented Irish. (The 1798 affair, insofar as it was brought about by a political movement, was essentially an affair of the British colony in Ulster, which quickly became Unionist when the Union Bill was introduced.)

Is democracy a basic moral value by which political events should be judged, or is it not? If it isn't, let it be said so clearly. If it is, let it be applied to

British conduct in Ireland, and elsewhere, after the War and the post-War election.

Fanning has been rummaging behind the scenes and he presents us with tit-bits. He seems to have discovered belatedly that English Protestantism is essentially anti-Catholicism and that English culture is therefore anti-Irish, and to be shocked. And he presents Lloyd George as the villain of the piece because he did what the British democracy wanted done. Lloyd George, who discovered early in life that the principles he started out with would get him nowhere, was energy without substance, Ovid's *"weightless fire from heaven"*. He put his energy at the disposal of the actual forces operative in the British democracy. He was not a Napoleon or a Pitt or a De Valera. He was only an opportunist facilitator. It is not clear what his villainy consisted of in Fanning's mind. Partition was going to happen whether or not the Home Rule Party lost out to Sinn Fein. The consequence of Partition, which makes it impossible for Southern Establishment thinkers to think, is not a consequence of Partition as such. It is the consequence of the enactment of Partition by means of Northern Ireland—a Six-County sub-state entirely under Westminster sovereignty but excluded from the political system by which Westminster governs and therefore consigned to unmediated communal, or *"sectarian"*, conflict. But Fanning does not concern himself with that, even though it led, pretty well inevitably, to another War—the war because of which Irish academics have been warned off the 20th century history of British conduct in Ireland lest they metamorphose themselves into Provos!

Political unity in Ireland was not within Lloyd George's gift, to concede or to withhold. It would not have been in his power to give or refuse, even if he had been the leader of the biggest party in Parliament. As it was, he became Prime Minister by destroying the party in which he had made his career, and he was never the leader of more than a fragment of it. The Government in which he was Prime Minister was never in substance his Government. When he split the Liberal Party in 1916, the Unionist Party became without question the dominant party in the state.

A few weeks after the Easter Rising, and a few months before he became Prime Minister, Asquith asked him to try to get Home Rule Act In The Statute Book implemented. He took a couple

of weeks off from his job as War Minister and tried to negotiate an agreement between the Home Rule and Ulster Unionist leaders that would make this possible. He negotiated separately with each of them, knowing that if they were brought together for negotiation agreement would be impossible. In these negotiations the Unionists agreed to Home Rule, but with the exclusion of part of Ulster, which would simply remain part of the UK. The Redmondites agreed to Partition, but only for a period of six years, and then they held a great Conference, hailing the immediate establishment of Irish Home Rule in 26 Counties, with the other 6 Counties coming in at the end of six years. Whatever chance there was of initiating Home Rule government, with the duration of Six County exclusion being fudged for the time being, was blown by Redmondie publicity, which made it necessary to clarify the point.

If Redmond had not entirely lost his sense of the realities of the situation, he must have known that it was very unlikely that the Unionists had agreed to what Carson had described in 1914 as a sentence of death with a six-year delay of execution, and must have seen that, if 26 County Home Rule Government was set up with the Six Counties remaining out of it for six years, it was very unlikely that they would agree to come in when the time was up, or that Whitehall would apply force to them when they refused.

Lord Lansdowne, a senior British statesman of that era, who had estates in Kerry deriving from Cromwell's conquest, blew the whistle on the incident. Lloyd George had not got the agreement that was needed for implementation of the Act, so the project could not be proceeded with. So, naturally, Lansdowne, as a landlord/Unionist bigot, was declared to have vetoed an agreement that had been made.

Soon after this, Lansdowne circulated a Memorandum within the Cabinet, suggesting that it was time to formulate Peace Aims that would make it possible to begin negotiations for an end of the War on Germany. He was a fully-fledged member of the ruling class which had conducted Imperial affairs advantageously (in accordance with the principles set out by Swift in 1712 in *The Conduct Of The Allies*). That ruling class could make war, without moral frenzy, on the basis of conflicts of interest. But it was giving way to the wild Puritan

democratism of the Non-Conformist Liberals, who could only conceive of war as a conflict of Good and Evil—and Good doesn't draw up terms for an advantageous compromise with Evil. Asquith was thought to be inclining towards Lansdowne's view of the War situation, and he was ousted by Lloyd George—the Welsh Non-Conformist who became a militarist fanatic once he decided to support the War.

Of course there was more to it than that. But that was an element in it. And it is well to have some idea of Lansdowne's position in 1916 on the most important thing that was happening in the world before demonising him as the bigot who deprived us of Home Rule in 1916.

In the course of those Home Rule negotiations, Lloyd George wrote a letter to Carson in which he said:

"We must make it clear that at the end of the provisional period Ulster does not, *whether she wills it or not*, merge in the rest of Ireland".

This sentence is quoted by Fanning (p249) and the italics are added by him.

I recall having an argument about 40 years ago about the meaning of the clause italicised by Fanning. I took it to mean 'against her will', but found it was taken to mean 'even if she agrees'. Fanning's italicising of it seems to suggest that he takes it in the latter meaning, and sees it as highlighting Lloyd George's malevolence towards Ireland.

I don't think the language was at all ambiguous at that time, though perhaps that turn of phrase has become archaic. And I can see no earthly reason why Lloyd George would have wanted to scupper a possible Home Rule agreement in 1916. If he had brought about all-Ireland Home Rule, he would have been the man who solved the Irish Question, and it would have been a very big feather in his cap.

He was trying to fudge through sufficient agreement to get Home Rule going. I am not now as familiar with the detail of it as I once was, but my recollection is that he was reassuring Carson that he need not be worried that the chicanery of negotiation had the purpose of tricking the North into a Home Rule system.

Lloyd George was quicksilver—weightless fire blown this way and that by slight breezes. And Carson was not a slight breeze but a strong wind. He was a relentless plodder who wore down opposition, whether flighty or bureaucratic: witness the Wilde Trial and the Winslow boy. Also, he had recently been

a heavyweight in the Cabinet, and was likely to become so again. A lower middle class upstart like Lloyd George, who was living by his wits amongst his betters, had reason to be careful with him.

But that Lloyd George retained some convictions of his own, which might have led him to sabotage a Home Rule settlement which he might have achieved—that's a story for the birds.

I could never see the point in recycling those old groundless grievances, especially when it is done at the expense of substantial grievances—like the setting up of the Northern Ireland system on the pretext that it was somehow necessary to the enactment of Partition.

Lloyd George was not the cause of Partition. He was the cause of Northern Ireland. And it was Northern Ireland that caused the War that horrifies Fanning.

He never applied his mind to understanding what Northern Ireland is. The Southern Establishment doesn't. And so he can write, disregarding actual experience, about the Provos "*bloody and ultimately futile war*".

Seen from a Dublin Establishment viewpoint, I suppose it was futile, in that it did not end Partition. But the Dublin Establishment did not live under the Northern Ireland system, and did not try, either by intellectual analysis or imaginative empathy, to grasp what life was like for nationalists under it.

It was a bloody war, of course. Wars are bloody. But futility was not what the community that sustained it for almost thirty years felt at the end of it.

Those who celebrate Irish participation in Britain's World Wars point to the social developments which, for all the horror, happened in conjunction with them. Well, the same thing happened in the Northern nationalist community in conjunction with the Provo War.

