

Church & State

An Irish History Magazine

And Cultural Review Of Ireland And The World

A Culture Of Rights?

Labour And History

The Forgotten Lusitania

Sir Michael O'Dwyer And Amritsar

Plato: Politics, Education, Religion

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A Culture Of Rights?

The British Labour Party, which has never contested Elections in the Six County region of the British state, has carried a motion in Parliament requiring the Government to extend ‘mainland’ legislation on Abortion and homosexual marriage to the Six Counties, but it remains opposed to contesting Elections in the Six Counties. It stands therefore for Government without Representation, breaking a fundamental principle of the British Constitution. (However, Westminster does not propose to impose an Irish Language Act, though it has been the subject of a previous agreement, and also remains a demand in the current round of negotiations over the restoration of Stormont.)

British Governments have always had the right to over-ride the Devolution which they imposed on the Six Counties, and to legislate directly on matters which they chose to devolve, but they never did so during all the Stormont years, when much more serious issues were at stake than is now the case—issues which led to a War.

It is now exactly a hundred years since the proposal was first made to enact Partition by imposing a system of devolved Government on the Six Counties. It was made in the *Government of Ireland Bill*, published late in 1919. That proposal was opposed by the Ulster Unionist leader, Edward Carson. He said that Ulster Protestants had no wish to be put in the position of having to govern Catholics in a local Six County system in order to remain within the United Kingdom. But Westminster insisted that they must run a Northern Ireland Government—which could only be a government of Catholics by Protestants—or else they would come under a Dublin Government.

The Ulster Unionists submitted under duress to what they knew was a bad system. But the responsibility lies entirely with the Westminster Parties—and above all with the Labour Party, which was then in the process of displacing the Liberal Party as the second Party of the state.

Labour opposed Partition verbally but did not make an issue of the reckless means by which it was imposed—the establishment of the Northern Ireland system. And what it did when Partition-by-means-of-Devolution became an accomplished fact was to refuse to operate in the Six Counties. It refused to contest either Westminster Elections or local Elections in the Six Counties. The effect of this was to leave the Catholic minority entirely unrepresented in state politics.

The Tory Party, when it took definite shape again in 1922 after a period of confusion, also refused to operate in the Six Counties. But it retained a loose connection with the Ulster Unionist Party, and acted as the guarantor of the Union. Ulster Protestants therefore had a kind of third-rate representation through the Tories at Westminster, and Ulster Unionist MPs usually voted with the Tories. But the Catholic community was left entirely without representation in the politics of the

state. It was strongly Labour in outlook, but Labour boycotted it.

The Labour excuse, as far as it ever gave one, was that it favoured a United Ireland and it would be contradictory of it to confirm Partition by functioning in the Six Counties. But, when Labour came to undisputed power in 1945, it did nothing to end Partition. And when the 26 County State cut its last tenuous link with the Commonwealth in 1948, the Labour Government responded by passing legislation reinforcing Partition.

Its boycott of Northern Ireland after that was gross hypocrisy.

It developed a line of rhetoric about “*the twelve Ulster Tories*” elected to Westminster, classifying the Ulster Unionists as Tories, which they were not. The Ulster Unionist Party came close to monopolising Six County representation at Westminster because the Labour Party refused to contest elections in Northern Ireland, and it was increasingly evident that the local Nationalist Party was a futile organisation.

The ‘Ulster Tories’ voted with the Tory Party against the reforms of the 1945 Labour Government. But, once those reforms were implemented on ‘the mainland’, the Northern Ireland Government adopted at Stormont all the measures its MPs had voted against at Westminster.

In the 1920s it had made it a condition on continuing to operate the devolved Government, which it had not wanted, that Westminster should agree to finance Six County parity with Britain in social welfare arrangements. There was therefore no real contradiction involved in voting with the Tories at Westminster and then copying Labour legislation into the Stormont Statute Book.

Labour now allows token individual party membership to Six County residents, but it continues to boycott elections. But politics is a collective activity engaged in by organised parties. Individual membership may offer a kind of religious consolation to the individual, but it is not political engagement with the State.

And now Labour votes to impose homosexual marriage and abortion on the Six Counties, on the ground that they are universal human rights, lying beyond the competence of any political body to decide on. Ulster Unionists deny that there is any Declaration of Human Rights of which these things form a part, and they have not been answered.

Opposition to homosexual marriage is described as homophobic, but it clearly has no essential connection with decriminalisation of homosexual conduct—and it is a contested issue in England as well as in the Six Counties.

Marriage, throughout all ages and in all places, has existed as a social institution for the production and rearing of children, and for that reason the family has been considered to be the basic unit of society—the building block. Homosexual couplings are by their nature incapable of producing children.

Twenty years ago the very idea of homosexual marriage, if it had ever been seriously proposed for legislation, would have been regarded as an absurdity. Now, in England, it is a fundamental human right which must be taught in the schools, as the law of the land. The measure was slipped through Parliament by Cameron's Tory Government, with little public debate, to become the law of the land.

The large, increasing, and increasingly indispensable Muslim population of England objects to having the institution of marriage in its historic substance destroyed for the next generation by the action of the schools. Labour Party activists insist that it must be destroyed in the interest of freedom. It is the law of the land and the State must interfere actively in the schools in order to ensure that reactionary Muslim culture is destroyed.

The Labour position on this matter, and on others, now seems to be one of Authoritarian Libertarianism. And it must be applied in the Six Counties as well as in Birmingham, even though Labour has always refused as a matter of principle to take part in the governing of the Six Counties.

In the period of the great Moslem migration to England homosexual marriage was unthought of, and considerable latitude was allowed to teachers in schools, but teaching likely to encourage homosexual tendencies in children was discouraged. All of that has now been reversed. Teachers are obliged by law to undermine everything that was the case then.

Labour demands that the Government should enforce the law in the schools, even on very young children. And Muslims, who are a particularly industrious part of the population, have begun to make their own private provision for education.

English culture has long been driven by contention between its two sources, which Disraeli called Norman and Anglo-Saxon. Politically they were Cavalier and Puritan, which then became Tory and Liberal. The Tory strain had an aptitude for letting things be, while the Puritan strain was driven to establish a uniformity of what was 'right'.

The Puritan strain was excluded from high-level politics for almost two centuries after making a mess of things under Cromwell, during which time it made itself the capitalist middle class and made Capitalism a world force. It was admitted to the corridors of power by the 1832 reform and it launched the Victorian era of prohibitive legislation in certain spheres while letting the economy run free.

The draconian laws against homosexual conduct were introduced in that period, and the sanctity of marriage was insisted upon. Parnell was far from being the only politician whose political career was ruined by the Nonconformist Conscience which came to dominate the Liberal Party.

The Puritan poet and politician, John Milton, asserted that it was England's mission *to teach the nations how to live*. That came to be accepted as a self-evident truth in British culture. It was asserted by a young man in the audience of a recent BBC *Question Time*, not in a quotation from Milton but as a statement of the obvious. There was no disagreement.

Whatever is the fashion of the moment in England is universally true. English culture in its Puritanised condition cannot imagine that different ways of life can all be valid. The Imperial spirit is deeply ingrained in popular culture.

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It has changed its mind on homosexuality. It used to be Bad, and to be something that could not be tolerated. It is now Good, and it must be put on a par with heterosexuality, in the name of Equality, in social arrangements. The heterosexual activity through which human existence is continued must not be differentiated in any way from homosexual activity which is a biological dead end.

In other societies homosexuality could be let be as a naturally occurring aberration within the complex sexual system by which the human race is reproduced. But not in England.

A vision of homosexuality as having some special mission in human affairs was published in England about 90 years ago: *The Well Of Loneliness* by Radclyffe Hall. This suggests that it is not an aberration within the complex system by which nature provides for the reproduction of the human race, but has some natural purpose for which it was designed but which has not yet been discovered. That may be. But it can be said with certainty that its purpose is not the reproduction of the race—and reproduction is an absolute necessity of human existence.

It would not be surprising if there was soon an Ameranglian war on Russia. That is the way the propaganda is heading. And, if there is a war, then the “*human right*” of Equal Marriage will be prominent in the war propaganda.

Homosexual conduct is not illegal in Russia, but marriage there, as in most of the world, remains a social institution dedicated to reproduction. And homosexual marriage is all that counts in England today. And in Ireland. And it is the thing that Nationalist Ireland sees its way to imposing on the Ulster Prods.

During the two generations between the setting up of Northern Ireland and the coming to fruition of the War that was implicit in that arrangement, the Nationalist Party critique of Ulster Unionism in the sexual dimension of things was directed at the “*contraceptive culture*” of Unionism. J.J. Campbell, the Nationalist leader, saw Unionism as destroying itself by its anti-reproductive culture.

Limited abortion was, and is, available in the North. And we remember when Mary Kenny went up to Belfast to buy French Letters and flourished them at the Border on the way down.

When Unionist Ulster was being described as spurious and brittle, we said that it seemed to us that it was Anti-Partitionist culture that was brittle. It was largely based on a recently-established form of Catholic organisation, which was not an evolution of the Christianity that was implanted at the time of St. Patrick. In historical terms it was a novelty, compared with the Presbyterian culture of the North. But we did not expect it to collapse so suddenly and so unthinkingly, even though we saw the culture of the Unionist community as being more durable.

In a Radio Ulster discussion of the Westminster decision to impose abortion on demand and homosexual

marriage, the rights of the devolved electorate were invoked. One caller in the *Stephen Nolan Show* said that she was all for the devolution of power, but devolution to the individual. This ultimate anti-social position has been in the logic of “*human rights*” campaigning for some time, but this was the first explicit statement of it that we noticed.

Another caller—or possibly the same one—denied that she stood for abortion on demand: she stood for “*abortion on request*”.

But there are signs that the freewheeling Authoritarian Libertarianism, that began after the death of Martin McGuinness, is beginning to meet with resistance. ***

Letter to the Editor

Multi-Denominational Education

Dalkey,
Co. Dublin.

21st May 2019.

The Editor
Church and State Magazine.

Dear Editor,

I am the widow of Bill Hyland who is described in the Editorial of *Church and State—No. 136* as “one of the founders of *Educate Together*”. While Bill was very supportive of and engaged with the Dalkey School Project and the Educate Together movement he was never a member of the committee of either the Dalkey School Project (founded in February 1975) nor of *Educate Together* (founded in 1984). Bill died in 1996—22 years ago. In order to ensure that his views are accurately reflected, I wish to set the record straight about his views about the teaching of religion in schools, which are contained in a number of papers which he wrote in the 1970s and early 1980s.

Bill strongly believed that a rounded education must include Religious Education—but he distinguished between Re-

ligious Education and Denominational Instruction. He was of the view (a view shared by members of the Dalkey School Project) that a Religious Education programme in a multi-denominational school must take account of the religious and cultural differences of the families sending their children to the school. In a paper he wrote in 1977 (more than 40 years ago) he stated: “The programmes developed must take this variety into account and must accord with the aim that the social, religious and cultural background of each child be equally respected”. His paper continued: “An important distinction is that between those components of a programme which assume adherence to a particular denomination and components which do not assume such adherence”. He added: “Courses can be developed containing both kinds of components. Those components implying specific denominational commitment would be optional and would probably be restricted to those so committed”. His paper continued:

“Children should be helped (within the limits of their capabilities) to realise the distinction between basic statements of religious tenets, and the institutions which encapsulate these doctrines in particular times, places and circumstances. Religious Education must be taught in the light of history and the social function of religious institutions, particularly those which were and are important in our

Labour And History

history. This implies giving a sense of the development of doctrines and concepts and of the different roles that religious institutions have played at various times in history”.

Bill’s views were well ahead of his time, and many of them are currently shared by senior members of the hierarchy, both Catholic and Protestant. He wrote that the fundamental objectives of a Religious Education curriculum should include the following:

To give children an appreciation of the importance of religious ideas and institutions in the development of culture, in the history of the country, in contemporary reality and in individual lives;

To give children an awareness of the main tenets of Christianity, identifying both what is common to the main traditions and what differs from one denomination to another;

(In the case of children of specific denominations) to co-operate with the denominational authorities in providing children with the basics of their faith, in those cases where the parents wish the school to participate in this task.

To help the child not only with his/her own faith, but to be aware of and appreciative of the commitment of others to their faith. Our aim would be to foster not merely tolerance but understanding.

To give the child a capacity for developing a personal commitment to religious values in his/her own life on the basis of knowledge and free choice.

To help children to understand the part that religious concepts and their embodiment in religious and other institutions have played in the development of our society particularly in view of the sometimes close association of these institutions with political values and structures”.

As Bill would wish his views to be accurately reflected in any magazine which purported to include his views or beliefs, I would be grateful if you would publish this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Áine Hyland

The founding conference of the Irish Labour History Society was held in Belfast in May 1974. The other memorable event that occurred in Belfast in May 1974 was the General Strike. The relationship between these two expressions of Labour was one of profound hostility. It was, however, a one-sided hostility. The Conference was profoundly hostile to the Strike, in whose shadow it was being held, while the Strike was entirely unaware of the Conference.

I was publishing *Bulletins* in support of the Strike, but I called up to the University area once or twice to see what was happening at the Labour History Conference. The leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, the future Lord Fitt, denounced the Strike at a Fascist *coup d’etat*. I don’t recall seeing him at the Conference, but the feeling of the Conference about the Strike was in accordance with Fitt’s characterisation of it.

Much was made of the fact that the Strike was not called by the Trade Union leadership. In fact the General Secretary of the TUC came to Belfast to break it. His intervention had no effect, beyond being seen as an irritating intervention by an outsider.

The TUC is effective in conjunction with the Labour Party. The Labour Party did not organise in the Northern Ireland region of the state which it governed. And, even though Trade Unionism functions in the context of the economic policy of the state, and state economic policy in Northern Ireland was strictly that of the the British state, the general Trade Union body was officially not the Trade Union Congress but the Irish Congress of Trade Unions—even though the economic policy of the Irish state had little bearing on Northern Ireland. The General Secretary of the TUC was therefore acting outside his area of competence when he came to Belfast to break a strike.

The Strike was unofficial. It was organised by a group of shop stewards. That was at a time when unofficial strikes, organised by shop stewards, were not at all unusual in Britain.

And it was a political strike, not a strike over pay and conditions. Political Strikes were certainly unusual in Britain, but there had been a famous political strike in Irish nationalist history, and the characterisation of the Ulster Strike as fascist on the grounds that it was political was Irish nationalist.

One would expect a Labour History Conference held in the middle of a General Strike to take some interest in the complications of Labour in Northern Ireland, which brought about the Strike and made it effective. But all I saw at the Conference was minds closed in hostility and resentment.

The issue in the Strike was perfectly clear. A power-sharing Government under the Secretary of State was set up under the Sunningdale Agreement on January 1st, with only a marginal element of Unionist opposition. The understanding was that the sovereignty claim over Northern Ireland in the Irish Constitution had been revoked by the Irish Government’s signature on the Sunningdale Agreement.

The fact that the Dublin Government, acting under a written Constitution, did not have the power to revoke the sovereignty claim, was little understood in the North until a Fianna Fail back-bencher, Kevin Boland, brought a legal action against the Government for breaking the Constitution by signing the Sunningdale Agreement. The Government defended its action by pleading in Court that it had not attempted to revoke the sovereignty claim. It had only said that it was not its policy to enforce the claim. The claim remained there for any future Government to implement.

It was that clarification by the Dublin Government that led to the formation of a shop stewards’ group in Belfast, the *Ulster Workers’ Council*, to monitor the process of implementing the Sunningdale Agreement.

The Agreement provided for the setting up of two cross-Border bodies. The more serious of these was an all-Ireland Parliamentary body.

The SDLP segment of the devolved Northern Ireland Government

held a joint meeting with the Dublin Government. The purpose seems to have been to get a photograph of the joint session for the press, giving the message that a United Ireland was on the way. The SDLP boasted that the Agreement was the means by which the Unionists would be hustled into a united Ireland.

The UWC gave notice in March that, if this kind of thing continued, it would counter it with a Strike, which it called a Constitutional Stoppage. The crucial thing was that the establishment of the All-Ireland Parliamentary Council should be deferred—while the Power-Sharing Executive continued to function within Northern Ireland—or else that a fresh election to the devolved Assembly should be held to see if there was a mandate for the all-Ireland Parliamentary body in the light of the reassertion of the sovereignty claim by Dublin. If the Parliamentary body was set up on the appointed date in May, without being ratified by an election, it would be met with a General Strike.

That seemed to be a reasonable position to us in Athol Street. We tried to warn the SDLP that the matter was serious but our advice was brushed aside.

This SDLP blindness was encouraged by the Secretary of State, Merlyn Rees, and his Deputy Stanley Orme, who was a member of the Connolly Association.

The Strike was called and was made effective. The Government was made powerless—which must always be the case in industrial society when a strike is called for a realisable purpose. The Secretary of State refused to negotiate. On his home ground he would have known what was happening and negotiations would have begun long before the strike was called, but the Labour Party boycott of Northern Ireland, from the moment of its mischievous establishment in 1921, had made it foreign territory to him. In the end, he scrapped the entire Sunningdale Agreement rather than negotiate terms for its continuation.

I took no interest in the Labour History Society after observing its behaviour at its founding Conference in the midst of a General Strike. I knew that it had launched a magazine, but over the decades it had somehow never come my way. I took it for granted that it hated me for pointing out the obvious

to it at its founding Conference.

