

Church & State

# **An Irish History Magazine**

*And Cultural Review Of Ireland And The World*

---

**Fianna Fail & Industrial Schools**

**Abbey Theatre Attacked!**

**The USA Redskin Clearances**

**Peace-Loving Fascists!**

**Richard Baxter Reliques**

**Black '47, Seamus Heaney, G.B.Shaw & WWI**

---

---

No. 134

Fourth Quarter, 2018

## Liberalism, Fianna Fail And The Industrial Schools

The barrage of anti-Catholic and anti-national invective that poured out of the Irish media during the recent visit of the Pope revealed much about Irish liberalism. For one thing most media commentators have an apparent inability to place difficult issues, like the child abuse that occurred in Industrial Schools, in any sort of coherent historical perspective. The tendency has been to childishly reject the entire legacy of national independence while describing the traditional nationalist narrative as childish.

If maturity in public understanding of history and politics is to be a genuine aspiration, then let it be so. That the independent Irish State oversaw abusive treatment of some of its vulnerable citizens does not nullify the achievement of setting up an independent democracy. Nor does it nullify the positive achievements of the State, especially in the de Valera era but also in later periods, in the areas of social welfare, public housing, education, protective industrialisation, foreign policy and so on. A mature Nation State should be able to acknowledge incidences of negligence committed under its authority without proclaiming its existence to be the result of an unfortunate historical accident.

A survivor of the industrial school system whose book about his experiences was published in the late eighties, Paddy Doyle, has made available on the Internet a timeline of the industrial school story. A reference to Charles Haughey in the timeline fits neatly with the liberal narrative while distorting the historical record. It states:

"1978: A child care worker at Madonna House kidnapped a boy in his care, took him to Edinburgh and drowned him in a bath in a hotel. The Minister for Health, Charles Haughey, rejected a call for a public enquiry into the matter, stating that it would serve no useful purpose."

The statement is no doubt true but historical understanding of the issue is skewed by an insinuated charge of complicity. Haughey was one of a group of Fianna Fail representatives who defied the formidable atmosphere of episcopal dictatorship that persisted in Ireland right up until the 1990s.

In the 1960s Haughey, Donogh O'Malley and Brian Lenihan, close political associates, set in train a process that led to a State inquiry into the Industrial Schools that resulted in the closure of the main ones in the 1970s. Their actions on the issue were resisted at every turn by supporters of Catholic power—from the Church itself, from the political world and from the civil service—all of whom no doubt acted in good faith. That this coterie in Fianna Fail was able to achieve a measure of success—the provision of free secondary education was another of their projects—is a matter of no small significance and would not have been possible without the liberalising influence of the Second Vatican Council.

The first official move against the industrial school system was the establishment of an *Interdepartmental Committee on the Prevention and Treatment of Offenders* by Haughey in 1962. Speaking at the Parnell Summer School last year, Dr.

Fiachra Byrne from the School of History at University College Dublin is reported as follows on the subject:

"He said the first significant changes to State thinking on the needs of delinquent children and adults included contributions from psychologists and an interdepartmental committee set up by Haughey when he was minister for justice in 1962" (IT, 16 August 2017).

Dr. Byrne is not an apologist for Fianna Fail but a member of a team researching the mental health of juveniles in custodial institutions as part of a major project called, *Prisoners, Medical Care and Entitlement to Health in England and Ireland, 1850-2000*.

Haughey's initiative indicated that the State had an interest in arguments being made by psychologists and campaigners like Fr. Michael Sweetman. It signified that the treatment of children in Irish institutions was henceforth recognised as a suitable subject for official investigation. In itself the Interdepartmental Committee did little to change the Industrial Schools, but it signalled that the days of official blindness/neglect/connivance were over.

The next development was the establishment in early 1968 of the *Kennedy Committee of Inquiry into Reformatory and Industrial Schools* by then Minister for Education Donogh O'Malley. The Committee was chaired by District Justice Eileen Kennedy with the instruction from the Minister, "*I want the skin pulled off this pudding*" (*Minister describes steps to uncover abuse in 1960s*, IT, 14 May 1999). When the full horror of the Industrial Schools was becoming public knowledge in 1999, Micheal Martin, who was Fianna Fail Minister for Education at that time, referred to the Kennedy Committee in the Dail. The following is from an *Irish Times* report of what he said:

"Mr Martin said that the committee members visited Daingean in February 1968. 'Their impression of it was a dismal place which should be closed as soon as possible.'

They asked the manager about corporal punishment, and he replied 'openly and without embarrassment that ordinarily the boys were called out of the dormitories after they had retired and that they were punished on one of the stairway landings'.

When asked if the boys were stripped, he replied that at times they were. Asked why he allowed boys to be stripped naked for punishment, he replied, 'in a matter-of-fact manner, that he considered punishment to be more humiliating when it was administered in that way'.

Mr Martin said that District Justice Kennedy, who chaired the committee, wrote to the Department on this and other matters and received a reply which dealt with everything but the punishment.

'While giving assurances about the closure of Daingean, assurance about the punishments stopping seem only to have been given as a result of significant disputes, the exact details of which do not seem to be documented.'

Mr Martin said that the exception to this was an April 1970 letter from the Secretary of the Department of Justice to the Secretary of the Department of Education. The Secretary of the Department of Justice wrote that the official of his Depart-

ment who was a member of the committee had signed the report on the basis of assurances that the Daingean punishments would be stopped.

He wrote: "To sign a report which made no reference to the situation about punishment in Daingean would, in the absence of evidence that the practice had ceased, be to appear to acquiesce in a practice which is indefensible and for the continuance of which the Minister for Justice could not avoid some official responsibility arising out of his having registered Daingean as a suitable place of detention under the Children Acts."

Mr Martin said that the secretary's next comment revealed much about the approach to abuse, even of concerned people:

'On the other hand, to make any reference, however oblique, to this particular method of punishment in Daingean would be likely to lead to a disclosure of the situation and, in this way, to cause a grave public scandal'..." (IT, 14 May 1999)

A battle was being fought in 1968 to close down the Industrial Schools. Micheal Martin took the view in 1999 that even concerned people at the time did not wish to cause public scandal and that this demonstrated the need for "*everything to be out in the open*". But this is to judge actions outside of their historical context. If the officials pressing for closure had conducted their campaign in the full glare of publicity, their project could easily have ended in defeat.

Donogh O'Malley died in a car accident in March 1968 at a very early stage in the work of the Kennedy Committee. What happened after his death can be surmised from the following:

"The committee received little assistance in its work, said Mr Martin. 'The behaviour of many managers and officials has been described to me as at best silently obstructive. It was due to the direct intervention of the new Minister, Brian Lenihan, that the committee was given a proper secretariat'..." (IT, 14 May 1999).

So Brian Lenihan inherited responsibility for the Committee and made sure that it had the requisite resources and political backing to complete its work, no small feat in the circumstances. As a result of the work of the Committee and of its 1970 Report, the Industrial Schools in Artane, Marlborough House, Letterfrack and Daingean were closed and child care in institutions was earmarked as a category of social provision sorely in need of enlightened reform.

The closure of Industrial Schools should not be seen in isolation from social welfare reforms that enabled unmarried mothers to keep their babies. During the 1970s and 1980s Fianna Fail spearheaded many reforms in that area.

Recommendations from both of the Commissions on the Status of Women laid the basis for reform legislation.

There were others in Fianna Fail who supported the view that the power of the Catholic Church needed to be curtailed—Mary O'Rourke, Brian Lenihan's sister, carried the baton of secular reform in the 1990s when she championed the cause of an *Education Act*, as did Maire Geoghegan-Quinn when she enacted the decriminalisation of homosexuality—but Haughey, O'Malley and Lenihan were the pioneers of such reform in the sixties.

Contrary to the misconceived belief of many historians that celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 Rising in 1966 helped sow the seeds of the republican violence that later broke out in the North—the causes of the Northern conflict are to be found in the way that Northern Ireland was created as a

To page 4

## Contents

Page

<b>Liberalism, Fianna Fail And The Industrial Schools</b> Dave Alvey	2
<b>A Film To Remember.</b> Angela Clifford, Malachi Lawless, Fergus O Rahallaigh on <i>Black '47</i>	4
<b>Seamus Heaney And Dr. Kiely</b> Wilson John Haire	5
<b>Note on 'Ireland To-Day'.</b> Brendan Clifford <b>The Abbey Theatre Attacked</b> ( <i>Ireland Today</i> 1937) John Dowling	7
<b>'Symbiosis' in America?</b> John Minahane (Part 15 of the Spanish Polemic on Colonisation)	10
<b>Vox Pat:</b> Bunrecht na hÉireann; Irish Court Case??? A Sense of Place; More British than the Brits; Ephemera; CASTING pearls at . . . ; British Modesty! Neutrality?; Divine Right; Veg-Free US! US v GB: Ambition And Avarice! UCC at work! Haldane v. Churchill; Papal Visit; Lawyers Whinging! Happiness? Sublime to the . . . ; Cork Famine Commemoration Pat Maloney	9,15, 20
<b>Shaw: Great War Propagandist!</b> Brendan Clifford	16
<b>Reliquae Baxterianae</b> Stephen Richards (Part 1)	18
<b>Peace Loving Fascists,</b> Henry Williamson and Oswald Mosley Peter Brooke	23

Peter Brooke's *Alexander Solzhenitsyn,  
Alexander Dugin And The Russian Question*  
and the Daniel O'Connell biography  
will resume in the next issue

Some web addresses for associated sites—

**Athol Books:**

<http://www.atholbooks.org>

**The Heresiarch:**

<http://heresiarch.org>

There is a great deal of interesting reading. Go surf and see!

**Sales:**

<https://www.atholbooks-sales.org>

### ***Church & State***

**Editor:** Pat Maloney

ISSN: 0332-3625

**All Correspondence should be sent to:**

**P. Maloney,  
C/O Shandon St. P.O., Cork City.  
TEL: 021-4676029**

SUBSCRIPTIONS: €20 (Sterling £16) for 4 issues

ELECTRONIC SUBSCRIPTIONS: €8 (Sterling £6)

**Cheques/postal orders payable to ATHOL BOOKS please**

from

[athol-st@atholbooks.org](mailto:athol-st@atholbooks.org)

political entity—the most important by-product of the 1966 Commemoration was that it fired up the reforming zeal of the Southern political system. This had different manifestations in different political parties but in Fianna Fail it manifested through the work of Donogh O'Malley and his associates.

It is important to acknowledge that the reformers in Fianna Fail were not motivated by a desire to undermine Catholicism. The opinion of a reforming official that disclosure of the punishments being meted out in the Industrial Schools would cause a "*grave public scandal*" and was thus to be avoided, was probably shared by many of those pressing for reform. Change was being effected with minimum social polarisation and with minimum damage being inflicted on Catholicism as the majority religion; the process thus took the form of a natural political evolution.

I can think of only two media commentators—John Healy who developed his talents in the *Irish Press* before moving to the *Irish Times* and John Walsh, a long term educational correspondent with the *Irish Independent*—who lent journalistic support to the Fianna Fail reformers. Contemporary liberalism which seems to have merged with feminism and which is heavily media based, judges Ireland to be a backward province of the Anglo Saxon part of the West. From that standpoint Brian Lenihan and the officials who supported the Kennedy Committee were remiss in failing to understand the need for "*everything to be out in the open*". Yet by delivering the Kennedy Report without a major scandal Lenihan laid the basis for the closure of the largest of the Industrial Schools without causing a searing divide between liberal reformers and traditionalists. Present day liberals would be well advised to take a leaf from his book.

Those commentators and activists who took the opportunity of the Pope's visit to put the boot into the Catholic Church want a complete break with the past. Their agenda does not constitute a development of Irish society, but rather a new beginning for the country as a province of Ameranglia. It is difficult to figure out what direction Micheal Martin is leading Fianna Fail but most of the time it seems to be towards a pragmatic accommodation with the liberal/feminist ideologues who populate the media. More's the pity he's not in the Haughey-O'Malley-Lenihan mould.

Angela Clifford

Review

## A Film To Remember

It is with trepidation that anyone would go to see a film about the Famine/Holocaust. But *Black '47* is in a class of its own. Its history cannot be faulted. It conveys the devastation of a people and way of life—but as incidental to the action. It enables the viewer to comprehend that here was a well-populated, Gaelic-speaking population driven from their homes, cold and starving, finding bits of shelter where they can. But this is conveyed as background to the story.

The hero is an Irish Ranger who, having served in India and Afghanistan, deserts after saving enough money to bring his family to America, returns home to Connemara to find his family wrecked: mother dead, brother executed for resisting eviction, brother's wife and children barely alive—subsisting on nettles and little else.

While he is with the family, the evictors come to take down the roof of their dwelling. He offers to pay the rent, which is rejected. His nephew, a child who is wanted for stealing some food, is killed for trying to escape and he is arrested for trying to protect the boy.

The story then features his escape from custody and the retribution he exacts.

In the course of the action we encounter hard facts: that Ireland's population was reduced by a quarter; the view of the blond lieutenant that the Gaelic Irish are a feckless, inferior species; the export of grain under armed guard; the landlord who is making the most of this opportunity to start making money by clearing out his tenants and moving from cultivation to pasture; the official aim to make a Gael as rare in Ireland as a Red Indian in New York; the functionaries who are only 'doing their duty'; and, above all, the sanctimonious '*Soupers*'.

## Malachi Lawless and Fergus O Rahallaigh add:

The late Adrian Hardiman's book, "*Joyce in Court—James Joyce and the Law*" (page 45), quotes James Joyce's 'the Citizen' on the English in Ireland:

"We'll meet force with force, says the Citizen. We have our greater Ireland

The hero's mother had died, refusing 'to take the soup'. A particularly strong scene has the hero attending a field church service—benches of starving youngsters with no English—a cauldron of soup steaming in the corner of the tent, and a Protestant clergyman sermonising about the iniquities of Rome.

An unusual feature of the film is the way that acute political analysis is delivered in one-line remarks, which are in character for the person delivering them. There is no dwelling on the obvious or over-egging of the pudding—no speeches. In fact the hero doesn't say much. What is said is terse and to the point.

Where appropriate the dialogue is in Irish, with well-placed English sub-titles.

The action of the film holds the attention, much like a Hollywood production.

This has been the highest-grossing film in Ireland as of September 2018. But, not surprisingly, a *Guardian* reviewer found it "*draggy*", a "*weak revenge drama*" (30.9.18).

Director, Lance Daly (a Dubliner) and the screenplay writers—P.J. Dillon, Pierce Ryan, Eugene O'Brien and Lance Daly himself—are to be congratulated. (The film is based on an Irish language short film called *An Ranger*—I have seen some of these Irish language *bijou* films made for schools, and their quality is outstanding.)

It is amazing that Lance Daly and his team got the funding to make this film, in view of the home truths it tells about British policy in Ireland—possibly a by-product of Brexit. This is a film that should not be missed.

beyond the sea. They were driven out of house and home in the black '47. Their mudcabins and their shielings by the roadside were laid low by the battering ram and the *Times* rubbed its hands and told the whitelivered Saxons there would soon be as few Irish in

Ireland as redskins in America. Even the Grand Turk sent us his piastres. But the Sassenach tried to starve the nation at home while the land was full of crops that the British hyenas bought and sold in Rio de Janeiro. Ay, they drove out the peasants in hordes. Twenty thousand of them died in the coffinships. But those that came to the land of the free remember the land of bondage. And they will come again and with a vengeance, no cravens, the sons of Granuaile, the champions of Kathleen ni Houlihan" (Ulysses: 12: 1364-7).

This is from the so-called 'Cyclops' episode, allowing the sneering sophisticated of suburban Dublin to dismiss the Citizen therein quoted as a one-eyed monstrosity to be at all costs ignored, censored, suppressed. The current film "*Black 47*" is a fairly accurate, forceful expression of the period it depicts, redressing sneering, sophisticated, hand-me-down accounts of a mere potato failure—the 'act of God' school of history of the period.

All camouflaged with broken alder branches,  
 And headphoned soldiers standing up in turrets.  
 How long were they approaching down my road.  
 As if they owned them? The whole country was sleeping,  
 I had rights-of-way, fields, cattle in my keeping,  
 Tractors hitched to buckracks in open sheds,  
 Silos, chill gates, wet slates, the greens and reds  
 Of outhouse roofs. Whom shall I run to tell  
 Among all of their back doors on the latch  
 For the bringer of bad news, that small-hours visitant  
 Who, by being expected, might be kept distant?  
 Sowers of seeds, erectors of headstones...  
 O charioteers, above your dormant guns,  
 It stands here still, stands vibrant as you pass,  
 The invisible, untoppled omphalos.  
 (from the collection: *Field Work*):

## Wilson John Haire

## Seamus Heaney And Dr. Kiely

I have read Kevin Kiely's savaging of Seamus Heaney in a PR handout by his publisher in a book by him soon to be published. A couple of lines caught my eye about Heaney whom he refers to only as 'H' for the rest of his diatribe.

This reminds me of the German Fritz Lang-directed film called '*M*' of 1931 in which Peter Lorre plays a serial child killer whom the police are after—as are even the criminal underworld: they are so shocked by his callousness. Someone chalks their hand with M for *Mörder* (Murderer) and manages to clap the 'M' on to the back of the fleeing Lorre. Lorre is unaware of this marking on his back. But why has Kiely clapped 'H' on the back of Heaney's poetry?

Kiely says about 'H'—

"He hails from the media, the media era that raised Pam Ayres the "famous" TV poet with accessible punch-line verse, occasional bawdy subject matter with *double entendres*, and excessive use of her rustic accent for added comic effect."

But Ayres is not trying to be a Nobel prize winning poet. She recognises her work for the doggerel it is. Recently she said she felt aggrieved at how the media were treating her accent as if she were semi-illiterate. She is in fact a lady who likes to laugh at the absurdities of life. At the moment she is wondering why she is rarely mentioned by the media and rarely invited on to TV or radio.

Kiely's interview in *Village* in 2014 about Seamus Heaney is just as callous for an academic who describes himself as a Poet, Critic, Writer, Artist and

Raconteur. He seems obsessed by one of Heaney's poems in particular: '*Digging*.' More of that later.

### My Attitude To Heaney Before I Read Dr. Kiely

Before reading Kiely I wrote the following, and now repeated with a few corrections:

"In my opinion Heaney has a good way with words but he wrote about the wrong things, considering there was a war on and his people were being oppressed even more. Before winning the Nobel Prize he could have started writing about the reality of Northern Ireland. But I doubt whether, if he had written truthfully, he would have been published or got any PR in the British/Irish media.

There was no Soviet Union, no communist Eastern Europe, no CPGB with publishing facilities, no CPUSA with its *Masses & Mainstream INC* publishing house that would publish the 'Progressives'—like Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet or Bulgarian poet Nikola Yonkov Vaptsarov.

Kiely writes of "*sectarian war*", when what happened resulted from PIRA declaring war on the British State. (But at least he called it *war* and not *The Troubles*.) This War is still being described as a religious sectarian conflict in US university journals. Heaney's silence didn't help.

He did have one poem in which he does show resentment at the British Army on his roads:

### Toome Road

One morning I met with armoured cars  
 In convoys, warbling along on powerful tyres,

His '*Docker*' poem (from his collection: *Death of a Naturalist*) is a disaster in which he portrays Belfast shipyardmen as hardline Protestant sectarian dockers. (A bit of sectarianism from himself here, through casting his net too widely.) They are not dockers but highly skilled artisans. But as a country boy he's not to know of the finer details of heavy industry:

### Dockers

'There in the corner, staring at his drink.  
 The cap juts like a gantry's crossbeam,  
 Cowling plated forehead and sledgehead jaw.  
 Speech is clamped in the lips' vice.

That fist would drop a hammer on a Catholic—  
 Oh yes, that sort of thing could start again;  
 The only Roman collar he tolerates  
 Smiles all round his sleek pint of porter.

Mosaic imperatives bang home like rivets;  
 God is a foreman with certain definite views  
 Who orders life in shifts and leisure.  
 A factory horn will blare the Resurrection.

He sits, strong and blunt as a Celtic cross,  
 Clearly used to silence and an armchair;  
 Tonight his wife and children will be quiet  
 At slammed door and smoker's cough in the hall."

In the line: "*Oh yes, that sort of thing could start again*", he refers back in history, briefly, to 1920, when a pogrom by Protestant shipyardmen saw Catholic shipyardmen being violently ejected from Harland and Wolff shipyard

—then the biggest Yard in the world. It was a minority of the thousands and thousands who worked there. The aggressors were from what is called the Black Trades—dirty smoky greasy trades like platers, riveters, welders and caulkers. There were also the unskilled, mostly-embittered, labourers. They were the hard men in the shipbuilding trade and usually came from hardline Protestant areas like the Shankill Road and the two-up-and two down kitchen houses.

The more collar-and-tie men—like joiners, electricians, wood-machinists and shipwrights, from the parlour houses—would talk regretfully about those times. In 1946 I entered the shipyard and could hear these conversations twenty-six years after the event. The Catholic workers had been thrown into the sea (called *the tide* in their own parlance) and pelted with heavy rivets. Those Protestant workers who tried to prevent some of this—maybe they had a friend or a good workmate—were themselves thrown into the *tide*. No one-pound rivets followed them. It was meant to punish but not to kill.