"Partition was inevitable, perhaps in 1912, certainly by 1914, but the shape of the partition settlement remained an open question until 1920... Sinn Fein unquestionably cut itself off from participating in any decision on the boundary created under the 1920 Act and what became the Irish Free State. The painstaking if ultimately futile discussions between Redmond and Carson at the Buckingham Palace conference of July 1914 as to where the line might be best drawn in Fermanagh, Tyrone and south Armagh now went for nothing; so, too, did Lloyd George's exchanges with Carson and Redmond in the summer of 1916 and the finer nuances of the first report of Walter

Long's cabinet committee in November 1919 proposing a nine-county Northern Ireland. Instead when the line was drawn... Ireland had no nationalist representatives at Westminster who would have to have been consulted by the British government. Instead Ulster's Unionists got precisely what they wanted: the crude cut of six counties in which they had an assured and decisive majority.

"In regard to partition, Sinn Fein's calculated act of disinheritance was thus destructive of its own aspirations. In 1919-21 republican unilateralism proved a powerful weapon in advancing the case for independence, but it could do nothing to prevent partition or, later, to promote reunification. Although the resistance of the Dail and the IRA prevented the Government of Ireland Act of 1920 ever coming into effect outside Northern Ireland and although the treaty settlement... conferred a much greater measure of independence on what became the Irish Free State than had ever been envisaged under the terms of the 1920 act's application to Northern Ireland; nor could it do anything subsequently to moderate the Unionist domination of the elected representation in Northern Ireland.

"These circumstances explain why they... Act of 1920... was yet another charade... There was no prospect that Sinn Fein would accept it, but, from Lloyd George's perspective, that did not signify; its purpose was to get the Ulster monkey off his back. Ulster Unionists, apprehensive of the growing power of the British Labour, knew they would never get a better deal' (p357-8).

"The essence of the British negotiating position in regard to what became independent Ireland... was dominion status with 'no Navy, no hostile tariffs, and no coercion of Ulster". As always, Ulster was the key. Provided the integrity of the Northern Ireland settlement remained intact and short of an independent republic, Tory and Liberal ministers alike were relatively indifferent to the details of the settlement with Sinn Fein...

"...What mattered to the British government was the fact of a settlement, not its minutiae.' The politician who thinks he can deal out abstract justice without reference to forces around him cannot govern', Lloyd George had explained to Arthur Griffith..." (p359).

Fanning quotes Roy Hattersley (a right wing Labour politician of a generation ago whose views today would be Left extremist) as saying that all Lloyd George wanted was to remove Ireland from the political agenda, and that he succeeded where Pitt, Peel and Glad-

stone had failed. And he comments that that explains—

"why Lloyd George's successors... shrunk from any action that might destabilise his settlements of 1920 and 1921".

And—

"This understandable obsession with stability also explains why British ministers were so indifferent to the treatment of minorities in Ireland North and South... The result was fifty years of persistent discriminatory repression against Northern Ireland's nationalist and Catholic minority. In the South, the repression of the Protestant minority, although it did suffer discrimination... was never remotely of the same magnitude..." (p360).

The Treaty destroyed Lloyd George's prospects of remaining prime minister, but "*his excision of the Irish cancer from the British body politic endured for almost half a century...*" (p361).

What exactly was the Irish cancer in the British body politic? It was the bloc of 80 MPs, outside the party system, which wanted something that neither party was willing to concede, and which hung around waiting for balance-of-power situations in Parliament to exploit, disrupting Parliamentary business while it waited. This situation came about because the Whig Party failed to ground itself as the party of reform in Ireland under the Union. And its failure, in whole or part, was due to the refusal of Daniel O'Connell, who was a radical Whig in England, to act as a Whig in Ireland.

Partition cut out that cancer. Six County nationalist representation could never have disturbed Parliament in the way 32 County nationalist representation had done.

Protestant Ulster had been Whig and Tory in its politics from the Union to 1886. The two then merged in a Unionist alliance against Home Rule. With the hiving off of the 26 Counties, simple Partition would most likely have had led to a return to party politics, with Labour taking the place of the Liberals, in a development that would certainly have involved a substantial part of the Catholic community.

Catholic Ireland under O'Connell withdrew itself from British politics. The British parties lost ground to the nationalist movement everywhere except Protestant Ulster, but they kept on trying. But in 1921, when the "*Irish cancer*" was excised, they withdrew from the part of Ireland that wished to remain within the British state, and set up a

subordinate system of government there, outside the democracy of the state, which required those who wished to remain connected with Britain to return a clear Unionist majority at every election. And that set-up was only functional as a system of Protestant communal domination.

These are the "*minutiae*" which Fanning thinks the rulers of Britain didn't bother their heads about.

"Discriminatory repression" does not describe the circumstances in which the nationalist third of the population was placed.

It might be that there was "*repression of the Protestant minority*" in the South, though I cannot see where it lay. That minority was a remnant of a colonial caste that failed to do what it was put in Ireland for and therefore it had to live in the culture which it failed to suppress. One might choose to call that "*repression*" but it was certainly not disenfranchisement. Protestants were free to take part in the democratic life of the state and many of them achieved eminent positions in it. The Northern Catholics were cut off institutionally from the democratic political life of the state in which they were retained. And they were discriminated against in the first instance, and gerrymandered against, in order that the subordinate system of sub-government, on which the "*British connection*" was made to depend, could be operated. The Dublin Treatyites in 1922 exhorted the Northern nationalists to boycott the system and do their utmost to subvert it, to the point of making war on it. The Unionists responded with discrimination and gerrymander.

It was very far from being the case that "*Ulster's Unionists got precisely what they wanted*". What they wanted, as stated in their 1918 Election campaign, was to be excluded from the Home Rule project and resume political life within the British system. That is not what they got. And, when the Northern Ireland project was launched late in 1919 Carson said in Parliament that they did not want it, and that it had never been their ambition to govern Catholics. But Whitehall insisted that they must govern Catholics outside the democracy of the state as a condition of retaining "*the British connection*". Carson resigned the leadership. The layer of leadership under him made "*the supreme sacrifice*" for the Empire of accepting exclusion from British politics so that Whitehall might be free to do a job on Sinn Fein, and be able to say to the Americans: *Look, we've given not one*

Home Rule Government but two, and now it is all up to the Irish themselves!

Sinn Fein "*could do nothing to prevent partition*"—true enough. Neither could the Home Rulers before them—and it was the Home Rulers who were British constitutionalists.

What was "*Sinn Fein's calculated act of disinheritance*"? That it rejected its British inheritance by refusing to go to Westminster and to take the Oath of Loyalty to the Crown?

Would that Oath have counted for nothing? Could Sinn Fein have taken the Oath and still been free to commit treason under it, and still have been consulted about the line of the Border?

Unity or Independence were stark alternatives which the Home Rule Party never faced up to during the thirty years it had to consider the issue. The collapse of the Home Rule Party rushed Sinn Fein into a situation for which the Home Rulers had made no preparation. After Partition and after the Treaty, Southern politicians were encouraged by British influence to go for unity and delay on independence. Nicholas Mansergh, for example, criticised them for not doing so. But it was independence that was achievable and unity that was not. And foregoing independence would not have made unity more achievable. De Valera, in effect, put a marker on unity and went for independence. But if had made this explicit he would have been denounced for national treason by the Treatyites.

