

Church & State

An Irish History Magazine

And Cultural Review Of Ireland And The World

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Anti-Semitism And The Jewish State

The English obsession with Anti-Semitism has taken a strange turn. The newly elected Leader of the Labour Party, Sir Keir Starmer, has sacked his leadership rival, Rebecca Long Bailey, from her position in his Shadow Cabinet on the accusation of Anti-Semitism.

Her Anti-Semitism consists of the fact that she observed a similarity between United States policing methods and Israeli methods—the tactic of kneeling on the neck. She made no mention of Jews when noticing this similarity.

Her observation was made in the form of a tweet agreeing with a couple of sentences in an article by a television actress, Maxine Peake, published in the *Independent* newspaper:

“Systematic racism is a global issue. The tactics used by the police in America, kneeling on George Floyd’s neck, that was learnt from seminars with the Israeli secret services”.

Those sentences as published were followed by this sentence within brackets: “A spokesperson for the Israeli police has denied this, stating that ‘there is no tactic or protocol that calls to put pressure on the neck or airway’”.)

Whether or not there is a formal “tactic or protocol” recommending neck-kneeling in particular circumstances in manuals for police training in Israel, there is no doubt that it is a tactic used by Israeli police.

The *Independent* later issued this statement:

“This article has been amended to further clarify that the US police were taught tactics of ‘neck-kneeling’ by Israeli secret services is unfounded. The original version did carry a denial from Israeli police, however we are happy to further clarify the matter...”

In all of this there is no mention whatever of Jews. And *anti-Semitism* has to do exclusively with disparaging remarks made about Jews as a race—as if they were a race.

How did Sir Keir find Anti-Semitism in these sentences? He said that the article commented on favourably by Rebecca Long Bailey contained “conspiracy theories”, and conspiracy theories are Anti-Semitic.

A statement issued on his behalf to the *Guardian* said:

“The article Rebecca shared earlier today contained an anti-Semitic theory. As leader of the Labour party, Keir has been clear that restoring trust with the Jewish community is a number one priority. Antisemitism takes many different forms and it is important that we are all vigilant against it.”

He said in a television interview:

“I asked Rebecca Long-Bailey to step down from the shadow cabinet for sharing the article. I didn’t do that because she is anti-semitic. I did it because she shared the article which

has got, in my view, anti-semitic theories in it.”

He did not specify what any of these “*anti-Semitic theories*” were.

The only semblance of any kind of theory we can find in Maxine Peake’s comments is the assumption that neck-kneeling was discussed between Israel and the United States. It was not an unreasonable assumption in the light of the indisputable fact that the two states are closely aligned and that the neck-kneeling tactic is used by both.

Maxine Peake seems to have retracted her remark when Israel said it had not discussed the tactic with the USA. We don’t know whether it had or not. She is a television actress, and therefore vulnerable, and she behaved with personal prudence. The position of elected legislators is different.

The Israeli statement is rather carefully phrased. But, if the assumption was false, and Israel and the USA happened to adopt the same tactic independently of each other, and the false but not unreasonable assumption is a conspiracy theory, how is it an *anti-Semitic* conspiracy theory?

(Unprovable assumptions are made all the time in politics where remarkable coincidences are observed. And the biggest conspiracy theory of all at present, held by the majority of right-thinking people in Western elites, is the belief in the assertion of the US Democratic Party that Putin rigged the Presidential Election against Hilary Clinton, who seemed to be intent on driving the USA towards war with Russia.)

“*Antisemitism takes many different forms*”, Sir Keir says. In the present instance it takes the form of taking Israel to be a normal state and commenting adversely on its relations with another state. It takes the form of not mentioning Jews at all.

Last year a Jewish lobby group drew up a Jewish self-definition of Anti-Semitism. Rebecca Long-Bailey adopted it enthusiastically, and the Labour Party adopted it after some resistance, even though it characterised Palestinian resistance to Jewish oppression as Anti-Semitic.

It was denied emphatically by the advocates of the IHRA definition that it made criticism of the Israeli State Anti-Semitism. We were sceptical of this assurance, as the British Chief Rabbi had said repeatedly that, while criticism of Israel without being Anti-Semitic was theoretically possible, it was not possible in practice. Our scepticism was well founded.

Sir Keir clearly takes it that the State of Israel and Jewry are one and the same thing, and therefore adverse comment on Israel is Anti-Semitic.

There are some grounds for this, of course. Israel is not just a state formed by Jews. It is a Jewish state in a very different sense. It is a state of the Jews wherever they may live, and they have rights in it which are prior to the rights of non-Jews who happened to be living there when Britain, in order to turn the Jews against Germany, decided to construct a Jewish State in Palestine and facilitate the migration of Jews to Palestine for that purpose.

Palestinians who were driven out to make way for a Jewish state in 1948 have no right of return to places where they, or their parents, were living in. Jews living anywhere in the world have a right of return after two thousand years of absence. That is the current situation.

Spokesmen for Israel explain that this is because of a deal made between Moses and God, which has precedence over all earthly laws, which are superficial and transient.

Jewish colonial nationalism in Palestine, put into effect by Britain, is the most extreme and the most purposefully irredentist nationalism in the world, and the most effective. The British statesmen who set it in motion knew very well that this was the case. Balfour himself agreed that it was a clear breach of all the rules for a new world order that Britain said it was establishing in the form of the League of Nations. And he caused the League to give Britain a Mandate to enact this breach of itself.

The reason he gave was that the Jews were an exceptional people and that exceptional arrangements must therefore be made for them. He also said that the Jews, living in dispersion amongst other peoples and states, were a source of radical disorder in the world and that they should be removed by being tidied away in a state of their own. In other words, he was a Zionist for Anti-Semitic reasons. So it was with Churchill. With Lloyd George it seems to have been partially because of the strain on *Old Testament* Christianity in his social background. And, within Jewry, there were some who supported the Zionist project as a means of normalising Jewish conditions of life by arranging for them to live in a state of their own.

The normalising was never likely to happen.

Britain, *the* World Empire after 1918, had a mixture of motives for everything it did. One reason for imposing a Jewish State on Palestine under Imperial hegemony was to acquire a base of operations against the Arab Middle East—which it had promised in 1916 to recognise as an Arab state if it joined it in the war against the Ottoman Empire. That promise was given when it seemed doubtful that it could conquer the Ottoman Middle East with its own resources. It never had the intention of holding to that promise.

One British writer, who was close to the centre of things, explained that the British purpose in setting in motion the formation of a Jewish State was to provide itself with *a little loyal Jewish Ulster* against the sea of Arabism in the Middle East.

Zionism in Britain was strongly supported by Gentiles in the Liberal Party, which had a strong element of *Old Testament* Christianity in its membership. The *Manchester Guardian*—now *The Guardian*—was particularly supportive of it. British Liberalism in that era was a strange mixture of Christianist fundamentalism and intellectual Enlightenmentism. In its intellectual dimension it had an acute historical insight, through

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which it was aware that the Jewish States in Roman times had behaved intolerably towards their neighbours and had given the Roman Empire sufficient reason to destroy them. If the Jews were such an exceptional people that they had maintained themselves with integrity for two thousands of years after losing their state, and the irredentist claims of some of their leaders were now to be recognised, what grounds were there to suppose that the restored state would not behave as the state recognised by the Roman Empire had behaved?

A *Guardian* journalist, Herbert Sidebotham, puzzled over this. He explained in a book, *England And Palestine* (1918) that the new Jewish State would be a colony of the British Empire, and would be broken in to British ways, and would be carefully monitored by the Empire.

There were eminent Jews at the time who were sceptical of this scenario. A member of the wealthy Montefiori family, who was British upper class without ceasing to be Jewish, published pamphlets against the *Balfour Declaration* arguing that the formation of a Jewish State in Palestine would impel a revival of fundamentalism.

The critical moment came in 1947. The United Nations General Assembly (representing a minute fraction of the world; e.g., Ireland was not then a member) authorised the Partition of Palestine and the setting up of a Jewish State in one part of it. More than half of the territory was awarded to the Jews, who were a small minority in Palestine; and, in the territory awarded for the Jewish State, they were a bare majority of 51% according to some estimates, and a minority according to others.

It was Britain's business to give effect after 1945 to the project it had set in motion in 1917. Giving effect to it would have required rigorous policing. Jewish terrorist groups launched a "*War of Independence*" against Britain. The British attempt to curb them in order to effect an orderly transition was condemned as *Anti-Semitic*.

In the Labour Government that took over in Britain in 1945, the Foreign Secretary was Ernest Bevin. Bevin was a powerful Trade Union boss in a Trade Union system in which he had been a dominant force in the 1930s. In 1940 he was appointed to Churchill's Government and became a Government Minister and a Member of Parliament,

in that order. As Minister for Labour he organised the country for the war, and effectively ran the Government in domestic affairs.

In the first post-War Labour Government of 1945, he was removed by Labour leader Clement Attlee from the business of constructing the Welfare State, whose foundations he had laid, and was put in the Foreign Office, where he was surrounded by intellectuals.

Labour Conferences had adopted Zionist resolutions as a matter of course in the 1930s, without giving the matter any thought. On a couple of occasions a gesture was made towards considering what implementation of the *Balfour Declaration* involved in practice, which were stifled by condemnation.

When Bevin saw what he was expected to do as Foreign Secretary he was appalled. What had they fought the War for, if this was the first thing they were going to do after it?

His Junior Minister was Richard Crossman, a Leftish philosophy lecturer. Crossman, instead of helping Bevin to find a way around the problem, became a fanatical Zionist. He told the Zionist leader, Weizmann, that he was an anti-Semite because he was a Gentile, and all Gentiles had the bacillus of anti-Semitism in them. Weizmann did not disagree.

If you are not a Jew, and are therefore anti-Semitic as a fact of nature, and if it is a bad thing to be anti-Semitic, and if there is no remedy, what can you do about it? Crossman's answer was to facilitate Zionism in any way you can. He said that the British should have cleared the Arabs out of the way, so that the Jews would not have needed to do it for themselves in their new State.

What the Labour Government did with the Palestine problem it had created was to wash its hands of it. It made no attempt to implement the *Balfour Declaration* in accordance with its terms, or to implement the League Mandate. It gave up the matter to the United Nations but not to the Security Council—which had Executive power. It could not have washed its hands of it, on the Security Council, because it had the *Veto*. The General Assembly was given exceptional authority to decide what should be done, but it could not supervise the doing of it because it had no Executive power.

And so there was the *Nakba*. Unin-

hibited Zionist power reduced the Arab population in the territory awarded to it by the General Assembly, and expanded beyond that territory, until Britain belatedly deployed its *Jordan Arab Legion* into action so that it would not be entirely discredited in the eyes of the Arab states which were located over oil-wells.

At the same time the Labour Government "*gave India its independence*".

A few years earlier a Labour delegation had gone to India on behalf of Churchill's Government. The Indian leaders, who knew them well from their time together at LSE, were expecting a deal under which they would get independence in return for supporting the War. But they found that independence was out of the question. They found that they were expected to support the War for the sake of Empire and civilisation. They declared neutrality, as De Valera did. But they were not in power, as De Valera was. India was in the War anyway. And it got the Churchill Famine in which a million or two died. And Britain lost Burma to the Japanese because of supporting an American ultimatum to Japan, which was in effect a declaration of war. And the Japanese fostered a Burmese national movement which Britain could not suppress after the War. And the Burmese example was widely followed in India, its leader in India becoming a major national figure, Subhas Chandra Bose.

After 1945 Britain had no option but to leave India. But what it done in India in the course of the war meant that there could be no orderly withdrawal, as a Muslim separatist movement had been generated. Britain made a mess of India, washed its hands of it, and withdrew amid scenes of mass carnage.

(Charles James O'Donnell of Donegal was educated for the Indian Civil Service, was active in it for what he believed was the cause of civilisation, came to the conclusion that, under Lord Curzon's rule around 1900, things were being done which would result in sectarian Partition, retired and won a London seat in Parliament, in order to warn the English people about what was being done in its name. The English people paid no heed. It was perhaps naïve of him to suppose that the English people saw the Empire as anything other than a profit-cow, a market and source of cheap provisions.

What O'Donnell predicted about Bengal came about, but no notice has

been taken of O'Donnell by Irish academics who have written on India.

He published a book about the 1st World War which agreed in substance with what Connolly and Casement said. It was re-published by Athol Books.

When he died, O'Donnell left money to UCD to fund an Annual Lecture in his name. We could find no report of it ever being held.)

With regard to the Jewish State, it did not become a medium in which Jewish life was normalised. Most Jews chose not to go there. It never seemed likely that they would. Seventy years after its establishment, it remains a colonising state without Borders. The Borders al-

located by the General Assembly were discarded long ago and no new ultimate Borders have been asserted.

It is a state in which all of the Jews of the world have citizens' rights. And its continuation is dependent on Jews in the Diaspora exerting considerable influence on the states in which they live.

The campaign in Britain to brand Jeremy Corbyn as an Anti-Semite coincided with race laws being enacted in Israel. The branding of Rebecca Long-Bailey coincides with the Israeli decision to annex the territories it conquered and have the annexation recognised by the United States, thus blowing away the only point on which the United Nations retains a shred of credibility.

vitaly necessary that there should be in existence some body of people who can be depended on, even in the face of persecution, not to compromise their Socialist principles...[T]he ILP was the only British party I felt like joining—and also the only party I could join with at least the certainty that I would never be led up the garden path in the name of Capitalist democracy" (*Why I Joined the ILP*, June 1938).

If, as Orwell later said, Socialism was the making of him as a writer, then it was an ILP Socialism that made him. Many of his writings from the second half of the 1930s show a distinct Party influence—*Homage to Catalonia*, for instance, far and away the biggest selling non-fiction account of the Spanish Civil War in English, and *Coming Up For Air*, the last of his naturalistic novels. Both of these share the same revolutionary socialist outlook hinted at in the New Leader article—that fascism and democracy are two sides of the same capitalist coin; that Popular Fronts and liberal republics are not revolutionary and are in fact inimical to revolution; that the coming war with Germany will be the same old inter-capitalist struggle, this time with added aircraft; and that official anti-fascism was hypocritical and propagandist. The same ideas inform Orwell's more political reviews and journalism of that time—forget the Nazi mote, he argues, and look instead at the imperialist beam. One is as bad as the other, as indistinguishable as Tweedledee and Tweedledum. This fundamental similarity of Nazism and conventional democracy would, Orwell thought, become clear as soon as the War was underway and the democracies cancelled whatever freedoms they had allowed. Socialists, Orwell argued, should stand aside from this long-awaited conflict and instead prepare for revolution. Perhaps by sabotaging the home front, as Orwell and his friend the author, art historian and anarchist, Herbert Read, had plotted. Or by writing against it. Though Orwell's position at this time has sometimes been described as pacifist, he wasn't against all wars, only wars that had no revolutionary socialist relevance.

Much of Orwell's pre-War outlook comes together in his 1938 reviews of Searchlight on Spain by the Duchess of Atholl. The Duchess of Atholl—Katharine Stewart-Murray—was a Scottish Tory politician who supported the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War, on account of which she was sometimes called 'the Red Duchess'.

Martin Tyrrell

The View from Airstrip Two: Orwell, Ireland and the War
Part 4

Orwell, Dissidents and the War

For a brief period at the end of the 1930s, George Orwell was a Marxist. He was a Marxist in the sense that he was a member of a Marxist political party, the Independent Labour Party (ILP), which was, in turn, a member party of the International Revolutionary Marxist Centre, sometimes called the 'London Bureau' or, disparagingly, the 'Three and a Half International'. Orwell was formally an ILP member for little more than a year but his links to the Party date back to the early thirties when he began contributing to the *Adelphi*, not an ILP publication as such but one with strong ILP connections. (The *Adelphi* had been founded in the twenties by John Middleton Murry. Middleton Murry was ex-ILP by the time Orwell became an *Adelphi* contributor, having joined a breakaway group, the Independent Socialist Party. The split was organisational rather than ideological—the ISP thought the ILP was getting too centralised).

Orwell also worked in a bookshop owned by two ILP members. (ILP member Jon Kimche was his co-worker there. Kimche would later edit *Tribune* and write, among other books, *The Unfought Battle*, an account of how the Anglo-French declaration of war in defence of Poland was not followed up by any Anglo-French military engagement). It was through his ILP connections that

Orwell got to Spain in 1936, to serve with the militia of the POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista), the ILP's Spanish sister party in the London Bureau. But only in 1938 did he actually join up. Writing in the Party's paper, *The New Leader*, he gave his reasons:

"For some years past I have managed to make the Capitalist class pay me several pounds a week for writing books against Capitalism. But I do not delude myself that this state of affairs is going to last for ever. We have seen what has happened to the freedom of the press in Italy and Germany, and it will happen here sooner or later. The time is coming...when every writer will have the choice of being silenced altogether or of producing the dope that a privileged minority demands. I have got to struggle against that...And the only regime which, in the long run, will dare to permit freedom of speech is a Socialist regime...the ILP is the only British party—at any rate the only one large enough to be worth considering—which aims at anything I should regard as Socialism.

"I do not mean that I have lost all faith in the Labour Party...But we know what the recent history of the Labour Party has been, and we know the terrible temptation of the present moment—the temptation to fling every principle overboard in order to prepare for an Imperialist war. It is

Orwell doubted her sincerity. In *Homage to Catalonia* he depicts her as a kind of warzone tourist, the type who breezes in, stays in good hotels and sees what her sponsors want her to see. (All is well in the Spanish Republic, she concludes, though they are running low on coffee and butter—*"I hope they fund some butter for the Duchess"*, comments Orwell). Reviewing *Searchlight on Spain* (briefly and reasonably gently in *Time and Tide*; at some length and more acerbically in the *New English Weekly*), he comments that the Duchess follows the Communist line on the civil war to the extent that her book could as easily have been written by a Communist proper as by a politically eccentric Duchess. Pondering as to why a Conservative aristocrat might support the Republic and not Franco, he concludes that it is because she has worked out that Fascism is a threat to British interests. As a Conservative anti-fascist, she is in Orwell's view, operating as a kind of liaison officer, reaching out from the Establishment to the Left. And the Left—much of it, anyway—is proving responsive. Not Orwell, though. And not the ILP.

"The average English Left-winger is now a good imperialist, but he is still theoretically hostile to the English ruling class. The people who read the *New Statesman* dream of war with Germany, but they also think it necessary to laugh at Colonel Blimp. However, when the war begins they will be forming fours on the barrack square under Colonel Blimp's boiled blue eye. It is necessary to effect a reconciliation beforehand. That, I think, is the real function of books like [*Searchlight on Spain*]..."

As is now reasonably well-known, once war looked imminent Orwell, so he claimed, abruptly stopped opposing it and left the ILP. He dated the change to August 1939, to the night before the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact when, he claimed, he had had the kind of vivid dream worthy of an Old Testament prophet. In his dream, the war had already started and he was supportive of it. He noted that his support was due to the latent pull of the patriotism in which he had been drilled since childhood. The nation was in peril and he, *"a patriot after all"*, far from sabotaging its war effort, was keen to be a part of it. Rejected for military service on health grounds and dissatisfied with the Home Guard, Orwell would become a kind of propagandist broadcasting to India for the BBC.

I am sceptical of the dream story,

which Orwell does not tell until more than a year after the event. Indeed, from the declaration of war until April 1940, he has surprisingly little to say on the subject of the war, despite writing extensively whether for publication (e.g. the essay collection, *Inside the Whale*) or letters and diary entries. It is only in April 1940, in his review of Malcolm Muggeridge's *The Thirties*, that Orwell announces his own commitment to the war. And then in the autumn of that year comes *My Country, Right or Left*, which has the dream story. I think it more likely that Orwell was conflicted from around the time of the declaration as to which side he should be on and that it took time for him to decide.

He had had a pamphlet on the go at the end of the thirties—a work in progress setting out the revolutionary socialist case against war. That pamphlet never got beyond manuscript stage (although it was sufficiently advanced that Orwell pitched it to his agent) and the manuscript is now lost. It is lost when so little of Orwell's is lost. Which would suggest that it was Orwell himself that contrived to lose it. It was certainly fortuitous to his wartime role that it never saw the light of day.

A few months after *My Country, Right or Left*, came a further revision to his pre-war worldview. Orwell stopped regarding Fascism—or at any rate, the German version of it—as a variant of capitalism and regarded it instead as a kind of socialism. A deformed kind, of course, but in Orwell's view socialist enough to be more economically efficient than anything Britain had and thus a decided asset to Hitler's war. If Britain was serious about defeating Nazi Germany, he argued, it needed to revolutionise itself along German lines—to copy Germany's collectivised economy but also to see, as Hitler had, that the patriotism of the people, and of working class people especially, was something precious and powerful, to be made use of. War alone, said Orwell, or revolution alone, would mean a Nazi invasion. But war and revolution would win the war.

Aside from this revolutionary quirk, Orwell's was a largely conventional pro-War position based on received opinion post-Dunkirk—that France and Belgium had deserted Britain; that Britain now stood alone, the only thing keeping Hitler from European hegemony; and that Hitler's vision for Britain was for a Quisling state, to be achieved through invasion or negotiation. In Orwell's

wartime writings, negotiation is especially disparaged, its advocates a corrupt establishment fretting over its living standards. The prospects for a negotiated end to the war were never good but there was a slim chance around the middle of 1940 that government might prefer it to a prolonged war of attrition with no clear end in sight (*'Blood, toil, tears and sweat'*).

I do not think that Orwell ever quite acknowledged the extent to which he been opposed to the War and had only latterly become supportive of it, or that he had made so radical a break with what he had just lately believed. You would not get the impression from what he later commented about the ILP—*"I was for a while a member of the Independent Labour Party, but left them at the beginning of the present war because I considered that they were talking nonsense and proposing a line of policy that could only make things easier for Hitler"*—that he might ever have held that view himself, and held it to the extent of starting work on a pamphlet to propagandise it. *"The intellectuals who are at present pointing out that democracy and fascism are the same thing etc. depress me horribly..."*, he brazenly informs Gollancz in a letter at the start of 1940.

Orwell would justify his support for the War in a published debate with three British anarchists who opposed it—Alex Comfort, George Woodcock and Derek Savage. If these were pacifists, then they were pacifists in the revolutionary sense that Orwell himself had been one in the immediate pre-war period. The outcome of the war was of no matter to them. States were states, and states were dysfunctional, to be subverted by a spontaneous socialist order. They would fight as part of the subversion and in defence of it. And they would fight against a Nazi regime were one to be established in Britain. (Apropos of this, Middleton Murry, who was a kind of patron to the anarchists, as he was to Orwell, said that pacifists were the only true anti-fascists as they would resist it when all others had made their peace with it).

Orwell had a history with anarchism that did not make him inclined to be completely dismissive of it. In his pre-socialist/anti-socialist days, he had styled himself a 'Tory anarchist'. Later, in Spain, although he had joined the POUM militia, he had not quite got with its programme. But he had been much taken by the Barcelona anarchists. *Homage*

to *Catalonia* opens with his eulogy of their achievement. In a letter to Cyril Connolly he writes: "*I have seen wonderful things and at last really believe in socialism, which I never did before.*" In Orwell's account, a full-scale economic and cultural revolution is underway in Barcelona with the anarchists in the process of abolishing the middle class, the Catholic Church, gratuities in hotels and restaurants, even the polite/deferential second person plural. They have, superficially anyway, collectivised the entire city right down to its bootblacks whose boxes of brushes and polish are now painted in the anarchist colours. Only the prostitutes resist though re-education is underway.

Orwell does not dwell on how this revolutionary situation might have come about, whether a little coercion—or a great deal of it—might have had to be applied. He is especially pleased that the middle class has proletarianised itself or is lying low, and that church property has been looted and vandalised. And like many an observer of revolutionary work in progress he manages to stop short of wondering if anyone might have objected to this and what might have happened to them if they did. Channeling Colonel Blimp, Orwell regrets the anarchists' failure to dynamite Gaudí's Sagrada Família basilica—"one of the most hideous buildings in the world", he writes. "*Unlike most of the churches in Barcelona it was not damaged during the revolution—it was spared because of its "artistic value", people said. I think the Anarchists showed bad taste in not blowing it up when they had the chance...*" In fact, the anarchists did try to blow up the basilica and did succeed in destroying the workshop and most of the architectural plans and models.

