

Church & State

# **An Irish History Magazine**

*And Cultural Review Of Ireland And The World*

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## **1916: Just War?**

**Shaw, Casement, Connolly & WW1**

**Life In Harland & Wolff**

**Cora Hughes**

**Petain & De Gaulle**

**Spanish Colonial Debate**

**Solzhenitsyn**

### Just War

Sinn Fein was put in the shade by the celebration of the Centenary of the 1916 Rising put on by the Establishment parties of the state. The purpose of the official celebrations was to put Sinn Fein in the shade by putting on as a State event the kind of celebration that Sinn Fein would have put on, if the State Establishment had held to its original intentions. The original State plans for the Centenary would have handed the Celebration to Sinn Fein. That much became evident a year ago. Fine Fail and Fianna Gael therefore shrugged off their problematic 'maturity' and put on a display of being Sinn Fein for the purpose of marginalising Sinn Fein on the day.

Opinion-makers in the media—ponderous creatures—were upset by this sudden reversion to irresponsibility by the post-national Establishment. They had been preparing the way for a doleful, guilt-ridden act of repentance, and they could not bring themselves to be joyful at the drop of a hat. Their hefty incomes are guaranteed against the fickle moods of the populace. Their mandates come from another source, so they could stick with the agenda that was set a couple of years ago, before the politicians they served thought it expedient to carry favour with the populace.

*"To Question 1916 Is To Be Found Guilty By Some Of Un-Irish Activity: Facing up to unpalatable truth is part of accepting who we truly are"* (P. McGarry, *Irish Times* Religion Correspondent, 5.4.16).

*"Rising Led To Endless Conflict, says Bruton: Children should also learn about the work of Redmond, says former Taoiseach"* (*Irish Times* 29.3.16).

*"Time For Bishops To Speak Out On Violence Of 1916: Ireland has paid a high price for their hesitation to separate Jesus and Pearse"* (Seán O'Connell, *Irish Times*, 8.3.16).

*"Easter Rising Was Not A 'Just War—and it gave a false legitimacy to IRA"* (David Quinn, the Thatcherite Catholic guru, *Irish Independent*, 8.3.16).

*"Commemoration's Link With IRA Being Ignored: The heroes of 1916 put in circulation a death franchise which continues to be traded in Ireland to this day"* (Wesley Boyd, a former head of RTE, *Irish Times* 31.3.6).

*"President Fails To Deal With Pearse's Lack Of Mandate": The President should have told us that Connolly was behaving in defiance of all conventions of war at the time. Alas, he did not"* (Eoghan Harris, intellectual disciplinarian of the Official IRA in its flash-in-the-pan, unmandated terrorist war of the early 1970s, *Sunday Independent*, 3.2.16).

*The Corkman* pulled itself back from the brink of concern, with the result that it published a truly subversive editorial on March 31st: *"1916 Rebels Rose Without Mandate But Not Without Justification"*—A justified rebellion without a mandate! Could any idea be more shocking to our right-thinking official world?

One of the Fergal Keanes—the BBC one, the one with the OBE, the sanctimonious one—had an article with a very long title in the *Sunday Independent* on March 20th. Its sub-heading said: *"we cannot forget the link between 1916 and 1969"*.

*"The Proclamation Is Fanciful, Evasive And Presumptuous: The Easter Rising was a malign act of propaganda that deformed Irish politics for generations to come, says Professor Liam Kennedy"* (*Irish Independent*, 13th January).

*"I Benefit From The Bloodshed Of 1916, But Still I Will Not Celebrate It"*, Victoria White in the *Irish Examiner* on March 24th. *"I thought that a far more nuanced approach would be taken."*

\*

The mediaeval notion of *"just war"* has been bandied about with regard to the Insurrection. That notion had some effective meaning, perhaps, when there was a Roman Catholic structure for public life in Europe, with two sources of authority.

We took notice of the two thousandth anniversary of the death of the Emperor Augustus a couple of years ago, and commented on the continuing influence of the Empire he established and on the internal division of power within that Empire that came about after the Emperor Constantine established a form of Christianity, that had been put through the mill of Hellenistic philosophy, as the religion of the state, after the primitive impulse of the Roman Republic became inadequate for what Rome had become.

It was from the adoption of Christianity by the Roman Empire that the idea of the Church and the State as a combination of distinct things came about. When the unity of the Empire was broken, and the development towards the modern European nations began, the Roman Church kept the ideal of unity alive, and it exerted some influence over the affairs of the developing nation states. And it was as an attempt to moderate the conflicts of the nation states that the theology of the *just war* was founded. The international Church retained continuing influence within the post-Imperial states and, from its directing centre at Rome, it tried to subordinate their conduct to a kind of law.

While the duality of Church and State remained, there were sanctions that the supra-national Church could apply against the rulers of states which it judged to be out of order.

The purpose of the Reformation—of the only part of it that really affected us, the English Reformation—was to end that duality of Church and State, under which the national State was subject in some degree to the international influence of the Church. The English Reformation established an absolute nationalist unity of Church and State, in which the Church was absolutely subject to the State, and was its instrument.

The English Reformation was an act of the State. It did not take the form of adopting a new religion that had grown up within the society. The new religion was a construction of the State.

The first act of the State was to criminalise the old religion which connected national life with Rome. Inventing a new religion to serve the State came afterwards.

The reason usually given for the Penal Laws in Ireland was that the new, absolutely nationalist, English State, could not tolerate under its Imperial sovereignty a supra-national form of religious belief. The Irish, by virtue of being Roman Catholics, were divided in their allegiance, because they recognised two distinct sources of legitimate authority, and one of those sources lay outside the Empire. It was therefore necessary to the Empire that Roman Catholics should cease to exist within its realm. Loyalty could only be relied upon when subjects recognised the State as the source of all authority spiritual and temporal.

When a State is only capable of fighting *just wars*—as is the case with the British State—then the term "*just war*" is only a long-winded way of saying "*war*". And a State which is a comprehensive political/moral unity can only fight *just wars* because its policy is always moral and its morality is always politic.

There is not within the British State any authoritative body capable of judging any of its wars to be *unjust*. The business of the State Church is to bless the wars fought by the State, not to sit in judgment on them. And, to ensure that this was so, the Anglican Church was not allowed to assemble and sit in Conference at all during the generations when the State was making its way to world dominance.

As the force of religion declined in social life, the Anglican Church was allowed to hold Conferences and to discuss things in general—but we are not aware that the Archbishop of Canterbury has ever declared a war waged by the State to be unjust: not even the purely destructive wars of recent years, which killed off viable secular States in Iraq and Libya, in which Christianity was protected, and threw society into a condition of fundamentalist religious war.

In its relations with European states, in which an element of dual power still existed, the British Empire sometimes aligned itself with the Pope for the purpose of disrupting a Catholic state with which it was at war, but it did so while persisting with the suppression of Catholicism in its own realm. The most notorious instance of this as far as Ireland is concerned was the alliance of William of Orange with the Papacy against Louis XIV of France. It is said that this led to bells being rung in Rome to celebrate William's victory at the Boyne.

The Penal Las against Catholicism were the fruits of that victory in Ireland.

The ground of that alliance was the national development of France during the long reign of Louis XIV. Roman influence on the Church in France was being curbed and a Gallican variant of Catholicism was being cultivated by the French State, which did not please the Pope. Thus the absolutely nationalist British State was aligned with Rome against nationalist development in France.

A century later Britain was again aligned with Rome against Napoleonic France, which carried Gallicanism a step further and which was spreading the ideas of democracy and nationality around Europe—and in Spain Britain even went to the length of supporting the restoration of the Spanish Inquisition.

The Bourbon Monarchy and the Roman Church were restored in France in 1815 but the roots didn't take. Then, after its failed war of aggression against Prussia in 1870, France finally discarded both monarchy and Napoleonic Empire, and became doggedly Republican. It suppressed the Church by Secularisation, allowing it only a very limited existence under license. And it made an alliance with England—the immemorial enemy—for the irredentist purpose of making war on Germany in order to regain the mixed territories of Alsace and Lorraine which it had lost in the 1870 war of aggression.

Italy was brought into the Great War with the offer of large tracts of Austrian territory. Both the Vatican and the Italian Socialist Party opposed Italian entry into the War. And so, for the first time since the 17th century, England found itself opposed to the Vatican in a major war.

The Vatican did not see the Great War as a just war. It used its influence to try to bring about a negotiated settlement. Britain insisted that the War must continue until the German,

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Austrian and Turkish States were destroyed—and it insisted that the Vatican must have no part in the Peace negotiations.

(If Britain was engaged in an unjust war in Europe, can a rebellion against Britain in Ireland be described as unjust? And how could Redmondite recruiting for the British war be just?)

The era of general nationalism was then inaugurated by the nominal regimenting of the world into a League of Nations. But a universal League of nations living harmoniously was not a practical possibility in the era of capitalist Imperialism. And Britain made clear from the start that its worldwide Empire was going to remain in business independently of the League.

Twenty years later Britain launched another World War, without consulting the League. That War ended with the division of the world between Russia, which defeated Germany after Britain had withdrawn from battle, and the United States, which in 1944 hustled Britain back to France and Western Germany before the Russian forces could arrive there. A new world organisation was set up, the United Nations.

The United Nations abolished the appearance of equality of national states that had characterised the League. It was, openly, a Great Power arrangement of the world. It was set up by Russia and the United States, each of which insisted that its absolute sovereignty should be beyond the power of the UN to infringe upon, or even to discuss. Britain was included as a third Great Power, though it had become a dependency of the USA in the course of the War. And two others were added for the sake of appearance: France, which was allowed to restore itself as an Empire, and China, which the USA had come to regard as its client state, but which was to become Communist within three years. Those five states, which have Permanent Seats on the Security Council, are exempt from the authority of the United Nations.

Insofar as the idea of *unjust war* has any meaning in the world of the United Nations, it means a war which all five Powers condemn. Any one of them can prevent any war from being condemned. And a war waged by any of them cannot even be put on the agenda of the Security Council to have its morality discussed. (The General Assembly is irrelevant as it has no executive authority.)

\*

The *Irish Catholic* published a discussion of whether the 1916 Insurrection was a "*just war*"—or, rather, it published two monologues on the question, one saying Yes and the other No (17.12.15).

The answer 'No' is given by a Jesuit Professor at the Loyola University in Chicago. He deploys the four tests laid down by St. Thomas in the world of the High Middle Ages—when the possibility of Universal Monarchy passing judgment on such things according to a credible form of law and consensus of morality had not yet been reduced to fantasy.

Fr. Murphy SJ says that the first test is that non-combatants must neither be targeted nor endangered: and that the Insurrection did both, by killing non-combatants deliberately and by fighting in a city. We assume then, that Fr. Murphy has condemned the US War on Japan, in which two Japanese cities were deliberately blown to smithereens just to speed up Japanese surrender and possibly save the lives of some American combatants, as unjust?

The second test is hope of success. How does he know what hopes Connolly had? Napoleon's maxim was "*you engage and then you see what can be done*". And it was certainly a possibility that the general insurrection, countermanded by MacNeill, would take off when Dublin acted. In the event, it took three years for the consequences of MacNeill's action to be overcome and for the consequences of what Connolly and Pearse did to take effect.

The third test is competent authority, but he engages in a bit of insurrection of his own in this matter by taking it that the competent authority was not the Prime Minister but the leader of the Home Rule Party, which had always refused to undertake responsibility for the governing of the only state that existed.

Fr. Murphy confers on Redmond the right to make war on Britain. But this is a right that would not have been conferred on him, even if the Home Rule Act had been implemented instead of being buried. And it was a right he had said he did not want: he wanted Ireland to remain a militarily subordinate region of Britain.

The competent authority of the time was the British Government, and we must agree that Pearse and Connolly neglected to seek its permission to make war on it. ('Democracy' as a possible source of authority is a non-runner at that point, because the state was not democratic in 1916.)

The fourth test is 'just cause', and Fr. Murphy says the only just cause for war

on the part of a subordinate population is Government aggression against it, "*eg genocide*". It is true enough that British policy in Ireland had ceased to be genocidal in the way that it used to be, though it still counted on a high rate of emigration from Ireland as being a precondition of stability. And British authorities saw the reduction of emigration opportunities (other than Enlistment) caused by the War as a major cause of the War of Independence.

But the fourth test, as presented by Fr. Murphy, is paradoxical, because if only populations being subjected to genocide by the Government are entitled to wage Just War against it, that means that only populations that are incapable of waging war effectively are morally entitled to wage it! And surely that contradicts the second test.

Isn't it axiomatic that only populations that have been broken and rendered incapable of defending themselves can be subjected to genocide? One thing that the Insurrection demonstrated was that the Irish population was no longer the helpless thing that it had been in the 18th century and most of the 19th, and that genocide, even soft genocide, was off. And that means, according to Fr. Murphy's version of Aquinas, that it had lost the just cause for war against Britain that it had enjoyed when it was incapable of availing of it!

What Fr. Murphy does not consider is that Britain was itself engaged in an unjust war, condemned by Pope Benedict, and that it was threatening to conscript Irish manhood into fighting that war. Is there not a right of insurrection against being conscripted into an unjust war?

Fr. Joe McVeigh of the Clogher Diocese, says Yes, the insurrection was a Just War, without bothering to refer to the obsolete theological casuistry of a lost world. He says the Insurrection was—

"a courageous act of defiance that was justified by the circumstances in which they lived. I too have lived under a tyranny and understand what it is like to be on the receiving end of British military repression, humiliation and discrimination. I understand why many young people like the present Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness, were prepared to take up arms and risk their lives in pursuit of justice and freedom.

"The Easter Rising itself was doomed to fail militarily when Eoin MacNeill issued orders commanding that it be cancelled just days before it was to go ahead... They did not achieve then what they set out to do because they were

opposed from within and without..."

And:

"They were certainly not fighting to establish a narrow sectarian Catholic state like the one that emerged after the Treaty..."

\*

Full justice has not been done here to the awfulness of Fr. Murphy SJ's mediaevalist casuistry. It is a classical statement of the case that revisionists, with their narrow, pedantically-secularist, outlook, could only grope for. It deserves fuller treatment elsewhere. But one remark must be commended on here: "*Militarily insignificant, the rising had no political effect in Britain*".

A retired British War Minister (a position now called *Defence Minister*) made a television programme about the Rising, apparently relying on War Office documents of the time, never before made public. In it he speaks of "*the disaster suffered by Britain in Ireland*" in 1916. And he concludes:

"I'm convinced that the rebels made the modern history of this country. [He was filming in Dublin.] Without the Rising, Ireland would not have won her independence, her freedom, when she did and as she did."

Michael Portillo is a retired War Minister, unashamed of the Empire, who knows the English State from the inside, is interested in the causation, rather than the morality, of things, and undoubtedly understands very well the role of morality in English State affairs.

Irish politicians of the present generation have lost the ability to see the British State as it was and is, and Irish academics have been infected from Oxford with a subordinating moralism which makes them incapable of seeing things in the causative sequence of their development.

A retired British War Minister, who was once in the running to become Prime Minister, says that the Insurrection inflicted a disaster on the enemy. A very famous Dean of St. Paul's, Ralph Inge, who observed the course of things closely from a British ruling class viewpoint, wrote in the 1920s that the loss of Ireland was *the most shameful episode* in the history of the British State.

Portillo discussed with Dame Pauline Neville-Jones, a big-wig in British Intelligence, the failure to nip the Rebellion in the bud when the Government knew exactly when it was going to happen. Dame Pauline agreed that they had perfect Intelligence about it from a number of sources—they had "*unconscious*

*Intelligence*", as she put it, meaning Intelligence that the enemy could not suspect them of having. (They had spies within the Volunteer organisation and they had broken the German codes.)

So why did the authorities not act on this perfect Intelligence? She could think of no good reason. It was just inexplicable.

But the reason is obvious. Contempt! It was simply inconceivable to them that a people like the Irish should be capable of acting as the Insurrectionaries acted—and without asking for permission! So, let them parade, and posture, and pretend, and come to a realisation that an action such as they were fantasising about could not be undertaken by a people such as they were, whose independent public spirit had been broken by a long succession of defeats and humiliations.

Nor did Portillo and Dame Pauline mention the other reason for not rounding up the Irish Volunteers before the Easter weekend—the fact that doing so would certainly interfere with the recruiting for the British Army that was being done by Redmond's Home Rulers and their "*National Volunteers*".

The ordinary National Volunteers did not see the Irish Volunteers as their enemy. They had been spun a yarn by Redmond in 1914 about Britain's wars on Germany and Turkey having the object of establishing democracy and the rights of small nations as part of a new order of the world. Pre-emptive British action against the Irish Volunteers would have been disillusioning for the National Volunteers and would have upset the recruiting routine, at a moment when other reasons for disillusionment about the War were coming into play. The Government therefore took what seemed to be the small risk of letting the Irish Volunteers drill and parade in public, in order to maintain the smooth system of Home Rule recruiting for the war of destruction on Germany and the expansionist war on Turkey.

It was mistaken. But how was it to know that the pacifist effect of the Williamite Conquest on the Irish had worn off after two centuries and a quarter?

The Chief Secretary of the time—the Prime Minister of the Irish Government as a British Department of State—was a liberal intellectual who knew his Irish history, Augustine Birrell. He knew how to govern: he knew when to act and when to let things be: he knew that subordinated peoples must be allowed to bluster. He knew that the Irish, though nominally part of the ruling body of the Empire, were a

subordinated people close to the heart of Empire to which it was advisable under the circumstances to allow a great degree of extravagant bluster. And, as a literary man, he must have known the jingle about the Volunteers of the era of Grattan and Flood:

"They mustered and paraded  
Until their banners faded,  
Thus did the Volunteers."

Birrell decided to give the Volunteers the opportunity of doing so again. His decision was not to precipitate the situation by acting. He relied on two centuries of British experience in handling the Irish. He knew that the mere Irish could not do what the Anglo-Irish Volunteers of the Grattan period failed to do. He knew that it was beyond their capacity to make a voluntary decision to commit their drilled parading Army to war.

"*In the beginning was the word*":  
Faust toyed with that idea, but dismissed it: "*In the beginning was deed*".

The Irish had words in superabundance. They had words for every occasion. They were eloquent about the wrongs of Ireland down the ages. They had been the verbal entertainers of the English for two centuries after Puritanism had undermined the capacity of the English to entertain themselves. But the English monopolised the power of decisive action cold-bloodedly undertaken for a purpose.

Kipling knew it all:

"The Celt in his variants, from Bulith  
to Ballyhoo,  
His mental processes are plain—  
one knows what he will do,  
And can logically predicate his  
finish from his start;  
But the English—ah, the English!—  
they are quite a race apart."

(*The Puzzler: Actions And Reactions.*)

The Irish might plan but they could not act. It would be rash to act against their plans. Better let them wither in the mind, and demoralise it. And they would wither when the moment of decision came and doubts were maximised.

The Duke of Alva had laid his plans well against Egmont—but plans do not carry one through the moment of decision:

"The hand of the clock moves on.  
Let it travel another hour and a great work is done, or is lost—and lost irrevocably for the opportunity cannot recur. I had weighed up everything and resolved in my own mind what should be done. But now, in the

decisive moment when I am called upon to act, I am distracted by conflicting doubts, placed in a lottery between the two evils of action and inaction. If there is a destiny that controls these things, it keeps its secret still, and I am left groping for the unknown" (Goethe, *Egmont*, Act IV, more or less).

De Valera, who had considerable existential experience of decision-making, spoke about it with regard to O'Connell, in connection with a Young Ireland criticism of him, in September 1945:

"How some writers have blamed O'Connell for not having taken Cloncurry's advice years before to go for 00-9000 Repeal, when he was starting the agitation for Catholic Emancipation. It is not easy to give a fair judgment of O'Connell's decision. The Irish people was prostrate. Any serious attempt to repeal the Union meant rebellion and warfare and that required careful military preparation. How, in the light of the experience of our own lifetime could one say that any attempt at repeal would have succeeded? Consider how much it cost in the Fenian efforts, and subsequently from the first organisation of our Volunteers in 1913 to the sacrificial Rising of 1916, add to that the passive resistance Movement with imprisonment and death by hunger strikers, the renewal of guerilla warfare and measures taken against us. Then again the World in our time had been propoganded for the Cause of small nations and we had our race widely organised and our publicity machine working effectively. In view of our own experience can we blame O'Connell in his own time for aiming at the thing he felt could be achieved and thus giving our people some chance of rising from their knees? Decisions, to anyone who has witnessed the most crucial moments in a great struggle, are mysterious in their making and in their consequences" (This was found in the De Valera Papers when they were safe, and accessible, in a monastery at Killiney, many years ago.)

O'Connell had at first, in the early 1800s, been a Repealer, when Repeal was a movement of the Protestant Ascendancy trying to get back its Parliament, and O'Connell himself was a virtual Protestant. Protestant enthusiasm for Repeal died as the native population began to organise itself under the comparative freedom of the Union system.

Whether the populace could have been organised into a mass movement for Repeal if O'Connell had remained a Whig in Ireland, as he was in England, is one of the great imponderables. He

decided to go for Catholic Emancipation first, and he gained it with the implicit threat of civil war if it was refused. Having gained it, he switched the movement to Repeal, but with the Catholics having gained access to political power, Protestant enthusiasm for Repeal evaporated. And the Ulster Protestants, who had felt obliged by their own principles to support Emancipation (though with increasing reluctance as it approached) absolutely refused to join O'Connell in the Repeal movement. If one wants to find an origin for Partition in something other than the 1920 British Home Rule Bill, it lies in O'Connell's rupture with the Ulster Presbyterians in 1831.

In 1829 O'Connell pressed the issue to the brink of civil war and the Government gave way on Emancipation. In 1844 he had the country organised for Repeal—possibly nine-tenths of it—and he had a Parliament of substantial citizens (the Council of 100) ready to ensure an orderly transition, but in the battle of nerves it was he who gave way. The result was catastrophic. There is no knowing what the result would have been if he had not given way. And did he give way out of an open-minded calculation of things, or because his mind had congealed into fundamentalist pacifism, at least where Ireland was concerned?

Anyhow he did not act. And if it cannot be demonstrated that what followed was caused by his decision to give way, there are certainly no better grounds for thinking that it wasn't.

In 1916 MacNeill had the intention of leading his Army into battle in a war of Reaction, as befitted a Celt in Kipling's opinion. But would he have? "*Between the intention and the act, There falls the shadow*". And, if the British had decided to introduce Conscription in Ireland, they would have known what MacNeill thought his intention was, and would have understood that the Irish had a certain capacity for reactive action, and would have been prepared.

What upset the applecart was that Connolly and Pearse and a couple of thousand Volunteers engaged proactively in what was indisputably a purposeful act of war. And, even though the British, after six days of positional warfare, refused them belligerent status and insisted on unconditional surrender, they made an orderly surrender under command, leaving it to the British to cope with the consequences of their deliberate Irish act of war.

Michael Portillo appeared to be genuinely puzzled by the reference in the Proclamation to the "*gallant allies in Europe*". It was beyond all the preconceptions of his understanding to take it at face value as a statement of alliance with Germany in the World War. The opinion-formers he turned to for enlightenment—Kevin Myers and Robert Fisk—could not help him.

Fisk, Belfast correspondent of the London *Times* in 1974, wrote a book proving that the Unionist Strike against the way the Sunningdale Agreement was being implemented undermined the Union. He called it *The Strike That Broke The British In Ulster*. He then moved to the Middle East, where he conceived an irrational hatred of the Baath regime that was curbing religious fundamentalism and establishing liberal secular ground for life of the West European kind to be lived in Syria. But now he also seems to be against the force that has made a brave attempt to overthrow the hated Assad regime, because he tried to help Portillo by comparing the world view expressed in the 1916 Proclamation to that of ISIS, and not by way of praising it.

He explained that "*the gallant allies in Europe*" phrase as the device of a death cult to ensure that it was martyred:

"That was the death sentence. That killed them straight away. Why they signed their names to that! Was it really necessary to put in '*gallant allies*'. I can't believe it was, but they put it in. Pearse did anyway. There is a very odd parallel, and I don't wish to belabour the point, between the kind of cult of blood and martyrdom which we can read in the Proclamation itself and another cult which exists today in the Middle East, which I don't need to name—and other people's blood too."

Pearse was mad, of course! Therefore anything mad can be attributed to him. And it was obviously mad in 1916, in a world that had been thrown into chaos, to say where the signatories to the Proclamation stood in world affairs!

And the best kept secret of 20th century Ireland is that Connolly, the driving force for the Insurrection, was the active supporter of Germany in the World War from September 1914 onwards. He was primed and ready for class war and socialist revolution in August. He had got his Army from William Martin Murphy's Lock-Out and he was ready to take part in the revolutionary action against European War that the Socialist International was commit-

ted to. When the International collapsed in a heap, he reassessed the situation and he went to war in alignment with Germany, as did the only European Socialist leader with which he had expressed agreement—Joseph Pilsudski of the Polish Socialist Party.

He was pro-German on socialist grounds, on anti-Imperialist grounds, and on Irish nationalist grounds, all set out in *The Workers' Republic*.

But the historians have made a secret of it, beginning with Desmond Greaves of the Communist Party and continuing with Ruth Dudley Edwards of the revisionist Establishment. The fact is excluded from the biographies and the reference books.

Maybe, now that the Insurrection has been celebrated on its centenary instead of being apologised for, one of our many History Departments will summon up the daring to look at why the man who was chiefly responsible for the act of Insurrection thought a German victory in the World War brought on by Britain would be best for the world.

## VOX PAT

### Same Sex Marriage

There have been two same-sex marriages registered in Co. Cavan since last year's historic referendum, new figures show.

A total of 233 same-sex marriages have been registered across the Republic, according to the Irish Department of Social Protection, with one each taking place in counties Cavan and Monaghan.

The Marriage Equality Referendum was passed nationally in May, 2015, by a margin of 62.1% to 37.9%, with a much tighter margin closer to home, where the 'yes' side just shaded the result by 50.6%. The turnout in counties Cavan and Monaghan was over 57%.

The Marriage Bill was signed into law on October 29, 2015, by the Presidential Commission, made up of the Chief Justice, the Ceann Comhairle and the Cathaoirleach of the Seanad.

By comparison, since then a total of 126 same sex-marriages have been registered in the nation's Capital, Dublin at an average of almost eight a week.