Recently I came across a file of its magazine, *Saothar*, and glanced through it. I was surprised by how substantial it was. It was not at all what one would expect in a Labour magazine in a society in which Labour was politically marginalised. It had an Establishment flavour to it. It was academically-centred. It seemed to have served as a stepping stone in the careers of many academics.

I looked to see if it dealt with the great taboo subject of Connolly's rapid re-orientation in the world of international socialism in September 1914, and his strong identification with Germany in the war on both socialist and national grounds, but could find nothing.

There was an article called *Bew's Ireland* by Kevin Whelan in No. 33. As far as I recall, the future Lord Bew and the future Professor Patterson took part in the Founding Conference in 1974. And around that time they became Stickies, Official Republicans, with Bew at least going as far as joining the Official IRA. The Stickies established a relationship with Moscow on a par with that of the Communist Party. But, judging by Whelan's review, they had become outcasts to the Labour History Society. I suppose they had adapted to a different Establishment.

I read through that review for old time's sake. My brief association with Bew had ended well before *Saothar* was founded. He rejected my political characterisation of Northern Ireland as an undemocratically-governed region of the democratic British state. He did not argue the matter. He just took himself away in the face of it, later coming up with the notion that Northern Ireland was itself a state.

I don't know what Whelan's opinion is on that matter, but I would be surprised if he agreed with me and did not agree to a considerable extent with Bew. He makes no reference to the matter in his five-page assault on Bew, whose distinctive contribution to "*political science*" is his description of Northern Ireland as a state with a party-political system of its own, consisting of the Populists and the Anti-Populists.

I find that I am mentioned suddenly in the middle of the review:

"More austere historians might worry about excessive reliance on modern editions edited by Patrick Maume and on Brendan Clifford's compilations of

documents. They might also be concerned that in Chapter 11 on modern Ireland, twenty-four of 215 footnotes reference Bew himself and his frequent collaborator Henry Patterson. There are no references to Brendan O'Leary, John McGarry of Jennifer Todd..."

I was very surprised to see that I was given as a reference in an Oxford University Press book by Bew. I looked for it to see what it was, and found that the reference wasn't there.

There is an old-fashioned view that accuracy of detail is basic to academic practice. And I know that there was a time when that was the case. It is the case no longer. It ceased to be the case when the Northern War set off an explosion of random academic publishing on a subject, Northern Ireland, which had received no academic treatment until the War, which was always implicit in it, erupted.

Whelan must have found my "*compilations*" intensely irritating and so, when he was irritated by Bew's book, he reasoned that two things which irritated him must be the same thing.

He does not mention any of my "*compilations*". The major "*compilation*" I have published is *The Veto Controversy*. I believe it is the only one I have called a compilation. It deals with the revolt of the Dublin middle class after 1808 against the *Emancipation Bill*, proposed by Grattan with the agreement of the Catholic Hierarchy, which would have given the Government the right to veto the appointment of a particular priest to a Bishopric. This was normal practice in Europe, in Protestant states as well as Catholic.

The Irish Bishops had all been educated on the Continent because of the Penal Laws, and they saw nothing wrong in the arrangement. The Jacobite Pretender had been recognised by Rome as the legitimate authority in Ireland until about a generation earlier, and the Pope appointed Bishops in consultation with him. But that had ceased to be the case when the line of Stuart Pretenders to the British throne ended in the late 18th century. A new arrangement had to be made.

The Irish Bishops saw no reason why the function performed by the Stuarts who claimed the Crown but failed to get it should not be transferred to the Hanoverians who actually wore the Crown. Neither did the Pope, who was used to dealing with

the secular authorities in the matter. Grattan therefore proposed Catholic Emancipation with a Government veto on the selection of Bishops. But the emerging Catholic middle class of Dublin, led by Walter Cox and the *Irish Magazine*, raised an outcry against the proposal, which compelled the Hierarchy to disown the arrangement, and led to the Bishops in the Irish Church being appointed directly by Rome without any national intermediary body. That highly unusual arrangement had long-term consequences.

I gave the Vetoist case at length, and I got the feel of Jacobite Ireland from it. And I gave the anti-Vetoist case at length, and saw the new national movement being generated by it.

The book was stocked by Mullens in Central Belfast and sold out very quickly, or at least it disappeared from the shelves. Mullens would not restock it, which suggested that perhaps it had not quite been sold.

Books Ireland gave it a brief dismissive review which said absolutely nothing about it. The Church (then still in its full power) clearly did not want there to be any thought on the subject. And the anti-clericalism of Dublin had no more time for it than the Church had. And so the collapse of the Church position, when it came, was entirely mindless.

I thought the publication of the book was wasted effort, though the writing of it was of value to myself, until a recent article in *Irish Political Review* by Michael Stack showed that it was a book that was capable of being read to some purpose.

If it was not *The Veto Controversy* that irritated Kevin Whelan so much, I suppose it must have been *Bolg an Tsolair*, or *Belfast Politics* and other material from the United Irish movement in Antrim and Down.

In these, I think I showed that there was a politically autonomous movement of the Protestant colony in Ulster, and in the Antrim/Down migration, rather than the Plantation of the other Counties, which intersected with the movement of Catholic Ireland only at the margins, and which was also quite distinct from the aristocratic Anglicanism of the South.

The United Irish movement in Antrim and Down was not anti-British or anti-Monarchist. Its object was to reform the Ascendancy Irish Parliament into a national Parliament under the

Crown and within the ambit of the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688. The enemy was the Anglican aristocracy that owned the Parliament and prevented it from functioning under the Crown in the spirit of the British Constitution.

The demand for the admission of Catholics to the franchise was not to fuel the separation of Ireland from Britain but to draw the Irish into the British framework. That was Grattan's demand and, insofar as the movement was forced beyond that demand by the obduracy of the aristocracy, the Ulster colony was not at ease with it.

Its heart wasn't in the Rebellion into which it was being cornered. And, when the abolition of the Irish Parliament was set in motion by the Union Bill as the Rebellion was being suppressed, the United Irish movement in the North melted away into the British Constitution. It was the aristocracy and the Orange Order that were anti-Union.

The core of the Ulster Protestant body was not Anglican, therefore it lost nothing by the Act of Union.

Belfast first appeared in political history when its Presbytery condemned the execution of Charles 1 and recognised his son, Charles 2, as his successor. For this it was denounced by Cromwell's Secretary of State, John Milton. Cromwell considered rooting it up and deporting it, but did not get round to it because of pressing problems at home.

Presbyterian Ulster then settled down to autonomous middle-class development for a century and a half as a self-sufficient colony. It took part in the "*Glorious Revolution*" but was not affected by it to the extent that the Anglicans were through plunder and systematic oppression and a monopoly of political power.

It was included within the *Act of (Protestant) Toleration*, but excluded from the political life of the new regime. It did not form part of the new Protestant Ascendancy system in Ireland but neither was it seriously oppressed by it. It was oriented towards Scotland, where it would have been part of the State, but it lay a few miles outside Scotland.

The layer of Protestant Ascendancy established in Ireland after 1691 was draped over it but let it be, for the most part. Under the terms of the 1707 Union of the English and Scottish Parliaments, the Presbyterian Church of Scotland became a second Established Church of the state. Ulster Presbyterians went to

Glasgow for University Education and felt at ease there.

At home they lay between the two Established Churches, the Scottish and the English/Irish, and it seemed likely that the influence of the Scottish Establishment secured to them the possibility of free civil development in Ireland.

Belfast built itself as a bourgeois town outside the official structures of the state. There was a Borough of Belfast but it was not the Government of the town. It was an official fiction designed to give Lord Chichester two seats in the Ascendancy Parliament. It was the Pocket Borough of the Chichester family, established before there was a town, and the town was not built under Chichester guidance.

As the town grew, it devised its own informal mode of government. A politely distant relationship existed between the actual town and the official Borough. The first Belfast Election which was voted in by members of the town, which was a contested election between British political parties, did not occur until the 1832 Reform, by which time Belfast was an industrial city.

In the 1780s and 90s there was extensive Ulster Presbyterian support for Grattan's attempt to reform the Irish Parliament so that it might become representative of both the Irish and the Presbyterians. When the Parliament criminalised the Reform movement and provoked rebellion, and the British Government suppressed the rebellion and immediately proposed the abolition of the Anglican Irish Parliament, the Ulster Presbyterians had no reason to oppose this development.

They had supported reform of the Ascendancy Parliament but had never been Irish nationalists against Britain, nor Republicans against the Crown.

There was Presbyterian support for O'Connell's Catholic Emancipation movement because it was directed against the Test Act which also applied to Presbyterians. But when O'Connell then attempted to give that reform movement the aim of repealing the Union, the Presbyterians refused to follow. And when O'Connell condemned them as apostates he was met with a spirited Unionist reply from those who had supported the abolition of the Test Act. That was half a century before the 1st Home Rule Bill.

I also published a number of

“*compilations of documents*” from the course of development of the Protestant body in Ulster which I have described here. Nationalist Ireland, operating with fixed ideas inherited from Redmondism, took no interest. It did not dispute my history, or the policy I derived from it. It just did not want to know. Insofar as it gave any semblance of thought to the matter, it based itself on a misconception of the Grattan and Wolfe Tone movements, and reasoned that, if Protestant Ulster had supported Grattan’s attempt to forge an Irish nation by broadening the Ascendancy regime to make it in some degree representative of the Irish majority, as well as bringing the Dissenters into it, there must still be a strain of Irish nationalism lurking within it, though it was inhibited from expressing it by religious bigotry and Tory influence.

That was what was said in effect by the Fine Gael Front Bencher, Peter Barry, in a public debate with me half a century ago (in Coleraine as far as I recall). I was certain that there was no strain of romantic Irish nationalism latent within “Dissenter” loyalism, but I did not discourage anybody from searching for it in order to tap into it. In order to refute my “*two nations*” view, they need only find the missing link and activate it. But they did not find it and, as far as I could see, they did not even search for it. It seemed that, even while they asserted that it must exist, they knew that it didn’t.

Or they searched for it only in the sense that they advocated the application of strong external pressure against the Unionist community, whose loyalty was to the half-crown rather than the Crown, in the conviction that the Protestants would soon do what was required of them in order to relieve the pressure, the half-crown being a piece of money that no longer exists.

That was what Peter Barry proposed in order to bring out the latent Irish nationalism within Ulster Unionism. It was also what the Fine Gael editor of the Fianna Fail newspaper, the *Irish Press*, Tim Pat Coogan, proposed. Likewise Labour Front-bencher, Frank Prendergast, with whom I also debated the matter. And likewise Eoghan Harris, who denounced me as an Orange lickspittle when I debated with him in the early 1970s, before he became the kept-man of the *Sunday Independent*, political adviser to Lord Trimble against Sinn Fein, and admirer of the Battle of the Somme as a philanthropic event.

There is a third “*compilation of documents*” for which I was responsible. It has to do with the setting up of the Northern Ireland system as the means of enacting Partition, instead of simply excluding the Six Counties from the Home Rule Act, or the Government of Ireland Act. I showed that Northern Ireland was a perversely undemocratic structure of a kind which can be found nowhere else in the world. And I argued that it was the Northern Ireland structure, and not Partition, that caused the War in the North. Maybe that is what aggravated Whelan.

Well, I put that position, in West Belfast in the midst of the War, in pamphlets that circulated very widely. And the War ended without the ending of Partition but with the partial deconstructing of the Northern Ireland system.

I almost forgot about a fourth ‘*compilation*’, on Carlyle: **Charles Gavan Duffy: *Conversations With Carlyle***. [There are many others, such as of Thomas Moore writings, ed.]

Whelan writes: “*Victorian commentators like Froude and Carlyle get plenty of treatment*” from Bew—

“but without any reference to perhaps their strongest trait—their virulent and proud racism. The entire issue of race is neglected even though racial terms appear repeatedly in his quotations (e.g. Celtic...) ...Carlyle bluntly argued for extermination: ‘The Celt of Connemara and other repealing finest tenantry and white and not black; but it is not the colour of the skin that determines the savagery of a man’. The Catholic Irish must face reality or ‘extermination’.”

Carlyle certainly used the language of race. Who didn’t? And he published tirades against O’Connell’s mobs. And he did not give credit to O’Connell for ordering the lowest orders of the Irish emerging from the Penal Law system into effective mobs.

Pearse said that the history in the 19th century might be summed up as “*the desperate attempt of a mob to realise itself as a nation*”. But the mob itself had to be constituted. And that was O’Connell’s achievement.

Emancipation—the right of Catholics to sit in Parliament without taking the anti-Catholic oath—was gained by pressure exerted on the Government by mob action pressed to the point at which the choice lay between concession and war.

O’Connell then sought to gain repeal of the Union by the same method. But, at the critical point, Wellington—who had conceded Emancipation to the mob—indicated that he would not hand over the governing of Ireland to it, and O’Connell backed down at Clontarf. Wholesale demoralisation was avoided by the emergence of the Young Ireland movement. And the spirit of Young Ireland was the spirit of Carlyle.

Carlyle’s tirade against mindless O’Connellites who complained about the nature of things were no doubt exaggerated. Exaggeration was his way of making a point. And his point was that the world of dehumanising political economy was here to stay. Complaining about it could only lead to extermination. Survival required action within it on its terms.

The Young Irelanders took the point. They made contact with Carlyle and got on so well with him that they gave him a conducted tour of Ireland—a unique event in Anglo-Irish relations.

Young Ireland founded a new departure in the national movement within the laws of political economy as presented to them. Gavan Duffy founded the Tenant Right movement and formed the Independent Party which spoke the language of political England at Westminster. It was to be corrupted (Sadleir and Keogh) but it set in motion a development that got rid of landlordism in two generations.

And Duffy published an account of their relations with Carlyle, which I reprinted.

*

Carlyle was not only a stimulating influence on Irish national development at a critical moment, but he exerted a long-term influence on the labour movement in England. His pamphlet on *Chartism* (1839) became part of the literature of that movement, and his book *Past & Present* inspired a magazine of the same name which continued into the mid-20th century.

In *Chartism*, published in 1839 before he had any Irish connections, he wrote:

“We English pay, even now, the bitter smart of long centuries of injustice to our neighbour Island. Injustice, doubt it not, abounds; or Ireland would not be miserable... England is guilty towards Ireland; and reaps at last, in full measure, the fruit of fifteen generations of wrong-doing.”

And there is a sentence in *Past & Present* (1843) which applies to Ireland today:

"To predict the Future, to manage the Present, would not be so impossible had not the Past been so sacrilegiously mishandled; effaced, and what is worse, defaced..."

*

I proposed in 1969 that Dublin should recognise that in actual fact Protestant Ulster was not part of an all-Ireland nation and that it would not submit to irredentist pressure from the South and, on the basis of that recognition, should set about establishing a relationship with it. Lynch ruled that approach off the agenda: the Ulster Unionists were part of the general Irish nation and there would be no peace until Partition was ended.

Since I saw no prospect of Partition ending when Dublin reinforced it with every word it uttered about the spurious character of Ulster Unionism, I proposed that the undemocratic system of government of the Six Counties within the British state should be ended by the extending of the British political system to the Six Counties. Dublin lobbied Whitehall to ensure that this did not happen. The system of communal Protestant government outside the democracy of the state was continued, and it fed the War.

Bew, like many other Protestant students who had been involved in the Civil Rights agitation, took up the "two nations" view after the August 1969 events, and was associated with Athol Street for a couple of years. But he wanted the Two Nations position to be "nuanced". I refused because I saw the actual existence of two nations as being more forcefully asserted in the world day by day. What was needed was a bald expression of it as a narrative fact. "Nuancing" it, finding a slightly more subtle and less intelligible way of expressing it, would not alter what existed and would only make it more difficult to think about. Useful "nuancing" only applies within established narrative.

Bew was completely opposed to demanding the democratisation of the Six Counties within the UK. His opposition was fancifully expressed in terms of Althusserian Marxist metaphysics, but what it amounted to in the end was fundamentalist Ulster Unionism: Northern Ireland was not an undemocratically-governed region

of the British state but was itself a state with its own system of politics in which the minority refused to participate. I imagine Whelan would agree with that, though he would give a different "nuance" to the last clause.

Whelan's review expresses heartfelt detestation of Bew, which cannot contain itself within academic artifice. But there seems to be resentment in it too.

"Can it be true that Bew was at *Burntollet?!"* a Continental academic asked me many years later. Well, I

wasn't at Burntollet. I made a point of having nothing to do with the *New Left Review* scheme for bringing about an *Explosion In Ulster* whose outcome could only be what its instigators could then only deplore as "sectarianism". But I first met Bew amongst people who had been at Burntollet, and I have no reason to think that he was not there, or thereabouts at the relevant time, or close to it. His girlfriend was Paddy Devlin's daughter. It was an interesting coupling of demoralised gentry and radical plebs, with the plebs very much in the ascendant. ***

Martin Tyrrell

Erik Larson, *Dead Wake: the last crossing of the Lusitania*, Black Swan, 2015
Willi Jasper, *Lusitania: the cultural history of a catastrophe*,
Yale University Press, 2015

The Forgotten Lusitania

The sinking of the *Lusitania* by a German submarine, just over a century ago, is one of the best known and most commemorated events of the First World War. These two recent books, by Eric Larson and Willi Jasper, join the several dozen published over the last hundred years and are, if nothing else, evidence of a continuing interest in the subject.

