

Church & State

# An Irish History Magazine

*And Cultural Review Of Ireland And The World*

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*Reflections On Money And Power*

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# IRAN: Reflections On Money And Power

Europe—the European Union—imagined that, together with the United States, it had made a Treaty with Iran, establishing trade relations with it on the condition that Iran undertook to restrict its development of nuclear technology. A short while later the United States broke the Treaty, and warned the EU that it must not stand by it. The EU did not even pretend that Iran had given the USA grounds for breaking it. But, though regretting that the USA had broken it without sufficient ground, it did not seriously attempt to stand by it.

The idea that there is a part of the world which is free, and that it stands in necessary antagonism with the part of it that is not free, fell into abeyance for a while when the Cold War ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellite states. It has now been revived in full force.

Essential to it, in the days when the world was openly organised into two competing and incompatible modes of life, was the freedom of money-capital in the West and the directing of the economy by political power in the East. The accumulation of money was meritorious in the West and the individual with large quantities of money could do as he pleased with it and gain control over the lives of thousands of others. In the East it was not possible to accumulate vast sums of money, and in any case there was little to do with it beyond using it for living.

The United States was the source, and the master, of the post-1945 Free World. The consequences of the World War launched by Britain in 1939 were such that a functioning capitalism in Europe had to be set-up by the United States in what had been reduced to a vast battlefield. The only major state that had come through the war with its pre-war system intact was Fascist Spain. Everywhere else, revival depended on US industry and US money. Post-1945 Europe, leaving aside the Fascism that continued in Spain for a further thirty years, is an American creation. And, insofar as it had an internal dynamic under American overlordship, it was the Christian Democracy of Germany.

American overlordship was not problematic for the new governing authorities in Europe. They recognised it as a necessary condition of their existence. They were in that sense free participants in the American Free World.

They are now slightly discontented subjects of American hegemony. They have become discontented with the terms of their existence set by the fact that they are creations of American power. But they do not have the will to act otherwise than as creatures of American power.

Part of their difficulty is what might be called “*moral*”. They lack historical integrity. They were one thing before 1914, another thing after 1918, a third thing in the 1930s, and a fourth thing after 1945. There was no evolutionary development from one of these things to the next. And, in their post-1945 phase, they dare not think coherently about what they were in the preceding phase. They may condemn it, but condemnation is not thought.

The material difficulty lies in the radically changed nature of money.

In olden days money was a physical thing. It was gold and silver. It had its own value, which attached to its physical substance, and was not subject to evaporation. In the generation between the World Wars, physical money was found to be too restrictive of market growth and the expansion of money beyond the physical by means of credit was experimented with. And post-1945 credit became the predominant form of money.

The operation of credit money is a tricky business. It was the USA that mastered it. Only the USA could have mastered it because it was the only free capitalist economy in the world. And the money on which Free Europe was built was American credit-money.

Britain, with great ingenuity, maintained the illusion of freedom. But it was actually in pawn to the United States. It had run its War with American materials and American money, and its unprecedented post-War boom was fuelled by the United States. And, when it tried to rehabilitate its Imperial power by making war on Egypt in 1956, against the interests of the United States, Washington stopped it by threatening to wreck its economy—which it could have done with little more than the stroke of a pen.

Today it is impossible to say what money is. If you have gold you can certainly get money for it. But the gold is not the money, and there is not enough gold in the world to buy all the money. What is written on the English pound note is a piece of nostalgia. It is notionally a bank-note certifying that you have a pound in the Bank and that the Bank of England will give it to you if you hand in the note. But all you could get in the way of money for a pound note is another pound note. And if you did get a piece of gold, you would have to get credit-money for it before it was usable.

And that’s why the EU cannot stand by the Iranian Treaty after the USA has broken it. If it breaks the trading sanctions which the USA has re-imposed, Washington will sanction it in the way that it sanctioned Britain in 1956. It operates in the American credit-money system and is at the mercy of American sanctions.

This is not some new device sprung on the world by President Trump. It was used by President Eisenhower. And it was stated as a principle by President Obama that American sovereignty follows the dollar and its derivatives.

The different parts of the Free World are not free with relation to each other. The Free World is a body created by the United States and operated by it in its own interest.

A German Foreign Minister, Genscher, said in the 1980s “*We cannot become wanderers between worlds*”. But that is what it must be when it becomes discontented with the

overlordship of its creator while lacking the will to free itself from dependency on 'American freedom'.

The United States has now murdered senior members of the Iranian and Iraqi administrations. What will the EU do about it? Let's make a wild guess and predict that it will do nothing.

Thirty years ago the functional Iraqi State, under the Baath regime of Saddam Hussain, made war on the Iranian Revolution, which for a moment threatened to spread like wildfire in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia—the main base of the Free World in the Middle East—felt threatened.

At one moment there was panic, when it seemed that the Iranian forces were breaking through towards Baghdad. But the Iraqi Front held, and the revolution was confined to Iran.

The Iraqi State at war proved to be effectively national. Shia and Sunni merged in the military effort even though it was directed against a Shea state.

The United States was then poised to make war on Iran, which it considered itself to have been humiliated by—and Washington is now threatening extensive bombing in retaliation for that humiliation three decades ago. But in 1991 it decided to make war on Iraq instead—an entirely irrational decision, as far as the balance of power in the Middle East was concerned. However, a clue here is that Saddam was intent on selling Iraqi oil outside the American money system. Similarly, when Libya's General Gaddafi started talking of dropping the dollar for Libyan oil sales, his regime was smashed, illegally insofar as 'International Law' is concerned.

In the Iraq case, Kuwait provided the pretext. That country, a British Imperial concoction with a population consisting largely of immigrant servants and labourers, had been stealing Iraqi oil while Iraq was at war with Iran. The Iraqi Government decided to take strong measures against Kuwait, consulted the United States, and was given to understand that its projected action had American approval. And it was not subsequently denied that the American Ambassador had given the green light for the action.

But, when Iraq acted against Kuwait, Washington declared that a breach of international law had been committed, and launched a war to destroy the Iraqi regime, with Thatcher's Britain as an enthusiastic ally. (The former British Prime Minister, Ted Heath, who had taken part in the concocting of Kuwait, was horrified.)

The US could easily have prevented the Iraqi invasion into Kuwait, but it encouraged it instead, and then used the Iraqi action as a reason for destroying the Iraqi State.

The Ameranglian war on Iraq involved no actual battle. Its only memorable incident was the *Turkey Shoot* of the retreating Iraqi Army by the American and British Air Forces.

Then the advance into Iraq was called off without explanation, and the invading armies withdrew, after the Kurds had been incited to rebel, leaving the Baath regime in place, but with a badly damaged infrastructure and suffering from a UN-authorized regime of sanctions aimed at the civilian population, which was even denied access to cancer drugs.

The Kurdish rebellion was suppressed by Saddam. The State did not collapse through Sunni/Shia antagonism. But the country was subjected to ten years of Ameranglian bombing designed to destroy the necessary infrastructure of urban living.

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The Baath despotism was continuously active in those ten years, repairing the damage done by democratic bombing.

Then, after ten years, the leading democracies decided to destroy the Iraqi State—which had refused to lie down and die, despite everything thrown at it. US/UK invaded, with an opening display of “*shock and awe*”, and boasted that it was the greatest manifestation of military power ever seen in the world. And they called on the Shia population to come out in rebellion against the Sunni population on which the regime was chiefly founded. The Christian population, which was well represented in the Baath regime, was taken no account of by the West. Years of mayhem fuelled by Ameranglian-incited religious conflict followed, in the name of Democracy. And out of it came the strong movement for the restoration of a general Islamic State, organised as a Caliphate, and founded on Sharia Law. It was an outcome that was consistent with the destruction of the Baath State, insisted upon by the leading democracies.

The Irish Government facilitated the assault on Iraq, and Martin Mansergh, a Junior Minister, apologised for the fact that the Irish had sold beef to the Saddam regime.

Some years later Mansergh seemed to acknowledge that Democracy was not exportable, and was not something that one State could successfully impose on another. In practical politics it follows from that concession that Democracy should recognise the legitimacy of functional States which the idealists of Democracy see as Despotisms.

But such a recognition is not possible in the political ideology of the West, as produced under American hegemony since 1945, which is best described as *democratist authoritarianism*, in which the advocacy of Democracy in the form of party-political antagonism is usually an instrument of political destruction.

Iraq had not yet recovered from the destructive Democratic invasion or the caricature of Democracy that it brought with it. And, insofar as it has been made functional to a degree, it is through the involvement of Iran in its affairs on a basis of Shia affinity.

That Iranian involvement in a neighbouring state, which had been reduced to a shambles by foreign democratic invasion, is seen as terrorism by American eyes, and eyes

that see what America sees. There is some international concern about the American murder of its General Suleimani while he was on a peace mission in Iraq, but only on utilitarian grounds: it may provoke a reaction that will wipe out British interests in the Middle East. On moral grounds it is seen as entirely the right thing to have done.

Suleimani was scarcely heard of in the West until he was murdered, but the murder triggered off an immediate campaign of demonization of a ‘monster’ who had “*left a trail of blood across the Middle East*”, as Channel 4 put it.

Tony Blair collaborated actively with George Bush in the destruction of the functional Iraqi State for no good reason. A million people in Britain demonstrated against making war on Iraq when it was seen to be on the cards. But, after the appalling consequences of the invasion were there plainly in view or all to see, Blair won a General Election.

When he was obliged to give up the Prime Ministership under a prior agreement with Gordon Brown, he made a number of retirement speeches, to his Constituency Party and in interviews on BBC. In these speeches he was anxious that certain truths about the British State should not be forgotten by his party. The most important of them was that “*Britain is a war-fighting state*”. There was no record of any disagreement expressed by his hearers.

A big issue for Jeremy Corbyn, pressed on him, by media interviewers and commentators more than by Tory politicians, was whether he would *push the Button*. And it is a vital question now being put to candidates to succeed him.

The question as put is incoherent. Circumstances are never specified.

The pertinent form of the question is whether a candidate for the Prime Ministership would launch nuclear bombs against an enemy which was pressing hard against Britain with an army fighting with conventional weapons—would Britain be the first to use nuclear weapons.

The Soviet Union won its defensive war against Nazi Germany with conventional weapons. It was therefore a very powerful force in central Europe at the end of the War. (And, if Russia had not held out against the German attack and pushed it back, Germany

would certainly not have been defeated by Britain.)

The United States won its war against Japan with nuclear weapons.

Russia had no sooner defeated Germany in the Summer of 1945 than its nominal allies since 1941 treated it as an enemy, and a new war was budding in Anglo-American relations with Russia.

As a consequence of defeating Germany, Russia had the strongest land army in the world. But there was a period when the democratic West (the USA) possessed the weapon of indiscriminate mass destruction. And there were influential advocates of a liberal-democratic war of mass destruction against the Soviet Union. The famous liberal-democratic philosopher Bertrand Russell was a public advocate of it: The West should use its monopoly of nuclear weapons to overcome the conventional Soviet Army, and destroy the evil that had sprouted in Russia in 1917 and that had been brought into central Europe by the Second World War. If that was done the world could then settle down in Peace and Harmony!

Others were probing possibilities behind the scenes.

But, before anything was done, the Soviet Union made its own nuclear weapon in 1948. The utilitarian moral calculus then indicated a very different policy. Russell became a frantic pacifist.

In the long run the stand-off position of MAD was established—Mutually Assured Destruction. Each side would be capable of annihilating the other and would be well-informed about what the other was doing, and in the looming shadow of the general destruction of civilisation there would be peace.

But the NATO position, as far as we recall, was based on the First –Strike option, which in practice assumed that a conventionally-armed enemy was on the point of winning. Is such a position imaginable with regard to Britain today? Where is such an enemy to be found?

But the sovereign power in the West is America. All else is derivative from American Power. And in America the popular slogan at one time was *Better Dead Than Red*.

America was the salt of the Earth. The Earth would be tasteless without it. If the American mission in the world—inherited from the English Puritanism in which it originated—was in serious

danger of failing, it would be better that civilisation in general should be destroyed.

That is in the spirit of absolute Millenarian sovereignty brought into world affairs by the fundamentalist English breakaway five hundred years ago from the pragmatic European consensus of a thousand years.

Europe existed in a long-term dynamic of conflict between Church and State—Papacy and Empire. England withdrew and formed itself into an Empire in which Church and State were one, and Good and Evil were determined exclusively by the interests of the State. A Protestant Archbishop of Dublin three hundred years ago, William King, gave lucid expression to this view of the world in his *Problem Of Evil*. Evil, he said, was whatever obstructed the Will. And that is exactly how America sees it today. And Europe, which is a product of American will, and has no will of its own, dare not see it differently.

#### P.S.

Iran responded to the murder of its senior Government Minister by firing missiles close to American bases in Iraq, apparently taking care to avoid causing American casualties. It called this “*a slap in the face*” for the murder. America declared a No-Fly Zone over Iran, indicating that it was planning an attack. Shortly afterwards a Ukrainian air-liner was shot down after taking off from Teheran Airport. The Iranian Government put this down to some sort of malfunction in the plane. The US said it had been shot down by Iranian forces. Iran denied this—as the US always does on such occasions. A couple of days later it admitted that such was the case.

The explanation seems to be that the Iranian defences forces were on hair-trigger alert because of the American threat of obliteration, and that the air-liner veered off course for some reason, was approaching the Headquarters of the Revolutionary Guard, was taken to be an enemy object and destroyed.

Iranian Professor Seyed Mohammed Marandi appeared on *Newsnight* the day before Iran admitted the defence error. The BBC interviewer (Mark Urban) was greatly irritated by his insistence on giving intelligible answers to the questions put to him. He said it seemed possible that the plane could have been shot down by mistake, and explained the condition of a state under threat of obliteration by the US, which had the

power to do what it threatened. Things came to a head in this way:

“*Professor Marandi*: In the Iran/Iraq war the US downed an Iranian airliner and weaponised it against Iran. Admission the US did it only came years later...

*Urban*: They did eventually pay full compensation.

*Marandi*: Yes, but it was way too late. And they never apologised. And the compensation was almost nothing compared to the compensation they paid to Westerners. Back then Iran was blamed. And in this case the United States threatens to obliterate Iraq. And so the country is on a high state of alert. They assassinate. They murder. They carry out an act of war. And no one in Europe condemns it. Everyone condones it.”

Urban cut across his interviewer at this point, making his sentence unintelligible except for the last few words:

“*Professor Marandi*: ...says that the person deserves death.

*Urban*: He didn’t say that. But look, Professor, thank you—

*Professor Marandi*: He did.

*Urban*: He did not say he deserved death.”

*Professor Marandi*: He did. It’s true.”

Marandi was not asked to substantiate this assertion. What Urban said next, apparently in response, turned out to be in an interview with somebody else.

The “*he*” who was the subject of this exchange was blotted out by Urban’s interjection. It was certainly not the President who did not say that Suleimani deserved death. And is it conceivable that there was any eminent person in the Free World who contradicted its President?

Israel pioneered the practice of killing Palestinian leaders when they were living in other states, but that is not on a par with what the US has just done. The people Israel murdered were not members of a Government recognised as legitimate by the United Nations.

There is no precedent for what the United States did—but it sets a precedent. And Democracy is what Democracy does. It was discussed as an abstract ideal by philosophers for about 2,000 years but was generally regarded as not being practicable. It was given actual existence as a mode of government a hundred years ago, but it soon failed in most European states. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War it was given a more durable existence by the United

States in the part of Europe that did not come under the Power that defeated Nazi Germany, but that durability depends on actual subordination to the United States under a general veneer of national sovereignty in the United Nations.

When the UN was formed the USA and Russia were exempted from the system of international law it established. Without that exemption it could not have been formed. The exemption was also extended to three other states for diplomatic reasons at the time. It was quite unnecessarily awarded to China, which was then an American client-state.

A system of International Law, which is operated by these states through the Security Council, and from which they are exempt, is an absurdity, and the United States treats it as such. (US Secretary for Defence John Bolton has in the past been eloquent in his ridicule of the UN.)

International Law is a game of make-believe. There is no legal constraint on American action in the world. It regards the world as belonging to it, and is deterred from action only by the existence of effective power of defence by a couple of maverick states out there in the world: Russia, which retains something of the status it gained by destroying Nazi Germany, and China, which slipped out of American clientship by an internal movement that was too vast for America to cope with.

The only actual defensive power today is nuclear weapons and the ability to deliver them to the other side of the world. Voltaire’s joke is no longer a joke: “*This animal is dangerous; if attacked it defends itself*”. The only effective power of defence is the power to obliterate the enemy who is obliterating you.

The only state which has used nuclear weapons is the leading democracy, on which the other democracies depend. It used them in 1945, when Japan had been beaten but was delaying acceptance of *unconditional surrender*. The US saved the lives of some American soldiers by the mass killing of Japanese civilians.

Fantasists of International Law say that the killing of civilians in an enemy country to save the military cost of conquest is a war-crime. But Geoffrey Robertson QC, the great enthusiast of International Law, gives

some recognition to the pragmatics of the situation:

"The nuclear bomb has been unlawful ever since its drop in 1945 proved massively, indiscriminately and environmentally damaging. The first use at Hiroshima was certainly justifiable on the grounds of military necessity, since nothing less than a demonstration of the annihilating power would move Emperor Hirohito to even contemplate surrender. It incinerated thousands, but it saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of Allied forces, as well as Japanese soldiers and civilians who would otherwise have been killed. The second bomb on Nagasaki three days later may not strictly have been necessary and should have been dropped elsewhere than on a city, but it does seem to have been a crunch for Japanese capitulation, which came five days afterwards" (*Crimes Against Humanity: The Struggle For Global Justice*, 2006 edition, p219).

The mass killing of civilians to hasten surrender by the enemy was justifiable! Not a word was said about it at the Nuremberg Trials, which Robertson sees as having established functional International Law. Irish opinion at the time was sceptical of the Nuremberg pretensions. So was a senior American Judge who refused to take part in them, describing them as Lynch Law.

It is undoubtedly the case that many people killed by Lynch Law can be seen as having deserved killing. The case against is that it is not law. And the case for law is certainly not that it never kills people who do not deserve killing. But where one State passes judgement on the leaders of another State which it has destroyed by war, judgement by law is not a practical possibility.

The Americans at Nuremberg did not find the Germans guilty by establishing a system of law to which it was itself also subject. It just killed the leaders of a vanquished enemy.

The defendants were not tried under a previously-established law, and they were not allowed to plead in their defence the precedents set by the conduct of the States for which the Judges were acting.

Over forty years later, when the US and UK decided to destroy the Iraqi State, they did not act even under the make-believe law of the United Nations. France would not let them, So they raised what President Bush called a *Posse Of The Willing* (in which Ireland

was reluctantly willing) and went about the business in disregard of the UN.

In the 1930s De Valera took the League of Nations in earnest, only to find that it had been reduced to a sham—by the Super State of the period, on which the League's reality depended, which was Britain. And he warned that it was a dangerous sham because of the illusions it generated. That is the case with the UN today—as American politicians sometimes explain when it

serves their purpose.

As we go to print the British Ambassador to Iran has been called to account in Teheran for taking part in an anti-Government demonstration. Whitehall immediately condemned that admonition as a breach of International Law. It never described the murder of senior Iraqi and Iranian Government Ministers in Iraq as a breach of International Law!

## Manus O'Riordan

Considerations on Jeremy Corbyn's anti-Semitism,  
as alleged by Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis  
during the British Election Campaign of December 2019.

### The 'Apartheid Made Me' Rabbi *and the Jews who actually fought racism*

There was an unprecedented intervention by a foreign power in December's British General Election. No, not by the Russian bogeyman, but by the State of Israel, and the Chief Minister of that Israeli intervention was the UK Chief Rabbi. I do not, however, believe that—apart from the energy dissipated in combatting false accusations of anti-Semitism—the Mirvis intervention played a decisive role in the British Labour Party's defeat. This was a Brexit Election pure and simple, hammering home even more sharply the choices that had been made in the 2016 Referendum. The soul of the Scottish nation remains European, while the soul of the English nation has been more emphatically shown to be Brexit. Notwithstanding his professed rhetoric about saving "*the soul of our nation*"—was he suggesting that there is a single "*British nation*"?—Rabbi Mirvis did not speak for the soul of either the English nation or the Scottish nation, but rather set out to pursue the interests of the Nation State of Israel. But, while not being a decisive electoral intervention, its unprecedented character, not least its relentless character assassination of Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, nonetheless requires closer scrutiny.

On November 26th the London *Times* delivered a rabbinical anathema in triplicate. Under the heading of "*Labour antisemitism: Why is Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis intervening in*

*the election?*", its political correspondent, Henry Zeffman, began: "*Ephraim Mirvis's article in today's Times is unprecedented by a chief rabbi during a general election.*" In another article, under the headings of "*Labour anti-semitism: Corbyn not fit for high office, says Chief Rabbi Mirvis. 'New poison' in the party has been 'sanctioned from the top'.*", Zeffman further wrote:

"Jeremy Corbyn's handling of anti-semitism allegations makes him 'unfit for high office', the Chief Rabbi has said while warning that the 'very soul of our nation is at stake' in next month's general election. In an unprecedented intervention into politics ... Ephraim Mirvis says that 'a new poison' has taken hold in Labour 'sanctioned from the very top'."

Under the rhetorical and hysterical heading of "*What will become of Jews and Judaism in Britain if the Labour Party forms the next government?*", Ephraim Mirvis himself, the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, pontificated (to borrow a metaphor from another denomination):

"Convention dictates that the Chief Rabbi stays well away from party politics—and rightly so. However, challenging racism is not a matter of politics, it goes well beyond that... A new poison—sanctioned from the top—has taken root in the Labour Party. Many members of the Jewish

community can hardly believe that this is the same party that they called their political home for more than a century. It can no longer claim to be the party of equality and anti-racism... How complicit in prejudice would a leader of Her Majesty's opposition have to be to be considered unfit for office? ... What will the result of this election say about the moral compass of our country? When December 12 arrives, I ask every person to vote with their conscience. Be in no doubt, the very soul of our nation is at stake."

In other words, Mirvis was not just accusing Corbyn with negligence in tackling anti-Semitism; he was accusing him of being its chief architect. "*A new poison—sanctioned from the very top*" has no other meaning. Mirvis portrayed Corbyn as little else but a reincarnation of Hitler.

English-born and raised Rabbi David Rosen CBE (who is also the first Israeli citizen and first Orthodox Rabbi to have been made a Papal Knight) is the Jerusalem-based International Director of *Interreligious Affairs for the American Jewish Committee*. I was to form a personal friendship with Rosen when he served as Chief Rabbi of Ireland from 1979 to 1985. The South African-born and -raised Ephraim Mirvis arrived as a second Orthodox Rabbi in Dublin in 1982, succeeding Rosen as Chief Rabbi from 1985 to 1992. During Mirvis's decade in Ireland, it was more a case of a friendly acquaintanceship, not least because he was Chairman of the Board of the secondary school to be attended by my children. Mirvis came across to me as an affable yet rather grey presence compared to his flamboyant predecessor. In November 1987 Chief Rabbi Mirvis attended a lecture I gave in the Irish Jewish Museum on 'Irish and Jewish Volunteers in the Spanish Anti-Fascist War, with particular reference to the story of the Irish Jewish Volunteer Maurice (Morry) Levitas (1917-2001).' It would not be until a year later that I would actually meet my fellow Dubliners, the Communist brothers Morry and Max Levitas (1915-2018), leading to enduring family friendships. But Mirvis had no problems attending that lecture in praise of the Levitas family, for my lecture had also praised the Irish-born President of Israel Chaim Herzog (1918-1997) for the solidarity with the Spanish Republic which he had shown during that War.

Press censorship in Britain does not, however, now allow a Levitas to

be published when he wishes to dispute Mirvis's character assassination of Corbyn. On November 28th, after ongoing refusals to publish any of his letters, Ben Levitas, son of Morry, posted on his Facebook page:

"The latest version of a letter I have sent in various forms to the *Guardian*, *Jewish Chronicle* and most recently the *Times*, protesting against the slur that Corbyn is antisemitic: My uncle Max Levitas fought Mosley's Blackshirts at Cable Street in 1936 and remained an anti-Fascist activist until he died late last year aged 103, when the *Times* honoured him with a full-page obituary. He remained a Corbyn supporter to the end and saw attempts to label the Labour party antisemitic as a smear campaign. In his memory, I would like to remind readers that Ephraim Mirvis does not speak for all Jews on this matter ('Corbyn not fit for high office, says chief Rabbi' November 26)."

"Max Levitas knew well what it was to fight racism. He had its true measure. In recent times he shared platforms with many from John Bercow (for the charity *Jewish Care*) to Corbyn himself. He would, I am certain, have recognised Bercow's fair judgement when the ex-Speaker said earlier this month that, in 22 years of knowing Corbyn, he had "*never detected so much as a whiff of anti-Semitism*". Jeremy Corbyn paid warm tribute to Max as the main speaker at his packed memorial service earlier this year, alongside the local Labour MP Rushanara Ali and the local Rabbi: Antisemitic? Not from where I was sitting."

Also on November 28th, Ben's mother Jackie posted:

"I've posted several things which try to defend Jeremy Corbyn's record of fighting against Anti-Semitism. I feel Righteous Anger and a sense of pain at the latest accusations. I want to give a very different picture gained from meeting Corbyn at my brother-in-law's memorial service in January this year. He was the main speaker among many because Max Levitas was much loved and a star in his community. The hall was packed and all shades of the Left were there but mainly family and friends and comrades and a different kind of Jewish community than the one described by the Chief Rabbi in the *Times*. Their voices have not been heard. None of them would have accepted an anti-Semite in their midst. These are devoted activists against racism and they have been in the front line, Corbyn among them. They know full well who is who. Max Levitas

would have been the first to speak up for Corbyn. My son Ben Levitas has tried to do the same. I reprint his letter sent in vain to various newspapers. I've also re-printed the long list of Corbyn's record on fighting anti-Semitism and defending Jews. I wonder how many of his accusers could match it?"