The purpose of setting up Northern Ireland was not Good Government for the Six Counties, and those who set it up could not conceivably have thought it was. Nor was it that they were tired of the Irish Question and wanted rid of it. The Six Counties would not have been "*the Irish question*" if the obvious arrangement had been made for them. And they took a lot of trouble to make the wrong arrangement, and keep it going because it was a means of influencing the part of Ireland they were losing.

Of course they did not imagine that a military/political force like the Provos could arise in nationalist Ireland. It took them only three years to deal with 1918 Sinn Fein and get it to make war on itself. After 45 years all it has managed against the Provos are Anthony McIntyre and the Boston Tapes. It took Whitehall a long generation to grasp that something new had been generated out of its Northern Ireland inferno. Dublin still doesn't grasp it. *

John Minahane

The Spanish Polemic on Colonisation
Part 6

Cabeza de Vaca and What the Indians Wanted

Introduction

In previous articles I promised to say something about the experience of a Spaniard who spent eight years in Indian territories. He was Álvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, a man of the *hidalgo* class (minor nobility). In 1527, when he was about 40 years old, he joined an expedition setting out from Spain intending to conquer Florida. There were five ships with about 600 men. Cabeza de Vaca was treasurer of the expedition, and he also held the position of *alguacil mayor*, which was something like chief enforcer. He was an experienced soldier who had served in Italy, Spain and Navarre.

The expedition went first to Hispaniola to take on supplies. About a quarter of the men immediately deserted, because the local Spanish colonists made attractive proposals about how to get rich without having to go any farther. The ships went on to Cuba for more supplies, and the same thing happened. By the time they finally got to the Florida coast there was not much more than half of the original troop number. And then the expedition began to fall apart.

The main reason for this, according to Cabeza de Vaca, was the incompetence of Panfilo de Narváez, the overall commander. He was interested in making explorations inland, even before he had found a proper harbour. The local Indians were generally hostile. They struck threatening attitudes and signalled to the Spaniards that they should leave, or they fired showers of arrows, or they gave a welcome and then made surprise attacks. When captured they would talk about a territory some way distant that had lots of gold or was worth visiting for some other reason, and Narváez would follow their suggestions. After futile explorations the Spaniards returned to their ships, but then a violent storm scattered them. Cabeza de Vaca and some other men were shipwrecked on what is now Galveston Island, off the coast of Texas.

After that no further contact was made with the commander or with any large group of Spaniards. Cabeza de Vaca's group was soon down to 15 people. They spent the next eight years

first on Galveston (which they called The Island of Ill-Fate) and then on the mainland, in territories where no Spaniards had ever been before. Various people have tried to reconstruct their journey. There are estimates of about 8000 kilometres covered in the eight years (not wildly different from Cabeza de Vaca's own estimate of 2000 leagues). Anyhow, the castaways seem to have wandered through great stretches of what is now the southern United States and northern Mexico. Finally, in 1536 Cabeza de Vaca and three companions reached Spanish-held territory and were soon telling their story in Mexico City, where they made a great sensation.

The following year Cabeza de Vaca returned to Spain. While there he wrote a memoir of the Narváez expedition and his own life among the Indians. This was published as a book in 1542; later it became known as the *Shipwrecks* (*Naufragios*). But originally what he wrote was addressed to King Charles V and it was less a memoir than a kind of "grant proposal", as Juan F. Maura calls it. Cabeza de Vaca was applying for another and bigger job. His account was meant to show that he was an able and resourceful man with rich American experience: he understood the Indians, knew how to treat them fairly, and was well-equipped to win them over to be good Spanish subjects and good Christians. The King was impressed, and in 1540 Cabeza de Vaca was made governor of the River Plate colony, which included parts of present-day Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay.

The new governor's main task was to find a viable route linking the River Plate colony with Peru. During his few years in the job he seems to have done a good deal of exploration. Among other things, as protector of the newly-Christian Guaraní people, he successfully made war on their not-yet-Christian enemies, the Guaycurú. But he was outmanoeuvred by his Spanish rivals in the River Plate, and in 1544 he was arrested for maladministration and sent for trial to Spain. Though eventually he was exonerated, he never returned to America. However, he did produce a further

memoir (*Comentarios*) describing and justifying his actions in the River Plate, and this was published in 1555.

What interests me here is the *Shipwrecks*. In the course of it Cabeza de Vaca remarks that "*the Indians are great storytellers and liars*" (Chapter 29). He himself is undeniably a great story-teller, and it has been suggested he's a great liar. According to Maura, who calls him *el gran burlador*, the great joker or con man, "*the author of the Shipwrecks included or omitted to include whatever suited him, as and when it suited him*". I have no doubt that he omitted things. For example, he claims to have become an outstanding medicine man; elsewhere he says that the medicine men could have two or three wives, while the ordinary Indian was monogamous. So the question of marriage or polygamy must have arisen for him, but he says nothing about it (as one would expect). Also, some things in his account are definitely tall tales, and to what extent he knew that they were tall tales is not easy to judge.

However, I think much of the *Shipwrecks* rings true. I am not concerned with the misleading image which, according to Maura, has predominated in works published during the past 25 years: "*a Christian martyr who, after a slow transculturation from conquistador to quasi-native, would defend 'the weak Indian' in the purest style of Las Casas*". Maura rejects this modern academic notion, but he seems to end up confusing it with the image of himself that Cabeza de Vaca is trying to convey.

"Cabeza de Vaca the conquistador, with an army of up to 10,000 natives and Spanish infantry and musketeers, fighting against the Guaycurú of Paraguay, has very little to do with the almost hagiographic self-portrait that he paints in the *Shipwrecks*, with reference to the treatment given to the Indians".

But what happened, according to Cabeza de Vaca, was that the newly-converted Guaraní Indians came to him as Governor, appealing for protection against their ferocious Guaycurú neighbours who were killing and plundering them. The Governor first asked the leading clerics whether in these circumstances he could make just war on the Guaycurú. When the clerics declared that he could, he sent messages to the Guaycurú demanding that they stop oppressing the Guaraní and give allegiance to the King of Spain. Only after their contemptuous refusal did he

assemble his huge army. And even when he caught up with the Guaycurú and launched his attack on them, he tells us that he took care to leave them a path of flight to the mountains, "so that there would not be great butchery". And when the Guaycurú had been routed (purely due to the tremendous impression made by a Spanish cavalry charge) and they came to him as the vanquished offering themselves as slaves, Cabeza de Vaca received them kindly and told them that, if they were peaceful subjects and good Christians, they would always have favoured treatment, better than any other tribe! Besides, he goes out of his way to praise not only their excellent physique and their splendid qualities as fighters but also their treatment of women. They treated even captive women well, never harming them. As for their own women, "the Guaycurú women have more liberty than what Queen Isabella gave to the women of Spain".—So in terms of explicit attitudes towards the Indians, I cannot see much that much difference between the *Shipwrecks* and the *Commentaries*. As will be seen below, even in the *Shipwrecks* he envisaged the possibility of waging war against Indians and explained how it could best be done.

From here on I will only be concerned with the *Shipwrecks*, and purely with what it has to say about relations between the Spaniards and the Indians. When the former arrived in large groups, with weapons, and evidently with motives more ambitious than survival, they were generally met with arrows, and any peaceful encounters were ambiguous and could never be depended on. But as vulnerable, unthreatening people who could be assimilated in some fashion into Indian society, Cabeza de Vaca and his companions had a different experience. The communities they were with seem to have been some of the poorest, living the most precarious lives, in all of America.