Larson's *Dead Wake*, which is by a long way the better of the two, narrates the events leading up to the sinking. It is clear from this account that it was largely by chance that the *Lusitania* was torpedoed. Although the liner was carrying a small cargo of munitions, and was a Royal Navy auxiliary cruiser (a civilian ship that could be redeployed for military purpose), it was targeted opportunistically by a lone submarine, the U20, whose single torpedo caused a massive and disproportionate explosion. Had the liner left New York a little earlier, or a little later, or if it had not been delayed by heavy fog, it might well have reached its Liverpool home port without incident. Likewise if the crew had been more experienced, or if Cunard, the ship's owner, had allocated enough coal to hit maximum speed. Or if the U20 had gone to the mouth of the Mersey as instructed, rather than begun its journey home. And so on.

We read Larson's account, knowing how the story will turn out, and seeing

how all of these crucial details—weather, speed—will contribute to the terrible ending. The various personalities—here superbly drawn—add to our engagement. William Turner, say, the *Lusitania's* captain; and Walther Schwieger, the U20 commander; passengers such as the bookseller Charles Lauriat with his Thackeray drawings and Dickens first edition; Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt, a *Titanic* survivor; and Sir Hugh Lane, with his cargo of priceless paintings. Who will survive? And who not? The story shifts back and forth from ship to submarine, and from Washington (Woodrow Wilson, Edith Bolling Galt, Colonel Edward House) to Room 40, the Admiralty's intelligence gathering operation. It's a story that's been told before, but is here told well.

Willi Jasper's *Lusitania: the cultural history of a catastrophe* covers much the same ground as Larson's book but much less successfully. I had thought a German take on the sinking might be fresh and full of insight. Instead, and disappointingly, it recycles an old and questionable argument—that the sinking of the *Lusitania* reveals the proto-Nazi streak in the German Empire, if not in Germany in all its forms.

Early in his book, Jasper states that many U-boat commanders went

on to serve the Third Reich, implying that submarining appealed to the Nazi type or maybe brought it out in people. Is there any evidence, though, that German submariners in the First World War were disproportionately attracted to the Nazi regime? Karl Donitz became the Reich's Admiral, but what about the rest? Were they more likely to be so than men who served on surface ships, or in the army, or the air force, such as it was? Time and data availability, not to say disinclination, keep me from doing the primary research, and I rather suspect Willi Jasper hasn't done it either. But I do know that two people who were on the U-boats went on to be icons of anti-fascism. One is Captain Georg Von Trapp, as fictionalised in *The Sound of Music*, where his *Edelweiss* is a paean to Austrian distinctiveness in the face of *Anschluss*.

The other is Pastor Martin Niemöller, who went from U-boat to pulpit by way of the *Freikorps*. Niemöller was fictionalised too, and much earlier than von Trapp, in the British film *Pastor Hall* (1940). (When, in 1939, the script for that film was first submitted, pre-production, to the British Board of Film Censorship, it was rejected on the grounds that it was anti-Nazi propaganda. Towards the end of the year, however, it was resubmitted, passed and produced, the defect—anti-fascism—having suddenly become a point in its favour).

The irony is, had Niemöller and von Trapp been more successful—had they sunk more ships—who knows but there might have been no National Socialism, not in Germany anyway. Germany might have got its negotiated peace and continued down the Social Democratic path. The *Lusitania* would today be a footnote, and the context in which it was torpedoed—particularly the Allies' hunger blockade to which the German submarine campaign was an improvised response—familiar to the point of tedium.

Regarding that blockade Larson comments: "*What Germany never acknowledged was that Britain merely confiscated cargoes whereas U-boats sank ships and killed men*". But the blockade was more than just confiscations. It was an initiative intended to hit Germany's civilian population sufficiently hard that it would press for peace. Planned carefully in the immediate pre-war period, it caused food shortages that resulted in a civilian death-toll later estimated at between four and seven hundred thousand. Without this Blockade, and its several

hundred thousand civilian deaths, there would have been no reactive German submarine campaign, which resulted in a fraction of that number of deaths. If that is debateable, neither Larson nor Jasper debate it.

Jasper, in fact, has even less to say on the Blockade than Larson, just the occasional passing reference: "Churchill, he writes, 'was well aware that in naval warfare it is not a single battle that is decisive but the ability...to mount an effective blockade in order to keep foreign powers at bay'", which is downright odd. Odd, too, is that Picasso's *Guernica* features in the book's illustrations. "Picasso's "*Guernica*" (1937),' runs the caption, 'remains a work of protest at the blurring of the boundaries of wartime violence.'" How *Guernica* relates to the *Lusitania* is not obvious except that both were acts of war carried out by Germans that resulted in civilian deaths.

Aerial bombardment, in the manner of *Guernica*, was a kind of successor to Blockading. Blockading gradually turns the screw on a civilian population until its will is broken. But, after the war, aerial bombardment was seen to have the edge on it—a quicker way to break the stubborn public will. That was the lesson of the immediate post-war years. In Mesopotamia, say, where the fledgling Royal Air Force was deployed to quell a popular uprising against the British mandate, resulting in somewhere between 2,000–4,000 civilian deaths and maybe 5,000 wounded. "*In a new but effective tactic, their aircraft machine-gunned and bombed from the air*", writes Versailles historian Margaret Macmillan, before moving swiftly on. The bombing of *Guernica* was of the will-breaking, Mesopotamian kind.

In Allied propaganda, Germany's submarines were depicted as evidence of a collective German "*frightfulness*". You do not need to read too widely on the *Lusitania* before you come across the idea that the Royal Navy, or the Admiralty, or Churchill, or whoever, recoiled from submarines on ethical grounds and were reluctant to invest in them. And eventually, this can be sourced to an attributable statement. In 1901, Rear Admiral Arthur Wilson did, indeed, say that submarines were "*underhand, unfair and damned un-English*" advocating that, in wartime, enemy submariners be treated as pirates and hanged. But this was subterfuge. Wilson was in fact a submarine enthusiast who, just the year before, had founded what would become

the Royal Navy's Submarine Service. His public disavowal was intended to deflect attention from his project and deter any similar initiative by a rival power. In practice, Britain's submarine service was expanded throughout the pre-war period and, by 1914, was larger than its German counterpart.

Nor can it have been the use of submarines as commerce raiders—British submarines targeted Germany's Baltic Sea commerce from 1915 until the Russian Revolution deprived them of naval bases. Aside from the fact that it compounded the impact of the Blockade, this low-key campaign appears to have been relatively humane, and was certainly humane in the sense that there was no Baltic equivalent of the *Lusitania*. Few writers on the *Lusitania* mention the Baltic campaign, let alone consider why it and its German counterpart were so different.

Germany's deployment of submarines against merchant shipping was a tactic improvised once the war was underway. It began with the attack on the *Glitra* in October 1914 with a few attacks in each subsequent month up to February 1915, when Germany's war on British commerce was formally declared. During this initial and experimental phase submarine commanders generally kept to the conventions of commerce raiding—the rules of engagement. Typically, they surfaced, hailed the ship, and demanded that it stop. If it was found to be carrying contraband, the crew was put into lifeboats and the ship sunk. In the opening months of the war, all attacks by German submarines on merchant shipping were of this kind and there were no civilian fatalities. Accounts of this phase are replete with stories of remarkable decency—of U-boat commanders gifting bottles of brandy to merchant crews evacuated into lifeboats, and so forth.

Most of Germany's military leaders disagreed with this cautious and conventional approach. They argued that submarines should attack without warning and do so while submerged. That way, they would play to their strengths, maximising their hit rate and minimising the risk of being struck themselves. ("*You do not demand of an aeroplane that it should attack the enemy on its wheels*", wrote Reinhard Scheer, Germany's Chief of Naval Staff in his post-war memoir). A submarine campaign that kept to the rules, Scheer reasoned, would deter nothing with the result that the war—and the Blockade—would continue until

Germany collapsed. Only if submarines attacked without warning would they sink more and bigger ships until, just possibly, no rational ship owner would allow a vessel to chance the German warzone.

Then again, a no-warning campaign came with a massive ethical and diplomatic downside. Civilians—merchant crews and passengers on liners—would surely die, followed by swift international condemnation. The German civilian leadership—the Kaiser and his Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg—was mindful of this and insisted that convention was respected. When Germany stepped up its U-boat campaign on 4th February 1915 by formally declaring its own, *de facto* Blockade, the wording of the announcement reflected this division.

The February declaration was *not* as is sometimes claimed, a declaration of *unrestricted* submarine warfare, the all-out type Scheer and others on the military side wanted. It stated that enemy merchant ships would be destroyed and it would not always be possible to avoid danger to those aboard. And, in practice, in the three months between beginning of the warzone and the sinking of the *Lusitania*, U-boat commerce-raiding comprised both no-warning attacks, and conventional ‘surface and hail’ engagements in approximately equal numbers. It was a conventional engagement, between the U28 and the *Falaba* (a passenger-cargo ship) in March 1915 that resulted in the greatest loss of life prior to the *Lusitania*—104 dead, including an American, Leon Thrasher. (American protests were, however, muted because the *Falaba* had been carrying munitions).

As for neutral merchant ships, the declaration suggested that these would not be targeted as a rule but might be targeted by accident. And the main reason they might be targeted by accident, the declaration said, was because the Admiralty had, on 31st January 1915, advised British merchant shipping to fly neutral flags.

Aware of this abuse of neutral flags, neutral shipping companies took steps to minimise the heightened risk, painting their national flags and colours prominently on the sides of their ships along with the ship’s name in big visible letters, and making sure that these details were properly illuminated after dark. As for the Germans, Thomas Bailey and Paul Ryan, in their 1975 book *The Lusitania Disaster*, describe how they were especially keen to avoid trouble

with the United States. To this end, they sought, and received, details of every American ship that would be sailing into the warzone—its name, its schedule, its photograph and its silhouette. As a result, from the start of the war until the United States joined the Allies in 1917, only one American merchant ship was ever attacked by a German submarine. This was the *Gulflight*, which was torpedoed in error in 1915. (The *Gulflight*, travelling with a Royal Navy escort, was assumed to be a British ship.)

All in all, the first few months following the February declaration were a time of caution on the German side. So tentative, in fact, that the German authorities felt the need to issue a reminder that the warzone was still in place—an advertisement to this effect was published in a number of American newspapers the very day the *Lusitania* began its final voyage (1 May 1915). And so tentative that Scheer thought the warzone initiative had no chance of success. The hands-off policy with regard to neutrals was, in his opinion, especially limiting since a third of British trade was carried in neutral holds. The British tended to think the same, regarding the declaration as an empty threat (“*premature and feeble*”, Churchill later described it). The campaign had barely started and had sunk next to nothing when the Germans signalled their willingness to stand it down. The deal was that the campaign would end, provided food imports for Germany’s civilian population were allowed to resume. This imported food would be carried on American ships and American consular staff would police its distribution to ensure that only civilians benefited. But the Allies were unwilling either to weaken their blockade, or to diminish it in exchange for some reciprocal action on the German side.

I take it from that that submarine commerce raiding was not seen as being of equivalent strategic value to the blockade. And that the Blockade, if it was to be worth the effort, needed to target civilians. There was no value to the British in scaling down the Blockade, just as it was beginning to work, beginning to damage German civilians, in return for the Germans standing down a counter blockade that was looking decidedly timid and underwhelming. Whatever impact Germany’s submarines might have, it was always going to be smaller than that of the Blockade, with the constant risk that it might rebound badly on the Germans. As A.C. Bell wrote, in his (suppressed)

official history of the Blockade, “*no submarine commander when he fired his torpedo could foretell whether, by doing so, he would involve his government in serious complications, or whether he would merely make it the recipient of a formal protest...*” (p215). To Bell, the entire warzone initiative was “*a hazardous experiment*”. It would soon be made a lot more hazardous.

Shortly after the February 1915 declaration, the Admiralty issued instructions to British merchant ship-owners. These exploited the fact that submarines made problematic commerce raiders. For example, in order for a submarine to hail a merchant ship on the open sea, it had to surface. And a surfaced submarine was a vulnerable submarine. Unlike a regular warship serving as a commerce raider, a submarine might be smaller, slower and less solid than the ship it had stopped. It might even be less well-armed. It therefore put itself at risk of being counter-attacked by the very ship it had hailed. At risk of being fired on, say, if the merchant ship had a deck gun, or at risk of being rammed, provided the merchant ship was big enough and fast enough to get away with it.

On 10th February 1915, six days after the German declaration was issued and a week before it came into effect, British merchant captains were officially advised that they should try to ram any submarine that hailed them. And two weeks later, they were instructed to consider using their deck gun, if they had one. (Many did. A programme of defensively arming British merchant ships had been underway since early 1913.) A cash prize was established for the first merchant ship to sink a submarine and, in April 1915, the House of Commons commended several merchant captains for their actions when faced with a U-boat commerce raider. Among them was Captain Charles Fryatt, whose ship the *Brussels*, had been hailed by the U33 in March 1915. Fryatt had stopped when hailed and given every appearance of respecting convention. Then, without warning, he had steered the *Brussels* at speed in the direction of the U33. The U33 survived but only by submerging quickly and dangerously. (Larson is good on the technology of First World War submarines and its limitations. Diving and surfacing were, he says, especially hazardous to submarine and crew since visibility was limited during both manoeuvres.) In Germany, the *Brussels* incident was neither forgotten nor forgiven. When Fryatt was later

captured by the German navy, he was tried and executed as a kind of naval *franc tireur*.

By May 1915, then, U-boat commanders would have known there was a reasonable chance that, if their U-boat surfaced, it was putting itself in some danger. In response, they too defected from convention and began to attack without warning and while submerged, exactly what their military and naval chiefs had wanted all along, and the diplomatists had opposed. They would now sink more tonnage but with a heightened risk of alienating neutral, especially American, opinion. And this is more or less what happened.

I do not hold to the conspiracy theory—that the *Lusitania* was deliberately set up in the hope that this might goad the Americans into war on the Allied side—but I can see where it's coming from, why the incident lends itself to such an explanation. There was no conspiracy—no deliberate setting up of any *particular* ship—but the conditions were created so that, sooner or later, the Germans would sink the wrong kind of ship and that this would, in Churchill's phrase, "*embroil*" them with the United States.

The sinking of the *Lusitania* was the moment of embroilment. There were close to 2,000 people aboard at the time the torpedo struck, around 1,200 of whom were killed including nearly a hundred children. The death rate for American passengers—128 of the 159 aboard—was especially high and disproportionate. Although this did not, of itself, prompt the United States to declare war on Germany, it drew swift American condemnation and soured German-American relations irreversibly. The Kaiser and his Chancellor now stepped in, imposing strict controls on all future actions. The U-boat war was scaled back, restricted, and eventually (though temporarily) suspended.

In its earliest stages, the German submarine campaign was waged as honourably as any exercise in commerce raiding, and certainly as honourably as the British campaign in the Baltic. Both followed long established rules. That it ceased to be waged honourably was due primarily to the Admiralty's instructions to British merchant shipping. British merchant ships were to behave, in effect, as naval ships. And German submarine crews were to be treated as, if not exactly pirates, then irregular soldiers. (At least one captured submarine crew

was briefly imprisoned in an ordinary prison and was released only when the Germans threatened to do the same to Allied prisoners.)

After the November 1918 Armistice, there were calls for German submarine commanders to be tried for war crimes. In the end, it was agreed that three or four might stand trial in Germany before a specially-convened court. Amidst significant public resentment, two commanders were eventually sentenced, but they were soon helped to escape. And in 1928, their cases were reviewed and their sentences quashed. Meanwhile, the Allies debated what to do about submarines in general, and submarine commerce raiding in particular, resolving in the end to do nothing that might put a stop to either. In the Second World War, no warning submarine attacks on merchant shipping happened from more or less the outset with Allies submarines inflicting by far the greatest civilian death toll.

Jasper's book includes a number of

propaganda images from the time of the sinking, one of which also serves as the book's cover. It is described as '*Irish poster, 1915*' and shows an artist's impression of the sinking *Lusitania*. It is an Irish poster in the sense that it was produced for use in Ireland and had a wide circulation here. Missing from the version in Jasper's book is its 1915 caption: 'IRISHMEN, AVENGE THE *LUSITANIA*. JOIN AN IRISH REGIMENT TODAY'. It is a recruitment poster intended to drum up Irish enlistment in the British army by means of an appeal to conscience. In this it failed. Irish recruitment in the First World War, despite such propaganda and Nationalist Party exhortation was well below the UK average. And, if Ulster recruitment is subtracted, it was lower still, suggesting that, for nationalist Ireland, the guilt had come off the gingerbread, and from an early date. Recruitment was already on the slide in 1915, barely twelve months into the war, and was in freefall the year after. There are some things stronger than propaganda. ***

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Equality?

The unfortunate thing is that modern society is evolving in a way that compels us to deny the limits of our individual life experience and it does that on the basis of equality. Equality and the demands it makes on how we interact denies us the responsibility of highlighting those areas of our life experiences that are not shared and cease to demand the appropriate human response of empathy from each other.