Unlike its Catalan counterpart, British anarchism was largely theoretical. Comfort, Woodcock and Savage, all were literary men. Comfort was the most prominent of the three. A recently qualified doctor, he also wrote fiction and poetry. Published and well-regarded at the time, that side of his work is now largely forgotten. Like Orwell, however, he would go on to achieve belated success when his *Joy of Sex* became an international bestseller in the 1970s. Comfort's relationship with Orwell would in time become amicable enough on the surface—Orwell genuinely admired Comfort's poetry and was never slow to recommend it and Comfort would go on to publish Orwell's *Looking Back on the*

Spanish War in the journal *New Road* in 1943 offering fulsome editorial praise for Orwell as a writer—"the most talented contemporary exponent of political writing as a literary form". But while Orwell wrote gratefully to Comfort, he also complained to the American socialist writer Dwight MacDonald that the published piece had been "*mutilated*". The sections Comfort omitted dealt with the falsification, during the Spanish Civil War, of current news, and also the re-writing of history, themes Orwell would explore in *Nineteen Eighty-four*. Orwell might have been particularly unhappy that Comfort had cut his comment that "*there is hardly such a thing as a war in which it makes no difference who wins. Nearly always one side stands more or less for progress, the other more or less for reaction*", since that was relevant to the then current war and was obviously at odds with what Comfort thought of it. It is unlikely, however, that Comfort cut Orwell's essay as an act of censorship. In his editorial, he is open that what he has published is an excerpt from a larger work and even gives a fair summary of what he has not included.

Comfort's was one of the names on the now notorious list Orwell gave to the International Research Department (IRD), a branch of the Foreign Office. Celia Kirwan of the IRD had asked him to advise on writers and others who might make useful international propagandists and Orwell had replied with a list of who not to invite—people he suspected were either Communists or Communist fellow travellers. Comfort, he advised the IRD,

"is pacifist-anarchist. Main emphasis anti-British. Subject very pro-German during war, appears temperamentally pro-totalitarian. Not morally courageous. Has a crippled hand." [Comfort had lost some fingers when he was fourteen, the result of an accident with a firework. Why this might interest the IRD is not obvious].

Accusing him of a lack of moral courage seems particularly unfair. Though Comfort was against the war and therefore did not join up, he had worked in emergency medicine in London during the Blitz. Orwell—formerly Eric Blair—might also have been getting at Comfort for occasionally writing pseudonymously, which is a bit rich. Details regarding Orwell's IRD list began to be published around thirty years ago, during Comfort's lifetime—he died in 2000. However, he was in poor health

in his final years and the details were apparently kept from him.

Orwell would build a stronger and more consistent friendship with Woodcock, a Canadian academic whose *Crystal Spirit* was an early and generally appreciative assessment of Orwell's life and writing. Derek Savage, however, would nurse a lasting grudge. In his 1983 essay, *The Fatalism of George Orwell*, he writes:

"Orwell's works do not have the integrity of art because the man himself did not have the integrity of the true artist...As a one-eyed man in the country of the blind he has been elevated to a position of eminence from which, with a change of mood and circumstance, he is bound to be dislodged."

The debate itself was sparked by some comments Orwell made in the American journal, *Partisan Review*. It was carried over into *Tribune* where Orwell and Comfort thrashed it out again...in verse. What particularly irked the anarchists was Orwell's claim that opposition to the war benefited Hitler and was therefore objectively pro-Nazi—in effect, the enemy of my war effort is my enemy's friend.

A few years earlier, Orwell himself had been indignant when the Spanish Communists had levelled the same accusation—objective pro-fascism—at the POUM and its militia. The POUM had always made clear where it stood. It was fighting Franco, not just to save the Republic, but to revolutionise it as well. To the Communists, however, this kind of talk was unhelpful. It jeopardised the Republican war effort, which was reliant on moderate support. By jeopardising Republican unity, the POUM were benefiting Franco and were therefore, ultimately—objectively—pro-fascist. (A Communist cartoon at the time showed the POUM as a mask concealing a Nazi face). In *Homage to Catalonia*, Orwell gets quite heated at this accusation, but it was not without justification. I can see how the POUM's doctrinaire revolutionary position might have put people off the Republic, for instance, and just at a time when Franco was getting the upper hand. And since the POUM (and the Catalan anarchists, who took a similar view) were reasonably numerous and influential, I can see how they might have had a negative effect on the Republican war effort.

By contrast, in Britain in the early 1940s, people who opposed the War were a small and insignificant minority

with little influence. (And the anarchists were a fringe on that fringe). The only significant opposition to the War—the only opposition that might actually have ended it—was the pro-negotiation faction within the Government and its opportunity had largely gone by the second half of 1940. It is possible that a few people here and there might have been influenced by some anti-war talk to the extent that it made them that little bit less enthusiastic for the War. And in that small way, they might have been useful to Hitler. But there was never any significant civic movement against the war and, after 1940, little chance of one emerging.

Orwell himself, writing at the start of 1941, reckoned that organised opposition to the War had perhaps 150,000 supporters dispersed across a number of groups and parties that, he said, mistakenly "*assume the common man is not patriotic*". These were: the Peace Pledge Union (PPU—by far the largest anti-war group in Britain); the Communist Party (this was before Barbarossa); Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF); and Orwell's former comrades, the ILP. In contrast to these, with their 150,000 members, the Home Guard had had a couple of million recruits in its first few months. Orwell also noted that, in by-elections since the start of the War, anti-war candidates had performed badly, struggling to save their deposit.

So commented Orwell in an article entitled *Our Opportunity* ('our' being socialists for whom the War was an opportunity for revolution). At the same time as he was writing *Our Opportunity*, Orwell was writing his *London Letter* for the April/May 1941 edition of *Partisan Review*. Here too he mentions the 150,000, only now they are described as the combined membership of "*the pro-Hitler organisations*". The BUF is pro-Hitler—no great surprise there—but so too are the Communist Party and the ILP, of which he had lately been a member. Also, the PPU. The PPU, he tells the *Review's* readers, is an organisation in decline,

"but many of the surviving pacifists now spin a line of talk indistinguishable from that of the Blackshirts ("Stop this Jewish war", etc)."

He goes on to allege that there is some crossover membership between the PPU and the Blackshirts, so that some pacifists are not merely 'objective' fascists, they are actual fascists. Neither of these accusations—that the PPU was pushing a similar line to the fascists

and that there was considerable fascist infiltration of the PPU—were eccentric. Many at the time thought the same. The PPU and the fascists certainly wanted to end the war. To that extent their respective lines were similar. But it was unfair (and irresponsible) to say that their common ground was any greater than that. Unlike the fascists, for instance, the PPU was generally critical of racism and imperialism and, like Orwell in the immediate pre-war years, thought imperialism was comparable to or even worse than what was going on in Italy and Germany. Fascist infiltration of the PPU appears to have been small.

More distinctive (not to say puzzling) was Orwell's opinion that some pacifists were transitioning into fascists because their taste for peace had, in some way, brought on a taste for authoritarian government—"people who have started by renouncing violence", he said "[end] by championing Hitler". Orwell would maintain this strange and unevidenced opinion for several years. In his 1945 *Notes on Nationalism*, he writes 'there is a minority of intellectual pacifists whose real though unadmitted motive appears to be hatred of western democracy and admiration for totalitarianism'.

All of these arguments—that pacifists are, variously, objective, actual or incipient fascists—are dusted off for Orwell's 1941 review of Alex Comfort's novel *No Such Liberty*. I have not read Comfort's book, which is long out of print. From Orwell's account of it—he dismisses it as a tract dressed up as fiction—its protagonist is a German doctor, a refugee (I'm guessing Jewish) who evades internment in Germany only to be interned (as an enemy alien) in Britain. After some loss and hardship, he finds asylum in the United States.

Comfort, says Orwell, implies a moral equivalence between Britain and Nazi Germany—just as Orwell himself had before the War. In contrast with his pre-War opinion, Orwell now writes that Britain is a more tolerant and liberal society than Nazi Germany, and that that is precisely why people are fleeing Germany for Britain, and not the other way about. If people are fleeing Germany for Britain, their respective political systems must be different and the difference must be in Britain's favour. And if the difference is in Britain's favour, then the case against the War falls. But for the War, Orwell contends, there would now be a Nazi Britain and anarchist pacifists like Comfort, who can currently operate with

only a little discouragement, would be silenced.

Orwell's review of Comfort's book has the title *No, Not One*, from Romans—"There is none righteous, no, not one". Not the combatants. And not the pacifists either. The pacifists, Orwell claims, might not themselves be fighting, but they are freeloading on the willingness of others to do so. "*Those who 'abjure' violence*", he would write in *Notes on Nationalism*, "*can only do so because others are committing violence on their behalf*".

That is valid, I think, only if there was any realistic chance that Nazi Germany might invade Britain. A successful Nazi invasion of Britain was, I suppose, a possibility in 1940. But there was little chance of it any time after that. When it was a possibility, significant action was taken against people who were thought potential Fifth Columnists—fascists, pacifists, communists, people of Italian descent, even refugees from Nazi Germany. But this lessened as the chances of an invasion faded. And, as the chances of invasion faded, government interest in the people who might in some way be useful to it faded too. If pacifists were left largely alone in Britain after about 1941, it was because they were no longer officially perceived as a threat to the war effort.

Orwell restated his arguments against pacifism—against opposition to the War—in the spring 1942 edition of *Partisan Review*. Once again there is the 'objective' pro-fascism of the pacifists and "*the overlap between fascism and pacifism, both of which overlap to some extent with 'left' extremism*". And then something new—the pacifists' strong "*anti-semitic motif...soft-pedalled in print*". Take the *Adelphi*, he says, which has gone in for what he calls mild "*Jew-baiting*". Also, Woodcock's magazine *Now*, which he alleges has provided a platform for a range of anti-War opinions including those of fascists and fascist fellow travellers. Fellow travellers such as Julian Symons, who Orwell claims writes in a fascist style with a few Leninist whistles and bells. A Jewish Trotskyist, Symons was an unlikely fascist. He later befriended Orwell, recalling the following in an interview with George Woodcock for Canadian radio in the 1970s:

"I wasn't predisposed to like him... To be even slightly linked with fascism in 1944 (sic) was no joke. But as soon as I met him, I did actually like him

very much... [A]fter about half an hour or so, he said in a gruff, apologetic tone, "Very sorry I called you a fascist or pretty well called you a fascist. I shouldn't have said that"..."

Orwell did this a few times in his dealings with the anarcho-pacifists, make a sweeping accusation in print, then afterwards, and in private, soothe and charm the person on the receiving end. At any rate, it was this particular *London Letter*, in Spring 1942, that prompted the anarchists to respond. Their replies to Orwell, and Orwell's reply to their replies, appear in the subsequent edition of the periodical that autumn. The debate itself is fairly pedestrian—a restatement of familiar positions.

Only Woodcock makes anything of Orwell's pre-war ILP past ("*Comrade Orwell returns to his old imperialist allegiances and works at the BBC conducting British propaganda to fox the Indian masses*"), while Derek Savage expresses something like Orwell's own ambivalence towards Nazi Germany—"There would", he writes, "*be a profound justice... however terrible, in a German victory*".

With some *chutzpah* Orwell takes the anarchists to task for being slow off the mark in getting wise to Fascism. They seem (or affect) to believe, he says, that the War began in 1939 and this enables them, so he alleges, to avoid mentioning Japanese aggrandisement in China, Italy's annexation of Ethiopia, the Spanish Civil War, or the invasion of Poland. Nor do they mention the persecution of the Jews under Hitler.

But on all of these, aside from Spain, Orwell himself had had little to say at the time. On Ethiopia/Abyssinia, for instance, the earliest reference by him that I can find is a 1935 letter to his friend and former flatmate, Rayner Heppenstall, in which he mentions a Communist factoid that Lawrence of Arabia is still alive and living there. There is a handful of other, passing references that indicate a conventional sympathy on Orwell's part with the Ethiopians following the Italian invasion, but nothing more than that. As for the Jews in Nazi Germany, the pre-War Orwell offered no opinion on how the refugees might be accommodated in Britain and the other democracies. In his review of *No Such Liberty*, he comments:

"There are probably sixty thousand German refugees in this country and there would be hundreds of thousands more if we had not meanly kept them out."

But he had nothing to say on the restrictive immigration policy when it was a live political issue. And, even after war was declared, he took the various complimentary rumours that were doing the rounds about the refugees sufficiently seriously to investigate them, concluding, following a cursory investigation, that there was something in them—a conclusion he had hopes of publishing.

Orwell did not defend in print his claims of anti-Semitism among the anti-War groups. The anarchists had written their side of the *Partisan Review* debate in May 1942 and Orwell his rejoinder in July. And the whole exchange was published in the Autumn. But, a few days after he had written his contribution, and several months before it was published, Orwell wrote privately to Comfort to say that he would like to discuss this aspect of the debate privately. The background, he writes, is that Max Plowman (an *Adelphi* Editor who had died the previous month, June 1941) had been notoriously but privately anti-Semitic ("*hated Jews*", says Orwell). Plowman had generally kept this side of him in check but occasionally it had slipped out all the same, such as when he reviewed John Macmurray's *The Clue to History*, "*a rather unbalanced book*", said Orwell, "*and extremely pro-Jew (sic) in tendency*".

(Orwell was one of a number of *Adelphi* reviewers who reviewed the book when it was published in 1938. In his review he suggested that Macmurray's depiction of the Jews as a kind of advance guard of civilisation, and Hitler as a kind of reactionary block on that advance, was irresponsible.

Though Orwell would invite Macmurray, a philosopher and theologian associated with the Student Christian Movement, to broadcast on the BBC, Macmurray would, like Alex Comfort, end up on Orwell's list of Communists and fellow-travellers. If Max Plowman was an anti-Semite, he was an unusual one, since he publicly supported the mass resettlement of German Jewish refugees in Britain, regardless of the economic cost).

Orwell also recalls that Middleton Murry (he may have intended to type Plowman) had "*at least once referred with apparent approval to Hitler's 'elimination' of the Jews*". But this is mere anecdote.

All in all, Orwell seems to me to offer fairly thin evidence on which to

make a valid charge of anti-Semitism against the *Adelphi* and pacifism in general. The thinness of the evidence is probably why Orwell wanted it kept out of print. Comfort wrote back to Orwell, seemingly accepting what he said about Plowman and Middleton Murry and accepting his reasons for wanting to keep his comments between themselves. He also thanks him for his review of *No Such Liberty*, which he says has given him food for thought.

The *Partisan Review* debate was followed around a year later by the debate in (at times somewhat laboured) verse in *Tribune*—a poem by Comfort (writing as Obadiah Hornbooke), entitled *Letter to an American Visitor* and Orwell's rejoinder, *As One Non-Combatant to Another*. It is perhaps indicative that opposition to the War had ceased to be part of practical politics that the debate is conducted in poetry and that, for both writers, the main preoccupation is which of them is the deadhead conformist and which the principled dissenter. Thus Comfort:

"They catch the poets straight from
Cam or Isis:

"Join the brigade, or be forever
dumb—

Either cash in on your artistic lysis
Or go on land work if you won't
succumb:

Rot in the Army, sickened and un-
willing"

So can you wonder that they draw
their shilling?"

And Orwell:

"It pays to stay at home and be a
writer

While other talents wilt in Nissan
huts...

And in the drowsy freedom of the
island

You're free to shout that England
isn't free;

They even chuck you cash as bears
get buns

For crying "Peace!" behind a screen
of guns."

Where Comfort focuses on animal metaphors—he and his fellow anarcho-pacifists are lions and those who support the war are variously lapdogs, residents of Monkey Hill (at London Zoo), '*Laureate of Monkeys*', the '*simian crew*'—Orwell suggests the pacifists are a self-regarding (and effeminate) clique:

"Each little mob of pansies is a
world,

Cosy and warm in any kind of weather;
In such a world it's easy to "object",
Since that's what both your friends and foes expect."

Orwell, on the other hand, sees himself as the maverick, disowned by the Left, the 'pinks':

"I wrote in nineteen-forty that at need
I'd fight to keep the Nazis out of Britain;
And Christ! how shocked the pinks were! Two years later
I hadn't lived it down; one had the effrontery
To write three pages calling me a "traitor"
So black a crime it is to love one's country.
Yet where's the pink that would have thought it odd of me
To write a shelf of books in praise of sodomy."

On Churchill, Orwell writes:

"Which will sound better in the days to come
Blood, toil and sweat or kiss the Nazi's bum."

But also:

"I'd gladly shoot him when the war is won..."

Orwell would remain a supporter of the War for its duration and did not appear to regret his having changed sides in 1939-40. To that extent, the debate with the anarchists, prose or poetry, had no impact. But I think it might have made him feel less comfortable in his role as what amounted to a propagandist, or at least become more acutely aware of his discomfort. If the Duchess of Atholl was a liaison officer for the Establishment to the Left, Orwell after 1939 was arguably the same.

"For heaven's sake don't think I don't see how they are using me", he wrote to Woodstock towards the end of 1942. "I doubt whether I shall stay in this [BBC] job very much longer..."

And in fact he left it the following year, around the same time that he began to concede that he had overstated the chances for Socialism during the War. Eventually, via his *As I Please* column in *Tribune*, he would reject as well his earlier equation of Pacifism and Fas-

cism, grudgingly and circuitously like his roundabout apology to Julian Symons:

"The same propaganda tricks are to be found almost everywhere'... It would take many pages of this paper merely to classify them, but here I draw attention to one very widespread controversial habit—disregard of an opponent's motives. The key-word here is "objectively". We are told that it is only people's objective actions that matter, and their subjective feelings are of no importance. Thus, pacifists, by obstructing the war effort, are "objectively" aiding the Nazis: and therefore the fact that they may be personally hostile to Fascism is irrelevant. I have been guilty of saying this myself more than once..." (December 1944, emphasis mine).

And having, for much of the War, abandoned his pre-War equation of Colonialism and Fascism, Orwell would come back to it. "*I should be the last to claim that we are morally superior to our enemies*", he informed the readers of *Tribune*, "*there is quite a strong case for saying that British imperialism is actually worse than Nazism*". When the

Duchess of Atholl asked him to join her League for European Freedom at the end of 1945, he turned her down. The League, he complained, had nothing to say against Imperialism. Also, it was a Tory grouping. "*I belong to the Left*", he told her, "*and must work inside it...*"

Orwell did not cease being a socialist when he changed from opposing the War to supporting it. (He never did cease to be a socialist.) It is in wartime propagandist writings like *The Lion and the Unicorn* that his advocacy of Socialism is uncharacteristically enthusiastic. He even has an uncharacteristic good word to say about Progress, physical exercise and even the suburbs. By contrast, the writings that made his name suggest a deep disillusion—revolutions that have taken a perhaps inevitable totalitarian turn, sustained by lies and conformity, and, in *Nineteen Eighty-four*, have resulted in a society where wartime propaganda is one of the few obvious economic activities. It is a novel that seems to draw greatly (and negatively) on Orwell's own wartime role and to mark his rejection of his wartime vision.

Hugh Duffy

Perfidious 'Toy Show' Should Be Ditched By RTÉ

With so much discussion on the role of RTÉ in its provision of public service broadcasting, it is timely to question the relevance of the annual *Toy Show*.

We live in a society where we have 10,000 citizens homeless, including 4,000 children. We have families existing on 'gig' employment. Employees in this bottom stratum of society earn the minimum wage and are not sure if their job will be there tomorrow or indeed whether they will be sent home after journeying into work. Our politicians regard this 'zero-hours' employment as acceptable and its existence is lauded as evidence of full employment.

I joined RTÉ as Deputy Financial Controller in August 1961, before RTÉ opened on 31st December 1961. As matter of interest the annual budget in the first few years was IR£2m for the combined radio and television offering, including the Symphony and Light

Orchestras.

The highest paid contributor was Paddy Crosbie for his *School Around The Corner*, which commenced in 1954 and transferred to TV in 1962. *The Late Late Show* was the brainchild of Tom McGrath, which went ahead on a rolling contract basis against the view of Programme Controller Michael Barry (BBC).

I can remember in the early '60s, if you wished to buy toys out of the Christmas season, there was only one shop selling them in Dublin. It was in Henry Street, where RTÉ bought toys as prizes for children's programmes.

Today we have large toy emporiums in all the major cities, which must be as delighted as the UK manufacturers are, who actually sell us 95pc of our toys.

Their profits are helped by our public service broadcaster, whose perfidious '*Toy Show*' displays an array of toys that

pressurise parents to yield to the pester power of their children, who are themselves subjected to peer pressure from their young friends.

Ex-RTÉ Authority member Bob Quinn, who objected to the 'Toy Show'

on the above grounds, saw his arguments ignored by RTÉ, as I am sure the case will be ignored again. RTÉ will argue the programme has a big audience and attracts many advertisers, which is not a case for a public service broadcaster!

It was easier then to do that and not be deported. A future brother-in-law of mine, an Indian Muslim and engineer officer in the Indian Navy, did that when he and an Indian crew were sent to Belfast to collect a refurbished aircraft carrier, which India had bought.

Wilson John Haire

Culture And Racial Stereotypes

[Editorial Note:

Green Party leader Eamon Ryan was widely slated after quoting in the Dail the words of a young mixed-race Irish boy about the insults hurled at him. This attempt to counter racist attitudes entailed using what is now known as "the n-word". Ryan said:

"Again, in a newspaper today there was a young Irishman, Sean Gillane, giving his experience of being othered.

"From the age of six being given that name, you nigger.

"And explained that sense of how it completely undermines people.

"I know friends and relations of colour in this country and travellers and other minorities speak of the same experience. It's real."

There was an immediate backlash for using the full word instead of saying "the n-word". Typical of the critics was Irish Solidarity—People Before Profit TD Paul Murphy, who tweeted that the word is "rooted in brutality, violence and slavery" and condemned its use. Also many of Ryan's social media 'followers' "cancelled" Ryan. This seems to carry sensitivity to extremes! The following account of racial attitudes in the past serves to provide some perspective. Ed.]

Our Inner Statues

Today the move is on to destroy everything that marks the past as being negative.

I suppose you could call it street-furniture, such as statues to slave-owners and statues to people of Empire. But what about the inner statues that you can't destroy, for to destroy them is to destroy yourself? If you are old enough, you were probably a racist without being aware of it: for society was racist through its media, commercial life, and its judiciary. That society was Northern

Ireland, the only one I knew from birth, back then.

The N-word was around until the 1950s and was freely used by most people.

Drapers' shops in Central Belfast labelled some of clothing as N-Brown, wool for knitting was also labelled that. Food products in jars had the golliwog image. That golliwog, with its stripped trousers, red coat, bow-tie, huge hairdo, large eyes and wide mouth, was a sort of rag-doll, created by Florence Kate Upton for her children's books in the 19th Century.

Schoolbooks for children in Britain during the 1930s, had a series of *Little Sambo* tales, about the cute Piccaninny, with the large eyes and the wide mouth, the full lips, the massive hair.

You can still buy *The Three Golliwogs*, written by Enid Blyton and Rene Cloke today from Amazon. [Her *Ten Little Niggers* has, however, been renamed Ed.] ß Also available is the music of *The Golliwogs*, an American white rock band that started in 1959, also from Amazon.

There were also black dolls for children. It was the white doll with the usual European features, made black. And there were the smaller black plastic dolls on a string being sold. I remember my daughter at five, in London, during the early 1960s passing a market stall, and she wanting one and I buying it and then realising in the street, as she bounced it on its elastic string, that every black person passing was looking at it as if they were being hanged. I wasn't being sensitive enough to others, though I was by that time a conscious anti-racist.

There were a few black men around the Belfast docks during the late 1940s/1950's. They may have jumped ship.

The few black men in Belfast were treated well. People would stop them in the street and talk to them. NI, despite its history, has some of the friendliest people this side of the world. The shipyard I remember as full of warm humanity. If you (a Catholic) had forgotten your 'piece' (sandwiches), your Protestant workmates were quick to share their 'piece'. No wasn't an option. This might sound contradictory but no one can think you a threat to their national being 24/7.

A black doctor in East Belfast was very popular and had more patients that he could handle. Maybe for the wrong reason. People felt black doctors has special powers of healing. They probably thought of Africa and Ju-Ju—witchdoctor magic. The doctor may have come from Liverpool.

About 1944, the rubble from the German blitz had been cleared away and the thought was the Germans wouldn't be back after their four air raids during 1941.

In High Street a large square empty space had been left by the German bombs. It was immediately nicknamed Blitz Square. (Later it would also become known as Red Square, due to the CPNI holding regular meetings there.) Barry Amusements, a Funfair, set themselves up on Blitz Square with a series of temporary wooden buildings and tents.

Also there were individuals doing acts, like one from the traveller community, who swallowed a 6 foot long chain, bringing it up with what looked like blood, causing the women in the audience to scream and the men to grow pale.

Getting closer—if you could avoid their whirling bullwhip, deployed to make a circle which kept the audience at bay, you could see that the man had deliberately eaten tomatoes.

There was also the bed of nails (blunted nails); and the bed of nails with a large rock on the chest to be broken by a volunteer. Of course, the larger the rock, the more it took the impact of the sledgehammer away from the chest of the man lying on the bed-of-nails. All good fun for a few pennies given in the whip-round.

Barry's had the most exotic act—black performers dressed in African clothes, carrying snakes, selling amulets and magic potions. Half naked black girls handled and danced with the snakes to drums being beaten with chants by their men folk. Later the sale was on, with magic African beans and curios.

It seemed WW2 had deserted this part of the world.