The Shipwrecks

I take up the story from the time of their arrival on Galveston, the Island of Ill-Fate, using an old translation by Fanny Bandelier that comes in handy. The handful of washed-up Spaniards was soon confronted by a hundred Indian bowmen. With no hope of resistance or escape, they signalled their peaceful intentions. The Indians accepted this and brought them food. Afterwards, feeling fortified, they tried to relaunch their boat, and they stripped off all their clothes the better to drag it out of the sand. Then

they set out to sea, but soon they were flung back on shore, exhausted and naked.

"At sunset the Indians, thinking we had not left, came to bring us food, but when they saw us in such a different attire from before and so strange-looking, they were so frightened as to turn back. I went to call them, and in great fear they came. I then gave them to understand by signs how we had lost a barge and three of our men had been drowned, while before them there lay two of our men dead, with the others about to go the same way.

Upon seeing the disaster we had suffered, our misery and distress, the Indians sat down with us and all began to weep out of compassion for our misfortune, and for more than half an hour they wept so loud and so sincerely that it could be heard far away.

Verily, to see beings so devoid of reason, untutored, so like unto brutes, yet so deeply moved by pity for us, it increased my feelings and those of others in my company for our own misfortune. When the lament was over, I spoke to the Christians and asked them if they would like me to beg the Indians to take us to their homes. Some of the men, who had been to New Spain, answered that it would be unwise, as, once at their abode, they might sacrifice us to their idols.

Still, seeing there was no remedy and that in any other way death was surer and nearer, I did not mind what they said, but begged the Indians to take us to their dwellings, at which they showed great pleasure, telling us to tarry yet a little, but that they would do what we wished."

About an hour after arriving at their lodges the Indians began to dance and made a great celebration that lasted all night. The Spaniards were more convinced than ever they were going to be sacrificed. However, this proved not to be their hosts' intention.

Some castaways who were washed up on the mainland had a worse time. "Five Christians, quartered on the coast, were driven to such an extremity that they ate each other up until but one remained, who being left alone, there was nobody to eat him." And when the Indians heard about this Christian cannibalism... they were shocked and appalled! "There was such an uproar among them, that I verily believe if they had seen this at the beginning they would have killed them, and we all would have been in great danger."

Within a short space of time a total of eighty Spaniards in this part of the expedition was reduced to fifteen. Then,

ominously, the natives began to die too. "The natives fell sick from the stomach, so that one-half of them died also, and they, believing we had killed them, and holding it to be certain, they agreed among themselves to kill those of us who survived." However, the man who was then Cabeza de Vaca's master (a medicine man?) deduced that the Spaniards could not be responsible for the fatalities.

"When they came to (kill us) an Indian who kept me told them not to believe we were the cause of their dying, for if we had so much power we would not have suffered so many of our own people to perish without being able to remedy it ourselves. He also told them there remained but very few of us, and none of them did any harm or injury, so that the best was to let us alone. It pleased Our Lord they should listen to his advice and counsel and give up their idea."

The question arose as to what the Spaniards could do to earn their keep. They were asked to do what they knew they weren't qualified to do and thought they wouldn't be able to do. In fact, they found they could do it admirably.

"On the island I have spoken of they wanted to make medicine men of us without any examination or asking for our diplomas, because they cure diseases by breathing on the sick, and with that breath and their hands they drive the ailment away. So they summoned us to do the same in order to be at least of some use. We laughed, taking it for a jest, and said that we did not understand how to cure.

Thereupon they withheld our food to compel us to do what they wanted. Seeing our obstinacy, an Indian told me that I did not know what I said by claiming that what he knew was useless, because stones and things growing out in the field have their virtues, and he, with a heated stone, placing it on the stomach, could cure and take away pain, so that we, who were wiser men, surely had greater power and virtue.

At last we found ourselves in such stress as to have to do it, without risking any punishment. Their manner of curing is as follows: When one is ill they call in a medicine man, and after they are well again not only do they give him all they have, but even things they strive to obtain from their relatives. All the medicine man does is to make a few cuts where the pain is located and then suck the skin around the incisions. They cauterize with fire, thinking it very effective, and I found it to be so by my own experience. Then they breathe on the spot where the pain is and believe

that with this the disease goes away.

The way we treated the sick was to make over them the sign of the cross while breathing on them, recite a Pater noster and Ave Maria, and pray to God, Our Lord, as best we could to give them good health and inspire them to do us some favors. Thanks to His will and the mercy He had upon us, all those for whom we prayed, as soon as we crossed them, told the others that they were cured and felt well again. For this they gave us good cheer, and would rather be without food themselves so as to give it to us, and they gave us hides and other small things."

However, it seems that as well as curing people Cabeza de Vaca was required to do heavy physical labour.

"I had to remain with those same Indians of the island for more than one year, and as they made me work so much and treated me so badly I determined to flee and go to those who live in the woods on the mainland, and who are called those from (of) Charruco.

I could no longer stand the life I was compelled to lead. Among many other troubles I had to pull the eatable roots out of the water and from among the canes where they were buried in the ground, and from this my fingers had become so tender that the mere touch of a straw caused them to bleed."

On the mainland he found a better occupation.

"I improved my condition a little by becoming a trader, doing the best in it I could, and (the Indians) gave me food and treated me well. They entreated me to go about from one part to another to get the things they needed, as on account of constant warfare there is neither travel nor barter in the land.

My stock consisted mainly of pieces of seashells and cockles, and shells with which they cut a fruit which is like a bean, used by them for healing and in their dances and feasts. This is of greatest value among them, besides shell-beads and other objects. These things I carried inland, and in exchange brought back hides and red ochre with which they rub and dye their faces and hair; flint for arrow points, glue and hard canes where-with to make them, and tassels made of the hair of deer, which they dye red. This trade suited me well because it gave me liberty to go wherever I pleased; I was not bound to do anything and no longer a slave. Wherever I went they treated me well, and gave me to eat for the sake of my wares. My principal object in doing it, however, was to find out in what manner I might get further away. I became well known among them; they rejoiced greatly when seeing me and I

would bring them what they needed, and those who did not know me would desire and endeavour to meet me for the sake of my fame."

In due course Cabeza de Vaca learned that another officer from the Narváez expedition was staying with other Indians not far away. In order to be with him it was necessary to enter an arrangement which he describes as slavery. *"With this understanding I remained, and they gave me as a slave to an Indian with whom Dorantes stayed."* Having made such bargains, the Indians took it badly if a Spaniard broke the agreement by trying to run away. A captured fugitive might be beaten badly and have, say, an arm pierced by an arrow, or worse. But there were times when Cabeza de Vaca was desperate enough to take the risk. *"So badly was I treated that I had to flee three times from my masters, and they all went in my pursuit ready to kill me. But God, Our Lord, in His infinite goodness, protected and saved my life."*

However, even a successful change of masters might only be a move from the frying-pan into the fire. In one instance,

"the Christians escaped through flight, and remained with the other Indians, whose slaves they agreed to become. But, although serving them, they were so ill-treated, that no slaves, nor men in any condition of life, were ever so abused. Not content with cuffing and beating them and pulling out their beards for mere pastime, they killed three out of the six only because they went from one lodge to another."