Equality is increasingly the means by which empathy is being placed on the statute book and being legislated out of existence. We no longer need to look into our behaviour and take stock of ourselves because the State has increasingly assumed the role of conscience. All we need to do is ensure we behave in a manner that complies with the appropriate legislation. (From a reader)

"We are not asking for superiority for we have always had that; all we ask is equality." Nancy Astor (1879-1964)

Convert!

"In the death call, while awaiting execution, Ruth Snyder embraced the Roman Catholic faith. By her last-minute conversion, she sealed her fate. Her motive was too obvious. Alfred Smith, the Governor of New York State, was a Catholic. If he had had any intention of reprieving Ruth, that now became impossible" (*Courtroom U.S.A.2*, Rupert Furneux, Penguin, 1963, p.116)

Ruth Snyder "*The Bloody Blonde*" was executed for the murder of her husband at Long Island, U.S.A. in 1927.

A Scandal!

"Unfortunately there is no record of the Bishop of Cork's [John Butler] reaction to a scandalous incident in 1780 which involved a priest and Lord Doneraile. It is reasonable to assume that Dr. Butler knew both His Lordship and Father Neal, who was described in contemporary newspaper accounts as a parish priest. Doneraile was angry with the aged priest, who had excommunicated one of his tenants for living in adultery; he asked Father Neale to remove the excommunication, but he refused. The lord went to the priest's house and horsewhipped the priest and his

“ancient maid servant” when she intervened. The case was brought to court, and Doneraile was fined £1,000; a couple of days later the priest died, and it was rumoured that now his lordship might be tried for murder. This did not happen, though the victim’s defence had been in the hands of John Philpott Curran who had generously taken up the case when all the other lawyers on the circuit had shunned the brief. Thomas Davis believed that the priest’s victory over the lord was “a conquest from the powers of darkness — the first spoils of emancipation”. (Con Costello, *Faith or Fatherhood, Bishop Dunboyne’s dilemma*, The Story of John Butler, Catholic Bishop of Cork 1763-1787. The Woodfield Press-2000-p.28)

Canon Sheehan

In books which enjoyed immense popularity for over half a century, Canon Sheehan — born March 17, 1852 — railed against the advance of materialistic values among the people.

“Everyone is preaching materialism”, one of his characters claims.

“The idea of Ireland as a great missionary country is scoffed at; the idea of Ireland as a centre of learning and sanctity, our old heritage, is not even named. The whole mind of the country is directed in one way—to be a little England or America—factories, industries, workshops, our harbours filled with ships, our rivers polluted with slime, the atmosphere reeking with soot.”

Elsewhere he speaks of the loss of the Irish language which he considered a greater tragedy than the Penal Laws or the Act of Union.

“The Irish race would have had a different history for the past fifty years if it had been welded by a common language into unbroken solidarity... If the Irish language ever does come back, may there come with it the old genial, Celtic spirit, instead of the Anglicized, mammon-worshipping, neo-pagan manners and customs which in many places at home are the chief characteristics of our race to-day.” SJL (Irish Press, 17.3.1994)

WHEN THE YANKS CAME

"A 48 hour non-stop convoy of U.S. troops passed our door in Carryduff, County Down about 1942.

They threw sweets and gum to the children waving at them. The same convoy left in 1944, passing our door day and night. The children of the area waved at them. No response. Just grim faces. We knew something big would happen soon—D-Day.

The U.S. camp in Carryduff housed

the 608th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company.

It was full of army padres of all religions. They let the handful of local Catholics use their chapel.

Local Protestants protested outside the camp, feeling we were being encouraged to stay in Carryduff. A U.S. sentry fired shots over their heads to disperse them. We heard the firing while at Mass. (Two soldiers in uniform acting as altar boys). We came out to see the Protestants running away up the Saintfield Road.

A bus driver was shot dead in our area in County Down when he wouldn’t stop the bus to let a convoy pass.

Three children killed in our area by a speeding US army truck.

Three local girls made pregnant by U.S. soldiers. No comeback for them.

Local lads in Downpatrick beat up U.S. soldiers for stealing their girlfriends.

24-hour gun battle between black and white soldiers at Downpatrick not mentioned in media but full details came from bus crew on the route Downpatrick to Belfast.

I am still grateful for the US sentry firing shots over the heads of a loyalist mob demonstrating against a handful of local Catholics being allowed to use the U.S. military chapel. Some of those thugs had also stoned our house and poisoned the well-water. I made my first communion in the U.S. chapel as did my sisters. At that mass were two families with young children, not including my own mother and young sisters. I thought at the time: 'Why did you just fire over their heads?'

W.W.11 was a popular war. I was later to demonstrate outside the U.S. legation in Chichester Street, Belfast, about the death sentence of the Rosenbergs. (*Communist Party of Northern Ireland, Young Workers' League and I. Wilson John Haire.*)

* Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were American citizens who spied on behalf of the Soviet Union and were tried, convicted, and executed by the federal government of the United States. Both were executed via electric chair on June 19, 1953.

SAME SEX CHANGE!

The former first minister of Northern Ireland David Trimble has said he was “forced” to change his view of same-sex marriage after his daughter married her girlfriend.

Vicky Trimble married Rosalind Stephens at a ceremony in Scotland in

November, 2017.

As leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, Mr Trimble frequently voted against moves to liberalise marriage rules when he was an M.P.

However, speaking in the House of Lords in July he described both abortion and same-sex marriage as “*delicate matters*”.

“I have found myself taking a particular position with regard to same-sex marriage, which was forced upon me when my elder daughter got married to her girlfriend,” he said.

“I cannot change that, and I cannot now go around saying that I am opposed to it because I acquiesced to it. There we are,” he added.

Precision!

Noah Webster was the founder and compiler of “Webster’s Dictionary” and was naturally a ‘stickler’ for words—and incidentally, for his secretary.

The two of them were one day locked in fond embrace, when Mrs. Webster happened to burst into his office.

“Oh, Noah, I am surprised”, exclaimed the good lady.

“No, my dear, you are wrong again”, responded Webster. “It is we who are surprised. You, surely, are astounded.”

LONELY Tattoo Generation

Young people feel lonely more often and more intensely than any other age group, one of the biggest studies into the issue has found.

The study, developed by academics and published by BBC Radio 4, found people who feel lonely have more Facebook friends, suggesting social media could be a factor in loneliness.

Some 40% of respondents aged between 16 and 24 years old said they experience loneliness often or very often, compared with just 29% of those aged between 65 and 74.

As Mickey Newbury used sing: “A World full of people and so many people alone.”

Moonstruck!

While the media celebrated the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing on July 20, the origins of that dream are oft forgotten. It began with the setting up of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (J.P.L.) in 1936. Two of the main founders Jack

Parsons and Frank Malina eventually became “surplus to requirement”—Parsons was as fascinated by the occult as he was by rockets. Malina’s sin was the greatest of all : he had been a member of the Communist Party of the United States of America. Malina was informed on by the very man he had recommended to be his successor at J.P.L.

During 1947, with rocket research in high gear, Malina’s demanding travel and administrative schedule, along with a dislike of so much rocketry research being devoted to weapons systems and not scientific research, caused him to re-evaluate his career and leave the industry. Malina’s passing interest in the Communist Party and labor activism while he was a graduate student in the 1930s had also attracted the attention of the FBI.

He moved to France and joined the fledgling United Nations in the secretariat of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) under Julian Huxley.

In 1952, at the height of the Red Scare, Malina was indicted for having failed to list his Communist Party membership on an old security questionnaire. He was declared a fugitive, to be arrested if and when he returned to the United States.

In 1990, Malina was inducted into the International Space Hall of Fame. Frank Malina died in 1981 in Boulogne-Billancourt, near Paris, France.

Here’s a beauty: Buzz Aldrin, who with Armstrong walked on the moon that night in 1969 and, on his return to Earth, worked for six months as a Cadillac salesman in Texas. He didn’t sell a single car! Selling a Cadillac in Texas is a little more than just rocket science! Wouldn’t you agree!

The Wonders of Democracy!

“A judge hearing a bid by a bank to re-possess Mick Wallace’s Dublin residence has been told there had been ‘a change in his financial circumstances’ following his impending election as a member of the European Parliament.

Mr Wallace, the Independents 4 Change T.D. for Wexford, looks set to be elected to the European Parliament.

“Mr Wallace, who has previously been declared a bankrupt by the High Court, was granted an adjournment by Judge Jacqueline Linnane in the Circuit Civil Court of AIB Mortgage Bank’s

application for possession of No 13 Clontarf Road, Dublin 3.

“No 13 was stated to be the primary residence of Mr. Wallace which, the court has heard, was purchased on April 29th, 2004 on foot of a mortgage loan of €825,000 on which there were agreed monthly instalments of €2,270.

“At earlier hearings, the judge was told that Mr Wallace, who is described as bankrupt in the proceedings, had failed to keep up the required monthly repayments. She was told the bank was now owed €910,800, which it was seeking to recover through the courts.” (Irish Times 5.6.2019)

Hurling Blues!

For this writer the biggest concern at the moment is that Cork has not won an All-Ireland Hurling title since 2005, 14 years ago, and if the present form continues and we fail next year, we will have equalled the longest gap without a win in our history!

We may have a Dublin bishop but the thought of a Dublin hurling manager for Cork, it doesn’t bear thinking about!

Report

How Britain stole \$45 trillion from India *And lied about it.*

by Jason Hickel

There is a story that is commonly told in Britain that the colonisation of India—as horrible as it may have been—was not of any major economic benefit to Britain itself. If anything, the administration of India was a cost to Britain. So the fact that the empire was sustained for so long—the story goes—was a gesture of Britain’s benevolence.

New research by the renowned economist Utsa Patnaik—just published by Columbia University Press—deals a crushing blow to this narrative. Drawing on nearly two centuries of detailed data on tax and trade, Patnaik calculated that Britain drained a total of nearly \$45 trillion from India during the period 1765 to 1938.

It’s a staggering sum. For perspective, \$45 trillion is 17 times more than the total annual gross domestic product of the United Kingdom today.

How did this come about?

It happened through the trade system. Prior to the colonial period, Britain bought goods like textiles and rice from

Indian producers and paid for them in the normal way—mostly with silver—as they did with any other country. But something changed in 1765, shortly after the East India Company took control of the subcontinent and established a monopoly over Indian trade.

Here’s how it worked. The East India Company began collecting taxes in India, and then cleverly used a portion of those revenues (about a third) to fund the purchase of Indian goods for British use. In other words, instead of paying for Indian goods out of their own pocket, British traders acquired them for free, “buying” from peasants and weavers using money that had just been taken from them.

It was a scam—theft on a grand scale. Yet most Indians were unaware of what was going on because the agent who collected the taxes was not the same as the one who showed up to buy their goods. Had it been the same person, they surely would have smelled a rat.

Some of the stolen goods were consumed in Britain, and the rest were re-exported elsewhere. The re-export system allowed Britain to finance a flow of imports from Europe, including strategic materials like iron, tar and timber, which were essential to Britain’s industrialisation. Indeed, the Industrial Revolution depended in large part on this systematic theft from India.

On top of this, the British were able to sell the stolen goods to other countries for much more than they “bought” them for in the first place, pocketing not only 100 percent of the original value of the goods but also the markup.

After the British Raj took over in 1847, colonisers added a special new twist to the tax-and-buy system. As the East India Company’s monopoly broke down, Indian producers were allowed to export their goods directly to other countries. But Britain made sure that the payments for those goods nonetheless ended up in London.

How did this work? Basically, anyone who wanted to buy goods from India would do so using special Council Bills—a unique paper currency issued only by the British Crown. And the only way to get those bills was to buy them from London with gold or silver. So traders would pay London in gold to get the bills, and then use the bills to pay Indian producers. When Indians cashed the bills in at the local colonial office, they were “paid” in rupees out of tax revenues—money that had just been collected from them. So, once again, they were not in fact paid at all; they were defrauded.

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Eamon Dyas

Sir Michael O'Dwyer - an Irish Catholic in the service of the British Empire
Part 2

Sir Michael O'Dwyer and Amritsar

(A small number of Irish Catholics made a successful career in the Indian Civil Service. Among them was the most infamous Irish Catholic administrator in India, Sir Michael O'Dwyer. History has intrinsically linked O'Dwyer's name with the Amritsar Massacre of 1919. Although not directly involved in the massacre, as Lieutenant General of the Punjab he was the man who authorised martial law that provided the ultimate authority, justification and support for the actions of the man who did give the order to fire on the unarmed crowd.

"On the afternoon of 13 April 1919, Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer led fifty riflemen of the 1/9 Gurkhas, 54th Sikhs and 59th Sikhs through the streets of Amritsar to the Jallianwal Bagh, where a meeting was being held in defiance of his proclamation banning such gatherings. The Bagh was a piece of waste ground, some two hundred yards long, wholly enclosed by the backs of houses and low boundary walls. It had three or four narrow entrances, the main one only broad enough for two people to walk abreast. This proved too small to permit the passage of the two armoured cars, with mounted machine-guns, which Dyer had brought with him. Shortly after 5p.m. he led his troops up the narrow alley. The crowd in the Bagh was later estimated at more than twenty thousand people. Among them were many villagers from the surrounding countryside in Amritsar for the *Baisakhi* holiday and the cattle-market held on that day.

Within thirty seconds of his arrival Dyer ordered his men to open fire. No warning was given, not was there any demand that the crowds disperse. The firing continued for ten minutes; in all, 1,650 rounds were spent. Dyer ordered fire to be focused where the crowd was thickest, including the exits. He only gave the order to ceasefire when his ammunition was virtually exhausted. According to official figures, 379 people were killed and over 1,200 wounded; Indian estimates are much higher. Dyer later acknowledged that had he been able to use his machine-guns he probably would have done so, with inevitably larger casualties."(*British Reaction to the Amritsar Massacre*

1919-1920, by Derek Sayer, pub. in Past and Present (May, 1991).

Sir Michael O'Dwyer was subsequently in 1919 removed from his position. On 13 March 1940 he was shot dead by Udham Singh, an Indian revolutionary, in revenge for the Amritsar Massacre which had taken place twenty-one years earlier.

However, within a few years of his dismissal from India O'Dwyer was commissioned by Geoffrey Dawson, the editor of The Times newspaper to act as an anonymous correspondent from Ireland. The result was two articles published in 1923 and another in 1927 in which he provided a trusted voice in supplying the British imperial establishment with information on what had happened to Ireland in the aftermath of the establishment of the Irish Free State.

Identification of Sir Michael O'Dwyer as the author of the articles in The Times is made possible from sources in the Times Archive and are republished below. Prior to that is the part of his autobiography which deals with his upbringing in Ireland and his educational experiences preparatory to his taking up a position in the Indian Civil Service. (ED)

INDIA AS I KNEW IT 1885-1925

By Sir Michael O'Dwyer

Pub. Constable & Company Ltd., London, 1925

Chapter 1.

Ireland Then and Now.
Ireland and India.

Early environment, as a rule, colours all one's subsequent outlook on life.

I was born in 1864 and brought up at Barronstown, some few miles from Tipperary in the heart of the "Golden Vale," under the shadow of the Galtese, in the land of the "blue mountains and the rushing river." The environment was one of green pastures, luxuriant crops, fine cattle and well-bred horses; and my heart has always gone out to those who live by and on the land. The clan had been settled in Tipperary for many centuries,

and in the Lord Justice's Report of 1515 to Henry VIII, on "The State of Ireland and Plans for its Reform," the O'Dwyers are mentioned as one of the twelve clans constituting the King's "Irish enemies" in Munster and holding North Tipperary. The Report goes on to say: "And every of the said captains (chiefs of clan) maketh war and peace for himself and holdeth by sword and hateth Imperial jurisdiction within his 'room,' and obeyeth to no other person, English or Irish, except only to such persons as may subdue him by the sword." So that four hundred years ago they were an unruly lot.*

In the Great Rebellion the clan fought for the King against the Parliament. A Colonel Edmund O'Dwyer held out to the end against Cromwell in Clonmel. Given their choice of Hell or Connaught after the Cromwellian conquest, they chose Connaught. As he looked over the beautiful Golden Vale, which the capture of Clonmel had placed at his disposal, the Protector is said to have exclaimed, "This is a country worth fighting for." His hardy troopers were of the same opinion, for under the Cromwellian Settlement they readily accepted the confiscated lands in lieu of arrears of pay. The lands of the O'Dwyer clan went mainly to the troopers of Maude, a Cornet of Horse, and Maude, then or later, got with his share the old castle of the family, of which the ruins still exist, some six miles from Tipperary. His descendants prospered and rose by successive stages to the rank of Baronet, Viscount (of Hawarden, as the place was renamed), and Marquis of Montalt. Meantime some of the expropriated O'Dwyers, like many others, trekked back from Connaught to their old homes, and re-established themselves, on a more or less precarious footing at first, with the connivance or the encouragement of the new conquerors.

In the case of our own family, which claimed to be the head of the clan, the situation was accepted as the fortune of war. Forty years later however, they were strong enough, or unwise enough, to take up arms again in a losing cause, the Irish Campaign of James II against William. Two of the family, John and William, were prominent among the defenders of

* Hugh O'Neill who had brought an Ulster contingent, was in chief command. Carlyle quotes Whitlock's account, "That they found in Clonmel the stoutest enemy this Army had ever met in Ireland; and that there was never so hot a storm of so long continuance, and so gallantly defended, either in England or Ireland."