Here in Ulster, Donegal saw the highest number of gay marriages take place with eight, while in the south of the country 21 marriages were registered in Cork and 14 in Limerick.

No marriages involving same-sex couples were registered in Clare. (*The Anglo-Celt*, Cavan-25.03.2016)

## Brendan Clifford

### Shaw, Casement, Connolly And The Great War

Fintan O'Toole wrote about G.B. Shaw and Casement for the 1916 Centenary edition of the *Irish Times*.

Shaw proposed, in effect, that Casement should not conduct a legal defence, but should make revolutionary speeches from the dock as an Irish nationalist rebel. And he wrote a Defence for Casement to perform.

It was highly improbable that an English Court would have allowed a German agent to give a theatrical performance of treason—an incitement to treason—at a moment when the War it had launched on Germany was in serious trouble and seemed to be heading towards defeat.

O'Toole doesn't mention the War. Nor does he mention the fact that Casement was a traitor not just because he made war on the Crown as an Irish Rebel when the Crown was in serious trouble with the War it had declared on a foreign enemy but because he had declared support for that enemy in the War, and had gone into alliance with it.

Casement had not gone to Germany as a neutral to appeal for military assistance against Britain, as Sean Russell did 25 years later: he was pro-German in the War. He had, as a senior British diplomat, seen Britain preparing to make war on Germany, and when it did so, he described the British act of war as *A Crime Against Europe*, and came out for Germany.

His articles exposing British preparations for war on Germany during the generation before 1914 were collected and published in independent Ireland before it began 'modernising' itself into historical mindlessness in the era of Jack Lynch and Conor Cruise O'Brien. That was the most important book on foreign policy ever published in Ireland. When politico-academic influence put it out of print, I put it back in. The Commercial distribution was, naturally, restricted by revisionist influence, but *The Crime Against Europe* remains available from Athol Books.

Shaw was right, of course, in holding that Casement didn't stand a chance in law. It is said that Casement, between

being sentenced and killed, regretted that he hadn't taken Shaw's advice. I'm sure it would have done him no good at all if he had. He was a serious person, committed to whatever he was engaged in, with no strain of paradoxicality in his make-up. He could not have performed the piece written for him by Shaw. And, if he could have, he wouldn't have been let.

He was Anglo-Irish, like Shaw, I suppose. But he was Anglo-Irish utterly unlike Shaw. He was of the Glens of Antrim, and had little in common with the Anglo-Irish of the Pale.

The Leinster Anglo-Irish are the failed English colony in Ireland. When they go to England they feel at home. (Shaw, like Elizabeth Bowen, certainly did.) But they are English who have been out in the Empire, raised, to some extent, amongst aliens. They are English who have seen England from the outside, and when they come within they retain a certain sense of detachment. They become participators but retain something of the attitude of observers. They are not fully absorbed into the world of appearances of the homeland. They live between their two worlds. But their two worlds are not Ireland and England. They are English Ireland and England.

Anglo-Ireland is the product of an English colony that failed. The United States is an English colony that succeeded. Each developed at a tangent from the Mother Country. In the 1780s the American colonies asserted their independence but the Irish colony only asserted Legislative independence. It might have had Executive independence by asserting it, but it shied at the prospect of having to cope with the teeming Irish on its own. It remained under the British Government for protection. It was half-baked. And it went mouldy. But it had become something distinctive in the English world during the century of its colonial dominance in Ireland, and that distinctiveness persisted during the century of its decay, and even into the 20th century. And, when they went home, no matter how much at home

they were, they remained slightly colonial—slightly alien.

I am much less familiar with the gentry of the Glens of Antrim. But those I know of are not flighty like the Palesmen. And I just do not see Casement performing Shaw.

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There is an aspect to the law affecting Casement's defence which O'Toole does not mention.

One of the ideological myths about English law is that the 'Cab Rank' principle applies in it. The barristers are sitting there in a row, like taxis outside a railway station, and are obliged to be of service to whoever comes along to them able to pay the fee. English law, which a close French observer described as a system of Chicanery, needs ideology like this to camouflage its reality.

In 1945, when Britain took part along with other Victors in establishing the Court of Victors to try the defeated under laws that did not exist, and with 'precedent' in the conduct of the Victors/Judges, ruled out of order, but with the trial procedure being that of adversarial English common law, the English Attorney General told the members of the English Bar that they must not act for the accused Germans. All of that made the Nuremberg Trials the greatest Show Trials ever held. As trials at law they were complete frauds. There were some American lawyers who still retained some respect for the form of law, and one of them said to a colleague who agreed to participate at Nuremberg that he heard he was going off to join a lynching mob.

America had retained some detachment from this second European War into which it had been drawn. But the English Bar was compliant and went along with the pretence that what was going on at Nuremberg was law.

And in 1916 there were no KCs in the English cab rank waiting to serve Casement.

What the interest of the State required with regard to Casement was the empty form of fair trial in which no matter of disturbing substance should be entered into the Defence.

No barrister wanted to take the case. The State, including the Law, was in war-mode, and representing the enemy was not the way to advance one's career. Tons of money were not available to compensate a high-flying barrister, who might have been able to introduce the substance of a political Defence, from the political fall-out that would follow a serious attempt to do it.

Serjeant Sullivan from Ireland, who was not an English KC, agreed to conduct a minimal defence as a service to the State, and he was rewarded for it.

Casement was a traitor to the Crown—there's no two ways about that. He was a servant of the Crown. He had accepted honours from the Crown. And, when the Crown went to war, he went into the service of the enemy, and tried to raise a military force in enemy territory for use against the Crown in Ireland. And then he tried to bring a shipload of enemy arms to be used by Irish rebels to make war on the Crown.

He was a traitor on two counts so a defence based on Irish national right would not have been enough for him. Most of the others in the leadership of the Insurrection were Irish national patriots pure and simple. They had never been in the service of the Crown, except in the sense of living in subjection to it. But Casement had made a career in the service of the Crown. He only became an active Irish national patriot late in life. And, if he did not become an active Irish patriot as a consequence of seeing that the British Empire was preparing to make war on the German Empire, and of concluding that the destruction of the German state by the British Empire would be bad for the world, then the two things happened together, simultaneously.

He became a traitor to the British Empire on international grounds—on the very ground on which the British State claimed to be acting when it declared war on Germany.

Britain claimed to be acting in defence of a supposed system of international law which Germany had supposedly broken by marching an Army through Belgium. Then, a few months later, it declared war on Turkey and set about conquering the Middle Eastern region of the Turkish Empire without giving a clear reason for doing so. And the following year it set about forcing the Greek Government to abandon its declared neutrality, declare war on Turkey, conquer the western region of the Turkish state, and base a revival of the ancient Greek Empire on the annexation of Asia Minor.

And, when the Greek Government resisted both the stick and the carrot, it was overthrown by direct British intervention and a Government was installed which declared war on Turkey—with catastrophic consequences for Greece a few years later.

Britain made war in the name of

International Law on two states which were obstructing its ambitions. It applied a test of absolute national sovereignty within its own sphere, while conducting that supposedly internationalist war, but it cultivated treason in the enemy states, particularly in Austria-Hungary, in the name of both International Law and National Right.

It lured Italy into the war as an ally by encouraging Italian irredentist claims on regions of the Austrian state. By a secret Treaty in 1916 it awarded the Italian state a territorial expansion up to the Alps, and across the Adriatic Sea to the Dalmatian coast, and various other odds and ends. Both the Vatican and the Socialist Party opposed Italian entry into the War. Entry was actively supported by the revolutionary socialist, Mussolini.

Traitors on the ground of patriotism were cultivated in the regions that Britain offered to transfer from Austria to Italy if Italy helped to defeat Austria. When Austria captured some of these Traitor-Patriots, tried them, and executed them, the British propaganda complained to High Heaven against the perfidy of it all.

That was the possible ground of a Defence of Casement's action, based on the contemporary reality of the War rather than on the parsing of some mediaeval document. It would no doubt have been ruled out of order, but even the denying of it would have made the State squirm.

It seems to have been this duplicity with regard to Traitor-Patriots that made elements of the British warmongering intelligentsia uneasy after Casement was sentenced to death and led them to sign a petition for reprieve.

The Crown countered this source of unease with another more powerful one. It privately showed Important People dirty photostats (or something of that ilk), suggesting that Casement was a Sodomite. (None of those 'diary' typescripts or photostats survived, to be compared with a document claimed to be Casement's Diary that was placed in the British Public Record Office more than 40 years later.)

Twenty-two years later, in 1938, there were Traitor-Patriots in Germany. They tried to come to an understanding with Britain about the treatment of Germany if they enacted a *coup d'etat* against Hitler if he moved on the Sudetenland. They got the self-righteous reply that Britain did not deal with traitors.

It did in 1916 when it wanted Austria weakened. It didn't in 1938—when it



wanted Germany - - - ?

The basing of a Casement Defence on British precedent with regard to treason in the War—*The War That Will End War*—would no doubt have been disallowed. But the attempt to enter it would have been an event.

(Thirty years later, when Russia, the USA and Britain set up the International Court at Nuremberg for the trial of Germans, the precedent of what the Allies who were sitting in judgement had done was ruled out of order in advance as a ground of German defence. The Germans were not tried under any actual laws, and the example set to the world by the judges was declared to be irrelevant to the Trials. And that remains the case essentially about International Law.)

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Sergeant Sullivan, who was strongly anti-Republican, and was only a Junior Counsel in England, though a KC in Ireland, enabled Casement to be hanged after the appearance of an English fair trial. A few years later he became a Judge in Ireland under the British Reign of Terror. Then, of course, he became a Treatyite. When the Treaty Party repudiated the Empire and the Crown he remained under the Crown. He went to England.

By comparison with the craven Irish, many of the Anglo-Irish showed spirit. Even Shaw did, in his way. But Shaw was just as Imperialist as Sullivan. And he was no more willing than Sullivan to make an issue of the Government's—the Crown's—hawking around dirty scripts in order to make sure that Casement could be killed without causing too much fuss close to the Mother of Parliaments.

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O'Toole is a theatre critic by vocation. He can burble on indefinitely about a play he has just seen. That is an art in itself. I first noticed him on Radio Eireann—Teilifis Eireann didn't reach Belfast—probably in the eighties, when he came hotfoot to Radio Eireann studios from the Abbey Theatre to report excitedly on performances of Yeats plays he had just seen. I had read the plays and not thought much of them, but I found it interesting to listen to O'Toole about them. But, when he was promoted into politics by the *Irish Times*, he lost his touch—like Shaw when he moved from diverting political flippancy to the drama of human emotions in the bourgeois world.

The drama of the bourgeois world had been written by Ibsen before Shaw

began. Shaw could write about Ibsen but could not write Ibsenite drama—and no more could James Joyce when he tried his hand at it with *Exiles*. *The Dolls House*, *The League Of Youth*, *The Enemy Of The People*, *John Gabriel Borkmann* etc.—in those plays the bourgeois world is represented: and subverted by representation

*All the world's a stage, and the men and women merely players*—a philosopher close to the source of political power in a period when society is being melted down and remade might see it like that. But the actor in the world must feel that he is grasping the substance of things and changing them irrevocably, in order to be effective.

Pearse may have had something of the stage actor in his make-up. I believe he produced plays at St. Enda's. He also had it in him to be a creator in the life of the world. He stood at the interface between the stage and the world. And, from that vantage point he wrote the one Irish poem in English that compares with the best that was written by the author of Shakespeare about this aspect of things. But, without the action of the soldier, "*on the bulks of actual things*", the dream would probably have remained a dream. And nobody cares to look too closely at Connolly.

O'Toole, an observer of theatre, stands back from action of both kinds, and confuses them when writing about Shaw and Casement—the stage actor and the actor in the world. Shaw was a gifted and relentless self-publicist whose plays caught the rising tide of Liberal Imperialism in the early 1900s and gave him status on the margins of the governing circle after 1905. I described him somewhere as the Court Jester of the Liberal Imperialist era in Britain. The Court Jester has the privilege of blurting out truths in a certain manner. That was the ground that Shaw had for presenting himself as a ruling force in the world.

O'Toole appears to have been taken by that presentation: or he continues to live in the world of theatrical representation when political history is supposed to be what he is writing about. The theatre is his world. A few years ago he came off-stage, proclaimed a revolution on the pavement outside Trinity College, and didn't seem to see that nobody noticed.

A lot of that kind of thing has gone on in Irish history, so it is perhaps appropriate that O'Toole should represent Ireland to the international media. But in 1916 the playacting, on which the British

administration relied, was brushed aside. And Yeats was so astonished that pimply-faced clerks, that he had looked down on patronisingly, should take themselves so seriously that they upset his appercart—by doing what he assumed it was the privilege of their betters to do—that he wrote some verses about the day when, instead of going to work, they went to war on their own account.

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Berthold Brecht had a theatrical device whose name I forget—the alienation effect?—by which he jolted the audience out of their absorption with the make-believe action on the stage and reminded them that it was only pretending. O'Toole needs to be jolted in the reverse direction:

"George Bernard Shaw was highly controversial and his skepticism about the first World War had outraged mainstream British opinion... And now he sat down to draft a dramatic monologue for a very specific actor. It was to be performed for a very small and select audience. And it had a precise purpose: to save a life...

"Shaw attempted in full seriousness, to get Casement to perform a script for the jury that would try him... The playwright's proven capacity to make an English audience feel and think that it did not want to feel and think would, through the voice of the accused, force an English jury to acquit an Irish traitor.

"Shaw did not think that Casement was right to forge an alliance with Germany. He was even more deeply opposed to what he saw as Prussian militarism than he was to the English ruling class. He would write in a letter of June 1917, that the Germans, if victorious, would show 'as ruthless a contempt for Irish as for Polish nationality'. But he did believe that Casement, as an Irishman, owed no allegiance to the British Empire" (*Bernard Shaw To Roger Casement: Put On The Performance Of Your Life*. IT 26.3.16).

(Does O'Toole not realise that the war to restore the Polish state was launched, with German and Austrian backing, in 1914, by an Army raised in Austria by Joseph Pilsudski, who was the only Continental Socialist with whom Connolly expressed agreement in both runs of *The Workers' Republic*?)

When did Shaw ever make an English middle class audience feel what it did not want to feel? He was their slightly shocking entertainer, taking them where they wanted to go. And he judged nicely at each stage how far they wanted to go. He put "*bloody*" on the

stage for them, making it respectable, but he did not chance his arm with "fuck". He was himself too English middle class, too much at home in his time and place, for that. He was safely shocking.

As between "*Prussian Militarism*" and the English ruling class, he acted for the latter against the former. His "*skepticism*" about the World War had to do entirely with the propaganda that was put out for mass consumption.

The pamphlet he wrote for the middle-class Liberals of the *New Statesman* told them that it was a war that had been planned by Britain to catch the Germans at a disadvantage. The official propaganda said it was a War that had been sprung on Britain by Germany when it broke international law, and that, but for the German march through Belgium, Britain would not have intervened. The *Times* had rebutted that kindergarten story long before Shaw did, explaining that it was a proper balance-of-power War—the kind of war that Britain had been committed to fighting in Europe ever since the aristocracy/gentry had undermined national monarchy in 1688 and set about forming themselves into a free ruling class under William and Anne, finally slotting themselves into place with a German-speaking King. It was about the principle asserted by Pitt the Younger during the War against the French Revolution that no European state of any consequence must be allowed to control "*the navigation of the Scheldt*", meaning the outlet of the Rhine into the sea.

The Belgian state was constructed around "*the navigation of the Scheldt*" for that purpose. It took the form of Catholic secessions. O'Connell supported it, to be the example of a modern Catholic state, but it came into being because Britain wanted it. And the example it set, when brought to light by Casement, was scandalous. It was the major slave state in the world in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Belgian King had a vast slave Empire in Central Africa. He was the King of a state without nationality. There were indisputably two nations in Belgium, Dutch and French, locked in conflict with each other under a veneer of religious unity.

Casement unmasked the Belgian Empire—or the King of Belgium's Empire—for a Liberal Party that had come to power after a long period of Unionist rule, while it was still feeling radical, liberal euphoria, and had not yet been brought to a sense of Imperial

responsibility. And it seems that the Foreign Office made use of Casement's report to ensure that Belgium would resist a German march-through in a Franco-German War. All was forgiven and forgotten when Belgium did that.

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Shaw came at the end of a long line of intellectuals from Ireland who played a part in English politics. The first was John Toland, a Catholic Gael from Donegal who underwent conversion to radical Protestantism in Derry in the 1680s and went on to become a high-ranking Whig pamphleteer, playing some part in working out balance-of-power strategy, and in organising the Hanoverian Succession. He was followed by Swift, a born Anglican Protestant who was a Tory and held him in contempt. Most influential of all was Edmund Burke. All were talented servants of the English ruling class. But, no matter how influential they became, they knew that they were not members of the ruling class. They mixed with it as if they were equals, but knew that they were prizefighters.

They resented their position but could not alter it. Swift was fobbed off with the Deanery of St. Patrick's after enabling the Tories to bring the War of the Spanish Succession to an advantageous conclusion when enthusiastic Whigs wanted to continue it as a mere war of destruction, and in his brooding resentment he sickened of the human race.

Burke, Swift and Toland were the most influential of those intellectuals. Shaw comes at the end of the line, with a weight something like that of Goldsmith and Sheridan rather than Swift or Burke.

His world was that of the old ruling class, which made ample space in which social inferiors could display their talents. His political function in the system was to imperialise the socialist movement. He was a lively spirit among the plodding Fabians, but in everything that mattered he was Fabian to the core. He supported the last straightforward war of conquest waged by the British Empire, the Boer War. That put him in tune with the group of Liberals that came out as Imperialist in the same war—Asquith, Haldane and Grey—and that gained command of the Liberal Party six years later.

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His "*scepticism about the first World War*" which "*outraged mainstream British opinion*" was no more than an expression of disagreement with the official account of the origin of the War as a war that "*Prussian militarism*" had forced on Britain. Maybe it did "*out-*

*rage*" a sliver of socialist opinion that wanted to continue living in a Gladstonian wonderland and would have preferred not to be told that the ruling class had prepared carefully for this war and had wrong-footed Germany into it at a critical moment, but that, although it was another balance-of-power war of the kind deplored by Gladstonian Liberalism, it was nevertheless a good and necessary war against "*Prussian militarism*".

What was this Prussian militarism? Shaw never explained. It could not be the Nietzschean infection of the post-1871 German state—called the German Empire because it was a state that included a number of Kingdoms—as many of his simple-minded colleagues believed. It could not be, because Shaw himself had made a point of being Nietzschean, at least for purposes of display, and he knew that Nietzsche had despised the German Empire.

So what was it? Was it anything more than the fact that the new German state had no natural borders on the East or the West, that there were two powerful Imperial states beyond the lines on the map which constituted those borders, that the French Empire had claims on it, and that the Tsarist Empire, having been defeated by Japan in the East, was looking Westwards with British encouragement, and that Germany therefore had to maintain a strong standing army, and that this Army, on which the existence of the state depended, was accorded prestige in the cultural life of the state?

Undoubtedly, the greater part of Germany became more military after the unification of 1871, achieved as a consequence of the French war on Prussia, than it had been before 1870. But, before 1870, the scores of small German kingdoms had been a battleground in wars between the surrounding Empires. Those kingdoms had united around Prussia—the only one of them that had the attributes of a modern European state—and had contributed to the maintenance of a national Army for the new national state. But the new German state was not a centralised bureaucratic state like France, Russia, and Britain. The kingdoms which had united to form the Empire retained considerable autonomy within it and maintained their own Armies as components of the Army of the state. In that sense Germany was militarised by unification into an Empire.

Becoming itself an Empire, it was no longer to be a mere battleground of Empires. It became a player in the game of sovereign states. It had affronted its

Western neighbour by becoming a sovereign state, and its Eastern neighbour (expansionist by nature) was looking Westwards. And so it needed to be always prepared for war, as they were.

Germany was Militarist only in the way that France and Russia were Militarist. And, if Britain was not Militarist, that was only because it was Navalist and had conquered the seas of the world. It did not need a large Standing Army for defence, therefore it did not raise one. When it raised an Army of millions, first by appeal and then by compulsion, that had nothing to do with defence.

The German Navy, about which there was so much British hysteria, was nowhere near a match for the Royal Navy. German foreign trade by sea was stopped in a few days following the British declaration of war. The mass British Army that was raised was an Army for a destructive conquest.

Casement had understood this to be the purpose of British diplomatic activity in the years before 1914, and he acted purposefully on that understanding when Britain intervened in the European War that it had nurtured. He declared support for Germany, argued that Germany represented the cause of civilisation in Europe, and that the cause of Irish independence would be best served by British failure.

Shaw's understanding of the origin of the War was not essentially different from Casement's, though it led him to active support for Britain.

The point of his *New Statesman* pamphlet about the War—which "outraged" only obsolete Liberal illusion—seems to have been to demonstrate that he was not taken in by the propaganda pap that was churned out for the masses. He said that his *Commonsense About The War* was inspired by Tom Paine's famous pamphlet for the American War, *Commonsense*, but it had the opposite purpose. Paine made a case against the Empire and joined the opposition to it. Shaw made a case for the Empire and was active in Imperialist recruiting. He would not insult his intelligence by pretending that Britain was an 'injured' innocent. It was the British Lion, the King of the Jungle, and it had timed its leap well.

Of course Shaw was a bit of an Irishman too. He had had to leave Ireland for England because England was English and Ireland wasn't—not quite, not yet. He was a master of English, therefore he had to be in England—which was a strange

thing for a Dublin intellectual to say in that generation when Dublin was awash with intellectuals, each with his mouth brimming over with English vocabulary. But it was sometimes useful, on the Continent, to be an Irishman.

And Shaw did not forget Ireland in 1914. His business in England was to apply cynical reason to the war propaganda for socialists, so that they would not fall away from the war effort if they saw that the official propaganda was unbelievable. In Ireland it was to act as intermediary between the Castle administration and the populace and attune the recruiting propaganda to the mentality of the Irish.

His former secretary, Mabel Mc Connell, wrote to him in December 1914:

"the majority of Ireland outside of Ulster is pro-German in this war. For sentimental reasons, hatred of England and love of a brave fighter, she necessarily is on Germany's side, and of course for the common sense reason that Germany holds the potentiality of nationhood for us. Since the war started Ireland has put aside the shabby little dream of paper freedom that was all Redmond could get from England and has seen a larger vision..."

Shaw replied, primly:

"Redmond may not be your ideal; but he is big enough to have done the right thing on this not very difficult occasion. In Ireland we have always suffered from a plague of clever fools saying the wrong thing in the most skilful way. When you get a stupid man who says the right thing with rhetoric enough to make himself listened to, be thankful for him... The day of small nations is past; indeed, except for nations still denied self-government, nationalism is a dead horse... Only as a member of a great commonwealth is there any future for us... We are a wretched little clod, broken off a bigger clod, broken off the west end of Europe ... We are capable of taking a very high degree of training: in fact, we are rather dangerous without it.

The "we" here is problematic. A South Dublin Englishman is writing to an Ulster Protestant. And Mabel had become Mrs. Desmond Fitzgerald, wife of the future Editor of the *Irish Bulletin*, and mother of the future Taoiseach, and more consistently Republican than either.

Shaw also recommended Horace Plunkett to her, "*the whitest man in practical politics at present*". But:

"A co-operative dairy leaves you cold: a romantic expedition to Berlin by a knight errant who should have gone to offer France or Belgium the

last drop of our blood delights you... I prefer the co-operative dairy and the knight errant who transfixes the giant instead of the distressed damsel..."

Alas for the South Dublin understanding of Ireland. A few years later the Slayer of the Prussian Giant was at war with the Co-op Dairies as organising centres of Republicanism. The new property-owning democracy received from Plunkett what they found useful and ignored the rest.

Mabel suggested that he should take up the cause of Ireland. He replied "*the place is too small for me*". But "*Ireland must have an ambassador in the great world*", and that was him. He was acting for Ireland in its best interests, and he knew where its best interests lay much better than it did itself:

"Consequently I have written to the Irish papers to the above effect generally, with the intention of setting back the pro-German propaganda in Ireland, and suggesting to the British Government that there are more tactful ways of encouraging recruiting than suppressing the Nationalist papers."

This is how he concludes what seems to have been his last letter to Mabel:

"I must break off now, having written far too much; but I want to rub your eyes for you and waken you up. Ireland is your plaything at present, because you are an educated woman trying to live the life of a peasant. You have put yourself out of reach of Beethoven and the orchestra; so I suppose you must have something to play with. But you shant play with ME, madam; and with that I beg to subscribe myself

Your most obedient  
G. Bernard Shaw"

(*Collected Letters*, Vol. 3, pp261,274).

Mabel paid no heed. The peasants revolted and formed their peasant state, making Shaw's Irishness nothing but a useful posture in the British game of attitudinising. He dragged his heels at every stage of the Independence process, and at the final stage in 1939 he declared support for British reconquest, bringing down on him a reprimand from the peasant intellectual, De Valera, for whom Ireland was big enough even though he had a mind that could cope with the mathematics of infinity.

And, during the generation when Irish independence was being constructed and consolidated, the radio era began, bringing the universal dimension of European culture—German culture of the 18th and 19th centuries—within the

reach of everybody. In becoming independent, Ireland cut itself off from nothing except the weight of English State propaganda.

In the early 1950s in Slieve Luacra I was familiar with Beethoven and Wagner from the radio. And I was familiar with Goethe and Schiller from books of an earlier era that were still circulating locally. It seems that nobody bothered with Shaw. I got his *Collected Plays* in a cheap edition published in London—and I can't recall that anything of his was ever published in Ireland. I found them entertaining to read, but when, in the late fifties, I saw a couple of them performed, it struck me that they were superficial verbal concoctions—chick-lit for a basically Puritan English middle-class that was losing itself in the course of inserting itself into the corridors of power in place of the authentic ruling class that had made the Empire. They were superficial literature for the era in which Imperialism became frivolous and bounded from World War to World War.

On August 12th 1914 Shaw wrote to Beatrice Webb (co-founder of the Fabian Society):

"It is by pure luck that we got the Belgium excuse for declaring war, as we should have had to fight just the same if no German military boot had touched Belgian soil. Now we have to sit down and consider the Treaty of Peace..."