*

I was 12 years old and I did the shopping in Belfast, travelling in by bus from Carryduff. My reward was a trip to the cinema matinee on a Saturday: to either the Apollo or the Curzon on the Ormeau Road. Sometimes I visited the Apollo. They were a bit jumpy there because of my two bags of shopping. The manager would be called and he took the shopping into his office, saying to the usherette: "*Don't let him leave until I examine these bags.*" The IRA were active in Belfast during WW2 and I was aware of that.

The Apollo was thought of as a Catholic cinema, that I also knew, while further up the Ormeau Road the Curzon was a Protestant cinema. They also seemed bothered by the two shopping bags, which were also taken into the manager's office.

In the queue outside some of the children were smoking cinnamon, the stuff that came in the length of a cigarette and was sold in sweet shops to children. It burnt okay when lit and crackled, letting off cinnamon fumes . . .

On one occasion a young black man came in, as the manager was handling my two shopping bags at the Apollo. He nearly dropped them at the sight of the man, but he welcomed him. Five minutes into watching *The Three Stooges*, before the main film, an attendant came round with a large brass spray and sprayed the whole cinema. Obvious I had no idea about racism then, but I maybe thought it was being done because of the young black man being in the cinema.

I was quite countrified, naive and not in the least street-wise. I had my own problems with sectarianism. If the Curzon was being sprayed suddenly during the showing of *The Three Stooges* I might have thought it was being done because of my presence there. But I just couldn't connect up the two scenarios and might even have felt the spraying at the Apollo was right as adults knew better.

At Barry's Amusements the black half-naked girls stopped dancing with the snakes to bring them round the audi-

ence to touch. I was surprised how silky their skin was. You could feel the body-heat that the girls' bodies were giving off, after the dance turned into a frenzy to drumbeats and chanting in a strange tongue by the men. Looking back now it was obvious they were acting out a white image of themselves.

Every black entertainer coming to Belfast did that. Some were American who were well-practised in the US of giving off the white image of themselves. There was the appalling joke I heard from two black comedians. One says to another:

"*I was an accident and lost my knee. What am I going to do!*"

The other answers:

"*Don't worry, Ne-gro.*"

In the shipyard as an apprentice, another lad said to me when we were discussing Barry's Amusements.

"'Member them Ns there? They came from Liverpool!"

At the *African* show I had spent a shilling of the shopping money to buy a small bottle filled with a yellow liquid. It was supposed to be a cure-all. My father was ill and I bought it for him. Then I got a sudden dreadful feeling that, having spent the shilling, I was in-for-it when I got home. My mother, to my surprise wasn't annoyed at me spending a shilling like that, after I explained where I bought it. She even joked about it being "*black man's piss*". (She never used the N-word. Covent-educated, there was that Black-Baby charity going on. My father drank the medicine and later said he felt better. I had made him feel better so no smack on the back of the head for wasting his hard-earned money.)

My father had spent 7 years in New York (1923 – 1930) and was used to seeing black people. He had visited Harlem and was surprised to see that even the cops there were black. But it was still an apartheid system in the US and he was always uneasy about what they might do to people like him.

There was a movement there by black activists, calling for a separate homeland within the US, and he thought that might be a good idea. His friends were Germans and Poles. He never came in contact with the black community, whether it was working or socialising, so he never understood anything about

them. But, back in Belfast, he never used the N-word, which was being said all around him.

Neither was he going to be anti-Semitic, as he had worked mostly in New York with Jews in the antique business, repairing furniture as a joiner/cabinet-maker.

The year I was born, 1932, was the year of the *Outdoor Relief Riots* in Belfast. 'Outdoor Relief' was road-making during unemployment in return for food tokens (as opposed to *Indoor Relief*, admission to the Workhouse).

We lived in either Denmark Street or Spencer Street, around Carlisle Circus.

Our home was a ramshackle house in disrepair and we lived in one room. The whole house was rented by a Jewish-German tailor, so he rented out a room to supplement his earnings. I was told his treadle sewing machine was going sometimes 18 hours a day and still he wasn't making much from the tailoring firms who threw him a few jobs now and then.

In the then casual anti-Semitic atmosphere of Belfast my father got along with Jews, even when they hurt him. On one occasion he got a job as a cabinet-maker with a Jewish company, when the shipyard had made him redundant. That was in 1953. I also had been made redundant. After working there for six weeks he told me there were vacancies for cabinetmakers. I applied and got the job. The day I started work he was made redundant.

It looked liked the company had a policy of only employing for six weeks. It was a new-broom-sweeps-clean syndrome. People leaving with him were talking about Jewish sharp practices, but he never joined them in that kind of talk. It was going on in Christian-controlled workshops as well.

This workshop was in Corporation Street. Further down this street was the Labour Exchange with its long queue of people signing-on.

My father had got on well with the boss's son, who was a supervisor. He had failed his medical exams a few times and his father had forced him into the factory to work, wearing his white would-be doctor coat as a factory dust-coat. He saw his father as a tyrant but he didn't seem to have the strength to walk out.

What was prominent in papers like the *Belfast Telegraph* was the arrest of

Indian seamen on ships in the port for having on them Indian Hemp (cannabis). They got five years in prison plus racial comments from the magistrates/judges. They were called *Lascars*, Britain's colonial seamen, and were used as such well past the date of India's independence of the 15th August 1947. They wore traditional clothes and their own hand-made shoes of soft leather with curly toes.

When in Belfast, they hung around Barry's Amusement with a strange smell around them as they smoked cannabis, which I knew nothing about back then. They wouldn't have been paid Union rates because of their racial status and wouldn't have had enough to pay the ladies-of-the-night whom they were looking for.

Passenger ships crewed by Lascars also had Indian waiters from Goa. They were more sophisticated in the eyes of the shipyardmen, though they were Catholics. These were the wheeler-dealers in the selling of tin boxes of 100 cigarettes, of the most popular brands, to the shipyard workers. They wore suits and ties.

These Indian crews were surprised at how friendly people were in Belfast. The exception was some teenage shipyard worker, aged around 14 or 15 who began to make knives and carry them in fear of being sexually molested by the Indian crews.

I couldn't see any evidence of this in the shipyard. I used to fish with them from the shipyard wharves at lunch-time (dinner-time) for they too were friendly.

There were incidents of sexual predation against the young teenagers on occasions, but these were by some shipyardmen which was generally ignored. Openly gay shipyardmen were tolerated in this macho atmosphere and joked with about their sexuality.

There were incidents happening around Barry's Amusements, as far as I heard, caused by some of the cannabis-smoking Lascars. But that wouldn't be unusual as such places were the haunt of all kinds of sexual predators.

As a young teenager in the Young Workers' League I was getting street-wise. A young Sudanese student at Queen's University used to come to our meetings. A few of us also socialised with him at the week-ends. The Sudanese were much blacker than the Liverpool blacks at Barry's Amusements shows.

In Summer he became even blacker with the sun. He complained about not being able to get a girlfriend. Even the YWL young lady members didn't want to know him. He said he could hardly study anymore as all he saw on the text-book pages were naked women.

So one Saturday night we brought him round to Donegall Street, where the ladies-of-the-night hung out. He asked how much and each one he went to said: *"You're kind is double the price."* It was a price he couldn't afford out of his grant. The girls had a price-ring and a closed shop. Anyone trying to bring down the price was driven out.

Donegall Street at night wasn't the place for my friends and I, but we tried to do a pal a favour, while we held our noses: as arrogant as you can get.

In reading a James Bond book, in the 1960s, by author Ian Fleming, *To Russia With Love*, he describes 007's opponent Donald 'Red' Grant's birth, as played by Robert Shaw, being the result of a meeting with a prostitute at Barry's Amusement, Belfast. The price—half-a-crown. I was indignant at the time of him devaluing Northern Ireland, especially Belfast, momentarily forgetting the poisonous set-up of sectarianism. Half-a-crown was just too cheap and humiliating for the working-girls, I thought.

Derry has had an Indian community since the early 1950s. They mostly run small businesses and so were not having to work directly with white Derry. But the Indian Muslim, I mentioned as jumping ship in Belfast, was now married to my sister and living in Derry.

He had the amazing ability of taking Degree after Degree in the Open University and absorbing and keeping the mostly engineering and early computer information in his head. He got a job in a factory, computerising it for making cigarette-making machines. The workers were mostly from the Nationalist Bogside. He complained of racism. I tried to figure it out with him, thinking at the time how could the Bogside be racist while undergoing sectarianism and gerrymandering under the Unionist Government. I was the victim of utopian socialism back then, a naive way to think.

Another angle was: maybe it wasn't racist but the shop floor attitude towards management and anyone who wore a suit. Yet another angle was his pro-Protestant approach. He believed in partition,

because India had been partitioned. But the workers in the factory wouldn't have known his views.

Maybe they hated him because he was creating robots that could put some of them out of work in the future. But he insisted on plain racism as being the problem.

When one of the factory workers, a member of IRA, was killed by the British Army, he decided to go to his funeral as a mark of respect and in an attempt to bond with the factory workers. I was in Belfast visiting and decided to go to Derry. It was the time of Free Derry, with armed IRA at the entrance to the Bogside. I went along with him but I was refused entry to the Bogside, whereas he was waved through without questioning. Later he complained about racism saying:

"They waved me through because they saw me as only a poor fucking Indian."

It was just no use in telling him how on Our Lady's Day, in the Markets area of Belfast on the 15th of August, the same day as Indian Independence, they celebrated both: with tables put together the length of the street with cheap wine and things to eat and songs and tributes to India in gaining independence.

When Indian freedom was announced on the radio, a Catholic woman who happened to be visiting my family, burst into tears.

Generally, the black people back in those days of our ignorance were still loved, but we didn't know how to describe them.

21.6.2020.

Abolition Of Slavery

Slavery was abolished in most of Britain's colonies on 1st August 1834. Slave-owners were awarded over £20 million for the loss of their property, c40% of the annual budget. The slaves got nothing.

Daniel O'Connell protested at this compensation and succeeded in getting the names of the recipients being made public. Around 100 individuals with an Irish connection were listed on this huge database, which has been made available on-line by University College.

Cosgrave & Son!

“W. T.’s religious conviction was the bedrock of his life. He attended Mass and Communion every day and, like a great many people in Ireland at the time, said the Rosary every night. It is said that during the 1920s when younger members of the Free State government visited Beechpark in the evening they were expected to join in the nightly recitation of the five decades of the Rosary. During the War of Independence Cosgrave had proposed to de Valera that a theological commission should be established to vet the decisions of the Dail. After Independence he considered handing over the site of the General Post Office in Dublin for the building of a Catholic Cathedral as there was no Catholic cathedral on any main street in Dublin due to the penal laws.

“Cosgrave travelled to Rome on a number of occasions as President of the Executive Council and it was a habit he was continue in and out of government. His loyalty to the Papacy went hand in hand with his piety and he was accorded a number of papal honours and allowed to establish an oratory in his house where Mass could be said each morning” (*The Cosgrave Legacy*, Stephen Collins, Blackwater Press, 1996)

Liam Cosgrave

His son, Liam Cosgrave emulated, W. T., replacing James Dillon as leader of Fine Gael in 1965.

He was elected Taoiseach in 1973 in a Fine Gael/Labour coalition supported by Brendan Corish. It was a position he held for only one term, until 1977, when he called an ill-judged election a year earlier than was necessary and was soundly beaten by a resurgent Fianna Fail under Jack Lynch, after which he immediately resigned. He was succeeded by Dr Garret FitzGerald.

A man of deep Catholic faith, he achieved what many believed was a ‘first’ in Irish politics when, as Taoiseach, he voted against his own Government’s

contraceptive legislation in 1974, helping to defeat it by 75 votes to 61.

His main interest in life after politics was horse racing and he was a familiar figure at meetings in Leopardstown and The Curragh, and served as an honorary member of the Turf Club for many years.

Mr. Cosgrave, died on 4th October 2017, at the age of 97, leaving more than €33 million in his will, including €6,000 for Masses to be said for his soul.

The vast bulk of his estate relates to his home, Beech Park, a relatively modest bungalow set in 16 acres of residentially zoned land on Scholarstown Road, a development oasis set among the middle-class housing estates of Templeogue in south Co Dublin.

“In his Will, Mr Cosgrave also directed that Masses be said for him and his family at his favourite churches in Dublin: Rathfarnham, where he lived, John’s Lane off Thomas Street, where he grew up as a boy, St Mary’s in Tallaght, Whitefriar Street, Clarendon Street and Mount Argus, all of which he attended for religious ceremonies over the years” (*Irish Independent*, 20.5.2018)

Saving England!

“We want a “Wake up, England!” Movement in Great Britain, and not merely in Great Britain, but for all the English throughout the world. We want a mood and form of politics that will save our destinies from our politicians while there are still great things to be saved” (*H. G. Wells*, 1866-1946)

Irish Adoptions

“About 80% of children adopted into Ireland over the past three decades have come from five countries.

“In the first of a series of short research reports, the Authority of Ireland analysed the 4,989 intercountry adoptions that were approved between January 1991 and September 2019.

“Between January 1991 and October 2010, there were 4,282 inter-country adoptions, from 33 countries, with 83% of children coming from five countries: Russia, Romania, Vietnam, China, and Ethiopia. Children born in Russia accounted for 1,414 adoptions.

“Then, between November 2010 and September last year, there were 707 intercountry adoptions, from 23 countries, and 80% came from just five countries: Russia, Vietnam, Ethiopia, U.S.A., and China. Adoptions since 2010 have taken place under new legislation and highlight a decline in the number of intercountry adoptions” (*Irish Examiner*, 9.1.2020)

Wee Greta:

“The emperors are naked. Every single one,” she says. “It turns out our whole society is just one big nudist party.”

Some critics have accused Thunberg of being a doom-monger, but she insists that her message is one of hope, not despair.

“There are signs of change, of awakening,” she says. “Just take the ‘Me Too’ movement, ‘Black Lives Matter’ or the school strike movement (for climate action) for instance,” she says. (*Sunday Independent*, 21.6.2020)

There’s a conundrum: ‘Me Too’ and ‘Black Lives’?

Charity Begins At . . .

“The 2019 annual report of the Charities Regulator found the overall number of concerns was down by 5% on the previous year but more charity organisations were the subject of concern — up from 423 in 2018 to 521 in 2019.

“Close to half of all concerns (46%) related to the ‘legitimacy’ of the charity while governance, financial control and transparency issues were also raised. Concerns regarding clothing collections constituted a significant number of the concerns that we received in 2019.

“There are now more than 10,500 charities and 67,000 trustees registered across the country.

“While 130 charities were removed from the register, 845 charities were registered in 2019.”

Of the 10,514 charities registered by the end of 2019, more than half (54%) served the community, close to one-third (30%) were involved in education, and one-in-ten (9%) were involved in relieving poverty or economic hardship. Some

875 charities reported an income of more than €1m, though the vast majority — 80% — had an income of less than €250,000. (*Irish Examiner*-15.7.2020)

Hail Mario!

“Pope appoints Draghi to Vatican body” (*Irish Independent*-11.7.2020)— Former European Central Bank (ECB) chief Mario Draghi has been appointed a member of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences by Pope Francis, the Vatican said yesterday.

The academy, a think tank established in 1994 as a sister body to the older Pontifical Academy of Sciences, holds regular international symposiums on subjects of social concern such as human trafficking, modern slavery and debt relief. They are attended by world luminaries in their fields and produce reports which the pope can use to guide him on non-religious issues. . The Academy and its membership is not influenced by factors of a national, political, or religious character. Mr. Draghi was born in Rome and is of the Catholic persuasion.

As a member, Mr Draghi, who during his eight-year tenure as ECB president was widely credited with saving the Euro, will play a key role in choosing topics for conferences and deciding whom to invite. He stepped down from the ECB last October” (*Irish Independent*, 11.7.2020)

Abortions

6,666 abortions were carried out in the Republic of Ireland in 2019.

“It was the first year the service was made legally available in Ireland.” (*Irish Examiner*, 1.7.2020)

“New figures from the Department of Health show 6,666 abortions were carried out in the year since the new laws were introduced.

“More than 6,500 of these took place during early pregnancy, while 144 happened as there was a risk to the life of the child or woman.

“625 terminations were carried out in January, which was the highest monthly figure recorded last year.

“The lowest figure of 490 was recorded in February.

“2,493 women who had an abortion in the Republic last year had an address in Dublin.

“606 said they were from Cork, 295 from Kildare and 280 from Galway.

“The Department of Health says 67 women from Northern Ireland had travelled here for the service.”

No breakdown was provided as to whether terminations were performed in

hospitals, or in the community.

The Pro Life Campaign, adding the UK and Irish figures, said this was the first time in 18 years that there had been an increase in the number of abortions “and the first time in our history that thousands of innocent unborn babies have had their lives ended with the full backing of Irish law”.

“On January 1st 2019, laws allowing for abortion in Ireland came in to force.

“It followed the repeal of the Eighth Amendment in May the previous year” (*Irish Examiner*, 30.6.2020)

“Sinn Féin party reps in Dublin say they were not consulted over a party motion that would seek to restrict abortion in the north.

“The party is grappling with widespread criticism of their stance on abortion in Northern Ireland, which came “out of left-field” for some TDs and Senators, some of which learned about the amendment on social media. (*Irish Examiner*, 2.6.2020)

Cremation: Times Past!

(cf, C. E., IV-481).— The practice of cremation is reprobated by the Church, and no attention must be paid to any request for it. If a person has asked to be cremated he may not receive Christian burial, unless he repented before dying; unreserved excommunication is incurred *ipso facto* by those who order or compel the Christian burial of such persons, while those who give it voluntarily are interdicted from entering church, the censure being reserved to the ordinary. (*Codex jur. can.*, 1,552-2,194; *Novel. Commentarium.*) *The Catholic Encyclopedia. Supp. 1, Volume XVII.* New York 1922.

“**JK Rowling** joins 150 public figures decrying ‘cancel culture’ including U.S. intellectual Noam Chomsky, eminent feminist Gloria Steinem, Russian chess grandmaster Garry Kasparov, the letter appeared in *Harper's*, a monthly magazine of literature, politics, culture, finance, and the arts. Launched in New York City in June 1850.

“Editors are fired for running controversial pieces; books are withdrawn for alleged inauthenticity; journalists are barred from writing on certain topics; professors are investigated for quoting works of literature in class; a researcher is fired for circulating a peer-reviewed academic study; and the heads of organizations are ousted for what are sometimes just clumsy mistakes.” (*BBC news*, 8.7.2020)

Old Cecil!

On 9th June 2020, thousands of protesters in Oxford demanded the removal of the monument of Cecil John Rhodes (1853-1902) from Oriel College at Oxford university. According to the BBC, the college denied claims that donors threatened to withdraw more than £100m of funding if the statue was removed.

The aggrandisement of the British Empire was the object of Rhodes life, and South Africa was the area over which he hoped to establish English rule. When he died in 1902, his Will set up scholarships at Oxford university, to about 100 candidates from Britain and ninety for their US ‘cousins’.

“Since the Trust was founded, more than 7,000 scholarships have been awarded. For a short time, from 1992 to 1995, the scheme was extended to the European Union. According to a Trust spokeswoman, there are 11 Irish Rhodes Scholars: Darragh Byrne, Dr Patrick Coveney, Selina Guinness, Dr James Hall, Thomas Kiely, Dr Mark O’Neill, Dr Colm O’Reardon, Mike O’Sullivan, Dr Sinead O’Sullivan, Dr Siofra Pierse and Dr Eileen Reilly” (*Legacy: The Rhodes Trust and Rhodes Scholarships*, Philip Ziegler, Yale UP, 2008).

One wonders how many of these ‘Irish scholars’ realise that—

“Rhodes supported Home Rule on principle as a means of organising the Empire—or the White parts of it—into a coherent Imperial Federation. He contributed £10,000 to Parnell’s party in 1888 [£1,308,325.70 today]. In 1891, he made a secret contribution of £5,000 to the Liberal Party on condition that a flaw in the First Home Rule Bill (discontinuation of Irish representation in the Imperial Parliament) should be remedied in the Second Home Rule Bill which was then in prospect. The 1892 Bill provided for continuing Irish representation at Westminster, on a reduced scale, after a Dublin Parliament was set up” (*Ireland in the Great War, The Irish Insurrection of 1916 set in the Context of the World War* by Charles James O’Donnell (1849-1934). Introduction by Brendan Clifford, Athol Books, Belfast, 1992, €10 plus postage).

Jack Charlton

“He was very English but you felt he knew what it was like to be Irish”: Eamon Sweeney, Author and Sports columnist in the Sunday Independent (12.7.20) on the passing of Jack Charlton. How does this read in reverse? “He was very Irish but you felt he knew what it was like to be English.”

Michael McDowell and the Black Diaries

Writing in the *Irish Times* about the removing of statues and the boarding up of those in Parliament Square in London, Michael McDowell concluded:

“They shouldn’t have to be boarded up – let alone be “defended” by a self-appointed gang of racist thugs. I think the answer is more statues, not fewer.

I don’t mind Prince Albert lurking in the bushes at Leinster House, long after his wife was removed from there and transported, like her Young Irelander rebel felons, to Australia.

Perhaps, in Pride Week, Dublin might acknowledge the glaring truth that Roger Casement was gay and give him a decent statue to commemorate his struggles for Ireland, against imperialism and for the cruelly enslaved people of the Congo and Amazon basins” (24.6.2020).

I sent him the Spring issue of this magazine in which I had the following article on the Trial of Casement, which I thought might interest him – he being a well-known legal eagle:

“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 it 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; a large six-volume file (TNA DPP 1/46) prepared for the DPP that 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 5 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 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 and 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- 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 the alleged diary/ies for the prosecution file rather than go to 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. 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 what to ask for and not 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:

MacColl: 1953 – 1971 = 18 years,
Inglis: 1953 – 1993 = 40 years,
Reid: 1971 – 1991 = 20 years,
Sawyer: 1975 – 2019 = 44 years,
O’Síocháin: 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 what he was shown so he could check it with Casement himself and was denied. Quinn wanted to take it to check the handwriting and the context. He was denied this. 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!

McDowell promptly thanked me for the magazine and engaged in an email correspondence that day, dealing with aspects of the forged diary controversy. I repeated the points as he made them and responded to him as follows.

24/6/2020

Dear Michael,

Below is the more considered reply I promised earlier. Your original points

are in black and my responses in red. I very much hope you will take time to respond.

All the best, Jack

Below McDowell's points are indented and in bold prnt, each being followed by Lane's reply. Ed]:

McDowell:

I have to say that I cannot accept for one minute that the Black Diaries are a forgery that post dates the use of typescripts to discredit Casement.

You have to understand that the Diaries were offered to Serjeant Sullivan, Casement's QC before the trial commenced. FE Smith did that in a hare-brained effort to persuade Casement's lawyers that their client could save his neck by claiming insanity.

This is simply not true. No diaries were offered to Sullivan. Police typescripts were offered to Artemus Jones as he himself verifies. This happened in May before the preliminary hearing at which Sullivan was not present. Smith's motive was to compromise the defence, not to save Casement. When Sullivan arrived in London in June he refused to look at the typescripts and told Jones to return them to Smith which he did.

The enormous hole in the fabrication theory is that it seems to follow that Casement must have been aware of the fact that the Diaries, in whatever form, were in the hands of his prosecutors. Nobody has ever suggested that Casement's lawyers decided to hide from their client the offer to view the diaries made pre-trial. That would have been an inexplicable breach of duty. (My emphasis, JL)

Again not true and confused and this is all speculation as indicated by ‘it seems to follow’ and ‘Nobody has ever suggested’ etc. Classic circular argument – ‘the Diaries, in whatever form ...’ The typescripts are not diaries and Casement did not type the typescripts. The typescripts were kept by Jones in a safe until Sullivan's arrival in London just before 12 June for the trial on 26 June. Jones was junior counsel and had no authority to show anything to Casement, so no breach of duty happened. There is no evidence that Casement was aware of either Diaries or typescripts being in the hands of his prosecutors. Sullivan's remarks are contradictory and the BMH statement is suspect, being unsigned. I have read many of these statements and this is the only unsigned statement I have come across.

If, as is argued, they were a complete fabrication, Casement would have protested vehemently at this utterly disgraceful attempt to besmirch him as he faced into a treason trial. He would hardly have remained impassive in the face of such a shocking defamation.

He would only have protested if he had been told of the defamation. There is no evidence that he was told before the trial in late June. There is evidence that he was told by Doyle of the defamation after the trial and he repudiated it vehemently. Neither Duffy, Jones nor Sullivan ever saw bound diaries despite searching for the source of the rumours. Jones saw typescripts only. Duffy and Sullivan saw nothing.

I don't agree with the conspiracy theorists. The majority of his biographers no longer argue for fabrication.

The majority of the biographers have never argued for fabrication.

Look at the controversy that surrounded Sullivan's letter to the Irish Times on the subject.

That controversy was caused by MacColl's artful deception after his interview with Sullivan. He cleverly concocted his interview report to suggest that Casement admitted the diaries were his. But Sullivan refuted this in the Irish Times debate – “Casement told me nothing about the diaries or himself” (26/4/1956).