Among the miseries of Indian-style life, the mosquitoes had their prominent place. Big fires of damp and rotten wood were lit to make smoke to keep them away. *"The whole night we did not do anything but weep from the smoke that went to our eyes, and the heat from the fires was so insufferable that we would go to the shore for rest. And when, sometimes, we were able to sleep, the Indians roused us again with blows to go and kindle the fires."*

However, a time came when the four surviving Spaniards (or actually three Spaniards and a dark-skinned Arab) once again lived with Indian communities who properly appreciated their talents and treated them well.

"They lodged Dorantes and the negro at the house of a medicine man, and me and Castillo at that of another. These Indians speak another language and are called Avavares. They were those who

used to fetch bows to ours and barter with them, and, although of another nation and speech, they understand the idiom of those with whom we formerly were and had arrived there on that very day with their lodges. Forthwith they offered us many tunas, because they had heard of us and of how we cured and of the miracles Our Lord worked through us. And surely, even if there had been no other tokens, it was wonderful how He prepared the way for us through a country so scantily inhabited, causing us to meet people where for a long time there had been none, saving us from so many dangers, not permitting us to be killed, maintaining us through starvation and distress and moving the hearts of the people to treat us well, as we shall tell further on.

On the night we arrived there some Indians came to Castillo complaining that their heads felt very sore and begging him for relief. As soon as he had made the sign of the cross over them and recommended them to God, at that very moment the Indians said that all the pain was gone. They went back to their abodes and brought us many tunas and a piece of venison, something we did not know any more what it was, and as the news spread that same night there came many other sick people for him to cure, and each brought a piece of venison, and so many there were that we did not know where to store the meat. We thanked God for His daily increasing mercy and kindness, and after they were all well they began to dance and celebrate and feast until sunrise of the day following."

There was one cure that the Spanish medicine men might pardonably have felt proud of, though their historian gives all the credit to God. They were asked to attend a man who was said to be on the point of death. Only three of them went (the fourth was very timid and always afraid that his sins would prevent a successful cure).

"When I came close to their ranches I saw that the dying man we had been called to cure was dead, for there were many people around him weeping and his lodge was torn down, which is a sign that the owner has died. I found the Indian with eyes up turned, without pulse and with all the marks of lifelessness. At least so it seemed to me, and Dorantes said the same. I removed a mat with which he was covered, and as best I could prayed to Our Lord to restore his health, as well as that of all the others who might be in need of it, and after having made the sign of the cross and breathed on him many times they brought his bow and

presented it to me, and a basket of ground tunas, and took me to many others who were suffering from vertigo. They gave me two more baskets of tunas, which I left to the Indians that had come with us. Then we returned to our quarters.

Our Indians to whom I had given the tunas remained there, and at night returned telling, that the dead man whom I attended to in their presence had resuscitated, rising from his bed, had walked about, eaten and talked to them, and that all those treated by me were well and in very good spirits. This caused great surprise and awe, and all over the land nothing else was spoken of. All who heard it came to us that we might cure them and bless their children."

But again, in these desperately poor communities it was impossible not to be hungry, and a medicine man with Spanish physique could be called upon to do hard physical labour.

"While with those, we suffered more from hunger than among any of the others. In the course of a whole day we did not eat more than two handfuls of the fruit, which was green and contained so much milky juice that our mouths were burnt by it. As water was very scarce, whoever ate of them became very thirsty. And we finally grew so hungry that we purchased two dogs, in exchange for nets and other things, and a hide with which I used to cover myself. I have said already that through all that country we went naked, and not being accustomed to it, like snakes we shed our skin twice a year. Exposure to the sun and air covered our chests and backs with big sores that made it very painful to carry the big and heavy loads, the ropes of which cut into the flesh of our arms.

The country is so rough and overgrown that often after we had gathered firewood in the timber and dragged it out, we would bleed freely from the thorns and spines which cut and slashed us wherever they touched. Sometimes it happened that I was unable to carry or drag out the firewood after I had gathered it with much loss of blood. In all that trouble my only relief or consolation was to remember the passion of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, and the blood He shed for me, and to ponder how much greater His sufferings had been from the thorns, than those I was then enduring. I made a contract with the Indians to make combs, arrows, bows and nets for them. Also we made matting of which their lodges are constructed and of which they are in very great need, for, although they know how to make it, they do not like to do any work, in order to be able to go in

quest of food. Whenever they work they suffer greatly from hunger."

(Their best workers, in fact, were the homosexuals.

"During the time I was among them I saw something very repulsive, namely, a man married to another. Such are impotent and womanish beings, who dress like women and perform the office of women, but use the bow and carry big loads. Among these Indians we saw many of them; they are more robust than the other men, taller, and can bear heavy burthens.")

"Again, they would make me scrape skins and tan them, and the greatest luxury I enjoyed was on the day they would give me a skin to scrape, because I scraped it very deep in order to eat the parings, which would last me two or three days. It also happened to us, while being with these Indians and those before mentioned, that we would eat a piece of meat which they gave us, raw, because if we broiled it the first Indian coming along would snatch and eat it; it seemed useless to take any pains, in view of what we might expect; neither were we particular to go to any trouble in order to have it broiled and might just as well eat it raw."

Cabeza de Vaca had had time to study the Indians' strengths and weaknesses.

"Their eyesight, hearing and senses in general are better, I believe, than those of any other men upon earth. They can stand, and have to stand, much hunger, thirst and cold, being more accustomed and used to it than others."

They were doughty warriors on their own terrain, and the Spaniards needed to know what would work against them and what would not.

"They receive little damage from our crossbows and muskets. On the contrary, the Indians laugh at those weapons, because they are not dangerous to them on the plains over which they roam. They are only good in narrows and in swamps.

Horses are what the Indians dread most, and by means of which they will be overcome.

Whoever has to fight Indians must take great care not to let them think he is disheartened or that he covets what they own; in war they must be treated very harshly, for should they notice either fear or greed, they are the people who know how to abide their time for revenge and to take courage from the fears of their enemy."

The Spaniards were taken on tours as virtuoso medicine men. Those who

travelled with them would never eat anything they had killed, even if they were dying with hunger, unless the Spaniards blessed it first. *"The women brought us tunas, spiders, worms, and whatever else they could find, for they would rather starve than partake of anything that had not first passed through our hands."*

Going wherever their escort took them, they found themselves involved in peculiar customs which they could not comprehend. At one particular village,

"the whole night they spent in celebration and dancing, and the next morning they brought us every living soul of that village to be touched by us and to have the cross made over them, as with the others. Then they gave to the women of the other village who had come with their own a great many arrows. The next day we went on, and all the people of that village with us, and when we came to other Indians were as well received as anywhere in the past; they also gave us of what they had and the deer they had killed during the day. Among these we saw a new custom. Those who were with us took away from those people who came to get cured their bows and arrows, their shoes and beads, if they wore any, and placed them before us to induce us to cure the sick. As soon as these had been treated they went away contented and saying they felt well.

So we left there also, going to others, by whom we were also very well received, and they brought us their sick, who, after we had made the sign of the cross over them, would say they were healed, and he who did not get well still believed we might cure him. And at what the others whom we had treated told they rejoiced and danced so much as not to let us sleep.