The Catholic media never did cherish these Protestant workers. Instead the 1920 pogroms were cast on a modern shipyard as an everlasting image and grasped on wrongfully by Heaney.

One or two Catholic shipyardmen were murdered during the war situation in the 1970s. But the assassins didn't work there and slipped in on the intelligence of others, I would think. The shipyard management, unlike the 1920 set, threatened to sack anyone indulging in sectarian behaviour. That was a real threat because once you got the sack out of Harland and Wolff you would never be rehired. The shipyard also had many specialist trades that couldn't be used outside it. Shop stewards were asked to intervene in sectarian problems in the Yard and some of them ended up having to carry hand-guns for their own protection. The shipyard management got the licences.

It has been claimed Heaney had to go and live in Dublin after his poem *'Docker'* because of loyalist threats. Most shipyardmen would be repulsed by his description of them.

I never met Heaney but I met his wife, Marie, who came to the Abbey Theatre around 1973 to see a play by me. About five years ago, I met Heaney's cousin in London when he was here to help launch a book. He was quite

disturbed by his cousin's drinking habit. Having similar problems over 30 years ago I could understand his anxiety.

I did regret not being able to support Seamus Heaney at the time. I saw him as a British poet.

There was a lot of quiet indignation about him winning the Nobel Prize for Literature among the Protestant poets and writers of the North. They thought he was stealing their thunder, their right to be head-and-shoulders above the Taig. Many Catholics did take literary and academics jobs reserved for their *bettors* after the Good Friday Agreement and, to make matters worse, they were writing like Protestants about subjects like the history of the British Navy or the American troop presence in NI during WW2.

But the Catholic population generally liked him and praised him for his achievements, though many didn't read his poems. They were delighted at his winning the Nobel Prize. They usually saw a country boy (things are worse in the countryside for Catholics) becoming this great talked-about person in the media, and the whole world knowing he was a Catholic, and him not being ashamed of it by hiding it.

What I found difficult to watch on TV was Patrick Mayhew, Secretary-of-State of Northern Ireland, awarding Heaney with a shiny new shovel for his poem: *Digging*, (from his collection: *Death of a Naturalist*). The first two lines begin:

"Between my finger and my thumb  
The squat pen rests; snug as a gun..."

And he goes on to describes his father digging potatoes and his grandfather's great ability in cutting turf.

The poem ends with the lines:

"Between my finger and my thumb  
The squat pen rests.  
I'll dig with it."

Dr. Kevin Kiely jeers at the "*finger and the thumb gun*", in his interview with *Village*, which is called, *Kevin Kiely Puts Boot Into Seamus Heaney* (18th August, 2014).

He becomes childish: "*How can you hold a gun between your finger and your thumb?*" What Heaney was saying, I would think, is that he wouldn't be using a gun during this war conflict, that that his gun was his pen. A simple enough explanation.

## My post-Dr. Kevin Kiely Attitude To Seamus Heaney

There is no point in laying down what Heaney should have written during that near 30-year-war. I was one of those critics. I had stuck my neck out back in 1978 with three plays I had written for the National theatre in London. Peter Hall, the artistic director, decided to produce my plays *'Wedding Breakfast'* was one of them, along with two others, one being about four unmarried elderly Protestant sisters caught in their farmhouse during a clash between the British Army and PIRA. The contents also dealt with early child abuse. The other play was about children being kidnapped out of Cambodia by Westerners during the war situation there.

*'Wedding Breakfast'* was based on fact. A young Provo on the run is married in a derelict house as the British Army smashes through the walls of countless houses to get at them. The woman who organised my involvement was a Protestant who worked for the late Mary O'Malley, artistic director of the Lyric Theatre, Belfast., as her house-keeper. She also worked up the Falls Road. Ms O'Malley said somebody has to write about this, "*but I won't produce it because the loyalists will bomb the theatre*". (They did attempt this when I had another work on there a couple of years later.)

I thought at the time the English should know what was going on over there. Peter Hall had encouraged me by producing these plays so why should I worry. The British media thought otherwise. However, I have never received so many insults through the media. Much of it was character defamation. Obviously I thought: 'Is that why you are being so quiet, Heaney, in your poetry? I have probably ruined my whole future in theatre and look at you wining-and-dining-with the elite.'

After that I just picked up my wood-working tools. I resented the theatre world and I wasn't going to need them for anything. In the end Peter Hall didn't defend me through the media, nor did the Director of the plays, nor the actors. But, before he died, Hall contacted me to say he still believed in what I had written all that time ago.

He had taken a chance with his own career. After the hostile reviews somebody set fire to part of the National Theatre. Murmurs of that's what you get for producing IRA propaganda from various staff. it turned out to be a former actress with mental problems.

The media also howled about the Cambodian play as well in their colonial-mindset fashion.

How much could Heaney write about the NI war situation? The British war poets of WW1 didn't write a lot of stuff about their experiences. Out of everything written between them there were three good descriptive poems. In the end they would have had to get on with the everyday private and public world in their work.

There are a lot of poems about the Holocaust and what could be the greatest of them all: *'Death Fugue'* by Paul Celan. I have read it many times and agree with Brendan Clifford who mentioned it sometime go in one of the Aubane journals.

Finally: Heaney grew up on a farm, so why not write the pastoral scenes. Kiely, in another outrage, says the pastoral scenes were plagiarised by Heaney from Robert Frost, the US poet, thus making Heaney's pastoral poetry redund-

ant, in his opinion. The highly successful Welsh actor Anthony Hopkins said recently:

'You climb the tree but there's nothing there.'

(Could apply to Dr Kevin Kiely?)

Seamus Heaney in the end had a battle with alcohol and lost it. Hopkins had his battle with alcohol and won, to glimpse the emptiness of success.

## Note on *'Ireland To-Day'*

The review of the Abbey Theatre, which is reprinted here, first appeared in the monthly magazine, *Ireland To-Day*, in January 1937.

*Ireland To-Day* began publication in June 1936 and continued until March 1938. No hint is given in the final issue that it is the final issue, but its editorial says:

"Ireland has often been accused of stabbing England in the back, of moulding her policy on the thesis that 'England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity'. What her accusers seem to forget is that this policy is largely determined by the very positive policy—or, perhaps, it might be better described as a negative policy very positively maintained—of England, who never concedes anything save under compulsion. You will never get anything from England except by force."

We understand that the organiser of *Ireland To-Day* was Jim O'Donovan, an engineer in the Republican movement, and that he wound up the magazine in order to concentrate on making bombs for use against England, in the event that it started another European war.

*Ireland To-Day* sought to be national in the fullest sense. It drew its contributors from right, left and centre. They include Peadar O'Donnell, Owen Sheehy Skeffington, Professors Michael Tierney and James Hogan, Eric Gill, Aloys Fleischmann, Eoin MacNeill, Frank Pakenham, Robert Barton, Desmond Ryan, Bulmer Hobson, and Ernie O'Malley. There does not seem to have been any well known Fianna Failer involved in it.

It seems to have been an attempt to draw together on national grounds those on either side of Fianna Fail who we unable to participate in it, which is

particularly interesting now that Fianna Fail has been run aground by Jack Lynch's apostle, Micheál Martin.

The only information given about

John Dowling is that he was Art Editor of the magazine. There is no entry about him in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography* produced by Cambridge University and the Royal Irish Academy.

## Ireland Today

January 1937, Volume 2, Number 1

### The Abbey Theatre Attacked

For many years the present writer has been attempting, without the slightest success, to undermine the credit of the Abbey Theatre and to prove... that far from being, as is generally held, a strong national force; and the potent factor in the regeneration of the nation, it has been in reality the very opposite, bitterly hostile, retrograde, vile and unprofitable. His contention has appeared so ludicrous that hearty laughter has usually prevented the development of the argument. Listeners remembered the manly sobs they had swallowed over the sorrows of Cathleen Ni Houlihan and refused to hear any more. The open forum which is the boast of *Ireland To-Day*, however, offers a platform from which the most unpopular opinions, provided they be sincerely felt, may be shouted to the extent of a few thousand words, not without fear of contradiction, but at least without interruption...

The birth of the Abbey... synchronised roughly with the resurgence of the National Idea which may have been overdue anyway, but which it is convenient to associate with the Boer War and the recruitment of the Irish Brigade. There were other irritants at work, the centenary of the rising of 1798, Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebrations, and the foundation of the Gaelic League... The Abbey had little or nothing to do with

any of these, and yet it has been confused with them in the public mind. There was a literary side to "the movement" though it had not yet become recognised by that name, and the activities of the Abbey seemed to be part of it, because the Abbey did draw a little inspiration from the Gaelic gods (then exhumed from their tumuli by the Gaelic League and now in process of reinterment with cries of derision by a generation bitter with disillusion), and perhaps also because Mr. William Yeats was known to have smashed with his own fair hands the lamps illuminating the Dublin shops during "The Jubilee", there grew a belief that the Abbey in its genesis was a part of a general growth when in fact it was a purely literary adventure having its origins in a class the majority of whom would have dropped it like a hot coal if they had suspected in it a living spark of nationality. And not alone to such coincidences must be attributed the fact that the Abbey was accepted by ourselves as being on our side, without which acceptance it would have had little or no influence. More important was the conclusion reached by the founders of the Irish Theatre and the dramatists who wrote for it that they had become at last part of the Irish Nation, not that they had been absorbed into it, but that they had absorbed it. Seeing nothing in the burgeoning around them but a

sentimental or literary nationalism which they welcomed as a sane and safe substitute for the militant nationalism of the past, they discovered in themselves a genuine romantic sympathy with it. And we responded to that sympathy.

The plain and ugly truth is that, in the early days of the Abbey the Irish people agreed that the Irish Nation was dead. The Irish Party had plastered "Home Rule" on their banners and Dark Rosaleen was only remembered in dingy publications over pints porter equally ready to pledge the victorious return of "the Dublin Fusiliers". The rehabilitation of Cathleen, as a noble though dangerous queen was therefore soothing to our self-esteem. The Renaissance was in fact not recognised by the Irish people. They, like the Abbey, saw in it the birth of a new nation not the rebirth of the old nation. Major McBride and the Irish Brigade who fought for the Boers in South Africa were not regarded (except by a few forgotten old men of the I.R.B.) as a real expression of the Irish people. There was a sneaking pride in them, but there was just as much pride in the Dublin Fusiliers. In short, the early years of the twentieth century saw the nearest approach there has ever been to the fusion of the Gaelic and Anglo-Irish cultures into that mythical blend which is the ideal of a certain group to-day.

"*Romantic Ireland's dead and gone*" sang Mr. Yeats, meaning the Ireland of the Fenians, the Ireland which struggled for separation and I am very much afraid that the Irish people agreed with him and while the class to which Mr. Yeats represented felt that at last that they could afford to sentimentalise over the dead warrior who was no longer a menace (just as New Zealand to-day weeps over "the noble Maori"), so also the Irish people, or that enlightened section who listened to Abbey plays, believing that the end had indeed come, were slavishly grateful for the tributes mouthed over the hero's grave by the descendants of the conqueror.

This sentimental sympathy with the Gaelic race, this sentimental sorrow for a gallant nation which is now only a precious memory, is the motif of the Abbey Theatre. It runs through all their plays; it is flagrant in those dramas directly concerned with that eternal striving which heaves beneath every problem in this country and which is regarded by some as the canker poisoning and choking all development

and by others as the fire and the light which lifts us out of the mud and slough of slavery.

"*They went forth to battle and they always fell*", is the text of the sermon preached by the Abbey. The Gael was gallant, lovable, futile and, above all, doomed to defeat. That is the sermon they preached and that is the sermon to which we listened with grateful tears. "*They shall be remembered for ever*" intoned Mr. Yeats, and instead of proceeding, as any sensible person would, to tear the Abbey brick by brick, we went away glowing with pride in that comfortably distant past which we felt was a little too gallant and futile for the 20th century.

There are four plays on the Abbey list which amply demonstrate the truth of this thesis—*The Rising of the Moon*, *The Dreamer*, *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* and a fourth the name of which escapes me, but which, I think was *The Piper*. If it were not tragic it would be laughable to remember that these plays, the themes of which would suffice to destroy the morale of the Spartans, have been the four most popular with militant Irishmen and a couple of them were almost invariably chosen to be played at IRA concerns organised to swell company arms funds from 1914 onwards. It is a tremendous tribute to the morale of the IRA that it appears to have been little affected by them, for it is hard to believe that any man who attended a course of these plays could ever summon up the courage to fire a shot. Luckily, however, "the boys" never took these dramatic performances very seriously, and, in fact if they had ceased in the middle of a scene very few would have been the wiser. And it is safe to assume that the regular Abbey audiences were not strongly represented in the armed patrols of Dublin or the flying columns of the country.

In one very subtle way, however, the Abbey Theatre did affect the morale of certain leaders of the IRA. It is a bold statement that the Immolation Idea, that is, the idea of going forth to battle merely to fall, not to ensure victory on another front, or to check the enemy advance, but merely deliberately to be killed, as a soul-stirring gesture, owed something to the teaching of the Abbey. It is unquestionable that certain heroic figures entertained that idea, it is unquestionable that they were great and

noble and that they achieved much. It is true also that many were credited with that idea who never entertained it, and is equally unquestionable that if the rank and file of the IRA ad understood and shared that idea they would never have gone forth to battle at all, and never inflicted any casualties on the enemy. Enemy casualties are even more useful, in a war, than soul-stirring gestures. And fortunately the vast majority of the IRA never having been to the Abbey, missed the immolation idea altogether. They actually thought they were out to win!

The immolation idea is a corollary of the Abbey sermon. If the Abbey did not actually invent, it certainly nurtured the belief that since 1798 armed revolts against British authority had ceased to be attempts to achieve victory and had been merely quixotic sentimental gestures, one of which was demanded in each generation "*to save Ireland's soul*". It was understood, of course, that it was a disembodied soul, to be preserved in lavender only for literature and the Abbey stage. The Abbey did not suspect that there would ever be another gesture which would be more than a gesture. Mr. Yeats did not suspect that when Cathleen ni Houlihan mourned her strong sons who had gone forth to battle and fallen (but who would be remembered for ever, thanks!) that anyone might be moved to emulate them. Lady Gregory never thought that the hunted rat on the Quay in "*The Rising of the Moon*" could ever inspire a subscription to an arms fund. Mr. Lennox Robinson, in whose travesty of history, *The Dreamer*, Robert Emmet deserted by his drunken rabble of cowardly Dublin workmen, goes to his doom with sad Protestant nobility, can hardly have dreamt that he was fanning a spark, however faint, and surely the forgotten author of *The Piper*—if that was the name of the play where the cowering rebels are huddled in a hut or a cave squabbling after their rout and united against the one realist of their number, the one fighting man who keeps doggedly repeating "*we were bet*", and who was not trusted with a gun because he didn't make his Easter Jooty—surely he would have sniggered at the suggestion that his play could have any other effect than the total destruction of the national morale of his audience.

And yet, is it not true that Patrick Pearse was inspired to some extent by the Abbey tradition? Is not "*the Singer*"



an Abbey play as bad as they're made. Is Terence McSwiney's "Insurrection" not the same thing? I saw this play, translated into Irish under the title "*Ais-eirighe*", produced in a Dublin Sinn Fein competition a few years ago by a group who probably prided themselves on their activity in the cause of nationality, and the gloom, the woe, the sense of utter, tragic, and inevitable defeat which hung about it was enough to make any Irishman afraid of his shadow. The benches of the Mansion House were crowded with innocent school-children drinking the poison with widening eyes and storing up in their minds the Abbey sermon of defeat and doom. The players themselves, of course, would be quite unconscious of this effect, being fortified against it by a vivid memory of what conditions really were between 1916 and 1923.

It is quite plain that Patrick Pearse and Terence McSwiney would have applauded "The Dreamer" or "The Rising of the Moon" as useful nationalist propaganda. The morale of these men was so unassailable that it could survive any attack, and they were quite prepared to go forth to battle with the intention of falling...

Pearse of course has been wilfully misunderstood. He fell back on the immolation idea only when other measures failed at the last moment, and his decision was perfectly sound and has been fully justified. But a nation is not made up of Pearses and McSwineys. The majority, when invited to take up arms with the assurance that they will inevitably fall in defeat (and be remembered for ever) will ask with unanswerable logic: "*Then why go?*" and that query has been implicit in the Abbey sermon for the last thirty years. The spirit which imbued Pearse and McSwiney was a noble and chivalrous spirit, but it was not a conquering spirit. "*Not those who can inflict most, but who can suffer most will have the ultimate victory*" was the creed of McSwiney, a creed suitable for heroes like himself and Mahatma Gandhi, but an extremely vicious slogan for troops entering battle. And it is a fortunate thing for Ireland that the influence of the Abbey Theatre has been confined to a comparatively small group.

That small group, however, has great importance. From it are drawn the articulate leaders of opinion, the makers of laws, Ministers of State, framers of

policy and the higher executives of administration. Public opinion and public morale is very much in the hands of that group. An example of their influence is to be found in the censorship of films. Censorship of films in this country means nothing and is not expected to mean anything, but the holding of a watching brief for the sixth commandment... In other countries a sharp look-out is kept for presentations which might adversely affect national morale. But our film censors do not know what morale is. "*The Rising of the Moon*" would seem to them excellent national propaganda, simply because the scene was not laid in Hollywood and it is only a short step from *The Rising of the Moon* to "*Ourselves Alone*", a film which enjoyed a spectacular run in our capital city. The censors who approved this picture probably thought they were doing a service to the country and that the film marked a great national advance. Under similar circumstances in England censors employed by the English Government would have found themselves out of a job. In Italy, Germany or Russia they would have found themselves in jail. That picture represents to the growing generation the history of the IRA. A pack of hunted rats, always retreating, never fighting, drunken cowards skulking behind women's petticoats... The same audiences who were grateful for the sorrows of Cathleen Ni Houlihan were grateful for this gesture of a foolish and futile handful of imbeciles pitting themselves against the might of an Empire. That is what we, instructed by the Abbey, are telling the next generation about ourselves. What the Abbey said about Robert Emmet we are saying about Cathal Brugha, or we are letting Britain say it. In both cases it is a lie, but such a pleasant sentimental lie that we let it pass. We forget that the rebels were not hunted rebels, but that they were the hunters, gay and light-hearted. We forget that it was the British who were hunted, who did not dare to emerge from their fortresses except in huge numbers armed with steel helmets and protected by tanks, armoured cars and machine-guns...; that the Black and Tans had to be dragged out of their posts at all; that the Auxiliary bluff covered a bullet-proof waistcoat, and that the whole country outside a few towns were in the hands of a few thousand IRA...

That is the true version of history and when that version is given to the

young generation we may begin to believe that the Abbey Theatre has been a harmless influence...

It is a sad and dreadful reflection that the wheel has gone full circle and that we are sunk again in that slavish torpor which marked the beginning of the century... Up to a few years ago O'Casey's plays, all in the Abbey tradition, were still capable of rousing the honest indignation of those who remembered the fighting years and who instinctively recognised in his work the terrible menace to the morale of Young Ireland. But now "*Ourselves Alone*", a maudlin mixture of the old-school-tie and Handy Andy, the crudest Imperial and anti-Irish jingo, can hold a Dublin audience entranced for a month!

*"It was for this Lord Edward died, and Wolfe Tone nobly bled."*

**John Dowling**

## Vox Pat

### 1944—Neutrality?

"We've never asked anything from Spain but honourable neutrality", said Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden in the British Commons. "In the dark days of the war the attitude of the Spanish government in not giving our enemies passage was extremely helpful."

He said he was in agreement with the US that Spain could no longer plead alarm at German concentration on the Spanish frontier. (Irish Independent, 24.2.1944).

\*\*\*\*\*

### Divine Right

"Can he believe that a coronation ceremony will keep him safe from all misfortune? There is no longer any hand virtuous enough to cure scrofula, or any holy phial beneficial enough to render kings inviolable..."

Chateaubriand on the coronation of Charles X, whose reign as King of France (1824-30) dramatised the Bourbons' failure to reconcile monarchy by divine right with the spirit of democracy prevalent after the French Revolution.

\*\*\*\*\*

## John Minahane

### The Spanish Polemic on Colonisation

#### Part 15

## 'Symbiosis' in America?

In *The Invasion of America* Francis Jennings describes how the Puritan colonists of New England destroyed the major Indian communities in their territories during the 17th century. But this was a Pyrrhic victory, Jennings argues at the end of his book. The New Englanders drove themselves into a dead end. Sheer bigotry and aggressiveness prevented them thinking in terms of more constructive relationships and partnerships with the Indians, and they paid the price. Their colonies ceased to expand and develop; they were no longer a dynamic force in America; larger-minded people and colonies took leadership instead of them.