Look at Casement's poetry.

This is about alleged diaries not about poetry.

Casement's homosexual relationships were well known to British intelligence before he ever went to Germany.

There is no evidence for this claim. Who in British Intelligence allegedly knew this? If you have this evidence, you must cite it.

If you google Serjeant Sullivan, the Bureau of Military History letter is available online.

In the *Irish Times* debate that you mention Sullivan contradicts the BMH statement typed by an unidentified person 7 years earlier and he says “Casement told me nothing about the diaries or himself” (26/4/56/ *Irish Times*). He is therefore not a reliable witness on the issue.

The BMH statement is unsigned and it says that he is unable to write but no explanation is given. (<http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/bureau-of-military-history-1913-1921/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0253.pdf>)

BMH Witnesses statements were not to be made available for 50 years so none could be challenged or verified at the time. Many did not submit statements for that very reason. That was not the case with the publicly available Irish Times discussion which is therefore a more credible source. Moreover, Sullivan does not refer to this BMH statement in that debate.

And there are many other oddities about the BMH Statement. The request letter is addressed to London, to barristers' chambers: but Sullivan was aged 78 in 1949 and long retired. It is not credible that the BMH thought he was still in chambers in London. He had a house in Terenure.

The statement is typed (by whom?) and mysteriously Sullivan cannot write it out himself, nor can he put his initials to the statement. No explanation for inability to write. The text would therefore be dictated to the unknown typist but the grammatical structures of many sentences strongly suggest that the text was copy typed, not dictated by a 78 year old without preparation. If copy typed there was an original written version - by whom?

If the invitation was sent to London, how would London know he was in Cork when the BMH did not know?

Neither Inglis nor O' Siochain mention Humphreys handing 'the Diary' to Sullivan at the trial opening on 26th June. We know for sure that the reference is to typescripts, as confirmed by Jones' reference to the preliminary hearing in May.

Sullivan did not type the BMH statement and it does not bear his signature, ergo it cannot be accepted as genuine.

The essential facts of the case are that there were no witnesses to Casement's authorship of the diaries and there is no scientific evidence that he wrote them. Nor is there any evidence that the bound diaries materially existed during his lifetime. It follows that there are no sound reasons for believing them to be authentic and an abundance of solid reasons for believing them to be false.

Moreover, the major biographies are 'unreliable' on the diaries question as Hyde's book demonstrates very clearly (cf. Chapter 6). For authenticity to be

tenable requires irrefutable proof of the material existence of the bound diaries in 1916. Without that proof, no rational person can judge them authentic. That proof would have to be independent witness testimony - there is none.

Authenticity has become a dogma precisely because there is no evidence to support it. In all instances the 'diaries' are found to be the typescripts, allegedly copies of unseen bound diaries.

It is a pity you have not read Hyde's book because his analysis is based mostly on HM documents and avoids opinions and conjectures. By the way, he reviews your lecture to the Bar Council on the subject at some length, pages 47-9.

The evidence presented by him demonstrates that there was indeed a conspiracy which began in October, 1914. It is of course understandable that people who have long been convinced of authenticity would find it almost impossible to set aside that deep-seated conviction and to consider that they might be mistaken, might have been misinformed for a long time, might have been deceived, might have relied on false evidence. It takes rare courage and a lucid intellect to re-examine one's own convictions, to overcome the fear of admitting error. Those who are afraid, won't; those who are not afraid, will.

All the best,
Jack.

*

The Black Diaries keep doing their job

That the forgeries remain effective was evidenced by another response to McDowell's article—a letter in the *Irish Times* on 26th June, which illustrates very well the original purpose of the 'Diaries' over a hundred years ago when the views and feelings expressed in this letter would be magnified a thousand times:

"A statue of Roger Casement

Further to "Sanitising Britain's imperialist past would require collective amnesia" (Michael McDowell, Opinion & Analysis, June 24th), would the "decent statue" of Roger Casement, "to commemorate his struggles for Ireland, against imperialism and for the cruelly enslaved people of the Congo and Amazon basins", also detail his sexual exploitation of vulnerable young boys in South America, just to complete the picture? No historical figure is either all good or all bad. **Gerald Flynn**"

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And a note on Sullivan's Bureau of Military History Statement

It should be noted that the BMH tried unsuccessfully to get Serjeant Sullivan to sign his statement and gave up trying.

A memo from its Secretary, P. J. Brennan, had reported that: "In the opinion of the Director, the letter dated 23 May, 1949 from Mr. Serjeant Sullivan, K.C. in reply to my letter of 10TH May 1949 regarding the trial of the late Roger Casement is of little value. The Director decided, however, to place the letter on record and a copy of it has been kept on this file for convenient reference.

Rúnaí
25 May 1949"

This means that Serjeant Sullivan's statement, by which Mr. McDowell sets so much store, was not accepted by the BMH as a proper statement as it did not meet a basic requirement of the BMH. Is it not odd that a Senior Counsel who is a former Attorney General finds such a statement acceptable today?

Serjeant Sullivan's apparent inability to write, and his delay in replying to the BMH, is odd when his letter to the Irish Times seven years later, on 26th April 1956, was written in reply to Rene MacColl's letter of the previous day. His writing ability and speed of response appears to have improved enormously during the previous seven years! In terms of getting a letter published in the Irish Times, it is the equivalent of the speed of light. All in all, a veritable miracle, I would suggest. He changed his name once to 'Serjeant' Sullivan, perhaps he should have changed it again to Saint Sullivan!

Of course there are other questions going a begging about Sullivan's statement. This always happens when pursuing any aspect of the Black Diaries issue — there are rabbit holes aplenty to go down. Why was he commissioned for a statement in the first place? He was an individual despised by all Republicans because he was firmly on the British Government's side during the War of Independence; and so he was forgotten about. This is shown by the fact alone that the BMH was not aware of his Dublin address. Yet, apparently, he was located in Cork by somebody in London for a Statement and then produced one that the BMH did not wish to be considered a valid Statement, because he did not sign it, but against their better judgement let it stand as one.

Why?

Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh

Poems to the English / Ծան ևս ճալլ

(**Poems to the English / Ծան ևս ճալլ**, a selection of poems by Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh, edited by John Minahane, is to be published later this year. Some extracts from the preface and introduction are given here.)

From the Preface:

This is a selection from the work of Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh, one of Ireland's greatest poets. His poetry can shed light on many things. For example, there is a fact of Irish history which is famous but obscure – that the colonists from the first English invasion took up Irish thinking-patterns and ways (or putting it strongly, “*became more Irish than the Irish themselves*”): Gofraidh Fionn can tell us a great deal about this change, because certain poems of his are meant to contribute to making it happen.

The fame of Gofraidh's poetry spread from end to end of Ireland. He was born and raised and afterwards mainly resided near the foot of the hill of Clara, to the west of Millstreet. But though very much a southerner, he was not less admired in the north. Two centuries and more after his death, a succession of outstanding northern poets looked up to him as one of the greatest ever. Those were the years associated with Hugh O'Neill, Queen Elizabeth the First and King James the First, when North-South rivalry and tension was not lacking; among the poets, in fact, it was expressed more sharply than ever before. But this made no difference to the warm regard felt for Gofraidh Fionn.

The northern master-poets would choose a poem of his to recite for a non-professional connoisseur, some poetry-loving prince, as an enjoyable model of the art; or refer to him as “prophetic Gofraidh... weaver of perfect artistry”; or praise the professional pride that made him abandon patrons who did not value his art at its true worth; or borrow some resourceful line of his for a crisis-solving poem of their own; or emphasise the intense concentration and perfectionist care that he gave to each of his poems without exception.

But what was it, more precisely, that they saw or heard in him? “*Always he was the flower of art*”: when an Antrim poet said this about Gofraidh, what was he thinking of particularly?

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Tadhg Óg Ó hUigín, a master-poet who produced a survey of his art, defines poetry as concise, meaningful and musical speech (*comhrádh cuimir, ciallmhar, ceolmhar*). Or, expanding this a bit: poetry is a highly-charged communication of thought which is at the same time a piece of music. When the Antrim poet praised Gofraidh's work, I think he must have had all of these elements in mind.

To begin with the music: this was an art intensely devoted to the beauties of sound, and it had to be strikingly performed. The occasion, setting and atmosphere needed to be right – say, an evening in a prince's residence with the leading members of his assembly, their wives and some of their sons and daughters, supplied with reasonably comfortable seating or standing space and drinkable wine (all of which Gofraidh Fionn describes memorably). Secondly, there should be accompaniment on the instrument of highest status, the harp – the real, metal-stringed harp, needless to say, the harp that could sound “*lionlike*” (Gofraidh's term), not the tame gut-stringed drawing-room instrument that nowadays masquerades under the name. And

thirdly, the person reciting the poem should be clear-voiced and fluent and very highly trained.

Today no one can be sure how the reciter did his performance, the genuine harp is not used, and we don't have the tunes for poems. So is it a hopeless task, to attempt to make contact with this art? “*I can't fathom words or music...*” says the bad artist, speaking in one of the reciter's training-poems; must we say the same? Not entirely, I think!

With a sharp enough “inner ear”, readers who know modern Irish will be able to hear a good deal of Gofraidh Fionn's word-music in the originals. To help with this, I have given basic descriptions of the small number of metres featured in the book. (According to one of the ancient handbooks, there were three hundred and sixty five poetic metres in Irish; for our purposes, fortunately, a week's supply will do...). I have also given more detailed attention to some of the poems, in particular the first one, addressed to the prince of the O'Donnells.

The essential music is still there, lurking in the written words of the Irish originals. But everyone will understand that the music cannot carry over into English translation. This problem is insuperable! If Gofraidh's poems were ballads or rhyming couplets or even sonnets, one could make an attempt to imitate their patterns. But these harmonic structures are in a different dimension. They are made for one language only.

I thought of doing what translators do with, say, Brian Merriman's *Cúirt an Mheon-Oíche*, where the metre is far simpler than Gofraidh's but still has too many internal rhymes to be reproduced in English. All of the translators (we have, one learns, as many as eleven *Midnight Courts*) simplify drastically. They are content, for the most part, simply to have an end-rhyme. So I thought of attempting a more or less regular metre, with end-rhymes. But the danger was that in trying to catch a shadow of the sound (Tadhg Óg Ó hUigín says that a poem without the grand harmonies is only the shadow of a poem) I would weaken my transmission of the sense. My English poem could end up just a little more *ceolmhar* and a lot less *ciallmhar*.

The primary meaning, the substance and spirit of what the poet says: that ought to be transmissible, after all, unlike the harmonies. That is something a translator should be able to convey. In my introduction and afterword, what I focus on mainly is the thought-content, the meaning. No one, I think, will deny that this poet was a master of the music of words – or if anyone does, then that person simply isn't on the wavelength, he or she can give no arguments or grounds for their point of view. A more serious issue is: did this poet have anything to say? Is there any substantial thought-content in his poetry? Did he make anything that we on the 21st century heights can appreciate as sense?

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Tadhg Óg was not alone in thinking that poetry must be *ciallmhar*. Practically everyone, Irish or not, used to hold this opinion. When discussing poetry and art in general terms, a writer would typically say that the work had to make some sense. Philosophers said so, from Aristotle to Hegel (who, criticising some of the first dissenters, said uncompromisingly: “*If the meaning of the artwork is insignificant, or wild and fantastic, or vacuous, the commonsense of mankind refuses to ignore this lack of substance and to enjoy such works*”).

I take it that, despite the art-for-art's-sake fashions of the past two hundred years, this is actually the view which continues to prevail. Today as formerly, most people who

pay attention to poetry expect it to communicate some significant thought. And this is where the problem arises for the reception of Gofraidh Fionn.

Many able writers, from Edmund Spenser to Frank O'Connor, represent the poets of this tradition very negatively, as people who did not have much mind or were not of sound mind. Others, and especially Eugene O'Curry and James Carney, treat them as substantial men of culture. O'Curry and Carney have deeper insight, but alas, the negative voices are more influential.

Here I will try to present Gofraidh Fionn as someone doing a work of thinking relevant to social order, power and conflict in the Ireland of his time. A one-sided focus, certainly. But I am arguing that he is a great poet, not just some pretty tinkler; and if these questions of order, power and conflict are important for him (and indeed they are), then, given how intensely such matters interest modern minds, we had better find some merit in how he handles them. Otherwise, as Hegel says, he will have the commonsense of mankind against him, and that won't do.

* * *

(On the use of the Irish script for the original poems):

For those with a grasp of modern Irish, the good news is: this is not difficult! Really, getting your head around this script is easy! It's not as if you were wrestling with the intimidating alphabets of Russia or Greece. The letters, in fact, are all near-twins or brothers/sisters of the Roman letters, they're just more beautiful:

a b c d e f g h i l m n o p r s t u

a b c d e f g h i l m n o p r s t u

The accented vowels, á é í ó ú, are already represented in Roman Irish, so they won't bother anyone. That leaves precisely nine small problems: the lenitions, the softened consonants which are represented by the *séimhiú*, the superscript dot:

ḃ ċ ḋ ė ḟ ġ ḣ i̇ l̇ ṁ ṅ ȯ ṗ ṙ ṡ ṫ u̇

representing

bh ch dh fh gh mh ph sh th in Roman.

Here the letters have a gentle breath blown through them (except for fh, which goes silent: fhuair is pronounced the same as uair). Actually, there is some use of h in the old manuscripts, though it's not very systematic, and it is possible to develop variants of the script which remove the *séimhiú*. One such variant was used by Brian and John Manners for their Irish-language text of *The Trinity College Harp*. It's an interesting experiment which eases the modern reader in gently, and it might usefully be repeated in other prose works. But Gofraidh Fionn must have *séimhiú* and all!

From the Introduction:

Close by the hill of Clara, Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh was raised. He sees Clara, he tells us, constantly to the east. We can take this to mean that he lived in the Cork-Kerry border district, not far to the west of Millstreet, which came to be called Ballydaly – *Baile Uí Dhálaigh*, named after the professional poets who were active there for centuries.

Gofraidh was born probably about the year 1300. Details of his family are scanty. His grandfather was called Tadhg; I

do not know his father's name or his wife's name. He had at least one child, a son named Eoghan. Gofraidh himself taught him poetry, and he believed that the lad had talent enough to become chief poet of Munster. But Eoghan died before he had finished his studies. He was buried in a churchyard on a hillside, and a large and finely-carved cross was raised over him:

Δς ουλ σεοδαο σαν σλιζιò
 θεδρα σο λαρ λειστριòι;
 'ςατ αιτνε, Δ çros, βαò corcra
 αιςτε βασ αν ðαντροçτα.

When people pass you on the road,
 tears will fall to the ground.
 Red – when they see you, Cross! – will be
 the faces of women's hands!

Gofraidh's poem expresses intense personal loss. While his son was alive, he says, to be separated from him even for a single night was painful. Family status, or failure to maintain family tradition, is not what the poet primarily thinks of here. It suffices for him to say: "A son in the father's place / would be the proper order; / his father being his heir, / Lord, is a cause of grief".

For comparison he traces the story of another artist who lost his son: Cathbhadh the druid, one of the leading figures in the legend of the Red Branch Knights. When his son Geanann Bright-Cheek died, Cathbhadh lay on his grave and died of grief. Gofraidh has equal cause to die – why is it that he cannot? And this is his ultimate grief:

Cosm̃ail, Δ ðé, ðam̃na ΔR ççaoi,
 meise Δçus Caçðaiò çaoim̃-ðraoi;
 çrò eaò ní com̃çrom çcuim̃að
 an conçlann ðear n-ealaðan.

O God, we have like cause to weep,
 Cathbhadh the druid and I;
 yet, we two men of art
 are not equal in sorrow.

Where Did He Live?

The poet was born and raised by the hill of Clara and continued to live there in adult life. But where exactly?

Is mé çofraiò mac meic Çaiòç,
 Δ-nðeas ðn m̃um̃ain m̃ionaiò;
 ceΔrc cðá ðn lios i luiçim
 çá cðá ðios Δ ðriΔçruiçim.

I am Gofraidh, son of the son of Tadhg,
 a southerner, from a smooth green height in Munster;
 there are few who know the answers
 to what I ask, from the *lios* where I lie!

Here I am taking the meaning Dinneen gives for the word *mín*, "a smooth green spot on a mountain or amid rough land", but I don't insist on that. The important thing is that Gofraidh tells us he dwells in a *lios* – and this in a highly ambitious poem addressed to the poets of all Ireland, where every word was carefully weighed.

The *lios* or *ráth* was a ring-fort, of which there are many round Clara. For centuries this was the typical homestead of

fairly well-off people in Ireland. “Both high king and small farmer” had residences of this type, Matthew Stout says.

The ring-fort was, first of all, a barrier, a circular rampart of earth. Enclosing it was a trench, from which the heaped earth had been dug. A causeway led over the trench, and this was secured by a strong gate. Inside there was a space around a dwelling. Mostly this too was circular, and usually it was made of interwoven wooden rods packed with clay. Good hazel rods were required in great quantities, many hundreds of them. The rods were fitted neatly, so as not to leave any sharp ends protruding and possibly causing injury.

The roof of the dwelling was thatched. It might make a great difference to comfort if care was taken in laying a floor, and this could be done using a variety of materials: clay and gravel and stone slabs, wattles and brushwood. A base would also be provided for the beds: grassy sods, meadow grass and brushwood were used. The beds were wooden and could be sectioned off with wooden screens.

Without stopping to say more about other furniture, cooking, heating, and the like, one might conclude that such a dwelling could be comfortable enough if one was used to it. However, the upkeep of the interior would require continual work. And indeed, the exterior too: a dwelling of the kind described would have needed frequent repairs. It would also have needed periodic replacement. If Gofraidh did indeed live in a ring-fort, then probably three or four times during his lifetime the house that he lived in would have been pulled down and built anew.

A complication arises here, because some writers claim that by Gofraidh Fionn’s time these sites were abandoned. Matthew Stout and others argue that by about the eleventh century, those who lived in the ring-forts were moving out of them. From then until the rise of the sturdy stone tower-house, even better-off people were living in more exposed and vulnerable structures, which have left no traces behind.

But why should the well-to-do of the whole country “downsize” like this? The explanation given is that it had to do with a concentration of royal power. Also, perhaps it reflected the danger of the ring-fort situation in times of more intense warfare. People began to live in clusters or “nucleations”, close to some powerful princely residence.

So then, when Gofraidh Fionn says he is in a *lios*, maybe he is using an old, fine-sounding word for a respectable abode, which no longer describes his real current situation? (And of course, the word *lios* alliterates very nicely with *luighim*, “I lie”, the typical posture of the poet when composing!) A similar question might be raised about the testimony of the historian Seán mac Ruaidhri Mac Craith, a contemporary of Gofraidh, who in all probability knew him well. After the tremendous fighting of the year 1317, Seán mac Ruaidhri tells us, the men of north Munster went home for the winter, and “every prince stayed in his fortress, every lord in his stronghold... every hospitaller in his mansion, every master-poet in his *ráth*...” Can this be taken literally, or is it just a traditional run of charged language (we find similar passages, after all, in *Táin Bó Cuailnge*)?

I would say that we might be justified in concluding this much at least: it did not sound unreasonable in Gofraidh’s time to suggest that the typical residence for a poet was the *ráth*, the ring-fort. In fact, various writers have turned up evidence that many ring-forts were occupied in Gofraidh Fionn’s time (14th century) and later. Some of the probable occupiers were poets (on the Sheephead peninsula by Bantry Bay, to take one example, a large ring-fort has been

identified as “a convincing candidate for the pre-tower house residence” of poets based locally). The reasons given for people in general to move out of ring-forts would not necessarily apply in the case of poets, who had a traditional right of immunity from plunder and violence that was normally respected by anyone who came to make war in a given territory.

I am inclined to take Gofraidh literally when he says he is composing in a ring-fort. So the next question is, where specifically could this ring-fort be? Going by his poem to the “hill east beside Duhallow”, it should be located to the west of Clara, with a fine view of the hill.

Seán Tucker has shown me one such, located in a farmer’s field on a knoll overlooking Ballydaly, with Clara an overwhelming presence to the east. Its basic dimensions are given in the *Archaeological Survey of County Cork* (listed as No. 8018). On top of a knoll on a North-facing slope, the ring-fort’s area makes a fairly perfect circle, with a diameter of 45.6 metres East–West, 45.5 metres North–South. It is enclosed by an eroded earthen bank, 1.05 metres high.

This is the largest ring-fort of those to the west of Clara. Unquestionably it gives the powerful sense of the presence of Clara that is expressed in Gofraidh’s poem to the hill. I think it may very well be where he lived.

There are countless questions to which I have no answer. Were there some trees around this spot, which is now perfectly bare, providing a wind-break in what is a very exposed location? Also, what kind of configuration did the fort have on the inside? Gofraidh’s house, of course, was a centre of local decision-making, given that he was the *ceann fine*, the head of a quite extended kin-group of Uí Dhálaigh. But within the rath there were typically workshops, stores, various paths and passages, playing areas, possibly outbuildings and pens for animals. Often pigs were kept within the enclosure, but a poet might have preferred not to have those harsh-voiced creatures too near him. We can take it as certain, though, that Gofraidh, wherever he lived, had some kind of barn for processing and storing his grain.

The Poet’s Estate

Somewhere in that locality, Gofraidh had lands. He refers once to his corn, which a soldier has burned. He tells how “the lord of the hill” of Clara, the deceased Art Ó Caoimh, used to give gifts of cows. Also, a yearly gift of a horse was a suitable recompense for the privilege of being praised in a special quatrain in each one of his poems – and Gofraidh appears to have had this arrangement with several people, so he may have had quite a few horses.

It was typical that the outstanding poets, those who were capable of making the most distinguished verse and conducting poetry schools, would be given grants of rent-free lands by their local lords. The Uí Chaoimh, who were lords in Ballydaly and the environs of Clara generally, are known to have made this provision. All that any particular Ó Caoimh would expect in return was *cíos a šeán*, “his ancestral rent”, as a later poet put it: the right always to have an additional praise-verse in any poem which an artist of that kindred made. (That much, plus lots of pleasant and stimulating talk. Two centuries after Gofraidh’s time there was another famous Ó Dálaigh, Aonghus Fionn, who kept a school of poetry in Ballyday. The Ó Caoimh of the time, it is said, had once been his student, and in later life the lord hated to let a single day go by without meeting his poet for conversation.)

In his passionate address to Clara, Gofraidh says: I never left you, hill, till now! – meaning, the moment when a close friend of his was killed on its slope. But what this means is that he had never abandoned it definitively, never gone away with the intention of not returning. In fact, for many years he had spent the term time, i.e. half the year, in a poetry school in north Munster. After he had qualified as a poet, and especially before he took over the estate in Ballydaly, he may also have lived for long periods somewhere else.

My impression is that an heir-in-waiting might be given some corner of the family estate where he would be out of the way. He would often take to the road and go for protracted visits to lords elsewhere; they would introduce him to others, and indeed, he might settle for a while with one who particularly liked him. An interesting example is Tadhg Dall Ó hUigín, who was thirty five years old when he succeeded to his father's poetry school and poetic estate. Tadhg Dall's poetry principally relates to his home region of Mayo-Sligo, but he has a fair number of poems to people in Donegal, Tyrone and Fermanagh, and others still further afield in Antrim, Wicklow and Clare. Much of his "touring" poetry must have been done while he was heir-in-waiting. And I think he had spent some extended period of time with one patron at least, Cathal Ó Conchubhair: there are expressions implying that in an obituary poem which Tadhg, then aged thirty, made for Cathal in 1581.

Gofraidh Fionn tells us that he comes from a long line of poets. He was sent to study at an excellent poetry school, and I presume that he always expected in time to inherit the poets' estate in Ballydaly. But as heir-in-waiting he must have travelled a good deal, making friendships and picking up single-quatrain contracts. From the additional verses to various poems, one gathers that he forged such agreements with some of the Kerry O'Sullivans and the O'Donoghues of Lough Leane, with various MacCarthys, and with at least one O'Brien. And I think that the splendid poem to the harp of Knockycosker, in present-day Westmeath, may have been from this youthful "wandering period".

Once he took over his estate, however, it is not likely that he would have permanently moved anywhere else. Seán Tucker suggests a connection with Nohovaldaly, another north Cork locality named after the Ó Dálaigh: an old cemetery there on a hillside would fit the description of the *cúlac* where Gofraidh's son Eoghan was buried. That is possible, certainly, and Gofraidh might have acquired something in the locality, but if so, I think it was only an outlying holding and "country cottage".

Gofraidh as Student Poet

Gofraidh Fionn studied poetry at one of the schools run by the family of Mac Craith. It was their elite establishment, conducted by their *mór-oiré* (great professor), as a classmate of Gofraidh's calls him. Since the Mac Craith were chief poets to the O'Briens, their top school would have been fairly close to the principal residence of the ruling O'Briens at Clonroad, near present-day Ennis. At that point the river Fergus makes a loop to form a second river meadow or island (the first being Ennis, *Inis*, 'the Island') called *Inis an Laoigh*, 'Calf Island/Little Island', which encompasses Clonroad.