After we left those we went to many other lodges, but thence on there prevailed a new custom. While we were received very well everywhere, those who came with us would treat those who received us badly, taking away their belongings and plundering their homes, without leaving them anything. It grieved us very much to see how those who were so good to us were abused. Besides, we dreaded lest this behavior might cause trouble and strife. But as we could not venture to interfere or punish the transgressors, we had to wait until we might have more authority over them. Furthermore, the sufferers themselves, noticing how we felt, comforted us by saying we should not worry; that they were so happy at seeing us as to gladly lose their own, considering it to be well employed, and besides, that further on they would

repay themselves from other Indians who were very rich. On that whole journey we were much worried by the number of people following us. We could not escape them, although we tried, because they were so anxious to touch us, and so obtrusive that in three hours we could not get through with them.

The following day they brought us all the people of the village; most of them had one eye clouded, while others were totally blind from the same cause, at which we were amazed. They are well built, of very good physique, and whiter than any we had met until then. There we began to see mountains, and it seemed as if they swept down from the direction of the North Sea, and so, from what the Indians told us, we believe they are fifteen leagues from the ocean.

From there we went with the Indians towards the mountains aforesaid, and they took us to some of their relatives. They did not want to lead us anywhere but to their own people, so as to prevent their enemies having any share in the great boon which, as they fancied, it was to see us.

At daybreak the same Indians we had left the day before surprised the lodges, and, as the people were unprepared, in fancied security, and had neither time nor place to hide anything, they were stripped of all their chattels, at which they wept bitterly. In consolation, the robbers told them that we were children of the sun, and had the power to cure or kill, and other lies, bigger even than those which they invent to suit their purposes. They also enjoined them to treat us with great reverence, and be careful not to arouse our wrath; to give us all they had and guide us to where there were many people, and that wherever we should come to they should steal and rob everything the others had, such being the custom.

After giving these instructions, and teaching the people how to behave, they returned, and left us with these Indians, who, mindful of what the others had said, began to treat us with the same respect and awe, and we travelled in their company for three days. They took us to where there were many Indians, and went ahead to tell them of our coming, repeating what they had heard and adding much more to it, for all these Indians are great gossipers and liars, particularly when they think it to be to their benefit. As we neared the lodges all the inmates came out to receive us, with much rejoicing and display, and, among other things, two of their medicine-men gave us two gourds. Thence onward we carried gourds, which added greatly to our

authority, since they hold these ceremonial objects very high. Our companions sacked the dwellings, but as there were many and they only few in number, they could not carry away all they took, so that more than half was left to waste."

The Spaniards, sensing they were coming near to Spanish-held territories, began trying to dictate the route. The Indians kept being evasive and making excuses, until eventually the Spaniards became angry. Soon the Indians capitulated and told them not to be angry: they would be taken wherever they wished,

"We feigned to be angry still, so as to keep them in suspense, and then a singular thing happened.

On that same day many fell sick, and on the next day eight of them died! All over the country, where it was known, they became so afraid that it seemed as if the mere sight of us would kill them. They besought us not to be angry nor to procure the death of any more of their number, for they were convinced that we killed them by merely thinking of it. In truth, we were very much concerned about it, for, seeing the great mortality, we dreaded that all of them might die or forsake us in their terror, while those further on, upon learning of it, would get out of our way hereafter. We prayed to God our Lord to assist us, and the sick began to get well...

All those people believed that we came from Heaven. What they do not understand or is new to them, they are wont to say it comes from above.

We exercised great authority over them, and carried ourselves with much gravity, and, in order to maintain it, spoke very little to them. It was the negro who talked to them all the time; he inquired about the road we should follow, the villages etc; in short, about everything we wished to know... We came across a great variety and number of languages, and God our Lord favored us with a knowledge of all, because they always could understand us and we understood them, so that when we asked they would answer by signs, as if they spoke our tongue and we theirs; for, although we spoke six languages, not everywhere could we use them, since we found more than a thousand different ones. In that part of the country those who were at war would at once make peace and become friendly to each other, in order to meet us and bring us all they possessed; and thus we left the whole country at peace.

We told them, by signs which they understood, that in Heaven there was a man called God, by us, who had created Heaven and earth, and whom we wor-

shipped as our Lord; that we did as he ordered us to do, all good things coming from his hand, and that if they were to do the same they would become very happy; and so well were they inclined that, had there been a language in which we could have made ourselves perfectly understood, we would have left them all Christians."

As they approached Spanish-held territory, they began to hear typical stories of the Christians' violence.

"They brought us blankets, which they had been concealing from the Christians, and gave them to us, and told us how the Christians had penetrated into the country before, and had destroyed and burnt the villages, taking with them half of the men and all the women and children, and how those who could escaped by flight. Seeing them in this plight, afraid to stay anywhere, and that they neither would nor could cultivate the soil, preferring to die rather than suffer such cruelties, while they showed the greatest pleasure at being with us, we began to apprehend that the Indians who were in arms against the Christians might ill-treat us in retaliation for what the Christians did to them. But when it pleased God our Lord to take us to those Indians, they respected us and held us precious, as the former had done, and even a little more, at which we were not a little astonished, while it clearly shows how, in order to bring those people to Christianity and obedience unto Your Imperial Majesty, they should be well treated, and not otherwise."

When they finally made contact with the ruling colonial Spanish, the Indians who accompanied them did not believe they could possibly be the same breed of people.

"Thereupon we had many and bitter quarrels with the Christians, for they wanted to make slaves of our Indians, and we grew so angry at it that at our departure we forgot to take along many bows, pouches and arrows, also the five emeralds, and so they were left and lost to us. We gave the Christians a great many cow-skin robes, and other objects, and had much trouble in persuading the Indians to return home and plant their crops in peace. They insisted upon accompanying us until, according to their custom, we should be in the custody of other Indians, because otherwise they were afraid to die; besides, as long as we were with them, they had no fear of the Christians and of their lances. At all this the Christians were greatly vexed, and told their own interpreter to say to the Indians how we were of their own race, but had gone astray for a long while, and were people

of no luck and little heart, whereas they were the lords of the land, whom they should obey and serve.

The Indians gave all that talk of theirs little attention. They parleyed among themselves, saying that the Christians lied, for we had come from sunrise, while the others came from where the sun sets; that we cured the sick, while the others killed those who were healthy; that we went naked and shoeless, whereas the others wore clothes and went on horseback and with lances. Also, that we asked for nothing, but gave away all we were presented with, meanwhile the others seemed to have no other aim than to steal what they could, and never gave anything to anybody. In short, they recalled all our deeds, and praised them highly, contrasting them with the conduct of the others.

This they told the interpreter of the Christians, and made understood to the others by means of a language they have among them, and by which we understood each other. We call those who use that language properly Primahaitu, which means the same as saying Bizcayans. For more than four hundred leagues of those we travelled, we found this language in use, and the only one among them over that extent of country. Finally, we never could convince the Indians that we belonged to the other Christians, and only with much trouble and insistency could we prevail upon them to go home."

Eventually the Indians were persuaded to come back out of hiding (though some could not be found, "*as the Christians had again driven them into the wilderness*"). The current military commander swore he would never hurt them or make slaves of them—unless and until his superiors told him to. And once again the Indians received a lecture about the Christian religion; this time, inevitably, the physical and spiritual terrors facing the unwilling were emphasised a bit more. Nonetheless, according to Cabeza de Vaca, the positive part of the message was much appreciated and responded to with enthusiasm.