On November 26th, Morry's daughter, Ruth Levitas, also posted:

"This photograph shows my uncle Max Levitas on the platform at the 80th anniversary of Cable Street in October 2016 when Max was 101. It was his last public appearance. He shares a platform with Jeremy Corbyn. Corbyn wrote about Max in the *Jewish Chronicle* after Max's death in 2018—see [HYPERLINK "https://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/the-world-is-a-better-place-because-of-my-friend-max-levitas-cable-street-1.472167"](https://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/the-world-is-a-better-place-because-of-my-friend-max-levitas-cable-street-1.472167) [www.thejc.com/comment/comment/the-world-is-a-better-place-because-of-my-friend-max-levitas-cable-street-1.472167](https://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/the-world-is-a-better-place-because-of-my-friend-max-levitas-cable-street-1.472167)—and spoke movingly and generously at Max's memorial meeting in January this year. Max had campaigned in East London with Corbyn against racism and fascism for decades, and regarded him as a friend. If there were an iota of anti-Semitism in Corbyn, Max would have had nothing to do with him. Max and my father Morry were at Cable Street in 1936: both of them were injured and needed hospital treatment. So were Jeremy Corbyn's parents. The Jewish Establishment at that time told Jews to stay at home and not oppose Mosley. The Jewish Establishment then did not speak for all Jews. The Chief Rabbi does not speak for all Jews now. The threat of anti-semitism is far greater now as then from the far Right—the likes of Tommy Robinson who has offered his support to Boris Johnson—and from the Conservative Party itself. Our radical tradition demands that we work for a better world, a more just and equal society, here and internationally. That is what Max stood for and what Corbyn stands for. I can hear Max's voice as I write: WE MUST RETURN A LABOUR GOVERNMENT."

On December 9th Ruth further posted:

"I've just come back from the Corbyn rally in central Bristol in time to watch it on the news. Good turnout, good feeling of determination to push on through the week. But going onto College Green participants had to run the gauntlet of Rabbi Mirvis's acolytes brandishing placards saying Corbyn is a racist, Corbyn loves terrorists, 87% of Jews think Corbyn is an anti-Jewish racist. I spent half an hour arguing with

them (including a bit on camera for ITV). They spout terrible nonsense. I'm not posting pictures of their placards as some of them are libellous, and I don't want to give them publicity. One of them even told me Corbyn had endorsed an antisemitic book by Eric Hobsbawm that talks about ugly Jews. I did point out EH was Jewish and a refugee from Nazi Germany, and the book at issue is J A Hobson's 1902 analysis of the economics of imperialism, written at a time when antisemitism was endemic. But Corbyn's still a racist, please don't confuse me with facts."

And again on December 10th:

"I see that those of us who argued with the Jewish students at the Corbyn rally in Bristol on Monday are also being labelled antisemites. I appear in video footage as an offender in some of these tweets. I am actually Jewish. I guess that's one way of proving the Labour Party is full of antisemites. When will this absolute garbage stop?"

But to return to Mirvis himself: on matters of Israel, he had, for the most part, kept a low **public** profile while Chief Rabbi of Ireland. The *Irish Times* of 2nd November 1992, did record the soon-to-depart "*Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, talking on television at the Jewish New Year and saying he would like to see an Israeli embassy set up here*". But he remained content to leave the **public** heavy lifting on behalf of Israel to his predecessor.

"*Religious imperialism in Vatican—Dr Rosen*" was the main heading in the *Irish Times* on July 22, 1985, when reporting on a colloquium held in Dublin of the International Council of Christians and Jews:

"The Chief Rabbi of Ireland, Dr Mirvis, said that the colloquium was a unique event for Ireland. He recalled that his predecessor, Dr Rosen, who also spoke last night, played a leading part in establishing the Irish Council of Christians and Jews... The former Chief Rabbi of Ireland, Dr David Rosen ... now Dean of the Sapir Jewish Heritage Centre, Jerusalem, was a keynote speaker... (He said) real tolerance on the part of Christians towards Jews today was also not possible if one had not come to terms with the reality of the return of the exiles to the land (of Israel) and the restoration of independent Jewish life. A statement issued last month from the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with Jews ... called on Catholics not to

see contemporary Israel in a religious perspective but in reference to the common principles of international law. If the Vatican really saw Israel in terms of international law then it would have recognised its existence *de jure* after it came into being following a United Nations decision and would by now have established the appropriate diplomatic relations."

When it came to international law, of course, David Rosen wanted to have it both ways. What he neglected to reveal was his successor's record as a settler on illegally-occupied territory. For, from 1973 to 1976, Mirvis had been based at Yeshivat Har Etzion, in the settlement of Alon Shvut, which is located in the Occupied West Bank on territory captured by Israel in the 1967 War, and categorised as an illegal settlement under international law. Having been Chief Rabbi of Ireland, Mirvis's career path was to proceed prestigiously upwards. From 1993 to 1996 he was rabbi of London's Western Marble Arch Synagogue after the previous holder of the position, Rabbi Jonathan Saks, became UK Chief Rabbi. In 1996, Mirvis was appointed rabbi at the Finchley United Synagogue, before finally succeeding Jonathan Lord Saks as UK Chief Rabbi in September 2013.

From the outset, Mirvis had a political mission. The *Jewish Chronicle* reported on 15th May 2014:

"Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis's mission to Israel this week involved 49 Orthodox rabbis from across Britain... Rabbi Mirvis said the aim was to give his rabbinate a 'better understanding' of Israel and to deepen their awareness of 'both the old and new challenges that Israel faces'... The trip was an initiative of Rabbi Mirvis, a strong Zionist who has pledged to increase the prominence of Israel in communal life. All rabbis under his aegis were invited... Rabbi Mirvis said: 'Israel is central to our faith. I would like Israel to feature more prominently in our synagogues and across our communities. The Jewish people's connection to the Land of Israel is deep and it is eternal. It goes to the very fibre of our being as a faith community and as a nation'."

So, five years ago, when Mirvis spoke of "*the soul of our nation*", for him the "*our nation*" meant Israel, not at all the Britain of his "*our nation*" anti-Corbyn campaign.

And he next set out to redefine anti-Zionism as being nothing else but "*anti-Semitism*" pure-and-simple. In *The*

*Telegraph* on 3rd May 2016, Mirvis pronounced:

"The time has come to give the lie to a myth that has not only dominated recent headlines, but that has poisoned public discourse on anti-Semitism and Israel for decades ... that Zionism is separate from Judaism as a faith; that it is purely political; that it is expansionist, colonialist and imperialist... (Zionism is) a noble and integral part of Judaism... But to those people who have nevertheless sought to redefine Zionism, who vilify and delegitimize it, I say: Be under no illusions—you are deeply insulting not only the Jewish community... You are spreading that ancient and insidious virus of anti-Semitism."

It is Mirvis who insulted the noble anti-Zionist traditions within the Jewish community.

See HYPERLINK "<https://yiddishkayt.org/the-salt-sea/>" <https://yiddishkayt.org/the-salt-sea/> for that anti-Zionist anthem of the Jewish Workers' Bund penned by the great Yiddish poet S. Ansky and performed by Daniel Kahn, which includes the following verses, as translated by Kahn:

"The children of wealthy, enlightened,  
the clergy—  
Into Zion they call the Hebrews,  
We've heard this old story before from  
our enemies 'A ghetto for the eternal  
Jew!'  
They say that they answer th prayers  
of our fathers From deep in their  
graves, hear them call. While souls  
who are living in sorrow and hunger—  
To them they're deaf as the wall."

In an article for the *New Statesman* on 24th February 2016—entitled "*I grew up in South Africa, so believe me when I say: Israel is not an apartheid state*"—Mirvis had also fulminated:

"This week on university campuses across the UK, activists are preparing for 'Israel Apartheid Week'... The implied message here is simple: Israel today is where South Africa was in the latter part of the 20th century. It is a comparison that is entirely false; a grave insult to those who suffered under apartheid; and a tragic obstacle to peace. The difference between the two countries could scarcely be more stark. Under apartheid, a legal structure of racial hierarchy governed all aspects of life... Anyone who truly understands what apartheid was cannot possibly look around Israel today and honestly claim there is any kind of parity... I personally draw a great deal of inspiration from the state of Israel and am

proud of her achievements. The state was born against all odds and, despite having to fight every day for survival, has become a world leader in medicine, technology, science, agriculture and beyond. But of course, as even the prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, has said, Israel is not perfect—no country is. The challenges she faces, both external and internal, are urgent and severe. And yet, the beauty of Israel's democracy, unique in the Middle East, is that there is no social or political problem that is not given abundant consideration within Israel's own parliament, free press and civil society..."

In the *Jewish Chronicle* on 25th August 2016, in an article headed "*Apartheid made me who I am*", the following portrait was provided:

"Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis is looking thoughtful. Outside, views of Table Mountain in the winter sunshine catch the attention of tourists, but the South African-raised rabbi's regular visits to Cape Town are rather different—they are something of a journey into his soul... Rabbi Mirvis always wanted to be a rabbi. And the fact that his father is a rabbi and that he hailed from a family of community leaders inspired his choice... although his faith in society was tested by apartheid. 'There is no doubt whatsoever that growing up within the apartheid era fashioned the type of person that I became. I grew up detesting the policies of the government of the country in which I was living.' His rejection of South African politics, however, was formative... The Chief Rabbi's late mother, Freida, was principal of the only training college for coloured teachers of pre-school children in South Africa during apartheid. 'She was a selfless person who was committed to her own community and also to South African society, and that certainly had a profound influence on me', he explains."

In an article entitled "*The contract on Corbyn*", and published in *Haaretz* this November 28th, the courageous Israeli journalist Gideon Levy paid tribute to the decency of Mirvis's parents, but questioned whether their son could lay claim to any such 'anti-apartheid' credentials:

"The Jewish establishment in Britain and the Israeli propaganda machine have taken out a contract on the leader of the British Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn. The contract was taken out a long time ago, and it was clear that the closer Corbyn came to being elected prime minister, the harsher the conflict would get... Born in South Africa and a graduate of Har Etzion Yeshiva in

the settlement of Alon Shvut, Mirvis is the voice of British Jewry. In Cape-town, Johannesburg and Har Etzion, he should have learned what apartheid was and why one should fight it. His parents did so, but one doubts that he learned the moral lesson from the regions of disenfranchisement in which he lived in South Africa and the West Bank... As opposed to the horrid Corbyn, Mirvis sees nothing wrong with the continued occupation... and he doesn't sense the similarity between the South Africa of his childhood, Har Etzion of his youth and Israel of 2019. That is the real reason that he rejects Corbyn... A prime minister who is critical of Israel is an exemplar of the new anti-Semitism. Corbyn is not an anti-Semite. He never was. His real sin is his staunch position against injustice in the world, including the version Israel perpetrates... The new and efficient strategy of Israel and the Zionist establishment brands every seeker of justice as an anti-Semite, and any criticism of Israel as hatred of Jews. Corbyn is a victim of this strategy..."

The UK Chief Rabbi's website currently relates: "*As Chief Rabbi of Ireland from 1984 to 1992, Chief Rabbi Mirvis represented the Jewish community to government, other faith communities and the media.*" This is a more diplomatic rewording of the proud boast on his Finchley Synagogue website at the time he attained his present high office: "*Passionate about Israel, Rabbi Mirvis frequently represented Israel's interests at Government level and in the media, during his spell as Chief Rabbi of Ireland (at the time when there was no Israeli Embassy there).*" It is as if, in the Catholic Church, the same Archbishop of Dublin occupied **both** the position of Primate of Ireland **and** that of the Vatican State's Papal Nuncio to Ireland—except, of course, that the State of Israel, to put it mildly, has considerably more battalions than the Pope! Mirvis was proudly described as a representative agent of the State of Israel in Ireland, a role which he is patently proud to be continuing in the UK, alongside the Israeli Embassy, even though discretion is now employed not to describe it quite like that.

During his sojourn in Ireland, the self-style "*Apartheid made me*" Chief Rabbi also had one observation of note to make about his native South Africa when it was still in the grip of an Apartheid regime, an administration which would be described as follows by Mirvis in his 2016 *New Statesman* article:

"Under apartheid, a legal structure of racial hierarchy governed all aspects of life. Black South Africans were denied the vote. They were required by law to live, work, study, travel, enjoy leisure activities, receive medical treatment and even go to the lavatory separately from those with a different colour of skin. Interracial relationships and marriages were illegal. It was subjugation in its rawest form."

Well, what had he to say about South Africa three decades previously? I checked out the *Irish Times* records. I do not know the identity of the columnist who penned the following perceptive portrait in its issue of 4th April 1985:

"The Thursday Profile—A Young and Diplomatic Pastor: Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis ... at the intimidating age of 28 ... is the latest, and youngest, incumbent of a post long synonymous with international prestige... Irish Chief Rabbis have traditionally gone on to even finer glories... Appointments are dependent on a mixture, delicately balanced and in proportion, of natural talent and political sensitivity; it is as intriguing as it is impressive that Rabbi Mirvis, at so young an age, has got the formula so exactly right. Not that he is anything but suitably modest... His studied naivety sometimes works to the same purpose as the suave charm of his handsome predecessor, Dr David Rosen, with whom he shares other characteristics: a South African background (Rosen had previously served as Senior Orthodox Rabbi in Cape-town—MO'R), soft cultured tones, several years of training at a 'yeshivat' (seminary). The 120,000 Jews who fled Lithuanian pogroms for the sanctuary of South Africa chose that country for its employment possibilities, while many of those who came to Ireland did so by mistake, believing themselves in Britain or America. Personally he denies any culture shock on exchanging Johannesburg for Dublin and is warm in his appreciation of the respect accorded the Jewish community in this small 'safe' country, although it is one of several to which he applied for a post that was 'challenging'..."

No culture shock on leaving the "normality" of 1980s Johannesburg! Don't say "boo" about Apartheid! The "*studied naivety*" of it all! Another South African Jew had, however, experienced severe culture shock on going into exile from Johannesburg in 1963:

"Joe Slovo, Communist Party chairman and leading ANC executive committee member ... was born (Yossel Mashel Slovo) in Lithuania in

1926. His dad, to escape the pogroms, went first to Argentina, lost his job, decided to try South Africa instead, starting as a street hawker, then ran a little fruit shop. Joe arrived in SA aged ten, speaking only Yiddish... It was at secondary school that he first became politically aware, thanks to an Irish teacher who was very left-wing and anti-British. 'I later joined a Marxist-Zionist group, till I realised they were not compatible.' ... In 1961 he joined Mandela in launching the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation). Until then, his strength had been as a political strategist, organising the Communist Party against apartheid... In 1963, he went on an ANC mission to Tanzania. While he was away, Mandela and others in the military wing were imprisoned after the so-called Rivonia raid—and Mr Slovo spent the next 27 years in exile. From 1964 to 1976 he lived in London, a city he'd passed through once before, aged ten, on the way from Eastern Europe to catch a boat to South Africa. *'All I can remember is the fog. Coming back as an adult in 1964 ... I remember getting on a bus and seeing races mixing together. When I saw my first black and white couple, walking down the street together, I feared for their safety. I wanted to go and warn them. In Jo'burg they would have been arrested at once, or shot.'* ..."

(Interview published in *The Independent* on 19th April 1994. The following month, Joe Slovo would go on to become Minister for Housing in Mandela's first post-Apartheid Government, but would die from cancer in January 1995. His first wife, the South African Jewish Communist Ruth First, had been murdered by the Apartheid regime in August 1982).

"*Nelson Mandela was a revolutionary—and these Jews made common cause with him*" was the title of an article in the online magazine *Tablet* on 26th November 2013, where Richard Kreitner related:

"In 1963, after South African police arrested six Jews and seven blacks in a raid on an African National Congress hideout in the Johannesburg suburb of Rivonia—a sweep that eventually landed Nelson Mandela in prison for more than 25 years—a white nationalist newspaper asked whether Jews were unhappy in South Africa. The community's Board of Deputies responded unequivocally that the opposite was true, promising that South Africa's Jews were loyal and patriotic. *'No part of the community can or should be asked to accept responsibility for the action of a few'*, the board insisted in its official

reply... While most South Africa Jews took the silent, implicitly conservative position of the Board of Deputies, the great majority of white South Africans involved in 'the struggle' were Jewish. Many were Communists... But all faced what has been described as a 'double marginality': not fully accepted as white, while also alienated from an organized Jewish community beholden to the powers that be. That so many Jews surrendered the comforts of their own relatively privileged lives—indeed, in at least one case, surrendered life itself (Ruth First)—to join Mandela and the ANC, though they had little material stake relative to their black comrades, is in itself a testament to the radical legacy these Jews brought with them out of Europe to the other end of the globe."

Having fought to defeat Apartheid in South Africa itself, such Jewish opponents of oppression have called it out elsewhere. One such is Ronnie Kasrils (born 1938), a leading officer of the ANC's military wing who went on to serve as post-Apartheid Minister for Intelligence. In South Africa's *Mail & Guardian* on 27 January 2006, Kasrils wrote:

"The State of Israel is based on a framework of myths that require courage to confront, for fear of being smeared with the anti-Semitic brush. To attempt to analyse these myths can only serve to broaden the debate, which would be of value to all sides. To do so honours those who perished in the Holocaust, rather than exploiting their suffering in order to visit unjust treatment on the Palestinians. One of these myths equates all criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism, which aims to intimidate Jew and non-Jew alike. The sternest critics of Zionism were often left-wing Jews. In South Africa, this honourable tradition was articulated by the likes of Joe Slovo and Rusty Bernstein."

Thirteen years later, on 3rd April 2019, Kasrils argued in Britain's *Guardian*:

"I fought South African apartheid. I see the same brutal policies in Israel. As a Jewish South African anti-apartheid activist I look with horror on the far-right shift in Israel ahead of this month's elections, and the impact in the Palestinian territories and worldwide. Israel's repression of Palestinian citizens, African refugees and Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza has become more brutal over time. Ethnic cleansing, land seizure, home demolition, military occupation,

bombing of Gaza and international law violations led Archbishop Tutu to declare that the treatment of Palestinians reminded him of apartheid, only worse... The parallels with South Africa are many. The Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, recently said: 'Israel is not a state of all its citizens... Israel is the nation state of the Jewish people—and them alone'. Similar racist utterances were common in apartheid South Africa."

In October 2013 I had been witness to a rather amusing act of sabotage against the attempt—in the interests of "respectability"—to quite liberally (in every sense) airbrush the South African armed struggle from historical awareness. The International Brigade Memorial Trust was holding its AGM in Edinburgh, and we were given a civic reception by the Provost in the City Council chambers. But we were also invited to the civic reception that immediately preceded ours, for South Africa's Denis Goldberg (born 1933), who was due to speak at the Edinburgh World Justice Festival. Goldberg, a Jewish Communist, had been a co-defendant of Nelson Mandela in the Rivonia Trial of 1963-64—hung out to dry by South Africa's Jewish Board of Deputies—and was sentenced to four terms of life imprisonment, of which he would serve 22 years. But when one of the Festival organisers sought to introduce him as a "veteran human rights activist", Goldberg immediately protested: "*I was not a 'human rights activist'! I was a freedom fighter! I was the technical officer making the weapons!*"

On 28th July 2015—under the headings of "*Pioneer Jewish South African Freedom Fighter Calls Israel 'Apartheid State': Denis Goldberg says even Israel's treatment of Arab citizens counts as apartheid*"—the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* reported:

"Veteran Jewish anti-apartheid activist Denis Goldberg, whose 1985 release after two decades in a South African prison was aided by Israel, and who then lived briefly in the Jewish state before leaving in protest, told a Johannesburg gathering that Israel is an apartheid state. Noting that critics of this view protest that Palestinian citizens of Israel, unlike blacks in apartheid South Africa, vote and serve in their country's parliament, Goldberg said, 'You don't need to be like South Africa to be an apartheid state, there is a definition in international law through the UNESCO declaration on

apartheid', he said. Apartheid exists, he said, in states that enforce laws and policies that discriminate between people on the basis of race or religion, and this holds true in Israel proper as well as in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. He was one of a panel of anti-apartheid activists discussing the lessons that struggle holds for the Palestinian cause."

"Goldberg, 82, one of the original members of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the African National Congress, was sentenced with Nelson Mandela and other activists to life in prison in the 1964 Rivonia treason trial. He was released in 1985 with Israel's intercession, then went to live on a kibbutz, but moved to London months later, denouncing Israel's war in Lebanon, its occupation of the Palestinian territories, and its close ties with South Africa. 'There is no doubt in my mind that Israel is an apartheid state', Goldberg told the gathering. 'Having lived through apartheid in South Africa, I cannot allow in my name the same kind of oppression to go on.' He added, 'I have to be an opponent of the exclusionist policies of Zionism, but let me say straight away that I have to be opposed to the exclusionary policies of the feudal Arab states of the Middle East as well.'"

See also [HYPERLINK "https://youtu.be/KBw6KJh47MM"](https://youtu.be/KBw6KJh47MM) <https://youtu.be/KBw6KJh47MM> for Goldberg speaking on the Israeli policy of expelling Palestinians from their land and villages.

Those Jewish Freedom Fighters—who actually unmade the South African Apartheid era that Chief Rabbi Mirvis claims he detested and which made him the type of person he became—have called out Israel. But what of the late Joe Slovo (1926-1995), whom I had the privilege of meeting in 1968? Following the Apartheid regime's murder of his wife Ruth in 1982, Slovo began writing an autobiography which, however, he had to abandon a couple of years later as his ANC and SACP work intensified in that final decade of bringing an end to that Apartheid regime. But what Slovo managed to complete in *The Unfinished Autobiography* is relevant to this article. On a 1981 visit to the USSR, he finally, after an absence of 45 years, made a return visit to his birthplace in Lithuania, where he had spent the first decade of life:

"I did not expect to find anyone familiar; the news had long reached us that when the Nazis came in 1941 they slaughtered every Jewish man, woman and child in the region. I was

led to believe that the only relative who survived was my father's elder brother, who had joined the Red Army... (But Slovo did meet two surviving cousins)... Bela and Sareta ... are the daughters of Wulfus, my grandfather's younger brother after whom my father was named. They are the two who had gone to study at Moscow University and who, by this accident of fate, survived the Holocaust. Every other memory of the family on my mother's and father's sides, together with all other Jews in the region, had been wiped out" (pp 5 and 10).

Slovo's 1980s memoirs also recalled a 1946 visit to Palestine:

"At the time Zionist guerrilla organisations were active against the British occupation... We reached Tel Aviv ... (and arranged) to spend a week on a kibbutz which, coincidentally, was run by my old (Marxist-Zionist) organisation *Hashomer Hatzair*. Looked at in isolation, the kibbutz seemed to be the very epitome of socialist lifestyle. It was populated in the main by the idealistic sons and daughters of rich Jews who had amassed their fortunes in the Western metropolis. They were motivated by an Owenite passion and belief that by the mere exercise of will and humanism you could build socialism as one factory or one kibbutz and the power of example will sweep the imagination of all men in society, worker or capitalist. Social theory aside, the dominating doctrine on this kibbutz, as well on others, was the biblical injunction that the land of Palestine must be claimed and fought for by every Jew. And if this meant (as it did eventually mean) the uprooting and scattering of millions whose people had occupied this land for over five thousand years, more's the pity."

"Within a few years the wars of consolidation and expansion began. Ironically enough, the horrors of the Holocaust became the rationalisation for the preparation by Zionists of acts of genocide against the indigenous people of Palestine. Those of us who, in the years that were to follow, raised our voices publicly against the violent apartheid of the Israeli state were vilified by the Zionist press. It is ironic, too, that the Jew-haters in South Africa—those who worked and prayed for a Hitler victory—have been linked in close embrace with the rulers of Israel in a new axis based on racism" (pp 30-31). (By 1980, Israel had become South Africa's largest arms supplier, and in 1981 Israeli Defence Minister Ariel Sharon pledged military support for South Africa's incursion into Namibia.)

The South African Jewish community

was fortunate that, from 1987 to 2004, it had found in Cyril Harris (1936-2005) a Chief Rabbi who helped it come to terms with the ending of its share in the "*white supremacy*" of that country's Apartheid system. Himself a lifelong Zionist, Harris did not wax hysterically about some supposed existential threat to South Africa's Jewish community as an outspoken anti-Zionist like Joe Slovo came to the fore as a key player in forming the first post-Apartheid Government of South Africa. Quite the contrary! Speaking at the state funeral of Joe Slovo on 15th January 1995, Cyril Harris, Chief Rabbi of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues of South Africa, pronounced:

"We gather together today to mourn the passing of Joe Slovo and to give thanks for a great life ... a white man who with every fibre of his being fought to improve the lot of his black brothers and sisters... His humanity was boundless and inspirational; he became the true champion of the oppressed. Let not those religious people who acquiesced, passively or wrongly, with inequalities of yesteryear, let not those religious people dare to condemn Joe Slovo, a humanist socialist, who fought all his life for basic decency, to reinstate the dignity to which all human beings are entitled. He was proud to acknowledge the Jewish roots of his compassion. Brought up as a child in a Lithuanian ghetto, he experienced at first hand the degradation and misery of being unfairly treated for no proper reason. So, in the South Africa he grew to love, he determined that no one should be singled out for unfair treatment for no proper reason... We give thanks for his bravery. Unflinching throughout the struggle, he never gave up in the darkest hours but soldiered on to tackle seemingly insurmountable difficulties... There is an old Rabbinic teaching, a beautiful one, that just before a person dies, an angel comes to him from Heaven and asks the vital question: 'Tell me, is the world a better place because of your life which is about to end? Is the world a better place because of the efforts you exerted? Is the world a better place because you were around?' For Joe Slovo, we give the answer Yes, a resounding Yes. The world **is** a better place, thanks to you, Joe, and your remarkable life... *Shalom*, dear brother, *Shalom*. Rest in eternal peace."