Jennings sums up his case in these two sentences:

"The hitherto most aggressively expansionist colonies in English America became a closed pocket and remained so until the American Revolution. The way to the beckoning West would be found by people who consciously adopted a strategy of maintaining symbiotic interdependence with the Indians."

That second sentence is an eye-opener. What can it possibly mean? If words have their normal meanings, it appears to imply that, when the Puritan leaders were superseded by men of the Enlightenment, there was an improvement in the situation for the Indians. Instead of genocidal bigots, they were now dealing with people who would 'live and let live', or even more than that, people who wanted "*symbiotic interdependence*". In future, space would be made for them—or space would be left for them.

On these matters we are entitled, I think, to make use of hindsight. There was, indeed, a kind of coexistence (not "*interdependence*"), which came between two periods of violence. In a long perspective, it might be seen as a holding operation. The truth of the matter is that newly independent America tried at first (1783-6) to secure its aims by violence or the threat of violence. The young Republic sought "*Indian Removal*", i.e. forcing the Indians to move west of

whatever lines on the map the colonists thought they could currently stretch to, but found that this was beyond its power. A policy was then adopted of negotiating and making Treaties with the Indians and purchasing land from them, and encouraging Indian communities to pursue settled agriculture.

This policy could be expounded in very sophisticated and sometimes quite disarming language, especially by Thomas Jefferson. The apparently humane, peaceful and dialogue-based approach of the US Federal Government charmed naïve optimists and encouraged them to think that "*live and let live*" would be the norm for the future. In particular, the Cherokees believed this. Having given up most of their lands already, they gambled that they would be allowed to live on the remainder (which were guaranteed to them by Treaty) and to develop an Amer-Indian variant of progressive Euro-American civilisation. They staked everything on this prospect.

Jefferson's idea, such as it was, of the possibility of a long-term "*live and let live*" (the other possibility, which he never forgot and occasionally mentioned, was extermination) is expressed in a letter to one of his Indian agents, Benjamin Hawkins, in 1803. He said it was important to promote agriculture among the Creeks:

"This will enable them to live on much smaller portions of land. While they are learning to do better on less land, our increasing numbers will be calling for more land, and thus a coincidence of interests will be produced between those who have lands to spare, and want other necessities, and those who have such necessities to spare, and want lands. This commerce, then, will be for the good of both, and those who are friends to both ought to encourage it."

It is not too hard to spot the speaker's cloven hoof! However, "*Jeffersonian philanthropy*" made a considerable impression in its time. For one thing, it gave the United States Federal Govern-

ment a coherent Indian policy. Most of all, though, it managed to put a humane, respectable, kindly veneer on a horrible process of the ongoing destruction of peoples.

That great observer Alexis de Tocqueville naturally was not taken in. But he was fascinated by how "*Jeffersonian philanthropy*" worked in its context. Writing in the 1830s (just before the State of Georgia, supported by President Jackson, tore up the Cherokee Treaties and made his argument obsolete), he gave the following description:

"The Spaniards pursued the Indians with bloodhounds, like wild beasts; they sacked the New World with no more temper or compassion than a city taken by storm; but destruction must cease, and frenzy be stayed; the remnant of the Indian population which had escaped the massacre mixed with its conquerors, and adopted in the end their religion and their manners. The conduct of the Americans of the United States towards the aborigines is characterized, on the other hand, by a singular attachment to the formalities of law. Provided that the Indians retain their barbarous condition, the Americans take no part in their affairs; they treat them as independent nations, and do not possess themselves of their hunting grounds without a treaty of purchase; and if an Indian nation happens to be so encroached upon as to be unable to subsist upon its territory, they afford it brotherly assistance in transporting it to a grave sufficiently remote from the land of its fathers.

The Spaniards were unable to exterminate the Indian race by those unparalleled atrocities which brand them with indelible shame, nor did they even succeed in wholly depriving it of its rights; but the Americans of the United States have accomplished this twofold purpose with singular felicity; tranquilly, legally, philanthropically, without shedding blood, and without violating a single great principle of morality in the eyes of the world. It is impossible to destroy men with more respect for the laws of humanity."

In a previous article in this series, I said that de Tocqueville had left a whole history of North American colonists' violence against Indians out of account; he also ignored the considerable efforts by the 16th century Spanish Kingdom to give Indians in its colonies legal protection. But his description of Jeffersonian policy is memorable. He will have no nonsense about symbiosis, and his view of the trend of events is clear:

"I believe that the Indian nations of North America are doomed to perish; and that whenever the Europeans shall be established on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, that race of men will be no more. The Indians had only the two alternatives of war or civilisation; in other words, they must either have destroyed the Europeans or become their equals."

### 19th Century Thinking on 'Extermination'

In 1838 the settled agricultural community of the Cherokees was torn up by the roots and deported hundreds of miles west. Ex-President John Adams, who compares rather well with his rival Jefferson, condemned the expulsion, but he was a voice of the past. What happened to the Cherokees was a dotting of the 'i's and crossing of the 't's. The future was going to be genocidal.

Brendan C. Lindsay, author of *Murder State: California's Native American Genocide, 1846-1873*, remarks in his Preface:

"Over the past seven years... as I studied and taught about the history of California and the United States, I encountered many students, colleagues, and faculty unwilling to accept the argument that genocide had been committed upon Native Americans in California and the United States during the nineteenth century. Some suggested that the tremendous loss of lives was instead an unintended consequence or even a necessary evil of the advance of Western civilisation or national progress."

These attitudes of 21st century students and teachers have a long history behind them, but they are rooted in two quite different periods. The reluctance to admit that genocide could have been committed in the United States comes out of the political culture of the second half of the 20th century. It was then that the United Nations Convention on Genocide was passed, and the best-known genocide of the century, that of the Nazis against the Jews, was condemned in all mainstream thinking in Europe and America. The idea that something at all comparable might have happened in America would be bound to meet resistance, however strong the evidence in its favour.

On the other hand, the idea of Indian deaths as a regrettable but necessary or inevitable feature of the advance of civilisation comes from the 19th century. It was no secret to anyone in the mid-19th century that the progress and expan-

sion of the United States was attended by massacres of Indians and destruction of their means of life. People did not use the word "*genocide*" then. However, the commonly used terms "*extermination*" and "*annihilation*", referring to the Indians, came within the range of meanings that "*genocide*" covers now.

Except that where "*genocide*" is to be utterly rejected and condemned, "*extermination*" was either enthusiastically advocated or merely regretted. This attitude runs through 19th century culture in Europe and America. Politicians and philosophers, learned and unlearned people express it. For a typical statement by a politician, we may take the following from the first United States Governor of California, Peter Burnett, in 1852:

"That a war of extermination will continue to be waged between the two races until the Indian race becomes extinct, must be expected; while we cannot anticipate this result but with painful regret, the inevitable destiny of the race is beyond the power and wisdom of man to avert."

As Lindsay shows with abundant examples, the idea of extermination of the Indians was a commonplace in political speeches and newspaper articles in mid-19th century California, as it was also in the eastern United States. Everybody knew that this extermination was being accomplished by human agency. But, for those who found something disturbing in it, there was comfort in the thought that it was in reality a great impersonal process, it was inevitable, it was destiny—or it was a sacrifice made to the great god *Progress*. On the other hand, there were the zealots who found nothing disturbing about the extermination except its slow pace. They were calling for Government, troops, volunteers and everyone else to get down to the work purposefully and do it thoroughly. As an example, we may take the *Marysville Daily Evening Herald* of 12th August 1853, referring to the situation in northern California:

"Now that general Indian hostilities have commenced, we hope that the Government will render such aid as will enable the citizens of the North to carry on a war of extermination until the last red skin of these tribes has been killed. Then, and not until then, are our lives and property safe. Extermination is no longer even a question of time—the time has already arrived, and let the first white man who says treaty or peace be regarded as a traitor and coward."

When we look at how European politicians, philosophers and social theorists viewed the trend of events in America, we find a similar range of attitudes. Sir Charles Dilke, a leading British Liberal who might have become Prime Minister if his sexual life had not caused him political problems, was an enthusiast for extermination. In his best-selling book *Greater Britain* (1869) he exulted in the genocidal vigour of the Anglo-Saxon race:

"The Anglo-Saxon is the only extirpating race on earth. Up to the commencement of the now inevitable destruction of the Red Indians of Central North America, of the Maoris, and of the Australians by the English colonists, no numerous race has ever been blotted out by an invader."

In Dilke's view, this ability to crush inferior races gave the Anglo-Saxons a very good chance of universal domination of the world. So far as he was concerned, what was being done to the American Indians was an inspiring example and model. Similar views were afterwards expressed by Adolf Hitler, throughout his active political life. For him also, the conquest of the American West was an inspiration and a model for conduct in Eastern Europe and Russia: it was the Germans' duty, he said, "*to look upon the natives as Redskins*" (See *The American West and the Nazi East: A Comparative and Interpretive Perspective*, by Carroll E. Kake).

There were others in Europe who had a sense of how unprecedented and how truly terrible the process of events in America was. Some of them afterwards became notorious as race theorists. What they wrote at least gave some evidence of human feeling, compunction or regret, or a sense of moral disturbance. To settle themselves they needed powerful doses of the drugs called '*inevitable destiny*', '*Divine Providence*', and '*progress*'. (One should note that in much of the Euro-american high culture of the 19th and early 20th centuries, *Progress* and the advance of superior races were basically the same thing.)

Arthur de Gobineau (*Essai sur l'inegalite des races humaines*, 1853-5) was struck by the sheer pitilessness and methodical destructiveness of the Anglo-Americans towards the natives.

"(The barbarians of early medieval Europe) were too vigorous by nature to comprehend imposing the use of strong liquor or poisons on their subjects or foreign nations. That is an invention of

modern times. Neither the Vandals, Goths, Franks nor the first Saxons would have considered it and even the civilisation of the ancient world, however refined or decadent, never had such an idea. Neither the Brahmins nor the Magi found the need to comprehensively wipe out anything that did not follow their way of thinking. Our civilisation is the only one which possesses this instinct for violence and murder, it is the only one to act—without anger, without agitation, but instead with exceedingly delusional mildness and sympathy, an expression of the most unbounded gentleness—to incessantly surround themselves with a horizon of tombs" (1853-5).

In some ways this might be read as an updating of de Tocqueville. However, De Gobineau thought there was no use pointing a finger of blame: "*The Anglo-Americans, as convinced and true representatives of this type of culture, fashioned their laws accordingly. One cannot blame them.*"

Theodore Waitz, a German race theorist writing in the same decade (*Über die Einheit des Menschengeschlechtes und den Naurzustand des Menschen*, 1859), had to give himself particularly strong drugs of philosophical Christianity so as to be able to face the reality of genocidal America:

"According to the teaching of the American school... the higher races are determined to repress the lower races, as it has always happened on earth when there is a higher entity and a lower one. The perishing of the lower races corresponds to divine purpose and shows not only our recognition of the right of the white Americans to exterminate the Red Indians, but also identifies piety in praising the way they have always devoted themselves as enlightened and insightful tools in bringing about the realisation of extermination. The pious apostle of murder may feel sadness about the unfortunate fate of the Red Indian race, but he finds solace in the fact that the natural laws are being followed, laws which dominate the rise and fall of peoples, according to the natural drives and instincts which were planted in the individual races by the creator Himself."

Houston Stewart Chamberlain, writing forty years later, was not inclined to call himself a "*pious apostle of murder*". (Nor did he need to, since in America the murdering had already been done.) But Chamberlain, who was the principal bridge between the high culture of Germany and the Nazis, was still pious

in his own way. As he saw it, the annihilation of the Indians, even if not moral in itself, had laid the basis for something highly moral, as he explains in his *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (a book received with enthusiasm by the *London Times*):

"Wherever the reader casts his eyes, he will find examples to prove the fact that the present civilisation and culture of Europe are specifically Teutonic... The Teutons are characterised by a power of expansion possessed by no race before them, and at the same time by an inclination to concentration which is equally new. We see the expansive power at work—in the practical sphere, in the gradual colonisation of the whole surface of the globe... That the Teutons with their virtues alone and without their vices—such as greed, cruelty, treachery, disregarding of all rights but their own right to rule &c.—would have won the victory, no one will have the audacity to assert, but everyone must admit that in the very places where they were most cruel—as, for instance, the Anglo-Saxons in England, the German Order in Prussia, the French and English in North America—they laid by this very means the surest foundation of what is highest and most moral..."

We are thrilled with horror when we read the history of the annihilation of the Indians in North America: everywhere on the side of the Europeans there is injustice, treachery, savage cruelty; and yet how decisive was this very work of destruction for the later development of a noble, thoroughly Teutonic nation upon that soil!"

In short, the most noted genocides of the 19th and 20th centuries have been treated differently in European/American culture. The great 20th century genocide has been firmly called by that name and generally condemned, with no inclination to hear excuses. By contrast, the great 19th century genocide is typically called something else. In the 19th century it was treated with polite understanding and a sense of the unavoidable costs of Progress, which already had a flourishing cult. This way of thinking predominates even today.

#### Massacres and Reservations

"Despite an outpouring of work over the past decades, those investigating American Indian history and U.S. history more generally have failed to reckon with the violence upon which the continent was built", one historian said in a book published ten years ago (Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early Ameri-*

*can West*). The 19th century genocide continues to be played down. However, there are some non-conforming historians in the United States who are posing a challenge. They have got a firm grip of some awkward facts and they don't seem ready to let go.

For example, there is the fact that the killing of non-combatant Indians is a major feature of 19th century American history. Much of this was done by citizen volunteer companies (or "*democratic death squads*", to use Lindsay's term), but a great deal was also done by the US Army:

"American-Indian conflict in the years 1783-1890 contains many examples of 'total war'—that is, waging war on entire 'enemy' populations, including unarmed civilians (regardless of sex or age). It was US Army Generals William Tecumseh Sherman and Phil Sheridan, however, who ultimately sanctified it as deliberate policy in the decades following the American Civil War. Both generals believed in waging 'total war' against the entire Indian population, in a strategy reminiscent of a similar one that they had used against the South in the last years of the American Civil War (1864-5). The Sherman-Sheridan concept of 'total war' was based on the strategy of severely undermining the Indians' collective will to resist, by killing the 'enemy' and by destroying their food, clothing, shelter, and horses. The centrepiece of the strategy was surprise attacks on Indian villages, which meant, in most cases, the killing of unarmed women and children in addition to armed warriors. The aim of these attacks was to force the survivors to surrender, scatter, or retreat to a reservation, under the impact of military attack, climatic extremes, and/or psychological stress."

There are, of course, historians who deny that there was an American genocide. They have pointed to the fact that the US Army did not usually follow up its military defeats of the Indians with a campaign to wipe out the survivors. Rather, it was prepared to let the survivors live on reservations.—But, as Lindsay points out, organising a comprehensive massacre would have been hugely expensive. "*One could more easily and cheaply let people die by starvation, neglect and disease, particularly if one placed Native Americans out of sight and mind on sometimes arid, isolated reservations.*"

Jefferson's policy of peaceful expansion, where possible, by purchase, and encouragement of agriculture among

Indian communities within the United States, was abandoned in the 1830s in favour of 'Indian Removal', i.e. forcing the Indians beyond the limits of current white settlement. But in turn the 'Indian Removal' policy soon became obsolete. The expansion of settlement in the 1840s was so powerful that it made any notion of a distinct 'Indian country' unworkable. So the idea was floated of many separate small 'Indian countries', scattered across the West, where the Indians would be 'concentrated'.

By 1851 the Secretary for the Interior was saying that the policy of removal had to be abandoned. "*The only alternatives left,*" he concluded, *'are to civilize or exterminate them. We must adopt one or the other.'*" So then, once again the Indians were in theory supposed to become agriculturalists, but this time in specially designed small pockets under strict surveillance.

"Hoping to avoid the expense of 'Indian wars', the reservation policy mandated compulsory 'relocation' of western tribes to federal land reserves, where permanent residency under strict government control would be obligatory. As a practical matter, it would further reduce Indian lands as well as facilitate white expansion and settlement. Moreover, if any Indians resisted this policy, the US government was fully prepared to use the army to enforce the 'concentration' policy. Arguing that it was cheaper to feed the Indians than to fight them, the federal government was willing to provide rations to 'reservation Indians', but the rations provided were often insufficient and/or poor in quality. In the quarter century after the Civil War, starvation and near-starvation conditions were present on most of the 60-odd Indian reservations. Rather than nurseries for 'civilisation', government-managed reservations effectively became poverty-stricken 'concentration' sites for dispossessed and displaced Native Americans. In the end, the US governing elites were content to 'relocate' the Indians to the most undesirable lands and leave them there to rot and slowly die out. As early as 1853, one Indian agent, Thomas FitzPatrick, had branded the federal reservation system as 'the legalized murder of a whole nation... expensive, vicious, inhumane'. That same year FitzPatrick accurately predicted that the Indian reservations would become 'hospital wards' of cholera, smallpox and other diseases."

In summary, the reservations policy was itself genocidal, though the process

of killing was slower than in outright massacre.

### **Democratic Genocide: The Case of California**

The great 20th century genocide was a centrally-directed undertaking by a totalitarian state, where the principal agents were specialised state forces. That is not true of the American genocide, despite the crucial part played by the Federal Government and the US Army. The American event had a pronounced democratic character.

This was particularly true of California:

"Democracy as a political system served as a genocidal mechanism. The will of the white majority, enshrined as the sacred will of the people, drove the democratic process of creating a multi-faceted campaign of genocide in California, in which Native people were starved to death, worked to death, shot to death, or so badly broken by poverty, exposure, and malnutrition as to waste away from diseases at an alarming rate. Representatives were elected, laws enacted, meetings held, and companies of volunteers empowered, all in the name of legally removing or exterminating Native peoples in the state. What one might describe as an appalling crime today was in the nineteenth century typically legal or at least not illegal enough to bring widespread censure or prosecution for the perpetrators."

What led to all this was the Gold Rush of 1849. Prior to that, there was a relatively small mixed population of gold prospectors in California, and as many as half of them may have been Indians. The latter had no cultural use for the gold, but they could trade it. However, the enormous influx of white miners coming in from the United States in 1849 and the early 1850s pushed the Indian miners out. From the beginning the new arrivals were encroaching on Indian lands and damaging the native ecosystems.

Besides, of the multitude of newcomers who failed as miners, a good many aspired to succeed as farmers and wanted to acquire and hold land. The Indians responded to their aggressive presence with local attacks and robberies, and the settlers used this as justification for totally disproportionate violence. "*Using new state laws and their rights as citizens, they quickly and bloodily transitioned California's land base from one controlled mostly by Native peoples into one controlled almost completely*

*by Euro-Americans."*

The farmers were more sophisticated than the mining communities, who also employed democracy but inclined more to direct forms. An example:

"Redrick McKee, an Indian agent in California, described the genocidal actions of a group of miners in a report to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Luke Lea. McKee learned that as many as forty Native men, women and children had been massacred at a camp on the Klamath River. Following the shooting of a Native man by a local white miner, the unidentified Native people in question went to the nearby mining camp and complained to the miners about the shooting, leaving peacefully after the protest. The miners felt certain that the Native group would soon turn violent. Holding a camp meeting, which was the way miners democratically regulated most everything in a mining camp, the men determined on a policy of preemptive extermination of the dangerous Indians, before the same was done to them. They descended upon the Native village and exterminated the entire population. This was a reflection of how miners solved many of their problems democratically, among themselves or with others."

The settler farmers did the same sort of things, but they effectively involved the machinery of representative democracy in what they were doing: "*local and county governments, the press, and the state legislature, executive and judiciary*". By 1853 or so there was a flourishing genocidal press, which became shriller as the 1850s and 60s wore on. The shrillest of all was a paper called the *Chico Weekly Courant*, which once suggested that the best way to kill Indians was to introduce smallpox among them. "*Poison and biological warfare, however,*" Lindsay remarks, "*were not common measures proposed for dealing with Indigenous populations.*"

The most common measure proposed was shooting. Local communities held meetings and raised companies of volunteers who went out to kill Indians, often while drunk. Funding of various kinds was available for this enterprise. It might come from the community in the first instance, but reimbursement was expected from State and Federal Governments. During the 1850s and 60s the availability of money for these purposes helped to produce the so-called '*Indian hunters*' of northern California.

These were people who "worked as professional assassins on behalf of local communities and the state". They were not, however, purely specialist killers: most of them were settlers themselves. "In fact Indian hunters were usually members of the citizenry that set out to exterminate local Native Americans at the head of a column of their neighbors." Lindsay gives examples of some of these columns who accounted for hundreds of killings in a matter of months. Whole regions were cleared of their native populations over a few years. And all of this had official support and sustenance.

"The state government played the most immediate and vital role in supporting genocide in California. Governors of California responded to popular calls to exterminate Native Americans by authorizing deployment of volunteer and militia companies. Governors also helped fund community efforts to destroy or remove Native populations by representing the will of the people to the legislature, as well as federal officials. Most important for the economy of the state, governors worked diligently to make sure the genocide was not paid for by the citizens of California, but by the federal government."