Far enough away from bustling Clonroad to preserve the quiet needed for composing poetry, and yet not too far, there is a suitable location. It is a place where the Mac Craith were based in later centuries, and it even carries their name:

Islandmagrath. This is about six kilometres from Clonroad, in the lands of Clare Abbey close by the Fergus. Quite possibly the Mac Craith had settled there by Gofraidh's time and made it the site of their principal school.

So it may be that this was where Gofraidh studied. While he lay composing in his student-poet's hut he may have heard, like Gearóid Iarla afterwards, the sound of the water lapping on the flagstones, as the Fergus ran nearby.

The prescribed term for the training of a poet of the highest class was twelve years. This included seven years of study to achieve the status of *ollamh*; that was the highest rank, but at this stage "the poet is still not complete", an ancient curriculum insists, and five years of advanced study should follow. Even two centuries after Gofraidh's time, there are poems which imply that this twelve-year training is still regarded as the norm. We have to assume that Gofraidh fulfilled it, and that he was well into his twenties before he left the Mac Craith.

There was certainly plenty to study. A poet had to master advanced grammar, a great deal of Irish law, place lore (*dindshenchas*), an immense fund of traditional stories (the fully-equipped poet had to know 350 of them), the endlessly complex field of metrics and diction, books of advanced language resources, the historical culture of *senchas*...

A typical poetry school had a number of distinct buildings. A later poet distinguishes three: a study hall or "house of memorisation", *cead meadbraiscthe*; a "house of reclining", *cead luige*, where the students composed poems in a style suitable to their level on topics set by the master; and a "house of assessment", *cead breicib*, where the students would recite their exercise poems and the master would point out some of their faults. *Cead luige* was a bare hut (actually several huts) with beds, partitioned off in some fashion, where the students lay while composing. The huts were windowless and normally dark, but this helped the poets to see with the mind's eye:

doirceadán dóib níor doircead

their pleasant dark was not obscurity.

But doubtless the teacher had specialised assistants, so that the students went to some other houses also. One commentator, explaining the name of the fifth-year poet (*clí*), says it's because he's a *cleith* (wattle-post) in the house of the historian: in other words, he spends so much time at his history lessons that he's not just part of the furniture, he's more like part of the wall. And since it was important for poets to know the law (some even say that law was one of the four great branches of poetic study), at certain periods the student might be a rod or a clod in the lawyer's wall also...

Poetry was boundlessly interesting, it was great fun, and on the whole it inspired cheerfulness. The poet was supposed to be *ƣear suairc*, "a cheerful man", even though the fates might make him otherwise. But the experience of poetry school was by no means all *suairceas*...

NOTES: Full references will be given in the book. For the moment two will suffice:

Tadhg Óg's definition of poetry: *Graiméir Ghaeilge na mBráthar Mionúr*, ed. Parthalán Mac Aogáin (D 1968) p. 126.

Hegel on poetry having to make sense: Compressed from p. 33 of *The Philosophy of Hegel*, New York 1955 (*The Philosophy of History*, tr. Carl J. Friedrich).

JOHN MINAHANE

Stephen Richards

Part One

A Lodge In The Wilderness

I was intending to write about George Borrow, a once-celebrated now forgotten figure who flourished from about the 1830s to 1860s, but that will have to wait. In these febrile times, when movies are being banned, streets renamed and statues toppled as part of an ongoing cultural revolution, I thought it might be instructive to look back to John Buchan. Basically, I can't get enough of Buchan, and the more I read him the more relevant he becomes.

Buchan was a great writer who was not always a good writer, and at times can be surprisingly bad. The sheer volume of his work, and his literary facility, meant that often he is just facile; and his writing is blighted by lazy stylistic repetitions, betraying the would-be man of the world.

We don't go to Buchan's novels for penetratināg psychological analysis, or even well-worked plots. What he excels in is the power of story, a sort of zest and texture in the narrative. Atmosphere in Buchan is primarily the physical atmosphere; for me he's simply the best writer in the English language at conveying a sense of what it's like to experience a particular landscape in a particular season and time of day, in particular weather. You can smell the rain dripping off the dank branches, or the whin blossom, or (as in the Irish hornpipe) the Scent of the Bog. He had walked, ridden, fished, shot, and gone rock climbing in many and varied places, and was able to distil the sensory impact of those experiences in a way that rings true. Hemingway is nowhere near.

He was fascinated too by the Inner Ring, and this comes out repeatedly in his novels. There is this circle of men, usually men if not exclusively, who have, as Buchan would say, knocked about the world a bit. They're explorers, bankers, lawyers, even academics, some of them the sons of aristocratic houses, and often making their way in politics. They have an ambiguous relationship with the Establishment because, while in once sense they are the Establish-

ment, they're generally a restless bunch, impatient with what Buchan might have called the conventional wisdom, had the term been invented.

He himself was strongly attracted to this bunch of kindred spirits who would bump into one another at house parties (under the eye of shrewd, benevolent hostesses), at shooting weekends, and at various events during the London Season, a phenomenon which they pretended to despise. He himself was not quite of them but, being clever, amiable, and culturally sensitive, he ended up more inside than out. He was certainly very useful to them. They appear again and again, in idealised form, in the novels.

The Golden Age

Some readers may not be familiar with C.S. Lewis on *The Inner Ring*. This was originally an *Address* given at King's College London in 1944 and was subsequently published in the collection *They Asked for a Paper* (Geoffrey Bles, 1962). Lewis describes it in such a way as to demonstrate that he himself was certainly not immune from the temptation.

"I believe that in all men's lives at certain periods, and in many men's lives at all periods between infancy and extreme old age, one of the most dominant elements is the desire to be inside the local Ring and the terror of being left outside. This desire, in one of its forms, has indeed had ample justice done to it in literature. I mean, in the form of snobbery. Victorian fiction is full of characters who are hag-ridden by the desire to get inside that particular Ring which is, or was, called Society... [But] people who believe themselves to be free, and indeed are free, from snobbery, and who read satires on snobbery with tranquil superiority, may be devoured by the desire in another form. It may be the very intensity of their desire to enter some quite different Ring which renders them immune from the allurements of high life. An invitation from a duchess would be very cold comfort to a man smarting under the sense of exclusion from some artistic or communist coterie."

While it would be unfair to place Buchan as a pathetic hanger-on, dependent on the goodwill of the cool squad for his self-esteem, I think it was among them he found his spiritual home, a kind of elbow room not to be found in the theological and cultural straitjacket of Free Church Scottish life. His attraction to the gilded generation of aesthetes and classicists at Oxford was instant, and well described in his autobiography, *Memory Hold-the-Door*. Of these it's Raymond Asquith who looms largest. Asquith was one step further removed than Buchan from earnest Nonconformist roots, and affected a languid disdain for life's grubby toilers: "*the world as I see it just now is a little barren of motives*". It is, as they say, idle to speculate about what Asquith would have made of himself had he not, like several others of Buchan's close friends, been killed in the War, in his case on the Somme in September 1916. With the patina of nostalgia Buchan has him bur-nished to the status of a demi-god.

In passing, it's such a strange cultural phenomenon, this privileged generation whose outlooks were formed in *fin-de-siecle* England and refined in Oxbridge and polite agnostic Edwardian society. They weren't jingoists and even their patriotism was of a muted variety. Yet, like Yeats's 'Irish Airman', they threw away their lives for something they only half believed in. Maybe it was all an act and they were simply worried about coming across as being too 'keen', keenness being a subject for jocularity in the public schools.

Wider Still And Wider

Another thing that strikes us about the novels is that, by and large, their English or Scottish background operates as a jumping off point for something else. There are of course exceptions, such as the very early novel, *John Burnet of Barns* and the later ones, *Witchwood* and *The Blanket of the Dark*. Of these only *Witchwood* is in the first rank, but part of its power lies in its oddly claustrophobic quality. As we survey the Buchan *oeuvre* I think we can conclude that he's not primarily focused on the lived experience of native British people in their native British settings. He's in search of a wider canvas.

The novels are full of this, and in *The Blanket of the Dark*, a very English novel, you have someone remarking: "*There is a dark blanket (!) that covers Europe but beyond it there are open skies and the sun*". Fast forward to Buchan's *Path of*

the King, and *Salute to Adventurers*.

Only recently have I begun to understand what was Buchan's governing idea, not just one of his preoccupations but the key preoccupation. It was the British Empire, or, perhaps more precisely, the British Imperial ideal. Indeed his public life was neatly bookended by his role in South Africa just after the Boer War, as one of Milner's Young Men, and, then as Lord Tweedsmuir, Governor-General of Canada, in which post he died in 1940. The Empire was his first and last love. Of course I'm not stating this either to praise or malign him, but just as an interesting fact, which none of his biographers has given the place it deserves.

A Lost World

And this is where we come to his 1906 *A Lodge in the Wilderness* (LW). Apart from the title, I hadn't come across this book before. It's discussed briefly but helpfully in what I think is the best biography of Buchan, that by Janet Adam Smith in 1965 (OUP). Some may wish to explore Andrew Lownie's not very good *Presbyterian Cavalier* (though Lownie is a capable enough writer on other subjects), or the recent one by Ursula Buchan, a granddaughter. Anyway, I thought I should look into this LW book. Now I've done so, I can't understand why it's not better known. It's the most thoughtful piece of Imperialist apologetic I've ever seen, and indeed comes near to creating an Imperialist philosophy, even a religion.

Back in the 1980s James W. Sire wrote a book called *The Universe Next Door*. His theme was that the people we're interacting with day by day may have a completely different understanding of life, the universe and everything, from what we might expect: a totally different set of assumptions and epistemological framework. And that might be true of us as well. I thought of this when reading LW. Could it be possible that this passed for mainstream, even enlightened thinking just fifty years before I was born? In the words of the old Bob Wills number, *Time Changes Everything*. Time in this case, and two World Wars.

LW is basically a Socratic dialogue among a dozen or so protagonists in the course of what we might call the House Party To End All House Parties. The team are holed up for a month or so in a hunting lodge in Kenya, apparently 9,000 feet above the Rift Valley. This is no ordinary hunting lodge, as it has a library with

62,000 books, Louis Quinze furnishings, cuisine of the highest standard, and liveried native attendants on every hand. It's so high up that the immediate environs are akin to a less damp Scotch moorland while, as you descend, you experience more temperate, then savannah-like, then tropical, micro-climates, with the associated flora and fauna.

The house is called *Musuru*, and they have been invited there by Francis Carey. I'll let Janet Adam Smith describe the *dramatis personae*:

"Lord Appin is a former Prime Minister, Lord Launceston a former Viceroy of India, Mr. Wakefield a Canadian statesman, Mr. Loewenstein a Jewish financier; also in their party are a big-game hunter, a famous explorer, and a far-travelled journalist. Several married women are there without their husbands... but these absent spouses are equally eminent. Spotting the originals of the characters was one of the pleasures of the book for its first readers. The closeness varies, but Carey is undoubtedly Rhodes, though Buchan makes Rhodes more sympathetic than he had found him at a first meeting in 1902... Launceston derives from Milner, Loewenstein from Alfred Beit, and Lord Appin is a mixture of Rosebery and Balfour. Lady Warcliff, wife of the G.O.C. India, comes from Lady Lyttelton; Lady Lucy Gardner from Lady Lugard; the artistic Mrs. Deloraine... from Pamela Wyndham, sister to George Wyndham the politician, who married Lord Glenconner. Hugh Somerville... is Buchan himself; and the Meredithian Lady Flora Brume is a girl he was seeing much of at the time he wrote the book. The women are, for 1906, emancipated, given to smoking and adventuring... [they] are well-read, well-informed, articulate and witty. They contribute a great deal to the discussion and are listened to seriously by the men. There is a general atmosphere of good birth, good breeding, easy circumstances, high-mindedness and intelligence; a hint of Hatfield [Hatfield House, home of the Cecil family] and more than a whiff of Balliol."

When LW was published, fun was to be had in trying to identify the guests, the same kind of fun as people had with Elgar's Enigma Variations.

The Future That Never Was

Reading LW in 2020 gives rise to a whole smorgasbord of, often contradictory, reactions, which I'd like to discuss, because it's about us as much as Buchan

or the Empire. But, overshadowing the whole of it, is the word Ichabod, "*the glory has departed*", as Buchan might have said, as the book is maddeningly full of biblical allusions, delivered in a knowing, utterly non-contextual way, as a form of shorthand. So we have *Arks of the Covenant* and *sins against the Holy Ghost*. The language of the King James Version is like a shared patois for the protagonists. The really profound truths are in the quotations from Virgil, Juvenal, and other classical poets, not from Scripture.

If the glory hadn't departed, it was about to depart. It was less than five years since Britain had emerged, victorious but with a bloody nose, from a war against a couple of tinpot Dutch-speaking republics in South Africa. And, within a decade of the date of publication, the Empire had plunged head first into another war, intended to solidify the *Pax Britannica*. As we know, it had the opposite effect. In the aftermath of the Great War the loss of prestige and the appalling levels of national debt, coupled with foolhardy Imperial overreach, in Africa indeed, but especially the Middle East, meant that from that time on the Empire was suffering from internal bleeding. The next War resulted in a comprehensive Imperial collapse. The fall of Singapore postdated LW by just 35 years. Buchan himself had died in 1940, when the *denouement* was imminent, and evident to anybody with eyes to see.

The last pages of the autobiography make for poignant reading, and could indeed be added to LW as a kind of melancholy postscript.

The overall *schema* of the work enables Buchan to float a number of boats without having his name on any of them. So it's not always easy to locate his sympathies. However, Buchan never outgrew the English Idealism exemplified by F.H. Bradley. In the speech which follows, from Carey, I think we can see his concept of Empire as a sort of *Grundnorm*, as with Hans Kelsen. The *Grundnorm* is a non-theistic version of God. It is the underlying reality behind all things, the giant turtle on which the moral *cosmos* sits, the mysterious bridge that translates us from the *sein* to the *sollen*.

"We are all Imperialists at heart nowadays... Every party is more or less resigned to the fact of empire. Some kick a little against the pricks, some are half-hearted, others burn with

zeal; but all have the same conviction that it is inevitable... The Empire must be accepted, like the Monarchy, as a presupposition in politics which is beyond question... We shall of course always differ on particular questions, but there should be no difference on the ideal. Indeed, I honestly think that there is little among ordinary sane-minded people. The average man may be described as a confused Imperialist. He wants to make the best of the heritage bequeathed to him; his imagination fires at its possibilities; but... he has no idea how to set about the work."

Of course it is conceded that influential voices are raised against the Imperial "creed". ("Creed" is a word, here and elsewhere in Buchan, which I wish he had expunged from his vocabulary. Its constant repetition, and the tone in which it is repeated, are wearisome.) Another speaker has a go at the aesthetic pre-Raphaelite types who condemn Imperialism as the exercise of brute force and fail to appreciate the moral purpose with which that force is wielded; and at the practical-seeming Benthamite:

"He is averse to Empire partly because his mind is full of Rome and Carthage and he has not the imagination to conceive a new model, partly because it gives scope for energies which are only by accident utilitarian. His ideal state would be a community of Samuel Budgetts and Worldly Wise-mans. The answer to him and his kind is that their doctrine is built on a false conception of human nature, and that in tranquillising life they would denude it of all that makes it worth having..." (Cue for quotation from Juvenal!).

The third group of nay-sayers is the most interesting. They are the independent vigorous souls who perceive that the national manhood is being frittered away for the sake of Imperial baubles. I suppose we would now call them Little Englanders. At the time of writing this was probably code for a certain type of Tory who was sceptical about the idea of Imperial expansion.

Lastly come those who are intent on social reform at home, the non-Imperial Liberals, who are treated more sympathetically:

"And he is perfectly right. As long as we make 'national' and 'imperial' water-tight compartments, there must be this jealousy. What we have to show him is that the whole is one great problem, and that his own interests cannot be realised save by the help of other interests which he despises. And then

he will be on our side, for at heart he is one of us."

The Theatre Of Dreams

One is reminded of the *impromptu* Election Address, delivered by Buchan's ideal man of action, Richard Hannay, on the run from the authorities and from the sinister company of the Black Stone, at a Scotch hustings in *The Thirty Nine Steps*, attempting to inspire his audience with a vision of "what a glorious business we could make of the Empire if we put our backs into it", on the cusp of the 1914 War. In a sense the Empire is simply there, as a fact of existence. But, if it is going to be a motive force for heroic endeavours, which are "only by accident utilitarian", then what are the inspirational motives?

The benefits of not just Western but Anglo-Saxon civilisation, "*British values*" if you like, are taken as a given. Who would not wish to live under the *Pax Britannica*? But the guests never get round to describing in any detail the concrete good which the subject peoples are experiencing, in the fields of Christianity, English literature, music, sport, or general culture. There might be a case to be made for any of these, but these benefits, like the rights of man, are taken to be self-evident and in no need of explaining. In fact there is not even a pretence at explaining them.

C.S. Lewis, himself a self-conscious embodiment of what he called "*Old Western Man*", makes some splenetic remarks in a letter I can't lay my hands on, relating to the system of Indian education projected by Macaulay, and the absurdity of making Indian youths study Chaucer to the exclusion of their native literature, an alternative possibility that doesn't seem to have occurred to Macaulay. I think there is something similar at work in Buchan nearly a century later.

We find throughout Buchan that what keeps bubbling to the surface is the idea of the colonies as a theatre for adventure, and of course his South African sojourn had been a wonderful adventure for Buchan himself. It had been the making of him. An interesting minor key example of this is his short story, *Ships to Tarshish*, where a series of harsh experiences, working for logging companies in the backwoods of Canada, supplies the diletante hero with the backbone to go back home and restore the family fortunes in the City.

One Ring To Rule Them All

The nuts and bolts of colonial administration loomed as large with Buchan as with Macaulay. Because the Empire was there, it had to be administered. One would think that the problems of Africa and India would have dominated the discussions, but not so. The focus instead is the search for an integrating administrative theory. Here is the Rosebery/Balfour character, Lord Appin:

"In the last resort all our units, colonies and dependencies alike submit to the sovereign executive power. We have also, roughly speaking, one law... at least five great legal systems and many smaller codes exist within the Empire, yet we have one ultimate tribunal of appeal [the Appellate division of the House of Lords sitting as the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council], and therefore some continuity of interpretation... [But] the trouble is the manner in which the sovereign authority is exercised. Its functions have been in practice delegated to the British Cabinet, and therefore, indirectly, to the British Parliament. Now clearly such Cabinet and Parliament must have two aspects—a national one, for the British Isles, and an imperial one, in which they control the Empire. But with the grant of self-government to so many colonies there can be no direct control, and so the doctrine of trusteeship has been brought into being..."

"This might be a perfectly satisfactory arrangement if our Cabinets or Parliaments were not human, and the magnitude and number of imperial questions were not beyond their power... Hence we get dissatisfaction on both sides. A Canadian who attends the debates in the House of Commons may wait for days before one imperial consideration emerges, and may see the Government which controls his destinies turned out of office on some business of English education. And the Englishman may justly complain that his own affairs are scamped because the men who were elected to look after them have to give their time to some Indian frontier question..."

Following this there is a lengthy discussion about schemes of confederation and whether they might become a Procrustean bed for such a living organism as the Empire. Lord Launceston (Milner) has the floor. He addresses almost by way of parenthesis the huge contradiction at the centre of all this, namely that there is not one Empire. There are at least three, and these are different types of Empire too. The gulf between then can't be fudged over by reference to different types of Imperial and Proconsular gov-

ernment in ancient Rome. He refers to the self-governing colonies, and by way of contrast the other dependencies —

“where autonomy is eternally impossible. The Tropics will always be a bar to a type of union which belongs essentially to white men and to the Temperate zones...”

(This begs the questions as to what exactly is a temperate zone, and why self-government can't work outside of it. I remember the Arthur Mee Children's Encyclopaedia of the 1930s, which I read voraciously in the late 1960s, coming out with the theory that the climate of the Tropics was so very heavy and oppressive that it hindered the collective intellectual and administrative development of the inhabitants.)

“For the time being, I do not consider the feasibility or the merits of federation in the common sense. Our conditions are not the conditions on which the ordinary federation is constructed. But... there is no reason why we should not develop a type of our own to meet our special requirements... Our primary merit is our elasticity.”

This leads on to a stirring quotation from Aeneid VII:

Non ego, nec Teucris Italos parere iubebo

Nec mihi regna peto: paribus se legibus ambae

Invictae gentes aeterna in foedera mittant.

(I will certainly not order Italians to serve Trojans, and I'm not looking for kingdoms for myself. Let both peoples, unconquered, and subject to equal laws, join in eternal alliance.)

The solution is an Imperial Council, an idea which, as elaborated by Wakefield (the Canadian), would involve the Cabinet in Imperial session, deciding on issues such as army and navy subsidy, foreign policy, currency, postage, shipping and other trade matters: the list is endless. This Cabinet would be expanded by the admission of colonial members, with colonial Premiers being members *ex officio*:

“The Premiers would have a mandate in a true sense from their colonies, for the subjects discussed in the Cabinet would already have been discussed in their own parliaments... In time Colonial Officials would be appointed to the great executive posts in the Empire, and we should attain to the only practical form of imperial federation—one

central and representative imperial executive.”

War is never very far from the minds of the guests. The litmus test of the administrative arrangements is how useful they will be to that end. Colonel Graham has some views on this:

“It is a matter I have thought a good deal about, and I have bombarded the War Office with my schemes... I want to affiliate colonial levies to the regular army for training purposes, and also for mobilization in time of war... But the rock we shipwreck on is the question of colonial contributions, and the obstacle will remain until we get some kind of joint executive... [The Colonies] would be perfectly content to be affiliated with us if they had a say in the management... A common executive would get us over the difficulty for then it would be the whole Empire which asked for men and money and directed the use of both.”

Colonel Graham need not have worried. When the day of decision came the colonial lion cubs came dashing to the aid of the chief lioness, as the Great War cartoons testify.

Would this sort of scheme ever have come to fruition in the absence of the convulsive disruptions of the two Great Wars? The question must be left hanging, but ironically something very like it did come to pass in Europe post-1945. What Buchan is describing is uncannily like the EU Council of Ministers. And there are definite plans for a centrally-directed EU defence force. We'll possibly come back to this point in the second part of this piece.

Know Your Place

Lady Warcliff then joins the fray with the question, what to do about the lesser breeds without the law? The riposte by Wakefield, the raw Canadian, insofar as it's coherent at all, might be considered to be at the extreme end of the Imperial ball park, but still on it:

“...I found many good men who still clung to the Gladstonian notion that any rising of fanatics was an effort of a people ‘rightly struggling to be free’. These gentlemen would have all the possessions of England redistributed by some International Labour Congress. I tell you that such infernal nonsense would not be tolerated in the Colonies for one instant, and the man who talked it would be lynched. No, madame, we have our race pride, and any insult to it by professor or politician is hotly resented. Our democracy

is the creed of men and not of sentimentalists.”

That Buchan himself is giving vent to these remarks, only with a view to distancing himself from them, is evident from the remarks which follow, from Launceston/Milner, Buchan's hero—whose intervention nevertheless might be held to be objectionable for different reasons:

“A high-handed Bismarckianism is as much a risk to the well-being of our dependencies as any academic cult of the rights of man. But I agree with you that democracy will find in itself a cure for its weaknesses, and that it will not endanger those great realms we hold in trust for races who are unfit to struggle singlehanded in the arena of the world.”

I was particularly struck by the “*academic cult of the rights of man*”. This is obviously another of Buchan's “creeds”. When he entered the gates of Brasenose, he appears to have left behind the Scottish logician's attachment to clarity of definition, and reasoning from first principles. It then becomes almost indecent to look for a consistent moral underpinning to the concept of Empire, which can mean whatever we want it to mean and is not susceptible to the ordinary rules of rational discourse.

A Positive Colonial Experience?

In saying this, I'm not out to mock or despise the British Imperial vision, as interpreted by Buchan, who was perhaps its best interpreter; and indeed I find some sections of LW quite moving. Far from being a glorious business, the Empire, as we know, was a deeply flawed business. It was so huge, complex and diverse in its operations and effects that it's impossible to do a 'Sellers and Yeatman' on it. However, it's arguable that as colonial administrators in southern and east Africa the British record is far from contemptible, probably better than the French, a lot better than the German, and miles better than the Belgian. This may not be setting the bar very high of course. Colonial Uganda appears to have been a particular success story, capably governed with a light touch by a very small administration. Contrast that with the hordes of NGO staff in their jeeps that we see today, the grandiose Aid Schemes, and the UN Agencies (and, leaving aside the actual Ugandan Government, whose impact on the scene is probably negative). Between them all they can't seem to be able to establish clean water supplies, decent hospitals, passable roads, or

a proper network of elementary schools. The new colonial power in sub-Saharan Africa is the People's Republic of China. Let's see how that works out over the next few years.