And on August 26th:

"Bernhardi was reckless enough to show that England must smash Germany or Germany England, and that the vanquished would be annihilated as a Power..."

Belgium was the excuse for a war on Germany that would have to be fought anyway. It was well-known that, if Germany was caught in war between France and Russia, it would probably attempt a flanking move through Belgium in an attempt to deal with France before the immense Russian Army was brought to bear on it. It was discussed in the major Liberal papers in late July whether a German move through Belgium would warrant British war on Germany. The *Manchester Guardian* and *Daily News* were of the opinion that it would not. British intervention was described more or less in Casement's terms as a crime against Europe. (I quoted some of that discussion in the Introduction to a reprint of Charles James O'Donnell's *Lordship Of The World*.) But, when the German Army marched through Belgium and

Britain declared war, the Liberal papers promptly forgot all that they had just said on the issue. But Shaw still remembered a week later!

He must also have known that the Germans tried to get a clear statement from Whitehall on how the British Government would regard a German march through Belgium, and were effectively deceived into thinking that the Liberal Government was of the same opinion as the Liberal newspapers.

The "*Belgium excuse*" was far from being "*pure luck*". The Government needed it to facilitate war, and achieved it by diplomatic skill. It could have prevented the march through Belgium by saying that it would regard it as a reason for war, but that would have made it more difficult to overcome the Gladstonian opposition of the Liberal backbenches to what would have been an honest balance-of-power war.

The first German military demon of the British war-propaganda was a retired German Cavalry General, Frederic von Bernhardi, who in his retirement wrote a number of books in which he tried to warn German public opinion that it was living in a fools' paradise with regard to England.

Britain would not let itself be ousted by German enterprise from the position of primacy in the world market which it had established. Germany, in its economic development since unification, had become a major economic power in the world. It had become a World Power in that sense. It was therefore, whether it wished it or not, a rival to British dominance as *the* World Power. In order to survive, it must therefore prepare itself for the war that Britain would undoubtedly find a way of waging on it.

I do not have Bernhardi's books to hand, and it is a quarter of a century since I read them, but I believe that he summed up the German position around 1910 as being a choice of World Power or Downfall, meaning that Germany could only consolidate its economic position in the world by acquiring the military means of protecting it. And that meant being ready for war with Britain.

It was said in many of the British publications before 1914 that the British position in the world would only be maintained by destroying Germany, and the writers who said that were much more influential in the British Empire than Bernhardi was in Germany. The British war propaganda naturally did not publicise that overt British warmongering, while

publicising, and misrepresenting, Bernhardi's ineffectual warnings to the Germans. And *World Power Or Downfall* was of course presented as World Conquest or Downfall. And maybe that is what it meant in practice—but only if it was the case that Britain would not accept the existence of an equal in the world.

One of Bernhardi's books, published in German with the title, *Deutschland und der nächste Krieg* (Germany And The Next War), was translated and published in English with the title *England As Germany's Vassal*. There was nothing in the content of the book to justify the change of title.

Britain had been making detailed preparations for war on Germany for at least six years before 1914. The *War Book* being constructed by the Committee Of Imperial Defence was completed in July 1914. (It was a state plan for a war economy.) But, after August 4th, the political propaganda went into overdrive, presenting Britain as a peaceloving, unprepared victim. The masses were infected with a sense of outraged victimhood, and shepherded into a frenzy of Millenarian zeal for the era of perpetual peace that would arrive when Prussianism was dealt with. But the officer corps of the Army, which had to be able to use the millions in battle, needed to remain in possession of its senses. It had asserted its independence in the Curragh Mutiny affair a few months earlier, and it continued to understand the War on the terms on which it had made the secret arrangements for it with the French Army before 1914.

Major Street (who joined the Dublin Castle administration after the 1918 Election) explained the war for soldiers in a number of books published during the World War. In *The Making Of A Gunner* (1916) he wrote:

"A vital contest between two great nations or groups of nations has rarely or never been decided in less than a number of years... For this war, whatever causes may have underlain its beginnings, is an incident in the struggle for existence between two great races, ourselves and the Germans, and the existence of either involves its complete supremacy, and what great war or series of wars has ever been fought in which the final result was the equality of nations? Even if the present war were to end in a condition of equality, how long would such a condition last before the struggle renewed? The deeper seated causes of our quarrel with Germany are the same as those that swayed Rome and Carthage... Is it not fair to assume that its ultimate results must be the same?..."

"It may be said that this is nothing but Prussian Militarism, the very thing we are fighting to destroy, but, after all, is militarism such a terrible thing outside Germany, or even in it for that matter? Is it not rather a bogey used to frighten children by those who hardly understand what it means?" (p213/4. An extract from this book will be found in an Appendix to the Athol Books 2001 reprint of Major Street's *Administration Of Ireland, 1920*).

\*

I read Shaw's *Commonsense* in the late fifties, when I was a bus conductor in London. I had come to the conclusion that as a playwright he was a nine-days-wonder, and I never thought of him again for a few decades. When I did look him up again, I was almost shocked to find how active he had been in the destructive British war-effort against Germany.

That war might be described as a 'civil war within the mind of Britain', which in its understanding of the world had become heavily dependent on German intellect and culture—and within Shaw's own mind.

As Britain became the world-dominating Power in the second half of the 19th century, it ran out of perspective—as the Roman Empire did after it destroyed Carthage and was alone in the world. Scipio Africanus turned to Greece for renaissance, and the Graeco-Roman world began. England turned to Germany—but the Anglo-German world did not begin. What happened was that Germany was erected as the new Carthage to Britain's new Rome. And the Punic War of the new Rome was being preached by the 1890s.

The preaching was done discreetly in the influential, small circulation journals of the ruling class. The Germans were not to be alerted by mass propaganda. And so German influence continued to increase in the wider sphere right up to 1914.

Then the Punic War was launched and, very quickly in the Autumn of 1914, the awful sense came over the British public, and the popular intelligentsia in particular, of the insidious influence that Germany had exerted over them, and they made a declaration of British independence, economic and philosophical.

It was discovered that the best dyes used in British industries were German, and electric light bulbs were German. But German economic penetration was the least of it. Their minds had been tainted by *Kultur* and were in need of brainwashing.

It came out that the Lord Chancellor, Lord Haldane, understood German and actually read German philosophy in

German. A great outcry was raised against him and Prime Minister Asquith was made to sack him. (Poor Lord Haldane as Mr. R.B. Haldane had as War Minister prepared the Army for war on Germany after 1908, and in August 1914 he had, as Lord Chancellor, come off the Woolsack and detached the Expeditionary Force to France, because the state was without a War Minister due to the Curragh Mutiny. But, when it was realised that he was tainted with *Kultur*, he just had to go. And a de-Germanising novel by H.G. Wells, *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*, seems to have become obligatory reading.

Shaw did not go that far, of course. He was not a mere Englishman like Wells. He preserved a degree of colonial detachment from the more frivolous verbiage of the war propaganda. But he said "*Prussian militarism*". And his said "*Potsdamnation*". And he lectured Mabel on "*the jackboot theory of society*".

He showed by use of these shibboleths that his heart was in the right place, and he was therefore allowed to let his tongue wag paradoxically on marginal matters.

According to a collection of his writings called *The Matter With Ireland*, published in London in 1962, he was appealed to by Capt. Stephen Gwynn (Redmondite), in September 1918, to help with recruiting in Ireland, which was still in the doldrums as a result of the Easter Rising. He response took the form of an *Open Letter To Colonel Lynch*, which is dated September 1918.

He begins by conceding that the appeals by which the mass Kitchener Armies were raised in 1914 were bogus:

"It was evident in 1914 that on most questions which divide the interests of the man of the people, Irish or English, from those of the governing classes, the figureheads of the Allies sympathized with the Kaiser and not with the figureheads of proletarian democracy. It is still evident that their opinions and interests have not changed... As between King William Hohenzollern and Mr. Arthur James Balfour... there is from the point of view of the man who lives by labor, nothing to choose. It is not possible to believe that Mr. Balfour feels otherwise on the Irish question than the Kaiser on the Polish question.

"I do not see how recruits can be gained in Ireland by shirking these considerations... The Irish... will not be humbugged into enlisting... [In the light of his lecture to Mabel about Redmond, should he not have said "will

not be humbugged a second time"?]... But it does not follow that neutrality is the best policy; and if England would only appeal to Irish interests... your recruiting campaign would move more rapidly...

"...the truth is that this war... has become a war of ideas and institutions and not a war of dynastic ambitions and capitalistic market hunts...

"Consider what the present war has done. Nicholas, aiming at a Pan-Slav empire, has been slaughtered... The Kaiser, aiming at the destruction of the military prestige of the only Republic in Europe which seriously challenged the efficiency and respectability of the Hohenzollern tradition of government, has plunged all Europe to the east of him into the crudest regicidal Anarchism; brought the great North American Republic... on his other flank...; and is fighting desperately to avoid surrendering Alsace-Lorraine to a France whose military reputation has revived to a point approaching that boasted of by the Napoleonic glory merchants of 1812. Mr. Asquith and Viscount Grey, after vainly throwing Lord Haldane to the wolves, are down and out...

"What we Irish have to consider then, is not what the kings and their counselors and their warriors intended this war to be, but what, in the hands of that inexorable Power of whom it used to be said that 'Man proposes: God disposes', it has now actually become over and above its merely horrible aspect as an insane killing match. If there is anything at stake except military prestige..., what is it? I think we must reply that the war has become a phase in that great struggle towards equality as the sole effective guarantee of democracy and liberty...

"Idolatry to me is something much more real than an abusive catchword of Irish Protestantism. The particular idol I want the war to knock over is a highly Protestant idol, of the purest Dublin Castle brand... King William Hohenzollern... I object to the centre of Europe, with its hundred and sixty million people, being the feudal estate of the Hohenzollern and Hapsburg families...

"The two principles, Idolatry and Democracy, were not at issue when the war began... But now that the war has destroyed the Tsardom and given its place in the alliance to the great Federal Republic of North America, the situation has changed...

That Ireland can look idly on at such a situation whilst Americans, Canadians, Australians, and South Africans are fighting as furiously as Jugo-Slavs, Czecho-Slovaks, and Poles, is not to be excused by mere sore-headedness over our relations with England. What... has Irish Labour—that is, four-fifths of

the Irish people—to say to the American Federation of Labor’s manifesto as to the aims of the American working-class in supporting the Allies?...

"This challenge from America, in which Labor accepts all the conditions of President Wilson and adds to them a long list of demands which make any equivocation as to the thoroughgoing democracy of its spirit and aims impossible, proves that the war is now conceived by the Western peoples to whom we belong as a war of advancing world-Republicanism against Hohenzollernism fighting in its last ditch. The spirit of every nation will be judged according to the side it takes in it. It is useless for us to sneer at such a conception on the ground that the cleavage between the belligerents is not completely consistent: clean cleavages of that kind do not occur in the affairs of nations. Neither the Mikado of Japan nor the King of Italy, not to mention the Balkan kinglets, is at issue with the Kaiser as to Democracy. But it is none the less clear that the defeat of the Central Empires will be a discredit from which the social order they represent, typified in Ireland by Dublin Castle, can hardly recover...

"So far it is plain that the Irish side is for once the side on which the English find themselves... Why does the Irishman hold back?

"Not, clearly, that he is more afraid of being killed than other people... Not, either, in any number of cases worth reckoning, because he wants Germany to win with a view to the German terms of peace including the establishment of Ireland as an independent nation... under the guarantee of the victorious Central Empires. This was Roger Casement’s plan; but it is too technical politically for anyone but a professional diplomatist like Casement to understand; and the ruthless exposure by the war of the utter dependence of Belgium and Greece on their ruthless guarantors, and the uselessness of the ‘scraps of paper’ which guaranteed them, ought by this time to have set every intelligent Irishman implacably against such skull-grinning Independence as that.

"...Any Irishman who will not fight for his side in the world because the English are fighting on that side too has no political sense; and an Ireland composed of such men could never be free... It is a case not of refusing to help the English in a bad cause, but of refusing to take advantage of the help of the English in a good one.

"Then there is the more intelligent Irishman who hopes that the war may end in the establishment of a League of Nations, and that this League may take up the Irish question... But we must not deceive ourselves as to the interest

the rest of the world takes in our little island and our little people... We can make England feel us; and America is well aware of us; but we cannot make Europe feel us. The beginning of diplomatic wisdom with us is to realize our own insignificance outside the group of islands to which we belong.

"...If I say that the Irish people are under very strong obligations to the English people, obligations which it would be grossest ingratitude to deny or forget, I shall no doubt astonish those bookmade Irish patriots who are too busy reading about the Treaty of Limerick and the feats of Brian Boru to see anything that happens under their noses. But at least they must be dimly conscious that there was an attempt made in Dublin in the Easter of 1916 to establish an Irish Republic, and that one of its leaders was a noted Socialist trade unionist named James Connolly who, being captured by the British troops, was denied the right of a prisoner of war, and shot. Now, Connolly owed his position and influence as an Irish national leader to the part he had taken in organising the great strike of the transport workers in Dublin in 1913, and the remains of his organization was the nucleus of the little army of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. That strike was sustained for many months after it would have exhausted the resources of the Irish workers had they not been aided from abroad. Where did that aid come from? From the reckless generosity of the English workers. The English workers fed, out of their own scanty wages, the Irish strikers... I myself, with Connolly and Mr. George Russell, was among the speakers at a huge meeting got up in aid of the strike by Mr. James Larkin in London... Connolly got the money by the plea that the cause of Labor was the same cause all the world over... We did not set up the cry of Sinn Fein then. We did not say ‘*We Ourselves* are sufficient to ourselves: you can keep your English money and leave us to take care of ourselves’. We took the money and were glad to get it... We cannot now with any decency forget Connolly and change the subject to Cromwell and General Maxwell. I have the right to remind the Irish people of this, because I was one of those who asked for the money; and I was cheered to the echo by Englishmen and Englishwomen for doing so. I am an Irishman; and I have not forgotten. English working-class mothers have the right to say to me: ‘Our sons are in the trenches, fighting for their lives and liberties and for yours; and some of your sons who took our money when they were starving are leaving them to fight alone’. Not a very heroic position,

that, for an Irish movement which is always talking heroics.

"Naturally, General Maxwell and the Unionists of the War Office... take particularly good care not to remind the Irish of this obligation. They can hardly hold up Connolly as a hero after shooting him... They dread that sinking of national differences in the common cause of Labor all over the world far more than they dread a German victory. They will tell you to remember Belgium ...; but they will not tell you to remember Dublin and Connolly. And yet it is only through Connolly and the international solidarity that Connolly stood for that the Irish worker can be made to feel that his cause and that of the English worker is a common cause, and that he is in debt to English Labor through a very recent and very big transaction..." (*War Issues For Irishmen*. Quoted from *The Matter With Ireland*, pp171-181).

It’s the Shylock bargain—Irish blood in repayment for English money.

Is it conceivable that Shaw did not know that Connolly had wanted a German victory in the War, on Socialist grounds?

Did he withdraw so completely to the Ivory Tower after he became rich and famous that he lost all contact with what was going on amongst actual Socialists who had to work for a living?

He knew that, shortly after that fundraising meeting in London, that he gives as reason why Irish workers are under moral obligation to join the British Army, Connolly formed the only Socialist Army that ever existed as an active military formation in the United Kingdom. And, if he had any curiosity about what happened to that Army when the UK State went to war against Germany, he must have known that Connolly committed it to war against the British Empire in alliance with Germany. And, if he did not find out Connolly’s grounds for doing this—and it was not difficult to find it out—his Shavian posturing must already have turned him into an imitation of himself at his most trivial.

Connolly was willing for class war in August 1914. He expected it, and he had the means of fighting it. The English workers, with Shaw on their side, chose to engage in Imperialist war against the capitalist Power which Connolly saw as being closest to Socialism. That English decision to make war on Germany was the free act of the most powerful Empire the world had ever seen. The British Government, as the European War was developing, made a point of asserting that it had kept itself free of any Treaty

commitments in Europe. Then, when the European War had passed the point of recall, the Government revealed that it had made a secret agreement with France by which it was bound morally. The country agreed, and war was declared on the lucky excuse of Belgium.

I imagine that, when the British Labour movement fell into line behind the declaration of war by the Liberal Government, enthusiastically supported by the Unionist Opposition which had so recently been importing arms from Germany for the Ulster Volunteers, Connolly decided that any debt he felt was owed for help in the 1913 Lock-Out was cancelled. He adapted quickly to the collapse of the Second International—a collapse which in Britain lacked the excuse of the duress of rapidly developing military circumstances which applied on the Continent—and he made arrangements for another course of action.

Shaw made use of his name, but in substance blotted him out—as does Ruth Dudley Edwards, who stands in the line of succession from Shaw.

*War Issues For Irishmen* was published by the Home Rule publisher, Maunsell, but the War ended before it could be sold. (The War was expected to last into 1919 (and it did for Germany) but the fighting ended in a rush in November 1918 due to the combination of American propaganda and fighting ability.)

Shaw wrote a last minute insertion for it: *A Word going to Press*. It is dated November 10th though written some time earlier. After November 11th the book was scrapped. But it would be worth dealing with Shaw's final thoughts on the matter. They show the depth of delusion into which the British socialist mind had sunk in the course of this profoundly miscalculated war, that led so easily into a second catastrophe in less than a generation.

**Ireland In The Great War**, The Irish Insurrection Of 1916 Set In Its Context Of The World War: Partial reprint of *The Irish Future, With The Lordship Of The World* (1929) by Charles James O'Donnell (1849-1934), 116pp. €10, £8

**Traitor-Patriots In The Great War: Casement & Masaryk** by Brendan Clifford. (2004) 56pp. €6, £5

**The Casement Diary Dogmatists** by Brendan Clifford (2004). 68pp. €8, £6

**Roger Casement: The Crime Against Europe.** With *The Crime Against Ireland*. (2003). 184pp. €18, £15

**The Great Fraud Of 1914-18** by Pat Walsh, . 52pp (A4). £12, £9

**1914: England's Darwinist War On Germany** by Hans Grimm; *Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell*. 48pp. €6, £5

Manus O'Riordan

## In Praise Of Cora Hughes, Republican Congress Activist

On the occasion of the unveiling of the Kit Conway memorial in Conway's native Tipperary in June 2005, International Brigader Bob Doyle recalled:

"I was twenty years of age when the Spanish War broke out on the 18th of July 1936. But this was not simply a civil war. The intervention of the foreign forces of Germany, Italy and Portugal on the side of Franco's revolt against the Republic unmasked it as a stage in the strengthening of international fascism as it prepared for the Second World War. I tried to get to Spain to defend the Republic, because Kit Conway and others had already managed to make their way there in December 1936. Kit was my hero, a great friend and a great example. At the beginning of 1937 I went to see Cora Hughes, a goddaughter of de Valera, who was organising volunteers for Spain. I was rejected because I was considered too young."

Bob Doyle got to Spain later. But, in the meantime, in the February 1937 battle of Jarama, both Bob Doyle's mentor, Kit Conway, and Cora Hughes's boyfriend, Charlie Donnelly, would be killed in action—Conway with the British Battalion, and Donnelly with the Lincoln Battalion. Cora Hughes remained a formidable activist on behalf of Irish Friends of the Spanish Republic, not least as a public speaker. It was on encountering her in this role that W. B. Yeats wrote his poem "*Politics*":

How can I, that girl standing there,  
My attention fix—On Roman  
or on Russian

Or on Spanish politics,  
Yet here's a travelled man that knows  
What he talks about,  
And there's a politician  
That has both read and thought,  
And maybe what they say is true  
Of war and war's alarms,  
But O that I were young again  
And held her in my arms.

Donnelly and Hughes were described as follows in "*UCD and the Spanish Civil War*", a November 2009 post on "*Hidden History of UCD*":

"In 1934, while in his last year of college, Donnelly joined the Republican

Congress and started a romantic relationship with another member, Cora Hughes. Hughes came from a well-respected republican family – her godfather was Eamon de Valera. She also had studied in UCD and became commander of the Cumann na mBan division on campus. Hughes was jailed in September 1934 for her work in supporting rent strikes in Dublin. Described as a "*tireless housing activist*", she died tragically in 1940 after contacting TB in the slums."

Cora Hughes's 1934 imprisonment inspired Charlie Donnelly's poem "*The Flowering Bars*":

After sharp words from the fine mind,  
protest in Court, the intimate high head  
constrained,  
strait lines of prison, empty walls,  
a subtle beauty in a simple place.  
There to strain thought through the  
tightened brain,  
there weave—the slender chord of  
thought, in calm,  
until routine in prospect bound—joy  
into security,  
and among strictness sweetness grew,  
mystery of flowering bars.

A July 2014 post by Griobhtha on the [irishvolunteers.org](http://irishvolunteers.org) site further related:

"Charlie Donnelly's brother Joseph recollected that his brother was in love with a woman called Cora Hughes, the god daughter of Eamon de Valera: 'She had many admirers, including George Gilmore. Gilmore was to relate in an unpublished novel, 'The Gold Flag', the encroachment of this younger man into the relationship. However, he insists there was never any bitterness.' Joseph Donnelly quotes Gilmore's thoughts on the relationship: 'I believe that Charlie loved Cora and that she returned that love... it wasn't platonic, which meant that there was no room for meanness of mind on anyone's part, least of all mine, because Charlie and I were closer than brothers... I loved him almost as much as I loved Cora, which is more than a cynic like me would say is possible to love anyone.'"

In an article entitled "*George Gilmore—Protestant Republican*", and published on 7th September 2015, Anthony Coughlan more authoritatively related:



"George met Cora Hughes when she got involved in tenant-league agitation for the Congress. She was the great romance of his life. Her father, Frank Hughes, was an old friend of De Valera's. Cora was Dev's god-daughter and he too was very fond of her. She had a degree in Celtic Studies from UCD, where she became friends with the poet Charlie Donnelly, who was killed in Spain. She later transferred her affections to the older George."

"Once when she was arrested, De Valera, then Taoiseach, sent her books in prison. George believed it was her work in the Dublin slums that gave her the TB that eventually killed her. Cora's mother and sister did not approve of George as Cora's fiancé. His politics were opposed to the family idol, De Valera. He was a Protestant, a 'Red' and had no proper job."

"When Cora Hughes contracted TB the family solution was to send her to Lourdes. Her ultra-pietistic mother said that she would be happy if all her children preceded her to Heaven so that they would be there to greet her when she got there herself! George went to see his political opponent De Valera in the Taoiseach's office to ask him to use his influence with the family to get Cora to a sanatorium in Switzerland. He recalled De Valera weighing up the options carefully, showing some reluctance to intervene. 'You have your rights as her fiancé. I have my rights as her godfather. Her parents have their rights as she is their daughter', he went on in his methodical way. 'And has Cora herself no rights?', the exasperated Gilmore burst out."

"De Valera did get her a visa to go through France in September 1939 as World War 2 broke out, but it was too late. Dev helped carry the coffin at her funeral in Kiltimagh, while his policemen scoured the countryside to ensure no IRA firing party turned up. George stayed away. He never married. He wrote the political-personal story of his romance in fictionalised form as a play, 'The Gold Flag'. 'It would be a theatre smasher', Denis Johnston said. 'Yes, they would smash the theatre alright', his wife responded, thinking of the political sensitivities of the time. It has never been performed."

Let us therefore pay tribute to Cora Hughes on this night of Nollaig na mBan, and perhaps acknowledge that while Donnelly was not a poet of the stature of Yeats, "*The Flowering Bars*" was a more appropriate tribute to her politics.

Charlie Donnelly was killed in action at the battle of Jarama, on February 27, 1937, while serving with the James Connolly Section of the Fifteenth International Brigade's Abraham Lincoln

Battalion. I was present at the launch of his brother Joseph Donnelly's book, "*Charlie Donnelly—The Life and Poems*", on his 51st anniversary, 27th February 1988. It was particularly appropriate that on that night his friend Cyril Cusack should also recite Charlie Donnelly's tribute to Cora Hughes—"*The Flowering Bars*".

George Gilmore's literary executor, Anthony Coughlan, writes:

"On the poem—'Politics'—by Yeats that you quote, George told me that the Republican Congress people in the 1930s would often hold meetings at the corner of Dublin's O'Connell Street and Cathal Brugha Street, just by the Gresham Hotel. Yeats would sometime dine in the hotel and would pause while passing by their meetings, which typically dealt with Russian, Italian and Spanish politics. Cora Hughes would often be standing there, with her red-gold hair, which he said was her most striking personal feature, selling the Congress newspaper, and that almost certainly she was the person whom Yeats was referring to in that poem."

"A final point of interest: I recall once asking George had he ever experienced anything para-normal or

supernatural during his life. He said that the one thing on those lines that he could not explain was a day in 1937 that he visited Cora Hughes in her flat of an afternoon to take tea, which he said he often did. I think he said the flat was in South Frederick Street, at the top of a building there. As he mounted the stairs he remembered having the strongest feeling that Charlie Donnelly was standing on the landing at the top, yet he knew that this could not be the case for Donnelly was then in Spain. Some time later he learned that that was the very day that Donnelly had been killed. He commented that if there was one spot in the world where Donnelly's spirit would have flown to in such an event, it would have been to where Cora Hughes was living."

Nollaig na mBan,  
Women's Christmas in Ireland, 6 Jan. 2016

See [www.dailymotion.com/video/x2z2ehy](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2z2ehy) for a recording of "Politics", as read by Cyril Cusack—who, incidentally, had been a friend and contemporary of Charlie Donnelly and Cora Hughes in University College Dublin. See <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=wfs1uddCD0M> for another reading, with text on screen, and <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ncAmPHP8ij8> for a musical setting.

## Cathy Winch

Play Review  
*The Patriotic Traitor*  
by Jonathan Lynn

### Pétain And De Gaulle

In February/March this year North London's Park Theatre put on a play '*The Patriotic Traitor*' about the relationship between Pétain and De Gaulle. The first half of the play dealt with their friendship during World War 1 and between the wars.

In 1913 Pétain was commander of an infantry regiment where De Gaulle was a 22-year-old soldier. Pétain was a colonel and a lecturer at the Ecole de Guerre (War School) in 1914 where De Gaulle was a student. De Gaulle supported Pétain's unpopular idea that the infantry should not be sent to the Front without previous artillery attack, guided by the air force, to wear out the enemy.