Now **there** was a Chief Rabbi who knew how to act honourably!

✱

## Martin Tyrrell

Part 2  
*The View from Airstrip Two*

### Orwell, Ireland and the War (2)

In Part 1, I looked at how Orwell moved from the qualified pacifism of the International Revolutionary Marxist Centre—no war unless it's a revolutionary war—to a position supportive of Britain's war against Nazi Germany. In making this transition, he did not cease to be socialist. On the contrary, both before and after his change of mind, and for the rest of his life, he upheld a version of socialism that would today be considered far left and fringe, but in Orwell's own time (and well into mine) was seen as borderline cautious. His socialism (which was his in the sense that he professed, rather than initiated, it) included: nationalisation of all sizeable businesses, public utilities and farms; a planned economy; a new monetary system in which currency would be more like ration coupons or Green Shield Stamps; and approximate equality of income (no income smaller than £200 a year and none greater than £2,000—in today's money, a range of £10,000-100,000).

Orwell, at least initially, thought that the war had enhanced the prospects for this type of socialism in Britain. He reasoned that central planning, whether socialist or Nazi, was more economically efficient than capitalism and, being (national) state-controlled, more likely to be comprehensively unhelpful to the enemy. Orwell was concerned that profit-driven businesses might, despite the war, continue to trade with Germany, thereby strengthening the German war effort, and also that features of a market economy—such as competition, or the manufacture of frivolous products such as sweets and make-up, or the whole business of advertising, towards which Orwell bore a longstanding grudge—were inherently wasteful, diverting resources away from the war.

He was suspicious, too, that the upper class and upper middle class might negotiate some compromise peace to enable them to return to their peacetime comforts, possibly under a British version of fascism. He even compiled a list

of suspect and crypto fascists who might facilitate such a development—*“people with something to lose, or people who long for a hierarchical society and dread the prospect of a world of free and equal human beings”*. Among those Orwell listed as potentially useful to fascism were Montague Norman, a former Governor of the Bank of England; Frank Buchman, founder of the Christian group *Moral Re-Armament* (and who Orwell thought might be a kind of contemporary Rasputin); Mohammed Amin al-Husayni, the Mufti of Jerusalem; and John Beverley, a pacifist writer who had supported Mosley but who had, in fact, gone over to the war effort earlier than Orwell.

Orwell contrasted this dubious elite with the working class and the lower middles whose patriotism and commitment to the war effort, were, he alleged, generally authentic and beyond doubt. Unlike the upper classes, Orwell believed, people on lower incomes would not find it easy to settle under fascism, and had too much to gain from socialism ever to accept such a system. Also, with little to lose, poorer people were not finding the war as materially challenging as the rich. If anything, Orwell, surmised, working class people preferred war to peace, which was surely a telling indictment of peace.

In Orwell's (wartime) opinion, a failure of socialism to date had been to recognise and mobilise working class patriotism as a basis for revolution. Now, with the war, the time for that had come. The majority of the population was clearly behind the war, but the war was being lost because the old guard, with its old-style economics, was still in control. To Orwell, only a British planned economy could put Britain on the same efficient war footing as Germany. The people, being for the most part patriotic, would shortly see this and be supportive, leaving the diehard pro-capitalist minority isolated and powerless. *“What has kept England on its feet during the past*

*year?”*, he asks in his caustic 1941 essay *Wells, Hitler and the World State*—

“In part, no doubt, some vague idea about a better future, but chiefly the atavistic emotion of patriotism, the ingrained feeling of the English-speaking peoples that they are superior to foreigners. For the last twenty years the main object of English left-wing intellectuals has been the break this feeling down, and if they had succeeded, we might be watching the SS men patrolling the London streets at this moment. Similarly, why are the Russians fighting like tigers against the German invasion? In part, perhaps, because of some half-remembered ideal of Utopian Socialism, but chiefly in defence of Holy Russia (the “scared soil of the Fatherland”, etc, etc), which Stalin has revived in an only slightly altered form. The energy that actually shapes the world springs from emotions—racial pride, leader-worship, religious belief, love of war—which liberal intellectuals mechanically write off as anachronisms, and which they have usually destroyed so completely in themselves as to have lost all power of action.”

In advocating this fusion of nationalism and socialism, Orwell was either genuinely unaware, or affected to be so, that fascism had come from a similar source. Mussolini, Sombart, Michels—all were jaded men of the left who re-framed their socialism nationalistically. Nazism was similar, though most of its disillusioned socialists such as former Social Democrat Otto Strasser, had been purged by the late 1930s.

Early in the war, Orwell recalled that he “grew up in an atmosphere tinged with militarism”. His childhood had coincided with the great naval arms race that preceded the First World War. Barely out of infancy, he had been enrolled in the Navy League, which lobbied to extend Britain's already substantial naval advantage, a fleet larger than the next two combined. And at his preparatory school, St Cyprian's, he had joined the army cadet corps, drilling, re-enacting the battles of the Zulu Wars, and rising to the rank of bugle-boy. Orwell's time at the school, 1911-1916, coincided with the First World War. Thirty-eight St. Cyprian's old boys were killed in that conflict. Current pupils, like Orwell and Cyril Connolly, knitted socks and scarves for the men at the Front, bought them cigarettes, and put on shows for the troops on leave or recuperating. A map of the Western Front was on permanent

display in the school for the duration of the war, with troops and positions marked and updated daily. This was when Orwell, then Eric Blair, published his first poems, one on Kitchener and one a call to arms, written early in the war when volunteering, albeit nudged along with officially-organised social pressure, could still deliver sufficient recruitment. Young Master Blair made his own contribution to that collective national nudge:

Oh! give me the strength of the Lion  
The wisdom of Reynard the Fox  
And then I'll hurl troops at the Germans  
And give them the hardest of knocks.  
Oh! think of the War lord's mailed fist,  
That is striking at England today:  
And think of the lives that our soldiers  
Are fearlessly throwing away.  
Awake! Oh you young men of England,  
For if when your country's in need,  
You do not enlist by the thousand,  
You truly are cowards indeed.

Later, in his powerful, post-war essay *Such, Such were the Joys*, Orwell would write bitterly about his time at St Cyprian's:

"Your home might be far from perfect, but at least it was a place ruled by love rather than by fear, where you did not have to be perpetually on your guard against the people surrounding you. At eight years old you were suddenly taken out of this warm nest and flung into a world of force and fraud and secrecy, like a gold-fish into a tank full of pike."

But in 1940 he said only that being at a private preparatory school had left him better placed than the left-wing intellectuals when it came to empathising with the common man.

"It is exactly the people whose hearts have never leapt at the sight of a Union Jack who will flinch from revolution when the moment comes. Let anyone compare the poem John Cornford wrote not long before he was killed (*Before the Storming of Huesca*) with Sir Henry Newbolt's "There's a breathless hush in the Close tonight" [i.e. *Vitae Lampada*]... it will be seen that the emotional content of the two poems is almost exactly the same. The young Communist who died heroically in the International Brigade was public school to the core. He had changed his allegiance but not his emotions. What does that prove? Merely the possibility of building a Socialist on the bones of a Blimp, the power of one kind of loyalty to transmute itself into another,

the spiritual need for patriotism and the military virtues, for which, however little the boiled rabbits of the Left may like them, no substitute has been found."

Cornford, Charles Darwin's great-grandson, volunteered for the International Brigade and was killed a few months later. He was 21. Orwell's praise for him is a rare, possibly unique, instance of his having something good to say about a member of the official, Moscow-aligned Communist Party of Great Britain. But Cornford's poem in question is, to my mind, fairly dreadful, awkwardly theoretical and obscure where Newbolt's is at least accessible.

"The past, a glacier, gripped the mountain wall,  
And time was inches, dark was all.  
But here it scales the end of the range,  
The dialectic's point of change,  
Crashes in light and minutes to its fall.  
Time present is a cataract whose force  
Breaks down the banks even at its source  
And history forming in our hands  
Not plasticine but roaring sands,  
Yet we must swing it to its final course.  
The intersecting lines that cross both ways,  
Time future, has no image in space,  
Crooked as the road that we must tread,  
Straight as our bullets fly ahead.  
We are the future. The last fight let us face."

Orwell himself would wax more conventionally, not to say coherently, patriotic in a number of wartime writings, notably *The Lion and the Unicorn* and *The English People*, books he later tried to unperson, requesting in his will that they be allowed to remain out of print.

"The Stock Exchange will be pulled down", he forecasts in *The Lion and the Unicorn*, "the horse plough will give way to the tractor, the country houses will be turned into children's holiday camps, the Eton and Harrow match will be forgotten, but England will still be England, an everlasting animal stretching into the future and the past, and, like all living things, having the power to change out of recognition and yet remain the same."

And later, in the same essay, he offers some out of character enthusiasm for social mobility and the suburbs, seeing in them the first stirrings of a new classless society.

In private, however, he worried that the patriotism of the wider public might have its limits, particularly in the context of food shortages. People, he thought, might put up with having less to eat,

if this was what it took to defend the country against possible invasion. But they might not be so keen to, as Orwell put it, "*starve their children*", in order that ventures such as the North Africa campaign might continue. Some graffiti he had seen on a London wall had angered him—'*Cheese, not Churchill*'. This "*silly slogan*" he thought was the work of Communists or Blackshirts. "*It sums up the psychological ignorance of these people who even now have not grasped that whereas some people would die for Churchill, nobody will die for cheese.*"

As it happened, Orwell's own patriotism had its limits, as the Inland Revenue managed to establish. In August 1940, the Revenue issued him a tax demand in respect of *The Road to Wigan Pier*, his biggest selling book prior to *Animal Farm*. An indignant Orwell wrote: "*Towards the government I feel no scruples and would dodge paying the tax if I could. Yet I would give my life for England readily enough, if I thought it necessary. No one is patriotic about taxes.*"

Orwell kept a diary of events during the immediate pre-war months and two further, more conventionally narrative, diaries covering two separate periods (May 1940-August 1941, and March to November 1942) during the early years of the war. Orwell intended these latter for publication but Victor Gollancz turned them down, possibly fearing that they would give offence. Orwell would be nearly twenty years dead before they eventually appeared in print (in the *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters*, published in four volumes in 1968. This was superseded by the impressive *Complete Works* published towards the end of the 1990s. More recently, Penguin has published all of Orwell's diaries—pre-war, wartime and otherwise—as a stand-alone volume).

Reading the immediate pre-war diary and, better still, the wartime diaries, we get to see Orwell's reaction to the war as it happened, rather than his reflections with hindsight. Writing in June 1941, for example, he is sceptical that there will be any war between Germany and Russia, alleging that Stalin is too useful to Hitler for Germany to initiate any serious anti-Soviet offensive. And, when Operation Barbarossa begins, Orwell is sure that it has the limited objective of disabling Russia's armed forces, the better to enable an invasion of Britain. In this con-

text, he speculates, variously, that there is a Nazi Party in Russia and that Stalin is its leader, that Stalin might become a kind of Russian version of Pétain, or that Stalin might end up in exile in London, “selling samovars and doing Caucasian dances...”

Only gradually and grudgingly did Orwell accept that Stalin was mounting a determined resistance to Hitler, even commending him for “a magnificent fighting speech” in July 1941. “The Stalin regime is accepted by the Russian masses”, Orwell would later write in *Notes on Nationalism* (1945), alleging that this was a fact that any Trotskyist would find “impossible...to accept, even in his secret thoughts”.

Orwell’s pre-war diary covers the Summer months of 1939 and draws mainly on news reports and on information and rumour Orwell picked up in conversation (“It appears from reliable private information that Sir O Mosley is a masochist of the extreme type in his sexual life”). By the start of 1939, a war with Germany was widely and confidently expected. Orwell later wrote that he had seen it coming from around 1936, an expectation that informs several of his pre-war writings, notably *Keep the Aspidochelone Flying* and *Coming up for Air*. In the Summer 1939 diary, he notes ongoing preparations such as the issue of ration cards, mobilisations of the army and the naval reserve, sandbags stacked against public buildings, practice evacuations, and air raid precaution.

Orwell’s more discursive wartime diaries begin in May 1940, some nine months after the British declaration of war and just in time for the collapse of the Western Front, the French surrender and Italy’s entry into the war. There were around 20,000 Italians living in the United Kingdom at this time, some of whom were to experience the darker side of wartime populism—anti-Italian riots and attacks on Italians and their property. Orwell records this in passing in his diary, and minimises it; his entry for 12th June 1940 reads:

“[Eileen] and I last night walked through Soho to see whether the damage to Italian shops etc, was as reported. It seemed to have been exaggerated in the newspapers, but we did see three shops which had had their windows smashed. The majority had hurriedly labelled themselves ‘British’. Genari’s, the Italian grocer’s, was plastered all over with printed placards saying ‘This establishment is entirely

British’ The Spaghetti House... had renamed itself ‘British Food Shop’...and even a French restaurant had labelled itself British”.

A popular view at the time was that the French had been a kind of dead-weight on the British war effort and that Britain was well rid of them. Angus Calder, in his book *The Myth of the Blitz*, suggests that this opinion was held high and low; from King George VI (“we have no allies to be polite to and to pamper”) to the captain of a tug-boat (“No more bloody allies!”) The fictional Alf Garnett offers a similar view of things in the film version of *Till Death Us Do Part*. I’m quoting from unreliable memory, but as I recall it Johnny Speight has him say something like: “Bleedin’ frogs, never could bleedin’ fight. He’s bringing them all home, isn’t he?” ‘He’ being Churchill, ‘them’ being the British Expeditionary Force. (In France, it was Britain that was thought to have underperformed—where France had fielded 67 divisions, Britain had provided just five, and it was the British, not the French, who had cut and run.)

Orwell rejected the claim that France had been an unreliable ally and was enough of a realist to appreciate the danger of the situation following Dunkirk. But he did not question that the war should continue and, once the French had made a separate peace with Hitler, he was supportive of the *de facto* war against them that lasted until 1942.

After Dunkirk, the view in France was that the war was over and that it was time for a negotiated peace. The peace that was duly negotiated was, from a French perspective, reasonable enough. Although France had to swallow military occupation and move its capital to Vichy, it retained *de jure* control of its territory, control of its vast colonial empire as well as of the several hundred thousand troops based in it, and control of its navy. Churchill was unhappy with this outcome, but especially regretted that the French fleet—which he thought was the strongest since the time of Louis XV—remained in French hands. He wanted it to slip anchor and link up with the Royal Navy.

By way of compromise, the French offered that they would scuttle their ships in the event of any realistic attempt by Germany to seize them (which, in the event, they later did). Unconvinced, the Royal Navy launched, in July 1940, a surprise attack on a section of the French fleet at its haven at Mers el Kébir, result-

ing in the death of some 1,300 French servicemen and the loss of several ships. “It was a fine sight”, wrote the commander of *HMS Keppel*, even if it was “the wrong enemy, at the wrong place, at the wrong time”. Churchill called the action “melancholy”, Harold Nicholson, “odious”. In France, it strengthened pro-Nazi elements and dampened enthusiasm for De Gaulle. There had been no British casualties. Orwell, who supported the action, speculated that this was because the French had been reluctant to fire on their former ally.

Later, at the beginning of 1941, he was hostile to proposals that Britain should allow increased food exports to France. “The proper course”, he wrote, “would be to wait till France is on the verge of starvation and the Pétain government consequently rocking, and then hand over a really large supply of food in return for some substantial concession, e.g. surrender of important units of the French fleet.”

Blockading the enemy, including through the coercion of neighbouring neutrals, had contributed significantly to the eventual Allied victory in the First World War. After Dunkirk, Britain blockaded France on the assumption that French agriculture was meeting German as well as French needs and that British exports to Vichy were indirectly helping Germany. By reducing the amount of food available in France, Britain hoped to create tensions between France and Germany not to mention damage the overall health and well-being of the French workforce, making it less useful to the German war effort. However, the United States, still neutral, had recognised Vichy as the legitimate French Government and was opposed to the blockade since it was primarily American ships, carrying American goods, that were being blocked. Consequently, the British faced a tough choice—damage the former ally or alienate the prospective one.

By far the most controversial sections of the 1940 diary are those in which Orwell comments on the Jewish refugees he saw in London. In the Summer 1939 diary, he had already noted: “appears that German Jewish refugees are settling in great numbers in certain parts of London, e.g. Golder’s Green, and buying houses which they have plenty of money to do”, and that this “refugee problem (sic) [is] starting to become serious in London, especially the East End”. Word

had it, however, that support for Mosley had not increased.

Mosley and his movement were at the time alleging that the war was a 'Jewish war' being waged at the behest of British Jews on behalf of their German co-religionists—a dog whistle appeal to British anti-semitism. In response, the Government explicitly denied this as its motivation, insisting that the war was being waged solely because it was in the national interest to wage it. This was no lie; the war was not being waged to bring an end to Nazism and all its works but to try to restore the balance of power in Europe. (In 1939, months before the start of the war, the film *Pastor Hall*—an exposé of the Nazi regime based on the story of dissident Lutheran Pastor Martin Niemöller—was banned at the pre-production stage by the British Board of Film Censorship on the grounds it might offend Nazi sensibilities.) The popular support for the war that Orwell admired was not down to any widespread revulsion at Hitler's anti-semitism, but to mass hostility towards a state—Nazi Germany—now seen to be a threat to Britain's interests. Any Government focus on Nazi anti-semitism might well have weakened popular support for the war, not strengthened it. Only in the post-war era did it begin to be suggested that the Second World War had been waged for human rights reasons—that it was a kind of crusade.

In the immediate pre-war period, Britain's Government had allowed only limited immigration by refugees from Nazi Germany and on the strict understanding that any who were admitted were admitted on a temporary basis during which time they would be resourced from private charity, not the public purse. And not through regular employment either, since every employed refugee was assumed to mean an unemployed Englishman. An exception was made for entrepreneurs. Refugees who had been entrepreneurial in Germany were permitted to be entrepreneurial in Britain as well, so long as they could furnish their own start-up capital. And an exception was also made for refugees who were willing to work as domestic servants, as there was always a shortage of that type of thing. Otherwise, if you were a refugee fleeing Hitler, you lived on air, or you lived on the charity of the sympathetic, or you took yourself somewhere else.

Approximately 70,000 Jewish refu-

gees from Nazi Germany had settled in the UK by the start of the war and a further 10,000, mainly children, joined them once the war was underway. In London, which is where most of the refugees settled, they would have made a tiny community, dwarfed by a city population of around four million. Nonetheless, the Government appears to have been fearful that even this relatively small community of refugees might rouse local anti-semitism and allow the Mosley view to gain some traction.

It is possible that Orwell shared this concern. In a diary entry for October 1940, he mentions that an acquaintance of his, whose name is redacted in the typescript, "*declares that Jews greatly predominate among people sheltering in the Tubes. Must try and verify this*".

This appears to have been one of a number of antisemitic rumours circulating at the time. (Juliet Gardner in her 2010 social history *The Blitz: the British under attack* comments that Jews were accused of bullying their way into the air raid shelters and quotes an October 1940 letter to the *Hackney and Kingsland Gazette*: "*I should say that 90 per cent of those who recline nightly on Tube platforms are of the Jewish persuasion...*")

In the event, when an official survey of how Londoners protected themselves from aerial bombardment was carried out towards the end of 1940, it found that fewer than half the city population was using shelters of any kind, generally private shelters of varying degrees of robustness. Only 150,000 were using the Tube stations—even if the entire Jewish refugee population had taken itself down the Tube stations, it would still have been a minority there).

Using Underground stations as shelters was officially prohibited at the start of the war but the policy was changed in the face of significant public opposition. People disobeyed the ban in such numbers that officialdom was soon obliged to climb down. (The cynic in me says that if Jewish refugees had been the principal flouters of the ban, the ban would never have been lifted.)

Orwell's diary entry for 25th October 1940 records:

"The other night examined the crowds sheltering in Chancery Lane, Oxford Circus and Baker Street Stations. Not all Jews, but I think, a higher proportion of Jews than one would normally see in a crowd of this size. What is bad about Jews is that they are not only conspicuous but go out of their way to make themselves so. A

fearful Jewish woman, a regular comic paper cartoon of a Jewess (sic), fought her way off the train at Oxford Circus, landing blows on anyone who stood in her way."

So says Orwell in a piece of writing intended for publication. (It is surely to the good of his literary reputation that Victor Gollancz rejected it!) Three stations surveyed, all on the same, single night, and Orwell concludes that the proportion of Jewish refugees there was higher than you'd expect (whatever that means). And they stand out, he says, and they do deplorable things that make them stand out all the more, viz., that solitary example of the woman who battled her way out of the carriage, and who must have been a Jewish refugee because... because presumably Orwell thought no Englishwoman would ever have carried on like that.

The ill-tempered woman who bullied her way off the Tube at Oxford Circus, she might or might not have been Jewish and/or a refugee. Did Orwell even see her, or was he merely reporting something someone else told him? A version of her appears a few years later in one of his wartime *London Letters* to the American periodical *Partisan Review*: "*Because two days ago a fat Jewess (sic) grabbed your place on the bus, you switch off the wireless when the announcer begins talking about the ghettos of Warsaw; that's how people's minds work nowadays...*"

In the same letter, Orwell says that anti-semitism has become a problem in England and that it is directed more against the refugees than the long-established and anglicised Jewish community. He lists off the things that people are saying which, he argues, indicate a lack of sympathy and a lack of knowledge of what has been happening to Jews in Germany.

There is often nothing religious in the general hostility, he comments. It is more an objection to foreigners—"*Some people actually object to the Jews on the grounds that the Jews are Germans.*" Here, Orwell puts a little distance between his own view and those of the wider public. It is the wider public, he suggests, that has a negative view of Jews and Jewish refugees although he continues to hold that the refugees bring at least some of the opprobrium on themselves—"*the tactlessness of some of the refugees*", he writes, "*is almost incredible*". (For example, a remark by a German Jewish woman overheard dur-

ing the Battle of France: “These English police are not nearly so smart as our SS Men”). I wonder about that last remark, about the smart SS men. Who overheard it? Orwell himself? Or a friend? Or that old standby, the ‘friend of a friend’?

There is a similar distancing in *Antisemitism in Britain*, written in early 1945 when the war was almost won. Here Orwell writes that there has been a longstanding culture of anti-semitism in England/Britain and that part of the negative reaction to the refugees has been a consequence of this.

“The Jews”, he writes, “are accused of specific offences (for instance, bad behaviour in food queues) which the person speaking feels strongly about, but it is obvious that *these accusations merely rationalise some deep-rooted prejudice.*” [Emphasis mine.]

But he also comments that—

“[a] minority of the refugees behaved in an exceedingly tactless way, and the feeling against them necessarily had an antisemitic undercurrent, since they were largely Jews. A very eminent figure in the Labour Party—I won’t name him, but he is one of the most respected people in England—said to me quite violently: ‘We never asked these people to come to this country. If they choose to come here, let them take the consequences.’...”

Orwell says that he could “*fill pages with similar remarks*” and, indeed, he begins the essay with some *vox pop* examples of everyday anti-semitism he claims to have experienced. The ‘middle class woman’, for instance, who offers a variant on that bolshy Jewish woman who forced her way off the Tube train—‘The way they push their way to the head of queues, and so on. They’re so abominably selfish. I think they’re responsible for a lot of what happens to them’. Or the ‘chartered accountant, intelligent, left wing...’ who states that the loyalty of the Jews is questionable: ‘They’d change sides tomorrow if the Nazis got here... They admire Hitler at the bottom of their hearts. They’ll always suck up to anyone who kicks them.’

This last is suspiciously akin to something Orwell had written in his diary some four years earlier: ‘Surprised to find that D, who is distinctly left in his views, is inclined to share the current feelings against the Jews. He says that the Jews in business circles are turning pro-Hitler, or preparing to do so. This sounds incredible, but according to D, they will always admire anyone who

kicks them.’ Orwell, for his own part, chips in: ‘any Jew, i.e. European Jew, would prefer Hitler’s kind of social system to ours, if it were not that he happens to persecute them. Ditto with almost any Central European, e.g. the refugees. They make use of England as a sanctuary, but they cannot help feeling the profoundest contempt for it. You can see this in their eyes, even when they don’t say it outright. The fact is that the insular outlook and the continental outlook are completely incompatible.’

Attacks on innocuous Italian and even French businesses, and dangerous, not to say scurrilous, rumours regarding the Jewish refugees were populist and informal, but they likely took their cue from the official policy of the time. With the start of the war, Italians, people of Italian descent, and refugees from Germany became immediately suspect as potential fifth columnists. Aliens Tribunals were set up in order to distinguish the reliability of around 70,000 people of whom more than 7,000 were assessed as questionable, but after the fall of France this discriminatory approach was set aside. The preferred, and draconian, method was to try to move this suspect population to Canada and Australia. In July 1940, a commandeered liner, the *Arandora Star*, was torpedoed at the start of its Atlantic crossing. It had been carrying more than a thousand civilian detainees—mainly Italians, British citizens of Italian descent, and German Jewish refugees. Around half survived. News of the sinking was largely eclipsed by reports of the naval action at Mers el Kébir and Angus Calder suggests that what news there was was unreliable—tall tales, for instance, that the Italians had gone into a suitably Latin panic, but little acknowledgement that a ship with 1,500 people aboard had had lifeboats for just 1,000. The sinking, or something like it, features somewhat obliquely in *Nineteen Eighty-four* as part of Winston’s first, anxious entry in his diary.