Limerick, and after the capitulation and the Treaty of Limerick, they with many others, were given the opportunity of leaving their country for their country's good.

William entered the service of Peter the Great, helped to organise the Russian navy on the Volga and the Don, and is supposed to have died at Rostoff on the Don about 1720. John joined the Austrian service, and was killed at Belgrade fighting against the Turks in 1712.

From the Treaty of Limerick down to the end of the eighteenth century many of the old Irish with fighting traditions, in order to better themselves and escape the Penal Laws, steadily migrated to France, then continuously at war, to join the Irish Brigade (Dillon's, O'Brien's and Fitz-James's Regiments) in the French Army. The records of the Brigade show many generations of O'Dwyers or Dwyers (the O' was often dropped in the dark days of the Penal Laws), almost up to the Revolution, generally in Berwick's (FitzJames's) regiment.

The Revolution was the death-blow to these soldiers of fortune. They were looked on by the revolutionary leaders as tainted; they, too, were unwilling to fight for the new rulers. The services of the Brigade were offered to the British Government when it went to war with the French Republic. This golden opportunity for conciliating Irish sentiment was thrown away by the stupid obstinacy of the British Government, which made it a condition of the transfer that the Brigade, or what was left of it, should not be employed in Europe. The alternative offered of garrisoning Nova Scotia and the West Indies was grudgingly accepted as a *pis aller*, but the historic Brigade of which the proud motto was "*Semper et ubique fidelis*" soon fell to pieces.*

A similar spirit of distrust by the British Government (advised, it is said, by Lord Kitchener) was shown towards John Redmond's offer in 1914-15, to transfer the National Volunteers *en bloc* to the British Army. The transfer, at a time when enthusiasm for the allied cause was still strong in Ireland, might well have altered the subsequent tragic

* Compare Davis's Irish Brigade:
"And they who survived fought
and drank as of yore,
But the land of their hearts' hope
they never saw more.
For in far foreign fields, from
Dunkirk to Belgrade,
Lie the soldiers and chiefs
of the Irish Brigade."

course of events there. The Irish and English temperaments differ so radically that on the rare occasions when a cause arises that appeals to both, as the Great War did for the first year or so, no effort should be spared to bring them and keep them together. Unfortunately, British intuition and foresight have rarely succeeded in grasping the psychological moment, and Irish suspicion once aroused is not easily allayed.

The atmosphere I was brought up in, though essentially Irish, showed no signs of racial or religious feeling. My father had a rich objurgatory vocabulary, and like most southern Irishmen whose ancestors had been crushed under Cromwell's iron heel, the "curse of Cromwell on you" was perhaps the strongest expletive in his armoury. But I remember only one allusion of his to the results to our family of Cromwell's conquest. That was when, as a child, I was driving with him past the old family place, then still in the possession of the descendants of the victors.

When I was home on leave in 1909-10, the mansion and demesne lands had come onto the market. The suggestion was made to me that our family should make an offer for the property. But we did not for various reasons, chiefly financial, take the offer very seriously, and a community of nuns became the purchasers.

We were always on the most friendly terms with our Protestant neighbours. These were generally the descendants of the Cromwellian settlers, improved, as the late Marquis of Dufferin said of the Ulster plantation, by some centuries' residence in Ireland. They were, as a rule, men of fine physique, with strong military traditions and bold horsemen; in horse and cattle-breeding and in agriculture they were able to give a lead which was not always followed by their happy-go-lucky Gaelic neighbours. The "decent (Protestant) church that topped the neighbouring hill," Shronehill, half a mile from where we lived, was one of the most picturesque features in the landscape, and as we drove past on Sundays to our own church, a mile further on, the small waiting group used to chaff my father by inviting him to save himself the longer journey and join them. He would reply that the longer road led to the better place. So friendly were the relations between priest and parson, that my father used to tell us that when the Commissioners were coming round to decide on the churches to be closed down

at the Disestablishment, the Parish Priest, Father McGrath, arranged to depute some of his flock to swell Parson White's meagre congregation. But the manoeuvre did not succeed; the picturesque little church was marked down for abolition; after a few years it was dismantled, and Shronehill is now shorn of its most pleasing amenity.*

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870 is the earliest event in my recollection. Irish sympathy was strongly on the side of France; Marshall MacMahon, being of Irish descent, was a popular hero whose exploits formed the theme of many a ballad. Having then just learned to read, I was often called upon to explain the varying fortunes of the campaign of July-September, 1870, to the harvesters, all of whom were then illiterate. That was my first introduction to Welt-Politik. As regards to internal politics, all of his nine sons followed the example of my father, who had a dislike for politics and a distrust for politicians, less rare in an Irishman than is commonly thought. He had an admiration for O'Connell, by whose side he had once stood on a platform, and a regard for the lofty ideals* of the "Young Ireland" group of 1848, but a profound contempt for their revolutionary programme. For the subsequent Fenian movement he had even a stronger aversion, though he extricated a few local hotheads—among them the family tailor—who had got mixed up in it, by giving bail for their future behaviour.

The Home Rule movement was launched by Isaac Butt in 1870 on lines which wisely aimed at uniting all classes and creeds. It had, at least in the south, the support of many of the great territorial magnates, whose influence among the limited electorate, mainly composed of fairly substantial farmers, was still considerable.

At the General Election of 1874, Colonel White of the Annaly family, and Wilfred O'Callaghan, a son of Lord Lismore, both Home Rulers and great landlords, headed the poll for the County, and I remember at the age of ten bringing in half a dozen neighbouring farmers to vote for them.

* These are nobly expressed in Davis's *Celt and Saxon*:
"What matter that at different shrines we
pray unto our God,
What matter that at different times our
fathers won the sod.
In fortune and in name we're bound
by stronger links than steel,
And neither can be safe nor sound,
but in the other's weal."

John Mitchell, the '48 leader, was a bad third. He had antagonised the Catholic clergy by his caustic remark, after the failure of the revolutionary enterprise, that "the Irish would have been free long ago, but for their damned souls." A great clerical dignitary—the Church was not afraid to speak out in those days—retaliated by denouncing the secret societies as instruments of Satan, "for whom Hell was not hot enough, nor Eternity long enough!"

Mitchell, whose character and honesty of purpose were above reproach, was, however, successful at a subsequent bye-election, though, as a convicted rebel, he never took his seat.

My father was too much concerned with the problem of bringing up a family of nine sons and five daughters on four or five hundred acres of land to have any time to spare for politics. The land was of the best; a keen eye for the points of a horse and an unerring judgment in the matter of cattle, combined with ready resource and indomitable energy, enabled him to succeed where ninety-nine men out of a hundred would have failed.

It was made clear to his sons that all we could expect was a good education for whatever profession we decided to adopt. We were duly sent, when the time came, to the Jesuit Colleges at Tullabeg or Clongowes. Thence two of my elder brothers went on to Trinity College, Dublin, to study law and medicine; two other brothers, after going through the London and Royal Universities, joined the Jesuit Order; while others took up medicine, business, and farming as their turns came on. It was a point of honour to start on one's own as early as possible and make room for the younger ones. It was this fact, and having an elder brother in the Indian Medical Service, that turned my thoughts to the Indian Civil Service competition, the age for which was then seventeen to nineteen. After a few terms' coaching at Wren's famous establishment I was successful at my first shot in the 1882 examination, and in the following October I entered Balliol as a Probationer for the I.C.S.

Meantime the situation in Ireland had become more and more gloomy. The general failure of the harvest of 1879 had led to serious famine in the poor western districts, and to the fierce land-war which was then launched and which swamped the legitimate movement for Home Rule. The agitation for the reduction of rents in its early stages had much justification, but as so often happens in Ireland, it soon

fell under the control of unscrupulous men who exploited it for seditious and even revolutionary purposes, and before long it developed into a movement for the repudiation of rents.

(Though there was no direct connection between them and the Land League, the Clan Na-Gael in America and the Invincibles in Ireland took advantage of the Land League to push their murderous propaganda. The most terrible result of this was the dastardly murder, in May 1882, of Lord Frederick Cavendish, the newly-joined Chief Secretary, and Mr. Burke, the Under-Secretary, in Phoenix Park, Dublin, in sight of the Lord Lieutenant. I was in Wren's then, and for the first time felt ashamed of being an Irishman. Curiously enough it fell to my lot, as part of my legal training for the I.C.S., to have to attend and report the police court proceedings seven months later, when the Invincibles, Brady, Fitzherbert (Skin the Goat), Mullen, and several others were being committed for trial mainly on the evidence of the approver James Carey.

Since then I have had a fairly wide experience of conspirators and informers. But I have never seen such a desperate set of scoundrels as the Invincible gang, or such a canting, cowardly hypocrite as the informer. Some six months later, at the Old Bailey, I witnessed and had to report the last act in the drama of bloodshed when O'Donnell was convicted of the murder of the informer Carey, whom he had shadowed out to Durban and shot on board ship.

The failure of the authorities in that case to conceal and protect the informer, even though his assassin was brought to justice, was, I believe, one of the chief reasons why the supply of that contemptible but useful class, previously so common in Irish conspiracies, ran dry at the source. As Lieutenant-General of the Punjab, before and during the Great War, I had to deal with many revolutionary conspiracies, in unravelling which the *genus* informer played a considerable role, and our precautions were so thorough that in not a single case did an informer come to any injury.)

In the winter of 1881 and 1882 terrorism and violent crime were rampant in the south and west of Ireland. The "village ruffians" were for the time being in the ascendant, and quiet law-abiding people, though then in the vast majority, went about in fear for their lives and property.

My father, who was too honest to conceal his feelings, became a target for the lawless elements. He received threatening letters, and a plot to "hough" his cattle and horses on an outlying farm was discovered in the nick of time by the loyalty of a former servant who was in the counsels of the conspirators. Finally our house was fired into in December, 1882, and my father and sister had a narrow escape. When I came home from Oxford next day, I found we were

under police protection. In 1883 there was some improvement; but the strain had told even on the iron constitution of my father. Early in December he had a slight stroke of paralysis from which, however, he seemed to rally. He was so much better on Christmas Day, one of those soft mild winter days the south of Ireland is often favoured with, that he insisted on driving round his fields with me to see the land, the cattle, and the horses he loved so well. It was to be his last look. Soon after his return, he had a fresh seizure and passed away early the next morning. It is no filial exaggeration to say that he possessed the best traits in the Irish character, unselfish devotion to his family, partly concealed by an austere demeanour, loyalty to his friends, fortitude in times of trouble, and a genial spirit of hospitality. On his death the responsibility which he had so gallantly shouldered fell on my dear mother. She was helped in the task by my eldest brother who was already well established in his profession as a lawyer. She kept the family together in her own loving, unobtrusive and efficient manner till all were launched in the world or provided for at home, no easy task in those days of agricultural depression. And eighteen years after my father, in February, 1902, when I was in Peshawar, she too passed to her well-earned rest. Most of us only realise what we owe to a mother when we have lost her, and we then feel bitter regret and remorse that we did so little to return her love and devotion when she was still with us.

In our case my father's great capacity and dominating personality perhaps overshadowed my mother's sweet and loving disposition. None of her nine sons—she would laughingly claim to have 52 feet of them—and five daughters had an extra share of her maternal affection. Her heart was big enough for all.

There was only one occasion when I can recall that she was seriously angry with me. A Jesuit brother, who was then a professor at Clongowes, was coming to pay us a brief visit. I met him at the railway station and brought him on foot across country to Barronstown. A few years before he had been a fine athlete and captain of the college eleven, but he had gone out of training in a sedentary life. Not realising this, I took him a bit too fast over his fences—a tendency of mine which has now and then landed me in difficulty both with men and horses. He arrived in a state of exhaustion, and I was soundly and rightly rated as cruel and unfeeling.

To be continued

Introduction to a discussion on Plato
held in Belfast on 16th June 2019

Platonism and Political Education

In this presentation I will introduce the topic, describe the influence of Platonism; take up some of the issues described in my introductory draft document—as I will explain there is a problem with the draft; review a book of essays honouring Fergal O’Connor, a Dominican priest who lectured in University College Dublin; and finish by quoting an extract from the literature of Athol Books.

Introduction

I should first explain why I am raising this subject. For a number of years I have been aware of a decline in political skills or political ability in society. This became obvious as neo-liberal thinking got a grip on the political system. I came across it at first hand in the Trade Union movement. More recently, in writing about Brexit and the inner workings of the European Union, I have had occasion to focus on the political competence of members of the EU elite.

The most important thinker with influence in the EU at the present time, in my view, is Jean Pisani Ferry. Pisani Ferry comes from the French socialist tradition, founded the influential Breugel think-tank, wrote the authoritative history of the Euro crisis (*The Euro Crisis and its Aftermath*, Oxford University Press, 2014), and is one of the chief advisors to Emmanuel Macron. Since I hold his writings on the Euro in high regard, I have been appalled in observing the political advice that he has been doling out on how the EU can cope with various anti-EU movements.

His view is that the European Elections of May 2019, and EU politics on an ongoing basis, should be a straight fight between Liberal Europeanism and Populist Nationalism. He considers that the forces of Enlightenment need to be marshalled against the forces of Darkness, represented by the various shades of Euroscepticism. This strikes me as being a contemporary version of the philosophy of the French Enlightenment. Pisani Ferry, to my way of thinking, seems to lack any semblance of respect

for the concerns of conservative segments of the EU electorate.

Writing about Pisani Ferry’s position in one of a series of monthly summaries of the Brexit story I contribute to the *Irish Political Review*, I referred to advice given by a lecturer in Political Philosophy in University College Dublin in the seventies. The lecturer, Fergal O’Connor, believed that to have a rounded view of the political process it was necessary to engage critically with much of the canon of philosophical ideas from Plato to Machiavelli and Marx, from Hobbs to Rousseau and Mill. In the same article I cited a formulation that was developed in the literature of Athol Books—Paine plus Burke—a formulation that was designed to enable politicians on the Left of the political spectrum to deal with the complexities of wielding power in contemporary society.

Since Plato’s writings are (or were) usually taken to be a good starting point for a study of political philosophy and were certainly considered so by Fergal O’Connor, Platonism seemed to me, in the light of what I have been talking about, to be worth looking at.

Platonism from a Cambridge perspective

Plato has clearly been an influence in the Irish Catholic tradition but it was also taken seriously, along with the whole of Greco-Roman culture, by the British intellectual elite in the nineteenth century. The following, taken from a long introduction to Plato’s *Gorgias*, expresses a British view of Greek philosophy and compares the influence of Plato and Aristotle.

“[Plato] The stern haughty uncompromising Idealist, wrapped up in his sublime speculations and with his lofty unattainable ideal of truth and right ever present to his mind; holding scornfully aloof from the business and pursuits of a world which he disdained, and rebuilding society from its very foundations in the attempt to carry out his grand visionary scheme of a perfect Republic; acknowledging no pleasure but the contemplation of truth, and

sternly banishing from his model state all the arts which minister merely to the gratification of the senses or the intellect; will not stoop to recognise the value of an art which falls short of perfection.

The shrewd observant sagacious Aristotle, the philosopher of experience and thorough man of the world, eschews all such Utopian and highflying notions; he is satisfied to take things as he finds them and make the best of existing circumstances. As the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet goes to the mountain.” (E. M. Cope, *The Gorgias* by Plato, Introduction, Trinity College Cambridge, 1864)

As an aside in the same Introduction, Cope makes an interesting reference to Plato’s view of Imperialism. Referring to a surviving fragment of Cicero’s Treatise, *de Republica*, he paraphrases Cicero as follows:

“All people who ever enjoyed a flourishing empire, in fact the Romans themselves, who hold the sovereignty of the whole globe, if they mean to be just, that is to make restitution of what belongs to others, must return to their original cabins and lie prostrate in poverty and misery.”

Platonic morality then was not seen as being compatible with the Imperial spirit of either the Romans or the British.

It has struck me that, when students of politics and law study Plato, they study the philosophical foundations of the society they have been born into. They are learning about the idea space relevant to their future professions, and it is a large idea space. In that context, the question of whether the contemporary view of Plato is historically accurate or not is not so important. What is important is understanding the thought tradition—the Western intellectual tradition—that underpins the present legal and political systems; and Greek philosophy is as influential there as ancient Greek architecture is in contemporary architectural thought.

A Misreading of the Republic

Plato’s *Republic* shows that Philosophical Rulers were necessary because only carefully selected, suitably-educated, leaders could rule in the interests of the community *as a whole*. That point is certainly made repeatedly by Socrates, but in my introductory draft I attached too much importance to it; actually the point is far from being the primary reason why Plato and

Socrates believed that the State or *Polis* (city state) needed to be governed by Philosophical Monarchs or Aristocrats.

The purpose of the State as envisaged in the *Republic* is to assist citizens in discovering in themselves “*the good*”. In essence the idea is theocratic. Only the Philosophers can with effort comprehend the divine truth that is *the good*. Plain humanity sees shadows on a cave wall and imagines them to be the totality of the world, but they are mere shadows. The world outside the cave is true reality and this can be perceived in snatches by the Philosophers. The State needs to be ruled philosophically because its primary function is defence of the moral order.