During the First World War, his military thinking won him success and he was made General then, at the end of the War, Marshal. He became the *Victor of Verdun*. During the 1917 mutinies, he managed to rebuild the morale of the army by visiting the troops, improving

conditions as much as possible, and putting a stop to hopeless assaults. 55 men were punished by death for insubordination, a very small number. Part of his strategy was to wait for American troops.

Pétain remained head of the army until 1931, and the accession of Weygand. Between 1925 and 1927 Captain De Gaulle was one of Pétain's Staff officers in the Army Headquarters.

De Gaulle taught at the Ecole Militaire and it was his turn to put forward unpopular theories. He was still the protégé of Pétain. He named his first son Philippe after his mentor, the godfather of the boy.

After the crushing military defeat of May 1940, the choice for the Government was to go into exile and abandon the country to the enemy, or to ask for an armistice, pending a peace treaty.

Pétain refused to go into exile. Prime Minister Reynaud resigned rather than



ask for an armistice, and it was left to Pétain to do so. On 10th July 1940 Parliament overwhelmingly voted full powers to Pétain.

De Gaulle made the other choice.

The choices were in fact complementary, and were seen as such during the War, especially at the beginning.

This is the material that Jonathan Lynn worked on; he added a study of character, making much of the similarities and differences. Both men were original, independent-minded, strong-minded and incorruptible; despite ambition, they put their self-belief and their attachment to the truth before career advancement. Both believed in a strong leader whose prestige depends on secrecy and distance from others. Both had serious reservations about the merits of democracy.

An imagined conversation, just before the 1940 armistice:

"De Gaulle: I've always stood alone.  
Pétain: So have I.

DG (carefully): That's true. You have never lacked the courage to stand alone."

The two men also have sharp differences: Pétain was a man of humble origins, who liked people. He says in the play:

"Young man, I love three things in life—my country, the infantry and women."

De Gaulle was of a more elevated family, more intellectual, and liked the idea of France more than he liked the French.

Lynn used this contrast to illuminate the choices made in 1940: Pétain for the French, De Gaulle for France, on the one hand the actual population and on the other, a "*certain idea of France*".

Pétain says in a monologue spoken from jail in 1945:

"On the 18th June 1940 I was the most famous living Frenchman. I had my feet on the ground. De Gaulle had his head in the clouds. For De Gaulle, France was a dream. For me, it was the land, the trees, the soil. No, it was more than the land, it was the people. I loved the people. I'm a realist. The realist loves people for what they are. De Gaulle didn't give a fuck about the people. Never did. Still doesn't. How could I emigrate? How could *he*?"

And later:

"I had to ask myself, am I doing the right thing? De Gaulle might run away but I, a true patriot, had no choice but

to stay. How can you be a patriotic expatriate? How could that lunatic hope to raise an army in England? I had to hold it all together till we could fight another day. So I signed the surrender. It was lonely, bitter moment."

Later still:

"I shouldn't have signed it. I should have let those who lost the war surrender."

De Gaulle explains, during an imagined meeting between the two men, while Pétain was in jail, about his idea of France:

"A nation is not the sum of its people. A nation is a myth. The existence of a nation is a matter of spiritual belief. And this belief unifies the people. Look at the Jews. A state is a fact—but a nation is just a notion. So when *you* say France, you mean all those people out there in berets, smelling of garlic. But when *I* say France I don't include those vulgar cowardly plebeians in the streets, I mean the Resistance, the best of France and the French from Charlemagne to Joan of Arc to Napoleon, commemorated and immortalised. What Britain means to Churchill. A nation must have pride! Many of today's French are a squalid interlude between the glorious dead and those yet unborn. If the people have no pride, there is no nation."

(To Pétain)

"You had an obligation to tomorrow's people too. You were the trustee of a myth, not merely of what the people wanted. Anyone can give the people what they want. That is a contemptible ambition in itself. You should have aimed higher."

Both sides of the argument are well put. The play shows that both men had right on their side. The name '*the patriotic traitor*' could apply to both of them:

"P: De Gaulle, when you are militarily defeated it is a false heroic to pretend you haven't been.

DG It's a choice between principle and compromise. If you compromise you will be a traitor. A collaborator.

P. Maybe. But if you leave, *you* will be a traitor. A deserter."

There could have been a junction between the two regimes in 1944; Pétain did write to De Gaulle to hand over power. All those who had supported Pétain, and at the beginning, that was the overwhelming majority, even of those who later joined the Resistance, could have reconciled their wartime

experience with the experience of liberation:

Yvonne (De Gaulle's wife, speaking in 1945):

"Y. The Marshal still has plenty of support, even now.

DG Yes. The people were forced to pick sides. That should never have happened.

Y. Some picked both sides.

DG Nearly everyone, as it happens. But now they all pretend they never supported Vichy—apparently everyone was in the Resistance after all, we just didn't know about them. Strange.

Y. And they all want revenge."

"*They all pretend they never supported Vichy*" for reasons of self-preservation. Because of the purge of collaborationists conducted by the post-Vichy Government, people had to deny the truth in order to save themselves. People should have had the possibility of acknowledging the reality of 1940, the Armistice, the unexpected prolongation of the War (caused by Britain's refusal to make peace), and the consequences of this prolongation, combined with the worsening of war conditions. This play is a step in the direction of such an acknowledgement of the reality.

As such, it goes against the atmosphere that has prevailed since 1945. The media in France and England always portray the Vichy era as '*France's Nazi past*', '*shameful dark times*' etc.

The reviews of *The Patriotic Traitor* just ignored the detail of the subject matter. It became just a play about the War and two interesting characters. It was possible to do that because it was played for laughs—De Gaulle's supposed humourlessness providing a copious source of jokes—in a quick succession of brief scenes jumping back and forth between WW1 and WW2. As in *Yes Minister*, also by Jonathan Lynn, the truth is often told in a witty flash, and you only get it if you already know what is being talked about.

Even when a heckler at one of the performances made the national papers, there was no mention that the content of the play might have been original and controversial.

The *Daily Mail* online made a joke of it:

"Boris Johnson and David Cameron should quickly get themselves along to north London's Park Theatre to catch a fascinating new play by *Yes Minister* co-author Jonathan Lynn.

The show, starring Tom Conti and Laurence Fox, examines the relationship between France's Marshal Pétain and his protégé Charles de Gaulle.

One believed in accepting defeat and finding some sort of settlement with the enemy. Pétain saw in 1940 that the Germans could no longer be resisted militarily by France. He agreed to lead the Vichy government.

De Gaulle refused to have anything to do with that compromise with the Nazis.

He fought fiercely for his country's continued independence and eventually returned in glory. One would be seen by history, possibly a little unfairly, as a cowardly collaborator. The other would become father of the nation. Here is a play that is scintillatingly topical, beautifully written and magnificently acted."

I suppose that the play is 'topical' because Boris Johnson is De Gaulle, fighting for the sovereignty of Britain with Brexit, whereas Cameron is Pétain, choosing the comfortable option. But the comparison is obvious nonsense. There is no war situation today, no catastrophic defeat that makes certain decisions inescapable. Calling the play 'topical' entirely misses the point. Still, the *Daily Mail* on that occasion conceded that Pétain was treated "possibly a little unfairly". That is progress. I will leave the last word to Lynn, speaking to a theatre website:

"To keep the people safe is surely the most fundamental duty of every political leader. Few people are given the opportunity to save their country. This awful responsibility fell to two giants, Philippe Pétain and Charles De Gaulle—twice to Pétain" (<http://www.officiallondontheatre.co.uk>).

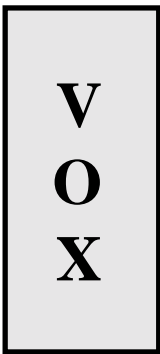
**Mural Slogan In North Belfast (Tigers Bay area):**

VOTE  
LEAVE  
E.U.

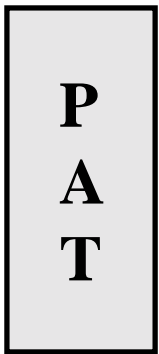
Rev, 18:4

*The Book Of Revelation*, Chapter 18, Verse 4 reads:

"Then I heard another voice from heaven say, 'Come out of her, my people', so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues."



**Neutrality & Threats!**  
**"Fresh Start"**  
**Syria**  
**Puerto Rico**  
**Atheist Joke**  
**Bible Joke**  
**Muslim Afterlife**  
**Cork Synagogue**



**Neutrality—Threats against Ireland!**

The Irish Government rejected a request by America for the removal of Axis diplomatic representatives in Dublin. The Note conveying the request was handed to Mr. de Valera by Mr. David Gray, US Minister to Eire, on 21st February 1944. Mr. de Valera immediately replied, verbally, that the request was one with which it was impossible for the Irish Government to comply. Subsequently a Note setting out the attitude of the Government was dispatched to the American Government. The US Note expressed concern for the preservation of the secrets of the Second Front, adding that the presence of Axis diplomats in Dublin would endanger the lives of thousands of US soldiers (*Irish Independent*—March 11, 1944).

It was announced in London that the British Government had sent a Note supporting the US Government's request for the removal of Axis consular and diplomatic representatives in Dublin. Consultations were proceeding between London and Washington concerning the next move in view of Mr. de Valera's refusal to accede to the Allied request. Economic sanctions were believed to be under consideration (*Ir.Ind.*12.3.1944).

It was disclosed in Washington that President Roosevelt advised Mr. de Valera two years ago that the Irish Government should not stand alone when the time came for the peace table conference. The President gave this friendly warning in Washington in 1942. Its purpose was to assure Mr. de Valera that the American troops in Great Britain and Northern Ireland did not constitute a threat to Ireland (*Ibid.*).

Restrictions on travel between Britain and Ireland was the first step in the policy designed to isolate Great Britain from Southern Ireland and to isolate Southern Ireland during the critical period now approaching, Mr. Churchill told the British Commons (*Ir. Ind.*15.3.1944).

"The events of the past fortnight had found the Irish people calm, dignified and united as never before. The govern-

ment had taken a stand which commanded the unqualified approval of the citizens, because that stand expressed what had been in the minds of all sections since the outbreak of war. Neutrality was the cardinal principal of Irish national policy accepted by all parties. It was not the policy of any party or of any government. (From *Today's Editorial—Ir. Ind.*16.3.1944).

Questioned in the Commons by Unionist MPs about Eire's refusal to removed Axis diplomatic representatives, Churchill said he did not wish to add to the statement already made. Nationalist members of the Northern Parliament supported de Valera's stand (*Irish Independent*—March 16, 1944).

The *Independent Political Correspondent* wrote:

"There appears to be a growing feeling in this country—shared apparently by thoughtful opinion in Great Britain—that the 'isolation' of Eire need not lead to a situation which would place a strain on the good relations between the United States and Great Britain on one hand and this country" (*Ir.Ind.*18.3.1944).

Mr. J. Beattie (Lab.) in the British Commons asked Mr. Eden if, having supported the US demand for the removal of the German and Japanese representatives in Eire, he would now make a similar request for the removal of Axis Ministers in other neutral countries. Mr. Eden, in a written reply, said he would not, as the consideration which applied in the case of Eire did not apply in the cases of other neutral countries (*Ir.Ind.*29.3.1944).

In an article in the Scottish weekly *Forward*, referring to the demand by America and Britain to Eire to remove the Axis and Japanese diplomatic representatives, Mr. George Bernard Shaw said:

"It is really Mr. Roosevelt's first stupid mistake. With all Ireland, Protestant and Catholic behind him, Mr. de Valera will tell the President 'to go to Hell', and he will get away with it again. The powerless cabbage garden called Eire wins in the teeth of all the mighty powers—*Erin go*

Breagh" (Ir.Ind.31.3.1944).

The British Postmaster-General announced that from today, as part of the general measures to prevent possible leakage of vital information through Ireland, the public telephone service between Great Britain and all parts of Ireland would be withdrawn immediately. The public telegraph service would be maintained subject to strict censorship. Calls put through to Britain immediately after the announcement were refused by cross-Channel exchanges. (Irish Independent-April 6, 1944).

The ban on the export of British coal to neutral countries announced by Major Lloyd George, Minister of Fuel and Power in the British Commons also applied to Eire. (Ir.Ind.8.4.1944).

#### "Fresh Start"

"A Rector who resigned his position in Newry last October having burned two Royal British Legion flags, has been appointed the new rector of Kilgarriffe Union of Parishes in West Cork.

"Reverend Kingsley Sutton hit the headlines in the North last year when he resigned his position after he removed two Royal British Legion flags that were hanging in St Patrick's and St Mary's churches in Newry, and burned them" (The Southern Star, Skibbereen, 27.02.2016).

Dr. Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross confirmed that Reverend Sutton had been appointed by the Board of Nomination for the position in Kilgarriffe.

"Reverend Kingsley Sutton did indeed resign as Rector of St Patrick's and St Mary's in Newry, which he had served in for the previous 13 years", Bishop Colton told The Southern Star.

"The incident was widely reported at the time, as was his own very abject and deeply felt apology and the parishioners in Newry have kindly permitted him to continue to reside in the Rectory since then, while he has been searching for something new."

"Following the usual recruitment process, Reverend Kingsley Sutton was selected and last week I went personally to the Select Vestry (the local church committee) in Kilgarriffe to announce the appointment. It is a very good parish with encouraging and supportive parishioners, and I know that they will give the Reverend Kingsley Sutton the help he needs in making this fresh start, and that they will care too for his wife and five children in their new surroundings in West Cork".

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#### Syria

If Syrian president Bashar al-Assad were removed from power now, Syria would become like Libya, a Syrian Bishop has warned.

Archbishop Jacques Behnan Hando, Syrian Catholic Archbishop of Hasakeh-Nisibi, said "the Syrians will decide if and when Assad has to go away, and not the Daesh [the so-called Islamic State] or the West", continuing "and it is certain that if Assad goes away now, Syria will become like Libya".

The Archbishop's comments came in the aftermath of American criticism of Russian attacks on anti-Assad rebels linked with al-Qaeda. "US Senator John McCain protested saying that the Russians are not bombing the positions of the Islamic State, but rather the anti-Assad rebels trained by the CIA", the Archbishop said, continuing, "I find these words are disturbing. They represent a blatant admission that behind the war against Assad there is also the CIA."

"Western propaganda keeps talking about moderate rebels, who do not exist," said Archbishop Hando, continuing, "there is something very disturbing about all this: there is a superpower that since September 11 protests because the Russians hit the militias of al-Qaeda in Syria. What does it mean? Al-Qaeda is now a U.S. ally, just because in Syria it has a different name? But do they really despise our intelligence and our memory?" (Irish Catholic-April, 2016).

Melanie McDonagh finds sobering reading in the words of the Archbishop of Aleppo (the Melkite Greek Catholic one), Jean Clement Jeanbart, in London for the launch of the annual report from the charity Aid to the Church in Need.

Christians and other moderates actually want the British Government: "...to stop the funding of the radicals and fundamentalists" and more important, "...find a political solution where compromise may be won". And what form might that take? The Archbishop wants President Assad left in place for now. He says:

"Of course, for the future he has to go, to leave the place for others who could be elected. For the time being, if Assad goes, the fear is that everything may collapse."

This is, plainly, pretty well the opposite of the PM Cameron's approach, which is to regard Assad as the real enemy, as great an impediment to peace as Isis.

Interestingly, the Archbishop also said that Christians in Syria were rather grateful for the Russian intervention in the conflict, because they're "...happy

that there is some hope the war will end". (Spectator, London-18.10.2015)

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#### Puerto Rico

March 2, 1917: The Jones Act took effect, designating Puerto Rico as a territory of the United States, "organised but unincorporated", and conferring U.S. citizenship collectively on Puerto Rico. (Britannica Concise Encyclopaedia)

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#### Atheist Joke

They even have a dial-a-prayer for Atheists now: It rings and rings but nobody answers! (The Book of Catholic Jokes-Sheridan-2015)

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#### Bible Joke

After the fall, Adam was walking with his sons, Cain and Abel. As they were passing the locked gates of the Garden of Eden, one of the boys asked: "What's that?"

Adam replied: "Boys, that's where your mother eat us out of house and home! (The Book of Catholic Jokes-Sheridan-2015)

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#### Muslim Afterlife

It's a curious contradiction: the number of atheists in Britain is rising, yet so, too, is the number of people who say they believe in life after death. On this Easter weekend, we asked leading philosophers, authors and religious thinkers to explain what the results of this new study tell us about the modern world... and what they believe about the afterlife. (Daily Mail-26 County edition-29.03.2016)

Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra: Assistant secretary general, Muslim Council considers that for many Muslims, this report would be puzzling:

"Just as in Judaism and Christianity, belief and reliance in God are the central pathway to a successful afterlife. Indeed, while we are promised ample material rewards in Heaven, our religious traditions place a greater value on the fact that after life, we would be closer to God: that is our ultimate salvation.

I am also struck by the suggestion that increasing feelings of 'entitlement' may be fuelling a rise in believing in life after death, despite not accepting religion or God.

This is worrying, especially if it leads, as academics suggest, to less spirituality and more individualism.

Choosing to believe in the afterlife perhaps gives a better life and justice to those who do not have material possessions of any significance despite

leading good and righteous lives.

There is a silver lining in that we all have a shared belief that life on this earth is temporary and many have something to look forward to.

However, before the afterlife, we have this worldly life to cherish, enjoy and in which to do good works. For those with a religious belief it is also a time to cultivate and plan for a successful harvest after death.

The Koran teaches us how to ask from God: 'Our Lord, grant us goodness in this world and goodness in the Hereafter and save us from the punishment of the fire.'

I'm always fascinated by how God wants us to first ask for this life and then for the afterlife. I think we call this the best of both worlds!"

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### Cork Synagogue

"A Protestant church is set to take over the former South Terrace synagogue" (Eve.Echo, Cork-1.3.2016).

Cork's Jewish Community vacated the premises earlier last month after their numbers dwindled in recent years. They no longer had enough male members to form an active membership.

Doors closed in the synagogue on February 6, 2016, ending 135 years of Jewish history in Cork.

Negotiations are almost complete on the future of the building, with the Seventh-Day Adventist Church set to take over in the coming weeks. The church, which has some 35 members in Cork, hopes to make the move during the summer.

Pastor Jeff Freeman said: "We are finalising the details with the Jewish community as we speak. We won't be moving into it for a few months as some repairs are needed."

Pastor Freeman has been based in Ireland for more than eight years, with the Seventh-Day Adventist Church operating in Cork for approximately 15 years.

The Seventh-Day Adventist Church is one of the fastest-growing Christian movements in the world, with more than 18 million members globally, 750 of whom are based in Ireland.

The building on South Terrace has been in use since 1905, serving a Jewish community that first settled in the city in the 1880s.

The dwindling numbers of recent years have been blamed for the closure, as there had been difficulty maintaining the minimum number of male adults needed for regular services.

Large numbers had left, particularly in the last 10 years, sometimes at a rate of two or three families every few months.

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## Wilson John Haire

Comment on Stephen Richards' article,  
*Old Paths And New Paths Of Righteous*

### The Shipyard And Restrictive Practices

I am always interested to read Stephen Richards' highly informative articles in *Church & State* therefore I have hesitated up until now to point out something I query. My question is: What was to be done under the conditions then in being in the Belfast shipyard of Harland & Wolff during total local Unionist rule for fifty years? In his article *Old Paths And New Paths Of Righteous (part two)* in the First Quarter, 2016 edition, under the heading *For Free Trade?* he writes:

"And yet, there were undoubtedly astonishing levels of inefficiency and multitudes of "Spanish practices" in our traditional industries such as the Belfast Shipyard.

Over the last fifty years of its life, it was hardly a shining example of the Protestant work ethic. Structural inequalities between Belfast and other foreign, shipbuilding cities weren't the only reason for its demise."

I have written about the sectarianism of this shipyard before for the *Andersonstown News* and about the few opportunities in it for the Catholic worker. But they wouldn't have wanted to know that there were some Catholic apprentices and some Catholic skilled workers plus the steady employment (when work was available) of Catholic industrial painters for painting red lead and the finishing coats of paint onto the hull of the vessel, the holds and any outside areas of the ship, right up to the top of the mast. It was highly dangerous and unhealthy work done from flimsy staging held by steel ropes. Catholics used for unpleasant work? But so were Protestants.

Class divisions got the better-off Protestant jobs in the office and administration. When things were very busy Catholic joiners, painters, and other trades were recruited. No I didn't say that for the *Andersonstown News* article or it wouldn't have been printed. It turned out I wasn't being propagandistic enough in writing a further piece when I tried to unravel the myth of the Titanic's builder's hull number.

Every ship has a number before it has a name. The Titanic had the number:

390904.

It is said a Catholic worker sighting the number reflected in a puddle of oily water saw that it read: 'No Pope' in its mirror image (try it, it works). Catholic workers then went on strike. That was the Builder's Hull Number and, after a bit of research on ship numbers, I discovered that it would be the next number to come up for a ship, any ship, after the keel was laid. The idea that the number was deliberately thought up was so much witchcraft thinking.

I did think that the successful fight-back of the Catholic community would have emboldened their confidence. But no, I was subjected indirectly to abuse about my fore-name, with insinuations about the Protestant habit of using surnames as forenames. It was interesting for me, having suffered anti-Catholic sectarianism for all my life, there to now suffer anti-Protestant sectarianism.

I later read a bitter anti-shipyard piece by Father Des Wilson, tagged the Republican priest by the British media, in the *Andersonstown News* as he went over the same old myths. I doubt if he understood anything about industrial Belfast.

I have also written about this shipyard without mentioning sectarianism. This didn't go down well in Catholic Belfast. No reviews. Yes, the shipyard was both sectarian, and non-sectarian when the good heart of men showed. Admittedly the Catholic in the shipyard wasn't advised to contradict the dominant loyalist view of things. Left-wing Protestants did share your views on the British Empire at that time and did acknowledge sectarianism existed and were disgusted at the 1920s pogroms against Catholics workers in the shipyard. But you weren't going to make them into Catholic Nationalists.

Overall my experience there as a covert Catholic was being able to attack Unionism as a communist. (communists were thought of as being anti-Catholic). Besides the odd outburst coming up to the 12th of July, daily working life, with its compassionate work relationships and humour was something I was never to experience in England.

But did these men work hard?

Shipbuilding from my experience from 1946–1954 was next to coal-mining in injuries and fatalities. Dozens died during my eight years there, hundreds upon hundreds were injured, and some of those injured were never able to work again. I have witnessed three deaths.

We didn't have helmets, protective clothing, or special reinforced toe-capped boots. You could die from falling rivets or pieces of steel, be electrocuted, lose your hearing through the intense noise of riveting and caulking in the shell of a ship just off the slipways. You could get fatal lung conditions from the heavy use of white asbestosis which was being applied to hot pipes for insulation. It made the interior of ships look like it was snowing inside.

The engine-room of a ship could blow up like it did once when on trials off the coast of County Down, causing over fifty death and severe injury from scalding. A gangway to a ship could snap, which it did, causing a scene like out of hell with the dying and the desperately injured screaming on the jetty below.

First-aid posts were everywhere as if in a war zone, and they were crowded every day. Then there was the freezing cold in Winter with a gale howling up Belfast Lough. The huge workshops were at times no safer, with their machinery of man-high circular saws, metal cutting guillotines, mechanical hammers, coke fires, welding machines and steel plates being craned above your head.

Safety regulations were very basic. Compensation was very low—a hundred pounds (under twelve weeks' wages) for a finger being cut off and six weeks' paid rest at home, that being the most common injury. Being crushed, as a crate with a hundred tons of machinery falling from a crane happened a few times; cut in two with a falling steel plate happened; crushed feet, crushed hands, or the loss of an eye through grinding metal on an electrical grindstone when eye-shields were not provided.

Every industrial accident you could mention happened in the Belfast shipyard. Asking for a pair of industrial gloves when handling abrasive material usually brought the retort. *'Do you play the piano or something?'* Meaning, are you not *macho* enough? Extra clothing in Winter was not allowed. It was either a boilersuit, or dungarees over a pullover and trousers. Wearing extra clothing was seen as a person deciding not to do much work. Even when the sea froze over, as it did in 1947 the slogan was: *'Get on with your good warm work.'*

The shipyard had its own ambulance service for bringing serious cases to the hospital. The shipyard employed only one doctor who dealt mainly with eye injuries. With lesser injuries, like getting a nail through your foot or requiring stitches, you made your own way to the hospital by tram. There was a bus service but only for within the shipyard which covered the large Queen's Island on which the shipyard was built.

Also take into account the casual nature of the work. No one was there for life, though they could attach themselves to the shipyard for life if you didn't mind being made redundant over and over again when the order for ships fell off. You could be six months on and a couple of months off.

During my time there were up to 35,000 workers (including a few female office workers and a few women upholsterers) The 'black' trade workers, like riveters, caulkers, welders and platers, were the hardest workers of all. They just couldn't decide to slack. A ship had to be launched by a certain date. Many were also on piece-work rates, which meant the harder they worked the more money they got. Wages weren't that good generally for the other trades. An apprentice didn't earn enough that would keep him in food, tools and clothes. His father had to make up the difference for the five years of his apprenticeship. If he stayed living at home after his apprenticeship was finished at the age of 21, he was expected to hand in half his wages to the household to start making up for the investment put in him.

The finishing trades like joiners, painters, electricians, plumbers and shipwrights, considering themselves the elite of trades, might not be so hard pushed but in the end the interior of a ship had to be finished on time.

The workshops were highly supervised by bowler-hatted chargehands, foremen, head foremen and a manager. They peeped over the workshops from all-glass offices, or patrolled the spaces between the work benches. You were allowed seven minutes to go to the toilet but for only twice a day. Everything made, like the furniture, doors and frames, sheetmetal air-conditioning, and a thousand other workshop products for the ships, had to be perfect in their manufacture and production. To be charged with bad workmanship was the most humiliating of all in a Belfast that prized their skills. One such man, in his fifties, and a highly skilled woodworker, made

a grave mistake in something he was making and, knowing he couldn't undo the mistake, sat down and lighted his pipe. He was sacked for smoking but not for bad workmanship. Men went home worried about their job and wondering if their work would be passed by the chargehand the next morning. I was advised by my father not to take up woodworking as it was a trade with a lot of worries attached to it. I did.