“Last night to the flicks. All war films. One very good one of a ship full of refugees being bombed somewhere in the Mediterranean. Audience much amused by shots of a great huge fat man trying to swim away with a helicopter after him, first you saw him wallowing along in the water like a porpoise, then you saw him through the helicopters gunsights, then he was full of holes and the sea around him turned pink and he sank as suddenly as though the holes had let in water, audience shouting with laughter when he sank.

Then you saw a lifeboat full of children with a helicopter hovering over it. There was a middle-aged woman might have been a jewess sitting up in the bow with a little boy about three years old in her arms...’

(The ‘great huge fat man’ was, in Orwell’s original manuscript, a Jew. DJ Taylor, in *On Nineteen Eighty-four*, his recent survey of the making of Orwell’s final novel, suggests that Orwell here self-censored).

Orwell, in his own (1942) diary, mentions, in passing, the case of the *Dunera*, which, like the *Arandora Star*, was commandeered to transport enemy aliens and other suspects. He comments that this is one of several disreputable wartime incidents that are ‘believed in or disbelieved in according to political predilection’. But he gives no details, possibly because the story was well enough known at the time.

The *Dunera* carried around five hundred German prisoners and sympathisers and perhaps four times that number of German Jewish refugees to Australia. Some of these were *Arandora Star* survivors. Many of the guards on the *Dunera* were ‘soldiers of the King’s pardon’—convicts released for military service—and they subjected the deportees to a brutalising regime characterised by beatings, theft, humiliation and lengthy confinement below deck in squalid conditions.

Orwell’s diary comments suggest that the story of the *Dunera* had, at that time, the status of a factoid or urban legend. It probably would have been forgotten but for the fact that many of the so-called ‘Dunera Boys’ were, or went on to be, men of distinction, prominent in academic or cultural fields. Also, around a thousand who had been on the ship went on to serve in the Australian Army. As a result, the story of the *Dunera* gained some currency in Australia in step with that country’s growing post-war independence from the United Kingdom—the old country might have abused the Dunera Boys, but Australia honoured and respected them.

Australia asserting its independent self in the world seems a good place at which to end since in Part 3 I want to look at Orwell’s wartime take on imperialism, anti-imperialism and decolonisation.

TO BE CONTINUED

## FIANNA FAIL reverts to its roots?

The Fianna Fáil Mayor of Clare is to boycott the forthcoming commemoration service for the Royal Irish Constabulary, describing the event as "historical revisionism gone too far" (RTE website, 5.1.2020).

Cathal Crowe, who is also a Fianna Fáil general election candidate, was invited by Minister for Justice Charlie Flanagan to attend the 17 January service.

However, he said today that it is "wrong to celebrate and eulogise" the RIC, "an organisation that was the strong-arm of the British state in Ireland".

The commemoration is being held to remember members who served in the RIC and the Dublin Metropolitan Police prior to independence. It will take place in Dublin Castle. Both Mr Flanagan and Garda Commissioner Drew Harris are due to address the event.

In a statement, Mr Crowe said he studied history for four years at the University of Limerick and blogs regularly about local history. He is also a member of the War of Independence Commemoration Committee in his parish of Meelick-Parteen.

"In the main, I think all of the Government's State commemorations have been apt and tasteful, but I see the commemoration of the RIC as a step too far," he said.

"I don't hold any ill feeling towards the individual men who served in the RIC Division of Clare—many of them were decent people who were guided by the their strong civic and law-abiding principles.

"I do, however, think it's wrong to celebrate and eulogise (I consider "commemorate" to be a verb with positive connotations) an organisation that was the strong-arm of the British state in Ireland.

"The RIC joined army and auxiliaries (Black & Tans) in search parties and raids that resulted in our

country-people being killed/tortured or having their homes torched. In the 1800s the RIC were present with battering rams as poor Irish tenants were forcefully evicted from their ramshackle homes."

He also said he has an issue with An Garda Síochána being central to the event.

"The guards have my full and utmost respect but I don't believe that, historically or ethically, they should seek to claim any form of descent from the RIC. The Irish Defence Forces see themselves as a totally distinct organisation from the British army."

Describing the commemoration as "an overstretch", the Mayor of Clare added: "It's also historical revisionism gone too far".

Since going to press: a similar stance has been taken by the Mayor of Galway; the Lord Mayor of Cork and Dublin City Council, with the result that the Government has cancelled the R.I.C. Commemoration ceremony. Irish academia have done a runner proclaiming: they're not to blame!

## Irish Cardinal???

For the first time in more than 40 years, Ireland will not have a vote at any forthcoming conclave to elect a new Pope following the omission of an Irish Prelate from Pope Francis' new list of Cardinals announced on October 5, 2019.

The list included ten who are young enough to participate in a papal conclave. This brought the number of cardinal electors to 128, eight more than the limit set by Pope Paul VI, but often ignored.

The Pope's appointees to the College of Cardinals reflect the diminished role of Ireland in an increasingly globalised Church reports The Irish Catholic (5.9.2019).

"AN UNRESOLVED mystery of 2019 is why Pope Francis has continued to withhold a Red Hat from Arch-

bishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin, Ireland's senior prelate who is due to offer his resignation of April 8 when he reaches the official retirement age of 75. Could it be that the one Irish churchman who pioneered a full-disclosure policy towards paedophile clergy is out of favour in Rome, where he previously worked as a diplomat for three decades?" (The Phoenix Annual, December, 2019)

The omission of an Irish prelate from the list means that for the first time since the Papal conclaves of 1978, the Irish church will not have a representative should the election of a new Pontiff arise!

The Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All-Ireland, Eamon Martin from Derry was born in 1961, and most certainly will be included in a future list.

Ireland's first Cardinal, Paul Cullen of Dublin arrived in Rome too late to participate in the conclave that elected Leo XIII in 1878. The next Irish Cardinal in a conclave was Cardinal Michael Logue of Donegal who participated in the election of Pope St. Pius X in 1903, Benedict XV in 1914 and Pius XI in 1922. Cardinal Joseph MacRory of Ballygawley, Co. Tyrone participated in the 1939 conclave that elected Pius XII.

Cardinal Logue's father was the driver of Lord Leitrim's [Robert Clements] coach when he was assassinated at Cratlagh Wood, near Milford, Co. Donegal in a well-planned attack on the morning of April the Second, 1878. Mr. Logue had no involvement in the attack.

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## Round And About

"I have never ceased to like the Irish. I should not like to think of America with them left out. Because of their wanting things in New York we have playgrounds, public baths, Central Park, Riverside Drive. Their instinct for collectivity made the docks and the ferries public property. They have given us our water-supply and fire department, a wonderful library service, and as good a school system as is probably to be found in any large city. And under Tammany Hall a system of local taxation was created that is unsurpassed for honesty and efficiency in this country or abroad. Unconsciously aiming to shape the state to human ends, the Irish have made New York what it is" (Frederic C. Howe, The Confessions of a Reformer, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925)

'Spectacular wealth' saw hordes of Irish rugby fans jet out to Japan—Thousands of Irish supporters flew out

to Japan for the Irish team's pool games in the Rugby World Cup and the quarter final defeat to New Zealand." (The Sunday Business Post, 27.10.2019)

"Ireland's 'spectacular wealth' was the reason Irish rugby fans were able to drown out the All Blacks' 'haka' during last weekend's World Cup quarter-final", according to Ibec's head of corporate affairs Siobhán Masterson.

Aye, indeed, you could say their bark was worse than their bite, even with the assistance of three of four mercenaries.

Ibec's head of corporate affairs said there was a reluctance to acknowledge the country's "spectacular wealth" and "spectacular growth" because the country had been imprisoned in a kind of austerity mindset "up to quite recently".

Like their US and UK allies, they think you can buy success! As Steinbeck once wrote: "Anything that just costs money is cheap."

Newry loses out to New York as shoppers plan festive excursions—Why go to Newry when New York is on offer? (Irish Independent, 9.12.2019)

Around a quarter of Irish households plan to travel outside the State to do some pre-Christmas shopping, but only 9% by crossing the Border, according to an AA Ireland survey.

In total, 26.7% plan a pre-Christmas foreign trip, including increased interest in weekend shopping in US cities, a phenomenon associated with the final years of the Celtic Tiger.

Aer Lingus this weekend reported 10% growth on numbers travelling to New York in the run-up to Christmas. It plans to carry 110,000 passengers to all U.S. destinations in the first two weeks of this month alone, 20% higher than in 2018.

Irish residents spent almost €7.5 billion on foreign trips last year.

The latest figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) show that there was a huge increase in both overseas and domestic travel in 2018. (Irish Examiner, 20.6.2019)

In total, Irish residents spent €7.4 billion on outbound travel last year, with €1.5 billion spent in Spain.

The USA and Canada was the next highest at €1.2 billion, with the UK third at €1.1 billion.

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## Education Trends

Catholic Church domination of schools slowly chipped away again—The Catholic Church's dominance of

education is continuing to slide in the face of rapid growth for the multi-denominational sector. (Irish Independent, 24.12.2019)

The Catholic Church is still by far the biggest stakeholder in primary education, accounting for 90% of pupils, but that is down from 90.6% in 2017 and 90.3% in 2018.

The number of Catholic primary schools has dropped by 118 to 2,760 over the past decade, while there has been a fall from 178 to 172 in Church of Ireland primary schools in the same period.

At the same time, the multi-denominational sector has more than doubled, from 73 schools to 150, and now has 6.8% of enrolments.

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**HEDGE SCHOOLS** and a German visitor:

"J. G. Kohl visited one of the last of the old hedge schools during his stay in Ireland and states: "one in the pure old national style—enabled me to observe the mode by which, in these remote parts of Ireland, the light of intellectual cultivation is transmitted. It was, in truth, a touching sight. The school house was a mud hovel, covered with greens sods, without windows or any other comforts.

The little pupils, wrapped up as well as their rags would cover them, sat beside the low open door, towards which they were all holding their books in order to obtain a portion of the scanty light it admitted. Some of the younger ones were sitting or lying on the floor; beside these, others were seated on a couple of benches formed of loose boards ... The master, dressed in the national costume already described was seated in the midst of the crowd ... outside, before the door, lay many pieces of turf as there were scholars within, for each one had brought a piece with him as if a fee or gratuity for the school master ... he was teaching the children the English alphabet and they all appeared very cheerful, smart and bright-eyed over their study. When their poverty, their food, and clothing are considered, this may appear surprising; but it is the case with all Irish children, and especially those in the open country. The school-house stood close by the roadside, but many of the children resided several miles off, and even the school master did not live near it ... before the introduction of state education, the hedge schools were the only places where Catholic children could receive a schooling free from real, or imagined, proselytising."

(KOHL, Johann Georg, *Travels in Ireland*. London: Bruce and Wyld, 1844. pp. xii.)

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## IN CHURCH!

"While church attendance in Ireland is dropping, the busiest day of the year for congregations to assemble is Christmas, and for some Christians it is one of the only days of the year they step inside a church. Figures for [HYPERLINK "https://www.irishtimes.com/topics/topics-7.1213540?article=true&tag\\_organisation=Church+of+Ireland"](https://www.irishtimes.com/topics/topics-7.1213540?article=true&tag_organisation=Church+of+Ireland) Church of Ireland attendance average at 58,000 over three Sundays which rises sharply to 108,000 for the Christmas rite, an indication that the Christmas tradition of church attendance is still alive and well.

Increasingly though, ecclesiastical bodies are selling off more and more churches. According to the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) in the United Kingdom, about 500 churches in London alone have been turned into homes in the past five years." (Irish Times, 21.12.2019)

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## The Headlines:

"Under 16s 'can't choose gender' (Daily Mail, 26 county edition, 30.12.19).

"Budget had no funding for free condom scheme" (Irish Examiner, 28.11.19).

"Infant baptism inconsistent with human rights, says McAleese" (The Tablet, Former President of Ireland, Professor Mary McAleese delivered the Trinity Long Room Hub Annual Edmund Burke Lecture 2019 on 5.11.2019).

"Reduce number of churches to save planet-eco-theologian" (Irish Catholic, 25.7.2019).

"World's first 'two-womb' baby is born" (Irish Examiner, 5.12.2019)

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## idealistic, generous and selfless—

"Dear Editor, In your issue (Irish Catholic, 1/8/2019) John McGuirk states "that in the days when the Church was the pre-eminent cultural power in the land, it attracted to the priesthood and to the religious life many of those who sought power and influence for themselves".

As one who was around at that time, I never witnessed such an attitude in those pursuing vocations to the priesthood or the religious life.

Then as now they were remarkably idealistic, generous and selfless men and women, especially those who volunteered for the foreign missions.

Fr Anthony Gaughan, Blackrock, Dublin.

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☞ To page 19, column 1

## Commemorating the RIC?

The implications of the 'Treaty' rumble on.

The Government decided to have an official commemoration of the part played by the Royal Irish Constabulary in the achievement of the independence that was gained by the establishment of the Free State in 1922. This was entirely in accordance with the official character of the Free State.

The official position in this matter is the British position. The Free State was formed under British authority and British law. And the status of the Free State in British law was that it was a successor administration of the British administration—accepting responsibility for what Britain had done in the course of trying to prevent its establishment. And one of the things Britain had done was commit the RIC to the suppression of the Republican Government established on the basis of a free election in 1919.

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and Justice Minister Charles Flanagan were being consistently Free Statist when they included the RIC in the Centenary

Commemorations. But the populace rebelled. And the Lord Mayor of Cork said there was no way he would celebrate the murder by the RIC of his predecessor, Lord Mayor McCurtain. So the RIC has been taken off the commemoration agenda.

Ruth Dudley Edwards appeared on Radio Ulster to defend the RIC. Her view seemed to be that the RIC was a body operated by the State of the time and was therefore legitimate, while those it acted against had no State legitimacy. The fact that the RIC acted for a State which had lost its electoral base in Ireland against a Government elected in Ireland seemed to be beyond her power to grasp.

She also argued that the word "*commemorate*" meant "*recognise a historical fact*", and carried no connotation of sympathy or approval, but, quite apart from that being a piece of nonsense, her heart wasn't in it.

The historical fact of the RIC is well remembered—all too well remembered, as the Government was quickly made to understand.

But weren't they *Irish* at any rate?

The revisionist movement has fostered a hazy notion that the RIC was a police force in the Irish region of the British state, organised in the same way as the English police. However, it was not a County Constabulary drawn from the community which it policed. It was an armed State police force, centrally-controlled, and discouraged from forming local ties. It was conducted independently of Local Government. The Home Rule Party, even when recognised as an Irish Government-in-waiting, had no part in the running of it. It was the instrument of a State which had lost all representative political connection with three-quarters of Ireland half a century before the War of Independence. And it was nurtured as a kind of caste.

The decision of the Taoiseach to honour the part played by the RIC in Irish history was also defended on Radio Ulster by Eamon Phoenix, who should have known better—or at least should have known differently.

The Royal Ulster Constabulary was not the part of the RIC left in the Six Counties when the Twenty-Six were let go. It was not an instrument of the State directed by the Government of the state, but a local, community-based police force run by the local authority.

It was a community police force of the Protestant community and its purpose was to hold the Catholic community in check. And that was very much a change in the wrong direction. A devolved Northern Ireland, excluded from British politics, but with its own police force, was about the worst arrangement imaginable.

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The voice of traditional Sinn Féin was heard in that Radio Ulster programme in the form of Peadar Kirby, who was pushed out from Mary Lou's Sinn Féin because he was traditional. He is now Independent TD for Louth and has formed a new party, Aontú. He has a well thought-out understanding of Irish affairs in their historical context, is competent in discussion, and is free of fashionable jargon. A party calling itself Sinn Féin that thinks it is better off without him is very foolish. But that is a symptom of the dilemma of Southern Sinn Féin which profited from having the name of the war party in the North but is without the experience of having been in the war.

## Vox Pat continued

### Penal Laws Once More!

"The Irish have gone from being craven before the Church to utterly dismissive of it and its influence on society. Either position is irrational. The Irish tipped the cap to the Church at every turn and now believe that it has no role in the world.

"This shift might be understandable, given the Church's past excesses. But, to anybody who understands the role of religion in society, the last state is as irrational as the first.

"The penal laws may well be on the way back; but this time they will be enforced by a government of our own. This is not as far-fetched as it may seem"

(Irish Examiner, 2.2.2018 (Fr.) D. O'Brien, MSC, Co Cork).

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### MAGIC!

"MIRACLES are not caused by a saint but because a saint asks God to use His power.

"Many people, even Christians, mock belief in miracles but, as Newman said, to anyone who can accept the most stupendous of all miracles—the Incarnation and Resurrection—lesser, almost minor miracles are easy to believe in.

"St. John Newman, pray for us." (Jacob Rees-Mogg is Leader of the British House of Commons, a prominent Roman Catholic and author of *The Victorians*.) (Sunday Express, 13.10.2019).

Few politicians have a greater right to believe in miracles than Rees-Mogg?

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SPRING MUSIC CHOICE OF 2020—  
HYMN OF THE CHERUBIM  
(Tchaikovsky). USSR Ministry of Culture  
Chamber Choir.

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## The Casement Controversy

Concerning the *Black Diaries*

The book, *Anatomy of Lie—Decoding Casement* by Paul R. Hyde published last year, creates a new paradigm for assessing the infamous case of the alleged *Black Diaries* of Roger Casement; it establishes the case that there is no verifiable evidence that these diaries existed in 1916 before Casement's execution.

Hyde makes a convincing case and the book is essential reading for anyone interested in the issue. For what it's worth I would like to add a few points connected with the Trial that confirms his thesis.

I looked at the Prosecution File at the British National Archives: it is a large six-volume file (TNA DPP 1/46). Prepared for the DPP, it naturally included anything and everything available to help the case against Casement.

This file included, *inter alia*, the first appearance of the police typescripts, 24 carbon copy pages describing homosexual activity by Casement, submitted to the DPP on the 5th May 1916 with a covering note by Inspector Parker of the Metropolitan Police (MEPO) that explained:

"With reference to the Commissioner directions: I beg to report that on the 25th ultimo Mr. Germain of 50 Ebury Street, S.W. brought to this office a number of articles, including some diaries, which he stated were the property of Sir Roger Casement who had left them in his charge. A careful examination has been made of the diaries and a ledger, and extracts have been made of entries evidently written by Sir Roger Casement of his sexual habits with male persons, both in England and abroad. Six copies attached."

There are no diaries, or diary, or photographs of these alleged diaries, or even a page of a diary or a ledger included with the typescripts in the file.

Consider the scenario here: allegedly the most potent documents of all the documents possessed by the police were not presented, photographed or *asked for* by the DPP. Even if the DPP had no interest in the typescripts of the alleged sexual behaviour of Casement, why was he not curious about the rest of the content of the diaries? or in the

ledger which might well have included very relevant evidence relating to the charge of High Treason? In fact, it is almost certain that these *would* contain invaluable evidence for the prosecution. But the DPP was not interested! Apparently there were no curious individuals in the DPP office—whose very job was to check the validity of police evidence presented to it. And this was evidence for the most high profile case of the time for the gravest charge in English law—High Treason—committed by a Knight of the Realm.

Surely in such a case some substantive corroboration would be needed to back up any such evidence as the typescript of a diary. Nothing could be left to the chance of a challenge to its authenticity if the typescripts alone were ever used. Yet the police do not provide all the evidence they claim to have to avert such a possibility!

By contrast, the diligent RIC in Tralee, to help the prosecution had produced evidence of everything they had found in connection with Casement's landing and arrest—right down to the wrapping paper of a sausage, which became Exhibit Number 15 for the Prosecution.

But the infamous Diaries that the Metropolitan claimed to have in their possession did not merit the consideration accorded a sausage wrapping!

This was the moment of truth for the alleged Casement diaries. The Metropolitan Police and the DPP prepared very thoroughly to *'throw the book'* at Casement—but not the diary. How odd it may seem. Surely it would have been easier for the police to simply produce, or to photograph, the alleged diary/ies for the prosecution file rather than go the trouble of typing out some entries from the alleged diaries?

I would submit that there is no chicken and egg mystery here about the *'diaries'* and the police typescripts—the latter came first and the *'diaries'* were hatched later!

I think it must be blindingly obvious to anybody that the diaries did not exist at the time. And the DPP knew they did not exist, which is why they were not asked for. Is there any other possible explanation? It is a binary choice—they

did or they did not exist—and a version of 'Schrödinger's cat' will not suffice. The state of that proverbial cat is very analogous to the way the existence/non-existence of the *Black Diaries* has been treated by the British Government and the true believers down the years.

Of course, we must remember this was all happening within the highly secretive and confidential world of the upper echelons of British Intelligence and legal world where everything is shared among friends and all clearly knew the real situation and indeed what to ask for and not to ask for. A ruling class doing what comes naturally.

Consider another scenario; I estimate that there are 460 files held at the British National Archives at Kew relating to Casement. It has been estimated that the main authors have spent the following number of years on the Casement case:

McColl: 1953—1971 = 18 years.

Inglis: 1953—1993 = 40 years.

Reid: 1971—1991 = 20 years.

Sawyer: 1975—2019 = 44 years. O'

Siócháin: 1995—2019 = 24 years.

Dudgeon: 1995—2019 = 24 years.

Do the sums and also allow for numerous others, all diligent and well-resourced, who were involved and we are into at least two centuries worth of research! And, as far as I know, none have produced actual evidence of what was actually shown in 1916, apart from police typescripts. Claims made for such evidence is not the same as the actual evidence. Claims made, it should be remembered, by people who were set on destroying Casement in every sense. If such evidence can be found, there is a great *Eureka* moment awaiting the finder. It would be a wonderful experience. It took some serious effort to ensure that all that was *shown*, not *given*, to people in 1916, apart from some typescripts, have disappeared. This did not happen by accident.

Of course, some people were suspicious and did query what they were shown; a top US legal eagle, John Quinn, and a reputable journalist with the Associated Press, Ben Allen. These were very urbane men of the world and not easily fooled. Ben Allen demanded the diaries, so he could check them with Casement himself and was denied them. Quinn wanted to take them to check the handwriting and the context. He was denied them. And both were neutralised.

British Intelligence had plenty of 'what it says on the tin'—*intelligence*—

to ensure that this happened and thereby covered its tracks.

PS. Hyde does another useful service in pointing out the deliberate misleading and ambiguity in the use of the word *diary* and/or *diaries* by Casement biographers and commentators when referring to the police typescripts and alleged manuscripts. This was a great way of confusing issues. The police typescripts were not *diaries*. A classic example of this occurred when the British Government after 40 years was eventually forced to 'come clean' on what it had in its possession. The Cabinet decided at a meeting on 17th March 1959 to have restricted availability of the documents

at the PRO. The Home Secretary, R. A. Butler, presented a background Memorandum on the issue, drafted by the PRO. That draft, *inter alia*, explained that the Ambassador in the US "was given photographs of two passages from the typescripts". In the memorandum itself that was deleted and replaced by "The ambassador was given photographs of two passages." (TNA CAB 129/97/3).

Why did the Home Secretary make this change that was clearly and deliberately misleading?

The Memorandum was recorded as being "*Removed and destroyed on 5/10/93*" in file HO 144/23481. All curious—to say the least!

est in their community. The daily religious devoutness clashes with making a living. The phone and Internet helps to make some sort of a living.

Liberal/progressive Jews work on Saturdays if they have to and keep Christmas, if they want to: usually they do.

Interesting sight in the local Pound Shop in London, with Muslim women in Muslim dress buying Christmas decorations. It seems their children at school are demanding to have Christmas like the rest of the kids, but still remain Muslim. Women are much more tolerant in these circumstances.

Two of my sisters converted to being *born again* as Protestants. They had been devout Catholics and of course had suffered sectarianism while looking for jobs as shorthand typist after having being on a two-year course at a secretarial college, a great financial burden for my father who was forced to work overtime in the shipyard to pay the bills.

## Wilson John Haire

### Converts? Some Reminiscences

In Northern Ireland conversion is seen as trying to fool people. Once a Catholic always a Catholic they say. Which is about right if you look on Catholicism as a nationality in NI. There is ranting about the evilness of Catholicism more than true Protestants, despite experiencing sectarianism in their lives.

What did Mao say?:

*"He who rides a tiger is afraid to get off."*

You get odd cases of Protestants attending Mass without ever converting. As a kid I remember a man and wife who did this. The local Protestants called them 'honest' because they were Protestant at heart and didn't try to fool anyone.

My aunt's husband, a sergeant in the RUC, converted to Catholicism, or there would be no marriage. She was blond and beautiful so I could understand he did it for unquenchable love. But we still saw him as a wolf in sheep's clothing. By the cut of him you could see he wasn't a Catholic.

My father knew a man in Belfast who converted to Judaism. It was seen as him having cargo-cult aspirations: that is, he'd be rich in no time, under the odd notion that Jews helped each other to be rich when the truth was they competed fiercely with one another. The man had been an old Testament Christian and just

thought he would do the final journey. But he made the mistake of preaching Judaism in the shipyard, as missionary Protestants usually did there on Protestantism. That caused him to be taunted continually about not being rich, and still working as a pipe-lager (using damp malleable asbestos). In the end he contracted the disease that comes from asbestos fibres breathed into the lungs.

Years later, near death, he was awarded thousands of pounds. Now he was a proper Jew according to his workmates.

I suppose that would be thought of as anti-Semitism today but in truth it was just myths, there were no threats against Jews, no one was ever going to attack this small Belfast community. It was a sort of admiration and envy and parochial ignorance.

During the 28-war situation I noticed Jewish women in Belfast wearing the Star-of-David around their necks, as way of showing they weren't part of the situation, I would think. Safer than wearing rosary beads?