Prior to the American Civil War, the individual states had large and increasing powers in relation to the Federal Government, and especially with Indian affairs. (The classic example is Georgia getting its own way on the removal of the Cherokees.) Even after the Civil War, when the Federal Government was in the ascendancy, "it did little more than write the checks to pay for the costs of killing or removing California's Indigenous population". It was, of course, operating a reservation system in California as elsewhere.

Some US Army officers, showing great strength of character, resisted the will of the settlers and refused to help them to exterminate Indians. Nonetheless,

"Federal military forces participated in the slaughter of thousands of Native people in hundreds of engagements. Settlers treated those federal soldiers who resisted their will as pariahs, calling them traitors to their country for resisting the genocidal impulse that had captured so many in California. At best these officers could stem the tide of genocide for but a little while, and only when left free by orders to act on their own judgment. If ordered to kill Native Americans, even these officers did so."

As for the free press, while its journalists indeed wrote with every appearance of freedom, it naturally had its particular customer base and its publishers. Those were settlers and they had no interest in the protection of Indians; quite the contrary. "The sad result was that the popular press in California was a vociferous supporter of genocide", although there were notable exceptions. One positive result, from a present-day standpoint, is that its writers reported a great deal of what was going on, because they had no sense that it was an atrocity or a disgrace.

In summary,

"genocide in the state of California in the nineteenth century was 'planned' by white settlers, miners and ranchers who used extermination, either physical or cultural, to obtain Indian land and resources. By legalizing, funding, and generally assisting citizens in the commission of genocide, the state and federal governments created a new definition of state-assisted genocide. The free press in California, as well as the many letters, diaries, and petitions created by the perpetrators and bystanders, have come down to us over a century later because, first and foremost, there was no shame in killing savage Indians, and not a little glory."

There is one bright spot in this frightful story of the Murder State of California. Even though the population of Native Americans went down by about 80% during the first decade after the Gold Rush, and although the genocidal pressure continued through the rest of the 19th century, it was not quite sustained to the finish. From early in the 20th century the surviving Native people began a recovery and worked resourcefully to try to improve their conditions. Lindsay expresses the hope that—

"this study is sufficient to generate shame and outrage, today at least, and help in the process of revitalizing, rebuilding and remunerating Native communities by educating all Americans of the genocidal past of the shared place that Native and non-Native persons now call home."

#### NOTES

"The hitherto most aggressively...": Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America* (NY 1976) p. 326.

"This will enable them...": Reginald Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy 1783-1812* (East Lansing 1967) p. 110.

"The Spaniards pursued...": Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* Vol. 1, tr. Henry Reeve (NY 1839) pp. 352-3.

"I believe that the Indian...": *ibid.* p. 340.

"Over the past seven years...": Brendan C. Lindsay, *Murder State: California's Native Indian Genocide 1846-1875* (Lincoln 2012) p. ix.

"That a war of extermination...": *ibid.* p. 231.

"Now that general Indian hostilities...": *ibid.* p. 313.

"The Anglo-Saxon is the only extirpating...": Charles Dilke, *Greater Britain* (8th edition, 1885), p. 223.

(Hitler), "look upon the natives as Redskins...": Carroll E. Kakel, *The American West and the Nazi East: A Comparative and Interpretive Perspective* (Basingstoke 2013) p. 1.

(De Gobineau), "(The barbarians)...": Cited by Domenico Losurdo, *The Germans: A Sonderweg of a Cursed Nation?*, ch. 2, tr. Angela Stone. In *Irish Foreign Affairs* June 2016, p. 26.

(Waitz), "According to the teaching...": *ibid.* "Wherever the reader casts...": Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (London 1912) Vol. 2, pp. 196, 226, 229, 267.

"Despite an outpouring of work...": Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge MA. 2008) p. 3. Cited by Kakel, *op. cit.* p. 5.

"Democratic death squads": Lindsay, *op. cit.* Ch. 5, "Democratic Death Squads of Northern California".

"American-Indian conflict in the years...": Kakel, *op. cit.* pp. 146-7.

"One could more easily...": Lindsay, *op. cit.* p. 359.

"The only alternatives left...": Kakel, *op. cit.* p. 160.

"Hoping to avoid the expense...": *ibid.* p. 161.

"Democracy as a political system...": Lindsay *op. cit.* p. 179.

"Redrick McKee, an Indian agent...": *ibid.* pp. 218-9.

"local and county governments...": *ibid.* p. 179.

"Poison and biological warfare...": *ibid.* p. 320.

"worked as professional assassins...": *ibid.* p. 214.

"In fact Indian hunters...": *ibid.*

"it did little more...": *ibid.* p. 228.

"Federal military forces perpetrated...": *ibid.*

"The sad result was that...": *ibid.* p. 229.

"Genocide in the state of California...": *ibid.* p. 359.

Indian population fell 80% in decade: *ibid.* p. 226.

"This study is sufficient...": *ibid.* p. 359.

V  
O  
X

**Veg-Free US!**  
**US v GB: Ambition And Avarice!**  
**UCC at work!**  
**Haldane v. Churchill**  
**Papal Visit**  
**Lawyers Whinging!**  
**Happiness?**  
**Sublime to the . . .**  
**Cork Famine Commemoration**

P  
A  
T

**Veg-Free US!**

"That's the way the farms are in Texas! I was shocked to hear that a large percentage of Americans cannot afford to buy food. The money for food banks comes from the agricultural budget and accounts for over 75% of it.

"And that prompts my gentle giving out: I saw no vegetables anywhere in the seven days I stayed there, apart from potatoes in the form of chips, and cabbage in the form of coleslaw. It was illuminating when I asked a Texan if they ever eat vegetables and his response was: "Well, we have chicken and pork—that's vegetables" (Klaus Laitenberger, *Irish Exam. Property*, 28.08.2018).

Sorry, Klaus. Out in Blancherstown, Co. Fingal, they only eat Doughnuts!

\*\*\*\*\*

**US v GB: Ambition And Avarice!**

"The mad ambition, the lust of power, and commercial avarice of Great Britain have left to neutral nations an alternative only between the base surrender of their rights, and a manly vindication of them" (*Report of the House Foreign Relations Committee*, June 3, 1812, written chiefly by John C. Calhoun).

\*\*\*\*\*

**UCC at work!**

"'Study hard, nap harder' could be the new motto of University College Cork after a new snooze station was unveiled at the college's library yesterday.

The energy Pod allows library users to take a break from their busy study schedules to recharge and reenergise for a short nap as part of the pod's sleep cycle" (*Eve. Echo*, Cork, 25.09.2018)

**WHEW!**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Haldane v. Churchill**

"Lord Haldane had developed something of a pot, which Churchill, then a rather brash young Cabinet colleague, poked with his finger and asked Haldane what he was going to call it. Haldane replied:

"If it's a boy I shall call him George, after His Majesty the King. If it's a girl, Mary, after Her Gracious Majesty the Queen, but if it's only wind, I shall call it Winston" (*Lord Champion, British Labour Party politician and former Rail worker.*)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Papal Visit**

"One of the most absorbing programmes relating to the events of this weekend was *The Whole World In His Hands* (TG4). Dating from 1989, ten years after Pope John Paul II's visit... The views of the now President Higgins were among the most humorous and trenchant: 'It had its bizarre elements. It's as if we're the best shot in the world at being Poles. We were to be a kind of an Irish Pole: conservative, women in the home, not in the workforce, the traditional values... And I didn't like many reductionist elements of the collective behaviour... I think there were no doubts at all that at certain times it went completely out of control ... in some ways, it had many of the elements of a Status Quo concert gone wrong" (Emmanuel Kehoe, *Sunday Business Post*, 26.8.2018)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Lawyers Whinging!**

"One of the country's leading barristers warns the judicial system is in crisis and worse than some Third World countries" (*Sunday Express*, London, 30.9.2018).

The criminal justice system is in 'crisis' with morale among judges and lawyers at an all-time low and 'squalid' courts, one of the country's leading defence barristers has warned.

William Clegg, QC, who has acted in some of the most high-profile murder trials in nearly 50 years in practice, said that successive cuts of 40% to the Ministry of Justice's budget means the 'courts are in crisis and the profession is in crisis'...".

\*\*\*\*\*

**Happiness?**

A Red C poll finds 63% of Irish people are happy, the highest on record

according to The Sunday Business Post (31.12.2017). Aye but while the good are often happy : the happy are not always good!

"The baby Jesus figure was taken from Skibbereen's crib days after Christmas, smashed and left headless" and up the road in Leap...

Mean-spirited thieves stole a Charity Box from a Christmas lights display in the village, after an 18 year old student had invested €2,000 of his own money creating the attraction" (*S. Star*, 6.1.2018).

These days the poor old "Star" hasn't time to be watching Russia, it's the local Gurriers who are the enemy!

\*\*\*\*\*

**Sublime to the . . .**

The 43-year-old who lost his job over a vehicle insurance row with his employer said yesterday that he "drew strength from his grandfather's act of defiance during the Second World War" (*Irish Examiner*, 12.1.2018). Pejazyr Cakolli was last week award €50,000 by the Labour Court when he refused to drive vehicles that did not carry insurance or tax disks on publicly-accessible roads at Shannon Airport.

...and in the same paper on the same day...

"Swedish furniture giant, Ikea, is inviting women to pee on a new magazine ad to reveal if the reader is pregnant.

"If the women is pregnant, a special, half-price discount on cots will be revealed" (*Irish Examiner*, 12.1.2018).

Who said it wasn't worth pissing on the printed press?

\*\*\*\*\*

**Cork Famine Commemoration**

"Chairperson Pat Gunne reminded everyone that 150,000 tons of food was exported from the port of Cork in 1847. Look up the word 'famine' in the Collins English Dictionary, it says 'a scarcity of food'. There was no scarcity of food in Ireland at the time!" (Michael O' Flynn, letter to *Eve. Echo*, Cork, 3.10.2017).

To add insult to injury we now have a combination of street traders just yards from where this food was exported declaring that the immediate area be named "*The Victorian Quarter*". Worse, the majority operate in MacCurtain Street, renamed from King Street after the British murder of the Lord Mayor of Cork! Rebel Cork my butt!!!

\*\*\*\*\*

## Shaw: Great War Propagandist!

George Bernard Shaw, the stage Anglo-Irishman who was consumed with a desire to be famous in England, has been in the news recently with two books about him as the *ersatz* Irish intelligentsia cultivated by *Irish Times* patronage wonders what is to become of them after Brexit. I have looked at one of them, a coffee-table book by Fintan O'Toole, called *Judging Shaw*, in which Shaw is hailed as one of the great playwrights of the world.

I read all of Shaw's plays as a teenage labourer in Slieve Luacra. They were published cheaply in a single volume by Odhams Press, a London socialist publisher of the time, now extinct. When I went to London in my early twenties I saw some of them in the theatre. It struck me from the first that they were not plays at all, but mere concoctions. When reading them one could pick up some smart ideas from them, but in performance it became clear that there was no life in them. He was incapable of giving life to his ideas as drama.

His talent was for short, light conversation pieces. When that talent was applied to big subjects the attempt to breathe life into them took the form of the injection of cheap sentiment. He said somewhere that his idea of the perfect actor was the marionette and one could see why.

When it was decided to build a British Library at King's Cross to take over from the Reading Room of the British Museum, the facade of the site on Euston Road was decorated with two giant portraits, one supposedly of Shakespeare, the other of Shaw.

Shakespeare, whoever he was and whatever one thinks of him, is English literature. I went to see him sixty years ago at the Old Vic theatre, where he seemed to be played continuously, and it was unmistakable that the audience was at its national devotions. The dry passages were stoically endured for moral strengthening, in the knowledge that the relaxation of a purple passage would soon come along, and simple humour was enjoyed simply.

They were not plays set in the life of the time in which they were written.

Plays set in the current life of Tudor England, as it was being shaped forcefully to the Reformation ideology in the variant chosen by the new total state established by Henry VIII, were not allowed. The action of 'Shakespeare' was set in foreign parts and ancient times, with the insertion of an occasional piece of State propaganda.

"This royal throne of kings, this scepter-  
ed isle

This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars  
This other Eden, demi-paradise,  
This fortress built by Nature for herself  
Against infection and the hand of war  
[!!]" etc. etc.

Shakespeare is what England is about. When I saw Shaw put up alongside him as one of the twin giants of English literature, I thought that finally England had lost the run of itself. Shaw, the licensed clown of the brittle middle class of the Liberal Imperialist generation, as a cultural pillar of the state!! The end must be nigh.

But my hopes were dashed. Shaw was soon removed, leaving Shakespeare to stand alone. And the spread of Method Acting from America took the ground from under Shaw's marionette theatre.

When I read Shaw's plays, the famous Prefaces were not available to me. If they had been, I would probably have seen the emptiness of the plays much sooner. Shavian prose, with its hollow attitudinising, its predictably wild exaggeration, and its trivial paradoxising, grated on me and confirmed me in my appreciation of Canon Sheehan.

Shaw, above all things, wanted to be famous. He needed to be famous in order to support the illusion that he existed. And he found he had the knack of being famous in the *persona* of a stage Irishman who was perfectly adapted to the Liberal Imperialist culture of the era of Greater Britain. In the mode of Court Jester to the middle class Liberalism that had been inducted into the megalomania of Empire, he could say the slightly shocking things that were felt to be true but were suitable for utterance only by the Court Jester.

Shaw was a kind of outsider alongside human life. He belonged to no definite part of it, unless it be Anglo-Irish Dublin at the end of its tether. He was in London to be famous, and he achieved fame by means of paradoxical comment on the absurdities of life that he knew only as an observer. His relentless pursuit of trivial paradox gave me a horror of paradox, which I have taken to be something to be avoided almost at any cost. There are few inescapable paradoxes. Most paradoxes are evasions of thought.

Perhaps he would have belonged to Anglo-Irish Dublin, and would have been a person with internal substance, if it had been capable of being lived in when he was born into it. But it wasn't. Home Rule was squeezing it dry. So he went to London and made himself famous in that meaningless middle-class generation that rose to the top of the greatest Empire the world had ever seen, and then, to demonstrate its fitness to rule, promptly wasted itself in a Great War that overwhelmed it.

O'Toole compares him with Swift, to whom he bears no resemblance. There was nothing of the poseur in Swift. He was an authentic Englishman. He was one of the last effective Jacobite Tories. He rendered a service to the State which the rising power in the state, radical Whiggery, did not appreciate. By means of his influence on the public opinion of the time, he enabled the Tory Government to end that Great War by negotiation, from which it gained considerable advantages, while leaving a functional Europe in being. The Millenarianism that is latent in Whiggery was warded off, and was then held at bay for two hundred years, during which the Empire flourished (for Britain!).

But Swift was rewarded only with a sinecure in Dublin—which, as far as he was concerned, was in exile. And Queen Anne died and the long Whig Ascendancy began with the Hanoverians. And Swift in his Siberia brooded on his fate and on ingratitude and became authentically disgusted with human life and found the means of expressing it.

Shaw may have mimicked Swift on occasion. That is all.

Shaw was casting around in London for a foothold in the literary market when he became acquainted with William Archer, who had translated Ibsen and was trying to write plays of his own. As I recall, Archer could devise plots but



could not write dialogue, while Shaw's difficulty was the other way about, so they got together to make a play.

They parted company a generation later, on the issue of the great middle-class war on Germany. Archer became a war-propagandist.

And Shaw heroically stood out against the war hysteria, and exposed the duplicity of the war-propaganda—and defied the middle class mob by opposing opposing the British war effort, as Roger Casement did, and as James Connolly—with whom he had once shared a platform—did??!

And O'Toole—a product of the extensive patronage which the *Irish Times* maintains on minuscule circulation—praises him for this!!

Well, not quite. Although an unwary reader might be forgiven for supposing that it was so.

Shaw supported the war on Germany no less than his friend and colleague, Archer, did. But he supported it on grounds that contradicted and ridiculed the grounds on which Archer supported it.

Archer was an honest citizen—or subject—of the state. He knew that his well-being depended on the success of the marvellous state, to which it was his good fortune to belong, in the great enterprise which it had undertaken. And he took at face value the reasons given by the State for making war.

He had been well-disposed towards Germany until it broke international law by marching through Belgium, making it necessary for the British Government to declare war on it so that Europe might be restored to a condition of orderly equilibrium. And then he began to see that the evil that led Germany to break international law had always been lying there unnoticed, and must now be dealt with thoroughly.

Shaw would have none of this nonsense. He insisted that it was Britain that had sprung the war on Germany, catching it at a disadvantage. And he insisted that the principles attributed to Germany as Junkerism and Prussianism were the principles of British actions in the world. Some Germans had tried to learn them, particularly General Bernhardt, but it was not the German State that put them into effect. It was Britain.

Shaw's pamphlet on the war, *Common Sense About The War*, was

published as a supplement of the *New Statesman* in November 1914. O'Toole comments:

"*Common sense*... is a ferocious attack on the official justifications for the fighting. It is by far the bravest thing Shaw ever did...

"Just as he had seen the Boer War as an armed struggle between two dogs fighting for a bone, GBS presents the clash between Britain and Germany as a war between different national varieties of Junkerism...

"Even more woundingly, GBS demolished the sanctimonious notion that Britain was a peace-loving culture forced into war by German aggression" (*Judging Shaw*, p243).

That is true, more or less. But it does not signify that Shaw was against the British war on Germany, any more than he was against the conquest of the Boer Republics.

On the writings of General Bernhardt Shaw comments:

"It is from our foreign policy, he says, that he has learnt what our journalists denounce as 'the doctrine of the bully, of the materialist, of the man with gross ideals: a doctrine of diabolical evil'. He frankly accepts that doctrine from us... and blames us for nothing... He shows in the clearest way that if Germany does not smash England, England will smash Germany by springing at her the moment she can catch her at a disadvantage. In a word he prophesies that we, his great master in *Realpolitik*, will do precisely what our Junkers have just made us do. It is we who have carried out the Bernhardt program; it is Germany who has neglected it..." (*Common Sense*, p5, col. 2).

Britain cornered Germany into a war on terms very advantageous to itself, effectively misleading it on the issue of Belgium—and now Britain's business was to win the Great War for which it had prepared so skilfully!

I read *Common Sense* about sixty years ago. I read it under the misapprehension that it was a satire against war. I read Swift's *Conduct Of The Allies* about the same time under a similar misapprehension. The process of reading Shaw was rather like that of seeing *The Magic Flute* for the first time, where in the course of the opera the villain becomes the hero, but in reverse. It was borne in on me that what Shaw wrote was serious war propaganda. (And what Swift wrote was a powerful argument for negotiating an advantageous end to that war from a position of strength.)

The thing is so clear that O'Toole feels obliged to acknowledge the fact with a passing comment:

"Yet 'Commonsense' is not actually an argument for Britain to pull out of the war. GBS does pose the outrageous alternative of a socialist revolution... But he acknowledges that this is 'not at resent a practicable solution', especially in Britain" (p244).

The "*alternative solution*" is no more than a piece of flippancy. Shaw did nothing towards bringing it about. He did not join the socialists who were trying to generate a movement against the War. The "*bravest thing he ever did*" was perfectly safe. What it did was make a case for war on Germany for those who saw through the chicanery of the official propaganda. He quickly became an acknowledged war propagandist. He was invited to France by General French to be given a tour of the Front. This was in reward for a little recruiting play he had written in his light conversational style: *Augustus Does His Bit*.

He did not join the anti-War Socialists—but nether did he join the War Socialists like Blatchford, who was a much more earnest Socialist than Shaw but who acknowledged long before the War that the British working class standard of living had become dependent on Imperialist exploitation and who therefore supported British Naval dominance of the world.

Shaw too supported the Empire and the Navy, and was a Militarist, but this support was expressed obliquely, within a fog of frivolous verbiage. The best interpretation that could be given to his *Common Sense* is its purpose was to gain him a completely safe notoriety, and ensure that he was not left behind by the War to become a forgotten man.

The War could not have been fought if the mass propaganda for it had been hinged on the paradox that the British State was much more cynically, and effectively, Prussian than the Prussians. It could only be fought by infecting the populace with Crusading, Millenarian, illusions—because it could not by any stretch of the imagination be presented as a defensive war.

Germany did not threaten Britain. It could not have invaded Britain because its Naval power was comprehensively outclassed by that of the Royal Navy. And it made no claim to any particle of the Earth that was owned by Britain. Its

war on Germany, therefore, could only be an aggressive war.

It was characterised by James Connolly as *The War Upon The German Nation*, and by Casement as *The Crime Against Europe*. Shaw did not bother disputing the matter with these people of no consequence.

The preparations for the war on Germany had been laid by the Tory element in the Unionist Party, but the Liberal Party was in Office, depending on the votes of the Irish Party, when the opportunity arose for putting the war plans into effect and the backbenches of the Liberal Party were saturated with Nonconformist, Gladstonian idealism. The staid idealism of the Liberal Back Benches had to be trumped by unrestrained Millenarian idealism from the Front Benches so that the war on Germany could be launched.

The Liberal Government managed this very effectively, with the help of the Redmondites. Political reasoning was cast aside and a war frenzy was developed in the medium of an unrealisable ideal. The war against Germany, which Shaw held to be a necessary war, was not going. But he quibbled over the way it was being presented.