When an order for a ship came in you were told by your Trade Union to present yourself at the shipyard, Victoria Yard. A team of foremen would then scan the crowd for familiar faces. You had first preference as a constant shipyard worker. During busy times those unrecognised would be given a job, Protestant or Catholic.

The shipyard was 100% Trade Union-organised but the Protestant got the lion's share of the work. But, should a communist-led Trade Union send along the odd token Catholic, then that person would be started by the management or suffer industrial action. That is how Joe Cahill, an IRA leader, got to work in the shipyard as a joiner. Cahill, employed on the ships, which had a little less supervision, did admit, in a newspaper interview, to sneaking out of the shipyard on occasions and going to the cinema. Some did do that. Being caught was the sack and being banned from the shipyard for life. A severe penalty in an area with a permanent unemployment problem. He said that he got on with his workmates very well. Cahill won £30,000 in a compensation claim from the shipyard back in May 2004, when he was found to be suffering from the terminal illness, asbestosis.

Of course there were demarcation issues in the shipyard. This can only be understood from the point of view of the highly skilled who spent five years learning their trade, plus attending three days a week at evening classes for the theory side. Barristers and doctors don't give up territory either, on the grounds that they have worked hard to get to where they are. We are living in a period now when manual skills don't get respect, where nothing is made to last, and handy-men/handy-women are turned out in six-weeks, under the illusion that it is an apprenticeship they are serving. But when serious work needs to be done they bring in the Poles, the Russians, anywhere in Eastern Europe where the old traditional skills are still achieved through proper apprenticeships run by the highly skilled.

The Japanese did show themselves capable of building superb aircraft carriers, battleships and destroyers under older methods. They defeated Tsarist Russia back in 1905 during a naval battle. Being defeated during WW2, and with a great lot of devastation to their industrial areas, it could have been easier to start the shipbuilding industry with new infrastructure and a new people. Korea of course probably had to start from scratch.

Britain was winding down its industrial strength and withholding ship orders from Belfast first, before doing the same to its Scottish yards and then its English yards. That is what happens the further away you are from London. Many other industries in Belfast were also wound up, like Mackies, the engineering company whom German industry sometimes sought advice from, and sometimes employed

Mackie employees. The highly successful Sirocco Works was also closed down plus the world-renowned Belfast Ropeworks. These were companies that also employed a mainly Protestant work force. At the time, with the closing or running down of these major industrial enterprises, it was thought of, by Protestant militants, as a way of damaging or limiting Protestant power and making them more malleable to Whitehall.

The Belfast shipyard did undergo what was thought to be modernisation in the end, at a great financial cost, but it didn't do any good. The ship orders were going to France, Germany and Italy, though they had retained their worker's culture of good workmanship and good work relations and total Trade Unionism in much the same way as Belfast had.

10 April 2016

ism, from the point where he was personally pitched into it as a young colonist in Hispaniola. He lived for about 13 years as a colonist, like all the other colonists personally employing the forced labour of Indians, before he was convinced by Dominican preachers that the existing system was atrociously cruel and unjust. He soon made his appearance in Spain as a campaigner, seeking first of all to devise a more humane type of colony. An important point for him was that the Spanish colonists should themselves be prepared to work and not expect the Indians to keep them. Seeking to practice what he preached, Las Casas gained permission to be himself a colonial undertaker, but his scheme failed quickly and drastically once he got his 70 Spanish peasants to America.

At that point he withdrew to a monastery for about ten years of study and thinking. The first fruit of this was a book in which he argued that the only true way of promoting Christianity was the peaceful way. Once again seeking to practice what he preached, he pioneered a remarkable experiment in Guatemala which gave promising results for a number of years. With the Guatemalan mission proceeding, in the early 1540s he returned to Spain and worked to get the Spanish State behind a great effort to change Spanish social behaviour in America generally. Astonishingly, Charles V backed him—at the beginning. 'New Laws' were enacted, which would effectively have freed the Indians from forced labour and made them subordinate to the Spanish monarchy, but not to any ordinary Spaniards.

Yet again trying personally to put his ideas into practice, Las Casas returned to America with the rank of Bishop, but encountered an impossible level of resistance from the Spanish in his diocese—a resistance which broke out as open rebellion in Peru and was close to doing so in Mexico.

### Opponents

After these experiences, far from retreating intellectually, Las Casas sharpened his arguments and drew out more of their implications. He took on a major debate in Valladolid in 1550 with the ablest pro-colonial thinker, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda. In 1552, apparently without the regular permission from the authorities, he published a series of pamphlets in Seville, including the famous *Short Description of the Destruction of the Indies*. And more clearly than ever before he began to say that all the conquests which the Spanish had actually

## John Minahane

### The Spanish Polemic on Colonisation

#### Part 9

## English Colonists & The Red Indians

### Las Casas Summary

To summarise what has been said so far:

In the early 16th century Europe was buzzing with tensions and with a sense of great changes happening or ready to happen. The outstanding writer of the time, internationally famous and avidly read, was Erasmus of Rotterdam. Erasmus feared that wars between the great states might tear Europe apart, and in 1516 he produced *The Complaint of Peace*, calling on all Christians "to unite with one heart and soul in the abolition of war and the establishment of perpetual and universal peace". On the whole he felt optimistic. All over Europe literature, science and art was being promoted by enlightened rulers, whom he lists in a letter that he wrote in February 1517: Pope Leo in Rome, King Henry VIII in England, the Cardinal of Toledo, regent of Spain, King Charles V in the Low Countries, King Francis I in France, several German princes, plus the Emperor Maximilian...

Europe was ready, Erasmus thought, to become authentically Christian, meaning that Christianity would be lived as the true philosophy of life. He was probably the best-informed man in Europe, but he didn't know that two great controversies were just about to erupt which involved the interpretation

of true Christianity. One of them—Protestantism, rebellion against Rome—would divide Europe lastingly. The other controversy would cause only temporary division, and even that would only be in Spain, with the rest of Europe, Erasmus included, contributing nothing. And yet this controversy would be important for all Europe, because it concerned the relations of Europeans with others in a world that Europe was going to dominate.

It was about a controversy about the right and just treatment of human beings, the human beings who lived in the newly-discovered territories across the ocean. Bartolomé de Las Casas is the name that will be linked with it forever. Las Casas did not launch this controversy, and the campaign to reform the colonies did not depend on him individually: he retired from public life for most of the 1520s, yet there were many reform directives and regulations still coming from the State. But he was the most energetic campaigner, the one who spoke and wrote most plainly. And it was he who was forced to conclude, after half a century of campaigning, that the conquests were corrupting Spain very deeply, they were making a mockery of what was supposed to be the essential and priceless value, the soul of Spanish culture: Christianity.

Las Casas thought his way right through the problem of Spanish colonial-



made were totally unjust and that Spain, if it were to save its honour and its Christianity, would have to undo them.

According to Sepúlveda in Valladolid, Las Casas was saying that *"the Empire of the kings of Castille over the Indies is tyrannical and totally contrary to justice"*. But Las Casas always rejected this simplification. It was those Spaniards who carried out violent conquests who had subverted the King of Spain's sovereignty, entrusted to him by the Pope. The Pope had called on the Spanish Kings to convert the inhabitants of the new territories to Christianity. When that had been done by peaceful means—which was the only legitimate means—the Indian Christians should and would acknowledge the King of Spain as their ultimate overlord. That did not mean, however, that the Indians' own forms of government should be destroyed. Native government, culture and way of life should be respected. Peaceful persuasion should be used to bring about improvements that were thought desirable. And where the opposite had been done, reparation should be made.

Nestor Capdevila notes a kind of modern radical criticism that is made of Las Casas's argument:

"If it had been authentic and radical, wouldn't it have clearly posed the alternative of imperialism and anti-imperialism? This objection, formulated in the name of a radically anti-imperialist criticism, is naïve and irrelevant. Not alone did that not happen, but history shows that the ideological imagination is sufficiently strong and fertile to be able to live off what seeks to destroy it. The intra-imperial criticism of empire necessarily has limits, but it was the only one possible. And contrary to the illusion entertained by the fantasy of a pure radicalism, it truly was a criticism. In practice, this debate has had anti-imperialist effects, although it was imperial."

On Las Casas's idea of the Spanish King's true title to the Indies, which the conquests had subverted, Capdevila says: *"But the application of the "true" title juridically invalidates the really existent empire. This justification of empire is therefore profoundly anti-imperial."* However, this is said with the hindsight knowledge that the Spanish overseas Empire did not fundamentally change, and that the other European Empires also developed as systems of conquest. Las Casas hoped to abort what we think of as modern Imperialism, before it went any further than it had by 1550. But he was not fundamentally *"anti"*. He had a positive vision of things. Las Casas

thought it was possible to have peaceful contacts with overseas peoples based on mutual respect. His idea of a peaceful Christian conversion was in principle quite plausible: what it would have meant, as I pointed out in previous articles, was a Christianisation of an Irish type, a naturalised Christianity.

### Effects

Some years after Las Casas's death in 1566, his manuscripts were seized and their publication was forbidden. Sepúlveda's writings were banned also. Effectively, the State closed down the great polemic. And yet official State policy continued to show marks of it. The instructions (*Ordenanzas*) issued in 1573 for dealing with new territories say that discoveries should not be authorised *"with the name of conquest, as we desire that they should be done in the highest degree possible with peace and charity, and we do not want the name to give occasion or pretext for doing violence or wrong to the Indians"*. Discoveries should not be conducted as acts of war, rather the main initiative should be taken by priests and monks. Even warlike Indians should be exposed to peaceful influences, including meetings with Indians who were cooperating with the Spanish, and persuasion should be applied and the methods of charm, including music. Once the Indians had submitted and the land was at peace, they should be persuaded to pay a moderate tribute *"in recognition of the universal sovereignty which we have over the Indies"*.

Las Casas could not have quarrelled with much of this. But it's a little too good to be true—and even at that, the *Ordenanzas* stop well short of saying that the Indians need only recognise the King's overall sovereignty and therefore that their own forms of government are not to be disturbed. And of course, there is no mention of a revision of the great conquests carried out already. And then what about a land like Chile, where a conquest was ongoing?

It seems that Las Casas never quite lost credibility in the Spanish state as the voice of Christian principle. His opponent Sepúlveda, who maintained that conquest was justified because it was the only way the superior Spanish race could take up its burden of civilising the barbarians (a pioneering statement in the tradition that includes such people as Rudyard Kipling and Lord Curzon) was much less convincing. Las Casas marked Spanish colonialism but could

not fundamentally change it. Principles and practice remained at odds.

Spain was a great model of European power, but it was no kind of model for relations with the transoceanic peoples. In fact, one of the lessons drawn by the budding colonial powers that were listening in to the great polemic was that they should avoid such polemics like the plague. Capdevila cites an opinion from the pioneering English planters, the Company of Virginia in 1606: *"All of the (Spanish) arguments... were so incoherent and contradictory that many of the books which were written in the King of Spain's defence are prohibited in his realm."*

But also, the polemic may have encouraged those other colonial hopefuls to use a different approach. In America the English were still beginners, not much more than scavengers. But their potential was immense, and given favourable circumstances the picture could change dramatically to England's advantage, as it had earlier changed to the advantage of Spain. This was understood by people like Raleigh and Bacon.

In his essay *Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates*, Bacon said that the State should be aggressive and should not let slip *"any just occasion"* for war, because as the individual person's body needs exercise, so does the body politic: *"to a kingdom and estate, a just and honourable war is the true exercise"*. For planters, however, active aggression against the natives was to be discouraged.

"If you plant where savages are, do not only entertain them with trifles and gingles; but use them justly and graciously, within sufficient guard nevertheless; and do not win their favour by helping them to invade their enemies; but for their defence it is not amiss" (*Of Plantations*).

To be sure, those qualifications might cover plenty of violence. Nonetheless, it was open to non-Spaniards to appear in North America in the role of the good Europeans, peace-loving, just and honourable. The English were good at this self-presentation. It is a fact that at first they mainly tried to get what they wanted peacefully—though as early as the 1630s they were also engaging in genocide.

### Roger Williams on Indian Land Rights

Barbara Arneil gives four reasons why the English preferred the peaceful approach.

"Firstly, the English settlers were not initially in a position to conduct warfare

against the native tribes encountered in the colonies. Secondly, the use of "vacuum domicilium" ('empty domicile': the legal idea that land which was not being used might be taken by anyone who could use it. J.M.) had been part of colonial and legal thinking since the discovery of America and was easily adapted to the English claim for land under peaceful terms. Thirdly, the recognition of native Americans' claims to lands made the English settlers' purchases more secure against both other Indian tribes and European powers. Finally, as has been mentioned, the English wanted to attract investment and settlers to the new world and needed to insist, at least initially, that settlement would be achieved peaceably through labour and not by virtue of a constant state of warfare. "

The idea of "*empty domicile*" was often applied to all of the Indians' lands, denying that they really possessed any land at all. "*Our land is full—their land is empty*" said Robert Cushman in 1622: he was one of those who had arrived two years previously on the Mayflower. "*This then is a sufficient reason to prove our going thither to live lawful: their land is spacious and void, and they are few and do but run over the grass, as do also the foxes and wild beasts.*" In the early 19th century some brutal judges of the US Supreme Court would repeat the comparison of Indian settlement to habitation by wild beasts, and they would claim that this had always been the colonists' understanding and there had never been any recognition of Indian rights to the land.

However, there were very many formal purchases of lands from the Indians. Purchase was even typical. If it was opportune to buy, then the rule of policy was to do things the easiest way. The colony of Massachusetts, for example, had a patent from King Charles to take possession of a defined territory. If the local Indians raised no objections, they could simply regard the King's patent as their title. But the plantation company in London gave instructions that, if any of the Indians claimed rights over any of the territory, "*we pray you endeavor to purchase their title so that we may avoid the least scruple of intrusion*".

When disputes arose with other Colonial Powers the English would recognise Indian property rights or not, depending on what was advantageous to them. In a dispute with the Dutch in 1632 the English side formally denied that Indians could be regarded as legal possessors of land. They changed their

minds twelve years later in another dispute with the Dutch and recognised Indian ownership of land, since that was advantageous in the circumstances.

A conflict arose in Massachusetts in the 1630s which posed the question of what right the colonists had to the lands they were occupying. At the centre of it was Roger Williams, one of those Puritans who were called Separatists: they insisted on splitting away completely from the Church of England and forming independent churches. Williams had particular problems with King Charles, who was both head of the Church of England and the source of the Massachusetts colony's patent. In 1632 he published a booklet which caused particular offence by four statements: (1) King Charles was a liar when he said in his patent that King James's people were "*the first that discovered these parts*"; (2) King Charles was a blasphemer when he referred to Europe as "*Christendom*"; (3) King Charles had the definite appearance of being one of those kings mentioned in the Book of Revelation, who give their power to the Beast; (4) King Charles's patent gave no just title, and the colony of Massachusetts was unjustly occupying lands that belonged to the native Indians.

Governor Winthrop tried to smooth things over, but Williams raised the contentious issues again and the Massachusetts Court decided that he was dangerous and sentenced him to be deported to England. A Minister named John Cotton gave details of the dispute in a pamphlet published long afterwards. There were two grounds for the deportation. One was Williams's opposition to an Oath of Loyalty which the Massachusetts magistrates considered necessary. The other was "*his violent and tumultuous carriage against the Patent*".

Cotton said that the patent was what had made it possible for all of them to transport their goods legally from England. It was what enabled them to set up a form of civil government and make laws and administer justice; also to establish their Church government, which would hopefully succeed in "*the gaining of natives (in God's time) first to civility and then to Christianity*". The patent's authority was obeyed by Englishmen and recognised by foreigners.

"This Patent Mr. Williams publicly and vehemently preached against, as containing matter of falsehood and injustice: falsehood in making the King the first Christian prince who had discovered these parts, and injustice, in

giving the country to his English subjects, which belonged to the native Indians. This therefore he pressed upon the magistrates and people to be humbled for, from time to time, in days of solemn humiliation, and to return the Patent back again to the King. It was answered to him, first, that it was neither the King's intendment, nor the English Planters, to take possession of the country by murder of the natives, or by robbery; but either to take possession of the void places of the County by the law of nature, for *Vacuum domicilium cedit occupanti* ("Empty domicile gives way to an occupier" J.M.): or if we took any lands from the natives, it was by way of purchase and free consent. A little before our coming God had, by pestilence, and other contagious diseases, swept away many thousands of the natives, who had inhabited the Bay of Massachusetts, for which the Patent was granted. Such few of them as survived were glad of the coming of the English, who might preserve them from the oppression of the Narragansetts. For it is the manner of the natives, the stronger nations to oppress the weaker. This answer did not satisfy Mr. Williams, who pleaded. the natives, though they did not, nor could subdue the country (but left it *Vacuum domicilium*), yet they hunted all the country over, and for the expedition of their hunting voyages, they burnt up all the underwoods in the country, once or twice a year, and therefore as noblemen in England possessed great parks, and the King great forests in England only for their game, and no man might lawfully invade their property: so much the natives challenge the like propriety of the country here. It was replied to him,

1. That the King and noblemen in England, as they possessed greater territories than other men, so they did greater service to Church and Commonwealth.

2. That they employed their parks and forests, not for hunting only, but for timber, and for the nourishment of tame beasts, as well as wild, and also for habitations of sundry tenants.

3. That our towns here did not disturb the huntings of the natives, but did rather keep their game fitter for the taking; for they take their deer by traps, and not by hounds.

4. That if they complained of any straits we put upon them, we gave satisfaction in some payments or other, to their content.

5. We do not conceive that it is a just title to so vast a continent, to make no other improvement of millions of acres in it, but only to burn it up for pasture.



But these answers not satisfying him, this was still pressed by him as a national sin, to hold to the Patent, yea, and a national duty to renounce the Patent; which to have done, had subverted the fundamental state and government of the country."

This is a revealing statement from the Puritan mainstream, refuting a Puritan eccentric. Probably it shows the Puritan mainstream at its most persuasive. *"It was neither the King's intendment, nor the English Planters', to take possession of the country by murder of the natives, or by robbery"*: that's essentially the claim that has sustained an argument among American historians during the past fifty years, since the publication of *New England Frontier* by Alden T. Vaughan in 1965. One side insists on seeing the violence, domineering arrogance and cant that went into *"the invasion of America"*, the title of a book by Francis Jennings. The other side, represented by Vaughan among others, replies: there was no such thing as an invasion of America! The English colonists wanted to and tried to **share** America. They weren't always, or even usually, killing Indians. They had a culture of justice, fair dealing and respect for natives' rights; they were sometimes prepared to punish their own members, colonists, who had injured Indians. And even if in time things went badly wrong, it wasn't mainly their fault.

I find myself on the first side of that argument. Looking closely at what Cotton has to say above, it is impossible not to sense the contempt he has for other people's way of life. What William Cronon says is to the point:

"Few Europeans were willing to recognise that the ways Indians inhabited New England ecosystems were as legitimate as the way Europeans intended to inhabit them. Colonists thus rationalized their conquest of New England: by refusing to extend the rights of property to the Indians, they both trivialised the ecology of Indian life and paved the way for destroying it."

### **Roger Williams on the Indians**

Roger Williams was intolerable in Massachusetts, but there was space for him elsewhere. Governor Winthrop—whether because he liked the man, or because he foresaw how this malcontent might one day be useful—warned him to decamp before he was deported. Let him go further down the coast and make some arrangement with the Indians! Williams did precisely that. With a few followers he established the village of

Providence, which became the core of a kind of dissident colony (the English Parliament gave it official colony status in 1644). Williams thought that the civil power should be separate from the Church, with no right to give direction in religious matters, and within the Separatist Protestant Christian Church there should be freedom of opinion. He didn't have a very coherent civil power, his Church was fairly chaotic and the other colonies were hostile, but he kept going.

In 1643 he published a remarkable booklet, *A Key to the Indian Languages*. Vocabulary is presented in relation to various areas of life, including religion. Interspersed through it are some general reflections on the Indians. For example, they were not violent people:

"I have on occasion travelled many a score, nay many a hundred miles among them, without need of stick or staff, for any appearance of danger amongst them. Yet it is a rule amongst them, that it is not good for a man to travel without a weapon... I could never hear that murders or robberies are comparably as frequent as in parts of Europe, amongst the English, French etc.... Their wars are far less bloody and devouring than the cruel wars of Europe, and seldom twenty slain in a pitched battle."

Their government was monarchical, but the *Sachims* (kings) were sensitive to the people's wishes:

"The Sachims, although they have an absolute monarchy over the people, yet they will not conclude of ought that concerns all, either laws or subsidies, or wars, unto which the people are averse, and by gentle persuasion cannot be brought."

In religion they were tolerant: *"They have a modest religious persuasion not to disturb any man, either themselves, English, Dutch or any in their conscience and worship."*

In fact, they were civil people in their own way, paradoxical as that might be. *"There is a favour of civility and courtesy even amongst these wild Americans, both amongst themselves and towards strangers."* They were generous to strangers, more so than the English. Their numerical system was fully developed: Williams gives numbers up to a hundred thousand. They had two kinds of money and sometimes sold, for example, land. He denounces the opinion held by people like Cotton, that the Indians had no rights to their lands: *"I have known them to make bargain or sale among themselves for a small piece or quantity of ground— notwithstanding a sinful opinion amongst*

*many white people that Christians have the right to heathens' lands."*

The Indians were highly impressed by the English culture and civilisation. Williams told them there had once been a time when the English too did not have clothes, books, etc., but they had acquired these things. He did not have the modern racist's view that the natives were essentially less intelligent: *"For the temper of the brain, in quick apprehensions and accurate judgments, the most high and sovereign God and Creator did not make them inferior to the Europeans."*

His Christianity interested them. *"I believe they are lost, and yet hope (in the Lord's holy season) some of the wildest of them shall be found to share in the blood of the Son of God."* He was tempted to start converting them, but decided there was no point putting the cart before the horse. First there had to be social preconditions. (And maybe he wasn't sure enough about his religion: what would he be converting them to?) Anyhow, the order of things must be first civility (wearing clothes, learning to read etc.), then Christianity. His booklet might help its readers to converse with Indians all over the country, *"and by such converse, it may please the Father of mercies to spread civility and in his own most holy season, Christianity."*

Other interesting thoughts and sharp insights are scattered through Williams's writings, and the following is especially worthy of note: *"God Land will be (as now it is) as great a God with us English as God Gold was with the Spaniards."*

In the 1920s some American writers turned Williams into an advanced modern democrat and humanitarian. Others since then have been turning him back into a Puritan, but there's still much argument about what he really thought, including on the subject of the Indians. To put that topic in perspective, however, we must consider not only what he said but what he did. And the fact is, he was a key participant in one of the first genocides.

### **The Massacre of the Pequots**

The New England colonists traded with the Narragansett and Pequot tribes, who lived in what are now the states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. Trading was done using the Indian currency of wampum beads. As conducted by Indians, the wampum economy was not dynamic or socially disruptive. The colonists greatly extended its scope, of course, and soon controlled it. They were also disrupting the ecosystem. Peter Mancall says:

"Forests needed to be cleared; residents had to establish year-round dwellings; fences had to demarcate property boundaries and rein in the livestock brought across the ocean by the English. The colonists had no understanding of how north-eastern Algonquins used the land. They never grasped the important role that the forests or edge habitats played in regulating game or the logic of seasonal migrations to increase food supplies with minimal labour. None of this mattered to the Puritans. They believed that God had a single vision for the proper ordering of an economy,"

The Pequots, feeling that nets were being drawn round them, began to challenge the colonists. Early in 1637 there were skirmishes. By the end of April that year the Pequots had killed about thirty colonists in all; their own casualties may or may not have been higher. Governor Winthrop of Massachusetts was warned by a correspondent that all of the Indians were waiting to see what happened next. *"If some serious and very speedy course be not taken to tame the pride and take down the insolence of these now-insulting Pequots... we are like to have all the Indians in the country about our ears."*

The colonists were concerned that the Pequots might make an alliance with the Narragansetts, the other very powerful tribe in the region. In this situation Winthrop appealed to Roger Williams, who was living beside or among the Narragansetts at Providence and was friendly with their leaders. Would he act as the colonists' ambassador to the Narragansetts? Williams agreed, and did his work successfully. While he was negotiating, there were Pequot envoys in the Narragansett camp making the opposite case, for an alliance against the English. *"Three days and nights my business forced me to mix with the bloody Pequot ambassadors."* He feared for his life, but it seems that the Pequots respected the immunity of envoys.

His letters to Winthrop in mid-May 1637 show Williams asking for materials which could be given as rewards to Indians prepared to fight the Pequots, and offering advice on how to organise a joint campaign by the English and Narragansetts. In due course, a militia of 90 colonists from Connecticut, joined by about 500 Narragansett allies, set out to attack the Pequots. On May 26th they came to the main Pequot settlement at Mystic, in Connecticut. In a surprise dawn attack the camp was fired from two sides; colonists and Narragansetts

then surrounded the settlement and indiscriminately killed anyone, man, woman or child, who tried to escape being burned alive.

According to the colonists' commander, Mason, six to seven hundred Pequots were killed. Many Narragansetts were disgusted by the massacre and cried out that this was bad, the fire was killing too many. But the Puritans remained resolute.

"It was a fearful sight to see them thus frying in the fire and the streams of blood quenching the same, and horrible was the stink and scent thereof; but the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice, and they gave the praise thereof to God, who had wrought so wonderfully for them",

as William Bradford, the governor of Plymouth colony, wrote later.

Roger Williams was not personally present at the massacre, but he soon received accurate information about what had happened. His response was much the same as Bradford's. In a letter to Winthrop he referred to what had happened at Mystic as *"the late merciful success it hath pleased the Father of mercies to vouchsafe to the first attempts of our countrymen against these barbarous"*. From the remainder of the letter it is clear that these words were not meant ironically. Rumours were current among the Narragansetts, he said, that the English had run out of powder; he was telling them that the English would always get more powder, they would never stop fighting! His only criticism of the massacre was that, in the fury of killing, the colonists had killed or wounded many of the Narragansetts, being unable to distinguish one Indian from another. Winthrop should take steps to avoid a repeat. *"Sir, I understand that the reason why the English hurt so many of the Nanhigonnsticks (i.e. Narragansetts. J.M.) was want of signs or marks: you may please therefore to provide some yellow or red for their hands."*

Subsequently Williams urged the governor to pursue the surviving Pequot forces without delay. And in fact, a Massachusetts militia contingent was mobilised following the massacre to hunt down survivors. There were many further killings. A Puritan writer of the time reckoned that about 1,500 Pequots were killed in the two-month period from mid-May to mid-July.