Relevant concepts are: that politics needs to be viewed as a craft differentiated from and hostile to sophistry. (This is developed in the case argued by Socrates against Thrasymachus in the *Republic* and against Callicles in the *Gorgias*); and that philosophical detachment is useful to the activity of thinking about political problems. These concepts, I believe, hold regardless of the theocratic implications of Platonism. They are useful gifts from the Ancient Greeks.

In my experience of politics I consider that it is relatively easy to be persuasive, which is a skill of sophistry; the challenge is to develop positions that go beyond persuasiveness, that are based on solid historical or even philosophical understanding of a particular problem. Likewise I found the experience of being critical of my own tribe—as when supporting the ‘two nations’ analysis of the Irish national question or when opposing the excessive power enjoyed by the Catholic Church—positions that demanded an element of detachment—to be most useful.

Platonism’s Malign and Benign Legacies

The unsuitability of Platonic idealism for the world of practical affairs can be seen in Plato’s own life. He was at one time invited to advise the ruler of Syracuse (modern Sicily, then part of the Greek world) but the experience ended badly; a ransom needed to be paid so that he could avoid being sold into slavery. Platonism also needs to be recognised as a possible source influence for the development of Puritanism in both Protestantism and Catholicism. Certainly in the *Republic* there are echoes of the near theocracy that obtained in independent Ireland up until the 1990s. (I completely disavow the idea that certain Catholic institutions defined life in Ireland from

the 1920s onwards but that is a separate discussion.) The requirement that the Guardians should live in a community where they would receive free board and have no private wealth finds an echo in the Catholic religious orders, and passages in the *Gorgias* where Socrates extols punishment as a means of achieving redemption finds echoes in the treatment of women and children in Catholic institutional care where members of the clergy believed they were doing ‘*sinners*’ a favour by making them suffer. A further element in Platonism’s malign legacy may have been as a causative influence in the wars of religion but, lacking historical knowledge of that, I cannot speak about it with any authority.

While Plato’s influence endured in the centuries of late antiquity his doctrines experienced a revival six centuries after his death through a movement now referred to as *neo-platonism*. St. Augustine was famously won to Christianity through the writings of the Neo-Platonist, Plotinus. The Romans attached particular importance to Plato and Aristotle and through Roman culture their ideas found their way into Christianity. But Platonic thinking also exerted influence on Judaism, Islam and various esoteric Middle Eastern religions, some of which still survive.

Scholars maintain that Plato’s writings were not properly translated into Latin until the 1400s, the first century of the Renaissance. In 1439 a Byzantine philosopher, Georgius Gemistus, reputed to be a chief pioneer of the revival of Greek scholarship in Western Europe, championed the cause of Platonism at the Council of Florence. He is said to have influenced Cosimo de Medici; in any case a commitment to Platonic ideas, including Plato’s concept of Beauty, became a core value for succeeding generations of the Medici family. Under the patronage of Cosimo de Medici, Marsilio Ficino, a philosopher in his own right, translated the complete works of Plato into Latin. Ficino was largely responsible for the revival of Platonism in the Renaissance. A thought-provoking question is the extent to which the artistic creativity of the Italian Renaissance owes a debt to Platonism.

So which is more important: the malign or the benign influence of Plato’s philosophy? Not perhaps a question that can be easily decided. I would argue that, as Plato’s Philosophical State had the aim of assisting the self-development of the citizenry, the modern Liberal State places obstacle after obstacle in the way

of healthy human development. The modern State, in deference to the workings of Capitalism, gives pride of place to commercialism and consumerism; the result is a cultivation of the lower instincts in people. Through advertising the sale of commodities is projected as the central human activity. Against the modern barrage of commercial messaging, effort is required to assert the important human values. The role of the State in all this is to not interfere, to leave people to their own devices. And in recent decades the effects of liberal acquiescence to consumerism has been compounded by the advances in communication technology.

(Since this talk was given news was released that a thirteen-year old boy convicted of the rape and murder of a fourteen year old girl in Dublin had hundreds of hard core images on his phone depicting sexual violence. By allowing young people unrestricted access to the Internet, the State is complicit in skewing their values.)

Honouring Fergal O’Connor

While looking up information about Fergal O’Connor, I discovered that a collection of essays in his honour was published in 2000. Titled, “*Questioning Ireland—Debates in Political Philosophy and Public Policy*”, the book contains thirteen essays from former students and colleagues. O’Connor taught Political Philosophy at UCD for over thirty years and was well known as a regular panellist on the *Late Late Show*. A gifted teacher, he occupied a position of exceptional influence over generations of politics and law students, many of whom went on to achieve high Office. I was intrigued as to what the book might contain, as O’Connor left little behind by way of writing. That he was a Platonist could not be doubted by anyone attending his lectures; it was not surprising to learn that following his official retirement in the early 90s he continued to lecture, but only on Plato.

I found the book to be less than a complete disappointment—it has at least five good essays—but its faults are typical of Dublin politics. For me the most glaring fault is the topics that are omitted: nothing about the Northern conflict, the most challenging issue in Irish politics; nothing about how the political system has coped with big domestic issues like education and health; nothing about the issues and dominant personalities in party politics; and, surprisingly, very little reflecting a Platonic

view of society. A second fault is the ahistorical manner in which many topics are covered. Essay after essay dutifully follows along the narrow pathway of political correctness, without any historical perspective. Championing the cause of Women, Gays and Ethnic Minorities is the only real issue in politics, blah blah blah. In an essay by Attracta Ingram the force of Globalisation is welcomed on the grounds that it is undermining the nation state. A new civic nation based on Human Rights and cosmopolitan values offers a brave new dawn. Thankfully the passage of time has put paid to that particular vision.

But there are also some good essays. “*Figures of the Teacher: Fergal O’Connor and Socrates*” by Fergal’s fellow Dominican Joseph Dunne contains some interesting biographical snippets and is worth reading for being a credible defence of Platonism. Regarding O’Connor we learn that his father, mother, grandfather, and great-grandfather were all primary teachers, that the teaching tradition in his family went back to the Hedge Schools, that he attributed his interest in politics to his Kerry upbringing, that he established a hostel for unmarried mothers in the 1960s and devoted much of his life to it; that he was a founding and long term member of ALLY, a grouping committed to abolishing the concept of illegitimacy; and that the Dominican tradition stretching back to Albert and Aquinas was important to him.

It would, I think, be fanciful to see O’Connor as a modern survival of the interest of Hedge Schoolmasters in the culture of ancient Greece—his educational formation took place through studies in Rome and at Oxford—but for an academic he had a commendable knack of communicating to the wider public. In his frequent appearances on the Late Late Show he conveyed two memorable messages. The Catholic Church had no place in the bedroom; and getting it right in politics was often a matter of plain common sense.

Dunne is interesting on Fergal O’Connor’s attitude to liberalism. He says:

“Both Plato and Aristotle take their cue from Socrates in seeing ethics as inseparable from politics, that is to say in seeing the good life not as something to be achieved in isolation but as requiring a community held together by a shared ethos which animates its laws and institutions. By following these

Greek thinkers Fergal found himself at odds with contemporary ‘liberals’ who deem pursuit of the good to be only the private affair of individuals, while the polity must (as it were by ‘necessity’) resign itself to a lower level neutrality undisturbed by conflict between rival versions of the good” (p. 24).

Later, in describing O’Connor as a thorn in the side of the University, Dunne hits the nail on the top of the head when he says:

“Fergal went on pursuing this understanding of a university [the traditional idea of a university] in his own practice even as it became increasingly clear that the university’s actual role in society was becoming that of just another industry governed by the logic of ‘the bottom line’—as, for individual students, enhancement of their prospects in a competitive economy was becoming the overwhelming purpose of their education. As a place increasingly devoted to efficient dissemination of information within ever narrower and more fragmented specialisms, the university had become an inhospitable place for Fergal’s kind of educative practice—all the more so when the radicalism of those in the Humanities most likely to be critics of this debasement had often succumbed to a postmodernist rhetoric that was itself more a symptom than a critique of ‘late capitalism’...” (p. 25).

Another essay worth noting is “*The Civil Service: A Defence*” by Frank Litton. Litton, a lecturer in Public Policy at the Institute of Public Administration, challenges the Thatcherite view that the civil service, in constantly expanding beyond its original function, represents an unnecessary burden on the private sector. Using the Platonic concept of an ‘art’ as an occupational practice dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in its particular field, he argues that public policy-making is effectively a practice and that the construction of institutions that would realise that vision of public service is more realistic than anything the New Right has to offer.

In a collection dealing mainly with political themes, an essay entitled, “‘*Share Value*’ and *Shared Values*” could easily be overlooked, but the essay by Fergus Armstrong is one of the most interesting in the book. From a starting viewpoint that the power of shareholders in modern business is a negative factor, Armstrong examines the Stakeholder concept, at that time a hot topic since it had the backing of Tony Blair. I recall

the Stakeholder vision being discussed in Athol Street circles, and it being rejected as an inadequate basis for running a company. Armstrong concurs with that but like Frank Litton sees potential in the Platonic concept of an ‘art’ or practice. He considers it relevant to corporate governance. He concludes his essay as follows:

“The Centre for Tomorrow’s Company cites a study by Stanford University of those large US businesses that appear to have been more or less consistently successful over fifty years or more, and are today the undisputed leaders in their industries—the lead examples include Merck, Hewlett Packard, Proctor and Gamble and Motorola (Centre for Tomorrow’s Company, 1997). This identified the following as important contributors to success: continuity of values; actions consistent with values; investment in people; objectives beyond profit; and investment for the long term. Emerging Irish corporates, drawn to the American way, who look to select their role models, and industrial promotion agencies [the IDA] seeking to choose winners, need to give heed to the statistic that of the 500 leading American companies operating in 1970 only one-third are still even in existence. A focus given to richer ideas of collaborative enterprise should also be reflected in the quality of directors appointed to contribute to policy in promising concerns and in endorsement of the approach of those managers who do, instinctively, in their daily decisions, and the relations which they engender with staff, support the broader ideal” (p. 232).

Other interesting essays are “*Prisons, Politicians and Democracy*” by Philip Petit; “*Public Policy and Social Partnership*” by Rory O’Donnell; and “*The Priest in Politics*” by Austin Flannery. In the anti-democratic tradition of Socrates, Petit argues that the modern prison system is a barbarity that needs to be cut off from the control of democratic politics. It is at least a thought-provoking idea but the effect was ruined for me when he suggested the de-politicisation of Central Banks as a model to be followed. O’Donnell’s essay is notable because of the importance of its subject, but I found his defence of the inclusion of diverse elements in the process beyond Employers, Unions and Farmers to be unconvincing. As a positive example of a priest meddling in politics, Flannery cites a sermon delivered in 1511 in Haiti by a Spanish Dominican, Antonio Montesinos, in which he rounded on the Spanish colonists for their treatment of

the native Indians. A slave owner in the congregation, Bartolome de Las Casas, was affected so profoundly by the sermon that he gave his slaves their freedom and, becoming a Dominican, dedicated his life to defending the Indians. For mentioning this alone, which is described in detail in John Minahane's excellent series in *Church and State*, Flannery's article deserves credit.

Brendan Clifford on Burke

Having departed lamentably from my avowed theme of political education, I decided to check up on what had been written about Edmund Burke in the literature of Athol Books. In a Postscript by Brendan Clifford to the intriguing biography of Burke by John Morley, published by Athol Books in 1993, I found the following passage.

[the relationship between the ideas of Thomas Paine and Edmund Burke is being discussed]

"Paine was uneasy about a possibility which he saw in a system of representative government operating through parties in a democratic franchise. One party might win this election, the other party the next, alternation continuing at each election. If laws were made by party majority, then they were liable to be remade after each election. In such an event, the legislature 'would be no other than a committee of state, acting with discretionary powers for one year. Every new election would be a new revolution'. And, 'our laws and acts, instead of being founded in party, will be founded in justice, and be laws and acts of retaliation; and instead of being a republic of free citizens, we shall be alternately tyrants and slaves'.

"To avert this, Paine makes the impractical proposal that parties may contest elections, but that the successful candidates, on entering the legislature, shall cease to be animated by party spirit and become participants in collective wisdom. It is no solution. But the problem is real enough.

In the late seventies [Michael] Foot shepherded a great body of new legislation through Parliament. Thatcher won the 1979 Election, repealed all of that legislation, and enacted legislation of a contrary tendency. If Labour had won the 1983 Election it would have repealed Thatcher's laws, etc.

By contrast, the Attlee/Bevin legislation of 1945-50 has thus far defied all Thatcherite efforts to repeal it. That is because the Attlee Government did not merely enact laws, but altered the institutional structure of society by means of laws. And they implicated the Tory Party as far as possible—through the wartime Coalition—in the preparation

of these changes, rejecting Aneurin Bevan's demand that everything should always be done in an attitude of partisan hostility to the Tories.

Development through the conflict of political parties involves an unsettled combination of antagonism, which is part earnest and part display, and tacit consensus. The secret of it is not to be found in any rule that can be learned in the University or at the Bar. It is something which has to be devised anew in each new set of circumstances. But, while it cannot be learned at school, acquisition of the ability to devise it can be helped or hindered by the kind of political reading one does. And I know of no reading which is so conducive to enhancing the ability to make reforms which last as Burke on the political philosophy of reform and Pitt's speeches.

Bevanite literature is virtually a training in how to be politically ineffective. It combined the rhetorical froth of party conflict, whipped up extravagantly, with an inability to act on the substance of things. The Bevanite Governments of the seventies put words on the Statute Book, instead of putting representatives of the corporate bodies of the working class on the boards of directors" (p. 154).

The subject of political education is only briefly touched on in the passage but the nub of the matter is answered. In devising a system of political education, it would be necessary to start at the highest level and work backwards to the point of what could be taught in the schools to school children. I consider that education that has the aim of changing society is doomed to failure; all that can be done is prepare students for the society they will become part of. In any case it turns out that my paper has turned out to be something of a wild goose chase through Platonism, even if the stops along the way have hopefully been instructive.

One criticism I would make of Brendan's prescription for education through reading Burke is that reading is not enough for many people; the learning often needs to be supplemented by discussion. That is, I think, true in this organisation. We communicate regularly through email and articles but it is also necessary to hold meetings so that the ideas being developed can be teased out.

John Minahane

Plato and Today's Political Elites

The idea of a revival of Plato in the educational system, proposed by Dave Alvey, raises two big questions. One is the formation of political elites in democratic society: how they are formed currently (and specifically in Ireland), and how better elites might be formed. The other issue is how to sustain some substantial culture of citizenship at a time when much of the glue that gave society coherence seems to be coming unstuck—or to use the image developed by Zygmunt Bauman in a series of books, culture in general seems to be turning liquid.

I think it is true to say that the term "elite" is not normally used in a positive or neutral sense in political discussion in Britain and Ireland. It seems bad taste to acknowledge in a matter-of-fact way that the playing field in democracy isn't perfectly level, even if we're all aware of this reality. In Central and Eastern Europe people don't have such inhibitions, and the term "elite" is commonly

used as description of a social fact. For example, by Petra Köpping, the SPD Minister for Integration in the Government of Saxony, whose book *Integriert doch erst mal uns!* ('Integrate Us first!'), published last year, sparked a lot of discussion in Germany. The title repeats the words of an angry demonstrator against the CDU-SPD immigration policy: "You're always with your immigrants! Integrate us first!" Köpping's argument is that the anger in eastern Germany against immigration policy is fuelled by a deeper anger against the way German unification has worked out. One of her chapters has the heading: *Where are the East German elites? Why the West always dominates the East.*

Of the various attempts in modern times to form political elites, I think the two most ambitious and striking ventures are the British Public Schools and the Leninist Communist Parties. Both of them have contributed in complex ways

to the present-day liberal democracy or “open society” (the Public Schools don’t seem to have lost all relevance to elite formation even now). Both of them also could be compared in certain ways to the ruling elite of guardians imagined by Plato in *The Republic*.

(It is interesting to see how Karl Popper, the anti-Platonic philosopher of liberal democracy, regarded the Public Schools. He was writing *The Open Society and Its Enemies* during wartime, and he clearly wanted to speak positively about British institutions whenever he possibly could. But, tucked away near the back of the huge book, there’s a footnote where he expresses the view that the British Public Schools were a “not unsuccessful” attempt to hold back the development of the open society “by establishing class rule”.)

A more recent venture in elite formation, focusing on east/central Europe post-1989, is the Open Society Foundation, inspired by Popper and financed by George Soros. Its general goal seems to be to Westernise, or Americanise, these territories as far as possible—or it might be better to say: to *Clintonise* them. Open Society Foundation literature tends to have a more or less clearly stated idea of what is advanced, progressive (Clintonian America/Euroamerica) and what is backward (East/Central Europe). Among other things, the Open Society Foundation has contributed to a notion that Communism was a piece of waste history, some sort of bizarre deviation from a “normality” that has now been restored. (A few years ago Boris Groys observed with amusement that, in Eastern Europe, this seemed to be the prevailing idea of recent history—see his epilogue to *The Total Art of Stalinism*.)

The East-West Divide and the Failure of Elites

But something else may be developing, at long last. The Social Europe website recently published an eye-opening article by two women who work for the *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*—a venture in elite-formation connected with the German SPD, founded in 1925 and therefore long preceding George Soros (“*The EU’s east-west divide*”, by Eszter Kováts and Katerina Smejkalova, July 8, 2019, <https://www.socialeurope.eu/eu-east-west-divide>).