Shaw was, presumably, not the only Liberal intellectual who saw that the Millenarian propaganda was not compatible with the facts of the matter regarding the start of the War. The two major Liberal papers, the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily News*, had argued against British entry into the European War during the fortnight before the British declaration of war, before capitulating to the war-frenzy when war was declared, and some of their readers must have remembered those coherent arguments after August 4th. These were the people Shaw's pamphlet might have influenced.

He 'exposed' the chicanery of war-propaganda—the propaganda that was needed to ensure the mass involvement of the populace in the war—but insisted that making war on Germany was nevertheless the right and necessary thing to do.

His reasoning about why a British war of cynical *Realpolitik* on Germany was necessary is very hazy. What counted was that he staked his reputation as a daring Liberal intellectual on it.

**Puritanism And The Theatre**, by  
*Brendan Clifford*. 156pp.

€15, £12 postfree

## Stephen Richards

Part One

### Reliquae Baxterianae

Some years ago there was a study conducted to see which region of Ireland was the most Irish, of the most pure Gaelic racial stock. The answer they came up with was the area around western Westmeath and Roscommon, with Mullingar and Athlone as the main centres. I've been in Athlone only once, and a quaint sort of place it seemed to be at that time, with traditional ironmongers and so on. It would have been worthy to stand with those towns in the Irish midlands whose praise was hymned by Betjeman:

"The small towns of Ireland by bards  
are neglected,  
They stand there all lonesome on hilltop  
and plain".

It gave me a peculiar pleasure to think that these modest unassuming Counties made up the most authentic part of Ireland, if judged by that criterion; but a pleasure tinged with sadness as I thought of those communities who had been slowly driven back from the extremities of the country by the brash lesser breeds, and had been forced to congregate in the Bog of Allen or wherever.

Of course genetic results are far from the whole truth when it comes to the complicated questions of identity. Who you think you are is often more important than your genetic makeup. It has often struck me that the big hitters of history have been outsiders, even from the days of the Roman Empire. But in more modern times we have Napoleon, the upstart Corsican; Hitler, the Austrian corporal; Stalin, the failed seminarian from Georgia, and so on. When we look at the Irish revolutionary leaders of the last century, this tendency is very marked. I don't have to list the names for *Church & State!* The psychologists might tell us that there was an inner compulsion for these women and men to prove themselves *Hibernis ipsis Hiberniores*. Pure speculation no doubt, but an interesting phenomenon.

That said, it seems obvious to me that there is such a thing as a strong regional identity that owes little to either genetics or what Jeeves would call the

*psychology* of the individual. So, it can be said of a district, town or region that it *made us*, as in *Dublin Made Me* (Donagh McDonagh). Some of our northern poets, such as Heaney and Hewitt, keep coming back to this theme, and much of English poetry is salted with the flavour of the regions, connections now ruthlessly exploited by the tourist industry. Where we come from may be more important than who we are or who we think we are, and may be more influential for those from a rural background.

It's amazing to me how the huge expanses of Texas with its skyscraper cities and its hick towns, like Lubbock (birthplace of Buddy Holly and described by fellow Lubbocker, Kimmie Rhodes, as "*a whole lot of nuthin*"), have spawned such a clutch of singer-songwriters in the country-folk-blues tradition. There's something indefinable that seems to link them all, hinted at by a record producer from the country music Establishment who opined that the trouble with their songs was that they had "*too many words in them*".

#### Local Colour

The island of Ireland is, or was, full of districts that had a distinctive atmosphere about them, more or less pronounced. That part of South Down where my in-laws all live seems to me to transmit a very robust culture of its own, imbibed unconsciously by my nieces and nephews from a very early age. Nobody tries to force feed them, it's just the water that they swim in. There is something similar, if perhaps not now as strong, in the Presbyterian culture of mid-Antrim where I still live. To cite a very small example: when we were doing poetry at Kells and Connor School, before the commendable custom of learning by rote had fallen into disrepute, we had a subject called "*Recitation*", and there were certain poems that were drilled into us. One of these was *Where Go The Boats?* by R.L. Stevenson:

Dark brown is the river,  
Golden is the sand,  
It flows along for ever,  
With trees on either hand.

And so it goes on, or flows on. Every child in the class recited this poem in exactly the same strange sing-song sort of way, emphasising "golden", "for ever", and "trees", with the same emphasis at the same point in each stanza, irrespective of the content. Even at the time I thought this odd. It was even worse to listen to than that famous recording of the cloth-eared Yeats reading his *Lake Isle of Innisfree*. Who taught them to say it like that? Nobody really. It must have been copied behaviour from some influential teacher (or pupil?) from years before. The effect was to create a kind of buffer between the reader and the lines (s)he was reading. The subtext was: "I will avoid all emotional engagement with this piece of drivel I'm being made to learn!"

In the Kells and Connor of my youth the representative, if not the universal, culture encompassed church-going, football, flute bands, and pigeon racing, in no particular order. It wasn't a culture that set much store by aesthetics but it was cohesive and, for the most part, functional. It also typically involved a Saturday evening outing to the cinema in Ballymena, coming home in the smoke-filled late bus. Nobody had very much money and most people had jobs, often the same type of jobs.

The point has sometimes been made that the English are the Cinderellas of the four British nations in this regard, that they're a people without a national culture. *Das Land ohne Musik* was the German jibe. More recently, the question has been asked, *What's the difference between English folk music and yoghurt?* Answer: *yoghurt is a real culture.*

The heart of Englishness is to deny, in a self-deprecating sort of way, that there's any such thing as Englishness. This attitude I believe to be profoundly wrong. By "Englishness" I'm not referring at all to foreign policy, the British Empire, or even the political relations of the English with the Scots and Irish. I'm thinking in domestic terms, even regional terms, and I'm thinking of one particular region.

### Middle England & Middle Earth

My earliest introduction to the Puritans as a body was in the form of a small book called *Richard Baxter and Kidderminster* that we had in second year History at Ballymena Academy. At that time we were being taught by the young Francis Kelly from Dunloy, who later

became an institution at the school. The message from Mr. Kelly, implicit if not explicit, was that it was bizarre that our minds should be cumbered with this boring old fart. Baxter (1615-91) was of course anything but. The 'Kidderminster' in the title was important because—though Baxter was born a bit to the west in Rowton, Shropshire—Kidderminster in the north of Worcestershire, and 17 miles south west of Birmingham, was the scene of his only really settled ministry, during the Interregnum, and he and it have been inextricably linked since.

Worcestershire, the real garden of England, with the loveliest cricket ground in the world, is probably the county the *Daily Mail* is thinking of when it talks of Middle England. If Essex Man (or Mondeo Man) was the secret of Margaret Thatcher's success, it's said that Worcester Woman played an equally important role in the election and re-elections of Tony Blair's New Labour governments. It's a fair bet that Worcestershire is the model for the fictional county of Borsetshire wherein nestles the BBC *ersatz* village of Ambridge, and it's the county of England's oldest inhabitant, Grace Jones, aged 112.

It's perhaps the spiritual centre of the West Midlands, that region that includes also Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, northern Gloucestershire and southern Cheshire, all of which corresponds to the Saxon kingdom of Mercia. Politically speaking, Mercia was eclipsed by Wessex under whose leadership England was united just a hundred years or so before the Norman Conquest, but it was the Anglo-Saxon spoken in Mercia that became the common tongue of England. The language went underground after 1066, then revived in modified form with the Middle English of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Gower, and Chaucer.

Just over two hundred years from Baxter's death, in January 1892, J.R.R. Tolkien was born in Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State, but was brought back to England as a three-year-old. He was brought up a bit north of Kidderminster, in the more urbanised northern part of Worcestershire, where his mother's family roots were. A product of the normal grammar school education in the Classics, in his case at King Edward VI Grammar School in Birmingham, he had no exposure to Anglo-Saxon until he went up to Exeter

College Oxford, but, by his own account he "took to it as to a known language". He sensed that it spoke to him out of the Mercian depths of his West Midlands inheritance. Interestingly Tolkien also became learned in Welsh, the language of those dodgy tribes who lurked on the western side of Offa's Dyke, but he never developed any facility in Irish; and indeed he remarked that he found the air of Ireland alien to him. To the Anglo-Saxons Ireland was a strange exotic place that they didn't want much to do with. Their future Norman overlords had different ideas in mind.

*The Hobbit*, initially a diversion for Tolkien, was both a publishing platform for, and a link to, the world of epic myth, which with *The Lord of the Rings* and its subsequent 'prequels' became an obsession. Unwittingly Tolkien's vision of Middle Earth launched a thousand dreadful imitations, as well as a whole series of filmic and even cartoon adaptations, good, bad and terrible. But there was nothing trivial about his own ambition, which was nothing less than the creation of a mythology for England.

The English had nothing like the Ulster Cycle or its southern equivalent, which I might call the Finn Cycle. Even Beowulf had its putative origins in some deep Danish forest. He looked enviously too at the *Kalevala* corpus, translated in the nineteenth century and which drew him back to study the Finnish originals. Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* was presumably unacceptable as having been irredeemably contaminated by Norman-French influence.

"The Saxon is not like us Normans, his manners are not so polite.

But he never means anything serious till he talks about justice and right.

When he stands like an ox in the furrow —with his sullen eyes set on your own, And grumbles, 'this isn't fair dealing', my son, leave the Saxon alone."

(Rudyard Kipling, from *Norman and Saxon*)

This reminds me of another Catholic, Chesterton, and *The Secret People*:

"Smile at us, pay us, pass us, but do not quite forget,

For we are the people of England, that have not spoken yet."

I suppose they did finally speak, at the time of the EU Referendum, but they might as well not have bothered.

The Norman Conquest was resented by Tolkien just as much as if it had

happened in his lifetime, and he was equally resentful of the Reformation, which, not least among its sins, had deprived English Catholicism of its ancient cathedrals and parish churches, many of which of course had Saxon origins. While he wasn't a Catholic convert, his mother had been, and Tolkien's own passionate loyalty to the Catholic Church was influenced to some extent by his further resentment at the way he felt his mother had been treated by her relatives after her reception into the Church.

### Elegy For England

We could easily conclude that this admixture of Catholicism and a profound sense of English identity was unique to Tolkien if it weren't that we see it played out again in the life of that doyen of English composers, Edward Elgar (1857-1934). Now, Elgar was even more of an outsider than Tolkien. Born in Lower Broadheath, just outside Worcester, he was the fourth child of seven children of a piano tuner and seller of sheet music, whose wife had converted to Catholicism before Elgar's birth. Socially, geographically, religiously, he didn't fit the identikit picture of the English Romantic composer.

But worse than that, he was a supporter of Wolverhampton Wanderers, and as a young man once cycled 50 miles to see them play. The Wolves, in their Old Gold and black, were the archetypal Black Country soccer team. I've carried a torch for them myself, ever since Northern Ireland's Derek Dougan was their old-fashioned centre forward in the late sixties. They tended to go for those big aggressive guys up front: Dougan, Steve Bull, Andy Gray. In later, millennial, days Kevin Doyle from Wexford, a more subtle proposition altogether, and protégé of Mick Wallace, was the toast of Molineux. And of course they had Mick McCarthy as their manager before he jumped ship to lead the Republic of Ireland team in their 2002 World Cup campaign, the less said about which the better.

But away back in sixties and seventies Wolves were blessed with a magical left-winger called David Wagstaffe, a master of illusion, oddly too, the first ever player in the English League to be awarded the red card. He sadly died in 2013. For all his Mancunian origins his name has a quaint, Morris-dancing kind of ring to it, not unlike Will Shakespeare from Warwickshire, another Midlands

icon. And, while we're at it, let's not forget Samuel Johnson from Lichfield, who made no apology for his provincial vowels while he set the rest of the world to rights.

At one time it seemed that Elgar's reputation was going to die with him. He was seen as a sort of musical version of Kipling, a throwback to an embarrassing Edwardian era, but each generation rediscovers him. His attachment to his native West Midlands was demonstrated by his refusal to move permanently to London. The 1919 *Cello Concerto* can be read as a wistful elegy to the England that had been destroyed in the course of the previous decade, at times verging on bleakness. The theme of the First Movement is meant to suggest the curvy outlines of the Malvern Hills, under whose shadow the composer lies buried: a melancholy pastoral. As with Tolkien there is the feeling that the purpose of our lives is to "*fight the long defeat*", to keep the candles burning for as long as possible before they're all snuffed out. The greatest contemporary conservative philosopher, Roger Scruton, is temperamentally similar. His own tribute to England is entitled *England: An Elegy*.

Yehudi Menuhin in his 1985 memoir, *Unfinished Journey*, recalls his one and only encounter with Elgar not long before he died. They were supposed to be discussing performance details for the Violin Concerto, but the teenage Menuhin found that the elderly composer, with his courtly manner, was more interested in getting away to the races. An element of affectation here perhaps, but others have commented on Elgar's non-prescriptive approach to the performance of his own work. Even so, one can't help wishing that Elgar's ghost had whispered in Jacqueline du Pre's ear a word of caution about overegging the pudding.

### Painful Preachers

Like Chesterton's rolling English road, this preamble is going to get somewhere, to Kidderminster and Baxter. The span of his life was pretty typical of the English Puritans in their golden age. Some, like Baxter, made it past the Revolution; others did not, like John Owen (1616-1683) and John Bunyan (1628-1688). Just the mention of those other names underscores the sheer variety among the Puritans, which has to be set against obvious points of commonality.

A few general observations can be made. They were usually learned (but not Bunyan); nearly all those who survived to 1662 chose to go 'outside the camp' rather than conform (but not William Gurnall of Lavenham, one of the most impressive); most of them were Parliamentary sympathisers, active or passive, in the Civil War (but some were implicated in a Royalist plot around 1648); they were not generally of a Presbyterian outlook, and until 1662 many, including Baxter, were hopeful of a place within a more ecumenical Anglican structure with a modified episcopacy.

As for Calvinism, yes they were mostly at home with The Augustinian and Calvinistic emphasis on the sovereignty and holiness of God, and mankind's lost estate, though most would probably not have defined themselves as Calvinists, and Baxter himself sat at odds with some aspects of what might be called pure Reformed theology. One could read the Puritans for years without coming across the five points of Calvinism. What they majored on was expository, applicatory preaching, taking a text or a chapter or a book of Scripture and preaching through it exhaustively, with a pastoral emphasis and a theological underpinning. It was praise to be called "*a painful preacher*", meaning a preacher who took pains, whether or not he was painful to listen to.

Fundamentalists? The word would have had no meaning for them. Baxter could be so described, with hindsight, but his fundamentalism was of a different order from that popularly understood, as we'll see.

John Buchan in his *Life of Montrose* dismisses the whole of seventeenth century Puritan literature in a couple of sweeping sentences. For him the chief ornaments of English prose in that century were Donne, Walton and Traherne, with their picturesque turns of phrase. One can't stifle the suspicion though that there's a bit of literary grandstanding mingled among the true gold. The Puritans can be stodgy by comparison, as they bore their way remorselessly through the text, extracting every drop of juice, raising objections and answering them in true scholastic mode.

But there's a strange compelling power about them, mixed with an earthy pungency, and wit. Illustrations abound, classical, biblical and from day to day life, and quotations from the Church Fathers. One doesn't imagine them

suffering from writer's block; they were too full of matter, which had to get out, not always elegantly. Their style consisted of an absence of style, never shouting 'look at me', yet the plainest and least 'literary' of them, Bunyan, is the most feted by the *literati*.

"Then it came burning hot into my mind, whatever he said, and however he flattered, when he got me home to his house he would sell me for a slave" (Faithful, in *Pilgrim's Progress*).

Eat your heart out Ernest Hemingway!

### Pear-trees And Maypoles

For some reason Baxter doesn't say much about his mother, more about his stepmother. His father was of yeoman stock, from the wonderfully named village of Eaton Constantine, to which the family moved, from Rowton, when Baxter was ten. Unfortunately father and grandfather, both of them called Richard Baxter as well, had got so "*addicted to gaming*" that they had impoverished their estates. Baxter senior had learned the error of his ways by Baxter's early childhood, but his admonitions didn't prevent his son from nearly falling into the same pit, even at times post-conversion (saved seemingly by his extraordinary success at the tables one night at Ludlow Castle, which made him reflect on the possibly satanic reasons for it); and, like the young Augustine, he was also guilty of stealing pears and eating too many of them, "*which I think laid the foundation of that imbecility and flatulency of my stomach which caused the bodily calamities of my life*". His many ailments however didn't prevent him from comfortably outliving his aristocratic young wife, Margaret Charlton, whom he married at the age of 47, when she was 26.

Maypole dancing was another snare, in the binary world of the 1620s. There was only one day in seven that the country people were free from backbreaking toil. You could spend that day in cultivating the life of the soul, in and out of church, or you could pass yourself at church and then attend to amusements, chiefly archery, as validated by the much-hated *Book of Sports* of 1620, and maypole dancing. Young people danced round the maypole all afternoon, which seems a mindless sort of occupation to us, but presumably there were plenty of girls around. I'm not sure what the Irish equivalent was: dancing at crossroads perhaps? In all thirty two Counties there's only one maypole, in Holywood, County Down.

Anyway this whole maypole custom presented a particular dilemma to the Baxter family:

"In the village where I lived the reader read the Common Prayer, briefly, and the rest of the day, even till dark night almost... was spent in dancing under a maypole and a great tree not far from my father's door... And though one of my father's own tenants was the piper, he could not restrain him, nor break the sport. So that we could not read the Scripture in our family without the great disturbance of the tabor and pipe and noise in the street. Many times my mind was inclined to be among them, and sometimes I broke loose from conscience and joined with it; and the more I did it the more I was inclined to it."

Interestingly, and somehow fittingly, Baxter traces the first influences of the Holy Spirit in his life to a book that was lying around with the improbable title of *Bunny's Resolution*, after Edmund Bunny who had edited it, but actually by the English Jesuit Robert Parsons. In his autobiography, subsequently termed *Reliquae Baxterianae*, he traces the vicissitudes of his youthful spiritual journey, his frequent doubts of his sincerity, "*but I understood at last that God breaketh not all men's hearts alike*".

### Patchy Learning

Apart from a brief spell at court in London under the patronage of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, which didn't appeal to him, Baxter's education was carried on at various locations not far from his home. His account of this gives an indication of the charm with which he can write, of which he is all unconscious:

"It [his period of doubt] set me upon that method of my studies which since then I have found the benefit of, though at the time I was not satisfied with myself... divinity was not only carried on with the rest of my studies with an equal hand, but always had the first and chiefest place..."

But one loss I had by this method which hath proved irreparable: that I missed that part of learning which stood at the greatest distance (in my thoughts) from my ultimate end, and I could never since find time to get it. Besides the Latin tongue and but a mediocrity in Greek (with an inconsiderable trial at the Hebrew long after), I had no great skill in languages... and for the mathematics, I was an utter stranger to them, and never could find it in my heart to divert any studies that way [i.e. I was useless at maths!]. But in order to

the knowledge of divinity my inclination was most to logic and metaphysics, and with that part of physics which treateth of the soul... And these had my labour and delight, which occasioned me (perhaps too soon) to plunge myself very early into the study of controversies, and to read all the Schoolmen I could get; for the next [nearest] practical divinity, no books so suited with my disposition as Aquinas, Scotus, Durandus, Ockham and their disciples; because I thought they narrowly searched after truth and brought things out of the darkness of confusion; for I could never from my first studies endure confusion..."

So he was more or less an autodidact, missing out for better or worse on what we might call a liberal arts education, and maybe on the company of others capable of sharpening his wits against. Ironically, for all his professed hatred of confusion, it's the charge of theological confusion that has usually headed up the indictment against him.

### Laud's Road To Ruin

By the time Baxter was twenty, Archbishop Laud was in full career, and certain liturgical practices were being enforced and others introduced which the Puritan elements deemed unscriptural, superstitious, and indeed unlawful. Baxter's sympathies were with the non-compliant clergy who were being harassed. But he was able to overcome his scruples sufficiently to accept ordination and combine this with his work as a schoolmaster in the town of Dudley near Wolverhampton. It was mainly the surplice that offended him, but he got over that simply by not wearing it. Other contested points, like the sign of the cross in baptism, didn't seem to him to be of such fundamental importance to make him die in the last ditch. Through all the changing scenes of his life there is this degree of constancy in Baxter: he wasn't some curmudgeonly character, pronouncing anathemas on all and sundry and going off into the wilderness. Rather, he was forced out into the wilderness, as we'll see.

England in the 1630s, in the absence of Parliament, was doing all right. An equilibrium of sorts had been established. William Laud was certainly a destabilising force but the Puritans had no effective outlet for their resentment. Laud, backed by Charles I, might have got away with it, but when he determined to impose the English prayer book on the Scottish Church, with a view to total uniformity

between the two Churches he committed the fatal overreach. Wentworth in Ireland, no doubt on royal instructions, was attempting the same thing.