The colonists made an energetic attempt to destroy the remaining Pequot community by enslavement. An estimated 900-plus Pequots were enslaved, with about 600 given to their Indian enemies

and 300-plus disposed of by the colonists. *"The prisoners were divided,"* Winthrop explained to Bradford after one particular capture, *"some to those of the river, and the rest to us; of these we send the male children to Bermuda, by Mr. William Peirce, and the women and maid children are disposed about in the towns"*. According to Benjamin Madley, estimates have been made of between one-quarter and two-thirds of all Pequots killed during this *"Pequot War"*, with survivors enslaved or intentionally scattered. There was actually a Treaty of Hartford, agreed in September 1638 between the English of Connecticut and the non-Pequot Indian Sachems, which stipulated that there were to be no more Pequots. Any surviving Pequots must be Narragansetts or Mohicans from now on. Complete destruction of the tribe was intended—though in fact a weakened Pequot community did survive.

Roger Williams disliked slavery. At a later time he tried unsuccessfully to have it banned in the Rhode Island colony which he had founded. But in a letter to Winthrop during the Pequot War he went out of his way to acknowledge that slavery was legitimate. He merely expressed the hope that at a later date the enslaved women and children in the English towns might be freed, subject of course to security concerns: *"I doubt not but the enemy may lawfully be weakened and deprived of all comfort of wife and children etc.... but I beseech you well weigh if after a due time of training up to labour and restraint, they ought not to be set free; yet so without danger of adjoining the enemy."*

### **The Massacre of the Narragansetts**

By mid-July 1637 Winthrop was apparently considering whether, with grievous damage already done to the Pequots, he should not now attack the Narragansetts. But on this occasion Williams had a good word to say for his friend Miantonomo, the Narragansett Sachim.

"'Tis true there is no fear of God before their eye, and all the cords that ever bound the barbarous to foreigners were made of selfe and covetousness; yet if I mistake not I observe in Miantunomu some sparks of true friendship could it be deeply imprinted to him that the English never intended to despoil him of the country."

This was Williams the diplomat speaking and trying to make reassuring noises. (At other times he acknowledged that the lands he got in the Narragansett

country were given to him by the *Sachims* not selfishly or covetously but as gifts in true friendship.) However, the comforting idea that he wanted communicated to Miantonomo could never be "deeply imprinted", because it was substantially false. A disillusioned Miantonomo had this to say just a few years afterwards, in 1642:

"You know our fathers had plenty of deer and skins, our plains were full of deer, as also our woods, and of turkies, and our coves full of fish and fowl. But these English having gotten the land, they with scythes cut down the grass, and with axes fell the trees; their cows and horses eat the grass, and their hogs spoil our clam banks, and we shall all be starved."

He wanted then (if his words are truly reported) what he might have had five years previously: a united war of all the Indians against the English. But he had no time to organise anything of the sort. The Commissioners of the United Colonies, convinced that "it would not be safe to set him at liberty, neither had we sufficient ground to put him to death", solved their dilemma by arranging to have him killed by his Indian enemies.

Williams was in England, it seems, when Miantonomo was killed. He continued afterwards to be an Intelligence Agent for Massachusetts Bay and their diplomat to the Narragansetts. Over the previous seventeen years "I have been more or less interested and used in all your great transactions of war or peace, between the natives", he told the General Court of Massachusetts Bay in 1654. It seems that he did what he could to protect the Narragansetts from violence. He recalled how, on his leaving for England in the early 1650s, the Narragansetts asked him to present a petition to Oliver Cromwell ("*the High Sachim of England*"), asking that they should not be forced to change their religion. At that time a Puritan conversion drive was in progress. There were many so-called "*praying Indians*", some of whom were telling the Narragansetts that if they refused to pray they would be destroyed by war. And Cromwell at Williams's request actually granted the Indians some "*favours*". (Meaning freedom of conscience?)

Despite the colonists' endless pressure and expansion, it seems that the Narragansetts were fairly passive for another generation. But the colonists sometimes thought of making war on them. In the Autumn of 1654 Massachusetts received complaints against the Narragansetts, and a proposal to make war

on them jointly, from some other Indians. The proposal was given consideration. Williams made clear his opposition, and here we see him at his best, as a restrainer:

"I never was against the righteous use of the civil sword of men or nations, but... I humbly pray your confederation, whether it be not only possible, but very easy, to live and die with all the natives of this country..."

Hath not the God of peace and Father of mercies made these natives more friendly in this, than our native countrymen in our own land to us? Have they not entered leagues of love, and to this day continued peaceable commerce with us? Are not our families grown up in peace among them? Upon which I humbly ask, how can it suit with Christian ingenuity to take hold of some seeming occasions for their destruction, which, though the heads be only aimed at, yet all experience tells us, falls on the body and the innocent."

From that last sentence one gathers that he did, after all, have qualms about what happened at Mystic.

The next major conflict in New England erupted in 1675. Williams, his Editor tells us, helped by his work of mediation to delay it for a few years. On this occasion the colonists' Indian enemies were led by Metacom (known as King Philip), *Sachim* of the Wampanoag tribe. As usual, Williams met the Narragansetts on behalf of the Governor and Council of Massachusetts, and they assured him they would give no help to Philip (letter of 25th June 1675). However, just two days later he was reporting that there was reason to consider the Narragansett *Sachims* guilty of falsehood and treachery. He expressed a hope that "*some honourable way*" could still be found to keep the Mohicans and Narragansetts from allying with Philip. But plainly his diplomacy was bankrupt.

The Narragansetts were accused of harbouring enemy warriors, and a force was assembled to attack them. Writing on December 18th to the Governor of Connecticut, Williams said: "*I fear the event of the justest war. But if it please God to deliver them into our hands, I know you will... endeavor that our sword may make a difference and parcere subjectis* (spare those who are subject J.M.), *though we debellare superbos* (humble the proud J.M.)."

He seemed to have an intuition of what was coming. On the very next day, December 19th, the main Narragansett settlement on Rhode Island was attacked by a militia from the Plymouth, Connecti-

cut and Massachusetts colonies with allied Indians (who now included the surviving Pequots). The settlement was burned; non-combatants estimated at between 300 and 1,000 were killed, plus about 100 warriors. Afterwards some of the surviving Narragansetts were sold as slaves.

Williams, writing afterwards to Governor Leverett of Boston, expressed no criticism of the massacre. What he did say is that the Mohicans and Pequots who were present had not acted in the proper spirit and they had allowed most of the Narragansett warriors to escape. An eyewitness had told him—

"that if the Mohegans and Pequods had been true, they might have destroyed most of the Narragansetts; but the Narragansetts parlied with them in the beginning of the fight, so that they promised to shoot high, which they did, and killed not one Narragansett man, except against their wills."

Afterwards he drew up a list of deserving persons or colonies with a right to "*all or considerable part*" of the Narragansett lands.

What is one to make of this extraordinary man? It's not easy to find his wavelength. Alden T. Vaughan made a sweeping judgment in his book on the New England frontier: "*Williams and the other Puritans differed very little in their attitudes or their actions towards the natives of New England.*" One feels that this is obviously not true at the beginning of Williams's time in America, but it seems true enough at the end.

Williams was a Puritan above all. He was a most awkward Puritan who wanted to build the Church of God and the Christian State without compromise on his peculiar principles, too awkward to be put up with in the conventional colonies. The Puritans had made him an outcast and the damned had befriended him; yet once called upon, he would still give consistent loyalty to the larger Puritan body in all their dealings with "*the barbarous*". He was bright enough to see that on a human level the damned might be better and more admirable people than the saved, and this was a provocative fact with which to tease the saved in their unbecoming complacency. But could that have any essential significance?

After a promising start, as a defender of Indian rights Williams went nowhere. He became not just an ally but an assiduous agent of the armed civil power of much stronger colonial bodies with whom he had serious disagreements. In expressing those theologically-based

disagreements he was plain-spoken, combative, uncompromising (as in his book *The Bloody Tenant*, published in 1647); when conferring with colonial leaders about Indian affairs he was diplomatic, painfully anxious to demonstrate his loyalty and his adherence to ordinary colonial thinking. At least, that's the impression I get from his letters.

Near the end of his days, Williams paid tribute to the Narragansett Sachim who was his benefactor: "*When the hearts of my countrymen and friends and brethren failed me, (God's) infinite wisdom and merits stirred up the barbarous heart of Canonicus to love me as his son to the last gasp.*" The Narragansetts had given generously. How much did they receive in return? When the crunch came, wasn't Williams himself in the service of "*God Land*"? On occasion people compare him to Bartolomé de Las Casas, but I cannot see that this comparison has any foundation.

### John Locke

The idea that land which was not being used (whatever that might mean!) could be taken by those who would use it, went back a long way in English thinking. One finds it in Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516). The Utopians "*consider it a most just cause for war when a people which does not use its soil but keeps it idle and waste nevertheless forbids the use and possession of it to others who by the rule of nature ought to be maintained by it.*"

This idea came to America with the Mayflower (see the statements by Robert Cushman quoted earlier) and doubtless with any other ship that brought English colonists. But only at the end of the 17th century do we find the classic formulation of the thought, by John Locke in his *Second Treatise on Government*.

Locke's patron was the Earl of Shaftesbury, a leader of the extreme anti-Papist faction of the English aristocracy. Shaftesbury, a member of several Cromwellian Parliaments, went over to the side of Charles II at the last moment in 1660 and helped to install him as King of England. He was extremely able, and it was Charles who made him first a Baron and then an Earl. However, Shaftesbury's main political aim was to see to it that Charles's Catholic younger brother James would never become King. When, with all his machinations over many years, he failed to get James excluded from succession, eventually he plotted to have both James and Charles killed. The conspiracy went wrong and Shaftesbury was forced to flee to Holland, where he died in 1683.

In effect, Shaftesbury had tried to stage the so-called Glorious Revolution seven or eight years ahead of time. Locke was close to the conspirators, if not a conspirator himself. He too removed himself to Holland and remained there until William of Orange was in place as King of England.

In earlier days Locke had invested in a slave-trading company in the Bahamas and acquired estates in the slave-holding colony of Carolina. He was Secretary to the *Lords Proprietors of Carolina* (chief of whom was Shaftesbury) from 1668 to 1675. According to Barbara Arneil, the workload in this job was enormous. He was also Secretary to the Council of Trade, where again he was dealing with American colonies, from 1672 to 1676. The interest he took in America left its imprint on his *Two Treatises on Government*, written about the time of Shaftesbury's conspiracy (early 1680s) but not published until the 1690s.

The *Two Treatises* are famous as a statement of the English idea of liberty. But the first thing to note is that liberty isn't meant for everyone: Locke gives a carefully reasoned justification of slavery. "*It may seem unnecessary, and inconsistent with his principles*", Peter Laslett, his Cambridge Editor, remarks, "*but it must be remembered that he writes as the administrator of slave-owning colonies in America.*" Indeed it must, but I think Locke knew the logic of his principles better than his academic critic.

The famous chapter on Property in the *Second Treatise* had highly negative implications for the freedom, or eventually for the very existence, of the American Indians. Some thoughts on this must be held over to a further article.

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# John George MacCarthy

Extract from 1869 lecture

## The History of Cork

The earliest glimpse history gives us of Cork is towards the end of the sixth century; and the central figure this glimpse reveals is that of the founder of the city, Lochan, the Fair-headed, since called St. Finbarr. He was born near Galway. He studied under a Roman ecclesiastic. He became a scholar, a monk, and a priest.

He lived for some years at Gougane, called Barra after him. Then he came hither. Here he founded a monastery and opened a school. Before he died the monastery had become a famous abbey; the school had grown into a university; and around abbey and university had grown up—the city of Cork. Thus our city was founded.

The abbey, the university, the city throve for two hundred and fifty years. Let us look back through the ages and try to form some idea of them.

What was the Abbey like? It was situate in the suburb we still call Gill Abbey near where now stands the Queen's College. It spread southward to the little lake we call "The Lough". It included the present Protestant cathedral, still called after St. Finbarr. According to Petrie, its church, library, refectory, and other principal buildings, were of stone, surrounded by a wall pierced with square headed doorways, and crowned by the round tower (whose foundations were only recently removed), which served the triple purpose of a keep for sacred vessels and precious books, a watch-tower against enemies, and belfry to call to prayer.

The Abbey lands spread round about. The monks and students lived in little wooden, skin-roofed houses. Of material comfort there was probably little; of material splendour there was certainly none. Yet I think every Cork man may be proud of the old Abbey of Cork. It did good work in its day; it made Cork more famous than ever Cork was since.

What were the monks at? They certainly were no sluggards. For one thing they were at gardening and

farming. Our agriculture is till backward; how defective it must have been then!

How useful to introduce the agricultural art of Gaul and Italy to this far-off spot in the Western Seas! Literary culture and teaching ranked next among their avocations. It was the speciality of Irish monks that they were ardent scholars and earnest teachers. That their teaching was sought in every capital of Europe is decisive proof that they learned and taught well. Their chief duties, however, were religious and missionary. Christianity had been only recently introduced into Ireland. Vast tracts and tribes were still pagan, or nearly so. The Abbey of Cork was a sort of outpost in the work of Christianity. Dungarvan owes its name and Waterford its Christianity to Brother Garvan, of the Abbey of Cork. Brother Coleman became the missionary bishop and patron saint of Cloyne; Brother Fachnan, of Ross; Brother Nessian of Mungret; another Coleman, of Ossory; Brother Brian, of St. Brienne in France; and in the north of Scotland brave sons of St. Finbarr gave his patronage to the city of Caithness and his name to the Island of Barra.

What was the University like? Materially, as we have seen, it was a poor concern; intellectually, not so. It was of those great Irish schools which were the glory of the time. I think it is as well proved as anything in history that these schools *were* glorious. Shrewd old Sam Johnson thought so; and he had no prejudices in favour of Ireland. So did Bellarmine and Muratori; Mabillon and Denina; Mosheim, Scaliger, and Niebuhr; Schegel, Görres, and Döllinger; Cousin, Thierry, and Michelet; Hallam, Newman, and Macaulay. It seems safe to assume they were not all mistaken. Civilisation had, to use Görres' happy phrase, taken up its "*winter quarters*" in Ireland.

Wintry times it certainly had of it throughout Europe. The Roman empire of the West had fallen. The various tribes of the North had settled down amidst its ruins. The Angles and Saxons in Britain;

the Franks in Gaul; the Goths in Germany; the Vandals and Lombards in Italy; the Huns in Rome itself. Of course the old inhabitants were terrified, and had cause to be so. Equally, of course, the conqueror scarce knew what to do with themselves. But Ireland remained uninvaded. As she had escaped the eagles of the South so she had escaped the ravens of the North.

And just then her keen Celtic intellect had seized, together with the truths of Christianity, all the secular learning of the time. Her abbeys had recently been founded; her schools opened. Hither fled the timid for safety and the learned for leisure, bringing with them their best books and finest tastes. Hither also came the aspiring and the inquisitive. The Romanic citizen sent his sons to the schools of Erin for the culture which had become almost impossible at home; and the sons of the conquerors sought from the gentle and scholarly Celt the instruction they would have disdained from the men whom their race had subdued.

The occasion was a great one; and our fathers were equal to it. They received students from all lands; they went to all lands to teach. To them Alfred came to learn; from them Charlemagne received professors. Ireland became, as Johnson said, "*the School of the West*". Scaliger writes that at this period nearly all of the learned were of Ireland. The Universities of Oxford, Paris, and Pavia were of Irish origin. There is scarcely an important continental city, from Palermo to Cologne, in which some Irish saint and scholar is not still revered.

It was of this great movement that the University of Cork took part; and it was thus that in the olden days, by the bank of the our old river, the olive-tinted son of the South met the blue-eyed Saxon; Hun read with Gaul; Angle with Iberian; and all with O'Mahons from Drohid-Mahon, O'Driscolls of Iberscheine, O'Sullivan's Beare, and O'Sullivan's Bantriagh, and O'Sullivan's of Dunkerron, MacGilllicuddys and O'Donoghues of the far West, and the MacCarthys, to whom every tribe owed allegiance, from the Shannon to the sea.

We are indebted to Jack Lane for drawing our attention to this piece.

## Peter Brooke

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Alexander Dugin And The Russian Question  
Part 3

### Sympathy For The Devil

#### Reflections On The February Revolution

Solzhenitsyn's *Reflections on the February Revolution* (yet another text that has not, to my knowledge, been published in an English translation) consists of four essays originally intended as political summaries of each of the four volumes of *March 1917*. According to the jacket notes on the French edition: "On reflection the author decided not to include them in his epic so as not to influence the reader and to preserve the openness of perspective appropriate to a work of literature."

The decision was a good one. The four essays are written in a blaze of indignation against the incompetence and inadequacy of all the major players in the February Revolution. (It started in February according to the Julian calendar but in March according to the Gregorian calendar which was only officially adopted in what was left of the Russian Empire—but not by the Church—in 1918.)

All of them, that is, except Lenin and Trotsky. As Solzhenitsyn said in an interview given to *Der Spiegel* in 2007:

"SPIEGEL: A few months ago in a long article you reiterated your thesis once again: Communism was not the result of the previous Russian political regime; the Bolshevik Revolution was made possible only by Kerensky's poor governance in 1917. If one follows this line of thinking, then Lenin was only an accidental person, who was only able to come to Russia and seize power here with German support. Have we understood you correctly?

"Solzhenitsyn: No, you have not. Only an extraordinary person can turn opportunity into reality. Lenin and Trotsky were exceptionally nimble and vigorous politicians who managed in a short period of time to use the weakness of Kerensky's government. But allow me to correct you: the 'October Revolution' is a myth generated by the winners, the Bolsheviks, and swallowed whole by progressive circles in the West. On Oct. 25, 1917, a violent 24-hour coup d'état took place in Petrograd. It was brilliantly and thoroughly planned by Leon Trotsky—Lenin was still in hiding then to avoid being brought to justice

for treason. What we call 'the Russian Revolution of 1917' was actually the February Revolution."

Trotsky, however, only arrived in Russia towards the end of the period covered in the novel and, unlike Lenin, Solzhenitsyn doesn't cover his period in exile (though he does describe quite amusingly Lenin's impotent jealousy as he witnessed the joyous playacting of Trotsky and Parvus in the St Petersburg Soviet during the 1905 revolution).

It is easy to see how Solzhenitsyn's indignation could have mounted as he writes at such length with such patience and human sympathy for the people—the representatives of 'civil society'—he believes plunged Russia into Hell but it is the patience and the human sympathy—the 'openness of perspective'—that make the greatness of the novel.

The *Reflections* were first published as a separate text in 1995 after his return to Russia. In an introduction written in 2007 he says:

"At that time [1980-3 when the essays were written—PB], overwhelmed as I was by a huge pile of factual data, it was a physical need: to express in a coherent manner the conclusions that could be drawn from this mass of regrettable historical facts. It is all the more regrettable that still today, after a quarter of a century has passed, some of the conclusions may still apply to the dangerous instability we are experiencing at the present time."

#### 1917 And 1941

One of the points Solzhenitsyn makes in the *Reflections* is that, whereas the Russian Empire fell into anarchy in 1917, it did not fall into anarchy in 1941, when the military catastrophe that had hit it was a good deal worse. Thus he says:

"I'm not going to exaggerate in this respect the importance of the retreat in 1915, nor the weariness of the people nor, in some places, the interruptions in the supply of provisions, nor the incompetence of the Tsarist ministries. The Soviet retreat of 1941-2 was thirty times worse, it wasn't just Poland that was lost at that time but the whole of Belorussia, Ukraine, Russia as far as Moscow and the Volga, the losses in people killed and prisoners taken were

twenty times worse, the famine which reigned everywhere was unimaginable, not counting the terrible tensions in the factories and on the land, ministries that were even more incompetent and of course a crushing of freedoms that was beyond compare but *precisely because* the regime didn't hesitate in its cruelty, and it couldn't come into anyone's mind to express the slightest notion of defiance against it—this catastrophic defeat and the destruction of the country didn't produce any sort of revolution (another parallel, but a strange one: in both wars we were dependent on our western allies. But because of this the Tsarist government and the provisional government sought to enter into the good graces of the allies, while Stalin, in a similar situation, he imposed conditions on them ...)"

And again, responding to the idea that the 1917 rising in Petrograd had been the result of a shortage of bread:

"But today we know that in itself the slipknot of bread wasn't tied sufficiently tightly to strangle Petrograd, much less Russia as a whole. Not only famine, but even a real scarcity of bread hadn't yet hit Petrograd in those days. With what we know today, can we talk of famine if, after having stood in a queue, you can gather up as much bread as your arms can hold? And in many enterprises the management itself supplied provisions—so there weren't any queues for bread. There was no lack of bread in the garrison yet that is what played the decisive role. Russia and Petrograd would know scarcities of bread many times worse and would support them. We know well today that that same town, during the Second World War against the same Germany, accepted without protest to live not a week but a year, not with two pounds of bread a day but with a third of a pound and no possibility of procuring any of the other products that were freely available in 1917 ... today we know well that no famine can provoke a revolution where there is a national enthusiasm and Chekist terror, not to speak of the two simultaneously. But in 1917 neither the one nor the other existed ..."

What Solzhenitsyn is saying in all this seems to me rather remarkable, especially coming from Solzhenitsyn. He is saying that in 1941, in addition to the Chekist terror, there was a "national enthusiasm" that was missing in 1917. He is also saying that there was a nationwide machine that was able, even in the worst imaginable circumstances, to prevent any possibility of revolution—and we know from the previous article in this series that Solzhenitsyn was the



declared enemy of all revolutions, even a revolution to overthrow the Soviet state.

### Stalin And "National Enthusiasm"

So where did this national enthusiasm—absent in 1917, present after over twenty years of Soviet internationalist propaganda—come from? Could it be that Stalin had something to do with it? We will remember from the previous article the quarrel between Solzhenitsyn and his old friend Dmitri Panin over Solzhenitsyn's *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*. Solzhenitsyn was calling for a continuation of the existing State structure without the Marxist ideology no-one believed in any more, and open to more participation by elements from outside the Communist Party. Panin was calling for the violent overthrow of the existing State structure.

In arguing for the abandonment of Marxist ideology, Solzhenitsyn evokes the possibility of an imminent war with China (also a theme in Andrei Amalric's *Will the Soviet Union survive until 1984?* published shortly beforehand). He reckons that the war will be fought over Marxist ideology and that therefore the Russians, who don't believe in that ideology, will lose. By contrast:

"When war with Hitler began, Stalin, who had omitted and bungled so much in the way of military preparation, did not neglect *that* side, the ideological side. And although the ideological grounds for war seemed more indisputable than those that face you now (the war was waged against what appeared on the surface to be a diametrically opposed ideology), from the very first days of the war, Stalin refused to rely on the putrid, decaying prop of ideology. He wisely discarded it, all but ceased to mention it, and unfurled instead the old Russian banner—sometimes indeed, the standard of Orthodoxy—and we conquered! (only towards the end of the war and after the victory was the Progressive Doctrine taken out of its mothballs.)

"So do you really think that in a conflict between similar, closely related ideologies, differing only in nuances, you will not have to make the same reorientation? But by then it will be too late—military tension alone makes it very difficult.

"How much wiser it would be to make *this same* turnaround today as a preventive measure. If it has to be done anyway *for a war*, wouldn't it be more sensible to do it much earlier, *to avoid going to war at all?!'*" (*Letter to the Soviet Leaders*. pp.17-18).

Panin was disgusted by this:

"I consider these statements By Solzhenitsyn to be blasphemous."

He quotes Solzhenitsyn (*Letter*, p.45):

"When Stalin initiated such a shift during the war—remember!—nobody was in the least surprised and nobody shed a tear for Marxism: everyone took it as the most natural thing in the world, something they recognised as Russian."

and continues

"Who is this *everyone?* The oppressors and the oppressed? in *The Gulag Archipelago* Solzhenitsyn describes the appearance of the old *Vlassovians* [followers of Andrei Vlasov, the Russian general who, after being captured by the Germans, led the German-backed 'Committee for the Liberation of the People of Russia'—PB] behind the barbed wire. Out of the 432 pages of the first volume only 23 are given to them and even so a large part of the information is given in the form of footnotes. Solzhenitsyn explains, but unfortunately does not justify, the conduct of the soldiers and officers who turned their weapons against Stalin's despotism" (*Solzhenitsyne et la réalité*, pp.86-7).

He goes on to say (p.88) that the Soviet leaders are already making use of Russian patriotism:

"Without waiting for Solzhenitsyn's advice, Stalin reintroduced officers' titles and their shoulder boards; he devised new decorations glorifying the generals and marshals of old Russia. Children from infants' school onward are stuffed full of patriotic stories. In all the enterprises and in the army, at the obligatory hours of political education, the glory of Russian arms is sung. The peoples of the USSR are undergoing an artificial russification. Antisemitism is encouraged by the state.

"What more does Solzhenitsyn want from the leaders? To open the churches and allow them to ring their bells? But that bait, the leaders are keeping in reserve, following Stalin's example, only to bring it out in the event of a war."

We might remember from the first article in this series that Sologdin—the fictional version of Panin in *The First Circle*—regretted that European chivalry had been kept out of Russia through the thirteenth century Alexander Nevsky's victory over the Teutonic Knights, and argued that Russian Orthodoxy, unlike Roman Catholicism, was a religion of slaves, incapable of standing up against despotism.