Rebuking 30 big names, including Milan Kundera, Adam Michnik, Ágnes Heller and Salman Rushdie, who had issued a moralising “pro-European”

manifesto in January of this year, Kováts and Smejkalova say: “*Repeating abstract European values and using the sledgehammer argument of the Holocaust comes across as aloof and alien in the face of many people’s everyday worries and struggles. The last few years have shown that this often just creates a bigger divide.*”

Instead, Kováts and Smejkalova recommend Petra Köpping’s book. “*It helps us understand why the writers’ attitudes and the liberals’ slogans—‘pro-Europeans v Eurosceptics’, ‘progressives v populists’—do more harm than good. Instead, if we are truly interested in the demand side of populism’s growth, we can grasp its underlying causes.*”

And what are these causes? Köpping says that, in eastern Germany, they largely have to do with events after the fall of the Berlin Wall. According to her, it is still taboo (in west Germany anyhow) to discuss plainly and factually what happened then.

“The so-called ‘Treuhand’ policy which entailed an enormous transfer of wealth from east to west through the privatisation of most state enterprises and real estate to west Germans, the introduction of a militant neoliberal capitalism that would have been politically unthinkable in west Germany at that time, the alteration of entire living and working environments from one day to the next, the devaluation of people’s life histories and identities through the system’s failure, the frequent treatment of the ‘Ossis’ (easterners) as if they were immature or backward—all of this has left its mark...”

Anyone who denies this or doesn’t take it seriously simply pours oil on the fire” (Kováts and Smejkalova).

And the fire isn’t burning only in eastern Germany:

“What happened within Germany applies to east-central Europe in relation to the European Union. There was a desire to become ‘part of Europe’ again, but it was only possible to join following the rules set by the west. Democracy came as part of a package that also included precarisation. The prescription of the way forward was presented with a degree of arrogance—as if eastern Europeans had been backward up until now.”

The arrogance was accepted (if not actually invited), and the image was internalised, by the east German elite and by the east European elite generally:

“This attitude was also adopted

by the liberal, affluent and educated elite of eastern Europe, who detached themselves from the perceptions and lived experience of broad sections of their own population... The west was always the reference point. The goal was to catch up. The economic price of transformation and integration into free markets were downplayed as a necessary evil of civilisation.

Alexander Kiossev describes this process as self-colonisation...”

One can indeed say that “*the economic price of transformation*” was high. In a book published a year or two ago by Daniel Šmihula, a Slovak political scientist, it is said bluntly that the transformation after 1989 brought a sharp fall in the general standard of living; only about 2010 did the general standard of living catch up with its 1989 level, and in certain regions it has not caught up even now. Throughout eastern Europe, I think the same would have been true. At least until very recent times, surveys consistently showed a majority view that life was better under Communism. All of this has indeed been downplayed and is being downplayed still.

“*We were, are and remain on the periphery, cannot really catch up with the west materially and are not treated as equals by the west,*” Kováts and Smejkalova say. The relationship with west European capitalism aggravates inequalities: property prices tend to rise to western levels, but wages do not. Generally, the tendency is not towards equalisation. As for transfers, whatever the west may give in structural funds will be taken back several times over in profits.

What follows from all of this? The two writers take it for granted that the European Union should survive, and should continue to include eastern Europe. However,

“we need a discussion about power, instead of morality and abstract values: the power of the market over politics, the west over the east, the centres over the peripheries. This conflict also takes place within the states of east-central Europe... The dichotomy between ‘pro-Europeans’ and ‘Eurosceptics’ is false and counterproductive. Rather, the fault line runs between the winners and losers of the eurozone and the single market, between prosperous centres and peripheral regions that have been materially and symbolically left behind.”

These inequalities produce nationalist reactions and disintegration.

Typically, in response there is useless moralising (like the manifesto of the 30 worthies).

“There’s a vain attempt to present the EU as a moral and value-based project that must be rescued, even though its rejection is fuelled by the failure of its economic dimension and power structures to reflect those very values and morals.

This has to end soon; otherwise the EU will fall apart. First of all, we need to have the courage to talk about these inequalities. In order to be able to stand up against nationalism and Euroscepticism, social democrats east and west must, instead of moralising, find a language that brings these power dynamics back into play. Then we can work together to find concrete, courageous political solutions.”

Hybrid Democracy

There’s a refreshing attempt here to get some grip on realities—a good beginning. But is it only in eastern Europe that liberal elites have “*detached themselves from the perceptions and lived experience of broad sections of their own population*”? The problem goes beyond the limits of these two writers’ argument. There is surely evidence of a similar failure by the liberal elites in France, Italy, Britain and the United States. And again, their response to the Brexit vote, for example, or Donald Trump’s election, is mostly useless moralising and abuse. It is as if those elites were determined, on principle, never to make sympathetic mental contact with the erring populations, lest they should find themselves beyond “democracy”.

But an adequate democratic elite would need to know that democracy has to prove itself, and that there could be alternatives to democracy if it doesn’t. Also, that our present-day democracy is actually hybrid and contains elements of other systems described by Plato. This has been a feature of modern Europe generally. Europe’s earlier ruling classes (under their monarchs) are described as aristocracies. This is directly derived from the Greek word meaning “*rule of the best*”, which Plato used for the ideal system of government that he described in *The Republic*. By “the best” Plato meant “the best minds”. But even an aristocracy like Britain’s, which did have a powerful intellectual core, also presupposed landed property (so it had an aspect of “oligarchy”, the rule of the rich) and a military involvement by many of its members (giving it an aspect

of “timocracy”, rule by distinguished warriors).

Democracy has had similar admixtures. For at least the first half of the 20th century, both the Dail and the House of Commons had a high proportion of soldiers. As for oligarchy, there’s always some of it around. In present-day eastern Europe there are super-rich people who made fortunes from the privatisations after 1989; they are commonly called “oligarchs” and sometimes go into politics. One of them, Andrej Babiš, is currently Prime Minister of the Czech Republic.

However, “timocracy” is not prominent in Europe these days, and “oligarchy” mostly works prudently in the background. On the other hand, a question much discussed in the liberal media is how a democracy can become a “tyranny”, the last and worst of the five great systems, according to Plato. Democracy and tyranny are normally presented as mutually exclusive. But why is it not possible to have a hybrid here also (democracy with an aspect of tyranny)? Modern Turkey seems to be something like this.

From the 1930s to the 1960s Ireland

made a bold attempt to develop an independent modern Irish democracy. Since about 1960 much of the independence, and practically all of the distinctively Irish character, has been traded in exchange for more modernity, but the democratic political system has been retained and probably will be for the foreseeable future. However, one can easily imagine circumstances where that system would be changed. (Say, if it ceased to exist both in Britain and on the Continent...)

If some bold new attempt were to be made, an attempt to foster a political elite worthy of the name, I think *The Republic* might well be one of its key books. Nothing is more likely than that Plato’s work will have a revival and will be attractively fresh when Karl Popper’s anti-Platonic tome has become stale and unreadable. The description of democracy in Book VIII, unforgettably vivid (and partly a leg-pull—or does he really mean to tell us that under democracy “*the horses and asses have a way of marching along with all the rights and dignities of freemen*”?), will provoke and challenge the gifted democrat, like few other writings can. ***

Peter Brooke

Christianity And Platonism

Christianity East And West

In the Preface to *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche declares (in capital letters) that CHRISTIANITY IS PLATONISM FOR THE “PEOPLE”. There is something a little strange about this. In the area Nietzsche knows best, and where Platonism had the most influence—the area of Western Christianity—Plato’s actual writings were for a long time almost unknown. Aristotle only came on stream in the thirteenth century in the form of Latin translations of Arabic translations of the Greek originals. The writings of Plato and Aristotle that we possess now (together with the rest of what we have of the Greek classical heritage) were preserved in Eastern Christianity but, although a great deal of effort was put into finding and preserving good texts, and commentaries were written, there seems to have been very little interest in developing them as a living culture. N.G.Wilson finishes his book *Scholars*

of *Byzantium*, quoting Gibbon:

“The Greeks of Constantinople... held in their lifeless hands the riches of their fathers without inheriting the spirit which had created and improved that sacred patrimony; they read, they praised, they compiled, but their languid souls seemed alike incapable of thought and action.”

Wilson continues: “A closer look at what the byzantines wrote and the conditions in which they worked allows a more charitable version”. But actually his book gives little evidence for it. It is mostly a record of reading, praising and compiling.

The fact is that the Roman Empire, continuing in Constantinople, believed that the philosophical/religious problems raised by Plato had been largely resolved in Christianity, in particular through the development of the ascetic life, which provided a practical means of coming to know God without having to go through

a process of philosophical speculation. The masterpiece of eastern Christianity is the *Philokalia*, which is a compilation of texts on prayer and on the ascetic life. The emphasis throughout—and the literary style—is practical.

Very crudely one could say that the problem facing Greek and Roman culture at the time of the conversion of Constantine was how to reconcile on the one hand the personal relationship that was possible with ‘the gods’, personifications of various natural and psychological forces that had to be appeased, with, on the other hand, the abstract, impersonal Unity, origin of all things, from which all things derive and to which they return, of the philosophers.

The particular obsession of all the tendencies outside Christianity (and within Christianity in the ‘gnostic’ tradition) was how the One becomes the many. It is a problem that goes back to Parmenides counterposing a timeless unchanging reality with the illusory, constantly changing, world of our everyday experience. It is easy to imagine that, if Christianity hadn’t got in the way, this line of thought would have produced something much closer to Hinduism or Buddhism. But Christianity, and in particular the doctrine of the Trinity, provided for a quite different approach. The changing world in time and space is not an emanation of an unchanging original Unity. It is a creation and therefore of a separate substance from the Creator but with its own distinct ontological reality. It isn’t an illusion. The Trinity is of a separate substance from ourselves and so it is quite unknowable in its essence—but it can be known and experienced through its energies, as the Sun can be experienced through its light. A personal relationship is possible through Christ Who is the Union of God and Man, of the Uncreated and the created. The body—flesh, matter—is an integral part of the Creation, therefore assumed by Christ and brought into Eternity through the Ascension. Hence the Christian insistence—scandalous in the eyes of the NeoPlatonists—on the Resurrection of the body. We can also have direct experience of the energies of the Holy Spirit, Who ‘spoke by the prophets’ (in the words of the Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople), but the Father remains transcendent.

This body of thought is about as far removed from Platonism as one could wish. So why did Platonism assume importance in the Latin world, the world where Plato’s own writings were so

completely unknown? And, we might add, given the importance of Greek as the language of the *New Testament* and of the *Septuagint* (the authoritative version of the *Old Testament*), not to mention the debates in which the basic doctrines were established, why was the knowledge of Greek so completely abandoned in the West?

My own views are influenced by the Greek theologian/historian John Romanides.¹ He argues that what is called the ‘Roman Catholic Church’ was actually a new church formed in the 8th-9th century in the court of Charlemagne, largely in reaction against the Church of the Roman Empire whose centre was now Constantinople. The Frankish Church, as he would call it, was in a state of tension with the Pope who was their patriarch but who was still part of the Roman system, albeit claiming a position of superiority over the other Roman patriarchs. It was only with the Hildebrandian reforms of the late eleventh century that the papacy was fully incorporated into the German, or Frankish system.

The Church which formed round Charlemagne was based on peoples—Irish, Germans, Goths, Franks, Anglo-Saxons—who had never been fully incorporated into the Roman Empire, who had indeed often been at war with it. The Goths had been converted in the fourth century from Constantinople at a time when Constantinople was Arian (or ‘semi-Arian’) and so, according to the eventual settlement at the council of Constantinople in 384, heretical. The Anglo-Saxons, Germans and Franks had largely been converted from Ireland at a time when Ireland was cut off from the Christian world through the collapse of the Western Empire. These peoples were still notionally part of the Roman Empire centred on Constantinople but, though this had very little practical effect, Charlemagne was anxious to break free of it. One way of doing this was to convict Constantinople of heresy—hence quarrels over the veneration of icons and over the double procession of the Holy Spirit.² Hence also the development of

1 eg in John S. Romanides: *Franks, Romans, Feudalism and Doctrine*, Brookline, Mass, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1981. A selection of his writings can be found at <http://www.romanity.org/cont.htm>

2 The ‘filioque’ which the Latins had added to the authoritative Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople at the time when the Visigoths in Spain abandoned their Arianism. The original formula states that the Holy Spirit ‘proceeds from the Father’. The Latin formula says ‘proceeds from

a distinctively Latin theology, heavily dependent on the voluminous writings of Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in North Africa.

Austine East And West

Augustine has the distinction of being one of the very few early Church Fathers whose writings can be found in the Evangelical Bookshop in Belfast (I might have said the only one if I hadn’t spotted one time to my amazement, Saint Gregory of Nyssa’s very unCalvinist *Life of Moses*). At the end of his life he argued vigorously for what became the hard Calvinist doctrine of a ‘double predestination’—that God had predestined not just the elect for salvation but also the non-elect for damnation, their own personal merits having nothing to do with the matter. But in his early writings, Augustine is nothing if not a NeoPlatonist.

He was certainly an intellectual, a man who delighted in the operations of his own mind, who loved posing and grappling with intellectual problems. Reading the *Confessions* we can see the young Augustine despising what he saw as the philosophical ignorance of his mother’s Christianity. Then he meets Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, and is impressed by the conversion of Marius Victorinus, one of Rome’s leading NeoPlatonists. He sees that actually Christianity offers great scope for an intellectual like himself. Its very lack of philosophical culture opens up all sorts of opportunities.

So, instead of going into the desert to bewail his sins, as any normal candidate for sainthood would do, he retires to a friend’s estate, Cassiacum, in North Italy with a group of friends and teenage boys (they include his son, Adeodatus) who idolise him, and there he engages in a series of high-spirited and enjoyable Platonic style dialogues with himself

the Father and the Son’. Given that Arianism has the Son or Word of God as a created being, highest of created beings but still far below the uncreated Father, the intention was probably to stress the equality of Father and Son (albeit at the expense of the Holy Spirit). I have written on the controversy over veneration of icons in ‘The Seventh Ecumenical Council, the Council of Frankfurt and the Practice of Painting’ Article originally published in Janet Rutherford (ed): *The Beauty of God’s Presence in the Fathers of the Church (Proceedings of the eighth International Patristic Conference, Maynooth, 2012)*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2014. Also on my website at <http://www.peterbrooke.org/art-and-religion/frankfurt/>

playing the role of Socrates (but, unlike Socrates, making sure the dialogues were recorded). This at a time when he was himself a 'catechumen' prior to his baptism and therefore ought to have been receiving rather than giving instruction. His project seems to have been to lay the sound philosophical basis for Christianity that he believed it lacked.³

I wrote about Eastern Christian ('Orthodox') attitudes to Augustine in an essay, 'On Orthodoxy', first published in the *Heidegger Review* and now available on my website.⁴ I mentioned two writers from within the Orthodox tradition, the perhaps eccentric but nonetheless interesting 'Founder and President of the Kairological Society— Reality Restructuring Resources Ltd', Nicholas Laos, whom I encountered on Alexander Dugin's 'Fourth Political Theory' website; and a French priest, Patric Ranson, author of a book on the seventeenth century French pioneer of biblical criticism, Richard Simon. Ranson's book is subtitled 'On the illegitimate character of of Augustinianism in Theology'.⁵

Laos argues that Western Platonism is based on a misunderstanding of Plato's 'ideas':

"When Plato elaborated the term idea (which is one of the most controversial philosophical terms), he emphasised that seeing, or vision, is the most representative sense of man's mental life. But the medieval Western philosophers were ignorant of that aspect of Plato's philosophy, and, therefore, the medieval West was ignorant of the fact that, in the context of Plato's philosophy, knowledge—that is, the mind's relation to truth—is primarily a spiritual experience, and, hence, it primarily consists in a psychological state and only

3 There is no evidence that Augustine knew Greek or that he ever read Plato. His 'Platonism' seems to have been based mainly on Victorinus's Latin translation of Plotinus. Later in the Carolingian court of Charles the Bald, the Irish philosopher John Scotus Eriugena had access to Greek texts, mainly the authoritative Eastern Christian writers S.S. Maximus the Confessor and Dionysius the Areopagite. Maximus is writing to confute the view that Gregory of Nazianzus and Dionysius had heretical ideas derived from Platonism. John, in his *De Divisione Naturae*, manages to turn his arguments into a very impressive NeoPlatonist style hierarchy of values.

4 Heidegger Review No 2, May 2015, <http://www.peterbrooke.org/politics-and-theology/orthodoxy-index/>

5 Patric Ranson: *Richard Simon ou du catactère illégitime de l'Augustinisme en théologie*, Lausanne, L'Age d'Homme, collection La Lumière du Thabor, 1990.

secondarily in the discovery of causal relations. [...]