There was to be no room for creative ambiguity, no such thing as the "*Prescopalianism*", presided over by a benign James Ussher. Interestingly Archbishop Ussher appeared to Baxter to be the model prelate, ticking the boxes of moderate episcopacy, pastoral urgency, and a certain theological catholicity.

Charles needed an urgent injection of funds if the English were going to avoid total humiliation at the hands of the Scottish insurgents. Desperate efforts to raise extra-Parliamentary taxes provided a precise focus for his English opponents. There was no option but to summon Parliament, and so the stage was set for the conflict which was to grind its way on, over the next dozen years.

The pretext for Wentworth's recall was the ridiculous notion that he was engaged in raising a Catholic army in Ireland, intended to crush the king's English enemies. The sad irony was that in a sense his recall led directly to something like what the English Parliament was obsessing about, namely an Irish insurrection. So, in quick succession, and by sheer recklessness, Charles lost Scotland, his native kingdom, and virtually lost Ireland.

Baxter wasn't very long in Dudley, being invited to Bridgnorth in Shropshire, as a sort of curate, and then in 1641, in the middle of all the disturbances in Church and State, he was installed as vicar in Kidderminster. He had a miserable time of it at first, in poor health, depressed, assailed by all kinds of "*saucy doubts and fears*", and arousing some serious enmity in the parish, mainly because of his sober preaching method, as in his own couplet:

"I preached as never sure to preach again,  
And as a dying man to dying men."

### 1641 And All That

But everything was thrown into confusion when the King raised his standard at Nottingham and the Civil War began in good earnest. As in so much else, the West Midlands counties were really England in microcosm, split down the middle by conflicting allegiances. Baxter, sympathising with both

sides, felt alienated by the reckless behaviour of many of the main players:

"Thus rash attempts of headstrong people do work against the good ends which they themselves intend, and the zeal which hath censorious strife and envy doth tend to confusion and every evil work; and overdoing is the ordinary way of undoing."

What seemed to one side to be a reasonable precautionary step typically appeared to the other as a kind of provocation, and so mutual distrust ("*diffidence*", as Baxter calls it) increased exponentially, while every utterance by one side or the other was analysed and misinterpreted to death.

Much of this Baxter was prepared to put down to common or garden cussedness, endemic to fallen human nature, but he is at pains to underscore the impact of one happening, the Irish Rebellion, which appears to have had the same kind of transformative effect on the English psyche as the events of 9/11 had on middle America:

"But of all the rest there was nothing that with the people wrought so much as the Irish massacre and rebellion. The Irish Papists did, by an unexpected insurrection, rise all over Ireland at once, and seized upon almost all the strengths of the whole land, and Dublin wonderfully escaped (a servant of Sir John Clotworthy's [Masserene Castle, Antrim] discovering the plot)... Two hundred thousand persons they murdered (as you may see in the Earl of Orrery's Answer to a Petition, and in Dr. Jones's Narrative of the Examinations, and Sir John Temple's History, who was one of the resident justices). Men, women and children were most cruelly used, the women ripped up and filthily used when they killed them, and the infants used like toads or vermin. Thousands of those that escaped came stripped and almost famished to Dublin, and afterwards into England to beg their bread. Multitudes of them were driven together into rivers, and cast over bridges and drowned. Many witnesses swore before the lords justices that at Portdown Bridge [sic] a vision every day appeared to the passengers of naked persons standing out in the middle of the river and crying out 'Revenge! Revenge!' In a word, scarce any history mentions the like barbarous cruelty as this was. The French massacre [St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572] murdered but thirty or forty thousand; but two hundred thousand was a number which astonished those that heard it."

And has continued to astonish people ever since. If, as Sellar and Yeatman

argue, history is made up of what people can remember, then this is history, even though it may be a case of collective false memory syndrome. An historical phenomenon has morphed into a psychological phenomenon. The spectacular numerical exaggeration was no doubt useful as a propaganda tool, so that the English hearers would draw the appropriate conclusions from the trauma suffered by their kith and kin in Ireland. But yet that trauma was real enough.

The first Irish history school textbook I encountered was *Conquest and Colonization*, by M.E. Collins, part of a series called *The New Irish History Project*, or something similar. Always beware when something is called a *Project*. My budding mathematical genius was blighted from get go by a huge book we got at age 11 called *School Mathematics Project*, or SMP, which had neither rhyme nor reason. Maths, like Latin, should be taught the old-fashioned way.

Anyway, the New Irish History Project reigned unchallenged in Ballymena Academy, that bastion of conservative Protestant Unionist culture. When it came to 1641 they got very gnomish. These lurid accounts, with the associated numbers, were simply ridiculous, drummed up by English propagandists who were up to no good. They might have been better to say that *yes, there was an uprising and a massacre*, albeit a middling-sized massacre, and this was why it happened. Their attitude was more one of "*move along, nothing to see here*". It made me realise, even at my young age, that this old unhappy far-off thing was still a hot button issue.

The lack of historical method was alarming. 1641 was in fact a many-layered thing: in part an attempt by dispossessed Catholic gentry to reclaim their ancestral lands, in part a Royalist *coup*, in part an anti-Protestant crusade, and in part an act of attempted genocide.

I hope to go on to explore Baxter's career during and after the war, and to finish with an account of his *Mere Christianity*.

Postfree from ATHOL BOOKS

**The Origin Of Irish Catholic-Nationalism**,  
Selections From Walter Cox's *Irish Magazine*: 1807-1815.

136pp. Illus. Index. €14, £11.50

**Walter Cox's Union Star**, a pamphlet reprint of his 1797 paper.

36pp. €6, £5

## Peter Brooke

Based on a talk given in Belfast on 11th June 2018

### Peace Loving Fascists

*Henry Williamson and Oswald Mosley*

"the Great War was the epitome of lovelessness in Western Civilisation. That is the theme that has long possessed me." (Henry Williamson: *The Gale of the world.*)

#### Perry Anderson's Oversight

The *London Review of Books* has recently (July and August 2018) published two long articles by Perry Anderson on the novel sequence by Anthony Powell—*A Dance to the Music of Time*, in particular comparing it to Proust's *A la Recherche De Temps Perdu*. Arguing that Powell's project is unique, and that Proust's sequence is the only valid comparison, he says:

"In scale and design, the architecture of *A Dance to the Music of Time* is unique in Western literature. Scale: the novel covers a period of more than half a century, from 1914 to 1971. Design: it forms a sequence of 12 self-standing but completely interconnected works. Why is this combination unique? Balzac's *Comédie humaine*, covering the history of society from the Revolution to the last years of the July Monarchy, is comparable in span. But its 91 volumes form no single narrative: they are separate fictions, in which characters may reappear a few times, but the stories are essentially disconnected, at best unified ex post facto by the more or less arbitrary categories of the creator's 'system'. The twenty volumes of Zola's Rougon-Macquart cycle start with a prelude in the Ancien Régime, but as their subtitle, 'The Natural and Social History of a Family under the Second Empire', indicates, 18 of the novels are set in the two decades of Louis Napoleon's rule, integrated only by a doctrine extraneous to them, ostensibly obeying a biological determinism. In Spain, Galdós produced 46 Episodios Nacionales, from the Battle of Trafalgar to the fall of the First Republic, but these are historical novels in the strict sense, comprising five distinct series, each with a new hero, and each recounting major political conflicts through the adventures of an individual."

It is extraordinary that no mention is made, here or anywhere else in the articles, of Henry Williamson's novel sequence *A Chronicle Of Ancient Sunlight*. It consists of fifteen novels covering a period from the late nineteenth century to the end of the Second World War. It has a single central figure—Phillip Maddison, loosely, or perhaps rather tightly, based on Williamson himself. The first novel—*The Dark Lantern*—treats of Phillip's father but the rest of the sequence follows Phillip

through childhood, through the First World War (five very powerful novels), disorientation after the war, taking up a career as a nature-writer, engagement with Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists, taking up farming and finally suffering the isolation of someone identified as a Nazi lover through the Second World War—the whole seasoned with a seemingly endless succession of romantic affairs with young women.

I might also express surprise that Anderson doesn't mention Jules Romain's 27 volume novel sequence *Les Hommes De Bonne Volonté*, covering the history of France through a coherent group of central characters from 1908 to 1933. Of course no-one would expect him to acknowledge the sequence on the history of Serbia from the late nineteenth century to the rule of Tito by Dobrica Cosic (President of 'rump-Yugoslavia' in 1992 in the early stages of the Bosnian war). Only five novels—*Roots* (late nineteenth-early twentieth century tension between traditional peasant Serbia and modernising European Serbia), *Time Of Death* (First World War), *Time Of Evil* (Communist Party in the inter-war period and the German occupation), *Time Of Power* and *Time Of Deceit* (the period of Tito's rule)—but *Time Of Death* and *Time Of Evil* are each over a thousand pages long.<sup>1</sup>

#### Henry Williamson And Fascism

But we are concerned here with Williamson and the *Chronicle Of Ancient Sunlight*. I read it about ten years ago and at the time I had the feeling I was reading THE English novel of the first half of the twentieth century. It has no ambition to present a very wide-ranging picture of everything happening in England at the time but it seemed to me that Phillip Maddison, with his despair over the destruction as he sees it of the natural world, his inability to make sense of the war he has lived so intensely, his conviction that Mosley is the man who can restore dignity to Britain while at the same time preventing a new European war, and his continued loyalty to

that idea through the Second World War and its aftermath—which was indeed one of the main motivations for writing the book—all that has a symbolic quality—symbolic in the proper etymological sense of the word of bringing a large number of elements together in a single image, or, as in this case, a single person.

Williamson of course, best known as author of the animal sagas, *Tarka The Otter* and *Salar The Salmon*, hardly corresponds to the usual caricature of a 'Fascist'. He was indeed a born hero-worshipper but his heroes, apart from Mosley, were Blake, Shelley, Francis Thompson and above all the nature writer Richard Jefferies, the model and inspiration for his own career as a writer. His biographer and daughter-in-law, Anne Williamson, who maintains the very impressive website of the Henry Williamson Society, tends understandably enough to downplay his Fascism. In an essay on *Henry Williamson's Credo*, she says, describing his visit to Germany in 1935 when he was deeply impressed by the Nuremberg Rally:

"It may be considered quite extraordinary that a man of HW's personality and standing should fall for any of the propaganda with which he was bombarded. But HW was indeed naive and gullible—and the German propaganda was very cleverly presented... HW was like a horse with blinkers on: he could not see the dangers lying all about him."<sup>2</sup>

But, as we shall see, Williamson never repudiated the joy he felt during the German visit in 1935. He described it at the time in his 1937 book *Goodbye West Country* and again, after the war, with no apparent diminution of his enthusiasm, in *The Phoenix Generation*. It hardly does credit to Williamson's quality as a thinker to say that, having been duped in 1935, he never realised he had been duped over the next thirty years of his life (despite all the pressure he was under to admit to having been duped).

On the other hand, in a short book—*Henry Williamson—The Artist As Fascist*<sup>3</sup>, Guy Yeates stresses that Williamson was quite serious in his commitment to the British Union of Fascists (difficult reading the *Chronicle* to believe he wasn't) but tries to fit him into the caricature Fascist mould (product of an unresolved psychological disturbance):

"What, then, was the psychological condition which caused Williamson to embrace the fascist solution to social and economic problems facing the world between the wars, what blinded him to the truth? That, it seems to me, is the real puzzle about this artist. Without any attempt at what would be a wholly inexpert psycho-

analytical investigation, I should like to suggest that insoluble tensions arising from his unbearable relationship with his father appear to have been the major influence in his adult life...

'Williamson's complete failure ever to establish a loving relationship with his father is, quite probably, fundamental to an understanding of his character; partly because, as I suggested earlier, it may have caused him to seek a compensatory father-figure; but it may also have been this that led him to adopt authoritarian attitudes himself, sub-consciously to expiate his own feelings of guilt about his part in this failed relationship. These attitudes allowed him to support an authoritarian regime whilst at the same time his effective withdrawal from general society, as an artist, meant that he could claim either to be unaware of or not responsible for the grosser behaviour of the political systems he supported ...' (p.41).

'Possibly this disastrous relationship caused him as an adult to seek a father-figure whom he could admire, love even. If this were so, the significant point is that it was a Hitler/Mosley icon that he chose, rather than a liberal humanist' (p.10).

Both these approaches presuppose that 'Fascism' is a known quantity, that it is something very wicked—unlike 'liberal humanism'. It would of course not occur to Guy Yeates to think that 'liberal humanism' might have been responsible for the First World War.

### Williamson And The War

Williamson's sympathy for Fascism in general and for Hitler in particular has its roots in his experience of the war and most particularly his presence at the famous 'truce' of Christmas 1914.

He describes the truce at some quite ecstatic length in *A Fox Under My Cloak*, fifth volume of the *Chronicle*. But he also evokes it in *The Pathway*, last of the four-volume sequence *The Flax Of Dream*. This was his first major writing project after the war. It concerns Phillip Maddison's cousin, Willie, also based on Williamson himself but perhaps in a more fanciful and romantic form. The first two volumes concern his boyhood (*The Beautiful Years*) and adolescence (*Dandelion Days*). The last two volumes (*The Dream of Fair Women* and *The Pathway*) his adulthood and early death. The story of *Dandelion Days*, published in 1922, finishes in 1914. *The Dream of Fair Women*, published in 1924, begins in 1919. As Anne Williamson comments:

"HW avoids any direct portrayal of the war itself in this early work: he was

still too close to this shocking era to be able to write about it—that was to come later."<sup>4</sup>

Although, with nothing like the depth of the five volumes given to the war in the *Chronicle*, it came quite soon, in two books—*The Wet Flanders Plain*, an account of a tour round the battle sites in 1927—and *A Patriot's Progress*, published in 1930. The progress achieved by the patriot is well shown in the illustrations by William Kermode. They begin with the patriot (an English everyman figure—'John Bullock') in civilian life sitting at a desk in front of a typewriter with an old man standing behind him keeping an eye on what he is doing. They end with John Bullock as an older man sitting at a desk in front of a typewriter with a younger man standing behind him, keeping an eye on what he is doing. Bullock is now missing a leg. He has learned nothing from the dreadful experience he has been through. The book, a very powerful account with no hint of heroism in it, was serialised in Oswald Mosley's paper *Action*, in 1939.

The last volume of *The Flax of Dream—The Pathway*—was published in 1928. *Tarka The Otter*, his first and perhaps his only taste of major success, was published in 1927. Anne Williamson makes the interesting suggestion that *Tarka*, full of violence as it is, "*can—and perhaps should—be read as an allegory of the First World War*".<sup>5</sup>

In *The Pathway* Willie Maddison emerges as a figure vaguely reminiscent of Dostoyevsky's Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot*. Like Myshkin he disturbs the settled life and ideas of a minor gentry family both because he has lived through something they cannot imagine and because he is possessed by a semi-religious idea which he sees as the necessary antidote to the ideas that created the war. In the course of a conversation in the novel, he describes the truce:

"We were in trenches under Mes-sines Hill, and had a truce with the Saxon regiment opposite. It started on Christmas Eve, when they were singing carols, and cheering "Hoch der Kaiser!", and we cheered back for the king. Then they lifted a Christmas tree, lit with candles, on their parapet, and shouted for us to come over. We feared a trap; but at last one of us climbed out into no-man's land—

"That was you, I expect."

"Well, yes, I did go. A German approached me. It was bright moonlight

and the ground was frozen hard. We approached each other with trembling smiles, and hands fumbling in tunic pockets for gifts for each other. He could speak English. "I saw you coming", he said, "and I've told my comrades not to fire, whatever happens. They appear to be afraid of a trap." I was so moved that I could hardly speak. We shook hands over our barbed wire fence—in those days our barbed wire was a simple fence of five strands. He gave me cigars, and I gave him a tin of bully beef and some chocolate. After a while other men came out, and we stamped about and swung our arms to keep warm, smoking each other's Christmas tobacco...

"The trenches were about a hundred and fifty yards apart where we were, and we stood about all Christmas Day in the flat turnip field, in which dead cows were lying—most of them riddled with bullets fired by young soldiers—including myself—wanting something to fire at, from both sides during the preceding days and weeks. The ground was bone-hard but we managed to bury the dead who had been lying out in no-man's land since the October fighting. We marked the shallow graves with crosses made of the wood of ration boxes. I talked with my German friend and asked him what the words "*Fur Vaterland und Freiheit*" which were written in indelible pencil on their crosses meant. He said "*For Fatherland and Freedom*."

"This staggered me, for I had not thought for myself before; I believed, as nearly all English newspapers, priests, and politicians had declared, that it was a righteous war, to save civilisation; and that the Germans were all brutes, who raped women and bayoneted babies and old men, and had to be rooted out of Europe like a cancerous growth before the world could be safe. I was very young, you see, not then eighteen. My German friend said Germany could never be beaten; and I said, Oh no, England can never be beaten. He said Germany could not be beaten, because his country was fighting for the Right. I said, but we are fighting for the Right! How can you be fighting for the Right, also? We smiled at each other. He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out another cigar. "*Please smoke it, English comrade*..." (The *Pathway*, 1969 edition, p.226).

Earlier in *The Pathway*, in a conversation with Mary Ogilvie, a young woman who has befriended him, and her mother, Mrs. Ogilvie, matriarch of the family, Willie protests against the way German was treated in the post-war settlement:

"You know, William Blake, the poet who died about a hundred years ago! He was supposed to be mad, of course—the English always deprecate, or even destroy,



their best minds. Blake wrote that lovely poem which was sung in so many schools during the war—*Jerusalem*:

I shall not cease from mental fight  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand  
Till we have built Jerusalem

In England's green and pleasant land which various head masters and mistresses thought was a perfect expression of England's war aims for the annihilation of the German people. What stupidity, what blasphemy! The "dark satanic mills" of Blake's earlier verse referred to the industrial system, which began the ruin of England: and which the financial power went to war to defend against continental industrial systems, first Napoleon, and then Germany! Poor Blake, a long watch he has been keeping! The lies that were told in the war, and are still being told, about the Germans! The humiliation of their Rhineland being occupied by the conquerors who knock off the hats of civilians who forget to raise their hats to French and Belgian officers! The agents provocateurs who arrange clashes between the rival political parties of resurgence in order to proclaim martial law! I have just been walking through Germany' he went on, in a rapid nervous voice, amidst complete silence, 'and I know a little about it. It is terrible to see how that proud and truthful nation is brought low. The poor little starving children—why the starvation blockade was maintained until that revengeful treaty was signed at Versailles, eight months after the fighting ceased. Their bread was half sawdust. Scores of thousands of babies have died because of starvation'."

'It is retribution', exclaimed Mrs Ogilvie. 'Their defeat was the judgment of God! How can anyone think otherwise?' Her face was pale, her voice trembled.

Maddison hesitated. He too was pale. He took a deep breath. 'Good-bye', he said. 'Thank you for welcoming me to your fireside', he added, while standing before her uncertainly, and holding out his hands to the flames. 'I feel rather deeply about the war', he said, in a low, trembling voice.

'You are not the only one,' said Mrs Ogilvie.

'Because, you know, it will happen again if all people do not examine themselves and see the cause of war in their own understanding of their neighbours. We are all war-makers, unless we know and watch ourselves.'

'I would rather not discuss it, if you do not mind,' replied Mrs Ogilvie, putting down her needlework."

Mrs Ogilvie had lost three sons in the war.

## Phillip Maddison And Mosley

Phillip Maddison, central figure of the Chronicle, has also, like Willie, experienced the 1914 truce but, where Willie has tried to develop a world view, part political, part mystical, in response, Phillip, a decorated war hero, has gone to pieces, putting himself together again, like Williamson, by becoming absorbed in the natural world and becoming a writer, under the influence of Richard Jefferies. In 1930, though, politics suddenly become interesting:

"When the paper-boy brought the morning papers he got up to meet him, and returning to the deckchair glanced through the London paper. By this act he broke his rule never to look at the papers until after the morning stint, of a minimum thousand words, was done.

On the front page was the news of a junior minister's resignation from the Labour government. The name of Birkin was prominent ... *GREAT SPEECH TO THE HOUSE, ran the headline.*

'If this loan of one hundred million pounds cannot be raised,' continued the Minister, 'then unemployment, as an urgent and immediate problem, cannot be dealt with. We are told by the City of London that we cannot have the money to help the workless back to work—in reclaiming land, in afforestation, in building great new roads to replace the narrow, wandering tracks that so frequently link town with town, creating obstacles for traffic and danger to life; in electrification projects; and in everything needed to bring this great country up to date in the public utility services—all these things are needed for our survival. More important still, for our true wealth lies in our people, not only should children be kept out of industry, but an ad hoc pension scheme must be instituted whereby old people shall be encouraged to retire from industry at sixty by payment of pensions of twenty-five shillings a week. Thus more jobs will go to those who urgently need them—those on the threshold of adult life who are now growing up in idleness and subject to demoralisation of every kind' ..."