### Solzhenitsyn On Vlasov

In the last article I quoted Panin criticising Solzhenitsyn for not mentioning the

revolts that occurred in the Work Camps in the early 1950s and I pointed out that Solzhenitsyn did write about them in the third volume of *The Gulag Archipelago*. I should incidentally have said that not only did Solzhenitsyn write about them he was involved in one of them, together with Panin, a riot followed by a hunger strike in Ekibastuz Camp in 1952. But this third volume also discusses, and indeed justifies, the Vlasovians. So far as I can see, the third volume of *Gulag* was published in Russian in 1975-6. Panin's Booklet was published in Russian in 1975. Solzhenitsyn says:

"The time has come for us to give our views on the Vlasov movement once again. In the first part of this book the reader was not yet prepared for the whole truth (nor am I in possession of the whole truth; special studies will be written on the subject, (which is for me of secondary importance). There at the beginning, before the reader had travelled the high-roads and by-roads of the camp world with me, he was merely alerted, invited to think. Now, after all those prison transports, transit jails, lumber gangs, and camp middens, perhaps the reader will be a little more open to persuasion. In Part 1, I spoke of those Vlasovites who took up arms in desperation, because they were starving in the camps, because their position seemed hopeless (Yet even here there is room for reflection. The Germans began by using Russian prisoners of war only for nonmilitary tasks in the rear, in support of their own troops, and this, you might think, was the best solution for those who only wanted to save their skins—so why take up arms and confront the Red Army head on?) But now, since further postponement is impossible, should I not also talk about those who even before 1941 had only one dream—to take up arms and blaze away at those Red commissars, Chekists and collectivisers? Remember Lenin's words: "An oppressed class which did not aspire to possess arms and learn how to handle them would deserve only to be treated as slaves" (4th Edition, Volume 23, page 85). There is then reason to be proud if the Soviet-German war showed that we are not such slaves as all those studies by liberal historians contemptuously make us out to be. There was nothing slavish about those who reached for their sabres to cut off Daddy Stalin's head (nor about those on the other side, who straightened their backs for the first time when they put on Red Army greatcoats—in a strange brief interval of freedom which no student of society could have foreseen)".

He then goes on to a brief account of

various revolts that occurred in the context of the War. For example:

"On August 22 1941 the commanding officer of the 436th Light Infantry Regiment, Major Kononov, told his regiment to their faces that he was going over to the Germans, to join the 'Liberation Army' for the overthrow of Stalin, and invited all those who wished to go with him. Not only did he meet with no opposition—the *whole regiment* followed him! Only three weeks later Kononov had created a regiment of Cossack volunteers behind enemy lines (he was a Don Cossack himself). When he arrived at the prisoner-of-war camp near Mogilev to enlist volunteers, 4,000 of the 5,000 prisoners there declared their readiness to join him ... [He did better than Roger Casement in 1915!—PB]

"Having rightly taught ourselves to disbelieve Soviet propaganda, whatever it said, we naturally did not believe tall stories about the Nazis' wishing to make Russia a colony and ourselves German slaves; who would expect to find such foolishness in twentieth heads unless he had experienced its effects for himself? Even in 1942 the Russian formation in Osintorf attracted more volunteers than a unit still not fully deployed could absorb, while in the Smolensk region and Byelorussia, a volunteer 'people's militia' 100,000 strong was formed for purposes of self defence against the partisans directed from Moscow (the Germans took fright and banned it) ...

"I will go so far as to say that our folk would have been worth nothing at all, a nation of abject slaves, if it had gone through that war without brandishing a rifle at Stalin's government even from afar, if it had missed its chance to shake its fist and fling a ripe oath at the *Father of the Peoples* ...

"...this is the crucial question: Ought you, for what seem to you noble ends, to avail yourself of the support of German imperialists at war with Russia?

"Today, everyone will join in the unanimous cry of 'No!'

"What, then, of the sealed German carriage from Switzerland to Sweden, calling on the way (as we have now learned) at Berlin? The whole Russian press, from the Mensheviks to the Cadets also cried 'No!' but the Bolsheviks explained that it was permissible, that it was indeed ridiculous to reproach them with it ... Convert the war into a civil war! This was Lenin's proposal before the Vlasovites thought of it ...

"...there was a time when, inflamed with martial ardour, we never mentioned the Kaiser in print without the words 'ferocious' or 'bloodthirsty', and incautiously accused the Kaiser's

soldiers of smashing the heads of babes against stones. But let's agree—the Kaiser was different from Hitler. The Provisional Government, though, was also different: it had no Cheka, shot no one in the back of the head, imprisoned no one in camps, herded no one into collective farms, poisoned no one's life: the Provisional Government was not Stalin's government.

"We must keep things in proportion."

### Solzhenitsyn On Stalin

#### a) *In the First Circle*

It would of course be absurd to suggest that Solzhenitsyn had a soft spot for Stalin; and it would at least seem to be odd if Solzhenitsyn, so anxious while in the United States to distinguish 'Russia' from the Soviet Union, should admit that the Georgian Stalin could have had a streak of Russian patriotism, even a taste for Orthodoxy. And yet this is what he does in the portrait of Stalin he draws in *The First Circle*. Those who have read the version of *The First Circle* that became available in the West in 1968 will probably think his Stalin is a crude and unconvincing caricature, especially when compared with the powerful portrait of Lenin in *The Red Wheel*—published separately as *Lenin in Zurich*. But the 1968 version of *The First Circle* with its 87 chapters ('Circle 87') was a truncated version of the original, which had 96 chapters ('Circle 96') and which only appeared in an English translation (as *In the First Circle*) in 2009.

Solzhenitsyn prepared Circle 87 in the hopes of getting it published in the Soviet Union. It is 'anti-Stalinist' in the way that just might have been tolerated in 1964—*One Day in the life of Ivan Denisovich* had received Khrushchev's approval in 1962. But Circle 96 was written in 1955, revised in 1957, when there could hardly have been any thought of getting it published, nor indeed of Solzhenitsyn ever having a possibility of engaging in any sort of effective political activity. It includes a chapter reflecting on Stalin's whole life which is not flattering to Lenin and though the unflattering assessment is being made through Stalin's eyes one feels that Solzhenitsyn has some sympathy with it. And one feels that Solzhenitsyn has some sympathy with 'Stalin's' view that the secret of his own strength is that he was closer than the other Bolshevik leaders (the 'pointy-beards') to the real feelings of "*the people*".

#### b) *'Stalin' on Lenin*

'Stalin later refused to speak of the

"*great*" February Revolution, but he had forgotten how he himself had rejoiced and sung and winged his way from Achinsk [where he was in exile—PB] ... and done foolish things and handed in at a post office in the backwoods a telegram to Lenin in Switzerland.

"Once in Petrograd, he had immediately agreed with Kamenev that this was it, all that they had dreamed of in their underground days. The Revolution was complete, and all they had to do was consolidate its achievement. This was a time for practical people ... They must do all in their power to support the provisional government."

[Stalin's arrival from Siberia with Kamenev and Matvei Muranov is described in *March 1917*, v.4. The Bolshevik leader in Petrograd at the time was Alexander Shlyapnikov, a rare proletarian among the Bolshevik leadership, whom Solzhenitsyn treats very sympathetically. Under Shlyapnikov *Pravda* has been the only paper to take a firm stand against the continuation of the war. Shlyapnikov feels it in his bones that the Bolsheviks should attempt to overthrow the recently formed provisional government. He manages to extract the agreement of his fellow members of the Central Committee, Molotov and Peter Zalutsky but can't get the support of the other Petrograd Bolsheviks. His position is then completely undermined by the 'Siberians' who take *Pravda* out of his hands—PB]

"It was all so clear to them until that adventurer, who knew nothing about Russia, who lacked all-round practical experience, arrived and—spluttering, slurring, twitching—came out with his 'April theses' and created total confusion! Yet somehow he cast a spell over the Party and dragged it into the July uprising! This desperate adventure failed, as Stalin had foretold, and the whole party almost went under with it. And where did the strutting gamecock turn up next? He had saved his skin by fleeing to the Gulf of Finland while the foulest abuse was heaped upon Bolsheviks back home. Was his liberty more valuable than the prestige of the party? Stalin had posed the question candidly at the Sixth Congress but had not obtained a majority.

"Altogether 1917 had been an unpleasant year: too many meetings, eloquent ranters were carried on the crowd's shoulders. Trotsky was never off the stage in the Circus building. Where had they all come from, these nimble-tongued ninnies, swarming like flies onto honey? He had never seen them in exile, never seen them when he was carrying out 'ex-es'; they had been



idling abroad and now they had come back to yap their heads off and sneak into the front row. Whatever the subject under discussion, they hopped onto it as quick as fleas. They always knew the answer before the question was asked, before the problem arose. They laughed at Stalin openly, insultingly. True, he steered clear of their debates, never sat on platforms. For the time being he was keeping his own counsel. He did not like bandying words, trying to shout an opponent down, and he was no good at it. This was not how he had imagined the Revolution. Occupying important posts, doing a serious job—that was what he had looked forward to.

"They laughed at him, all those pointy-beards, but why was it on Stalin that they loaded all the heaviest and most thankless tasks? They laughed at him, but why did all the others in Kschessinskaya's former palace [the Bolsheviks had installed themselves in the delicate bijou-like palace of the dancer, rumoured to have been a mistress of Nicholas II before he became Tsar, Mathilda-Marie Feliksovna Kschessinskaya—PB] suddenly develop stomach aches and send Stalin to Petropavlovka [the Peter and Paul fortress in Petrograd—PB] when the sailors had to be persuaded to surrender the fortress to Kerensky without a fight and themselves withdraw to Kronstadt? Why? Because the sailors would have stoned, say, Grishka Zinoviev. Because you had to know how to talk to the Russian people.

"The October Revolution had been another reckless venture, but it had come off. Good. Full marks to Lenin there. Nobody knew what would follow, but for the time being, good. Commissariat of Nationalities? Very well, then, I don't mind. Draw up a constitution? Why not? Stalin was sizing up the situation.

"Surprisingly for a year the Revolution looked like a complete success. Nobody would ever have expected it, but there it was. That clown Trotsky even believed in world Revolution and opposed the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty. In fact, Lenin, too, believed in it. Pedants! Fantasists! Only an ass would believe in a European Revolution. They had lived there for years and learned nothing. Whereas Stalin had travelled across Europe once and understood it completely. They should thank heaven that their own Revolution had been a success. And sit quietly. Pause for thought."

[One can see why Solzhenitsyn liked Harry Willetts as a translator!—PB]

"Stalin looked around with a sober and unprejudiced eye. Thought things over. And saw clearly that these phrasemongers would ruin this great Revolution. Only he, Stalin, could steer

it in the right direction. In all honesty, in all conscience, he was the only real leader among them. He compared himself dispassionately with those poseurs, those mountebanks, and he saw clearly his own superiority, their instability, his own staying power. What set him apart from all the others was his understanding of people. He understood them at the point where they touched the ground, at the base, understood that part of them without which they would not stand on their feet and remain standing: Everything higher than that—all the pretences, all the boasts—was 'superstructure' and of no importance.

"Lenin, of course, could soar like an eagle. He could amaze you: turn around overnight and say 'Let the peasants have the land!' (we can always change our minds later), think up the Brest-Litovsk treaty in a single day (even a Georgian, let alone a Russian, suffered when he saw half of Russia handed over to the Germans, but Lenin felt nothing!). As for the New Economic Policy, it went without saying, that was the neatest trick of the lot; nobody need be ashamed to learn from such manoeuvres. Lenin's greatest gift, the most remarkable thing about him, was his ability to hold the real power tightly in his own two hands. Slogans changed, the subjects of debate changed, allies and opponents changed, but all power remained in his hands and in his hands alone!

"But the man could not really be relied on. He was storing up a lot of grief for himself with his economic policy; he was bound to trip himself up with it. Stalin accurately sensed Lenin's volatility, his reckless impatience, and worst of all his poor understanding, or rather total lack of understanding of people. (He had tested it himself: Whichever side of himself he chose to show was the only one that Lenin saw.) The man was no good at infighting in the dark—in other words, real politics. Turukhan (66° latitude [where Stalin was exiled in 1913—PB]) was a tougher place than Shushenskoye (54° [where Lenin had been exiled, 1897-1900—PB]), and Stalin felt himself that much tougher than Lenin. Anyway, what experience of life had this bookworm theoretician ever acquired? Lowly birth, humiliations, poverty, actual hunger, had not been his lot: He had been a landowner, though a pretty small one. He had been a model exile and never once run away! He had never seen the inside of a real prison; indeed he had seen nothing of the real Russia. He had idled away fourteen years in emigration. Stalin had read less than half of his writings, not expecting to learn a great deal from him. (He did of course, sometimes produce remarkably apt definitions: "What is dictatorship?

Unlimited sovereignty, unrestrained by laws" Stalin had written "Good!" in the margin.)" (pp.113-116).

### c) '*Stalin*' on *Holy Russia*

And on Orthodoxy, and Russia:

"This was the one doubt that sometimes insinuated itself into Stalin's mind.

"On the face of it, the facts had been proven long ago, and all objections refuted.

"All the same, there was some obscurity.

"Especially if you had spent your childhood in the church. If you had gazed into the eyes of icons. If you had sung in the choir. If you could chant "Now lettest thou thy servant ..." right now without a slip.

"Just lately these memories had for some reason become more vivid in Josif's mind.

"His mother, as she lay dying, had said, "It's a pity you didn't become a priest." He was the leader of the world's proletariat, the unifier of Slavdom—and in his mother's eyes a failure.

"Just in case, Stalin had never spoken out against God; there were plenty of orators without him. Lenin might spit on the cross and trample it; Bukharin and Trotsky might mock. Stalin held his tongue.

"He had given orders that Abakadze, the inspector of seminaries who had expelled the young Djughashvili, should not be harmed. Let him live his life out.

"And when, on July 3, 1941, his throat had dried up and tears had come into his eyes—tears not of terror but of pity, pity for himself—it was no accident that the words that forced their way from his lips were "brothers and sisters". Neither Lenin nor any other others could have uttered those words, intentionally or otherwise.

"His lips had spoken as they had been accustomed to speak in his youth.

"Nobody saw him, nobody knew, he had told no one, but in those first days he had locked himself in his room and prayed, prayed properly, except that it was in a corner without icons, prayed on his knees. The first few months had been the hardest time of his life.

"At that time he had made a vow to God: if the danger passed and he survived in his post, he would restore the church and church services in Russia and would not let believers be persecuted and imprisoned. (It should never have been allowed in the first place; it had started in Lenin's time.) And when the danger was over, when Stalingrad was behind him, Stalin had done all that he had vowed to do.

"Whether or not God existed only God knew.

"Most probably he did not. Because if he did, he was extraordinarily

complacent. To have such power ... and put up with it all! How could that be? Leaving aside the deliverance of 1941, Stalin had never noticed anyone but himself making things happen, never felt anyone at his side, elbow to elbow.

"But suppose God did exist, suppose he had power over souls ... Stalin must make his peace before it is too late.. In spite of the heights he had reached. His need, in fact, was all the greater because of that. Because there was emptiness all around him—no one beside him, no one near him, the rest of mankind was somehow far beneath him. So that God was, perhaps, nearer to him than anybody. And also lonely.

"It had given Stalin real pleasure in recent years that the Church in its prayers proclaimed him the Chosen of God. That was why the Monastery of Saint Sergius was maintained at the Kremlin's expense. No great power's prime minister got such a warm reception from Stalin as did his docile and doddering Patriarch; he went as far as the outer door to meet the old man and put a hand under his elbow when he took him in to dinner. He had even been thinking of looking perhaps for some little property, a little town house of some sort, and presenting it to the Patriarch. People used to make such gifts, to have prayers said for their souls.

"Stalin knew that a certain writer was a priest's son but concealed the fact. He had asked him, when they were alone once, whether he was Orthodox. The man had turned pale and lost his tongue. "Come on, cross yourself! Do you know how?" The writer had crossed himself, thinking that he was done for. "Well done!" said Stalin, clapping him on the shoulder.

"There was no getting away from it; In the course of a long and difficult life, Stalin had occasionally overdone things. It would be nice to get together a splendid choir and have them sing over the coffin, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant ..."

"In general, Stalin had begun to notice in himself a curious predilection not just for Orthodoxy. Now and again he felt the tug of a lingering attachment to the old world, the world from which he himself had come but which he had now spent forty years destroying in the service of Bolshevism.

"In the thirties, for purely political reasons, he had revived the word "motherland", obsolete by then for fifteen years and almost obscene to the ear. But as the years went by, he had begun to take genuine pleasure in using the words "Russia" and 'motherland'. It had helped to put his own power on a firmer basis. To sanctify it, so to speak.

"In earlier days he had carried out Party policy without counting how

many of those Russians were expended. But gradually he had begun to take more notice of the Russian people and to like them, a people that had never betrayed him, had gone hungry for as long as it was necessary, had calmly faced all difficulties—even war, even the camps—and never once rebelled. They were devoted; they were pure in heart. Like Poskryobyshev [Stalin's private secretary and gatekeeper—PB], for instance. "After the victory Stalin had said quite sincerely that the Russian people had a clear mind, strength of character, and staying power".

"In fact, as the years went by, Stalin's own wish was to be taken for a Russian himself" (pp.145-148).

### Stalin And Nicholas

By ruthlessly suppressing all opposition, by unleashing a Russian national, and even Russian Orthodox sentiment, and by refusing to kowtow to his Western allies, Stalin preserved the state which emerged after the War vastly stronger than it was before the War. Of course, despite the subjective taste for things Russian Solzhenitsyn ascribes to Stalin, the state in question was still the Soviet state, not Russia, a state which was in Solzhenitsyn's eyes as much a prison for Russians as for all the other nationalities. Nonetheless in these respects Stalin was doing what Solzhenitsyn believes the Government should have done in 1917, when the necessary repression of revolt could have been much less brutal. The *Reflections* are largely a polemic against Nicholas II. And what does he reproach in Nicholas II? In the famous essay in *From Underneath the Rubble* Solzhenitsyn called for national repentance, and elsewhere he defends Ivan the Terrible because, unlike his non-Orthodox successors (Solzhenitsyn has it that the Russian Orthodox tradition, certainly as far as the Government was concerned, was largely destroyed by the schism in the seventeenth century), Ivan was capable of repentance. But here he argues that Nicholas was fatally weakened by his own remorse for the massacre of January 1905. And he reproaches Nicholas for his excessive Christianity:

"The government had lost the February Revolution even before it started. We have to see there the results of the trauma of 1905, of that lamentable 9th January. Never could the sovereign forgive himself that fatal bloodletting. Now above all else he feared using the armed forces against his own people too soon and more than would be necessary ...

"All the preliminary orders given to those in charge of the capital, all the decisions taken during those days, derived, in the case of the Tsar, from his love of peace, eminent characteristic of a Christian, fatal for the man in charge of a great Empire. Hence the extreme ease with which the bloodless revolution of February triumphed ... but alas, what it cost us, that ease and that love of peace (even today we haven't finished paying the price!)."

One of the most moving passages in *The Red Wheel* has Nicholas withdrawing after he had signed the abdication to pray. We might compare it with Solzhenitsyn's picture of Stalin praying in the immediate aftermath of the German invasion. Stalin's prayer, however, seems to have been more effective ...

### From Tsarist To Bolshevik: The Case Of Alexander Svechin

In *The Red Wheel*, the fictional character Vorotyntsev, central figure in *August 1914*, is part of a group of 'young Turks'—military men anxious to reform the army. The group also includes as a particular friend of Vorotyntsev's, the non-fictional character, Alexander Svechin. In *August 1914* and *November 1916*, Svechin appears as a régime loyalist, deeply unhappy about the incompetence of the military leadership and the Tsar but nonetheless arguing against Vorotyntsev's less than loyal thoughts—without wholly revealing his mind to Svechin, Vorotyntsev is tempted by the idea of obliging the Tsar to abdicate, and this facilitating a separate peace with Germany.

In *March 1917* (vol 3, p.183), Svechin has been seconded to the *Stavka*—the army HQ—and arrives at the time of the the abdication, which had followed an orchestrated campaign of letters addressed to the Tsar by the leading military chiefs. Svechin finds the situation even worse than he had imagined:

"The main feeling Svechin experienced in those days was bitterness, a shame such as he had never felt, even at the time of the worst operation of this war. the whole Supreme Command of the Russian army—the Tsar, a bevy ('*breelan*' in the French. It actually means a 'hand' in a game of cards) of important Generals, then anyone to do with leadership—they were nothing but a collection of weaklings. Instead of, as military men should, taking the situation in hand and showing their strength, they had all sought as best they could the means of slipping into the background and giving way. From a military point of view, what was insurgent Petrograd? A disorganised, unarmed, hungry,

trapped mass, what's more locked up in the worst possible geographical situation. The rebel battalions were a collection of untrained half-soldiers with less than half a rifle between any four of them and ignorant which end was used to load it. One couldn't even speak of a superiority of the army at the Front over Petrograd: any sort of comparison was impossible. The profound quiet on the Front would enable anything up to half a million men to be removed straightaway, but thirty thousand would have been more than enough."

He blames the Tsar:

"It couldn't be a matter on the Sovereign's part of simple errors in the choice of men. No, even acting totally at random he should, following the theory of probabilities, make some mistakes but nonetheless appoint some men of value ... It was, rather, an error of doctrine, of the theory and the spirit in which the command had been raised, a sort of Schlieffen in reverse [Alfred von Schlieffen, leading German strategist in the period leading up to the 1914 war—PB]: the art of ensuring that one would be encircled, beaten and forced into a quick surrender. And the unfortunate instruments of this anti-Schlieffen doctrine were first of all the Sovereign and Alexeyev [Mikhail Vasiliyevich Alexeyev, the Chief of Staff—PB]."

Nonetheless when Nicholas arrives, after his abdication, to say goodbye to the *Stavka*, Svechin finds himself moved to pity.

It is surprising after all that to read in brief biographies at the back of the book:

"Svechin Alexander (1878-1935). General in the *Stavka*. Joins up with the Bolsheviks, historian and military theorist, professor in the Frunze Academy [the Soviet military academy, formerly the Academy of the Chief of Staff—PB]; arrested for the first time in the early thirties, then definitively: shot."

*Wikipedia* has it that his second arrest was in 1937, he was executed in 1938 and rehabilitated in 1956. "*His work Strategy became required reading at Soviet military schools.*"

### The Logic Of The Red Wheel

It is a source of frustration to me that the final part of *The Red Wheel*—*April 1914* Volume 2—has not yet been published in a French translation. The first volume of *April 1917* appeared in 2009 so I have been waiting seven years. I'm told it will appear in the next year or so.

Then we will see if the ending in *April* makes sense in terms of a rounded work of art. Solzhenitsyn's original idea had been to take the story through to 1922 and just as *August 1914* has a number of shortened 'knots' giving the prehistory of the events he describes, notably the assassination of Stolypin, so I understand that *April 1917* Volume 2 will have a number of summary 'knots' telling the subsequent story. The logic of the novel as it stands could almost be the logic Svechin must have (may have? will he appear in *April 1917* Volume 2?) followed. Somewhere, but I can't put my hand on the quotation, Solzhenitsyn says that in 1917 power was thrown like a flaming ball from hand to hand until it reached hands tough enough to hold it. The hands of course were Lenin's.

Without saying that Solzhenitsyn would have approved of Svechin's logic I think he would have understood it. He knew what became of Svechin but he portrays him sympathetically. Russia in 1917 stood on the brink of total collapse—like the collapse suffered by the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, and in our own time by Iraq and Libya. The Bolsheviks created a State. At that particular moment none of the other forces in Russian society proved capable of establishing a State.

The logic is reminiscent of the great counter-revolutionary tract *Considérations sur la France* by Joseph de Maistre. For the most part the *Considérations* is a defence of the monarchy and of the Church, capable as they are, unlike the Republic, of inspiring love. His essay *De la souveraineté du peuple—un anti-contrat social* begins with this masterly statement: "*The people is sovereign. Over whom is the people sovereign? Over the people. So the people is subject.*" But the *Considérations*, published in 1797, includes a defence of the Jacobin terror:

"If one thinks about it carefully one will see that once the revolutionary movement was established, France and the monarchy could only be saved by Jacobinism."

Revolutionary France was faced by a coalition of hostile powers which purported to want to re-establish the monarchy but which clearly had no interest in the wellbeing of the French state:

"The King never had any allies; and that is a fact so obvious that we can say in perfect confidence that the coalition was aimed against the integrity of France. So how could the coalition be resisted? By what supernatural means

could the efforts of the whole of Europe gathered together be broken? Only the infernal genius of Robespierre could achieve this prodigy. The revolutionary government hardened the soul of France, by soaking it in blood; it enraged the minds of its soldiers and doubled their strength through a fierce despair and scorn for life which bordered on madness. The horror of the scaffolds pushed the citizens to the limit, fed their physical force to the extent that it broke down all internal resistance. All life, all wealth, all power was in the hands of the revolutionaries; and this monster of power, drunk from blood and success, a terrible phenomenon the world had never seen before and doubtless will never see again [!—PB] was at once a horrific punishment imposed on the French people and the only means by which France could be saved."

And de Maistre yields nothing to Solzhenitsyn in the contempt he expresses for the pre-Revolutionary élite.

Solzhenitsyn expresses sympathy for the Whites and the peasants and later Vlasovites who resisted Bolshevik rule but he must have known that the overthrow of the Bolsheviks could only have meant collapse and that, under the circumstances he describes so powerfully created by the February Revolution, the State could only be reconstructed through terror. He criticises Stalin's lack of preparation for war in 1941, but the Soviet Union could not have won the war without a strong industrial base, posing the question whether such an industrial base could have been developed sufficiently rapidly by means other than the terrible means employed by Stalin. The one member of the Provisional Government for whom Solzhenitsyn expresses real respect in the *Reflections* (and he has a lot to say about him in *The Red Wheel*) is Andrei Ivanovich Shingarev, the Minister of Agriculture. He says:

"All the acts of this government measured according to the needs of the time could almost be regarded as jokes. Only the reforms envisaged by Shingarev to the food supply, more radical than those of Rittich which he himself had attacked, showed any degree of ambition and through them we already begin with horror to see the requisitions imposed by the Bolsheviks."

The image of a flaming wheel occurs throughout *The Red Wheel* (especially in the early pages when the poet and novelist hasn't been quite overcome by the historian). It is of course an image of the approaching Evil but it is also an

image of the inevitability of the course of events. As he says, however, in the interview quoted at the beginning of this article, it wasn't entirely inevitable. There was nothing inevitable in the appearance in the midst of it all of a man, or two men, or three men, of political genius. And there was an alternative. Following the logic of Solzhenitsyn's own argument, that alternative was total collapse. Libya in 2011.

A discussion of the relationship between the State and the Russian people, between Soviet patriotism and Russian patriotism, Soviet/Russian resistance to disintegration imposed by

foreign influences, might be an appropriate moment to introduce Alexander Dugin but I'm not sure. There's still more to be said about Solzhenitsyn and his response to the end of the Soviet Union. If the reader is getting impatient, I have written at some length about Dugin in the first issue of the *Heidegger Review* and the article is now available on my website at <http://www.peterbrooke.org/politics-and-theology/dugin-index/>. Dugin also appears more tangentially in my article 'On Orthodoxy' in the second issue of the *Heidegger Review* and a review of his book on Heidegger will, hopefully, appear in the third issue.