Orthodoxy don't usually do conversions. If they do, then it is because of extraordinary circumstances. The last controversy created in Orthodox circles was on account of letting an Irish business man into their midst, who subsequently offered £1 million to attract someone's Orthodox wife.

Orthodox Jews are usually the poor-

One of my sisters had over 100 letters, turning her down on the grounds of not belonging to the right religion. It was quite a blatant time for such comments under a Unionist government.

One humiliation suffered by the other sister was in a job interview in which the interviewer, when asking her religion and saying what persuasion she was, would lift her handbag and walk to the door with it.

Then the sisters became members of The Church of God, a Protestant sect. My mother a Catholic was horrified and shocked. They had already left home so she couldn't admonish them face to face.

My father a Presbyterian was shocked and also apprehensive at maybe being accused of influencing them. A psychiatrist was called in and gave his verdict: Both sisters had had a unique successful rebellion against both parents as teenagers.

My mother's opinion was that they were rewarding my father by taking up his faith for the financial sacrifice he had made in turning them into shorthand typists and giving them a chance in life. And of course they were never out of a job as Protestants.

My other two sisters remained Catholics, hadn't had the opportunity of secretarial college and ended up as unskilled labour in factories, suffering redundancy from time to time.

Both convert sisters married Protestants who were extremely sectarian.

Eventually through the years they were all talking to one another again. The two sisters had toned down and were now Methodists. They eventually had a daughter each, who as teenagers joined Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church. Then a strange thing happened,

The daughters both got Catholic boyfriends whom they married. Their sectarian fathers attended their marriages in a Catholic church. I was there as well. The general feeling was the daughters had detected their mothers were still Catholic under their Protestant fronts and decided to make some gesture towards their mothers. But both remain Protestants.

## NAMED AND BLAMED

If we take two national entities  
living side by side  
in what is a deliberately-made  
dysfunctional enclave as part  
of the UK,  
taking Northern Ireland as a guide,  
then that could convey  
being named and blamed  
as mixed parents  
hand out names to the newborn  
so as a son will not be lamed  
when there is a job  
and his name is not foreign.  
So it is with me,  
named after a Catholic uncle,  
and a Presbyterian father  
of the two forenames one  
is always a carbuncle  
when there are such times  
when domestic grey clouds gather  
and that inner sectarian set-about  
claims him as their own  
that seeds doubt  
in a boy's head and sets the tone  
of what name to answer to,  
and should you support this or that  
political view.  
You are a dog with two names,  
and can only answer to one  
at a time  
but not to both for one can be  
shame  
when two nationalities can't rhyme.

**Wilson John Haire.**  
9 December 2019.

Brendan Clifford

## Ulster Protestants And False Memory

A book about the 1798 Rebellion in Ulster, and how it has been forgotten or falsely remembered, written by an Israeli author (Guy Beiner) and launched in Israel, was reviewed by Angus Mitchell in the academically-sponsored magazine *History Ireland*. Mitchell, as far as I know, has had no particular concern with Ulster Protestant affairs, past or present. He took the book at face value, as demonstrating how the Presbyterian North had attempted to enact an Irish nationalist revolution in 1798, had been defeated by the British Army, had had the Act of Union imposed on it, had accommodated itself to the force which had defeated it, and had set about dissembling its capitulation by devious means of forgetting and falsely remembering.

That is the standard story told by nationalist Ireland ever since O'Connell's rupture with the Northern Dissenters who had supported Catholic Emancipation but opposed his movement to Repeal the Union. It began as vulgar abuse but was adopted as History when nationalist Ireland acquired an academic Establishment.

It is a false story. But it is sacred. Roy Foster took care not to violate it when charging Irish history in general with being a made-up story with which the Irish like to delude themselves. He prudently let it be. (I am assuming that he was enough of a historian to know that it was false.)

Beiner's book is now reviewed in the *Dublin Review Of Books* by Ian McBride, who is Carroll Professor of Irish History at Oxford, in succession to Foster. And I gather that the Carroll Professorship, established on funding by Carroll the builder, has now—under a new funding?—been renamed as the Foster Professorship.

McBride begins with a reminiscence about a discussion with the Minister of "Second Keady" about "the very first minister of our church", William Steel Dickson, who "had been a rebel".

Steel Dickson was very much more than a rebel—and whether he was a rebel remains in question, where he left it. It

depends on what you mean by rebel. He did not "come out" in June 1798. It might be that he did not "come out" only because he was behind bars. But the relevant fact is that he was behind bars and could not come out.

He was held without charge, either because the Government could not get usable evidence against him or because Castlereagh had a sneaking regard for him. And, when the Synod branded him a rebel, he took his stand on the Common Law order of things, that was supposed to apply in Ireland, and obliged the Presbyterian Synod to retract its accusation that he had been a rebel, or provide evidence that he had been. His Presbyterian accuser, the Rev. Robert Black, a theological 'radical' and a figure of some importance in the administration of the State, killed himself by jumping off a bridge in Derry. Dickson lived on as an ordinary clergyman. He published a volume of *Sermons* in 1817 and died in 1824.

Beyond this, Dickson was the outstanding writer produced by Presbyterian Ulster. I published a selection from his writings thirty years ago. "*Second Keady*" took no notice of them. I thought that Anti-Partitionist Ireland, which claimed that Presbyterian Ulster formed part of a common nation with it, might have taken a look at them, if only out of idle curiosity. It would have done a lot of good if it had. Dickson had intellect as well as spirit. But of course it didn't.

And McBride's review of Beiner shows no sign of Dickson's influence. The following passage amounts to a comprehensive rejection of Dickson's approach to public affairs and to the history of them:

"Memory studies have been a lively and productive field for thirty years now, in which cultural historians not only engage with their colleagues in the social sciences and anthropology, but encounter literary critics and psychologists and neuroscientists. Writings on memory illuminate many of our contemporary preoccupations—violence,

trauma, victimhood, reconciliation, colonialism and subalternity, identity politics, changing perceptions of time, globalisation and the apparent erasure of the past associated with postmodernity. 'Memory' appeals to historians no longer engaged in Ranke's pursuit of 'what actually happened' but intrigued by the more millennial question 'how did it feel?' Memory also arrived just as the boundaries that separated professional historiography from myth, amateurism and fiction were being challenged, as it was discovered that historians too were prisoners of language, cultural frameworks and narrative devices.

"...We now take it for granted that a memory is not a mental reproduction of a past event. Nor is it like one of those ancient computer files stored in your laptop that could be re-opened someday if only you could find the right settings" etc. etc.

A computer file, constructed in the past, to which the key has been lost, exists in the present, and will exist in the future if it is not smashed up. If the key to it is found in the future it can be read, provided the language in which it is written is still known and the circumstances in which life is lived have not changed utterly. But a past event does not exist in the present, according to the common understanding of things in the present. (It is perhaps an implication of certain forms of theology and of advanced mathematics that time is an illusion and that what we call the past and the future are always present in it, but that notion is incompatible with the actual living of life in the circumstances of globalist capitalism.)

I have never come across a historian who claimed that he was "*reproducing*" a past event, and that his book was that event. I suppose it would be possible for solipsists, who hold that the world has no existence outside their heads, to write such a book, but I have never come across one.

Ranke was a careful historian of the sequence of events through which Brandenburg developed into the Prussian State of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. He made no claim to have "*reproduced*" that development. He described the politics of it insofar as he could discover them by investigating various sources of information. He did not operate with any theory of history. He just tried to figure out what had happened by investigating the detail of it with a sense of reality based on experience.

(He was also of the opinion that a historian needed to be old, and to have had some experience out in the world. I suppose that is sufficient reason why present-day historians whose entire life has usually been spent in libraries or archives, and who tend to discount experience as an irrelevant distraction, should discard him.)

If contemporary historians are no longer concerned with objective events and structures, and give priority to feelings connected with myths and fictions, then they are not historians. But there is nothing new in that. It was just the same fifty years ago.

Prussia was very much a creation of politics—much more so than other German states were. It had little in the way of traditional existence. It was brought into being by means of the statecraft of a ruling family from a far distant region of Germany, acting on reclaimed land. And that presumably is why, when the Germany of a hundred petty kingdoms ceased to be viable, Germany became a national state through the influence of the Prussian State.

Northern Ireland too was an entirely political construction. It had absolutely no traditional existence. The 17<sup>th</sup> century Plantation and migrations had brought about the Protestant colony that took root and developed over the centuries into a rounded society, fundamentally different in kind from the Anglican colony that was set up to rule Ireland in the 1690s and made of a mess of it.

"*Ulster*" was not part of the glorious Protestant Ascendancy. It supported Grattan's project of developing the Ascendancy into a substantial West British nation by bringing Catholics and Presbyterians into the body politic. When the Ascendancy refused to undertake that project, and provoked the Catholics and Presbyterians into rebellion, and was then itself abolished by Whitehall, 'Ulster' settled down as merely British within the politics of the Union Parliament.

When the Catholics formed themselves into a political national movement and gained a Home Rule Bill, 'Ulster' demanded exclusion from it. It did not create the political entity of Northern Ireland in opposition to Home Rule. It had no ambition to form its own semblance of a state. And Partition did not require it to become a semblance of a

state. When Six County government was proposed in the 1920 Bill, the Unionist Party opposed it. But Whitehall insisted that it must either conduct its own little sub-government under the Home Rule Bill, and keep down a Nationalist minority half the size of itself, or else come under Dublin rule.

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So the concern of historian has moved on from asking "*what actually happened*" to the "*more millennial question of 'how did it feel'...*" They are no longer preoccupied with the governing facts of a situation, by which feelings were determined. Their interest lies in the feelings, detached from the political and social circumstances of the situation in which those feelings occur. The feelings then become things-in-themselves. They are valid because they are felt. And, as feelings, they are more at ease with myth and fiction than with political history.

It is likely that great strength of feeling, if it reflects on itself, will tend to imagine a history that heightens it rather than discovers historical circumstances that detract from it.

Professor Foster, who was flown to Israel for the launch of Beiner's book there, has made a distinguished academic career by criticising Irish history for being based on feelings and not on facts. In particular he accused A.M. Sullivan of spinning a history of Ireland out of myths and fictions. He did not actually scrutinise Sullivan's *Story Of Ireland* and show how it deviated from factual truth and spun a fanciful sense of Destiny which has misled Irish historians and politicians ever since. He condemned it in general terms, in his *Inaugural Lecture* at Oxford, for romancing but supplied no evidence at all that it was what Sullivan did.

But the implication of his condemnation was that Sullivan misrepresented the actual course of Irish history, which was there to be written accurately. He did not himself write the true history, but neither has he suggested that there can be such a thing as true history (i.e., an account of 'what actually happened').

If really modern historians have rejected the distinction between 'what really happened' and myths and fictions which express feelings, that must mean that the terms of Foster's condemnation of Sullivan make Sullivan a really modern historian!

Foster praises Beiner's book, which certainly does many of the things he ac-

cused Sullivan of doing. How so? Just a matter of different feelings, I suppose!

But this thing of the priority of feelings is not new.

From about 1968 to 1971 there was a generation of students at the Queen's University in Belfast—the next generation of academia—which was involved in the People's Democracy movement. It was heavily influenced by the English *New Left*, which had very advanced notions of history, had discarded the doctrinaire 'Stalinist' (Rankean?) notions of the Communist Party, was immensely powerful in the Universities and in publishing, and was the new bourgeois intelligentsia.

The People's Democracy and the New Left understood that in Irish affairs the Border was no longer of any consequence and they set out to stir up the situation by radical reformism which would open the way to revolution. The strategy was explained to me by one of the operatives of the *New Left Review*. I could not grasp what that revolution would be. The explanation was too complex for my simple, Rankean, mind to retain. Outside the hothouse of the University I could only see Unionists and Nationalists in routine deadlock, each comprehensively representing its community, with no common political ground between them under the Northern Ireland system, in which nothing else could be done.

The PD/New Left agitation contributed largely to the "*Explosion In Ulster*" in August 1969. What came of it was an intensification of the conflict of the two peoples, with the revolutionaries gravitating towards militant anti-Partitionism under the guidance of the only revolutionary force in being: a group that had been expelled from the IRA by a Marxist leadership that had taken it over and which considered that military struggle against Partition was obsolete.

The expelled group held that only by military struggle could anything be done. This group formed itself into the Provisional IRA, when reform agitation led to the pogrom of August 1969 and the abstract revolutionaries of the New Left ideology began to flock towards it. Their complex "*intellectual formation*", which had failed to establish a distinctive practical purpose for itself, melted down and was re-cast as Anti-Partitionism—the thing that it had so recently declared to be obsolete, apart from being a mere bogey in the ante-deluvian Unionist mind.

Having refused to take any part in bringing about the "*Explosion*", and seeing that what it energised was what actually there (i.e., the conflict of the two peoples), I took no part in shaping the situation towards war. When the war began I began a weekly publication against it in West Belfast, putting the case in detail about why it could not possibly succeed in ending Partition. The response of the Leftist intellectuals, who overnight had become militant anti-Partitionists, was an impatient dismissal of what might be called the Rankean approach of looking at things as they actually were. "*Don't think! Feel!!*" was how it was put to me at one moment.

It is interesting that the discounting of "*things as they actually are*" and the transfer of thought to the realm of feeling (which generated the energy for launching a war fifty years ago) should now become the latest fashion in academic history writing.

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Beiner's story about Ulster Protestant false memory is actually a very old story. It was the standard nationalist story half-a-century ago, when I set about understanding Northern Ireland. The Ulster Unionists—the Ulster Protestants—were hated and despised for having sold their Irish nationalist heritage for a mess of potage, and for having become religious bigots in defence of the privileges their betrayal had gained them.

They had sold out to the Crown for the sake of the half-crown: that was how it was often put. (The half-crown was an item of coinage that was abolished with decimalisation.) That was despicable, of course. But at the same time it gave ground for hope that Partition could be ended if there was one strong push against it, because the Unionists must still have a strain of Irish nationalism lurking within them. They must still be to some extent what they were so forcibly in 1798.

The soul is not an easy thing to sell—to alienate. It will still be there after it is sold, doing all that is necessary to preserve the bribes it got, but never in essence becoming something else. It was going through the motions of being British but its distinctiveness was there in plain sight for all to see. While it supported the Union, it did not take part in Union politics. All that was needed was to give it a reason to let its nationalist Irishness come to the fore.

Something like that was the view of the matter, expressed in a jumble of notions, held by members of the Dail

parties with whom I discussed it, and by what might be called semi-Constitutional nationalists in the North.

I could find no grounds for the view that there was a substratum of common nationality between the Unionist body and the Nationalist body and therefore I regarded the constitutional nationalist view as a kind of wilful self-deception. I suggested that Dublin should recognise Ulster Unionism as the expression of a different nationality and on that basis try to establish a means of communication with it. This was rejected immediately by Fianna Fail Taoiseach Jack Lynch. He reasserted the view that the whole of Ireland constituted a nation and that the ending of the Partition of the nation was the precondition of a peaceful settlement of the conflict that had broken out. That was in the Autumn of 1969. In 1970 he condemned the use of force to end Partition, while making no attempt to appeal to the sentiment of common nationality which he claimed existed in the Unionist community, and while continuing to assert the *de jure* sovereignty of the Irish State over the North.

The Provisional Republican movement, insofar as I had any contact with it, did not believe that there was a sentiment of common nationality underlying the Nationalist/Unionist division which could be appealed to. They were one-nationist in the different sense of holding that the Nationalist majority on the island had sovereign rights on the island and that the national character of the Unionist minority was not relevant to the issue. And that was the view that proved to be politically functional.

But the notion that there was a substratum of common nationality, and that it was demonstrated by Presbyterian action in 1798, had some influence on the course of events after August 1969. And it appears that academia has now been inspired to catch up with what was widely discussed within the populace in 1969-70, and give convoluted expression to the "*false consciousness*" explanation of Unionism.

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Professor Ian McBride's comment on Beiner begins thus:

"I can't remember what age I was when the Rev. Lindsay of Second Keady—the Presbyterian congregation to which my family belonged—remarked that the very first minister of our church had been a rebel. This was the Rev. William Steel Dickson, whose portrait still hung in the session

room. But I am certain that 'rebel' was the word used. In retrospect it strikes me as a revealing choice because, in the highly sectarianised environment of that time and place, it was both a synonym for 'republican' and a common term of abuse for Catholics. The assumption was that political and religious allegiances coincided neatly, and always had done."

McBride does not say what the choice of the word "*rebel*" revealed in its use by the Rev. Lindsay in the 1970s—I guess that it was in the 70s.

The fact of a "*highly sectarianised environment*" gives no indication of the date. Ireland was officially sectarianised around 1691 by the Irish/Anglican Parliament established on the base of the Williamite conquest. The structure of sectarianism diminished in later centuries but it continued in some degree into the 20<sup>th</sup> century—in the arrangements of Trinity College, for example—and it was revived in force in 1921 when the Westminster Parliament, instead of retaining the Six Counties within the structures and political institutions of the UK state, hived them off politically into a form of devolved government that could only function through communal politics.

McBride continues:

"In fact, more than sixty Presbyterian clergymen and clerical trainees were 'republican activists' during the years of radical mobilisation and reaction and terror that led to the fragmented risings of 1798. Many were imprisoned, half a dozen were exiled to the United States and three were hanged. The execution of the popular minister and radical writer James Porter, outside his own meeting house in Greyabbey, was particularly resented. But this information seemed impossibly remote to me. It had no practical application to the casual adolescent violence of a town in Co. Armagh, nor to the half-submerged infrastructure of insurgency and counter-insurgency that conducted the specialised violence of the grown-ups. What really mattered was communal solidarity."

If this says that there was no causal connection between the events of 1798 in eastern Ulster and the War of 1970-1998, then it is spot on. And, if it says that political life under the Northern Ireland system took the form of communal solidarity, then it is spot on again. The Northern Ireland system allowed for nothing else. But it probably does not mean the latter because he describes the communal solidarity as being maintained by a "*rigid system of mental policing*",

and refers to a book in which it was "*satirised*".

There was no practical possibility of "*normal politics*" (i.e. British politics) in the Northern Irish region of the British state because the political system by which the state was governed excluded Northern Ireland from its sphere of operations, and because all the major matters of state affecting ordinary life in Northern Ireland were dealt with by the British parties as Government and Opposition at Westminster, where the Ulster Unionists and Nationalists were mere spectators, and at Whitehall, where they had no presence at all.

The Tory Party kept up a flimsy pretence of still being the Unionist Party that it was from the 1890s to 1914, and the Ulster Unionists usually voted with the Tory Party at Westminster, but were not part of it. The Labour Party kept up a pretence of being Anti-Partitionist but it did not differ at all from the Tories when anything more than rhetoric was at issue.

The Ulster Unionists voted with the Tories against the Labour welfare reforms in the 1945 state Parliament but, when the reforms were enacted, it re-enacted them formally at Stormont, with Whitehall funding. The Stormont Legislature in such waters was in substance a photocopy machine. That was the Ulster Unionist political achievement.

Northern Ireland was a region of the British state, excluded from British politics, which had to operate a devolved government which it had not wanted, and there had to be a Unionist majority at every devolved election in order to keep the Six Counties within the British state. That was the condition of public life in which McBride grew up. It was the condition which led to war in 1970. It was a condition of things insisted upon by the Tory/Labour consensus in Britain. It bears not the slightest resemblance to the 1798 situation..

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As to Steel Dickson and rebellion: he was very much more than a rebel, if, indeed, he was a rebel. He was neither executed nor exiled. He was only imprisoned without charge. While he was in prison, the Presbyterian Synod, under the guidance of the Rev. Dr. Black, declared him to be a rebel and punished him. After he was released without charge he challenged the Synod to produce evidence that he was a rebel, or else withdraw its accusation.

Dr. Black himself had been a very radical radical indeed. He had preached to a Volunteer Convention in military uniform, wearing a sword, with the Bible resting on a drum—that was before he went into the service of the administration when it criminalised the reform movement.

His life was made a misery by Steel Dickson after his release from prison and, when the Synod decided to amend the minute describing Steel Dickson as a rebel, Dr. Black killed himself by jumping off the bridge in Derry.

During the dispute, in order to help the Synod get things straight, Dickson published a *Narrative* of his *Confinement and Exile*, in which he gave a detailed account of his movements in late May and early June 1798. According to that account, he was fully occupied with things that had nothing to do with sending an army into battle. And he comments:

"Yet I may have been a General, for ought that appears to the contrary; and I may not have been a General, though people said I was. But be that as it was, General, or no General, it appears... that my doom was pre-determined, though contrary to expectation, it did not prove fatal. Perhaps, however, as Mr. Pollock said afterwards "had I been left to myself two days longer, it might have been otherwise..." (The *Narrative* was published in Dublin in 1812. It has never been reprinted since then, except for a substantial extract from it which I included in a selection of Dickson's writings published by Athol Books almost thirty years ago, where this comment will be found on page 32).

It was said that he was the replacement General for Co. Down and was due to take over when he was arrested on 5th June, two days before the insurrection began in Antrim and Down.

It might be that, in the days before his arrest, he was going about military business under carefully arranged cover of other business. But that was a matter for the Government that arrested him to prove. And, when the Government failed to bring evidence against him and released him without charge, it was a matter for the Presbyterian Synod to prove, or else withdraw the allegation. He did not see it as his business, under the rule of the common law, either to confirm or deny that he was the appointed rebel General for Co. Down.

And he was vague about whether he

had even been a member of a United Irish Society. He remembered that he had joined a Society early on, when it was legal, but could not recall ever attending meetings. This is entirely credible. The impression I got from the *Northern Star* was that the United Irish Societies in the North did not generate what is called the *United Irish movement* but were generated by it. And, in any case, Dickson had been preaching what became the United Irish position long before any Society was formed.

The Society were much more important in the South (the Pale!), which was Anglican. And, when the insurrection was defeated, the Southern leaders made a compact with the Government to describe the United Irish set-up in return for amnesty so that matters could be laid to rest. Dickson refused to engage in any negotiations, and he refused an offer to be allowed to emigrate. He stood his ground, demanded a trial, and was released.

But he was held for more than three years. And he was one of the 20 State Prisoners transferred to Fort George in Scotland, where they were held in very comfortable circumstances. He describes how the Scots looking after them were astonished by the appearance and conduct of what they were told were the leaders of a Popish Rebellion.

Dickson made a survey of his colleagues. He found that ten of them were Anglicans, six were Presbyterians, and only four were Papists, while Anglicans made up less than one-seventh of the population of Ireland, and the Papists made up two-thirds and the Presbyterians a little more than a fifth. The Scots found this hard to believe when he told them, but the prisoners confirmed that such was the case.

And that is how it should have been. The ruling body in Ireland under the Williamite settlement of 1791 was Anglican. The Kingdom of Ireland from 1691 to 1800 was a Protestant Kingdom. Only Protestants (i.e. Anglicans) could sit in its Parliament. The Catholic two-thirds of the population was severely oppressed by it. The Dissenting Protestant fifth of the population was excluded from the Parliament and the privileges that went with it but was otherwise left to its own devices, particularly in Ulster where the main Dissenting body lay.

The Irish Protestant Parliament had

been subordinate to the British Protestant Parliament until the 1780s, and the British Parliament had vetoed many measures that it wanted to undertake. This irritated the Protestant colony in Ireland and its irritation was expressed in protest which was called *Patriotism*. The Irish Parliament became a *Patriot Parliament*. It wanted free control of the country in which it had been established as the ruling body. Its moment came with the revolt of the English colonies in America. Protestant Ireland saw that England's difficulty was its opportunity. It organised the Volunteer movement to defend Ireland from the French allies of the Americans while the English Army was preoccupied with the American rebellion. (John Redmond tried a similar tactic in 1914, not understanding that this kind of manoeuvre only worked within the "*kith and kin*" network.)

The Irish Parliament became an independent Legislature in 1782. Under its aegis Ireland became a "*Protestant Nation*". But there were those within it who saw that the Nation could not maintain itself as an exclusive 12 or 13 per cent of the population. It needed to engage with the excluded 85 per cent of the population and give them some degree of participation in the system, under Protestant hegemony.

That was Grattan's project. It became the project of the United Irish movement when the Parliament repeatedly rejected Grattan's appeals. The United Irish movement was essentially a movement in support of Grattan's aim to give national substance to the colony under Protestant hegemony.

As Grattan saw it, the vast excluded majority of the population was willing to be hegemonised into the Protestant Nation. The Jacobite inheritance of the native population had been shattered and the growing Catholic middle class, willing and eager to have barriers erected between itself and Rome, readily made the Declarations required of it by Wolfe Tone. And the coherent body of 'Dissenters' in the North prepared itself through Volunteering and the United Irish movement for its place in the Grattanite national development.

But it all depended on the willingness of the Protestant Parliament to construct the Catholics and 'Dissenters' into an actual national substance around itself. And the Protestant Parliament refused to hegemonise its surroundings.

It criminalised Grattan's project when it was expressed in a popular movement outside Parliament.

The Grattan/United Irish project was achievable by the Parliament, and only by the Parliament. Parliament absolutely refused to undertake it, and criminalised it instead. It was a bizarre decision, and it led to the destruction of the Parliament.

The interest that suffered in the political fiasco brought about by the Parliament was the Protestant colonial interest. It was therefore in the nature of the event that Protestants should have constituted the main body of State Prisoners. They were eminent figures in the Protestant colony who were paying the price for having tried to give it a future.

The Catholics had a future because they were two-thirds of the population. They had been willing to be shaped one way, as a hegemonised component in the development of the Protestant colony into a nation-state under the British Crown. When that line of development was closed to them, they developed in another direction on their own ground.