The '*junior minister*', Birkin, is, of course, Oswald Mosley, at the time Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in the Labour Government under Ramsay Macdonald (a personal friend as it happens). The account in *The Phoenix Generation* (pp.52 et seq) is very closely based on Mosley's actual resignation speech after his 'memorandum'—putting forward ideas very close to those of Jimmy Maxton of the Independent

Labour Party (Mosley was also a member of the ILP, as had been MacDonald and his Chancellor Philip Snowden) and those that had been discussed by, for example, Keynes and Bevin in the recent Mond/ Turner talks, 1928-9.

Maddison's reading continues:

"The Chancellor of the Exchequer [Philip Snowden—PB] has told us that the unemployed figures have risen, that they are bad and getting worse. He has told the House that if the unemployed problem is regarded from a purely Party point of view a tremendous case can, in the light of the published figures be made out against the Government.

The solution lies in the system of an import control board. Applied to agriculture, and particularly to wheat, an import control board can increase the price to farmers by ten shillings a quarter above the present world prices without any increase in the price of bread. Many thousands of men can thereby be found employment on our derelict arable farms, and the policy of controlled imports can be applied no less to other trades. For if we are to build up a home market, it must be agreed that this nation be, to some extent, insulated from the electric shocks of present world conditions. You cannot build a higher civilisation and a standard of life which can absorb the great force of modern production if you are subject to price fluctuations from the rest of the world which dislocate your industry at every turn, and to the sport of competition from the virtually slave conditions in other countries...

If that effort is not made, we may soon come to a crisis, to a real crisis. I do not fear that so much, for this reason: that in a crisis this nation is at its best. This people knows how to handle a crisis; it cools their heads and steels their nerves. What I fear much more than a sudden crisis is a long, slow crumbling through the years until we sink to the level of a Spain, a gradual paralysis beneath which all the vigour and energy of this country will succumb. That is a far more dangerous thing, and far more likely to happen unless some effort is made. If the effort is made, how relatively easily can disaster be averted. You have in this country resources, skilled craftsmen among the workers, design and technique among the technicians, unknown and unequalled in any other country in the world.

What a fantastic assumption it is that a nation which within the lifetime of everyone has put forth the efforts of energy and vigour unequalled in the history of the world, should succumb before an economic situation such as the present. If this situation is to be overcome, if the great powers of this country are to be mobilised and rallied for a great national effort, then

the Government and Parliament must give a lead. I beg the Government tonight to give the vital forces of this country the chance that they await. I beg Parliament to give that lead."

His enjoyment of the article is a little disrupted by the interjections of the drunken odd job man, Ripplingall ("*I've seen the ghost of the murdered priest*") and writer, Cabton, whom he dislikes. After finishing the article he is joined by his wealthy uncle Hilary:

"Talking of cobwebs, have you read Birkin's speech following his resignation from the government, Uncle Hilary?"

"Yes, I have, and in my opinion it's a lot of unrealistic idealism. Birkin was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and yet he pretends to be the friend of the working man."

"He is the friend of the working man, Uncle Hilary, surely? His generation led them in battle, after all."

"That's not enough to run a country in these difficult times, with a world slump threatening to become worse. Noble sentiments I agree, but they come from a hot head. Birkin wants to ignore world conditions, which rule our overseas markets. He knows nothing about finance, which is ruled by the world situation, as I said", replied the older man, his voice between the persuasive and conciliatory. "I hold no brief for Churchill, but he was right when he urged the raising of the Bank Rate, which stopped Labour's wildcat schemes. Now Birkin, in resigning, has turned his coat again, as once before he turned it when he was a Conservative. The fellow lacks stability."

"Birkin said that Churchill, who raised the Bank Rate, is like a man who sets fire to his house, then throws stones at the fire brigade."

"If these wild-fire socialists came to power, the first thing they would do would be to block Sterling. Then where would our export markets be?"

"We could export to the Empire, surely, and invest all Sterling there, chiefly in raw materials."

This did not please Hilary, who wanted to be free to invest his capital where he could get the biggest yield."

### Phillip Maddison In Nuremberg

In 1935, Williamson was whisked off by his friend Sir John Heygate (also, as it happens a friend of Anthony Powell's and author of *Decent Fellows*, a novel published in 1930, treating of homosexual activities in Eton College) to Germany, where he attended, and was deeply impressed by, the Nuremberg rally. He describes this in *The Phoenix Generation* (published, we remember, in 1965):

"They went out to drink and eat in a

large restaurant called Kempinski's, resembling the Trocadero in London. Phillip was surprised to see so many prosperous-looking Jews eating there. Piers [Sir Piers Tofield, the fictional representation of Heygate] said, 'It's owned by Jews.' This surprised Phillip, who, while knowing what he considered to be the distortional magnification of the newspapers, nevertheless had been affected by the reiteration of hostile criticism of the Nazis. He had thought vaguely of all Jews hiding in cellars, or being held in concentration camps.

Next morning he went to buy a shirt at a department store owned by Jews and found it thronged. Occasionally it was picketed, said Piers; Germans were asked why they bought from aliens and not from German tradesmen. Many other Jewish shops were open, it appeared. There were no beggars on the streets. There was work for all who applied for it. Nine million unemployed had been found work ...

His mornings were spent wandering about Berlin. Everywhere he saw faces which looked to be breathing extra oxygen: people free from mental fear. What a difference from the strained faces in certain parts of London! Would there be another war, he asked again and again, and got the same reply, No: Germany was now strong, and would create her own destiny: no more crowd-hysteria or mass-panic. No more political parties were fighting for power—there had been forty-eight such parties between 1918 and 1933, said the young Party-member who spoke English. He had appeared one morning at the hotel to take Phillip around the city. Proudly this young man wore the small gold and red badge of the 1923 Party-member. He had been a boy during the 1914-18 war, he explained.

"You are an ex-service man. Good! You, like our Führer, are a phoenix from the flame and steel of those days!" He spoke in clipped, sharp tones, obviously copied from Hitler in his speeches, which Phillip had heard (but not understood until he read them in translation) over his wireless set in England. "I am honoured to meet a front-line soldier, like the Führer!"

On the way to Nuremberg:

"They stopped again to look at a landscape of new peasant-cottages, white and pink, spaced regularly and built a quarter of a mile away from the main road. Each, said Martin proudly, had its four hundred square metres of land.

"They are for workmen, from the cities. There is an adviser for garden cultivation. Each man is encouraged to make and cultivate his garden to his own ideas. Our Führer does not want

us to be like bees or ants, you see. Each man must be a leader to himself. The Party will always remain, but when all our natural ideas are learned, the direct control will wither away.'

They passed a troop of boys in shorts, marching along under a taller boy. 'Hitler Youth, see for yourself how open are their faces, my friends!' They certainly looked happy, and smiled to see the little Union Jack pennant above the radiator cap."

In a letter (never in fact posted), Phillip describes his impressions of the rally:

"Three figures, Hitler in middle, walking in slow march up the white approach to the urns of remembrance, while softly the band below played I had a Comrade, that lament equivalent to our Flowers of the Forest. The tiny trio went past the masses paraded there below: helmets of the new Reichswehr, small and dark-grey, like poppy-seeds: clay-brown squares of the S.A.; blacker S.S. rectangles. These clerks, farm labourers, waiters, tram-conductors, newspaperboys, sons of generals and princes, poets, writers, labouring men, comedians and wounded soldiers—all who heard him in those early days and were shocked, rightly or wrongly, truly or neurotically, into a new way of thought, and gave up all for the Idea, and bound themselves together for their beliefs, fighting the forces of gold and disintegration and rival Ideas, meeting terror with terror and death with death, and driving the Communists off the streets until more than 30,000 Nazis (according to Martin) were slashed, cut, shot, blinded and finally killed in the struggle which has shocked the mind of the old Europe. I do not forget the opponents, tens, hundreds of men in a rival cause, millions of communist youths believing that the only way to a new world was by total destruction of the old civilisation, while Hitler wanted to base the new on the century-old virtues which were maintained in what was Old Europe. Yet many Communists heard the fanatic, and were disturbed anew, put into self-conflict, and went over to what they finally decided was the clear light."

He then enters into prophetic mode. It would be interesting to know if the letter was written at the time or if this is hindsight:

"Germany is boycotted. Germany will not break the idiom of money invested for the greatest profit, irrespective of human life. The free for all is dereliction and death for millions. Oh Christ if this boycott leads to war! There will not be a Jew left in Central Europe, there will not be a Germany, there will not be an Empire, England will no longer be Shakespeare's 'precious gem set in a silver

sea, this realm, this England! Yet Hitler is now within an economic trap, isolated in the centre of Europe, dying not from individual Shylocks, for the Jews are splendid family folks, and created one of the first corporate states in the known history of the world, but from an obsolete system which no longer serves modern world-needs. War is war. I have seen German prisoners, surrendered during battle, bombed in communication trenches when led to the rear, and this by a Battalion of Foot Guards. 'Truth is the first casualty in war.' As for Birkin able to rouse our people in time, he is making no real headway. The sad truth is that the great masses of people never feel keenly about anything outside their home and jobs, and that is good. They're usually too tired after the day's work to want anything but food, social life and necessary beer in their clubs (i.e. pubs). And the intellectual minority which formulates, indirectly, their destiny, is not prepared to struggle for peace. They are isolated souls, seldom prepared to be good neighbours first."

This is followed by an incident which obviously made an impression on him, since he refers to it several times subsequently—a close-up look at Hitler:

"The next day I was invited to the Party headquarters hotel. I sat not far from Hitler in the drawing-room. He was talking to several people. Very quick head movements. His face, in happiness, has a luminous quality, his eyes particularly, being pale blue with a kind of inner shining. A Shelley self-driven by an inner tyranny to strike evil? Or a saint who will never draw the sword?"

"Among the guests were the two young Mitford sisters, no longer wearing blue print dresses, but tweed coats and skirts, with no hats. Hitler in their presence seemed light and gay. He spoke rapidly, but was also a courteous listener. I could see that his natural pace was much faster than the normal. He glanced at me several times, I could feel sympathy between us. He had the look of a falcon, but without the full liquid dark eyes: an eyeless hawk whose sockets had burned out in battle and later filled with sky. A man of spiritual grace who has gone down into the market place and taken on the materialists at their own selfish game. Has such direct action ever succeeded in history?"

### Phillip Madison And Napoleon

In the hotel afterwards there is an interesting conversation which gives some idea of the notions of history Maddison is picking up from reading *'Birkin's weekly paper'*. Maddison is talking to a Dutchman—

"'Money does more than talking. It can send men to death. Hitler is only Napoleon over again.'

'That is so. No money, no gold.'

'Napoleon tried to divert the use of money as usury, you see, and so tried to create a self-sufficient and united states of Europe', Phillip went on hopefully. 'That, of course, was not the British bankers' idea at all. They wished for trade, in order to lend, and so make more money. You know that, you and old Van Tromp with his broom to sweep the British ships off the seas.'

'Ja ja, Van Tromp, he did some sweeping, too, my friend!'

'The bankers, or banksters. of Lombard and Threadneedle Street wanted a gold-based Europe, since they had the gold in their vaults.'

'What's wrong with that?' asked the pipe-puffing Liberal journalist.

'Bad for trade, sir. Very bad.' Phillip drank his tenth glass of champagne and said, 'Zum Wohl!', before continuing with what he had read in Birkin's weekly paper. 'You see, France after the revolution was bankrupt, so she could not afford to buy sugar and other commodities brought from the British colonies in British "bottoms". So he started a new system.'

'And ten million died in Europe as a consequence.'

'Yes, when England started to blockade Europe. If Napoleon's system had prevailed, Europe would have become self-sufficient, with a share in the trade from the East.'

'Then why did not Napoleon try peaceful overtures? Shall I tell you? Because he had a lust for power. "And all power corrupts, but absolute power corrupts absolutely." Lord Acton said that, if you know your history.'

'My history, sir, is not of the law, such as Judge Jefferies and those judges who said, or one of them, that Englishmen would not be able to sleep safely in their beds if children were no longer hanged for stealing anything to the value of half-a-crown and upwards. But the point is this, Lombard Street bellies would have to shrink if Napoleon and his system prevailed. He offered a prize for anyone who discovered a substitute for cane sugar. It was won by someone in Poland who cultivated a weed which became what today we call sugar-beet. He offered a prize of ten thousand francs for a substitute for bicarbonate of soda from sea-water. Someone made it. Cotton from America was substituted by silk from Lille [sic. should be Lyon?—PB] and elsewhere. Europe was blockaded, Nelson burned Danish ships which traded with Napoleon.'

'But Napoleon used force. And found his grave in Russia ...'

'Russia, under Alexander the King, double-crossed Napoleon, don't forget. Napoleon was promised Russian wheat, then Alexander bilked and accepted a bribe of four million pounds in gold from Lombard Street not to deliver in bulk. So Napoleon went to give Alexander a punch on the nose and was defeated by General Winter. And—no, don't interrupt me—I know your point of view, in a way it is mine too—cheerio.' He swallowed another glass of wine. 'In eighteen fifteen Napoleon said, "These English will rue the day they refused to work with my system. In a hundred years there will arise a nation across the Rhine which will break the strangle-hold of gold in Europe." And he was one year out; for ninety-nine years later there was nineteen fourteen!'

'Who are you? Why are you talking like this in Germany, when very soon we are likely to be at war all over again!'

'My name is Phillip Maddison, and I write books.'

'Phillip Maddison? You wrote the Donkin Tetralogy? [fictional equivalent of *The Flax of Dream*—PB] That was a fine work, an idealistic work. What has happened to you since you wrote those novels, and that even better book, *The Water Wanderer*? [Tarka—PB] Stick to your last, my lad, and don't try to play Hamlet!'

### Williamson And Mosley

Henry Williamson was not—and never claimed to be—a political thinker as such. One of the strengths of the *Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight*, though—like *Les Hommes de bonne volonté* but unlike, I think, *A la recherche du temps perdu* or *Dance to the Music of time*—is that thought runs through it. But it is thought about the things of his own immediate experience, the interaction of his own sensibility with the world about him.

The early books on Phillip Maddison's childhood reflect on family relationships and on what was/is in his view an inhuman education system. The war books and immediate post-war books on what effect war has on those engaged in it.

Then there is his own encounter with Germans in 1914, his outrage at the way Germany was treated after the war, his own despair at the condition of Britain in the 1920s, his own delight at hearing someone (Mosley) who seems to be able to make sense of it all, his own joy at seeing Germany recover and once again able to reassert itself in the world. He never does what novelists do routinely—invent a fictional character who would experience the world, say, as a German soldier or a British politician. People with experience other than his own appear in the novels more or less as he experienced them.

In Mosley, Williamson encountered, and recognised, what he himself wasn't—a first class political mind. I am sufficiently of my age and generation to find some of Mosley's ways of expressing himself—notably on the subject of 'negroes', Slavs, 'orientals' or Jews—distasteful. But Mosley was of his age and generation. As far as he was concerned, Western European culture and its extension in the USA had achieved huge things in the world which negroes, Slavs and orientals had not achieved (he saw Jews as a particularly clever variety of oriental which had become too closely entwined with Western European culture. This is, shall we say, a large theme which I won't be able to discuss properly here). That the achievement of Western European/American civilisation was enormous and had dragged the rest of the world into its wake, could hardly be denied.

There was within Western European/American culture, however, a recognition that the ultimate end of this huge technological/military achievement was an increase in material comfort, and that this was not actually a very high end of human endeavour. Hence the appeal in England of what we might call non-British, or non-Protestant, religions, starting with Roman Catholicism and then extending further to the East. That Williamson could be attracted to this way of thinking was shown in the person of Willie Maddison in *The Pathway* and in the book *The Star Rover*, supposedly the book written by Willie, as remembered by the small group he had read it to shortly before his death, when the actual manuscript was burnt. This is as close as Williamson gets to pure fiction, indeed fantasy, unless we count the animal stories which were however based on very intensive research.

Although this is a tendency of my own I think it is to Williamson's credit that he wasn't satisfied with it—that he recognised that the material problems of unemployment, the degeneration of agriculture, and war required a material solution.

So what do we make of the material solution proposed by Oswald Mosley? What do we make of 'Fascism'? And how did it look to the other major contender as radical alternative to the nightmare created by 'liberal humanism', to Communism? Since after all it is the Communist understanding of Fascism as an absolute evil that is still with us, still rendering thought on the subject so very difficult.

### On 'Social Fascism'

In 1928-9, more or less coinciding with the ascendancy of Stalin in the Soviet Union and the policy of rapid industrialisation and the collectivisation of agriculture, the Comintern adopted a policy of refusing to distinguish between 'Social Democracy' and Fascism, and indeed suggested that this 'Social Fascism' could represent a greater threat to the Socialist future than Fascism red in tooth and claw.

In retrospect, the policy looks like a foolish mistake but the retrospect is structured by the rise of Hitler. In fact the Comintern responded quite quickly to the new threat posed by the Nazi Government, switching to the policy of the *United*, or *Popular Front*.

Prior to 1933, however, Fascism in power was the rather less bloody rule of Mussolini in Italy. Social Democracy in power could be seen as the SDP in Germany which, in the anarchy following the end of the war and the embargo forcing Germany into a humiliating treaty, had used the proto-Fascist *Freikorps* to prevent a Communist revolution; or it could be seen as the Labour Governments in Britain, embedded with a large element of the old Liberalism, and unable to break free of the supposedly scientific principles of classical economics. Or it could be seen as 'Mondism' (from Alfred Mond, Lord Melchett, manager of ICI who had organised the 'Mond-Turner talks between leading industrialists and Trade Union leaders)—the willingness to learn from and work with the existing entrepreneurial class that was embraced by Bevin.

What Fascism and Social Democracy had in common was an effort to improve working class living conditions within a capitalist framework, still leaving control over the means of production and exchange in private hands. The difference between them was the extent to which capitalism and the private owners of industry were expected to adapt to the requirements of the State as representing the interests of society as a whole, including the working class.

The reason for ultimately preferring 'Social Fascism'/Social Democracy to real Fascism was that real Fascism also wanted to bend the institutions of the working class—the Unions—to the requirements of the State, thereby severely constraining the activities of the Communists. The liberalism of the Social Democrats, which prevented them from challenging the bourgeoisie also prevented them from effectively challenging the Communists—

although, in terms of social policy they might have been worse than the Fascists, they were, from the Communist point of view, less dangerous.

### The Critique Of 'Democracy'

Fascism agreed with Communism that the tendency of Capitalism left to its own devices was to impoverish the working class, as an inevitable consequence of the need imposed by competition to reduce production costs. It also agreed with Communism that the solution to the problem (at least for the Communists the immediate solution, the first stage of a solution) was a strong State. The State had to be above the society, able to impose its will on the society. Mosley compared it to a very idealised view of the Tudor monarchy, able (he said) to impose the interest of the nation as a whole, including the powerless people, on the powerful barons who had precipitated the country into the Wars of the Roses.

Whether that makes good history or not, it is quite a good image for how he envisaged the State. It could not be democratic, as that term was understood in Britain in the 1920s. A democratic State, subject to the vagaries of party propaganda, the influence of money, the 'people' as an amorphous mass, a jumble of conflicting social interests, could only be a weak State.

Mosley, scion of the old British landed aristocracy, probably understood better than many that the real strength of the British State lay in the coherence of the ruling class. Nor was he embarrassed by this—he maintained so far as possible his contacts within the class throughout his life. But he felt that it was at a loss what to do in the crisis of the 1920s. His argument was that the social problem—in the first place unemployment—had to be addressed in the same state of mind and using the same means as the state of war. The mobilisation of the economy to address the problem did not require, as the Communists would have argued the destruction of the aristocracy, of the bourgeoisie, of the spirit of the entrepreneur (far from it), but it did require those elements to be bent to the needs of a national plan, an economy organised not to secure the highest return on money invested but the needs of the society as a whole, working class included.

Although the State was placed above the society, the idea of democracy wasn't entirely excluded. The *'corporate state'* recognised that the society was made up of distinct interests. Instead of a democracy

consisting of parties covering all areas of government competing for the affections of the people as an amorphous mass, it was proposed that the different interests could be given each their own means of organisation, with a large autonomy in organising their own affairs and making representations to the State. I don't know how this idea—in principle very attractive—worked out in the practice of the actually existing Fascist states. After the war, Mosley dismissed it—or at least the scheme worked out by his colleague Alexander Raven Thomson—as overly bureaucratic.

Within the Fascist mindset it was perfectly possible to admire Bolshevik Russia. A slogan of the Spanish Phalange was "*Long live the society of the future. Long live Fascist Italy. Long live National Socialist Germany. Long live Bolshevik Russia.*" Willie Maddison, as it happens, in *The Pathway* expresses enthusiastic admiration for Lenin. Phillip Maddison in *The Phoenix Generation* informs his German minder in 1935 that Willie also (perhaps rather in advance of his time) admired Hitler.

My copy of the writings of the Futurist theorist, Filippo Marinetti, has gone missing just when it's needed, but I remember he had a political manifesto in which he argued (or it might be better to say pointed out) that to plan an economy you need to have a clear idea of the limits of the area to be covered by the economy. A national plan requires a nation living in a clearly defined territory. Marinetti argued (or it might be better to say pointed out) that Lenin understood this. He (and Stalin after him) had concentrated on building '*Socialism in one country*'.