"Melchior Diaz told the interpreter to speak to the Indians in our name and say that he came in the name of God, Who is in heaven, and that we had travelled the world over for many years, telling all the people we met to believe in God and serve Him, for He was the Lord of everything upon earth, Who rewarded the good, whereas to the bad ones He meted out eternal punishment of fire. That when the good ones died He took them up to heaven, where all lived forever and there was neither

hunger nor thirst, nor any other wants etc.; only the greatest imaginable glory. But that those who would not believe in Him nor obey His commandments he thrust into a huge fire beneath the earth and into the company of demons, where the fire never went out, but tormented them forever. Moreover, he said that if they became Christians and served God in the manner we directed, the Christians would look upon them as brethren and treat them very well, while we would command that no harm should be done to them; neither should they be taken out of their country, and the Christians would become their great friends. If they refused to do so, then the Christians would ill treat them and carry them away into slavery.

To this they replied through the interpreter that they would be very good Christians and serve God.

Upon being asked whom they worshipped and to whom they offered sacrifices, to whom they prayed for health and water for the fields, they said, to a man in Heaven. We asked what was his name, and they said Aguar, and that they believed he had created the world and everything in it.

We again asked how they came to know this, and they said their fathers and grandfathers had told them, and they had known it for a very long time; that water and all good things came from him. We explained that this being of whom they spoke was the same we called God, and that thereafter they should give Him that name and worship and serve Him as we commanded, when they would fare very well.

They replied that they understood us thoroughly and would do as we had told.

As soon as the Indians had left for their homes and the people of that province got news of what had taken place with us, they, being friends of the Christians, came to see us, bringing beads and feathers. We ordered them to build churches and put crosses in them, which until then they had not done. We also sent for the children of the chiefs to be baptized, and then the captain pledged himself before God not to make any raid, or allow any to be made, or slaves captured from the people and in the country we had set at peace again. This vow he promised to keep and fulfil so long until His Majesty and the Governor, Nuño de Guzman, or the Viceroy, in his name, would ordain something else better adapted to the service of God and of His Majesty.

After baptizing the children we left for the village of San Miguel, where, on our arrival, Indians came and told how many people were coming down from the mountains, settling on the plain, building churches and erecting

crosses; in short, complying with what we had sent them word to do. Day after day we were getting news of how all was being done and completed.

Fifteen days after our arrival Alcaraz came in with the Christians who had been raiding, and they told the captain how the Indians had descended from the mountains and settled on the plains; also that villages formerly deserted were not well populated, and how the Indians had come out to receive them with crosses in their hands, had taken them to their houses, giving them of what they had, and how they slept the night there. Amazed at these changes and at the sayings of the Indians who said they felt secure, he ordered that no harm be done to them, and with this they departed. May God in his infinite mercy grant that in the days of Your Majesty and under your power and sway, these people become willingly and sincerely subjects of the true Lord Who created and redeemed them. We believe they will be, and that your Majesty is destined to bring it about, as it will not be at all difficult."

Cabeza de Vaca saves one of his most remarkable statements till near the end.

"For two thousand leagues did we travel, on land, and by sea in barges, besides ten months more after our rescue from captivity; untiringly did we walk across the land, but nowhere did we meet either sacrifices or idolatry."

Comments on the account

Examining this account, one can see that Cabeza de Vaca was enabled to make himself useful, during the eight years that he spent with Indian communities, in three ways.

Firstly, he did heavy manual labour. Somebody had to do it, and Cabeza de Vaca was surely a robust addition to the normal labour force of women and old men. The younger Indian men were profoundly averse to manual occupations: working made a man unbearably hungry and spoiled him for hunting.

Now, as a matter of fact, the last thing any Spaniard wanted to do in America was to end up working manually. For Cabeza de Vaca as a *hidalgo*, it would not have been normal even in Spain. He nonetheless found he could do it if he really had to. One might see this as slavery, as he sometimes does himself. But maybe if he had wandered less between tribes and tried harder to assimilate, he might in time have achieved the exempted status—and the authentic visceral horror of work that went with it.

Secondly, he was useful as a trader.

There was so much conflict between the Indian communities that no ordinary Indian could have been credible in the merchant's role. In territories where Spaniards had not yet been seen, Cabeza de Vaca was not recognisably anyone's enemy. (He did the job so well that he feels a need to explain himself: my real motive, he says, was to see how far I could go.)

His third role is the most interesting. Like everyone else, the Indians wanted the best possible relationship with the gods, or (since Cabeza de Vaca says he never came across idolatry) let's call them the powers of good and evil fortune. To facilitate this was the task of the medicine man. Evidently the Indian medicine men, who make an impressive showing in their Spanish colleague's account, understood that the Spaniards could make large contributions in their own field of expertise. Far from resenting them as competitors, they took the Spaniards to lodge in their own quarters, explained to them why they should begin healing, and arranged for material pressure of the most effective kind when the Spaniards showed reluctance. Making all due allowances for Cabeza de Vaca's gifts as a storyteller, the experiment seems to have been a success. It appears that during the last years of their stay among the Indians the four Spaniards were being led around as celebrities and supermen of the medical art, rather as Jesuits were brought in to conduct spectacular missions in this or that Catholic diocese.

One could draw some conclusions from this. Just as the Druids of Ireland, according to Eugene O'Curry and myself, had once felt a need for a more powerful religious system, but without wishing to abandon all that was their own, it appears that the guiding minds in those Indian communities that Cabeza de Vaca encountered felt a need for more powerful spiritual resources. Anyone who could supply those would be met with receptive goodwill. The peacefully-preached Catholicism advocated by Bartolomé de Las Casas had a good deal going in its favour. Of course, once the Indians made it their own, this Catholicism might turn out rather odd (like Catholicism in Ireland), if judged by a strict Roman standard. But as preacher after preacher would complain for centuries to come, Catholicism among the Indians would be odd in any case. Las Casas-style Catholicism might still have achieved an unmatched pre-eminence, but without the destructive

long-term effects on the native Indian populations resulting from the violent imposition and maintenance of Christian power.

Juan F. Maura is irritated by supercilious Anglo-Saxons commenting on Spanish history, and understandably so. Would the Indian populations of Latin America have done better, he asks, if they had come under the rule of the British? Surely, a glance at the history of North America suggests that they would actually have fared worse? The native Indian populations would now be much smaller, and the Creole populations would be smaller also, since the Anglo-Saxons (at least since they took their Puritan turn) did not like to mix.— Those are valid points. But they should not cloud the issues which were raised in Spain and Spanish America in the early 16th century, before the Anglo-Saxons had yet shown what they were capable of doing to large parts of the world.

In the final article of this series I will try to say more on these matters.

SOURCES

The original of the *Shipwrecks* and the *Commentaries* is in Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios y comentarios* (Madrid 1922). There have been many English translations of the *Shipwrecks* (the first appeared in 1626). The version used here is by Fanny Bandelier, *The Journey of Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca and His Companions from Florida to the Pacific* (New York 1905). Fanny Bandelier ignores the chapter divisions in the original, as I do also. The sections quoted here are all in sequence, except for some small fragments.

Juan F. Maura, *El gran burlador de América: Álvaro Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca* (Valencia 2011) has much interesting information, though it's more concerned with Cabeza de Vaca in the River Plate.