A word about Rhodes. As Francis Carey he is quite sympathetically portrayed by Buchan. He was of course a racist by our elevated standards, and a fanatic for Imperialism. He also seems to have been a bit of a bully and not a very nice man, greedy and rapacious. But he probably was no more racist and quite possibly less racist than most of his Establishment contemporaries. In Cape Colony in the 1890s under his premiership there was no racial qualification on the electoral roll. Maybe there didn't have to be, because so few Black or Coloured people would have qualified under his property qualification (which possibly excluded some White people too). When the Rhodes scholarship was set up, it was explicitly stated to be open to the best candidates, whatever their race; and indeed non-white scholars were among the early recipients. He seems to be just another of these dead white men who are all lumped together promiscuously by the new Pharisees.

The New Jerusalem

I would like to conclude this next time by looking at the Empire as a cultural and religious phenomenon, through the eyes of the LW protagonists. To give a taster of that, here is a segment of a visionary speech by Wakefield. His premise is that the mother country over the course of time will find her natural resources depleted or superseded and her population too high for comfort. Consequently her centrality and pre-eminence will start to fade and the energies of the Empire will increasingly be diffused throughout the Colonies. The Empire, like Virgil's idea of Italy, will be a partnership of equals. He finishes on this religious note:

"In the early centuries of the Christian era the great Councils of the Church were held, now in Spain, now on the shores of the Bosphorus; and such mobility, which is the fruit of true cohesion, must be the ideal of our Empire if it is to survive. We are connected at present, but it is in the interest of us all, and especially of England, to be more closely related if we are to be secure against the future. Insularism must cease to dominate British policy, and be left only to the obscurantists and reactionaries. Such constitutional union as I propose is only a small and formal beginning, but it will make broad the path for the true spiritual change."

*

Brendan Clifford

Where Did Capitalism Come From?

There are at present almost two hundred nation-states in the world. The world is officially made up of nation states. The official ideal is that there should be nothing but nation-states in the world, and that they should all be distinct, sovereign and uniform. It is an inescapable ideal, but also an unrealisable one.

This world in which there must be nothing but nation-states was proclaimed by the Versailles Conference of 1919, which established the League of Nations as the political structure of the world.

The effective meaning of the word "*nation*" for the League of Nations, as for the United Nations which followed it, was "*state*".

There were in 1919 half a dozen effective states in the world. Five of them decided they were the world. These were the victor states in the Great War launched by the British Empire in 1914: Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and the USA. The sixth state was the Communist order. Established in Russia from the ruins of the Tsarist Empire, which had collapsed under the stress of the war of conquest which it had launched in alliance with Britain and France. That Communist order maintained itself against British and French invasions intended to destroy it, and it held control of the greater part of the Tsarist Empire, but it was not recognised by the others as a legitimate part of the order of the world.

Japan, though a Victor Power, was denied racial equality with the white European Powers. Its proposal, asserting racial equality, was rejected. And Britain, under American pressure, decided in 1922 not to renew its Treaty with it.

The United States, which had entered the European War with its own policies, withdrew from the Versailles settlement when Britain and France prevented those policies from being implemented.

Italy had broken its Treaty with Austria in 1915, and joined Britain and

France in war against it, under a secret agreement with Britain, supporting its irredentist claims against Austria. But that agreement was not honoured by Britain in 1919 because parts of the promised territory was needed for the formation of other states, which had not even been imagined in 1914, when Britain set about luring Italy into the War. This breach of faith was a factor in the rise of the Fascist movement under the leadership of Mussolini, who had been closely aligned with Britain in 1915, when he blended revolutionary socialism with nationalism in support of militarist irredentism.

That reduced the Versailles Powers—constituting the world—to two! Britain and France. These were the "*satiated Powers*", in a term widely used by historians a generation later. They were the Powers that got all they wanted from the War.

But Britain was Super-satiated. It was bloated. It had stuffed itself full of more than it could digest. And it prevented France from getting what it wanted most of all—a Rhine frontier with Germany, and a separate Rhineland state within Germany under French hegemony.

It was necessary for Britain to prevent France, which had borne the main human cost of defeating Germany, from getting what it wanted, and had very reasonable grounds for wanting. Because, if France had got what it wanted, it would again have become the dominant state in Europe—and Britain would have been obliged to make war on it again.

(A survey of public opinion, recently conducted by a British newspaper, found that what is called the *millennial generation* thought that the Second World War had been fought against France. It is not an absurd opinion. France is the historic enemy. It was with France that Britain disputed world dominance over many centuries. The German state, formed only in 1871, was never a rival World Power as France had been. The German state did not attempt to turn the

world upside down in pursuit of its interests as both Britain and France did. Its foreign policy was not revolutionary: it was ultra-conservative. It sought to preserve the Ottoman Empire as an orderly expression of Islam in world affairs, while Britain and France were seeking ways to destroy it, each to his own advantage, and were treating Islam as obsolescent.)

The British war on Germany was at best a pre-emptive war against the possibility that Germany might in the future become the world rival that France had been. It was undertaken on the assumption of easy victory. It was from the start a war for the destruction of the German state, not as a rival but as a force of Evil. But that meant of course that, if the German state was not destroyed unconditionally, Britain would have lost, and Germany would have become in the outcome what it was not at the start—the major European Power in world affairs.

The handling of the Versailles arrangement was Britain's business exclusively, after the USA had withdrawn in disgust and France was made to withdraw from intervention in Germany in the early 1920s and was subordinated to British foreign policy.

There is a sense in which Britain was alone in the world, as master of it, for a couple of years after 1919. That position was given eloquent expression by Winston Churchill at the time. Churchill thought he knew what should be done in order to consolidate the singularly powerful position that Britain had gained and make sure that it endured for several generations. But he was an outsider within the ruling elite, which looked on him as an interesting maverick.

The mainstream elite simply did not know what to do with the singular position it had gained through its Great War. A generation later Churchill, as historian, attributed the confusion of British power in its moment of global dominance to the democratisation that had come about in the course of the War. The democracy acted irrationally in pursuit of moral illusions and, in its floundering, it brought about the circumstances in which there was another Great War.

Churchill is in the news again. His statue in Parliament Square is boarded up, to ensure that it is not pulled down. A popular agitation brands him as an

Imperialist and a racist. But we have not heard any accusation that he was an Anti-Semite and a Fascist. It is agreed by both sides to pass by the fact that he was both of these things, and made no secret of it. He was a Zionist on Anti-Semitic grounds, and his close observation of the effect of democracy on British policy gave him a strong sense of affinity with Mussolini, to whom he did homage on a pilgrimage to Rome. But we will leave that aside because there is a British consensus to leave it aside.

In rebuttal of the accusation that he was a racist Imperialist, the British Establishment says that it is an obvious absurdity because he was the man who saved Britain in its hour of need, and who in fact saved the world from barbarism.

Britain's hour of need, in which Churchill took over as its Saviour, was the year from June 1940 to June 1941, when the course of the war against Germany passed out of its hands and into the hands of the Soviet Communist Party. What Churchill did in that year was prevent Britain from negotiating a settlement of the War which it had launched, even though it had lost the decisive opening battle and brought its army home and had no will to return to the battlefield.

It was not in difficulty because of German warmongering. It was in difficulty because of its own warmongering. It had declared war on Germany in September 1939, but made no attempt to prosecute the war for eight months. Then, in May 1940, Germany responded to the British and French declarations of war on it and disrupted the Anglo-French military deployment against it with an unexpected military gamble that came off. France negotiated a settlement, because its declaration of war had led to military occupation by the enemy. Britain did not: because the enemy made no attempt to occupy it.

It would not negotiate a settlement with Germany on the basis of the military facts of June 1940 because that would have involved a humiliating loss of face. It would have amounted to an acknowledgement that the Germany which it had plundered, humiliated and disarmed in 1919 had somehow become its equal, and that the position of arbiter of world affairs which it held in 1919 had been frittered away. (And the "somehow", by which Germany had risen to become a

major European Power, was active British collaboration with it from the time that Hitler came to power until early 1939. It didn't bear thinking about.)

Britain itself broke the Versailles conditions which it had imposed on Germany in 1919. By means of action and inaction it gave Nazi Germany a Navy, an Army, the Rhineland, Austria, and the German Sudetenland with its advanced arms industry. But it made war on the trivial issue of Danzig. It left Poland to be devastated, despite being Treaty-bound to defend it. And then it stood alone for a year, until its 1930s strategy of directing Germany eastwards bore fruit in June 1941.

Churchill's purpose was to maintain Imperial pretensions at any cost. If the pretensions were kept up, the possibility would remain of giving them substance if another World War could be got going in earnest.

He had been an 'anti-appeaser' from the early 1930s, but neither Fascism nor Germany had anything to do with it. It was the concession of some reforms to India that got him going.

When he took over in June 1940, and England was standing alone and needed company, he sent a mission to India composed of Labour radicals. The Indian leaders, who knew these people from their own time at the London School of Economics, expected that they were to be offered independence in exchange for supporting the war against Germany. But Churchill made it clear that he had not come to power to liquidate the British Empire. He expected the Indian Congress Party to support the war on Germany because it was the right thing to do. The Congress leaders were shocked that this was the message brought to them by their LSE comrades. They declared neutrality.

But of course Churchill carried on governing India anyway, recruited for the War despite the Congress, and made use of Indian resources as he required them, regardless of the consequences for the population.

Ash Sarker of *Novara Media* was interviewed on *Al Jazeera* television when the Churchill statue was in danger. She has got a niche for herself in the British media. She said that, whenever she tries to get a discussion of Churchill's *Bengali Famine*, in which millions died, she gets told that what she should be thinking about is how Churchill saved the world.

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England is preoccupied just now with the question of what is to be done with the public memorials of the era of slavery on which its prosperity was founded and which powered the take-off of freely operating international capitalism. Statues are being pulled down, amidst scenes of great popular enthusiasm, in defiance of the law. The only dissent uttered by the leader of the Labour Party, who is in principle the next Prime Minister, is that the work of destruction should be done by formal democratic procedures rather than by direct action.

Nobody seems to be defending those statues on the grounds that slavery was one of the major sources of the liberal civilisation on which England prides itself.

Twenty years ago, on the Millennium, the Royal Navy put on an Exhibition at Greenwich in which the crucial part that slavery played in the refinement of culture was explained.

The Navy was the core of the Empire. And it was for a long period the only systematically organised form of State. The ruling class, that took over from the Monarchy on the death of Queen Anne in the early 18th century, disciplined itself into professional seamanship for the purpose of conquering the world, and gave itself the right of conscripting manpower and disciplining it mercilessly for the carrying out the tasks of running warships. And the Navy was of course well represented in Parliament which was entirely a ruling class institution. And it was accustomed to calling a spade a spade.

Its Millennial Exhibition explained about the enormous wealth generated by the Slave Trade, the industrial Slave Labour Camps on Caribbean Islands, and the Triangular Trade. Protests were made about the Exhibition in the democratised Parliament, where it was said that what should be said about Britain's relationship with slavery was that it abolished the Slave Trade.

Britain did eventually abolish its Slave Trade in 1808, when it had no further use for it. And, as is its way, when it had no further use for it, it declared it to be illegal for everybody to engage in it.

England had its *Glorious Revolution* in 1688. It was a Protestant Revolution against a Catholic Monarch who attempted to maintain an internal State power to which all were subject, including the nobility.

A slave trade had been carried on under the Monarchy, but it was subject to law and at least a degree of policing. One of the first Acts of the Revolution Parliament was to throw the slave trade open to unsupervised free enterprise. Then in 1713 Britain gained a virtual monopoly of the international slave trade, as a fruit of victory in its first Great War.

(Spain regulated the slave trade to Spanish Colonies under the system of the *Asiento de Negros*. In 1713, the British were awarded the right to the *asiento* in the Treaty of Utrecht, which ended the War of the Spanish Succession. The British Government passed its rights to the South Sea Company. The British *asiento* ended with the 1750 Treaty of Madrid between Great Britain and Spain.)

The *Triangular Trade*, which was then established was the nucleus which developed into the capitalist world market. Slaves were bought in West Africa in exchange for goods produced in Britain, and transported to the Labour Camps in the Caribbean where they produced luxury goods which were transported to England and exchanged for manufactured goods, which were then traded for slaves in West Africa.

The Royal Navy exhibition explained how the great wealth gained from this trade funded the development of refined middle class living in England, culminating in the culture expressed in the novels of Jane Austen. In that culture, Bristol was a centre of fashion society. The slave trade was not mentioned in the culture, and if there was a *West Indian* about, he was the master, not the occupant, of a Slave Labour Camp—just as an Irishman was a colonial Protestant ruling over the Irish and the Indian was the British ruling stratum in India. But the growth of fine feelings did very gradually lead to sentiments which, when the Slave Trade was abolished, expressed themselves as moralising.

The slave trade was stopped in 1808 but the slave camps in the West Indies continued for a further twenty years. And, when slavery was abolished, the slave owners were compensated by the Government for the confiscation of their property. The slaves were merely freed, and left to fend for themselves as best they could.

About 120 years later, the emancipated slaves were imported to England in large quantities, in order to supply,

along with the Irish, a basic labour force for a society which, for one reason and another, could not supply to itself the services it had come to require.

In mid-18th century England there was only one notable opponent of slavery, Dr. Samuel Johnson, a literary man who wrote a dictionary. He was a household name in England for a couple of centuries because of his pointed sayings that were noted down by Boswell and published, but he seems to have been set aside during the past half century.

He was a Tory—a reactionary. What else could he have been, since he toasted every sign of slave rebellion in the West Indies—and was thoroughly reprimanded by Boswell for his irresponsibility! The Slave Trade brought pagan savages into contact with Christianity and civilization, and the Labour Camps made them industrious. Only a reactionary obscurant could deny that that was Progress, and that Progress was a good thing!

Slavery brought great swathes of African pagans forcibly within Protestant civilization. Those who remained behind in Africa have still not made it, while those who were taken away forcibly and commodified as slaves are now, in the form of their descendants, reaching the forefront of the civilization that enslaved them.

The output of the Slave Labour Camps contributed substantially to the freeing of market relations from all social restraints. It helped to make Capitalism the dominant economic force in English society, and to make the values of the market dominant over all other values. The great mass of wealth necessary for this to happen could not have been accumulated within England. The resistance of political and customary forces would have been too strong. It was gathered from outside England by the Empire—from the industrial capitalism using slave labour in the great Labour Camps on the Caribbean islands, and from the plunder of India.

Capitalism did not arise gradually out of trading activities within the national economy of states with Governments representative of established way of life. The conservatism of such societies, expressed in laws and customs, prevented it. In China, which was the greatest civilisation in the world until the 19th century, extensive trading was for centuries part of a settled way of life. The trading element did not free itself from the network of law, custom

and practice within which it was carried on. Market values did not become dominant over all other values. And in Europe capitalism did not arise out of the trade Guilds by which the market was organised.

It was in England, after the 1688 Revolution, that Money freed itself from social and political constraints and became Capitalism.

About a century and a half earlier, Britain had withdrawn from the European political consensus, declared itself an Empire, and made up a religion for itself in which *individualism* was the moving principle. This was done in conjunction with the formation of an absolute monarchy, which was directive rather than representative (Henry VIII). The life of society was disrupted. The State came into conflict with the individualism which it fostered. A period of revolution and counter-revolution followed. One effect of the 1688 Revolution was that the national structure of state, of which the only durable form had been found to be monarchy, was set aside and its place was taken by a network of aristocratic families which took power as a ruling class, with each family ruling in its own locality. Parliament became an assembly in which these aristocrats made deals with each other internally, and considered how to act in the world.

These aristocrats were in great part vigorous elements which had forced their way to the top in the flex set in motion by the individualist Reformation.

Two forms of Protestantisms were produced by the English Reformation. The aristocrats ruled in the form of one of them, which retained a degree of hierarchical structure—the Episcopalian form, in which Biblicalist enthusiasm was discouraged and belief was swallowed with a pinch of salt. The other form, Biblicalist individualism, which acknowledged no authority but the Bible, had taken power in 1641 and attempted to form a theocratic Republic but failed. It was excluded from public office under the 1688 regime but had freedom of operation otherwise. (The United States was to become the ultimate expression of this approach.)

Roman Catholicism, representing the traditional mode of life under a nationally-organised state to which all were subject—a monarchy—was criminalised.

The first reform of the 1688 Revolu-

tion was the freeing of the Slave Trade to individual enterprise.

This ruling class was not effete or decadent. It built a powerful Navy, mastered the use of it in war, contested the issue of world supremacy—control of the seas—with France, and won.

It was under these arrangements that free capitalism came about in the 18th century, with the Puritans being the capitalists. The wealth that poured into England from the Slave system and the plunder of India fuelled its development.

Capitalism as a freely operating system can only exist by expanding. It cannot tick over idly. The Empire, committed to a universalising Biblicalist individualism provided it with scope for continuous expansion.

President Trump has declared that China has been exploiting the United States, reducing it to the status of a Chinese puppet-state—the kind of thing China was to the US in an earlier era. There is an element of sense in that non-sense.

In the 1970s Angela Clifford drew attention to the fact that, implicit in Marx's description of Capitalism, was the expansion of Capitalism by Imperialist exploitation. Professor Bill Warren of the London School of Oriental and African Studies in London picked up on this and developed it in a book, *Imperialism: Pioneer Of Capitalism*. This went against the idea of Lenin's *Imperialism—The Final Stage Of Capitalism*. If capitalism in the course of Imperialist exploitation generated capitalism in the countries it exploited—if it reproduced itself amongst its victims—then it still had some distance to go.

Capitalist exploitation and Imperialist plunder are not quite the same thing. There was Imperialist plunder before there was Capitalism. It did not require the destruction of the societies it plundered. Imperialist plunder fed the development of capitalism in England (where it happened). Capitalism became Imperialist and operated by market exploitation under the protection of Imperialist military power. But it was not the case that Capitalism came into being as national capitalism and then became Imperialist. It was born within Imperialism, and the Imperialism in which it was born became capitalist, and exploitation was then carried on through the compulsory development of the capitalist market in the subjugated countries.

Capitalist goods had to be *sold* in order for profit to be realised through the system of commodity exchange. Neither plunder nor barter would do in the long run. The universal establishment of market values was the thing.

Grossly unequal exchanges took place, but the ideology and the logic of the system declared that commodity exchanges could only be an exchange of goods of equal market value, because otherwise there could be no transaction. Who would pay for anything above its value or sell anything below its value? But the determination of market values between the powerful and the subjugated is a slippery business.

Yet, however slippery this kind of trade was, it did establish the market system as a general phenomenon in places where it had only a vestigial existence before, destroying native industries in the process. And, in the course of time, the export of capital goods were added to simple consumer goods in the trade between the capitalist centre and countries which had been made dependent on it. This brought capitalist production with it. Capitalism exported not just its goods: it exported itself in its search for cheaper labour.

And, when those countries demanded national political independence—many of them not having been nations before Capitalist Imperialist imposed itself on them—they entered the wide world as weak components of the international capitalist system. They were weak because they were not capitalist through internal development, and their underlying societies remained comprehensively pre-capitalist in their habits and practices.

A German socialist during the First World War, who rejected the project of establishing Socialism by means of revolution because Capitalism was the most revolutionary force in the world and Socialism could never compete with it in the business of revolutionism, described the situation as follows:

“Capitalism is itself a form production of tremendous revolutionary power; ...it sweats revolution from every power, and only appears to be a safeguard against revolution because it is itself by nature so deeply revolutionary. Unceasingly, it spreads change and confusion among classes, circumstances, men and states; it ransacks the world to discover any spot where primitive household fur-

niture and primitive methods of work are still preserved; it does not rest until it has dissolved the most rigid social systems, broken up primitive social organisations which had defied all change for centuries, and forced them into the whirlpool of Capitalism, so that we perceive the World War to be not only a manifestation of World Capitalism, but at the same time a revolution, *the* revolution, the greatest revolution that has happened since the migration of nations and the onslaughts of the Huns... Capitalism has brought the whole world into subjection to itself, and ceaselessly, from morning to night, it drives forth to the field of battle all the nations without distinction" (Paul Lensch: *Three Years Of World Revolution*, 1917, English translation 1918, p2).

Lensch, who supported the German war effort on the ground that Germany was fighting a war of national defence against the English Capitalist Imperialism which, jointly with its allies, owned most of the world, put it to the Left socialists who rejected German defence and sought revolutionary overthrow, that revolution against the most revolutionary force in the world was not a practical proposition. Their idea of revolution, he said, was pre-capitalist. The fiasco of the German Revolution in the Winter of 1918-19 did not prove him wrong. And the anti-Imperialist revolutions which did occur have worked out so far as preparations for participation in the Capitalist world order on equal terms.

But isn't it reactionary not to be revolutionary?

"Germany is reputed reactionary, and, from the standpoint of English Liberalism, Germany is reactionary. All those who accept English political standards concur in this judgment; even Conservative politicians do not deny Germany's political backwardness: they merely seek excuses for it... Now this class of people, who unconsciously reason from English standards, comprises the whole educated German bourgeoisie. Their political notions of "freedom"... are derived from that individualistic conception of the world of which English Liberalism is the classical embodiment...

"In this connection it is an astonishing fact that, in so-called "reactionary" Germany, the working classes have won for themselves a much more solid and powerful position in the life of the State than is the case either in England or in France"

James Connolly and Roger Casement saw the matter in much the same way.

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In the Free World only Capitalism is allowed.

The *Free World* is an idea put into circulation in the years after 1945.

Britain declared war on Nazi Germany in 1939, after collaborating with it actively from 1933 to 1938. It conducted the War in such a blundering way that Nazi Germany became the dominant power in Europe in 1940. Europe would in all probability have settled down as Fascist if Germany had not made war on Communist Russia and been destroyed by it. In 1941-45 Britain hailed Russia as the saviour of civilisation from a force of pure Evil—whose appearance has never been explained in comprehensible terms of cause and effect.

In order to free Europe from Fascism, Russia had to drive back the Nazi forces into the heart of Germany. Having been brought to the brink of destruction by an invasion from Europe, Russia extended its authority over the area it had liberated, as protection against a repeat performance and brought it within its own system. Within a few years the Russian liberation of Germany from Fascism was being described more as a conquest, followed by the imposition of tyranny.

Churchill, who in the 1920s had explicitly acknowledged that Fascism was the force that saved European capitalist civilisation from Communism, and in 1933 had welcomed Hitler's stabilising of the situation in Germany, was by the late 1940s describing the force that overthrew the Nazi regime in the terms used to denounce the Nazi regime during the War; and he reverted to describing Russia in the terms he had used before the War.

If he had been in Office and had nuclear weapons, he would probably have used them to do what Hitler failed to do. Communism was the fundamental enemy of *Freedom*. Fascism had saved Freedom by means of a kind of half-way house. It was irritatingly paradoxical that British diplomatic bungling had made Fascist Europe an enemy and launched a war on it with catastrophic consequences from which it had been saved by Communism.

The British object during the next forty years was to destroy the force that had destroyed Nazism. It succeeded. The Soviet system broke up. Russia

entered a period of capitalist freedom such as Britain had enjoyed in the 18th century—with much the same effect on the populace. Living standards and life expectancy plummeted. Then an effective State was restored. The anarchy of capitalist oligarchs was curbed. Capitalism was preserved but was brought to a degree of order by the State.

The restoration of the State, which set parameters within which Capitalism must function, was experienced in the West as a restoration of Communism because it was not subject to Western hegemony. The concept of the Free World was revived against it, because it was "*corrupt*". Words like "*crony capitalism*" and "*kleptocracy*" were used to describe it—things that have always been part of Capitalism and that Capitalism is hardly imaginable without.

Wholesale corruption played a necessary part in the establishment of Capitalism as the national social system of England. Its operations became more discreet after the system became secure and unalterable and competition intensified.

In the mid-19th century, the capitalist criticism of Socialism was that it would destroy established values, beginning with the value of the family, which was then taken to be the basic social unit, the building block of society. Marx commented that anybody who was anti-family (and there were English socialists who were) could rely on Capitalism to destroy it for them. Money values would erode all existing values, reduce them to a hulk, and make a semblance of them exchangeable for money.

Political resistance to Capitalism as a destructive social force was first expressed by Jonathan Swift, before he became the eccentric Dean of St. Patrick's, when he was a Tory pamphleteer. He persuaded the very restricted public opinion of the time that it would be a good thing to negotiate an advantageous conclusion of the war with France, instead of pressing it to the destruction of France as the Whigs wanted. The War was ended with the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), which among other things gave England a virtual monopoly of the Slave Trade.

An important element in Swift's case was that the War was being paid for by an increase in the National Debt, which was bringing about a very great increase in the circulation of money, was making money take the form of *credit*, whose potential is infinite. And he saw that

money was a subversive force.

About a century and a quarter later Thomas Carlyle, who was a great influence on *Young Ireland*, but is now dismissed by Irish academe as an English racist, summed up the condition of things brought about by capitalist dominance as being one in which the only social bond was “*the nexus of callous cash payment*”.