As for the "*Dissenters*" in Wolfe Tone's three-part division, they were not really Dissenters at all in the British sense. They were Presbyterians. Presbyterianism did not originate in dissent within Anglican Protestantism. It had its own distinct and orderly development and structure—hence Milton's jibe: "*New Presbyterian is but old Priest writ large*". In the British Civil Wars it was in conflict with both Anglicanism and Independency. When the English and Scottish Parliaments united, it remained the State Church in Scotland. And the Presbyterian North, being excluded from the official 'Irish University', Trinity College, educated itself in Glasgow.

It seemed to me that Presbyterianism in Ulster, because of its internal structure and its close connections with Scotland, had about it something of the character of a state church, though without a state.

And I thought that, if there had to be Partition, and if the Six Counties had to be excluded from the political life of the British state, and had to conduct a little devolved government of its own, Northern Ireland should have been put in the hands of the Presbyterian Assembly to govern, instead of being obliged to have a Parliament that could never be anything but a provocative mockery of democracy.

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Dickson's *Narrative* was published, in Dublin, in 1812. In 1813 he had a book called *Retractions* published in Belfast. This has to do with the phrasing of the retraction by the Synod of what it had said in its Minutes of 1798 and 1799 about Dickson having been "*implicated in treasonable or seditious practices*". The 1812 Statement says that —

"the Synod did not express any thing more, than that Dr. Dickson... had been confined by Government under suspicion of treason and sedition and that this Synod now attaches no other meaning to that expression, and if that expression has been otherwise understood or applied, the meaning of the Synod has been misconceived."

The 1799 Minutes read:

"It appears, that of the comparatively small numbers who have been implicated in treasonable or seditious practices, two only, one a Minister, the other a Probationer, have been executed; two are still in confinement—some have expressed their sincere contrition..."

The Synod explained in 1813 that, what it meant by the words "*implicated in*" in its 1799 Minutes was "*suspected of*". What we get then in the 1799 Minutes, read in the light of the 1813 explanation, is that many Ministers expressed sincere contrition for having been suspected of treasonable or seditious practices, but only two have been executed for having been suspected, and two suspects are still in custody!

This is very narrow ground on which to make a book, but Dickson does it with skill and style and I found it more interesting than Aristotle's book on logic.

He accuses Dr. Black of being in rebellion against the *Republic of Letters*, and of "*wanton prostitution of words*" whose chastity is necessary to intelligible communication. And at the head of the book he puts a striking motto from the Bible: "*Great men are a Vanity, and mean men are a Lie*".

Professor McBride says that he was undertaking a PhD about Presbyterian radicals in the United Irish movement when he asked the Rev. Lindsay of Second Keady to show him the portrait of Dickson that was kept there, and he asked Lindsay if he knew "*that Steel Dickson had been commander of the United Irish Army in Co. Down*". I have not seen this Thesis so I don't know what evidence McBride discovered that warrants the definite statement that Dickson was the Co. Down Commander. Dick-

son, looking at the matter objectively, said there was no evidence either way. Dr. Black put it to him to say whether he had been Commander or not. He refused on the ground that the Synod had accused him and had punished him as guilty and it was not up to him to present evidence in the matter. Investigation should have come before accusation and punishment. And its "*explanation*" of its use of the words "*implicated in*" was absurd.

By the standards of that chaotic situation, in which the conduct of the administration was the cause of the chaos, Steel Dickson was handled very scrupulously by the Government, possible because a trace of sentimentality survived in the mind of Castlereagh. Dickson had been close to the Stewart family during its rise through the social ranks, and especially to young Robert, whose aristocratic names were Londonderry and Castlereagh. When Londonderry joined Downshire in opposition to the reform of the Ascendancy Parliament into a centre of national development, Dickson turned strongly against that Parliament.

I don't remember that there is in his writings after the Union any hankering after the world of the abolished Parliament.

He did not behave, after his release from prison, like somebody who had escaped his just deserts by the skin of his teeth and should therefore be careful not to offend authority. He continued to support reform in the Catholic interest. The only concentrated political event in which he took part, as far as I recall, was the by-election of 1805, in which Castlereagh had to re-contest his seat because he had been made War Secretary, and lost it.

The Stewarts had betrayed the cause in which he had supported them. But that cause was the reform of the colonial Parliament into an Irish national Parliament—a matter which had been proposed by Grattan within the Colonial Parliament.

It was not a matter of gaining political independence. Independence had been gained by the Volunteers in 1780-82. Allegiance to the Crown was not at issue—not in Ulster anyway. The Irish Parliament was an independent Legislature under the Crown. As Grattan put it: the King governed Ireland "*not through his crown of England, but through his crown of Ireland, conferred on him by*

*the Irish nation*". That was the constitutional position after the supremacy of the English Parliament over the Irish was revoked in 1782. The issue thereafter was one of internal reform under the Irish Parliament.

It was made clear in the *Northern Star* that the movement was not Republican. Discontent was with the small body of Anglican aristocrats which had control of the independent Parliament and prevented it from broadening its reach into the two major populations, Catholic and Presbyterian. Monarchy was not an issue.

Nor was it an issue for Dickson, either before or after the Union. He said in the *Narrative*:

"In regard to a republic, or a democracy, political theorists have presented nothing that could satisfy my mind. The states, so called, whether antient or modern, are sources of information equally unsatisfactory. In no two of them, has the constitution been the same. Their fate is the only thing in which they have been similar. In fact rational republican is, as it appears to me, has never had a fair trial. And, as the executive power, under every form of Government seems to be necessarily entrusted to an individual, while the right of legislation is inherent in, and inseparable from, the people, whether that might be exercised in mass, or by representation, the difference between a limited monarchy and a well constituted republic is rather in name than reality, provided the chief magistrate be elected by the state, and amenable to the laws, under which derives his authority. Whether he be denominated emperor, king, duke, stadtholder, consul or president, is a matter of no importance.

"This last paragraph I have inserted, that my readers may be enabled to form some general idea of my political creed, and the principles on which they are to judge my political conduct. Let me suggest that their judgment may be guided by it, and by it alone" (Quoted from the Athol Books collection, *Scripture Politics*, p14).

Dickson was silent on the subject of the Union, even more silent than he was on the question of whether he was the appointed General for Co. Down. There is ample ground for the former silence in the fact that the Union came as a bolt from the blue into the conflict between the reformers of the Irish Parliament, who had been provoked into insurrection by it, and the rigorous upholders of a narrow Protestant Ascendancy within it.

The situation within which that conflict was generated was abolished with the abolition of the Parliament.

If the Parliament had consolidated itself on its narrow Protestant Ascendancy basis, as was the intention, by the draconian suppression of the reform movement which it had driven into insurrection, and if Presbyterian Ulster had submitted meekly, then the kind of thing discussed by Beiner would be to the point. But what happened was something altogether different. England came on the scene as a *deus ex machina*, suppressed the Insurrection, and immediately proposed abolition of the Parliament, and carried through its proposals in conflict with the Ascendancy.

The matter at issue between the Protestant reform movement and the reactionary Protestant Parliament was swept away with the abolition of the Parliament.

Did Dickson then become a ‘*Unionist*’?

As far as I know he neither advocated a Union of Parliaments before 1798 nor protested against it after 1800. In that he was in tune with the Ulster Presbyterian community.

The term “*Unionist*” does not meaningfully stand alone.

When the first Belfast Election was held in 1832 it was not contested by any candidate calling himself *Unionist*. It had two Tory and two Liberal candidates. All four candidates were liberal reformers, but when the first two to register said they were Liberal Party, the other two had to be Tory. One of the Tories was a very eloquent liberal reformer, Emerson Tennent. That was the way of British politics. The Tory/Liberal division was inherent in it as a Platonic Form. If you were not one of them you must be the other!

The political fact of the Union was taken for granted as the framework of politics in 1832. Belfast was Unionist only in the way that Birmingham was.

The term “*Unionist*” as a politically meaningful description came into general use only after the rise of a strong national movement to take Ireland out of the United Kingdom half a century later. Today *Unionism* is the position of the Protestant community which is excluded from British party-political life but wishes to remain within the British

state in other respects.

Beiner makes this puzzling comment:

“Lord Randolph Churchill, in his address to the Orangemen during a visit to Belfast in February 1886 appealed to loyalist memory and referred to their forefathers in “98 opposing the rebellion”. Even though some of his audience would most probably have had rebel, rather than loyal, ancestry, Churchill’s questionable allusion to memory was not challenged by the conservative public which preferred to go along with the myth that they were all of pure loyalist stock” (p318).

In 1798 the Orange movement was militantly loyal to the Parliament which the British Government undertook to abolish, and it made threatening noises about what it would do if the British Government proceeded with the Union Bill. The United Irish saw the Union as a relief from the Orange Terror that would have held sway if the Irish Parliament had been consolidated instead of being abolished. The focus of Orange loyalty was abolished by the Union. The United Irish preceded the Orangemen in loyalty to the Union. But the Orangemen became Unionists too, and became Tories as the United Irish became Liberals.

Then in 1885-6 the Unionist movement, which included them both, was formed in response to the First Home Rule Bill.

I gathered from the Belfast papers that in 1885 there was tacit agreement between Liberals and Tories in Ulster that the introduction of a Home Rule Bill would put an end to their party division. It was expected to be the Tories who would introduce the Bill. Parnell thought he had an agreement with them, and had urged the Irish in Britain to vote Tory in the 1885 election. But in the event it was the Liberals who did it. The Ulster Unionist alliance therefore affiliated to the Tory Party. If the Tories had brought in the Bill, the Ulster Unionist alliance would have been with the Liberal Party.

(The Tories at the same time formed a union with the Birmingham social-reform Liberals to become the Unionist Party of the state in opposition to the *laissez-faire* capitalism of the Liberals, causing no end of confusion in the minds of some Irish historians in later times.)

What was destroyed by the *Act of Union* was the “*Revolution Parliament*”,

the ruling institution of the exclusive Protestant Ascendancy of the 1688 Revolution. The Ulster Presbyterians lost nothing by it.

They had been willing to be bonded into a general Irish nation if the Anglican Parliament had undertaken to create one. But what it experienced in 1795-98 was a reign of terror directed against it on behalf of Anglican Ascendancy. It experienced the Union as relief—a feeling well founded in things as they really were.

The Catholic experience of the final years of the Parliament was of a very much greater reign of terror. The Union therefore brought to them much greater relief.

They had been willing to be hegemonised into a Protestant national development by the Parliament, but the Parliament couldn’t have them. They were thrown on their own resources in the most shocking way, and within a decade they embarked on a development that would have been impossible under the Parliament.

A uniquely shocking event in the Reign of Terror in Co. Down was the execution of William Orr in 1797. It was the most shocking because it was the first, and because Orr was an upright and industrious Presbyterian, and because it was done under the noses of the Stewards who had become Londonderrys and who might have prevented.

It made the news, even in England. Charles James Fox proposed a toast at a public dinner: “*May the Irish Cabinet soon take the place of William Orr!*”—which it did.

William Drennan was outraged by it into writing his only memorable poem, which includes the couplet:

Hapless country, hapless land,  
Heap of uncementing sand.

That is an apt description of the Irish Protestant Colonial nation established by the Glorious Protestant Revolution: *Heap of uncementing sand*.

(I find I have said nothing about Betsy Gray. And that won’t do. She is a centrepiece of Beiner’s memory relapsing kaleidoscope, and must be returned to.)

## Stephen Richards

Reliquiae Baxteriana  
Part 4

### From Baxter To Boston (2)

The thesis that every organisation eventually starts advocating views antithetical to its founding principles is a seductive one, and is convincing at a more widely generic or cultural level too. The remarkable evolution within certain families whereby, within a few generations, the *Clapham Sect* morphed into the *Bloomsbury Movement* has often been commented upon, the common denominator being, I suppose, a tendency to preach. Even the *Cambridge Apostles* began as a fairly staid and serious bunch of high-minded intellectuals, dedicated to the idea of public service (on which see the interesting discussion by Niall Ferguson, *The Square and the Tower*, Allen Lane, 2017). And, although the New England Transcendentalists seem unlikely successors of Jonathan Edwards, there is a definite line of descent that can be traced.

So, I would argue, the questions as to whether Calvin was a Calvinist (a point disputed by R.T. Kendall in *Calvin and the English Calvinists to 1649*, OUP 1979) or even whether the present Pope is a Catholic aren't wholly frivolous. Richard Baxter would almost certainly have disavowed those in the next generation who described themselves as Baxterians. As we have seen, by the closing decades of the seventeenth century, the specifically Puritan strand within English Protestantism had run out of steam, coincidentally with its marginalisation in public life.

Baxter's abilities and personal qualities may have safeguarded his reputation among conservative evangelicals to this day, but the communal energy and the institutional machinery to correct him when he went astray were simply lacking in the restricted circles he was moving in.

#### The Gospel Train

Where he strayed was in the theological field known as *soteriology*: the study of the salvation-framework revealed by the Scriptures. What exactly is the Christian gospel, the *euangelion*, the Good News? If we suppose that there is a set of factual assertions involved, about a man called Jesus of Nazareth who lived in first-century Palestine, his

teaching, the miracles he performed, his death and indeed his bodily resurrection, then those assertions are (more or less) subject to historical verification. How much information do we have, and what is the reliability of the sources?

Then, if we're convinced either beyond reasonable doubt or on balance of probabilities that the historical accounts are substantially accurate, we can move on to the next stage: what does it all mean? Who or what was or is Jesus Christ? What is the cosmic significance of it all? These are theological questions. The answers given by Christendom down the centuries, in its Eastern wing, its Latin wing, and (within the latter) its Protestant and Catholic wings, have been remarkably consistent as to the identity of Jesus, as God in the flesh, and the salvific power of his death and resurrection. The historic Churches of Christendom, whatever their inner and outer controversies, have all held out the hope that, in the words of the gospel hymn, "*There's a way back to God from the dark paths of sin*".

Yes, but there's the rub. Let's think of the familiar image of the gospel train (well, familiar to me anyway, since I've spent many hours listening to Southern white gospel music). *Look, there's the gospel train a-comin', it's coming down the track, whistle blowing*, and so on, but how do we get on? And, secondly, how do we know that we've got on, and aren't either still standing on the platform, or on another train, a false train as it were, taking us to a different, un hoped-for destination?

These, it must be said, are characteristically, if not exclusively, Protestant preoccupations, because of the Protestant emphasis on the interiority of faith. What must I, subjectively speaking, do to be saved? The classic Reformed answer was predicated on the three Solas: *sola fide*, *sole Christo*, *sola gratia*. But Baxter developed this teaching in a surprising way, opening the door to tendencies he would have deplored.

#### Protestants At War

Much of what comes next is derived from J.I. Packer's masterly 1959 essay,

*The Doctrine of Justification Among the Puritans*, republished 1991 in a collection of his articles and addresses (*Among God's Giants*, Kingsway Press, 1991). Packer's dense yet lucid prose is a marvel to many. He starts off by summarising the respective positions of the parties to the Arminian controversy, which came to a head at the Synod of Dort (Dordrecht) in 1619.

Jacob Hermandzoon (Arminius) and his followers had drawn up a series of Remonstrances for purposes of debate, challenging the teaching of the Dutch Reformed Church, and especially its view of salvation as God's free gift, conveyed to us (to quote John Prine) "*in spite of ourselves*".

"The Arminian alternative", says Packer, "was that the covenant of grace is a new law, offering present pardon on condition of present faith, and full salvation on condition of sustained faith";

and that faith itself was the ground of our acceptance with God, as opposed to the conduit through which we receive God's free gift.

Baxter had an aversion to *Antinomianism*, the teaching that the law has no place in the life of the Christian, which he saw as a sort of logical tendency of free grace teaching. While he was not an Arminian, his thinking led him in that direction. "*What? Shall we just go on sinning so that God's grace may shine all the brighter*", as St. Paul asks rhetorically (*Letter to the Romans*, 6:1). In attempting to steer clear of antinomian Scylla, Baxter ventured very close to Charybdis, faith as a kind of work.

The Five Points of Calvinism as they have become known, as set out in the *Canons of Dordrecht*, emerge therefore as a worked-out riposte to the Arminian challenge to the primacy of grace. They have been understood rightly or wrongly as classical Calvinism, albeit postdating Calvin by sixty years. This refining process represents a tendency within Christendom, going back to the Council of Nicaea of 325 AD. Possibly this is what St. Paul has in mind when he comments puzzlingly in I Corinthians 11:19 that "*there have to be differences among you so that those who have God's approval will be recognized*".

But, even among those who were generally sympathetic, the theological assumptions underpinning the Five Points did come across in a somewhat Procrustean way as a basis for understanding the interaction of God's Holy

Spirit with the souls of men and women. Teachers at the French Protestant seminary in Saumur, near Angers in western France (founded 1593 and shut down by Louis XIV in 1685), promoted a softened-down version of the Five Points, a modification that became known as *Amaryldianism*, after Moise Amyraut, a professor there. This was a well-intentioned attempt to avoid the implications of the Third Point: *Limited Atonement*. Put crudely, the Amaryldian argument was that the death of Jesus is sufficient for all, but efficient only for the elect. The legitimate concern to blunt the sharp edge of the Reformed position did tend to lead back, subconsciously, to the understanding of faith as a voluntary act to please God.

### The Gospel According To Baxter

This was where Baxter's intellectual curiosity and hunger for systematising got the better of him. Here is Packer:

"Baxter's view sprang from natural theology; he thought Bible teaching about God's kingdom and rule should be assimilated to contemporary political ideas, or, as he put it, that theology should follow 'a political method'. God should be thought of as governor and the gospel as part of his legal code. Our salvation requires a double righteousness: Christ's, which led to the enacting of God's new law, and our own, in obeying that new law by genuine faith and repentance. Faith is imputed for righteousness because it is a real obedience to the gospel, which is God's new law. Faith however involves a commitment to keep the moral law, which was God's original code, and every believer, though righteous in terms of the new law, needs pardon every moment for his shortcomings in relation to the old law. Jesus Christ, who procured the new law for mankind by satisfying the prescriptive and penal requirements of the old one, should be thought of as the Head of God's government, enthroned to pardon true believers. Into this 'political' frame of concepts, learned mainly from the Arminian Hugo de Groot (Grotius) Baxter fitted the Amaryldian soteriology."

The emphasis on the 'new law' of course invited the term '*Neonomianism*'.

This is a wonderfully precise summary, but Packer has some harsh things to say about Baxter's thought, such as:

"The 'political' idea of faith as allegiance and commitment loses sight of the dimension of self-despairing trust: faith appears less as the outstretched

hand of a spiritual bankrupt than as the signing-on of a resolute volunteer, a work of some strength and merit."

And, for Packer, Baxter's understanding of the phenomenon of sin is seriously lacking, overlooking as it does the inner spiritual sickness of which outward misdemeanours are simply a symptom.

Packer then rounds off his essay with an impressive flourish:

"Thus Baxter, by the initial rationalism of his 'political method', which forced Scripture into an *a priori* mould, actually sowed the seeds of moralism with regard to sin, Arianism with regard to Christ, legalism with regard to faith and salvation, and liberalism with regard to God. In his own teaching, steeped as it was in the older 'affectionate' Puritan tradition, these seeds lay largely dormant, but later Presbyterianism in both England and Scotland reaped the bitter crop. It is sadly fitting that the Richard Baxter church in Kidderminster today should be—Unitarian. What we see in Baxter is an early stage in the decline, not simply of the doctrine of justification among the Puritans, but of the Puritan insight into the nature of Christianity as a whole".

And so, except in a few pockets and among a few individuals (such as Matthew and Philip Henry), the Puritan movement degenerated into a sort of pious mercantile Whiggery, a religion of good works and self-realisation. That dissenting tradition found novelistic expression in the likes of Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot, whose *Middlemarch* was recently serialised again, I think by the BBC. This unpromising plant was to flower exotically under the influence of German liberal theology, which in England found its apogee in the preaching of *Stopford Augustus Brooke*, 1832-1916, native of Donegal and graduate of Trinity College, Dublin. I can't resist this from Brooke (*God and Christ*), as quoted by William Oddie in *Chesterton and the Romance of Orthodoxy* (OUP 2008):

"Get rid of creeds. Be sure that in making Christianity simple, in freeing it from dogmas and legends and miracles, in restoring it to its pure and clear spirituality, you will... enable it to unite itself easily to all the great movements of humanity... The world is weary of barren disputes about religion—it seeks a life; it is weary of complex theories—it desires an ideal—it is weary of creeds—it wants to come before its God like a little child. And that is the secret of Christ."

*Mais bien sur*, as Hercule Poirot might say.

Back to the eighteenth century, and Baxter had been dead for fifty years before, around 1740, a powerful wind began blowing from a different direction, from Tory England, out of that apparently lifeless Hanoverian Church of England, and among the godless peasantry.

### Meanwhile In Scotland

But in between times there were ructions in the Scottish Church, associated chiefly with Thomas Boston and his friends, collectively and quaintly known as the *Marrow Men*, for reasons that will become apparent.

Following the battles of Killiecrankie and Dunkeld in 1689, the Scottish Church suddenly gained a secure and even a privileged position in national life. A special status for it was built in to the Revolution settlement. John McLeod, in his magisterial 1938 series of lectures, delivered in Philadelphia and gathered together as *Scottish Theology* (republished, Banner of Truth), is careful to lay emphasis on the new shot of vigour which the Church experienced at that time, but he still concedes that this era also saw the re-emergence of a body of smug, careerist ministers.

The "*erratic doctrinal teaching of Richard Baxter in his later years*" is identified as the leaven through which a strain of moralism entered into many pulpits, in many cases opening the door to "*full-blown Moderatism*". Among Scottish evangelicals the term "*Moderate*" became a term of abuse. While linked to a certain degree of coolness towards the "*doctrines of grace*" (i.e. the Five Points), it was also associated with a spirit of complacency and deference towards the civil powers, so that God and Mammon became close neighbours. Bitter disputes would later erupt over the curtailment of the right of congregations to elect ("*call*") their own ministers, as opposed to having them foisted on them by local lairds and heritors.

However, at the end of the seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth, there was no relaxation of doctrinal standards, and the Church was formally Calvinist, with all Ministers and Elders subscribing the 1647 Westminster Confession. The extent of the Church's social power can be gauged in light of the execution of Thomas Aikenhead for atheism in 1697. This has been the subject of what I consider to be a rather disappointing second novel by the Ulster writer Heather Richardson, *Doubting*

Thomas (her first was the much better *Magdeburg*, discussed by me in a previous article in *Church and State*).

It might be fair comment to observe that the Church's institutional and societal strength masked a creeping ossification, a mechanical going through of the motions. But this wasn't to last, because of events in the parish of Auchterarder, Perthshire.

### Marrow Men And Others

I've known about the *Marrow Controversy* nearly all my adult life, but for any glimmers of insight into what was going on I'm indebted to Sinclair Ferguson, a Scottish Presbyterian Minister and scholar who has written one of those books which are often described as "*the fruit of mature reflection*", meaning the author isn't as young as he once was. It's one of the best books I've ever read, certainly high up in my top ten of Christian classics. It's called *The Whole Christ* (Crossway, 2016).

The historical narrative is certainly tangled, because it really starts with *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, published in two parts, 1645 and 1648, the work of Edward Fisher, a barber surgeon of London, and a scholar of Brazenose College, Oxford. Composed in scholastic format, this work is made up of a series of dialogues featuring Neophytus, a new Christian, Evangelista, a pastor, and two others, Nomista and Antinomista, respectively representing legalistic and antinomian understandings of the gospel. Much of it is taken up with the marshalling of authorities, but arranged in such a way as to present a flowing argument. Insofar as it can be summarised in a sentence, it marks a robust attempt to free the doctrines of grace from what the author conceived to be a methodological straitjacket.

On 15th January 1717 Fisher and Baxter came up against each other posthumously in the parish of Auchterarder in Perthshire, with explosive consequences felt over much of Scotland, and the effects of which, I would argue, have reverberated ever since. Auchterarder was a poor community populated by weavers and tenant farmers trying to scrape out a living. But it wasn't wholly insignificant. It lay contiguous to the Gleneagles estate, then owned by the Haldane family. The name Gleneagles therefore wasn't a marketing wheeze dreamed up when the golf course was being designed or when the G8 summit was held there in 2005. Strangely enough, the great James Graham, Earl of

Montrose, had been an elder in the parish in the previous century.

A certain William Craig was appearing before the presbytery as a candidate for the ministry in the parish. He had reached the final stage of his theological examination by its members. On that January night they bowled him a curve ball, asking the question which later came to be known as *The Auchterarder Creed*. The statement put to him for agreement was as follows:

*"Do you agree that it is not sound and orthodox to teach that we must forsake sin in order to our coming to Christ, and instating us in covenant with God."*

Once he unravelled the crabbed syntax of the question, he must have realised that it really demanded the answer yes, which he duly gave, swallowing his not unreasonable misgivings; and he was duly licensed to preach the gospel. But, by the following month, his scruples had worked upon Mr. Craig, and he returned to the next Presbytery meeting to explain that he was retracting his assent. The meeting heard him out and then proceeded to declare his licensing null and void. His appeal against the decision came before the General Assembly of the Church later in the year. The Assembly was aghast at what had been done to the candidate, and the grounds given for doing it. It expressed its "*abhorrence of the foresaid proposition as unsound and most detestable doctrine, as it stands, and was offered by the said Presbytery to the said Mr. William Craig*" in relation to whom it was ordered that his licence be restored. It has to be said that the Creed had an ugly sound.

Present in 1717 at this Assembly, or "*diet*" as he tended to call it, was the 41-year-old Thomas Boston, who had been installed four years earlier as Minister of Ettrick Parish in the Border region. This act of the Assembly prompted Boston to realise that the issue was close to the heart of Fisher's book, which, in 1700, as a young minister in a place called Simprin, round about East Lothian, he had spotted on a parishioner's windowsill and had found to be manna to his hungry soul. He mentioned this to his neighbour at the Assembly, a certain John Drummond. This set off a sequence of events that led to the *Marrow* being republished the following year, 1718. Boston's sympathies were with the Auchterarder Creed, which he deemed, admittedly, to be "*not well worded*".