The objection to European Communists was that they did not understand this. They were 'internationalists', which meant in practice that they subordinated the national (French, Italian, German) interest to the Soviet, or Russian interest. It was quite understandable that the Russians should manipulate these foolish 'internationalists' in their own interest; it was equally understandable that the Fascists should resist that manipulation with everything in them. In France, Jacques Doriot's passage from Communism to Fascism was based on the feeling that the French Communists were simply the stooges of a Russian interest.

Unfortunately, however, the national economy did not necessarily provide everything that was needed for the fulfil-

ment of a national plan. The basic problem of capitalism, or rather industrialisation—the need to find markets to dispose of production beyond the needs of the nation; the need for a secure access to raw materials—hadn't gone away, hence the resurgence, or maintenance, of Imperial ambitions, the need for action beyond the borders of the nation state.

The ideal proclaimed at Versailles through the League of Nations was a system of nation states trading with each other on an equal basis in an international market. This of course was a fiction. The Fascist idea admitted the existence of leader nations and subordinate nations. Fascists—such as Quisling in Norway, Degrelle in Belgium, Doriot and Déat in France—had to accept a subordinate status and press for the best deal possible for their country in a system dominated by Germany. For Mosley, however, Britain already had a more than adequate market and source of raw materials in the form of the Empire<sup>6</sup> and should concentrate on cultivating that without trying to obstruct the efforts of Mussolini or Hitler to build Empires of their own. And, leaving aside the possible demands of his own psychological makeup, Hitler would not have needed to expand Eastwards if Versailles hadn't destroyed the Austro-Hungarian Empire (but in that case, of course, Hitler would never have been in power).

### Peace With Germany

Britain, however, Mosley argued, could not win a war against Germany with its own resources. It could only win by mobilising America and Russia on its side. That could only mean American and Russian hegemony and the end of the Empire.

Robert Skidelsky, in his biography of Mosley<sup>7</sup> sums up his position as follows:

*"Mosley's quest for peace and his National Socialism alike propelled him towards Anglo-German agreement, just as Churchill's refusal to contemplate such an agreement sprang from his lack of commitment to peace and from his hostility to Continental "tyrants". Churchill has recorded how he was 'obsessed by the impression of the terrific Germany I had seen and felt in action during the years of 1914 to 1918 suddenly becoming again possessed of martial power...' Mosley was obsessed with the gruesome slaughter of those years. To Churchill the First World War had been a successful if costly operation to preserve the traditional balance of*

power. For Mosley it finally discredited the whole idea of the balance of power. For Churchill nothing had changed. Britain must continue to 'oppose the strongest, most dominating power on the Continent...' For Mosley one purpose had replaced all the others: to remove the causes of war.

But it is equally true that Churchill and Mosley were on different sides of the ideological divide in the 1930s. In Churchill's view Philip II, Louis XIV, Napoleon, Wilhelm II, Hitler were all tyrants endangering the liberties of others through their insatiable ambitions and who therefore needed to be 'struck down'. This was the main English tradition, the ideological basis of balance of power as England has always seen it. Democratic socialism, Liberal capitalism and League [of Nations—PB] idealism fitted into this tradition easily enough since all three were offshoots of the English ideology. Once Mosley had lost his belief that England's 'free institutions' were the last word in civilisation, his commitment to this particular version of England's historic mission, already severely jolted by the First World War, disappeared altogether" (pp.433-4).

At the last moment before the war broke out Mosley had to dissuade Williamson from a quixotic project of going to Germany to speak to Hitler as one war veteran to another. Williamson naturally felt sympathetic to Rudolf Hess who tried to do the same thing in reverse. The last novel in the Chronicle—*The Gale of the World*—features an old First World War fighter pilot ace, 'Buster' Cloudesley, who develops a scheme for rescuing Hess from Spandau using glider planes. He has fond memories of chivalrous treatment at the hands of his wartime opponent, Hermann Göring:

"Herman Göring shot down Manfred Cloudesley over Mossy Face wood at Havrincourt in 1918. He saw that his enemy, who had killed nine of his Richthofen Staffel pilots, had the best surgeons and treatment in hospital. This morning Göring committed suicide. Better to have died on the cross, old Knight of the Ordre pour le Mérite" (p.98).

Maddison's sense of outrage at the progress of the Nürenberg Trials runs through the novel.

The title 'Gale of the World', incidentally, is a quotation from the Serb General Mihailovic, executed in 1946 on the order of Marshal Tito—

"shot in front of one of his daughters—a Communist; the father a Fascist, grey-bearded, manacle'd. I and all my works were caught in the gale of the world. The

hail of bullets cutting bone and flesh. *O fortunatus tu, mon general!* If only I had died of my wounds on the Somme. Morbid thoughts no good. Breathe in slowly; as slowly respire; twenty times. "Be still, and know that I am God." (Williamson).

Prior to the German assault on the USSR, Mihailovic was the only person leading a military resistance in occupied Europe. When I was living in France I became friends with a distinguished former associate of De Gaulle's who told me De Gaulle had sent him on a private mission to Yugoslavia to inform Tito that, so long as he (De Gaulle) had any power, Tito would not be allowed to set foot in France because of what he had done to Mihailovic.

### The Path To Power

But how did Mosley imagine that he and his Fascist movement could ever take power, providing the country with the sort of determined government he believed it needed? What did he think he was doing when he left the Labour Party (in which he was a force to be reckoned with) and, after the interval of the New Party, when he still commanded wide respect within both Labour and Conservative ranks, into the margins of British politics with the British Union of Fascists?

The expectation of classical liberal economics as practised by Snowden and Baldwin and the National Government was that, left to its own devices, the economy would right itself. All government could do was to hold the fort, to muddle through, until that happened. Mosley on the other hand expected the crisis to deepen, leading to a collapse and the emergence of physical force politics. But the only people prepared for physical force politics were the Communists, a marginal element in the existing political scene, but they had also been a marginal element in the Russian political scene in 1917. Hence the need for a body like the BUF, organised on a paramilitary basis. The precedent he pointed to was Edward Carson and the UVF.<sup>8</sup>

According to Williamson, the violence at Mosley's rallies was almost entirely the result of Communist infiltration: "*Uproar by Communist mobs was usual at a Birkin meeting; stones, half-bricks, razor blades in potatoes flung in the face, coshes, chair legs bound with barbed wire*" (*A Solitary War*, p.330). More surprisingly this view is supported by Robert Skidelsky. Skidelsky is now best known as the author of a massive biography of Keynes and as a major promoter of a new Keynesian

approach to economics.

His biography of Mosley (1975) follows on his early book (1967), *Politicians and the Slump: the Labour Government of 1929-31*, in which he argued that the 'Mosley Memorandum' of 1929 could have been the saving of the Labour Government. In the Introduction to the Mosley biography, he says (after expressing his admiration of Hugh Gaitskell): "*As the Labour Government of 1964 staggered from disaster to disaster under an obviously inadequate Prime Minister, Mosley took shape in my mind as Labour's 'lost leader'...*" (p.14).

He continues:

"the creativity with which he is now generally credited before 1931 did not suddenly disappear when he put on a black shirt. Rather, a highly unusual and penetrating mind went on developing and refining certain basic positions present only in embryo in the 1920s. Secondly, Mosley's political stands provide a mordant and ironic commentary on the history of his own lifetime. To study Mosley's thought is to be presented with an alternative history of Great Britain in the twentieth century, a history of 'what might have been' which has a fascination of its own. But it would be a mistake to treat it merely as fantasy. Mosley had a remarkable gift for being in tune with the main historical tendencies of his age. When his responses to twentieth century challenges are set side by side with those of Britain's rulers, it is their lack of attunement to the new age that appears to be striking. Mosley may have been out of tune with British political culture; but Britain itself was notably failing to adapt its nineteenth century ideas to twentieth century reality. Mosley may best be seen as an 'authoritarian moderniser' in a society which had 'resolved unwittingly to stand on the ancient ways'. It was the inherent difficulty of this position, as much as Mosley's 'character defects', which wrecked his political career. But the very quality of futurism which helped bring his political ambitions to dust keeps his ideas fresh for present and succeeding generations" (pp.16-17).

On the subject of political violence, he says:

"This whole complication of challenge and response makes it extremely difficult to assign responsibility for violence. Legally, the responsibility rests with the opponents of Fascism. They attacked Fascist meetings, processions and occasions. By and large fascists did no more than the law entitled them to do to defend those occasions. The basic reason why more

communists than fascists were convicted in the courts in the 1930s is that communists broke the law more frequently than fascists. Morally, the verdict has gone against Fascism; and the Public Order Act of 1936 was certainly passed on the assumption that the fascists were the guilty party. To the Left the anti-fascists were right to attack fascism simply because it was a 'bad thing'. And even the moderate Right found it very hard to sympathise with Mosley. Their attitude was very much that of the newspaper which remarked of him at the time of the Smethwick by-election (1926),<sup>9</sup> 'Mr Mosley rather asks for it, as he is a very provocative young man' ...

The general context in which violence took place was also favourable to opposition propaganda. The B.U.F.'s use of force always appeared to be more calculated, visible, more obviously organised than its opponents. In fact, the communists organised just as thoroughly, with as much military precision as the fascists. But their use of force was largely concealed; they were the guerrilla army; fascists the traditional army... a fascist march through a working-class area was a visible, open act. But when bricks were hurled at it what did anyone know about those hurling them? Who were they? Where did they come from? It looked like a 'spontaneous' expression of anger. But usually it wasn't ... 'It is fashionable to allege that we were starchy eyed idealists, but we certainly knew where to put razor blades in the potato when it came to a fight', says that veteran of many battles, Claud Cockburn..." (pp.361-2).

Because of the Mosley biography, Skidelsky was denied tenure at John Hopkins University and Oxford. Somewhat bizarrely, after passing through the Labour Party and SDP, he was made a life peer by the Conservative Government (under John Major) in 1991, becoming Conservative spokesman on Treasury Affairs in the Lords (which seems odd for a Keynesian) before being dismissed by William Hague because he opposed the war on Serbia over Kosovo.

### And In The Real World . . .

Obviously the establishment of a Fascist Government envisaged by Mosley through social collapse and confrontation with the Communists did not happen in Britain. But it could still be argued that the transition from classical economics to Keynesian economics did require a suspension of democracy—the suspension that took place during the war and virtual dictatorship of Ernest Bevin.

Skidelsky says that, at the time of the Mosley Memorandum, despite an obvious

similarity in political outlook, Bevin kept his distance. A comparison between them would be interesting. Bevin too could be said to have been the commander of an extra-parliamentary force—the TGWU, vastly more effective than the BUF. And vastly more effective in countering Communism—as Skidelsky points out, the confrontational methods of the BUF were well calculated to strengthen the Communists.

Mosley had argued that the re-organisation of the economy required wartime measures which he hoped could be applied in peace time. The irony was not lost on Williamson:

"Rural England, outside the desolate areas of airfields under construction, was becoming arable England again. Grass fields were ploughed up by orders of Agricultural Committees. Bad farmers—the obdurate 'C' men—were dispossessed at fourteen days notice. Businesses were closed down if they were considered 'unnecessary to the war effort'. The Government at last controlled Money. A British subject who had money in America and failed to sell his dollars to the British Government was liable to face a fine of thrice the value of the dollars and the original sum confiscated.

"Young men in the Forces looked well and fit... Village boys no longer had factory-made trash toys. They were beginning to carve and model their own—generally aircraft—out of odd bits of wood... Evacuee boys from London who at first had given trouble in the school, and helped in the spreading of obscene words and attitudes among the children, were changing... It was pathetic to see how, after a few words of praise—as it were in confidence to equals—a 'bad' boy would become alert and eager, anxious to be of use. The aimless kick-about-in-the-streets expression went from their faces. Phillip, after a few days, could almost see them reverting to type: the type of their rosy-faced forefathers, before the industrial revolution drew so many from the fields to the pallor of sweatshops and factories. These things were only indications of the incipient community spirit; but all of them were due to the precipitating agency, to use a term in chemistry, of the modern Lucifer" (*Lucifer Before Sunrise*, pp.74-5).

'Lucifer' being Williamson's code word for Hitler.

But Mosley was imprisoned during the war, together with other leaders of the BUF. He was released in November 1943 owing to ill health (the ruling class looks after its own. He was examined by the King's doctor, Lord Dawson of Penn<sup>10</sup>) but his release had been opposed by Bevin—

"behind him was the general council of the TUC which according to Beaverbrook mistook itself for a committee of public safety. Enmities on the Labour side went back a long way: Labour leaders, too, were genuinely worried about the effect of Mosley's release on industrial relations, particularly on the handle it would give to communist agitation inside the trade union movement" (Skidelsky p.461).

In his major publication after the war, *The Alternative*, he expresses little sympathy for the change that had taken place in British politics—in particular attaching no importance to nationalisation. He believed that, for initiating industrial projects, individual entrepreneurs were necessary but that once they were well established they should pass over to workers' control. The key role for Government in his eyes was not management of production but control of finance:

"His basic idea was still that the system of finance capitalism set up a chronic tendency for demand to fall short of productive capacity, and thus for the system to collapse into depression... Labour's policy was simply to reinstate nineteenth century capitalism with America replacing Britain as the world's chief money lender" (ibid p.489).

There is a certain grim relevance in all this to our present situation. Once again, as in 1929 and through the 1930s, mainstream politics is in the grip of the idea that 'classical' economics is scientific fact. Once again we are part of a globalised economy, more or less equivalent to what Lenin identified as '*Imperialism*', in which British industry and agriculture have both been gutted by cheaper imports. And since the deregulation of the 1980s (did Skidelsky as Conservative spokesman on Treasury Affairs support this?), the financial sector has been liberated from any concern it may have had about fulfilling social need.

One great difference is that Britain no longer has the possibility of exploiting the resources of Empire—a major concern of Mosley's, transferred in his immediate post-war vision to Africa as a hinterland for the whole of Europe, an idea that seems now to have been taken up by China.

The challenge facing Jeremy Corbyn is to bring about a change equivalent to the one Mosley envisaged, or the one Bevin achieved. But Mosley's tactic of

establishing a Fascist dictatorship in conflict with militant Communism is not available to him. Nor, hopefully, is Bevin's war. So can it be done in a 'democracy'?

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> There's also Georges Duhamel's ten volume *Chronique des Pasquier*.

<sup>2</sup> *In Search of Truth – Henry Williamson's credo*, accessible at <https://www.henrywilliamson.co.uk/57-uncategorised/129-in-search-of-truth>

<sup>3</sup> Independently published in 2017. One wonders if Guy Yeates is related to Victor Maslin Yeates, Williamson's boyhood friend, First World War fighter pilot who published an account of his wartime experiences, *Winged Victory*, with an introduction by Williamson, in 1933. His understanding of the causes of war rather resembles Williamson's: 'a state living by finance must always have neighbours from which to suck blood, or it is like a dog eating its own tail.' He had a son called Guy.

<sup>4</sup> In her account of *The Dream of Fair Women*, accessible at <https://www.henrywilliamson.co.uk/bibliography/a-lifes-work/the-dream-of-fair-women>

<sup>5</sup> *In Search Of Truth*.

<sup>6</sup> Williamson's fictional name for the British Union of Fascists is the 'Imperial Socialist Party.'

<sup>7</sup> Robert Skidelsky: *Oswald Mosley*, Macmillan, 1975.

<sup>9</sup> In *The Alternative*, explaining the 'atrocities' committed by German soldiers in occupied territories in the late stages of the war, Mosley remarks: "That is a situation which seldom confronts Churchwardens, but is often met, in varying degree, by military police in an occupied country, where resistance is being organised on a large scale. Did all the Black and Tans emerge quite so spotless from the same test in much the same situation in Ireland, as the Churchwarden would have liked to think in Church on Sunday, just after he had voted for the Coalition Government which used them in the attempt to break the spirit of the Irish by terror? Let us remember that Britain was not fighting for her life at the time the Government employed the Black and Tans in Ireland, but that every country, which occupied another country in the late war, was, at that stage, fighting for its existence." Mosley in Parliament in the early twenties (sitting as a 'Conservative and Unionist') began his career as a fierce critic of the government's terror campaign in Ireland.

<sup>9</sup>When Mosley stood as a Labour candidate against the Chamberlain dynasty. It his perhaps his opposition to the Chamberlain domination of Birmingham which prevented him from acknowledging the similarity of his ideas to those of Joseph Chamberlain

<sup>10</sup> Skidelsky, p.461.

V  
O  
X

Bunrecht na hÉireann  
Irish Court Case???  
A Sense of Place  
More British than the Brits  
Ephemera  
CASTING pearls at . . .  
British Modesty!

P  
A  
T

**Bunrecht na hÉireann—**  
Constitution of Ireland:

**Article 8**

The Irish language as the national language is the first official language.

The English language is recognised as a second official language.

Provision may, however, be made by law for the exclusive use of either of the said languages for any one or more official purposes, either throughout the State or in any part thereof.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Irish Court Case???**

"The application by a Councillor to have his case heard in Irish will be heard at the High Court in Dublin on December 13, 2018.

"Councillor Diarmaid O Cadhla, a member of Cork County Council is accused of blacking out Queen Victoria-related street names in Cork. Mr Ó Cadhla faces five counts of criminal damage to street signs at three separate locations in Cork City. (*Irish Examiner*-15.9.2018)

"This matter has been adjourned several times at Cork District Court so that a date could be fixed for hearing of the Irish language issue at the High Court in Dublin.

His advocate, Mr Barrett previously said that one of his submissions was that the case should be heard by a judge fluent in Irish. *"There is no translation online for the criminal damage charge. I cannot advise him [on whether to plead guilty or not guilty] until I have a translation online"*, said Mr Barrett.

*Cork Street Names Campaign* was set up to have streets in Cork named after the British queen renamed. They describe the naming of streets after Queen Victoria as an insult to the dignity of the Famine victims.

**"309k translation costs—  
Polish most requested..."**

"MORE than €300,000 has been spent on translation services in Cork's courts since 2015, with Polish the most requested language.

Interpreters for Lithuanian, Romanian and Russian are also commonly requested in courts across the city and county." (*Eye Echo*, Cork, 19.9.2018)

\*\*\*\*\*

**A Sense of Place**

Aylesbury, Tresilian, Dorset Paddocks, Walsingham Downs, Norfolk Grove : these are the estate names for three and four bedroom luxury housing springing up in the middle class areas of Dublin and Cork as the new Irish bourgeoisie distance themselves from native place names.

\*\*\*\*\*

**More British than the Brits**

"Brexit affords 'significant opportunities' for Ireland in the legal sphere, the country's most senior judge believes." (*Irish Independent*, 14.9.2018)

Chief Justice Frank Clarke said Ireland can provide 'a safe haven' by acting as a venue for the resolution of international disputes at a time of great uncertainty.

Mr. Justice Clarke made his remarks at a seminar at Fordham University in New York last night.

His comments come amid continuing uncertainty over the enforcement of British court decisions in the EU following Brexit.

After Brexit, Ireland will become the largest common law jurisdiction in the EU, with common law being the preferred governing law for a high proportion of cross-border commercial contracts and arbitrations.

We love our Common Law in Ireland, over the centuries we basked in its implementation of justice and humanity.

Padraic Pearse has expressed the sentiment that *"Daniel O'Connell found a mob and turned it into a nation"*. The direction we in Ireland are taking today

has all the appearance of being turned back into a mob.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Ephemera**

"One year the National Federation of Fish Fryers were holding their annual conference at the same time that the National Union of Journalists were holding theirs. The Federation sent the following telegram to the NUJ: 'Fraternal greetings. Our work is wrapped up in yours.'" (*Lord Greenwood of Rossendale, British Labour Party politician*)

\*\*\*\*\*

**CASTING pearls at . . .**

"José Mourinho has described himself as 'one of the greatest managers in the world' and quoted the philosopher Hegel to defend the stance.

"He made the claim when asked what it meant to him to be in charge of Manchester United. 'I am the manager of one of the greatest clubs in the world but I am also one of the greatest managers in the world'..." (*The Guardian*, 31.8.2018)

Three years have passed since he won the last of his eight championships in four different countries—three of which are English titles—and he was asked whether he would remain one of the world's greatest managers even if he did not win a ninth title.

"Of course", he said. 'Did you read any philosopher? You spend time reading Hegel. Just as an example Hegel says: "The truth is in the whole, is always in the whole". The inference was that Mourinho's overall CV should be considered...' (*The Guardian*, 31.8.2018).

The quotation is *"the true is the whole"* and it comes from *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, which Hegel published in 1807.

The gist of the idea is that you don't see the truth at the beginning. Think of an acorn and an oak tree. You need to wait for the acorn to become an oak tree before you can see the whole. Hegel applies this to people and history: you see who people truly are only when they have fully developed their capacities.

Georg Hegel's withering statement to his student: *"Only you have ever understood me—and you got it wrong!"* He wasn't referring to Jose!

\*\*\*\*\*

**British Modesty!**

"I contend that we (the British) are the finest race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race." (*Cecil Rhodes*)

\*\*\*\*\*