Walter Cox, in his *Irish Magazine* (1808-1815), pointed out that the English Government, which was a force of oppression in Ireland, was the most revolutionary force in the world.

The *Young Ireland* paper, *The Nation* on 29th October 1842, carried an Editorial entitled, *War With Everybody*:

“War with everybody is at present the enviable condition of our amiable sister of England.

“At the uttermost ends of the earth her soldiers and sailors are triumphing—if triumph that can be called which is victory without glory—over a nation of feminine creatures, destitute even of the brute instinct of resistance, and apparently incapable of imitating the most timid animals, which become valiant by despair. Thousands of these unhappy wretches, who yet, be it remembered, are human beings, ...are being butchered mercilessly, ...mowed down by canister and grape...”

And on November 26th:

“The English are holding a robbers’ jubilee for having grabbed a lot of land and money from China. They took (says the last mail) another big city, killed a parcel of men-women, and some real men. There was an old Tartar general there, who sooner than surrender, set fire to his house, then sat down in his own arm-chair, and died like a hero... As a result of this and other victories, the Chinese have promised (if the Emperor will agree to it) to leave a couple rich islands to the English, to admit their ships to five principal ports, to pay them about twenty-one million dollars (about five millions sterling), six millions in hand, and the rest within three years... If the Chinese make the treaty in good faith they are cowards—if in bad faith, both rogues and cowards” (Quoted from *The Nation: Selections, 1842-44*. Aubane Historical Society 2000, pp29 and 47).

This was the first of the *Opium Wars*—wars to compel China to become a market from opium goods produced by the British administration in India. China was laid waste. When resis-

tance was provoked—expressing itself in mystical terms—it was dealt with by mass slaughter with a good conscience by Western Christian pragmatists.

China was the biggest civilised country in the world—a country with many cities. It was peaceful and self-absorbed. Napoleon, concerned about what it might do if disturbed, advised that it should be let be. But Napoleon was a conservative dictator, who could make such decisions out of concern for the life of the world. The Whig/Liberal British Government expressed the interests of Capitalism in its purest form, and its War Minister was the most influential of all Liberal ideologues, Thomas Babington Macaulay, so ultra-civilised China was doomed.

About six months ago BBC radio interviewed some Chinese politicians for the purpose of criticism. It was brought up short by a reference to the *Opium War*. The interviewer was an old hand, about to retire, John Humphries, so he knew at least what the Chinese was talking about. But the *Opium Wars* were ancient history, with no bearing on present affairs! It was explained to him that the *Opium Wars* were the beginning of the present for China.

Capitalist Imperialism was not mere plunder. While mere plunder certainly played a part in fuelling the take-off of capitalism, it could not function by mere plunder once it was established. It functioned by trade—by the exchange of commodities. While at times this may have differed from mere plunder only in form, the difference in form was crucial. Plunder could leave the victim society poorer but otherwise intact. Trade required the smashing of society based on pre-capitalist modes of production and the reconstruction of them as market systems. What feeds the capitalist system in the long run is not plunder but market demand.

The resting point of capital is *money*. The cycle of Capitalism is: Money — Product — Money. It begins with money and ends with money. Money is invested in production for the purpose of making more money. A capitalist, who has goods left in his hand, loses. He can rest only when they are exchanged for money. Money is what Marx called the “*universal equivalent*”. There is nothing that cannot be got with it. That was the case in Walpole’s England three hundred years ago. It is substantially the case in the greater part of the world today.

When Walpole was obliged to retire, after his long career as a pioneering Prime Minister of capitalist England, in which he demonstrated that “*every man has his price*”, Parliament briefly considered impeaching him for subverting the Constitution, but then decided instead to found the Constitution on his practices.

Walpole’s purpose was “*to eradicate, either by force or conciliation, all the seeds of Jacobitism*” (*The History Of Party*, Vol. 1, p412, 1836, by Liberal historian, G.W. Cooke). Jacobitism stood for the maintenance of a national state in which all were subject to a governing authority. What happened in 1688 was that the aristocracy freed themselves from the governing authority of a Catholic monarch on the grounds that he was a Catholic, but in effect freed themselves from any State authority and took direct command of internal affairs as a ruling class of aristocratic families in which each major family was the virtually independent political power in his own region. This took about a generation to work out into a system.

The political revolution was accomplished in the few years following the death of Queen Anne, the last legitimate monarch, in 1714, and her replacement with a King got from minor German royalty who could not speak English and did not attempt to govern.

The Jacobites stood for maintaining the legitimate line of the Stuart monarchy, even though it would have put a Catholic on the throne. The Whigs accused them of treason and persecuted them. The Jacobites were Tories. Not all of them were Catholics—far from it—but they gave legitimacy priority over revolutionising religion, and stood for the maintenance of a national State, with a national Government which had authority over all.

Their leaders were persecuted. Some of them fled to France. Swift had already been put out to grass in Dublin. But there remained a substantial body favourable to Jacobitism within the aristocracy/gentry.

The form of monarchy was retained, but the substance behind it was an aristocratic republic—as Tom Paine, the great Republican, acknowledged a few generations later. The retention of a formal monarchy concealed what was happening. (The establishment of a state without a monarchy had been tried in the 1650s by the ancestors of the Hanover-

ian Whigs and it was found that the English populace could not rest easy with it.)

Walpole had to root out the seeds of Jacobitism in order “to keep the country in repose”. And Cooke acknowledges that—

“To effect this purpose, he certainly did not hesitate to use corruption—a means of government which had never entered into the theory of our Whig constitution, nor was desirable to be known in practice. But when Walpole assumed the direction of the state, the theory of a perfectly free constitution was impracticable in England. At that time, the people—and by this term I would be understood to mean, not the mere mob, but the whole of the middle class—the great mass of the community, as distinguished from the landed aristocracy—the people took little interest in the ordinary course of public affairs. If trade was injured or bread was scarce they murmured; if any imminent danger threatened their liberties, they rose in indignation; but when no urgent occasion called forth their energy, they seldom came forward to oppose their superiors. Thus, in periods of tranquility—and an ill-informed people had little foresight for distant dangers—the house of commons, if the influence of the landlords over the electors was left unopposed, would be an assembly of Tories. Walpole knew that such an assembly would restore the Stuarts...

“Walpole, doubtless, thought only of present success; but a statesman of more comprehensive views would probably have pursued the same course, not to perpetuate corruption, as the weapon of his party, but to use it as the surgeon often imitates by galvanism the functions of life to establish real vitality. If the attention of the people could be once habitually fixed upon political affairs, they might safely be trusted to give them a direction which would destroy the supremacy of an agricultural aristocracy over a commercial people. The means... were contrary to the principles of the Whig party... and therefore indefensible: the effect was invaluable” (p412-3).

Purposeful corruption maintained for a functional political purpose over a long generation, assisted by intimidation, and by outright terrorism in response to efforts to restore Legitimacy (eg 1745), consolidated the new regime by engendering habitual political conduct which took it for granted.

Cooke noted in a later volume that this mode of government gained a base of popular support and—

“occasioned a considerable alteration in the tactics of the Whigs. Corruption was no longer necessary to their party, and they disclaimed it... Henceforth, therefore, we find a great portion of the Whigs strenuous in behalf of short parliaments, and eager to extend the popular influence over elections so far as that could be effected without danger to the monarchical forms of the constitution” (Vol.3, p197).

That long generation of necessarily corrupt government used to be known in the 1950s to anybody who took any interest in English history as *The Whig Ascendancy*, but the detail of it was never probed. It was understood to be in the cause of *Progress*. Progress was an absolutely good thing, and therefore whatever was necessary to bring it about was good too, and should not be probed unhealthily. That was in the days when the Labour Party still saw itself as having a distinctive part to play in the working out of British history.

A famous book in the post-War years was *The Whig Interpretation Of History* by Herbert Butterfield. It promised to be a critique of the Whig interpretation (which could only be Jacobite), but it failed to deliver. And the author tacitly conceded in another book (*The Englishman And His History*) that the English political mind had been made incorrigibly Whig in outlook. (Whiggery stood for free-wheeling Progress, directed by an elite which commanded deference on the part of the populace. And *Progress*, of course, was Capitalism.)

A pamphlet called *Jacobite Socialism* was published in London in 1945. It led nowhere. The title must have seemed a mere paradox to the Public-School leaders of the Labour Government. But, if a serious attempt was to be made to overcome the essential flux of Capitalism—which unmade in each generation the degree of settlement that had been accomplished in the preceding generation—it could only be done in a Jacobite spirit. Otherwise all that could be done was set up a safety net to catch the worst victims of the always accelerating flux of Capitalism.

The Attlee Government lost its nerve about half-way through its term (c1948), and Labour remained an incoherent Party until Tony Blair took control of it and made it a party that revelled in the flux of Capitalism. So thorough was Blair's makeover of the Party that Kim Howells, a radical supporter of Arthur Scargill at his most extreme, became Blair's Minister with special responsibility for freeing

Capitalism in Europe from the Bismarckian curbs imposed on it by the EU.

Would Capitalism have developed and become a major force in the world, even if Britain had not been there—in the course of becoming a Great Power, but with its traditional life and culture destroyed by the two great waves of iconoclasm conducted by the two Cromwells, a century apart, and by the effects of a century and a half of revolution and counter-revolution before 1688, and without the mass culture of Predestinationist individualism, drawn from Calvinism, in the populace, and without a ruling class freed from the obligation to maintain a domestic State in the service of an integrated people but with a sense that it was its destiny to resume the work in the world that had been begun by pagan Rome?

(Algernon Sydney was the prophet and martyr of 1688 and he had drawn his inspiration from Ancient Rome. For a century and more his *Discourses Concerning Government* was a historical landmark for the English ruling class, and for the American republicans. And, if *Rome Papal* was to be destroyed by the Reformationist Biblicalism of the British Empire, where else could England find a precedent for what it aspired to be than in *Rome Pagan*?

Whatever about possibility, the actuality is that it was in the England, whose traditional life had been melted down, and which was without a secure internal system of law and government, that Capitalism became Society.

And, granting that it was conceived and born in England, could it have achieved world dominance without England's America that was made ready for it by comprehensive genocide across half a Continent, and without the large population of African slaves, supplied to it by Britain's Triangular Trade?

W.T. Stead, the great late-19th century fundamentalist Protestant Liberal, wrote a book in the early 20th century about how England's American offspring had taken over England's world mission from it, and how the *Englishing* of the world had become the *Americanising* of the world. The essence of England, when relocated in America, had the immeasurable advantage over England in the fact that there was no weight of history obstructing free capitalist development, and that a vast amount of emptied land inhibited the growth of a conservative class structure within it—

self by providing other options for the vigorous elements that might otherwise have constructed one. Encouragement to *Go West, Young Man*, kept life simple, free—and, in a sense, democratic.

It can hardly be denied that it is democratic. The dominant ideology in the populace is that of aspiring capitalists who want to maintain as far as possible the peculiar kind of freedom that produced them, and to live with the consequences. The life of the jungle is its ideal. Social security for the weak undermines freedom. In freedom the weak go under so that freedom can continue.

Since 1945 the United States has been the leader of the Free World. It is more than that: it is the foundation on which the Free World rests. If the United States had not taken over the shambles that Britain had made of Europe (for the second time in a quarter of a century), the world would now be very different from what it is. But American freedom resembles nothing else that exists in the world or that is possible in the world. Its example is even less one that can be followed by the world at large than is the British example. British Capitalism, to establish its dominance, had to restructure an existing society. It was greatly assisted in this by its destructive activity in other parts of the world. But American Capitalism did not need to become dominant over anything else. There was nothing else. Everything else was just wiped out.

The American example cannot be followed because it begins with Genocide and follows on with Slavery.

Slavery was abolished in the USA a century and a half ago, as an incident in a Civil War launched by Lincoln for the purpose of welding the States into a centralised, Continental, Super-State. The Abolition of Slavery was not the purpose of the War, and the freed slaves were held in subordination by informal methods for a century after Emancipation. Woodrow Wilson, the great Democratic intellectual, was of the opinion, both as historian and President, that continuing the subjugation of the former slave population was necessary to the consolidation of the Union and the healing of Civil War wounds. As President he celebrated the contribution of the Ku Klux Klan to American history by premiering the film, *Birth Of A Nation*, in the White House during the great War For Democracy (WWI).

I assume he had good grounds for his opinion. If one thinks the consolidation of the Union was a good thing, and that it is important to confront the truth in history (as we are so often told), then that is something to be thought about, rather than merely condemned.

The process of integrating the descendants of the slave population into the mainstream American system has now been going on very effectively for more than half a century. Movements which asserted a destiny for the black population around 1970 have all been marginalised. Martin Luther King's ideal of complete assimilation into the existing American system is well on the way to being realised. The black population is fitting in.

The position of black populations left at home in Africa, and plundered by capitalist Imperialism until the 1960s, is very different indeed.

In the case of Rhodesia, English colonising continued into the 1970s. The English wife of an Irish friend of mine was sent there for a while by her company. (She had technical skills.) She came back a thoroughgoing racist. But she was completely oblivious of the change that had occurred in her conduct. She couldn't understand what her husband was talking about, when he tried to bring it up with her. He had to leave her.

I remember a *Times* editorial expressing concern about the way the best British genes were flooding out to places like Rhodesia in search of freedom, leaving Britain the poorer in its human stock.

Then the great change came about very suddenly, in response to the *Spirit of the Age*, spurred on by growing protest movements in Africa. The Central African Federation under British hegemony was dropped. Nation states were invented and independence was conferred upon them in the expectation that they would behave themselves. Behaving themselves meant securing the British property relations that could no longer be made secure against them.

Margaret Thatcher, questioned about 'giving up' the Empire, said it was OK because the Africans had agreed to abide by the vote. England, of course, had only gone there to civilise and introduce them to voting! But of course the vote was what they had been demanding.

Rhodesia became Zimbabwe. Capitalist economy in Zimbabwe consisted of cash crops produced on vast colonial

estates. Robert Mugabe, who had been educated in European ways by Irish missionaries, knew how the colonial land system in Ireland had been eased out of existence. He understood that he had got a deal from Britain that would facilitate something similar in Zimbabwe. Time passed and Britain did nothing, so he decided to take over the estates by direct action and split them up to construct a class of peasant farmers. Civilisation was outraged. And, by this time, Ireland had become part of Civilisation and was anxious to forget its past.

African leaders were required to construct capitalist economies in combinations of social groupings hurriedly thrown together—across traditional divisions—and called 'nation-states'. And to do it without resorting to the means by which Capitalism was constructed (without 'corruption', that is), and without interfering with colonial property rights.

The case of China is another story!

Brendan Clifford

Solzhenitsyn

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body of thought, issuing in the 'second aliyah' which followed the more bloody pogroms of Kishinev in 1903 and, in 1905-6, in various parts of the Pale after the 1905 revolution. Among other important figures in the later history of 'Israel' David Ben Gurion was part of this second aliyah. There was also the development of a distinct Jewish national consciousness not tied to emigration but to a demand for Jewish autonomy within the area of the Russian empire. Its most important Socialist manifestation was the Bund, formed in Vilna (modern Vilnius, capital of Lithuania) in 1897. All this will have to go into the next article, if I have the energy to write it - it will be largely taken from Frankel's very impressive book. The present article has concentrated on the emergence out of a people bound by religious obligations of a people defined by race - one might almost say defined by the perceptions of their enemies. That has its own importance, particularly since, no matter how important the development of Zionism might have been in Germany and France, 'Israel' would not have emerged in anything like the shape we know today were it not for the experience of the Jews in the Russian empire prior to 1914.

La Fontaine on Imperialism!

Schools taught pro-Roman feelings in the old days in France, yet we also admired the great 17th century poet, La Fontaine, who wrote a great and well-known poem describing vividly the nastiness of Roman empire building.

The poem is called *The Danube's Peasant*, and it's a peasant from the Danube telling the Roman Senate that if they, the Germans, were as cruel and greedy as the Romans, they too could also enslave others.

Here is a small extract. It's from Fable 7, Book 11.

Qu'on me die
En quoi vous valez mieux que cent peuples divers.
Quel droit vous a rendus maîtres de l'univers?
Pourquoi venir troubler une innocente vie?
Nous cultivons en paix d'heureux champs, et nos mains
Etaient propres aux arts ainsi qu'au labourage.
Qu'avez-vous appris aux Germains?
Ils ont l'adresse et le courage
S'ils avaient eu l'avidité,
Comme vous, et la violence,
Peut être en votre place ils auraient la puissance,
Et sauraient en user sans inhumanité.

For are you better
Than hundreds of the tribes diverse
Who clank the galling Roman fetter?
What right gives you the universe?
Why come and mar our quiet life?
We till'd our acres free from strife;
In arts our hands were skill'd to toil,
As well as o'er the generous soil.
What have you taught the Germans brave?
Apt scholars, had but they
Your appetite for sway,
They might, instead of you, enslave,
Without your inhumanity.

The Fables of La Fontaine, translated by Elizur Wright

Peter Brooke

Solzhenitsyn's Two Centuries Together.
Part 14

The 'First Aliyah'

A distinct Jewish politics emerged in the Russian empire at the turn of the twentieth century - the Bund, formed in 1897; the Marxist Zionist Poale Zion in New York in 1903 and in the Russian empire in March 1906 (the term 'Poale Zion' may have been first used by a group formed in Minsk in 1897¹) and the Union for Equal Rights, which included the liberal Simon Dubnow and the Zionist Vladimir Zabolotinsky, in March 1905. This development presupposed a profound transformation of the idea of what it was to be a Jew, a transition from an essentially religious conception to a secular - and therefore racial - conception. If a similar development had been occurring in Western Europe since the emergence of the 'Haskalah' ('enlightenment') in the eighteenth century, it had been moderated by the emergence of Reform Judaism. The Haskalah itself had not been defined as anti-religious, and in

Reform Judaism it assumed a religious form. Although this is a sweeping generalisation my impression is that in the Pale of Settlement in the Russian empire, the transition was much more abrupt. Here the tendency of the Haskalah was not so much to reconcile Judaism with European 'modernity' as to reject Judaism in favour of an alliance with the similar tendency ('Nihilism') in Russian society. When a rebound occurred back towards a distinctly Jewish identity in the wake of the 1881-2 pogroms, it very distinctly did not take a religious form.

Some idea of the conflict between traditional Judaism and the new idea is given in two books by Yakov Rabkin - *A Threat from within*, and *What is modern Israel?*² Rabkin is writing as an anti-Zionist and his principle concern is with the opposition to Zionism by various

² Yakov M. Rabkin: *A Threat from within - a century of Jewish opposition to Zionism*, Zed books, London and New York, 2006 (first published in French as *Au Nom du Torah*, 2004) and *idem: What is modern Israel?*, Pluto Books, London, 2016 (first pub. in French as *Comprendre l'état d'Israël*, 2014).

'ultra-Orthodox' groupings - the haredim (those who tremble). Although militant anti-Zionism among the ultra-Orthodox is now reduced to two allied tendencies - the 'Satmar' haredim and Neturei Karta (guardians of the city) - Rabkin argues that they represent positions that had been more or less universally accepted as defining characteristics of Judaism for the whole period following the destruction of the second temple in 70 AD. He also says that those haredim tendencies that do not militantly oppose the existence of Israel nonetheless do not not recognise it as a legitimate Jewish state and certainly not as fulfilment of the return to the kingdom promised by the prophets.

What Distinguishes Jews From Gentiles

In the traditional concept, Jews are the people who follow, or aspire to follow, the law of God as revealed in the 'Torah' (the Pentateuch, or first five books of what Christians call the Old Testament). They are the 'chosen people' because they, and only they, are required to observe the Torah in its fulness. The rest of us are only required to observe seven laws which were given to Noah, ancestor, following the Flood, of the whole of humanity. According to the account on the Chabad (Lubavitcher) website, these are:

¹ Jonathan Frankel: *Prophecy and Politics - Socialism, Nationalism and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917*, Cambridge University Press, 1984 (first published 1981). p.310.

"1. Do not profane G-d's Oneness in any way.

Acknowledge that there is a single G-d who cares about what we are doing and desires that we take care of His world.

2. Do not curse your Creator.

No matter how angry you may be, do not take it out verbally against your Creator.

3. Do not murder.

The value of human life cannot be measured. To destroy a single human life is to destroy the entire world - because, for that person, the world has ceased to exist. It follows that by sustaining a single human life, you are sustaining an entire universe.

4. Do not eat a limb of a living animal.

Respect the life of all G-d's creatures. As intelligent beings, we have a duty not to cause undue pain to other creatures.

5. Do not steal.

Whatever benefits you receive in this world, make sure that none of them are at the unfair expense of someone else.

6. Harness and channel the human libido.

Incest, adultery, rape and homosexual relations are forbidden.

The family unit is the foundation of human society. Sexuality is the fountain of life and so nothing is more holy than the sexual act. So, too, when abused, nothing can be more debasing and destructive to the human being.

7. Establish courts of law and ensure justice in our world.

With every small act of justice, we are restoring harmony to our world, synchronizing it with a supernal order. That is why we must keep the laws established by our government for the country's stability and harmony."

Six of these laws were given to Adam. The law against eating the limb of a living of a living animal was added when permission was given to Noah to eat meat.

In 1978, the United States Congress asked President Carter to designate the birthday of the Lubavitch Rebbe, Rabbi Menechem Mende Schneerson, as Education and Training Day, to celebrate the Rebbe's achievements in that field. Since the Rebbe's birthday is four days before the Passover and calculated following the lunar calendar it is a moveable feast in the Western solar (Gregorian) calendar. The day has been proclaimed annually by the President ever since. In 1987, Ronald Reagan's proclamation spoke of "*the historical tradition of ethical values and principles which have been the bedrock of society from the dawn of civilisation when they were known as the seven noahide laws transmitted through God [should that be G-d? - PB] to Moses on Mount Sinai*";

and in 1991, Congress, in the preamble to the 1991 Bill establishing Education Day, referred again to "*these ethical values and principles*" which "*have been the bedrock of society from the dawn of civilisation when they were known as the seven noahide principles*".

In a book designed to introduce Judaism to non-Jews, Isidore Epstein claims that in the time of paganism Judaism was a missionary religion but primarily concerned with promoting the Noahide laws ("*the religion of humanity*"), rather than the full range of obligations imposed on the Jews. "*But when paganism gave place to Christianity and later also to Islam, Judaism withdrew from the missionary field and was satisfied to leave the task of spreading the religion of humanity to her daughter faiths.*"³

The Meaning Of The Jewish Exile

Traditional Judaism teaches that the exile (galut) of the Jewish people - which is something other than simply not living in Palestine - has two aspects. On the one hand it is a punishment for the sins of the Jewish people; on the other hand it is a means by which the blessing that accompanies Jewish integral observance of the Torah can be scattered like sparks of light throughout the world. The Chabad website concentrates on the sparks of light. Rabkin concentrates on the punishment.

What is the sin that was being punished?

In the broadest terms Rabkin represents it as engaging in political or, more seriously, military activism independently of divine guidance, specifically the Jewish revolt against the Romans which resulted in the destruction of the second temple and subsequently the revolt led by Simon bar Kokhba, 132-6 AD, which resulted in a huge destruction of the Jewish population of Palestine and exile from Jerusalem, though not from the country as a whole. In this reading, Judaism - in the absence of the legitimate ruler, the Messiah - is a religion of almost total passivity, apart from the obligation to observe the precepts of the Torah (Jews can legitimately risk their lives in resisting efforts to force them into breaking the precepts of the Torah, for example by worshipping idols). Thus when Jews encounter persecution they don't have a right to fight back. One could say (Rabkin doesn't) they have to turn the other cheek. In Rabkin's version they are strangers in any land in which they find themselves and therefore have no 'rights'. If they are well treated, well and good; if they are badly treated, their only options are to put up with it or move somewhere else. Thus he says of the Nazi attempt at genocide:

³ Isidore Epstein: *Judaism - a historical presentation*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1973 (first published in 1959), p.144.

"From a traditionally religious point of view based on the premise of the existence of divine justice, the tragedy of the Shoah calls out for the closest scrutiny of personal behaviour, and for individual and collective atonement. It is not an occasion for accusing executioners, and even less an attempt to explain their behaviour by political, ideological, or social factors. The executioner - whether Pharaoh, Amalek, or Hitler - in this perspective is an agent of divine punishment, an admittedly cruel means of bringing the Jews to repentance. Following this same logic, only divine providence - and not historical accident - can explain the catastrophes that have afflicted the Jews, affirmed Rabbi Elhanan Wasserman (1875-1941), disciple of Hafetz Haim and an eminent authority on Lithuanian Judaism. Born in Lithuania, then a part of the Russian empire, he trained under renowned rabbinical masters, culminating in the Talmudic Academy of Brisk (Brest-Litovsk). He served as director of several yeshivas, the best known of which was the Novardok yeshiva in Baranovich, currently in Belarus. While on a fund-raising mission to the United States on behalf of his yeshiva, he learned of the Nazi attack on Poland. Well aware of the Nazi threat to the Jews, he refused to abandon his students and returned to Europe. He was arrested in 1941 and put to death by Lithuanian collaborators. His last words have been preserved: In Heaven it appears that they deem us to be righteous because our bodies have been chosen to atone for the Jewish people. Therefore, we must repent now, immediately. There is not much time. We must keep in mind that we will be better offerings if we repent. In this way we will save the lives of our brethren so that Jewish life may continue." (Modern Israel, p.98.)