Boston has been so far introduced by degrees. His big contribution to Puritan

literature was a series of sermons produced under the title *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*. It used to be said that this was one of the three or four indispensable volumes in the home of the pious lowland Scottish cottier, together with *Pilgrim's Progress* and Howie's *Scots Worthies*. Translated into Gaelic it had a formative impact in the Highlands too. By the late nineteenth century the book had become such common currency in the culture and such turn-off to the younger generation that the fantasy novelist, the Highlander George MacDonald, has the hero of one of his romances hiding his grandmother's copy of it in a fiddle case.

### Boston And The Borders

Boston, a youngest son, had been born in Duns, East Lothian in 1676, on the eve of "*the killing times*", into a family of straitened means. Duns was hardly covenanting country, but the family roots were in Ayrshire, which certainly was; and his father was imprisoned for nonconformity in 1680. At Edinburgh University the penurious young Boston sacrificed his health to his studies. In later life he became an indefatigable Hebraist. Slightly built, one imagines that he was both pale and wan by the time he took on his first pastoral charge, in the said parish of Simprin, now defunct, in the area known as the Merse. After ten peaceable years there he moved to Ettrick, which was an altogether different sort of proposition.

If we borrow the language of Thomas Gray about the "*rude forefathers of the hamlet*", the forefathers in Ettrick could be said to excel in rudeness. It lay in one of the wildest areas of mainland Britain, and in those days of the Little Ice Age was snowbound probably for four or five months of the year. In my teenage years I was fascinated by the record in the *Daily Telegraph* of the preceding day's coldest and warmest places in the UK. As often as not the record for cold was held by Eskdalemuir, not a million miles from Ettrick, and probably a bit milder. Wanlochhead in the same area, a poverty-stricken ex-lead mining village, is possibly the highest settlement in Great Britain. A starker contrast with Baxter's Worcestershire and its Vale of Evesham could hardly be imagined. Lubbock in West Texas, birthplace of such musical luminaries as Buddy Holly, Butch Hancock, Joe Ely, and Kimmie Rhodes, has been described as consisting of "*a whole lot of nuthin*" which might be equally applicable to the moorland

tableland of Ettrick.

Yet it sits right in the middle of an area full of history, legend and song, the history mostly not very edifying. It was between Ettrick and Yarrow, at Philiphaugh, that Montrose met his Waterloo in September 1645 at the hands of the Covenanters, just thirty years before Boston's birth. This conflict wasn't notable for the humanity of the participants on either side, but it must be said that the behaviour of the victorious Covenanters in the wake of the battle was particularly unpleasant. Not content with the usual bloodletting on the battlefield, they went on to slaughter Montrose's camp followers next day in the courtyard of Newark Castle.

### To Boldly Go

This area was the epicentre for Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, published in expanded editions from 1802 to 1830 (available for practically nothing on Kindle), although Scott ranged throughout the whole of the Borders in his field work. The idea that Scott's mission in life was to popularise a pantomime, *ersatz* version of Scottish history won't survive a reading of his lengthy introduction to the *Minstrelsy*. There are plenty of quaint sidelights to be sure, such as an account of the Brownies in the Ettrick area. But Scott leaves the reader in no doubt at all of the vindictive savagery of the Border chiefs and their retainers, "*stern to inflict, and stubborn to endure*", compared with whom I suppose your average Afghan warlord would seem more like a community liaison officer. They ran amok with their feuds and reprisals until the early years of the seventeenth century when their wings were clipped somewhat by the Union of the Crowns.

Then a couple of generations after Boston, and roughly contemporary with Scott, comes James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, philanderer and improvident farmer, whose *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) is one of the darkest products of the Scottish imagination. More recently the Scottish novelist, poet and mountaineer, Andrew Greig, draws on the toxic legacy of Borders feuds in his sinister novel, *When They Lay Bare*, set in the present, the title taken from the lines of one of the bleakest of the Border ballads, *The Twa Corbies*.

The core of the Lowland Scots migration to Antrim and Down was from Ayrshire and the west, made up of dour tenant farmers. It happened that, for reasons I haven't understood, those ele-

ments of the Borders population that took part in the Ulster Plantation gravitated mainly towards Fermanagh and the west of Ulster. Hence the persistence in that region of such names as Ferguson, Kerr, Maxwell, Elliott, Scott, Nixon, Armstrong and so on. They still possessed something of that turbulent spirit which many of them carried on with them to the wild frontier of the American Colonies. It's somehow fitting that the First Man on the Moon, Neil Armstrong, should have had Fermanagh roots. And who will forget Gerry Armstrong, scorer of the only goal in possibly the most memorable Northern Ireland victory of all time, over Spain in Valencia, in the World Cup of 1982?

### Triumph And Tragedy

The parish records tell the tale that at the outset of Boston's ministry there were something under seventy communicants and by the end of it there were well over seven hundred, exceeding by far the population of the parish. In the early days he had to contend with conditions where many of the menfolk stayed outside the building during divine worship, engaging in loud conversation, and making animal noises when the conversational gambits failed. The covenanting, "*Cameronian*" remnant meantime stayed aloof from the church altogether. Boston was a slight, intense, scholarly figure, shy in his personal demeanour, without much of a fund of small talk. His wife Catherine, with whom he had been smitten at first sight, after some years of marriage fell into a depressive illness from which she never really recovered. Two of their five children died in infancy. He was continually on the edge of physical breakdown himself. In the middle of all this somehow these rough tough parishioners who came to sneer stayed to pray, as the saying has it, and were desperate not to lose him to some other congregation.

Boston's *Memoir* differs considerably from the *Fourfold State*. The latter could hardly be called racy, but it has a sort of verve and pungent flavour about it, like a Scottish version of Bunyan. Readers might like to savour just a smidgen of this forceful writing:

"Regenerating grace elevates the soul, translates it into the spiritual world, from whence this earth cannot but appear a little, yea, a very little thing; even as heaven appeared before, while the soul was groveling in the earth. Grace brings a man into a new world where this world is reputed but a stage of vanity, a howling wilderness, a valley of tears. God has hung the

sign of vanity at the door of all created enjoyments, yet how do men throng into the house, calling and looking for somewhat that is satisfying; even after it has been a thousand times told them that there is no such thing in it, it is not to be got there."

The *Memoir*, which is really more of a Journal, is equally unselfconscious stylistically, but I would think was never intended for publication. It has an angular, crabbed feel about it, coupled with a painful honesty. There are few interesting turns of phrase and no jokes. But by the same token this is a work which gives us a unique insight into the interior world of a particularly sensitive eighteenth century Calvinist pastor. We will peruse it in vain if we are looking to get a feel for what it must have been like to live and work in this harsh, beautiful landscape through the seasons, among the curlews and the corncrakes. Boston was no Francis Kilvert.

### A Flair For Controversy

On his own admission Boston was lacking in "*ecclesiastical prudence*". This deficiency manifested itself notably in 1712 on the passing by the Westminster Parliament of *The Abjuration Act*. It's important to remember that the Protestant succession was by no means a done deal at that time. So Parliament was aiming to future-proof the succession by imposing an oath on all Scottish ministers to renounce the Pretender and all his works. What's not to like? However, buried in the body of the Act were references to previous legislation such as the *Act of Settlement*, disqualifying non-members of the Church of England from the throne. So, by signing the Oath, would Boston and his colleagues be underwriting the Episcopal settlement? But if they stood out against it they were liable to a £500.00 fine. One by one the dominoes fell, But Boston held out. And seven years later, when the Act was reintroduced with the offending portions removed, but with the penalty still hanging over him, he kept up the resistance. If this kind of obduracy was irrational, it was also admirable.

Similarly Boston turned out to be a lone ranger in connection with the heresy trial of John Simson (1668-1740), Professor of Divinity at Glasgow from 1708. A "*New Licht*" theologian, whose teaching reputedly was particularly influential among the ministerial students from the North of Ireland, he was cleared of heresy at the 1717 Assembly, despite having "*vented some opinions*

not necessary to be taught in divinity”, but suspended from his post. He continued to take up the Assembly’s time on an almost annual basis, up to 1729. He was then suspended for the last time, on full pay. Readers might be interested to know that, alongside his controversial Christology, Simson was a believer in the existence of intelligent life on the moon, which presumably caused clerical eyebrows to rise.

Boston was especially irked that the same 1717 Assembly which cleared Simson condemned the *Auchterarder Creed*. The *Marrow* was to be subsequently condemned and placed on an Index of forbidden books. This disgruntlement was in part because Boston believed that the Creed had been formulated expressly as a litmus test against Simson. Just when the business about Simson had been managed at the 1717 Assembly and was put to the Assembly for approval, Boston stood up, like Horatius at the Bridge. To quote George H. Morrison in his Introduction to the 1899 edition of *Fourfold State*:

“Then Boston rose. ‘Moderator, I dissent in my own name, and in the name of all that shall adhere to me;’ then, looking round the house, ‘with an air of majesty’, as an eye-witness has it, ‘that I shall never forget’, and finding none had risen, he added, ‘for myself alone, if nobody shall adhere’.”

### Iron Logic

This brings us back to the Marrow Controversy, and why it convulsed the Christian commonwealth of Scotland as it did. The phrasing of the *Auchterarder Creed* certainly seemed to the Presbyterian Establishment of the day to be subversive of all piety. You don’t have to abandon your sinful ways before you come to Christ. But Boston, his friend Gabriel Wilson, and the Erskines saw it differently. Sinclair Ferguson sets out the problem in the form of a syllogism:

*Major premise: the saving grace of God in Christ is given to the elect alone.*

*Minor premise: the elect are known by the forsaking of sin.*

*Conclusion: therefore forsaking sin is a prerequisite for saving faith.*

There was something about this that didn’t smell right. At one level the issue could be seen as a scholastic intra-mural controversy among Calvinists. Does the experience of intense conviction of sin and the turning away from it mark you

as one of the elect and accordingly possessed of a “warrant” to come to Jesus for pardon? On this understanding there is a special category, that of the *privileged sinner*. The implications of this view are fearsome. How can you know that you have credibly forsaken sin and are therefore entitled to lay hold on the promises of the Gospel? For reasons psychological and pastoral as well as theological one can see how other equally Calvinistic types might have had concerns.

Indeed the purer Reformed view would be to take issue with the Assembly’s judgment; and for this reason, that it effectively turns the spotlight away from the redeeming activity of God in

the gospel and back to us, and to a work of repentance that would please God and make us acceptable to him. This is probably representative of the *Marrow* position but doesn’t sufficiently convey what was at issue, or the extent of the chasm that was opening up within Scottish Presbyterianism.

I will argue in what will I hope be the concluding part of this series that it was as a direct result of Boston and the Marrow Men holding out against the institutional heavy artillery of the Church of their day that the Evangelical scene in the Anglosphere is what it is today, mainly for the better, but maybe in some respects for the worse.

Peter Brooke

## Solzhenitsyn’s *Two Centuries Together*

Part 12

The Pogroms, Part Two

(Part One appeared in the 2nd Quarter, 2019: No. 136)

# More On The Pogroms

## The Story So Far: Jews And Capitalism

In the previous article in this series I tried to give some idea of the context in which, first in 1871 in Odessa, then in 1881 in more central parts of the Ukraine (though it touched Odessa again), pogroms broke out for the first time in the Russian Empire. I stressed the traditional role of Jews as the commercial class in the areas of Poland that had been incorporated into the Russian Empire in the late eighteenth century, very crudely summarised as a system in which the classes were defined by religion and ethnicity—Polish Catholic landlords, Ukrainian or Belorussian Orthodox peasants, Jewish middlemen, the Jews performing the role of ‘bourgeoisie’, the class which everywhere in Europe was challenging the landed aristocracy as the ruling class and in the process developing a materialist and liberal philosophy in opposition to traditional ritualistic religious systems.

The position of the Jews as the commercial class in the formerly Polish ‘Pale of Settlement’ was becoming more and more untenable, especially following the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 and the failed Polish rebellion of 1863. The emancipation of the serfs had increased the ability of the peasantry to provide these services for themselves,

thus putting more pressure on a competition already exacerbated by the steady increase in the Jewish population, which was growing at a faster rate than the Slav population. The failure of the Polish rebellion, together with the emancipation of the serfs, had also greatly weakened the position of the Polish landlords who had in the past been major patrons of the Jews in their manufacturing, trading, money-lending and administrative roles.

While this deterioration was true for the great majority of Jews, a minority—whose financial position was already secure—was in a position to profit from the increased possibilities for trade and industry. Thus the gap between poor Jew and rich, or even moderately comfortable, Jew was increasing. It was also assuming an intellectual form with Orthodox Judaism and Hasidism becoming widespread among poor Jews, while the *haskalah*—the Jewish secularising enlightenment—was taking root and giving rise to more European bourgeois-liberal ideas among the more securely established Jews (with Odessa as a major centre for Jewish intellectual life).

Under the Polish system the Jews had had a system of self government—the *kahal*—which conferred a sense of community across divisions of wealth, but the *kahal* had been abolished by

Government Decree in 1844, though, as we shall see, it was widely believed that it still existed in a more informal, clandestine manner.

In the previous article I asked how the functions of a commercial class were fulfilled in Russia itself ('Great Russia'), given that Jews were only allowed to settle there under very stringent and exceptional conditions. I took up Richard Pipes's argument that, although there was a legally constituted merchant class, the conditions under which it was forced to operate were such that it could not fulfil its role and certainly could not develop into a bourgeoisie on the European model. In consequence its role was largely divided between serf and landlords, with serfs, while still remaining serfs, sometimes accumulating large fortunes.

This naturally puts us in mind of the Russian 'kulak' (the word derives from the Russian word for a fist). John Klier, who I take to be the main authority on Russian/Jewish relations—at least in the English language literature—has an interesting discussion on the relations between the concepts 'Jew' and 'kulak'. He quotes the influential Kiev-based paper *Kievanin* in 1868: "*the Jews fully correspond to the Great Russian kulak*".<sup>1</sup>

*Kievanin* had been founded four years earlier with Russian Government support as part of a campaign to 'russify' Ukraine in opposition, not so much to the Jews, or Ukrainians, as to the Poles.<sup>2</sup> The Jewish writer Ilya Orshanski, in the rival paper *Den*, arguing that Great Russia should be open to Jews, said that there was little danger that the Jews would exploit the peasants because it was already being done by the kulaks. Later, at the time of the pogroms, a writer in the influential 'thick journal' *Delo* asked why, if the anti-Jewish pogroms had been caused by Jewish exploitation, there were no pogroms against the kulaks. They were worse than the Jews. The Jews "*resemble summer midges who got in one's throat, eyes and ears, rather than the [kulak who was a] poisonous fly*". The main difference between them was that the Jews were numerous and poor and therefore, because of the competition, lowered prices, while the kulak raised them. The Jews were forced to play this role by the situation in which they found

themselves, while the kulak had chosen it: "*There was always something left in a field harvested by a Jew, while a kulak blighted it to the roots*".<sup>3</sup>

The legislation on the emancipation of the serfs was accompanied by what appeared to be the first stages of a process of emancipation of the Jews. This included legislation allowing the most successful section of the Jewish merchant class ('merchants of the first guild') to settle in St. Petersburg. The effect was almost immediate and quite startling. It saw the establishment of the first commercial banking system in Russia, chiefly associated with the Gintsberg family, providing the credit for an immediate expansion of Russia's industrial capacity and the establishment of a railway network, also largely dominated by Jews, notably the Poliakoff family.

### Iakov Brafman And The Russian View Of Jewish History

The period also saw the development, mainly in St. Petersburg, of what might be called, if it isn't a contradiction in terms, a philosophical anti-semitism. Dostoyevsky's essay on *The Jewish Question*, published in 1877, and the response of Konstantin Pobedonostsev in 1877, which I referred to in the last article, could be taken as examples. They both saw the Jews as representing capitalism and the associated Western European liberal and secularising philosophy. To quote Pobedonostsev: "*they embody the spirit of the century*".<sup>4</sup>

The argument that the Jews were a malign force not just in the particular circumstances of the Russian Empire but in the world generally was reinforced by the publication in 1869 of Iakov Brafman's *Book of the Kahal*. Klier (*Imperial Russia's Jewish Question*, p.281) calls this "*the most successful and influential work of Judeophobia in Russian history*" which, given the competition provided by *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* seems a large claim. Brafman was a Jewish convert to Orthodoxy who, coming from a very poor background with no, or very little, education, had become a teacher of Hebrew in the Russian Orthodox Seminary in Minsk. In 1866 he had obtained leave of absence to go to Vilnius, capital of Lithuania, where he presented himself as a missionary to the Jews. In the *Vilenskii Vestnik*, the official publication of the North Western Edu-

cational District, he published an article arguing that the problem with Jewish culture did not lie with the Talmud as such but with the 'Talmudic Kingdom', a system of social organisation which allowed a Jewish elite to exercise control over every aspect of the lives of the Jewish masses and which, he claimed, had been reinforced by Polish and Russian government policy.

Through the director of the North West Educational District, I.P.Kornilov, he obtained a Government stipend to translate Jewish texts which he claimed would prove his case. These were the 'pinkas', the communal record book of the Kahal of Minsk from 1794 to 1833. Unlike the Protocols, these were genuine texts though initially, from 1867 to 1869, very poorly translated and edited. The 1869 version contained 285 documents. A much more scholarly Russian edition was published by the Imperial Geographic Society in 1875, with 1,055 documents.

The 1869 edition contained a commentary by Brafman which gave his version of Jewish history. He claimed that the Kahal, as an institution governing the whole of the Jewish world, had been formed after the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem in order to discipline and regulate Jewish life. It was the Kahal that commissioned the Talmud, creating a bewildering set of regulations that could only be understood and interpreted by an elite. The Kahal took responsibility for every aspect of Jewish life—the rules for the slaughter of animals for example gave it control over the supply of food. The main intention was to keep Jews separate from the societies in which they lived. To this end they established their own legal system in disrespect of the gentile system. Perjury was permitted in the gentile courts—it could be forgiven on the Day of Atonement. The Kahal could regulate competition among Jews by giving particular Jews a right of monopoly to exploit particular gentiles. He quoted the Talmud to the effect that gentile property was an empty lake into which Jews had the right freely to cast their nets.

He outlined five new Jewish brotherhoods which had taken on the Kahal's role of controlling international Jewry. They included the St Petersburg based 'Society for the Spread of Enlightenment among the Jews', recently established by the banker Evzel Gintsburg, but also, and chiefly, the Paris-based *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, which had come into existence in 1860 and was a favourite target

<sup>1</sup> John Klier: *Imperial Russia's Jewish question, 1855-1881*, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p.321.

<sup>2</sup> John Klier: 'Kievanin and the Jews: a decade of disillusionment, 1864-1873', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. 5, No 1 (March 1981).

<sup>3</sup> Klier: *Imperial Russia's Jewish question*, pp.326-7.

<sup>4</sup> It may be worth mentioning though that Jews barely feature in Dostoyevsky's novels.

for anti-semitic theorists. Klier (p.291) describes his account of the Alliance as "an accurate, if critical, summary of its goals and objectives", and says that the whole argument was much more credible than most of the contemporary European anti-semitic fantasies.

Brafman attracted widespread Russian support, including from the journals *Kievanin* and the St. Petersburg-based *Golos* ('The Voice') but was subjected to withering criticism by Jewish intellectuals in *Den* ('The Day') and *Novoe Vremia* (New Times). In 1870, Brafman was appointed Censor of Jewish books in the Chief Office for Press Affairs in St. Petersburg, where he was to die in 1879. His work was continued by his son, Alexander, developing the argument that the *Alliance Universelle* was aiming not just at establishing domination over Jews but over the world as a whole.

### The Pogroms

One of the theories of the origins of the 1881 pogroms is that they were fomented by Great Russians who had come to the area in search of work:

"The spring of 1881 found large numbers of Great Russians in the south and southwest regions of the Empire. In addition to those who normally sought seasonal jobs in the usually rich fields of the Ukraine, there were those thrown out of work in St. Petersburg and Moscow by the industrial crisis and depression of 1880-1881. The local crop failures and near famine of these years gave little promise of finding gainful employment. Still they came ... Being strangers far from home, these workers undoubtedly felt a strong sense of rootlessness, alienation, and anonymity. Many must have lost hope in their prospects for finding employment. They were hungry; homeless, embittered, and given to occasional acts of thievery and assault. Cases are on record of unemployed labourers in this region in this period committing crimes simply in order to be thrown into jail, where they were at least guaranteed something to eat. A pogrom had the advantage that it promised, as a bare minimum, a bellyful of vodka."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> I.Michael Aronson: 'Geographical and socio-economic factors in the 1881 anti-Jewish pogroms in Russia', the Russian Review, Vol. 39, no.1 (Jan 1980), p.21. John Klier (Russians, Jews and the Pogroms of 1881-2 - see the next footnote, p.53), it should be said, disagrees with this, saying that in the government archives the great majority of those arrested for participation in the pogroms were of peasant origin and lived locally. He also says they were mostly ethnic Ukrainians. Given Ukraine's desire

Without suggesting that such workers were influenced by the "*philosophical anti-semitism*" that was developing in St Petersburg, we might suggest that they were influenced by the phenomenon that had given rise to it—the sudden appearance in St. Petersburg of a new class of very rich and powerful Jews associated with the rapid expansion of banking and industry and the effect this was having on a proletariat in the very early stages of its development. To quote Aronson again (p.31): "*the pogroms were more the result of Russia's modernisation and industrialisation process than of age-old religious and national antagonisms*".'

The pogroms started in Elizavetgrad in the Ukraine during the Easter 'Bright Week' (the week following Easter Sunday celebrations).<sup>6</sup> The immediate context was the assassination the previous month of Alexander II, the 'Tsar liberator', responsible for the emancipation of the peasantry from serfdom in 1861, and also for a considerable easing of the restrictions that had been placed on the Jews.

According to Klier trouble was expected in Bright Week and the local Chief of Police called in an army contingent to deal with it but, after nothing had happened in the first three days, they withdrew. Klier points out that the forces available to the police were totally inadequate. In Elizavetgrad there were 87 police for a population of 45,000; in Pereislav, where the trouble spread, 16 for 16,000; in Poltava, 76 for 40,000. Since Emancipation, rural peasant communities were supposed to be self governing with an elected village elder and two elected policemen. These posts were unpaid and people were reluctant to take them on.

for separation from Russia it really ought to take possession of its pogroms so that we start calling these 'Ukrainian pogroms' rather than 'Russian pogroms'.

<sup>6</sup> This account is mostly based on John Klier; Russians, Jews and the Pogroms of 1881-2, Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp.17-48. Elizavetgrad is South of Kiev. At the time it was part of the governorate of Kherson. Since 1917 it has gone through some interesting name changes. In 1924 it became Zinoviyevsk (Zinoviev was born there); in 1934 it became Kirovo, changing in 1939 to Kirovograd. Since 2016, following a law forbidding the use of Soviet-era names, it became Kropyvnyiyskiy, after a locally born playwright. It is still in an oblast named Kirovograd because that is mentioned in the constitution of Ukraine and can't be changed without a referendum.

For those who did, the temptation to corruption was strong and they had a bad reputation. By 1900 throughout the Empire as a whole there were some 8,500 policemen to a total population of 90 million.

Despite the connection with Easter, Klier is dismissive of the idea that the pogrom was religiously inspired: "*the model of peasants emerging from the Russian Orthodox Paschal service intent on settling scores with 'Christ killing Jews' is nowhere to be found in any pogrom report. There was no such thing as an 'Easter Sunday' pogrom in Orthodox communities*" (p.68). I might add that if there was it would have to start at the earliest at 3.00 in the morning. The Orthodox Good Friday services are as it happens full of anti-Jewish sentiment. But the point about Bright Week is that it is a period of carousing and drunkenness, which tended to take place in taverns run by Jews who therefore found themselves in the middle of it. The Elizavetgrad pogrom was sparked off by a quarrel in a Jewish-owned tavern. According to Klier, the Orthodox clergy intervened "almost without exception" against the pogroms when they broke out and they were under orders from the Holy Synod, the governing body of the Church, at the time run by Pobedonostsev, to give anti-pogrom sermons.<sup>7</sup>

Klier describes three 'waves' of pogroms. In Elizavetgrad itself 418 Jewish homes were attacked and 290 shops and stalls wrecked. 601 people, mainly town-dwellers but with some peasants, were arrested and, though they were soon freed, 480 people were brought to trial (it doesn't appear that very many were actually punished). Two days after the pogrom had begun, the governor of the province arrived and demanded the return of stolen property. So much was returned that a warehouse had to be hired to store it all.

Nonetheless the violence spread, affecting in all three cities, a railway station, two small towns and forty villages: with 882 Jewish homes attacked and 434 commercial buildings damaged. This first wave was finished by the end of April.

The second wave began on 26th April in Kiev and the surrounding area. I'm using Klier's dates and I think he is using the Old Style (OS) Julian calendar still in use in the Russian Empire until 1917.

<sup>7</sup> Though he does, pp.51-2, refer to twelve priests being arrested among the pogrom-shchiki.

The governor here, Alexander Drenteln, had been the Chief of Gendarmes in St Petersburg at the time of the assassination of Alexander II and he was particularly anxious to avoid being involved in further trouble. The army was brought in before the pogrom started and he intervened personally to try to stop it. 500 people were arrested when a mob attacked the home of the wealthy Jewish sugar baron, Josef Markov Brodski. The army fired into the crowd killing four people. But, as with the Elizavetgrad pogrom, the violence spread, following towns and Jewish agricultural colonies along the railway lines South and East of Kiev to the Tauride and Ekaterinoslav provinces. This wave came to an end by the 10th May.