## Pat Muldowney

Review:

*Naming Infinity: A True Story of Religious Mysticism and Mathematical Creativity*,  
by Loren Graham and Jean-Michel Kantor, 2009.

### The Jesus Prayer versus Marxism-Leninism

The world's most famous universities include Oxford, Sorbonne, Yale etc. In the discipline of mathematics the School of Mathematics of Moscow University surpassed all of them put together—through the Great War, Revolution, Civil War, invasions and World War.

The spark for this was provided by Dmitri Egorov and his students Nikolai Luzin and Pavel Florensky. The after-glow persists to this day.

McCarthyism produced purges of academics and intellectuals in the USA. Usually this meant removal from their professions and from positions of influence. *Gulag Archipelago* quotes an appeal by Russian academics to Stalin (Pravda, May 20 1938):

"Heightening our revolutionary vigilance, we will help our glorious intelligence service, headed by the true Leninist, the Stalinist People's Commissar Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov, to purge our higher educational establishments as well as all our country of the remnants of the Trotskyite-Bukharinite and other counter-revolutionary trash."

Solzhenitsyn gave a brief account of Pavel Florensky:

"I think it would be appropriate here to include a sketch on the life, prison and camp persecutions, and death of Father Pavel A. Florensky, perhaps one of the most remarkable men devoured by the Archipelago of all time. Well-informed people say of him that he was a scholar rare for the twentieth century ... He was educated as a mathematician,

and in his youth he had experienced a deep religious conversion and become a priest. The book he had written in his youth, *The Pillar and the Affirmation of the Truth* [The Pillar and Ground of the Truth: an Essay in Orthodox Theodicy in Twelve Letters, published 1914—P.M.], is only today coming into its own. ... His prison career is known to me only at several separate points, which I list with trepidation: [description of various prisons and penal work camps]. Neither the place nor the date of his death in camp is known. But according to some rumors he was shot during wartime."

More information about Florensky has appeared since Solzhenitsyn published this in 1974. Florensky was shot in 1937. He had left academic mathematics to become a priest of the Orthodox religion. But as a priest he continued to do scientific work, notably in the service of electrification of the Soviet Union. He espoused a version of Platonism, in opposition to rationalism and objectification, in the manner of Heidegger to whom he is said to be a forerunner.

Florensky subscribed to the religious heresy called *Name Worshipping*. Name Worshippers are ascetics who enter a higher state of mystical consciousness by private repetition of the Jesus Prayer: "*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner*". Under Florensky's influence, his teacher Egorov and fellow-student Luzin espoused Name Worshipping in the period following the

failed 1905 Revolution. The three came from rationalist, progressive family backgrounds in the intelligentsia.

In June 1913 Tsar Nicholas II sent Navy ships to Mount Athos in Greece to suppress a group of Name Worshipping monks in a Russian monastery there. Florensky campaigned in defence of the heretical monks at that time. He was executed in 1937. According to his grandson, he had rejected an offer of release and exile.

The political campaign against Florensky included charges that his publicly expressed religious and philosophical views were contradictory to the ideas in Lenin's philosophical treatise "*Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*". (In this book Lenin debunked non-materialist philosophies by reducing them to Berkeley-ism, which in turn he debunked as solipsism—nothing exists except the "*subjective I*".)

Prior to Florensky's execution, his teacher Egorov died on hunger strike for his Name Worshipping beliefs. Luzin concealed his religious faith, but somewhat ineffectively. He escaped arrest because of intervention on his behalf by Stalin. But he too eventually fell, in the "*Luzin Affair*".

Luzitania, as the Moscow School of Mathematics was known in its glory-days, assiduously talent-spotted in the schools of the cities, towns, villages, steppes and taiga; so that promising youngsters could be brought to Moscow and their gifts nurtured, challenged and developed in a rarified, hothouse atmosphere, at the root of which was a Name Worshipping mentality.

In the course of this talent-spotting, Luzin was liable to come under critical ideological scrutiny for "*class bias*"—discrimination in favour of pupils whose social origins were in the intelligentsia, like himself, thereby possessing a head start over proletarians or peasants. He gave a glowing assessment of a school of the latter sort, which was later found to be actually sub-standard. Perhaps he was over-compensating. Anyway, he was hit with the charge of "*wrecking*", for bringing inadequately prepared students into the Soviet Union's premier higher educational establishment. "*Wrecking*" was a charge used earlier against engineers and technicians in industry to substantiate allegations of assisting foreign fascists.

Luzin lost his positions but was not imprisoned, and eventually died in his bed.

The Soviet state was officially atheist. Rightly or wrongly, it regarded religion as a threat; providing focus and unity for people ("*reactionaries/fascists*") who wished to overthrow the Bolshevik revolution and restore the previous regime. As described in *Gulag Archipelago*, openly religious people were liable to be imprisoned, tortured, and worked to death.

The story of Florensky and his religious/scientific associates runs contrary in many ways to common sense. It is counter-intuitive that some of the leading scientific and technological minds of the Soviet Union were fanatical religious head-bangers, so to speak.

This is not unprecedented; you could say the same of Isaac Newton, and of the Pythagoreans in ancient Greece. Likewise the self-taught Indian mathematician Ramanujan (1887—1920), who attributed his near supernatural mathematical discoveries to his family goddess Mahalakshmi. He would say: "*An equation has no meaning for me unless it is a thought of God.*" It is possible to make a case that weird religious belief, along with insanity and suicide, goes with the territory.

Florensky and Egorov were openly religious. Florensky wore his priestly robes in public, including when working for top Soviet officials. ("*Who is that?*" —Leon Trotsky, on seeing Father Pavel Florensky presenting a scientific paper at a Soviet conference while wearing his clerical robe.)

The trio (including Luzin) were targeted by fellow-mathematician and philosopher, the rigorous Marxist-Leninist Ernst Kolman, who had a role of policing political and ideological stirrings in academia.

In the 1930s Egorov was sacked from his Moscow position and imprisoned. His job was given to a Civil War veteran who resigned when he discovered the circumstances of Egorov's dismissal. In jail in Nizhny Novgorod (then called Gorky), Luzin was restrained from Name Worshipping religious practice and died from his ensuing hunger strike. By strange coincidence, in his final days he was surreptitiously nursed by the wife of the very same Red Army veteran who had earlier resigned his job on principle, being then sent to rusticate in Nizhny, where Egorov happened to be imprisoned.

Executed in 1937, Florensky was officially rehabilitated in 1958 ("*unjustly convicted without proof of guilt*").

While they understood counter-

revolutionary conspiracy and the like, policemen had difficulty in seeing any problem in obscure theoretical-ideological-philosophical connections and differences between unintelligible mathematical theories and Marxist-Leninist doctrines. (The latter could themselves be as strange and obscure as mathematical formulas. Anyone who knocked about with Marxists fifty years ago will remember the tests they applied to each others' doctrinal expertise. Some might pass the test of having heard of—if not actually read—Volume 4 of *Capital*. Very few got anywhere with Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, which was the basis of Ernst Kolman's attack on the Moscow mathematical mystics.)

Florensky's accusers (1928) had a setback when it emerged that he—

"had been arrested once before, by the tsarist police in 1906 for preaching a sermon in which he had protested the execution of one of the leaders of the unsuccessful 1905 revolution. Florensky did not sympathise with the revolution, but he opposed capital punishment. The discovery of Florensky's protest and subsequent arrest was an embarrassment for the Soviet police" (Graham & Kantor).

A light three-year penalty of exile to Nizhny Novgorod (Gorky) was imposed, with a requirement to report regularly to the police.

Arrested again in 1933, Florensky confessed under torture:

"Fully aware of my crimes against the Soviet system and the [Communist] Party, I wish to express in this document my profound repentance for my criminal membership in the nationalist-fascist centre."

In prison and out, Florensky did important scientific work for the Soviet state, which he regarded as the only means of improving the conditions of the people. But "*I consider it harmful for society when scholars and scientists, whose vocation it is to be dispassionate experts, become involved in politics. I have never in my life belonged to any political party whatsoever.*"

An informer in Florensky's cell—

"attempted to engage him in political discussions in order to pass on to his superiors any incriminating remarks that Florensky might make. The informer, a man named Briantsev, reported that Florensky said the following in one of their conversations in the cell: In the Soviet Union they punish people for no reason at all.

"They kept demanding at the Lubianka that I name the people with whom

I supposedly held counter-revolutionary conversations. After I had stubbornly refused to cooperate the interrogator said: 'Of course we know that you don't belong to any organisation and have not been carrying out any political agitation! But if something does happen our enemies could place their hopes on you... We can't behave like the tsarist government and punish people for an already committed crime. Our job is to anticipate' "... (Graham and Kantor).

With a batch of other prisoners Florensky was executed by a shot in the head in 1937. His exact burial place is unknown.

Luzin came under pressure from some of his students and professional colleagues on Marxist-Leninist grounds. But a private letter to Molotov/Stalin from the independent-minded physicist Peter Kapitsa urged restraint:

"[Isaac] Newton, who gave us the law of gravity, was a religious maniac. . . . [Girolamo] Cardano, who gave us great mechanical and mathematical discoveries, was a drunk and a debaucher... What would you do with them if they lived in the Soviet Union?"

After the War Kolman, himself a Czech, clashed with leading Czech communists, and was imprisoned in the Lubianka. He obtained political asylum in Sweden in 1976 and wrote an open letter to Brezhnev criticising the leadership of the Soviet Union, and resigning from the Communist Party. Before he died he wrote a book, *We Should Not Have Lived That Way*:

"In my time I evaluated many things, including the most important facts, extremely incorrectly. Sincerely deluded, I was nourished by illusions which later deceived me, but at that time I struggled for their realization, sacrificing everyone."

In their book *Naming Infinity: A True Story of Religious Mysticism and Mathematical Creativity*, the authors Loren Graham and Jean-Michel Kantor make a case that the mystical religious outlook of Florensky & Co. played a central part in the astonishing intellectual vigour of the Moscow School of Mathematics (called "Luzitania", after Luzin). They describe Name Worshipping as follows.

"This state of ecstasy and insight [of the Name Worshippers] was vividly described by J.D. Salinger in his 1961 novel *Franny and Zooey*. Salinger has Franny observing: *If you keep saying that prayer [the Jesus Prayer] over and over again—you only have to just do it with your lips at first—then eventually*

what happens, the prayer becomes self-active. Something happens after a while. I don't know what, but something happens, and the words get synchronized with the person's heartbeats, and then you're actually praying without ceasing. Which has a really tremendous, mystical effect on your whole outlook. I mean that's the whole point of it, more or less. I mean you do it to purify your whole outlook and get an absolutely new conception of what everything's about. ... [The] practitioner of the Jesus Prayer was dealing with a process that if done right, its adherents maintained, brought humans into the closest possible contact with God, but if done incorrectly, could lead to sin. This challenge and temptation may help explain why the licentious and notorious Rasputin, who claimed to have healing powers and who was adviser to the Tsarina Alexandra, became a supporter of Name Worshipping...

"[Luzin, doing mathematical work in Paris after 1905] was still totally without a purpose in life. He poured out his pain (in letters from both Moscow and Paris) to his friend Florensky, who was at the time in the Ecclesiastical Academy in Sergiev Posad. Luzin came to lean more and more heavily on Florensky in handling his mental crisis. In one of his letters Florensky agreed that 'chaos and confusion' were now reigning in Russia. He told Luzin that one of the reasons for Russia's crisis was that so many of its brightest minds were attracted to agnosticism and atheism (just as Luzin had been). Florensky had himself, almost ten years earlier, undergone the transition from scientism to religion, and he sympathized with Luzin's plight, expressing the hope that Luzin would find a way to 'the Source of all truth, to Truth itself'."

In one of his letters to Florensky, Luzin wrote:

"It is painful for me to live...! Those worldviews which I earlier knew (materialistic worldviews) absolutely do not satisfy me... Earlier I believed in materialism, but now I cannot live by it, and I have suffered, suffered, beyond end. Luzin went on to say, You found me a mere child at the University, knowing nothing. I don't know how it happened, but I cannot be satisfied any more with the analytic functions and Taylor series [of mathematics]... To see the misery of people, to see the torment of life...—this is an unbearable sight... I cannot live by science alone... I have nothing, no worldview, and no education."

And, most ominously, Luzin added, "If I do not find a path to seek the truth . . . I will not go on living."

Florensky supplied that path to truth, at least in Luzin's mind, but the full transition and conversion took a long time, perhaps two or three years. In the meantime Luzin returned to Russia, where he spent many days with Florensky in his monastery town outside Moscow, sometimes the entire Summer. Again and again Luzin turned to Florensky for guidance, saying in one letter (March 14, 1908), "I want to see you, and only you." (This was the same year when Luzin married his former landlady's daughter.)

In June 1908 Luzin read Florensky's thesis "On Religious Truth" (later published as a book, the English edition of which is still in print, called *The Pillar and Foundation of Truth*; Egorov read it in 1914 and corresponded excitedly with Luzin about it). The impact was profound. Luzin wrote his new wife, "I read it all at once in a single day—skipping a lot, but the impression was overwhelming. As I read it I was STUNNED the entire time by blows from a battering ram." He added, "This work is so valuable because it deals with the most fundamental questions of life."

By July 1908 Luzin's religious conversion was complete, and he wrote Florensky that "I felt as if I had leaned on a pillar . . . I owe my interest in life to you."

Luzin now found it possible to return to the study of mathematics, combining it with a deep interest in religious mysticism. His thoughts of suicide were behind him.

After the Bolshevik Revolution and the triumph of an atheist ideology, it is possible to see how difficulties could beset committed religious believers. But, apart from providing some psychological benefits, what had Name Worshipping to do with actual mathematical work? Did the Jesus Prayer really help Luzitania (the world-leading Moscow School of Mathematics) to work out complicated formulas, theorems and proofs in the most coldly rational and brutally logical subject area of them all; a subject which has absolutely nothing to do with mystical (not to say superstitious) religious beliefs and practices?

The explanation provided by Graham and Kantor (*Naming Infinity*, 2009) runs on the following lines. Newton and Leibniz created the new mathematical technique of calculus, which was the means by which outstanding problems such as gravity and planetary motion were apparently solved. Subsequently, a horde of Richard Dawkins-types used these developments to attack religion.

In *The Analyst; or, a Discourse Addressed to an Infidel Mathematician* (1734), George Berkeley responded with ridicule: "He who can digest a second or third fluxion", he wrote, "need not, methinks, be squeamish about any point in divinity". In fact Berkeley demonstrated that the new calculus was logically flawed; and then, turning their own weapons against them, Berkeley used this weakness to debunk the anti-religious materialists.

Ernst Kolman was involved in editing and publishing Marx's *Mathematical Notebooks*, a version of which is available on-line. Their significance was hyped by Kolman and others. Marx addressed the old chestnut of Berkeley, and half-heartedly applied Hegelian dialectics to it, without really making a dent in it despite the hype. Other than that, the Notes as published come across as those of a reasonably intelligent novice—and Marx had received, no doubt, the best possible general education in all school subjects including mathematics. The Notes are suspiciously free of errors and oversights that anyone, inexperienced or otherwise, would normally make in unedited, handwritten jottings.

On its own terms Berkeley's argument was sound. But logical flaws did not stop the use of mathematical calculus over the following centuries. By the end of the 19th century French mathematicians (Baire, Borel, Lebesgue) had gone a long way towards filling in the logical gaps in the calculus of Newton and Leibniz. But, according to Graham and Kantor, their empiricist/rationalist French intellectual culture inhibited them from a full resolution. Which is where the less inhibited Russian mentality of Egorov and Luzin came in.

Broadly speaking, the problem reduced, essentially, to how to count. Count? A child of five or six knows how to count things! So what's the problem?

A child can count one, two, three, and so on indefinitely. After any such number there is the next number in the list. These are whole numbers. They can be written consecutively in a list.

There are also fractional numbers between one and two, between two and three, and so on. These are numbers such as one and a third, one and a half, one and three quarters, and many, many more.

How many, exactly? Well, infinitely many. Can they be listed consecutively? Are there more of them in this new list

than there are in the original list of one, two, three etc.? From this point, things start getting a bit tricky, and soon you begin to enter very deep waters.

The idea of "*more*" suggests that, though each of these lists is infinitely long, there is some conception of the total number of things in each list. This "*more*" may be some new kind of "*infinite number*", a number which is different from numbers like one, two, three etc. which describe or count only some finite amount of things. There are infinitely many ordinary numbers (one, two, three, ...). Are there more than one of the new numbers which count infinities? Are there, perhaps, infinitely many of them? The mind boggles.

At some point in these speculations, the French mathematicians balked at acceptance of concepts which defeated any attempt at strict definition or exact initial understanding; and their development of the subject ground to a halt. Their Cartesian, Encyclopaedist minds were not prepared to engage with and process poorly specified, near-mystical mush which could not, they feared, be made actual or rational.

The mentality of the Russian Name Worshipping mathematicians, on the other hand, was one which could deal with concepts, such as God, by means of a discipline or ritual of naming and repetition which forced the concepts into the range of their intellect and experience. The act of naming in itself gave the object existence.

By initially giving a name to these new kinds of numbers, their minds colonised and eventually digested problems which the French found intellectually repulsive. The religious mind succeeded where the 'rational' mind failed. Broadly speaking, this is the explanation put forward by Graham and Kantor in their book *Naming Infinity*.

While acknowledging that their work was built on the foundations laid by the French before them (for whom they had boundless admiration), Luzitania—the Moscow School of Mathematics led by Egorov and Luzin—filled in scientific gaps such as the one highlighted by Berkeley centuries previously. (Another version is the historic problem of counting the number of angels—entities which do not fill any physical space—that can fit on the head of a pin, which, for the purpose of the argument, is itself is a location occupying no extent of space.)

In a way, the infinite numbering or counting issue can be broached in terms of ordinary counting: one, two, three etc. So-called primitive people can grasp numbers of things, but only if the numbers involved are small. Even modern, educated people are easily bamboozled by numbers, especially very large or very small ones, which we find very hard to take in and grasp.

So-called primitive people have "One, two, three, four, many"—but that's more or less it. Not only can they not calculate with numbers to any extent; they do not have much conception of the numbers with which to calculate.

But even very young schoolchildren can now do these things with relative ease. How is this possible? After all, in terms of raw intelligence there is little or no difference between "primitive" and "non-primitive" people.

It may be worthwhile to consider what we are dealing with. We can conceive of—or know, or recognise—four things: such as four cats, four apples, four books. But none of those manifestations is itself the actual number "four". The latter is an abstraction derived somehow from our experience and knowledge of four cats, four apples, four books, etc.

A schoolchild is introduced to the abstraction "four" by identifying "fourness" as some quality which is present in four cats, four apples, four books etc. The child is trained to repeat by rote the words "one", "two", "three", ... up to "ten" initially; then up to successively higher numbers; until the child somehow internalises and grasps the whole idea of counting. Then the child begins to do initially simple calculations over a number of years, often by repetition without any understanding to begin with.

This is a bit like knowing God by means of ritual repetition of the Jesus Prayer. According to Graham and Kantor, it was some intellectual process of this kind that enabled Luzitania to conquer mathematical infinities.

But this outlook also brought them under the spotlight of Marxist-Leninist ideology, with tragic consequences.

These were the trajectories of Florensky/Egorov/Luzin and their nemesis Kolman. It might be interesting to tease out the relative merits of the philosophies of the Jesus Prayer and Marxism-Leninism; of Name Worshipping and Materialism & Empirio-Criticism.



## A SCHOOL'S NOTION OF GLORIOUS WAR

They tut at child soldiers in Africa, of boy's aged eleven with an AK47 but what of this re-enactment of war erotica with England's children in Imperial heaven, tiny uniforms of WW1, spotless mini-trenches. No mention of Germany's industrial advance, of Britain incensed that caused horrifying Verdun. History re-written to live a lie for a hundred years, then at poorly-educated children sigh and at those classroom howlers jeer. What a future they plan for kids, their limbs marked-out to be blown off in some future war ignited by fibs.

10 July, 2014

## JIHAD'S OTHER GOD

At boarding school he was a quiet boy, shy, showing no sign of violence, bullied, he didn't ask the reason why, taking all in silence. At Eton he excelled, though, at the Wall Game he was beaten and in relationships he never gelled. Then at Oxford, philosophy, politics, economics. (though he wished he had studied bionics to teach him something about mainstream politics and its histrionics) Later he sent troops abroad to lands that never did him any harm, they killed with the aid of his god, sometimes too much to his populace's alarm. But blame it on his background, his father's money hounded to a Panamanian investment fund to save his assets from being everyone's little honey bunny, especially Her Majesty's Inspector of Taxes, while he himself preached against tax evasion by the big business axis.

**Wilson John Haire**  
6 March 2015



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100th Anniversary  
Fat Of The Land!  
Aussies & Gallipoli

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**100th Anniversary Of The 1916  
Easter Rising / Cothrom 100  
Bliain Eire Amach na Casca  
1916**

Those who profess to favour freedom,  
And yet deprecate agitation,  
Are men who want crops without  
Plowing up the Ground.  
They want rain without thunder and  
lightning.  
They want the ocean without the  
awful roar of its water.  
This struggle may be a moral one;  
or it may be both moral and physical;  
but it must be a struggle.  
Power concedes nothing without a  
demand.  
It never did, and it never will.  
Find out just what people will submit  
to,  
and you have found out the exact  
amount of injustice  
and wrong which will be imposed  
upon them;  
and these will continue until they  
are resisted  
with either words or blows, or with  
both.  
The limits of tyrants are prescribed  
by the endurance of those whom they  
oppress.

FREDERICK DOUGLAS,  
August 4, 1857

(Contributed by **Richard Behal**  
of Killarney, Co. Kerry.

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**Fat Of The Land!**

"Ireland's ever-expanding waistline  
is proving costly for bereaved families,  
with undertakers noting a rise in orders  
for oversized coffins.

"Funeral directors say the trend is  
consistent with the country's well-  
documented rising obesity levels, with  
demand for bigger coffins having  
increased every year for the past  
decade." (*Irish Examiner*-9.02.2016)

Keith Massey, who runs Rom  
Massey & Sons funeral directors in  
Dublin, said more than one in four people  
he lays to rest are obese—up from one

in 10 a decade ago.

Of the obese corpses, at least one a  
month is over 25 stone, leaving families  
with heftier bills to cover the costs of  
larger caskets and extra manpower to  
help out with the heavy lifting required.

"Maybe once a month we'd a body  
weighing 25 or 30 stone or more and  
that's where the extra costs come in.  
For a standard coffin, you'd be paying  
around €300 extra for the bigger size  
and then there's extra labour costs too  
which could be another €300 to €400  
more, because you might need two or  
three more pallbearers."

A World Health Organization study  
last year found that some 89% of Irish  
men will be overweight by 2030, with  
nearly half obese—up from 74%  
overweight and 26% obese in 2010. The  
outlook for women is also alarming:  
Experts predict that 85% will be  
overweight and 57% obese by 2030.

What will it be like when we arrive  
at 2045 to the 200th Anniversary of the  
Famine? Ah, by then, brother, the  
revisionists will have convinced us that  
it was obesity that took us down—the  
Famine was a mere myth! Our ancestors  
ate too much!

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**Aussies & Gallipoli**

"Relatives of fallen British soldiers  
have been banned from the centenary  
commemorations of a First World War  
battle that led to thousands of Australian  
casualties.

"British military planning has been  
blamed for the heavy losses at the Battle  
of Fromelles. Described by one  
commander as a "tactical abortion", it  
left 5,513 Australians dead or injured.  
The colonial troops had arrived on the  
Western Front only days earlier." (*The  
Times*, London-5.02.2016)

The battle on 19th July 1916, is  
regarded by many historians as not just  
the worst day in Australian military  
history, but the worst day in the entire  
history of the country.

The poor old *Times* is aghast, the

Editor writes:

"This is a cruel mistake. It is true that  
many Australians blamed flawed British  
command for the terrible slaughter, with  
some justification. Yet British troops  
died there, too, [and Irish] and a century  
has passed. If we have all learned to  
forgive our former enemies, Australia  
should be prepared to stand shoulder to  
shoulder, in memory of a shared tragedy,  
with one of its dearest friends" (*The  
Times*, London-5.02. 2016).

"The battle has a pivotal place in  
Australian history. Peter Fitzsimons,  
author of *In the Trenches of Hell*, said:

"More than any other battle,  
Fromelles cleaved a sense of separate-  
ness of the Australian soldier from Great  
Britain.

"Before the war the man who would  
be Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher,  
famously said: 'Australia will fight for  
Great Britain to the last man and the  
last shilling' and most of our blokes  
marched away as the sons of Great  
Britain. They returned as Australians"  
(*The Australian*-05.02.2016).

Jennifer Stephenson, of the Austral-  
ian Department for Veterans Affairs,  
which is organising the commemoration,  
said the focus would be on the Australian  
casualties, adding: "This is not to dim-  
inish the role of other nations but simply  
a recognition of the Australian focus of  
the event we are organising."

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**Celtic Scholar?**

February 24 was the 190th anniver-  
sary of Gaelic Ireland's greatest lexi-  
cographer, Peter O'Connell, who died  
on that date in 1826.

In researching his Irish-English dic-  
tionary, he travelled extensively in search  
of rare words and variations, visiting  
among other places, Scottish Highlands  
and Hebrides. Acknowledged as greatest  
Gaelic scholar of his age. O'Connell was  
born and died at Carne, Co. Clare.

Shortly after his death, his nephew,  
Anthony O'Connell took manuscript of  
dictionary to Daniel O'Connell at Tralee,  
hoping to draw public attention to it.  
But the Liberator showed no interest  
and on being told that the dictionary  
took 40 years to complete, dismissed  
his visitor, telling him that his uncle was  
an old fool to have spent so much of his  
life on so useless a book. Anthony  
O'Connell then pawned the manuscript  
for ten shillings to a Tralee publican.  
Subsequently, it was rescued by Eugene  
O'Curry and eventually sold to the  
British Museum.

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More VOX on page 18