Notes given here are for matters referred to in the introduction.

"grant proposal": Maura p. 16.

"the author of the *Shipwrecks*...": *ibid.* p. 281.

"a Christian martyr who...": *ibid.* p. 251.

"Cabeza de Vaca the conquistador...": *ibid.* p. 9.

"so there would not be great butchery": *Naufragios y comentarios* p. 217.

Captive women were treated well: *ibid.* p. 201.

"The Guaycurú women have more liberty...": *ibid.* p. 219.

1. Róisín Dub.

Δ Ρόισίν ná bíoð brón ort fé ar éiriş òuit,
 Tá na bráit̃re as teact̃ ear sáile is iad as triall ar muir,
 Tioct̃aio do p̃ardún ón b̃p̃ára is ón Róim̃ anoir,
 Is ní sparál̃far f̃ion Spáinneac̃ ar mo Róisín Dub̃.

Is fada an réim do liz mé ó inné so dt̃í inniu,
 Trasna sléib̃te so ndeac̃as léi fé seolta ar muir,
 Is an éirne do cáit̃ mé de léim é şio mór é an sruc̃
 Is bí ceol tead̃ ar şac̃ taob̃ díom is mo Róisín Dub̃.

M̃airb̃ tú mé, a br̃ideac̃, is nár̃b̃ f̃earr̃de òuit,
 Is so b̃fuil m'anam istis̃ i ñşean ort 's ní inné ná inniu;
 O'f̃ás tú las̃ añb̃fann mé i ñşné is i şruc̃ -
 Ná feall orm is mé i ñşean ort, a Róisín Dub̃.

Şiub̃al̃fainn f̃éin an drúct̃ leat̃ is f̃ásaiş şuire,
 Mar şuil so b̃faişinn rún uait nó páirt̃ dem coil̃.
 A cr̃aioib̃ín cum̃ra, şeall̃ais doim̃sa so raib̃ şrá asat̃ dom -
 'S şurab̃ í f̃ior-scoct̃ na Muim̃an í, mo Róisín Dub̃.

Tá mbead̃ seisreac̃ asam creab̃fainn in as̃aiò na şnoc̃,
 Is óẽañfainn soiscéal̃ i lár an aif̃rinn do mo Róisín Dub̃,
 Óẽarfainn p̃os̃ ton cáilín óş a b̃ẽarfad̃ a h̃óise òom,
 Is óẽañfainn cleas ar cúl an leasa le mo Róisín Dub̃.

Deiò an éirne 'na tuilt̃ib̃ tréana is réab̃far cnoic̃,
 Deiò an f̃arr̃aize 'na toñtaib̃ dearş̃a is doirt̃fẽar fuil̃,
 Deiò şac̃ şleann sléib̃e ar fuo éireann is móinte ar criç̃,
 Lá éis̃in sul a n-éas̃faiò mo Róisín Dub̃.

Same-Sex Marriage

W.T. Cosgrave
 Mary O'Rourke
 Kierkegaard

Same-Sex Marriage

After a long string of court victories, the American campaign to redefine marriage has lost a major case in the powerful US Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit. The decision will have far-reaching consequences.

At recent referenda in the states of Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee, clear majorities of voters supported natural marriage. However, activist judges in lower courts subsequently ruled that these referenda decisions were unconstitutional, effectively allowing marriage to be completely redefined to include same-sex couples.

In response to these court decisions, an appeal was made to one of America's most senior courts, the Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit. Last week, this court overturned the lower court rulings and upheld the original referenda decisions in favour of man-woman only marriage in the four states under its jurisdiction.

The 6th Circuit decision follows two other Federal Court decisions in Louisiana and Puerto Rico that upheld man-woman only marriage and rejected same-sex marriage.

A few points about the US judicial system help to explain the importance of the 6th Circuit decision.

The US has 10 Circuit Courts of Appeal, each covering a designated cluster of states.

They are considered among the most powerful and influential courts in the US, because of their ability to set legal precedents in regions that cover millions of Americans. They have strong policy influence on United States law.

The 6th Circuit's decision—in favour of natural marriage for Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee—places it in direct conflict with contrary decisions of the 4th, 7th, 9th and 10th Circuit Courts.

These latter courts had ruled in favour of redefining marriage in about two dozen states by overturning state

referenda/legislation that had defined marriage as being between one man and one woman only.

It now appears that the conflicting decisions between these powerful courts will be taken to America's highest court, the US Federal Supreme Court.

Until now, the Supreme Court has refused to intervene in decisions by the courts of appeals involving the definition of marriage.

The Court says that people don't "need the government's encouragement to have sex" or "to propagate the species", but people "may well need the government's encouragement to create and maintain stable relationships within which children may flourish".

This need for marriage policy is based on human nature:

"It is not society's laws, or for that matter any one religion's laws, but nature's laws (that men and women complement each other biologically), that created the policy imperative."

The Court has also answered the argument that banning same-sex couples from marriage is like banning a black person from marrying a white person. This referred to a time in American history, not so long ago, when interracial marriage was prohibited in some states.

As the Court rightly notes, when the US Supreme Court struck down bans on interracial marriage in 1967, it "addressed, and rightly corrected, an unconstitutional eligibility requirement for marriage; it did not create a new definition of marriage".

The Court goes on to acknowledge that same-sex couples have experienced unjust discrimination under some laws, but marriage laws are not a form of discrimination against such couples:

"We also cannot deny that the institution of marriage arose independently of this record of discrimination. The traditional definition of marriage goes back thousands of years and

spans almost every society in history."

The court has argued that the political process should be respected, saying that it "is dangerous and demeaning to the citizenry to assume that we, and only we [i.e., the judges], can fairly understand the arguments for and against gay marriage".

What happens to marriage next in America will depend on what decisions are made by the U.S. Supreme Court. (*News Weekly*, Melbourne, 22.11.2014)

W.T. Cosgrave

"Professor Michael Laffan said his research into one of the founders of the State had revealed 'a much more rounded figure, although he could be ruthless also'. During the Civil War, W.T.'s government imprisoned around 10,000 anti-treaty soldiers 'to save the three million people in the country', W.T. had said" (*Irish Independent*, 14.12.2014).

"Cosgrave's hard-line stance coincided with that of cabinet colleagues, but it was also consistent with his views before he became Chairman of the Provisional government. Despite his mild manner his approach was unyielding, and he was determined that there would be no compromise, no 'armed truce'. In an interview towards the end of the conflict he declared bluntly 'I am not going to hesitate if the country is to live and if we have to exterminate ten thousand Republicans, the three millions of our people is bigger than this ten thousand'. He must have found it reassuring that the government's aim was to enforce and carry out 'the Law of God' in Ireland. In Reading Jail in 1918 his fellow-prisoners were reported to have given him the nicknames 'Gentle Willie' and 'Holy Willie'. there was little sign of gentleness now." (*Judging W.T. Cosgrave*, Michael Laffan, Royal Irish Academy, 2014).

Mary O'Rourke:

"I am always disturbed that Micheal Martin, as leader of the party, never stands up for Brian or defends his memory in Dail Eireann"

(*Brian Lenihan: In Calm and in Crisis*. Edited by Brian Murphy, Mary O'Rourke and Noel Whelan, Irish Academic Press. 2014).

Kierkegaard:

"Life has to be lived forwards but can only be understood backwards": Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813, 1855) Danish Philosopher.