"From the perspective of European rationalism, to know means to be able to give an account, and, hence, knowledge reduces to the formulation of causal relations. Furthermore, European rationalism attempts even to know God through causal relations, specifically through the subject's syllogistic ascent to the most general concept, which the Western philosophical realists (such as Johannes Scotus Eriugena, Anselm of Canterbury, and Thomas Aquinas) equate with the divinity. On the other hand, Plato's theory of ideas implies a different approach to the problem of knowledge, one that is founded on a peculiar mental sensation, or spiritual experience. Thus, from Plato's viewpoint, an individual participates in the idea of humanity due to psychological relations among human individuals, i.e. because he experiences humanity, and not because he can logically conceive the notion of humanity".⁶

He goes on to argue that the basic error in Western theology was to think that understanding the logic of creation could be a means of understanding the Creator (and that understanding, or knowing the Creator was a matter of logical discourse). Hence, changes in our understanding of the logic of Creation can disturb our understanding of God. By contrast, Laos tells us:

"the genuine Orthodox Christian theologians never feel threatened by or at odds with any scientific theory, since, from the perspective of the genuine Orthodox Christian theology, science is concerned with the investigation of the *logoi* of the beings and things in the world, and the *logoi* of the beings and things in the world are not essential attributes of God, but they are God's wills; therefore, science can prove/disprove nothing essential about God."

Of course this also helps explain why 'science' (an interest in the *logoi* of created things) developed in the West, not in the East, at a time when everyone, East and West, would have agreed that the most important task was the knowledge of God.

Ranson's critique of Augustine is very wide ranging⁷ but broadly similar

6 Nicholas Laos: *Civilisation clashes in Europe: the philosophical causes*, accessible at <http://www.4pt.su/en/content/civilization-clashes-europe-philosophical-causes>

7 The main issue between Augustine and the Orthodox tradition turns on the understanding of grace, an issue that

to that of Laos in that, in the Augustinian West, knowledge of God is seen as a process of intellectual speculation while in the East it is seen as a Revelation to be gained through ascetic practise (the word 'askesis' in Greek doesn't mean self deprivation, but 'exercise'). The 'dogmas' of the Church are not subject to a process of reasoning; they are practical aids to entering into relations with a Reality that is completely other than the reality of the world perceived in space and time. The dogmas and sacraments of the Church are the means by which that other Reality can be experienced through what the standard English translation of the *Philokalia* calls the 'noetic faculty' (in Greek the *nous*). The 'exercise' of the ascetic life is an exercise of this faculty which is quite other than the reasoning faculty but which has become clouded through the process that is represented in the story of the Fall.

Heidegger and Augustine

Ranson (before he died in a car crash while on a pilgrimage in Greece) edited a large collection of mostly hostile essays on Augustine. It includes two essays on Heidegger. In 1921, as perhaps his last foray into the domain of theology, Martin Heidegger gave a series of lectures on 'Augustine and Neo-Platonism'. It followed from an intense engagement with the thinking of Martin Luther and St Paul:

"According to Heidegger, Paul's message and its explanation by Luther, witnessed a profound faithfulness to 'the actual experience of life', the experience of life in its radical irreducibility, and therefore its resistance to being definitively captured by any speculative system of conceptualisation ... If, according to Heidegger, there are many passages to be found in Augustine showing that he is inspired by the 'actual' experience of life ... the idea of the 'summum bonum' nonetheless presupposes a hierarchy of values whose consequence is that the 'restlessness' inherent in the unfolding of life in its actuality is trapped in the midst of categories that are static. This hierarchy of values closes God and man up in a single speculative system in which the finality of life receives a predetermined definition. The falsification (*détournement*) of the character of life in movement of the actual experience of life can be seen clearly in the Augustinian idea of this finality in terms of 'quietude' in the light of the eternal divinity. The influence of the Platonist and NeoPlatonist metaphysics

does not concern us here.

ics in Augustine has, as Heidegger has indicated, played a preponderant role in the constitution of a Western tradition, considered in its totality.”⁸

So, if we take that as an accurate account, there is Heidegger more or less endorsing Nietzsche’s view that Christianity, or at least Western Christianity in the wake of Augustine, is Platonism for the ‘people’, taking ‘Platonism’ to mean a coherent hierarchy of values continuous from God throughout creation. God is identified with a ‘highest good’ which in turn is identified with immutability, while distance from this highest good is measured by increasingly chaotic changeableness. From the age of fourteen Heidegger had been trained for the Catholic priesthood, given a solid grounding in Thomist philosophy. His ‘habilitation’ thesis, presented in 1915, was on Duns Scotus but he was already withdrawing from the scholastic systemisation of human experience and the rational arguments that supported it, emphasising actual (‘phenomenological’) experience while understanding that actual experience is underpinned by historically determined preconceptions. In his much later *Essence of Truth*, discussing Plato’s allegory of the cave in Book VI of *The Republic*, Heidegger argues like Laos that Plato’s ‘ideas’ had been badly misunderstood in the West which interpreted them as thoughts abstracted from the experienced world rather than a more intense seeing (*idea* in Greek means appearance, *idein* is to see), a fuller experience, of the things we encounter in everyday life.

Nietzsche singles out ‘Plato’s invention of Pure Spirit and the Good in Itself’ as the characteristics of Platonism that Western philosophy has to (indeed he suggests it already has) overcome. The ‘good in itself’ would be the *summum bonum* at the top of the hierarchy of values, the Augustinian process by which contemplation of earthly goods raises us up to contemplation of divine goodness, the idea of the ‘Great Chain of Being’ which fails to recognise the radical gap that separates Creator and created. ‘Pure spirit’ would refer to the notion—Heidegger and Laos would say a misinterpretation of Plato—that the truth or ‘being’, of the material world

⁸ Jeffrey Barash: ‘Les sciences de l’histoire et le problème de la théologie. Autour du cours inédit de Heidegger sur saint Augustin’ in Patric Ranson (ed): *Saint Augustin*, Lausanne, L’Age d’Homme (series Les Dossiers H), 1988. My translation from the French.

lies outside the material world.

But Nietzsche also says that—

“now when it has been surmounted, when Europe, rid of this nightmare, can again draw breath freely and at least enjoy a healthier sleep—we, whose duty is wakefulness itself, are the heirs of all the strength which the struggle against this error has fostered ... the struggle against Plato ... produced in Europe a magnificent tension of soul, such has had not existed anywhere previously; with such a tensely strained bow one can now aim at the furthest goals ...”

It was however a Platonism that had very little to do with Plato. And a tension that wasn’t much experienced in the Orthodox world where Plato was known. The Greeks incidentally gave the Slav world their Christianity but kept their pre-Christian classical culture to themselves, probably feeling that, despite

their own fondness for it, it wouldn’t be much use to anyone else. So the Russians too missed out on that “*magnificent tension of soul*”. It was only in the closing days of the Roman Empire, before Constantinople fell to the Ottomans, that the Greek classical texts began to pass into the West. So it is only with the ‘Renaissance’ that Plato himself, as opposed to Augustine’s Christianised version of Neo-Platonism, becomes influential in the West and, when it does, the effect, together with other aspects of classical culture, is to contribute to that mental estrangement from Christianity—that huge loss of the dimension of depth in human experience—that goes under the name of ‘Humanism’.⁹

⁹ See my essay *Humanism and technology as understood by Albert Gleizes and Martin Heidegger* at <http://www.peterbrooke.org/form-and-history/humanism/> ***

INDIA continued

Meanwhile, London ended up with all of the gold and silver that should have gone directly to the Indians in exchange for their exports.

This corrupt system meant that even while India was running an impressive trade surplus with the rest of the world—a surplus that lasted for three decades in the early 20th century—it showed up as a deficit in the national accounts because the real income from India’s exports was appropriated in its entirety by Britain.

Some point to this fictional “deficit” as evidence that India was a liability to Britain. But exactly the opposite is true. Britain intercepted enormous quantities of income that rightly belonged to Indian producers. India was the goose that laid the golden egg. Meanwhile, the “deficit” meant that India had no option but to borrow from Britain to finance its imports. So the entire Indian population was forced into completely unnecessary debt to their colonial overlords, further cementing British control.

Britain used the windfall from this fraudulent system to fuel the engines of imperial violence—funding the invasion of [China](#) in the 1840s and the suppression of the Indian Rebellion in 1857. And this was on top of what the Crown took directly from Indian taxpayers to pay for its wars...

Britain used this flow of tribute from India to finance the expansion of capitalism in Europe and regions of European settlement, like Canada and Australia. So

not only the industrialisation of Britain but also the industrialisation of much of the Western world was facilitated by extraction from the colonies.

Patnaik identifies four distinct economic periods in colonial India from 1765 to 1938, calculates the extraction for each, and then compounds at a modest rate of interest (about 5 percent, which is lower than the market rate) from the middle of each period to the present. Adding it all up, she finds that the total drain amounts to \$44.6 trillion. This figure is conservative, she says, and does not include the debts that Britain imposed on India during the Raj.

These are eye-watering sums. But the true costs of this drain cannot be calculated. If India had been able to invest its own tax revenues and foreign exchange earnings in development—as [Japan](#) did—there’s no telling how history might have turned out differently. India could very well have become an economic powerhouse. Centuries of poverty and suffering could have been prevented.

All of this is a sobering antidote to the rosy narrative promoted by certain powerful voices in Britain...

... during the entire 200-year history of British rule in India, there was almost [no increase](#) in per capita income. In fact, during the last half of the 19th century... income in India collapsed by half...

Dr Jason Hickel is an academic at the University of London and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts

14.12.2018 Al Jazeera

9 August 2019:

Fóram Staiře Iařtar Ćorcaí

(The West Cork History Forum)

A West Cork History Festival was launched in July 2017. Its patron was Simon Kingston. Its opening address was delivered by Roy Foster, who has been a Professor at a number of Universities in England. The major West Cork historian, Alexander Martin Sullivan, was not mentioned at the Festival.

Members of the Aubane Historical Society took issue, in the discussion period, with a number of gross inaccuracies in Professor Foster's lecture. The major inaccuracy was the assertion that Charles Haughey was a convicted gun-runner for the IRA. Foster and Kingston did not stand over that assertion when it was pointed out that Haughey was subjected to a criminal trial on the issue and that the jury found him not guilty in the light of the evidence. The factual detail of the Trial has been assembled and published by a member of the Aubane Historical Society, and it is plain for all to see that the State, for some political purpose, brought a criminal charge which it had no evidence to support.

Simon Kingston did not commend the Aubane group for correcting Professor Foster, and preventing his History Festival from launching itself on a groundless fable. What he did after the first session was suggest to the Aubane group that they should leave the Festival as their intervention had not been helpful—it was not the kind of thing the Festival members wanted to hear. He said they wanted to listen to “*a real historian*”, Professor Foster - who had been demonstrated to be a retailer of fables.

A.M. Sullivan was not unknown to Professor Foster. Foster's Inaugural Lecture at Oxford, 1 Dec. 1994, had been about him. And Foster had written a book about him called the *The Irish Story*. The *Story of Ireland* was the title of Sullivan's main work. Foster asserted that in this work Sullivan had launched a fashion of Irish national history-writing as a telling of fairy-stories, in which facts were made up to fit the story instead of the story being a relation of the sequence of facts.

Foster did not take issue with any of the factual detail of Sullivan's History. What he did was misquote him as saying that he intended to make up history, leaving the facts aside. So, if Sullivan was a self-confessed falsifier of history, there was no need to argue with him over historical facts.

It is a sign of the times that the Irish Universities did not demolish Foster's caricature of Sullivan. Since they have not done it, and Kingston's lavishly funded History Festival is not about history, it falls to some of us who are neither academics nor millionaires to do it. Because history is about the future no less than the past. That is why the Fóram Staiře Iařtar Ćorcaí (The West Cork History Forum) has been formed.

Sullivan was part of the influential movement known as the *Bantry Band*. His brother was the song-writer who wrote *God Save Ireland*. Another member of the *Band* was the pioneer of native capitalism, the notorious William Martin Murphy—who was not a Merchant Prince but an entrepreneur who clawed his way up from the bottom. Approve of them or disapprove of them as you will, these are people who should be known about in this era of go-ahead entrepreneurship.

THE PROGRAMME

The Forum will be launched at the West Cork Hotel, Skibbereen, on Friday 9th August, 2019.

Cathaoirleach : Donnchadh Ó Séaghdha

7.30. Seán Ó Ceilleachair, *The War of Independence in West Cork*

8.00. Brendan Clifford, author of a new publication of Aubane Historical Society on the West Cork Historian, A.M. Sullivan.

8.30. Questions and Answers

EVERYBODY WELCOME

V
O
X

Fr. Fintan Gavin
Miler Magrath
Lady Mallinson
Empathy

P
A
T

FR. FINTAN GAVIN was ordained Bishop of Cork & Ross on Sunday, June 30, 2019. Not since Bishop John Butler resigned as Bishop in 1787 to succeed to the title Lord of Dunboyne has the See of Cork and Ross been other than held by Cork natives.

Bishop Gavin is the 59th bishop, or 105th holder of the office since St. Finbarr (c.550-623)

John Butler (1731-1800), was made Catholic Bishop of Cork in 1763. A Dunboyne Butler from the House of Ormonde. In 1786 due to a succession of deaths in the family, he inherited the title of Lord Dunboyne. There had been successive Lords of Dunboyne ever since the Twelfth century. Determined that the title should not be lost, he resigned his bishopric, married and conformed to the Established Church. In so doing, he broke his vows and professed his unbelief in, among other things, the Real Presence.

Trusting to his famous name and lineage, he expected the Pope of the day, Pius VI, to dispense him from his vow of celibacy and validate his marriage. His petition was, naturally, turned down. He was accused of treachery, of being a modern Pharaoh whose heart had been hardened, a latter-day Henry VIII destined surely for the hot place. And, sadly, an heir eluded him. (*Con Costello-Faith or Fatherhood-Bishop Dunboyne's dilemma-The Story of John Butler, Catholic Bishop of Cork 1763-1787-The Woodfield Press-2000*)

In the course of Papal history there have been a number of notable historical examples of clerical dispensation—At [Napoléon Bonaparte's](#) insistence, [Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord](#) requested laicization in 1802, in order to marry his long-time lover [Catherine Grand](#) (née Worlée). Talleyrand was already excommunicated for his part in the [Civil Constitution of the Clergy](#). Pope [Pius VII](#) reluctantly lifted

the excommunication and gave him *permission to wear secular clothing*, which permission the French [Conseil d'État](#) interpreted as a laicisation. Talleyrand married Worlée, then divorced in 1815, and lived on as a layman, but on his deathbed in 1838 he signed a document of reconciliation with the Church, prepared by future bishop [Félix Dupanloup](#). Dupanloup then administered the [last rites](#) of a bishop to Talleyrand.

Miler Magrath

Of course, a previous apostate, Miler Magrath (1523-1622) entered the Franciscan Order and was appointed Bishop of Down and Connor by the Pope in 1565. However, five years later, after professing loyalty to the reformed church, he was made Anglican bishop of Clogher, and in 1571 Archbishop of Cashel. He maintained both Catholic and Anglican sees for years, also becoming involved in politics, informing on rebels against the crown while simultaneously conspiring with them. At one point he held four bishoprics (although the Pope deprived him of Down and Connor in 1580 for 'heresy and many other crimes') He retained the see of Cashel and is buried in the cathedral there.

Ironically, John Butler's cousin was Catholic Archbishop James Butler I of Cashel when John was ordained Bishop of Cork.

"One Butler family historian argued that the Bishop's intention was to prevent the lordship from coming into the Protestant end of the family, which he could have done if he produced an heir, and reared it as a Catholic himself." (*Butler Jn., Hubert Butler, V, 1973-4, 378*) This is the "Anthill" man, Hubert (1900-1991)

Yet despite the Apostates and the bribes and Priest hunters, only a handful followed in their footsteps. Albion failed to break the spirit and will of the people. Great emphasis are laid on the English

Catholic Martyrs, Ireland's have been totally ignored, bar Oliver Plunkett but that is changing.

Seventeen Irish martyrs received beatification in 1992. According to the Irish Martyrs Fund new documents outline the death of 41 Irish people and one English Carmelite priest all killed between 1572 and 1655. The martyrs include 10 lay men and two lay women.

"It is good that their memory should be kept", writes Patrick J. Corish. "If there be a 'God of Battles' he has in general been miserly to the Irish, but in their particular battles he was not".

LADY MALLINSON was sitting at the end of a platform at an English Speaking Union meeting when she fell. The Bishop of Barking was standing by and caught her in his arms and said:

"This is the first time I have had a fallen woman in my arms."
And she said:

"This is the first time I have been picked up by a Bishop."

EMPATHY, EMPATHY—

Men in general are regularly criticised for not knowing, and by implication, not being sensitive to the predicament of women. Heterosexuals are regularly criticised when it comes to the predicament of homosexuals and recently there has been examples of homosexuals being criticised for not being sensitive to the predicament of transsexuals.

I have to say that there is an element of truth in all of this but it is not unnatural and I can't understand why, in the context where our life experiences warrant it, such criticism is considered invalid. If a black person says that white people cannot know what it's like to go about your daily existence being black I for one wouldn't dissent. And, as has happened last year (I think), Teresa May's childlessness was mentioned by an MP who was critical of the government's record on child care, I don't see why that was considered a reason for an apology as it was relevant to the context of what was being discussed.

What appears to be happening is that the denial of different life experiences has become the excuse for denying the existence of the human capacity for empathy. It is this ability for people to imaginatively put themselves in the place of others and adopt that alternative perspective that is critical for social existence. It is this that enables us to know and become knowable to each other in a way that transcends our different life experiences when such life experiences cannot in themselves be shared.