The third wave lasted from 30th June to 16th August 1881, covering the Poltava and Chernigov provinces, East and North of Kiev. It had been preceded by petitions from various towns in the area, for example Pereislav, Poltava, demanding the expulsion of resident Jews. During this period a total of eleven people were killed, all of them pogromists killed by the army. Kier (p.35 and pp.66-7) maintains that the pogromists were observing a principle of attacking only property and not persons, except where they encountered resistance. By the 16th August he says "*all significant pogrom activity in the Pale of Settlement came to an end*".

There was, however, a probably unrelated pogrom on Christmas Day in Warsaw in the kingdom of Poland which was a supposedly autonomous part of the Russian Empire. It broke out after twenty-five people were killed in a stampede in the Roman Catholic Cathedral caused by a false fire alarm. It was believed that the cry had been raised by a Jewish petty thief wanting to evade capture.

In the Easter period in 1882 it looked as if the pogroms were going to resume in Ukraine when there was an outbreak in Balta, on the Odessa-Kiev railway line, a town with a population of about 20,000, more than half of them Jews. Trouble had been expected and Jews had been authorised to establish their own night patrols over the Easter period. This, according to Klier, is the only case in which Government reports confirm the occurrence of rape.

Antony Polonsky, in a book published about the same time as Klier's, gives a total of 259 pogroms, 219 in villages, 4 (as we've already seen) in

Jewish agricultural colonies, and 36 in cities or small towns. He claims that 25 Jews were killed in the 1881-2 pogroms, and he adds a "*final pogrom which occurred in Nizhny-Novgorod on 7th June and was accompanied by an accusation of ritual murder*" when "*ten Jews were hacked to death with axes*".<sup>8</sup> This may require some explanation since Nizhny-Novgorod (which under the Soviet Union became Gorky) is in Russia proper, outside the pale of Settlement. Wikipedia informs me that a Jewish community had formed in Nizhny-Novgorod on the basis of Jewish soldiers (Jews had been subject to conscription since 1827), "*required to live in the city where they served. They subsequently became merchants and traders.*" The Wikipedia piece, without mentioning the 1884 pogrom, says that a synagogue was built there in 1881-3.

### Simon Dubnow And The Jewish View Of Jewish History

Until 1971 and the publication of Hans Rogger's essay *The Jewish Policy Of Late Tsarism* it was almost universally believed that these pogroms had been fomented by the Tsarist Government or by 'dark forces' close to it. This was the view forcefully put in what was long accepted as the definitive account—Simon Dubnow's *History of the Jews in Poland and Russia*. Dubnow was a contemporary of the events concerned and is an interesting and important figure in his own right. He was born in 1860 in the Belorussian town of Mstislavl. He was therefore raised as a teenager through the 1860s and 1870s in a period when, following the reforms of Alexander II, there was a general optimistic assumption that Russia was on the road towards a modern liberal society in which restrictions on Jews would gradually be lifted. He himself, in defiance of his family tradition, became an enthusiastic supporter of the Jewish enlightenment, the *haskalah*, and subsequently of the European materialist and liberal world view—Comte, Büchner, Mill, Spencer—which in Russia went under the term '*Nihilism*'.

<sup>8</sup> Antony Polonsky: 'The Position of the Jews in the Tsarist Empire, 1881–1905'. I think, though it isn't obvious from the text I obtained off the internet, that this is a chapter of Polonsky's book *The Jews in Poland and Russia*, Oxford and Portland, Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010, Volume 2: 1881–1914. He says that the figures were given to him by Klier though I haven't found them in my notes on Klier's book.

He doesn't seem to have been particularly upset by the 1881-2 pogroms at the time they occurred. Until the late 1880s, according to the account by Robert M.Seltzer,<sup>9</sup>

"Dubnow had maintained in his reviews and articles that the pogroms of 1881-2 were only a passing aberration. The Russian government would soon realise that it *must* emancipate the Jews. Russian Jewry could best prepare for citizenship by undertaking a program of thorough religious and cultural reform, including the extirpation (with government's help) of Hasidic and other superstitions" (p.292).

His views however changed radically as the 1880s progressed. In particular, following an unsuccessful effort to get permission to stay in St Petersburg:

"Late in 1886, after a two month wait in the capital to obtain bona fide legal residence there, his request was again denied and he was ordered to leave the city within twenty-four hours. He went to the nearby village of Tsarskoe-Selo, greatly perturbed. The snowdrifts among which he walked were 'a symbol of frozen Russia, a lifeless country, crushed under the Tsarist regime', and 'the sign of Cain, 'Jew,' follows me everywhere.'"

He realised that, though he had ceased to be a Jew, he hadn't been accepted as a Russian. According to an entry in his diary, 1887:

"The twenty seventh year of my life was a decisive moment. Until then my thoughts still ran to general literary plans, although actually I worked only in Jewish literature. I was unhappy with this narrow sphere of activity and longed for the broader problems which my mentors Mill, Spencer, Renan and Taine studied. My eye illness, involving the danger of losing normal sight, gave me the impulse for deeper thought. I became convinced that true creativity required the process of self-limitation—that qabbalistic secret of concentration that the Infinite used to create the world from primordial chaos. I now understood that my path to the universal lay expressly through the field of the national in which I was already working. One could serve humanity only by serving one of its parts, all the more so a nation of the most ancient culture. It became clear that my general knowledge and universal ambition would give fruitful

<sup>9</sup> Robert M.Seltzer: 'Coming home: The personal basis of Simon Dubnow's ideology', *AJS [Association for Jewish Studies] Review*, Vol.1 (1976), pp.283-301.

results in conjunction with the inherited treasures of Jewish knowledge and the yet unformed Jewish ideals. From this time began my propensity for the great themes of Jewish history." (pp.293-4)

He moved to Odessa where he soon became an important part of a thriving Jewish culture, developing a philosophy which he called 'historism' (not to be confused with 'historicism').

"A fundamental assumption of 'historis' is that the goal of personal development is the realisation that one's tastes, convictions and character result from the imprint of past experience, reworked by thought and crystallised into a definite form. Therefore "a conscious relationship to the past is the criterion of personal development." And this applies as much to peoples as to the individual: "The essence of the Jewish national ideal is historical consciousness. Armed with the laws of Jewish historical development, the Jewish masses will be equipped to withstand the blows of fate, the sagging morale of the secular intelligentsia will revive, the national feeling of those who require a rational justification for remaining Jewish will be strengthened" (p.295).

These ideas were worked out in a highly influential essay—*What is Jewish history?*—published in 1893. They provided the basis for a political argument adopted by a group calling itself the *Folkspartei*, formed in 1907 in St Petersburg and closely allied with the Constitutional Democratic Party, the *Kadets*. The argument was that the nation is a more fundamental entity than the state: "*Not atomistic citizenship in an assimilationist nation-state but legal autonomy in a culturally pluralistic, multinational state would provide the Jewish people with a recognised place in a world of nations and at the same time facilitate full Jewish participation in modern civilisation.*" He was sympathetic to the Zionist idea of a distinct Jewish state but believed that it could only cater for the needs of a small part of the Jewish people. The immediate need, he told a gathering in Odessa in 1891, was not emigration to America or to Palestine but "*a propaganda tour of Europe to stir up the world against despotic Russia*".

*The History of the Jews in Russia and Poland* was published in an English translation in Philadelphia between 1916 and 1920. In 1917, after the February Revolution, he was given access to the Russian Government archives and published several volumes concerning

policy towards the Jews. I will come back to that if and when I come to the Kishinev Pogrom in 1903. He was out of sympathy with the Bolshevik revolution, seeing little point in equal rights for Jews if Jews could not develop a distinct national culture. In 1922 he moved to Berlin where he wrote extensively on Jewish history and national consciousness. With the coming to power of the Nazis he moved to Riga. Following on the Nazi takeover of Latvia, according to the account in Wikipedia, he was first, at the age of 81, bundled out of his home and into the Riga ghetto and then shot as Jews in the ghetto were being rounded up for the massacre that occurred in the Rumbila forest.

### Government Policy After The Pogroms

Dubnow did not invent the thesis that elements of the Tsarist Government or 'dark forces' close to government were behind the pogroms. It was widely believed at the time. In her essay *The Origins of an enduring myth: the pogroms of 1881-2 in the British popular narrative*<sup>10</sup> Sam Johnson, specialist in Jewish studies in the Manchester Metropolitan University, refers to 'two memoranda written in 1882. The first, the—

"Gintsburg Memorandum presented to the Tsar on 2 March 1882 (OS) 'established a template for attacks' on the Ministry of Internal Affairs, thereby implying that the forces of order had failed to quell the pogroms as a consequence of official directives. The Levin Memorial, written some time between May and June 1882 (OS) and which spoke of 'dark forces' at work in the Empire, revealed in some detail the mechanisms by which the pogrom policy operated."

Johnson gives Klier's book on the pogroms as her source. Unfortunately, when I was reading it in the British Library, I didn't get that far in the time I had available. Johnson continues:

"According to Klier it was the latter memorandum especially that aided in the embrace of the pogrom myth in Russian and Western received opinion; not by coincidence, it was often referred to by Dubnow."

10 Judaica Petropolitana No 4, 2015, pp.42-64. Judaica Petropolitana is an interesting phenomenon, a collaboration between the St Petersburg State University and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Its articles covering a very wide range of subjects of Jewish interest are available online - [http://judaica-petropolitana.philosophy.spbu.ru/Main/intro\\_en.html](http://judaica-petropolitana.philosophy.spbu.ru/Main/intro_en.html)

A review of Klier's book refers to

"a 250 page memorandum written by Emmanuel Levin that fully formulated arguments which produced the myth of the authorities' conspiracy in the pogroms". It is described as "the major product of the Gintsburg circle".<sup>11</sup>

This has particular importance because the Gintsburg in question was the banker, one of the most powerful men, and certainly the most powerful Jew, in the Empire. Klier's book uses material that was difficult of access to Western researchers during the Soviet era and this may explain why the memorandum is not mentioned in an essay on the reaction of the St. Petersburg Jewish leadership published in 1984 which nonetheless shows that the Gintsburg circle was very active at the time.<sup>12</sup> Principally they were anxious to fend off two, in their eyes, very dangerous ideas. The first, spreading rapidly among the Jews themselves, was that life in the Russian Empire was impossible and that the only solution was emigration, whether to North America or to Palestine.

The second was the idea being floated by the Minister, Count Nikolai Ignatiev, that the solution to the overcrowding of Jews in the Pale of Settlement would be to transfer them to underpopulated areas in S.E.Asia (we may be reminded of the Soviet project of Birobidzhan). Gintsburg and his circle wanted to keep the attention focussed on the question of equal rights, including the right to settle anywhere in the Empire. At the same time they were also anxious for a reform of Jewish life itself, encouraging both a more modern view of the world and the development of a wider range of productive craft and industrial skills.

I mentioned earlier that the outbreak of the first pogrom in April 1881 had followed hard on the assassination in March of the 'Tsar-liberator', Alexander II by the 'Peoples Will' revolutionary group. The

11 Vladimir Levin: review of John Doyle Klier: Russians, Jews and the pogroms of 1881-1882, The Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. 91, No.2 (April 2013), pp.369-372.

12 Alexander Orbach: The Russian-Jewish leadership and the pogroms of 1881-2: the response from St Petersburg, Carl Beck papers in Russian and East European Studies, Paper no 308, University of Pittsburgh, 1984. Orbach refutes very convincingly the common Jewish left wing view that the wealthy and powerful Jews of St Petersburg didn't try very hard to help their co-religionists, victims of the pogroms.

question of how that stands in relation to the pogroms raises the whole matter of the development of radical politics in the 1870s, relations between the radicals and the peasantry, the role played in the radical groups at that time by Jews (important in relation to the radical groups, almost insignificant in relation to the Jewish community as a whole), and the way in which the relationship between Jews and radicals was seen by the population at large. But I think all that requires a separate article. What is important here is the effect it had on Government thinking and in particular on the Government's response to the pogroms.

The Minister of Internal Affairs at the moment of the first outbreak in Elizavetgrad was still Count Mikhail Loris-Melikov, scion of an important Armenian-Georgian family who had fought with distinction in the recent Russo-Turkish War (1877-8) and who had been appointed by Alexander II with the specific intention of developing a programme of constitutional reform. When it was clear that Alexander III had no intention of implementing these reforms he resigned and was replaced by Count Nikolai Ignatiev who, as Russian Ambassador in Constantinople, had been largely responsible for fomenting the revolt in Bulgaria that led to the Russo-Turkish War. He had negotiated the Treaty of San Stefano whose terms were so unfavourable to the Ottomans that it prompted a European reaction, with a restraint put on Russian ambitions by the Congress of Berlin.

The new mood was symbolised by the *Manifesto of Unshakeable Autocracy* issued on 29th April 1881 and reputedly written by Dostoyevsky's friend Konstantin Pobedonostsev, procurator of the Holy Synod.<sup>13</sup>

13 He assumed that role as it happens in 1880, still under the reign of Alexander II, who had also, of course, appointed him as tutor to his son, Alexander III. Dostoyevsky and Pobedonostsev had come to know each other as members of a literary circle formed round Prince V.P. Meshchersky 'who had founded a new publication, *Grazhdanin* (The Citizen), to counter the influence of the liberal and progressive press' (Joseph Frank: *Dostoyevsky, the mantle of the prophet, 1871-1881*, Princeton University Press, 2002, p.18). The circle also included the poet Fedor Tyutchev. Frank points out that at this time Pobedonostsev 'was regarded primarily as a legal scholar and highly placed government official with a liberal past (in the Russian sense)'. He became 'tutor' to Alexander in 1865 when Alexander was already 20

### Sympathy For The Perpetrators

Although Klier establishes that "*Neither the Russian governing elite nor society wanted pogroms*", he goes on to say that "*they believed they understood them and they certainly empathised with them*" (p.86).

They saw the pogroms as an understandable reaction to exploitation by Jews. Klier (p.236) quotes the romantic novelist, Zenaide Ragozin, who acted as a spokeswoman for the Russian view of the world in North America, as saying, in an article drawing on the arguments of Yakov Brafman, that the Jews

"are a parasitical race who, producing nothing, fasten on the produce of land and labour and live on it, choking the life out of commerce and industry as surely as the creeper throttles the tree that upholds it".

Ignatiev gave his views on the origin of the riots in a memorandum to Alexander II submitted in August 1881:

"Having recognized how harmful to the Christian population of the country is the economic activity of the Jews, their tribal seclusion and religious fanaticism, the government for the past twenty years strove by a whole series of measures to promote their assimilation and almost equalized their rights with those of the native inhabitants. In the meantime, the anti-Jewish movement which began this year in the South [...] has proved irrefutably that in spite of all the government's efforts, the abnormal relations between the Jews and the indigenous inhabitants continue as before [...] The main reason for behavior so uncharacteristic of Russians lies in circumstances of an exclusively economic kind. In the last twenty years the Jews, little by little, have taken over not only trade and production but through rent or purchase significant amounts of landed property. Because of their clannishness and solidarity, all but a few of them have bent every effort not to increase the productive forces of the country but to exploit the native inhabitants, and primarily the poorer classes. This provoked the protest of the latter, finding such deplorable expression in acts of violence. [...] Having energetically put down the disorders and stopped the people from taking the law into their own hands in order to safeguard the

years old so the term 'tutor' is a little misleading. 'Counsellor' might be better. He continued to be close to him all his life and Frank quotes letters in which Pobedonostsev tells Dostoyevsky of the tsarevich's interest in his novels.

Jews from violence, an even-handed government must immediately take no less energetic steps to remove the abnormal conditions which now exist between Jews and natives and protect the latter from that pernicious activity which, according to the local authorities, was responsible for the disturbances."<sup>14</sup>

In October he established a *Committee on the Jewish Question*, under the Chairmanship of his Deputy, D.V. Gotovtsev, with a brief to examine fourteen proposed restrictions on Jewish activity to give the peasants "*a visible demonstration of the government's concern for their protection from Jewish exploitation*" (quoted in Rogger, p.174). The end result was the introduction in May of a set of laws, called 'Temporary Laws', though they remained in force until 1917. Rogger and Aronson,<sup>15</sup> however, point out that quite a lot of the evidence received by Gotovtsev was actually favourable to an easing of the restrictions on Jewish life, most especially the proposal to allow them freedom to move and settle outside the Pale. The counter-argument to the view that Jews left to their own devices would exploit the peasant was that it was precisely the intensity of competition among the trading classes (Jews among themselves but also with Armenians, Greeks, Old Believers and increasingly with Ukrainians and Russians) and the legal restrictions placed on them that forced them into shady practices as the only means by which they could earn a living.

In the event, the May Laws were less restrictive than Ignatiev's original proposal. To quote Rogger (p.179):

"Among Ignatiev's sharpest critics were M. Kh. Reutern, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers and a former Minister of Finance, and the incumbent of that office, N. Kh. Bunge. They saw administrative arbitrariness and pogroms alike as undermining property rights, the nation's credit and good name, its hopes for economic stability and. The State Comptroller, D. M.

14 Quoted in Hans Rogger: 'Government, Jews, Peasants, and Land in Post-Emancipation Russia: Two specters: Peasant violence and Jewish exploitation', *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique*, Vol. 17, No. 2/3 (Apr - Sep., 1976), p.173.

15 I.M. Aronson: 'The Prospects for the emancipation of Russian Jewry during the 1880s', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 55, No.3 (July 1977), pp.348-369.

Sol'skii, seconded them. 'Today they are harassing the Jews,' he warned. 'Tomorrow it will be the turn of the so-called kulaks [...], then of merchants and landowners. In a word, if the authorities stand by passively, we can expect the development in the near future of the most terrible socialism'."

Rogger continues:

"After turning down both the original fourteen points of the Gotovtsev Committee, and the scaled down emergency program proposed by Ignatiev, the ministers voted, 'in the interests of the local population', to yield to his urging on three points. Jews not already

living there were forbidden to take up residence in the villages (it might help to forestall trouble), to acquire rural real estate through lease, purchase or any other device, or to conduct business on Christian holy days. The prohibition which Ignatiev and most of the provincial commissions wished to see put on the liquor traffic was rejected, either for fiscal or humanitarian reasons, though some minor restrictions were authorised."

From a Government point of view, then, the 'May laws' could be seen as quite mild, the more so because through most of the 1880s, when Ignatiev was replaced as Minister of Internal Affairs by

Dmitry Tolstoy (Pobedonostsev's predecessor as Procurator of the Holy Synod), it appears that they weren't rigorously enforced. From a Jewish point of view, however, they were deeply shocking. Jews had just undergone the most terrifying experience and the Government had more or less concluded that it was all their own fault. The impact on Jewish culture and politics was enormous. In particular it produced the first *aliyah*, emigration to Palestine. It is too large a topic to be dealt with here. I hope to take it up again, together with the related question of the radical politics of the 1870s, in a subsequent article. \*

## Editorial

### BBC Anti-Semitism?

British Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn was vilified as an Anti-Semite because he refused to condemn as Anti-Semitic Palestinian Arab resistance to Jewish colonisation, ethnic cleansing, and apartheid structures. All candidates to succeed him in the leadership have complied with Jewish nationalist demands.

Jewish nationalist pressure is now being applied to the BBC because of a couple of sentences in a report by Orla Guerin of Holocaust memorial ceremonies in Yad Veshem on 22nd January, the day before they were due to be held. She said: "*The state of Israel is now a*

*regional power. For decades it has occupied Palestinian Territories. But some here will always see their nation through the prism of persecution and survival*".

BBC editors must have known that these sentences would have offended Jewish nationalist sentiment by their crisp, informative accuracy. The Holocaust and the establishment of the Jewish state as an unrestrained colonising force are closely connected in historical fact. The colonisation was under way before the Holocaust, but it was the effect of the Holocaust on European sentiment that set it free to break all the supposed rules

of the United Nations.

The BBC facilitated the slandering of Jeremy Corbyn. Has it now decided to take an anti-Semitic stand of its own—a stand which Jewish nationalism would brand as anti-Semitic—in order to restore the *status quo ante*? If it does not crumble, that is what it will have done.

Those couple of sentences also say that the Holocaust was not a literal genocide. There have been many literal genocides in recent centuries. Their victims have not formed powerful states. \*

### Highlights of the December issue of *Irish Foreign Affairs*:

\* Editorial: ECJ Rules that Settlement Products be Labelled as Settlement Products

\* Irish Media Blackout on the Historic State Visit by the Cuban President. *Manus O'Riordan*

\* *Britain and its War Dead*. *Eamon Dyas*

\* *Leopold Kerney—Ireland's Revolutionary Diplomat*. *Manus O'Riordan*

\* *Britain versus Russia: Battle for the Caucasus 1918-20 (Part Four)*. *Pat Walsh*

ALSO: 4 documents are reproduced, including the European Parliaments atrocious resolution on the USSR Pact with Nazi Germany

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## THE LATE Gay Byrne

(d.4.11.2019).

"Gay was the glue that bound Ireland together", ...the man who led a nation to modernity" (Irish Independent, 9.11.2019)

"I've been brainwashed with all the other lovely Catholic people of Ireland" (Irish Times, 5.11.2019) "The four decades of Dev's austere, restrictive, conservative Ireland were followed by four decades of Gaybo's Ireland" (Joe Duffy, Irish Times, 5.11.2019).

"Father figure of a New Ireland" (Irish Times, 5.11.2019).

Even the Irish Catholic weekly couldn't say a bad word on Gay, indeed their only gripe was that . . . "Bishops' misjudgement played into his hands". Diarmuid Martin was overwhelming in his admiration Gay "was a genuinely religious man."

On the week he died, the main stories in "Gaybo's Ireland" were: The sentencing of Ana Kriegel's boy killers; The inquest into the abduction and murder of Jastine Valdez by Mark Hennessy in May, 2018; A harrowing account by Kevin Lunney of his abduction and savage beating to near death; and a Drug War in Drogheda.

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## Family background

"Gay Byrne's father, Private Edward Byrne, joined the 19th Royal Hussars, a cavalry regiment [British army], before the war and served until 1919.

He fought at two of the five Battles of Ypres and the Battle of the Somme, and was nearly killed in a cavalry charge near the end of the conflict." (Irish Independent, 18.5.2014)

"My father joined in 1913 and didn't get out until 1919," Gay says. "My grandfather was a coachman for the Earl of Kilruddery (in Wicklow). The reason he joined was he decided to see a bit of the world, and also decided there was

nothing for him in Kilruddery.

"He ended up in the 19th Hussars because he had experience of horses and knew how to ride.

"I think there were seven (brothers) altogether. Six joined, and I don't know about the seventh . . . One was killed, one died of gas poisoning, and one who was poisoned died shortly afterwards. The (death) toll was about average."

"Guinness was among the major Dublin employers of the time, and any employees who enlisted were promised a job for life on their return. In addition, they gave half the man's salary to his wife, and if a worker was killed in action, his family received half his pay.

His father was one of the lucky ones, he says.

"He went into Guinness and it was a good, secure job.

"There are more related to people who fought in the First World War than were in the GPO, [1916] yet we know so little. If my father was not involved, I would not have known about it.

"There were two parallel histories and one became the official, signed, for history with the GPO and the other was consigned to the sidelines" (Irish Independent, 18.5.2014).

## War in the North

For whatever influence he had on society, one thing stands out: he had little or none regarding the most serious crisis in the history of the state—his silence spoke a thousand words in that case: Apart from his hosting Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Brooke on the Late, Late Show in 1992, when he coaxed Brooke into singing Oh My Darling Clementine on the day when seven Protestant workmen were killed by an IRA bomb.

In 1994, after the lifting of a ban in the Montrose Temple of Free Speech on Sinn Fein speaking on the Irish airwaves, Sinn Fein leader, Gerry Adams was interviewed by Gay Byrne. It was memorable because of Byrne's hostility

and his refusal to shake hands with the SF president.

An old media colleague puts Gay's role in that profession, thus:

"For better or worse he had a unique place in Irish society which will never be repeated. He was allowed combine light entertainment and serious politics in a two hour show broadcast at peak viewing time. In the 1970s he had a virtual monopoly on air-time.

"Did he change Irish society? I don't think he himself had any worked out coherent ideological perspective. He was a conduit or a catalyst for change rather than someone who initiated it."

## THE LATE Marian Finucane:

Another icon of the state's media jungle passed away on January 2, 2020. A humble commentator like the present writer would have little prerogative in the 'new liberal' climate to make judgement on her role in media, however, he was provoked to telephone Liveline sometime in the early Eighties of the last century. A debate of a sorts was airing on RTE Radio One.

He made the point that what Ireland urgently needed was a Concordat between Church and State similar to Austria and the Vatican relating to matters of mutual interest and clarifying the roles of "God and Caesar" in our fair land.

I had left for work before the Live-line ended. On arriving at work, an old pre-Vatican II colleague smiled at me and told me I should have advised Marian what a Concordat meant—as she had made a comment to the effect: "Had Ireland not enough Concordats!" He was generous enough to admit that perhaps my accent deceived her and she might have thought I was talking about a Concorde!

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## BABIES' IN BOXES?

The Government's plan to provide Scandinavian-style baby boxes for more than 60,000 new borns every year has been put back on the shelf for at least two years. Minister for Children Katherine Zappone announced her plans for the boxes, which contain essential items for newborns such as a mattress, a changing mat, baby clothes, a digital ear thermometer, a toothbrush and books, last August. (The Sunday Business Post, 18.8.2019)

According to the Irish Independent (15.4.2018): this is Ireland's strategy to increase the national birth rate.