Incidentally it's rather regrettable that the word 'holocaust' is so widely used in preference to the Hebrew word 'Shoah'. A 'holocaust' is a burnt sacrifice and as such in Biblical (Torah-Old Testament) terms it's a Good Thing. The word 'Shoah' means 'catastrophe', and as such it is parallel to the Arabic term 'Nakba', describing the destruction that befell the Palestinian people in 1948.

It's obvious that this traditional Jewish culture would be deeply alarmed by the ferocious voluntarism that characterised the development both of Jewish Socialism and Zionism in the wake of the 1881-2 pogroms. It is also obvious that this traditional Judaism would not have regarded the non-Torah following Jews as Jews in any meaningful sense of the term. Indeed, one could suggest that in the Russian Empire, Jews who, inspired by the *haskalah*, became interested in European culture or

got involved in the revolutionary movement, ceased to regard themselves as Jews. It was the pogroms, and the relatively indulgent response of Russian and Ukrainian political circles (including the radical circles) that forced them to self identify as Jews and to think about the needs that were specific to the Jewish community.

Hitler of course had a similar effect on many German Jews - Rabkin (*Modern Israel*, p.99) cites Orthodox Jews complaining that although Hitler was a scourge sent by God to bring the Jews back to the Torah they were instead turning to all sorts of non-religious cultural and sporting activities:

"Rabbi Schwab lamented in Germany in 1934: They have set up athletic associations and even an honest-to-goodness 'cultural league,' so that, God forbid, we should not 'get back into the ghetto again.' ... True, we are depressed, but we are not contrite. We are downcast but not humbled, least of all in our relationship with God. ... If this is so, is it still the people of God?"

Who Are The Haredim?

It isn't clear to me, however, that the haredim, at the centre of Rabkin's thinking, do represent traditional Judaism. They are divided into two great families - the *hasidim* and the *mitnagdim*. The *hasidim* were, as I remarked in an earlier article in this series, an innovation in Judaism, coinciding with the incorporation of the whole area that became the pale of Settlement into the Russian empire with the Polish partitions at the end of the eighteenth century. Hasidism could be described as a charismatic movement, both in terms of a much more intense emotional life on the part of the believer and a gathering round the individual leadership provided by the 'rebbe', himself a product of a charismatic family - Schneerson in the case of the *Lubavitchers*, Teitelbaum in the case of the militantly anti-Zionist *Satmar hasidim*. The term '*mitnagdim*' however, means 'rejecters' or 'opponents' and what they were rejecting was the hasidic innovation so, as a response to an innovation, they too could be characterised as something new. They were characterised by a much more intellectual, analytical approach to the study of the Torah and the authoritative interpretations of the Torah in the Talmud. In the extract I have quoted from Rabkin's book he refers to "*Rabbi Elhanan Wasserman (1875-1941), disciple of Hafetz Haim and an eminent authority on Lithuanian Judaism*". 'Lithuanian Judaism' is one of the major branches of the *mitnagdim*.

I would suggest that both *hasidim* and *mitnagdim* could be seen as products of

the disruption of the older '*kahal*' system which was essentially a system of law, of the policing of a whole society. Like an established church which all members of the society would be required to attend, the *kahal* made it easy to be a Jew in the religious sense of the term, in fact difficult not to. Maybe not a good Jew but a Jew nonetheless. It enabled, or rather obliged, Jews to organise their lives on a basis quite different from that of the society surrounding them.

In Poland it was, as we have seen, disrupted by the deterioration in the position and wealth of the Jews following the seventeenth century Khelmnitsky rising. In more general terms, in Europe in the nineteenth century, it was disrupted by emancipation, opening up greater possibilities for Jews to integrate with the surrounding society and therefore greater temptation to abandon the disciplines specific to Judaism. We have just seen Rabbi Schwab complaining against secularised Jews after the arrival in power of the Nazis not wanting to "*get back into the ghetto again*". He obviously saw it as an opportunity to do just that. According to Shlomo Avineri, in his book *The Making of modern Zionism*:

"The problems of Jewish identity had not been solved by liberalism and tolerance but, in a way, had been exacerbated. Being Jewish no longer meant a single, sometimes heroic, decision to stand by one's conviction and not succumb through conversion to majority pressure. Rather, it now became a series of innumerable daily decisions, bringing out the difference and distinction within equality in hundreds of individual decisions... With the young person's entry into professional life, now open to the Jews, the problems continued to accumulate. If he opened a doctor's practice, he had to decide whether to have his clinic open on Saturday and the Jewish holidays, and if he shared a clinic with gentile associates the dilemma became even more acute. If he became a clerk in a bank or a state employee or a teacher in the public school system, he had to solve the same problem. The necessity - and desire - to socialise with gentile colleagues again brought up the question of kosher food." ⁴

'Reform Judaism' could be seen as an adaptation to these new circumstances as religion increasingly became a matter of private opinion rather than of social organisation. Although the word 'emancipation' may not sound quite right in relation to the Pale of Settlement, the conscription of Jews into

the Russian army, the legal suppression of the *kahal* and the more liberal policies of Alexander II after 1860 all tended in the same direction. Under those circumstances the *haredim*, wanting to maintain and indeed intensify the coherence of the traditional disciplines could be seen as themselves a symptom of the breakup of the traditional disciplines.

Emigration

The period following the pogroms was marked by increasingly massive emigration. Hans Rogger says that prior to the pogroms, in the period 1871-80, it had reached a yearly average of 4,100 persons but--

"The yearly average of those going to the US alone was 12,856 for 1881-6; it reached 28,509 in the next five year period, rose to 44,829 during 1891-5; 82,223 for 1906-10 and 75,144 for 1911-14. Altogether nearly 2 million Jews left Russia [sic - PB] between 1880 and 1914, more than two thirds of them for the United States." ⁵

This was despite the fact that the government tried to discourage it: "*most border crossings were accomplished illegally, under the cover of darkness and with the connivance of frontier guards, but occasionally accompanied by their bullets*" (ibid. p.183). Rogger expresses puzzlement as to why the government, obsessed with its 'Jewish problem' didn't encourage emigration. A body called the Jewish Colonisation Agency was formed in London in 1891 by the Baron Maurice de Hirsch and it obtained some concessions for legal emigration but the agreed process was cumbersome and expensive and only had marginal effect.

Even those who left illegally still needed passports and the process for obtaining them was expensive and time consuming:

"More than half the Jewish immigrants arrived without any means and no more than 4-7 percent had more than \$50 in their possession. With a Jewish family's budget in a small town estimated as being about 300 rubles a year, the expense of obtaining a passport was obviously a major item - not to mention steamship tickets if these were not sent by relatives - and explains the resort to agents and their bribes and the pleas of the JCA for free exit permits" (still p.183).

In contrast to emigration to the United States, the alternative, emigration to Pal-

⁴ Shlomo Avineri: *The Making of modern Zionism - the intellectual origins of the Jewish state*, Basic Books, New York, 2017 (first published in 1981). I have it in a Kindle version that doesn't give page references.

⁵ Hans Rogger: *Jewish policies and right-wing politics in imperial Russia*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1986, p.178.

estine prior to 1914 - the first and second aliyot (plural of *aliyah*, meaning 'ascent', the term used by Zionists to characterise emigration to 'Israel') - was marginal, no matter how big it was with consequences for the future. A Jewish agricultural school - Mikve Yisrael - had been established in Palestine in 1870 under the auspices of the Alliance Universelle. In the middle of the enthusiasm over Oliphant's Palestine proposal, its founder, Charles Netter, also one of the founders of the Alliance, wrote to the papers to say that Palestine "was totally unsuited - climatically, economically, socially - for mass colonisation by the Jews" (Frankel, p.82). Mikve Yisrael had already met opposition from the existing Jewish population, the 'Old Yishuv', for whom the most integral observance possible of the Jewish law was a precondition for the privilege of living in Palestine, and this was incompatible with the principles of modern agriculture. This is one of Rabkin's themes: "*Tradition also underlines the grave danger of living in the Holy Land by comparing the land of Israel to a royal palace in which any transgression immediately assumes enormous proportions*" (Modern Israel, p.12). In this understanding the whole land would be to Jews what a church would be to Christians.

It was a problem encountered by the pioneers of the first aliyah in Rishon Le-Zion, an agricultural colony founded in 1882 by 'hovevei Zion' (lovers of Zion), the movement for migration to Palestine formed in the wake of the pogroms under the influence of the pamphlet, *Auto-Emancipation*, by Leo Pinsker, the parallel call by Peretz Smolenskin, Editor in Vienna of the Hebrew language journal, *Ha-shahar* (The Dawn - we encountered it in the last article in this series), and the hopes raised by Oliphant. Smolenskin in particular believed that, given the support of the House of Rothschild, "*with a mere fifth of their wealth they could buy the country and resettle in it all the hungry and those searching for salvation*". The money already collected by the Alliance "*could have bought more than half the country and settled there those who were persecuted*" (Frankel, still p.82). According to Frankel he blamed the failure to seize the opportunity on Netter (who died in 1882). Iakov Lvovich Rozenfeld, proprietor of the influential journal *Raszvet* (which also translates as *The Dawn* and which we also encountered in the last article) joined Oliphant in Constantinople in the effort to win a concession from the Turkish government. These respectable, establishment initiatives failed, largely,

as we saw in the last article, because of the new tensions that had risen between the Sublime Porte and the British Government over Egypt. The emigration which, unpromising as it may have seemed to begin with, started the process that eventually produced the state of Israel had quite different beginnings.

Bilu And The First Aliyah

At the beginning of 1882 the Jewish establishment responded to the pogroms in the traditional manner by proclaiming days of fasting and prayer (Frankel, p.90). The occasion was marked by a demonstration of Jewish students attending Russian language universities. This was a major phenomenon of the time. According to Frankel (p.120) there were 247 Jewish students in the Russian language universities in 1876, 1,856 in 1886. It paralleled in an interesting way the figures he gives for the involvement of Jews in the revolutionary movements, at least as recorded by the Okhrana, the Russian secret police - 63 Jews out of 1,054 identified in the period 1873-7; 579 out of 4,307 in the period from 1884 to 1890.

There had been an assumption that the involvement with the Russian universities would necessarily alienate them from the Jewish world: "*The spectacle of the returning sons therefore aroused widespread wonderment*". On the days of fasting and prayer—

"the students appeared in the synagogues not in pairs but en masse to express symbolically their solidarity with the Jewish people in a time of trial ... In their military type uniforms the mass of students and gymnazitsky stood out clearly in the synagogues which were crowded beyond capacity for the occasion" (p.90).

But this was not just an expression of solidarity. It was also an expression of defiance against the traditional Jewish passivity in the face of persecution, the tradition represented by the day of prayer and fasting, an expression of repentance for the sins which God had punished by unleashing the pogroms. In Kiev—

"the presence of the students in the synagogue, their sincere, warm and yet fiery speeches, the poems - brought tens of thousands of Jews to the synagogues and for lack of space people had to stand in the street ... The police could not help noticing of course ... and the governor general called in the rabbi and rebuked the censor for permitting the poems to be printed" (Frankel p.91, quoting a letter addressed to the pioneer Social Democrat Pavel Akelrod).

Among the students involved were the

founders of 'Bilu' - fourteen students at Kharkov University who met on the day after the demonstration and were thoroughly devoted to the idea of emigration to Palestine - 'Bilu' was an acronym based on the Hebrew of Isaiah 2:5, '*Let the House of Jacob go*' (not quite how it is understood by the King James Bible: '*O House of Jacob, come ye and let us walk in the light of the lord.*') Two of them, Moshe Yitshak Mints and Yaakov Berliavsky, went to Constantinople in May to meet Oliphant. But that was the month in which the Turkish government refused to open Palestine to Jewish emigration. Nonetheless other members of the group led by Yisrael Belkind went to Palestine in June and began a process of adaptation to the land in the agricultural school at Mikve Yisrael:

"The director, Mr Hirsch', Belkind wrote in November, 'who at first regarded Russian Jews in an unfriendly way and as incapable of working under the sun ... is [now] convinced that we do not lag behind the Arabs and to some extent even surpass them.' (They were paid one franc a day for their labour.) 'Our ultimate goal ...', Vladimir Dubnow wrote to his brother Shimen [the Simon Dubnow we encountered in the last two articles - PB] on 20 October, 'is, with time, to gain Palestine and return to the Jews that political independence which they lost two thousand years ago. Do not laugh [Simon Dubnow was indeed sceptical about the Zionist project - PB]. It is not a chimera'..." (Frankel, p. 97, lacunae as in the original).

This was the group that formed the first agricultural colony of the aliyah, Rishon Le-Zion. Although Rishon Le-Zion now claims to be the fourth largest city in 'Israel' (Wikipedia) its beginnings weren't very auspicious. It was dependent on outside help. The story is given by Frankel:

"The first important breakthrough came when an emissary from Rishon Le-Zion succeeded in October 1882 in gaining access to, and winning the sympathy of, Baron Edmund de Rothschild in Paris. Rothschild's decision to make an initial grant of 25,000 francs to that colony - in particular to six of the founding families that were left without any means - proved to be the beginning of a lifetime involvement in the cause of Palestinian settlement. He not only invested increasingly large sums in buying land, developing vineyards, building houses, and supplying livestock and equipment but also sent out overseers and agronomists to ensure that modern methods of farming be introduced. By the late 1880s, all the settlements (except Gadera) were receiving capital investments from him: Rishon Le-Zion, Zikhrov Yaakov, Rosh Pina, Petah Tikva, Ekron, Yesud Ha-Maala and Wadi Hanin (Nes Ziona)" (p.115).

Rothschild's support, however, was, as the mentioned exception of Gedera indicates, problematic:

"Baron Edmund de Rothschild had very definite ideas about what could and could not be permitted in the new colonies. He had a romantic image of small scale farmers, simple people devoted to orthodox religious practice, dressed in Arabic or Turkish style. The supervisors whom he put in charge of the colonies were expected to keep tight control over all aspects of life there.

"Rothschild's conception could not be reconciled with that of the Biluim, who (although for the most part not socialists) were convinced that their duty was to act as the core of a modern, secular, and political movement ... In 1883, Yisrael Belkind, who had settled with other Biluim in Rishon Le-Zion and had clashed with the overseers there, left it rather than have Rothschild cut off funds from the entire colony. In 1887 this pattern repeated itself. In this case, the decision by the overseer (Ossovetsky, a young Russian Jew recruited by Netter at Brody in 1882) to expel the leader of the day labourers in Rishon Le-Zion (Mikhael Helperin) led to a bitter clash with the entire colony ... Rothschild and his staff in Paris were convinced that they were faced by a form of Russian nihilism ... If it had not been for the combined efforts of Pinsker, Pines and Lilienblum [leaders of the Palestinophile movement in Russia - PB] the Biluim could not have remained as a group in Palestine ... For his part, Pinsker was able to channel funds periodically to Gedera, the settlement of the Bilu that was boycotted by Rothschild. But even in Gedera the few remaining Biluim were not free to live as they chose. Religious zealots in Jerusalem reported back to Russia that they were free-thinkers and so turned the leading rabbis in the Palestinophile movement ... against them.' As a result Pinsker 'wrote to the group in Gedera appealing to them to maintain voluntarily the traditional religious observances for the sake of the general cause ... Pinsker's letter had its effect. Most of the small group in Gedera, ranging between one and two dozen, agreed, as Pines reported, to take on 'the yoke of the Torah'..." (pp.126-7).

The list of colonies given above includes Zikhron Yaakov and Rosh Pina, both of which were Romanian, products of Oliphant persuading the Ottoman court that they had responsibilities to the Romanian Jews, denied citizenship in the now independent Romania. But it also mentions Petah Tikra. What Frankel doesn't mention is that Petah Tikra was older than Rishon Le-Zion and had been formed in 1878, prior to the Russian empire pogroms, by Jews who were native to Palestine (so in fact was Rosh Pina, ceded to the Romanians in 1882). And

here I'd like to intrude a piece of my own personal history.

Back in about 2004-5, as a result of my commitment to the idea of a single Israel-Palestine state for all its citizens (still amazed how long its taking for this simple and obvious proposal to gain traction), I was briefly in email communication with a very interesting man called Uzzi Ornan. In his youth in the 1930s, Ornan had been a bomb-maker for the Irgun and I believe was involved with the Stern Gang, which split off from the Irgun in 1940 with a view to continuing the fight against the British through the war. He was arrested in 1944 and kept in camps in Africa until returning to Palestine in 1948 when he was horrified by the way the Palestinian Arabs had been treated. He believed that he had been engaged in an anti-imperialist struggle against the British on behalf of both the Jews and the Arabs. He was one of a small group called (derisively at the time) the 'Canaanites'. Although numerically insignificant, they included a number of well-known artists in different fields including Ornan's brother, Jonathan Ratosh, recognised as a leading Hebrew language poet. Ornan's own major commitment was to the revival of Hebrew as a language of everyday use, regarding himself as a Hebrew speaking Palestinian rather than as a Jew (among other things he argued for a transition to the Roman alphabet, parallel to the alphabet introduced for the Turkish language by Atatürk).

I was at the time running the Brecon Political and Theological Discussion Group and, when the Cornish language poet Tim Saunders gave us a talk on the revival of Hebrew, I took the opportunity to post on the Discussion Group website an article by Ornan in which he showed that the 'Old Yishuv' was itself undergoing changes prior to the arrival of the first aliyah.⁶

The conventional history of the revival of Hebrew in Palestine (we are talking about revival as a language of everyday use, not a language of literature) presents it as almost entirely the work of Eliezer ben-Yehuda who arrived in Palestine from an area that is now part of Byelorussia in 1881 and so was part of the first aliyah. Ornan is not at all denying his importance but he says:

"The will to revive Hebrew had manifested itself quite a few years before Ben-Yehuda's arrival in Jerusalem. A spirit of awakening and a yearning for a change of values spread among the members of the Old Yishuv during the 1860s. About twenty years before Ben-Yehuda's arrival Uzzi Ornan: 'Hebrew in Palestine before and after 1882', Journal of Semitic Studies, Vol 29, no 1, 1984 and on my Discussion Group website at <http://www.peterbrooke.org.uk/bptdg/programmes/janmay05/saunders/ornan>

rival, Hebrew newspapers began to be published in Jerusalem.

According to Galia Yardeni, the publication of these newspapers happened as a result of a 'circle of young people who ... aspired for changes in the structure of the Yishuv'. It is clear that there existed in Palestine young people who 'thirsted for cultural enlightenment and also sought a window opening out on to the big world beyond a Jerusalem imprisoned within her walls'. These young people sought ways of supporting themselves, not through the Haluqa (charitable funds received from abroad by Jews in Palestine for distribution among the needy), but through the labour of their own hands.

"During this period, the first genuine attempts were made to venture out beyond the walls of the cities in order to acquire land for agriculture and to settle on it, to establish businesses for crafts and commerce and so on. The activities of [the English Jewish leader, Moses] Montefiore were oriented to the general mood and fervent desire prevailing at that time to break away from the life of Haluqa and from financial dependence on benefactors from outside Palestine. This time they achieved more success than the earlier attempts in this direction had yielded.

"This trend waxed strong during the 1870s. More groups with an aim to settle on the land came into being, and towards the end of the decade they succeeded in purchasing areas of land and settling its members there, something it had not previously managed to achieve. Petah Tiqwa was thus founded by those who ventured beyond the walls of Jerusalem, and Rosh Pina by those from Old Safed [particularly noteworthy as a major centre for study of the Kabbalah - PB]. For they also, as they put it, 'despised the bread of humiliation', that is, the charity of benefactors from abroad" [which was the necessary condition of a life devoted to integral observance and study of the eminently impractical laws of the Torah - PB].

Thus the picture Rabkin draws of a native Jewish population wholly committed to a strict religious conception of Jewish life in Palestine needs to be modified. Rabkin gives as one of the Old Yishuv objections to the arrival of the newcomers that they were tempting Palestinian Jewish youth away from strict adherence to a life bound by the Torah. But it appears that the temptation was already present.

This series, supposedly a commentary on Solzhenitsyn's book, is proceeding very slowly, largely owing to my own weakness for digressions. The 'first aliyah' in the wake of the 1881-2 pogroms was only important as the first step in the process of developing a much more substantial Zionist

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Machiavelli on Pandemics

During his turbulent career, the philosopher and diplomat was fascinated by plagues and their lethal effects – and his ideas about how politicians should address them are as relevant as ever!

In 1417, there were calls for even more dramatic steps. At a *practica* convened to deal with the crisis, Rinaldo Gianfigliuzzi—one of Florence’s most influential statesmen—demanded that, since the poor were “*dying of hunger*”, they should be “*subsidised with public funds*”.

Perhaps suspecting that such a dole might be beyond the Republic’s means, Bartolomeo Valori, another member of the ruling elite, went even further. He argued that, since the poor could not “*help themselves*”, the rich should ease their burden—perhaps through forced loans or some form of expropriation.

The problem was that these measures seldom worked. Since people often resisted confinement, the infection spread and hospitals were frequently overwhelmed. At the same time, the dole, when offered, was unsustainable; quarantine aroused resentment, and food shortages led to anger.

This presented a serious danger. If unchecked, popular frustration could easily boil over into public disorder. Even in ‘minor’ outbreaks, crime always increased. As Machiavelli put it: “*Now one hears of this theft, now of that murder: the piazzas and markets, where the citizens often used to gather, are now... vile dens of thieves.*”

Marginal groups – such as prostitutes, pedlars, and foreigners – were especially vulnerable. It would not take much for crime to give way to civil unrest; riots were never far away.

For Machiavelli, this was arguably the most troubling feature of the plague. In *The*

Prince and Discourses, he stressed that the success of any state depended on a delicate balance between social classes.

There would, of course, always be some rivalry; but, provided this was suitably contained, the tension between rich and poor could actually help to safeguard liberty and even lead to “*greatness*”. If factions formed, or civil unrest erupted, the consequences would be disastrous. Depending on who emerged victorious, liberty would give way to either anarchic licence or tyranny.

Not unsurprisingly, Machiavelli often described such a breakdown of political order using the metaphor of disease. Just as an illness could weaken, or even kill, a human being, he argued, violent class struggles ate away at the body politic. Demagogues were a “*plague*” on the state; servitude was a “*sickness*”; and disorder was a “*disease*”. This was more than just a literary device.

Though he rarely addressed the subject directly, Machiavelli also seems to have been aware that it was in times of plague that liberty was most in danger.

It was clear that, if Florentine liberty was to be preserved, a more effective way of containing infection, minimising economic suffering, and maintaining public order was needed. Machiavelli never addressed this problem directly; but the advice he gave in *The Prince* can be read as a guide to how governments should act during an epidemic.

As he explained, the key in a crisis was for a prince, or a republican government, to realise how dangerous their better instincts were. Laudable though honesty, generosity and compassion might be—especially when people were suffering—it was obvious that those virtues risked causing panic, bankrupting the exchequer and encouraging dissent, while doing nothing to stem the infection. As such, Machiavelli suggested

that princes and republics should try not to be so virtuous.

The first step was to be economical with the truth. In the past, the Signoria, the Florentine Republic’s most senior executive body, had actually come close to realising this. In 1383, Uberto Ridolfi stressed that the shortage of grain “*should be kept secret*” at all costs. But by the early 16th century, the need to keep a tight hold on information had become acute.

The second step was to keep expenditure to a minimum – and thereby reduce public resentment. This meant that, even if some public aid was necessary, care should be taken to ensure that it did not burden people with excessive taxes in future.

The final step was to use soldiers to instil a sense of fear. Given that people were not frightened enough of the plague to stay at home, and too selfish for appeals to the common good to have any effect, the government’s only chance of combating the infection was to punish infractions so severely that they would be too terrified to set foot out of doors—let alone riot.

They were harsh lessons, but later Florentine governments took heed. When plague struck again in 1630, a survey of the city’s needs was conducted to assess exactly how much food would be needed and to minimise health hazards. Then, before the infection accelerated, a total lockdown was enforced, harsh penalties were imposed on those who broke the confinement, and information was carefully controlled.

Basic needs were met with modest food deliveries, while other requirements – such as burials – were dealt with by charitable institutions. It was a painful experience, to be sure; but it kept fatalities to a minimum – and, crucially, kept the body politic in robust good health.

Today, we live in a very different world, and Covid-19 bears little resemblance to the plague. But, given that we face very similar socio-economic challenges, Machiavelli’s ideas nevertheless remain as pertinent as ever. Though they may seem cynical, even callous, they are still a useful lens through which to view our own reactions – and a powerful inspiration to seek out new solutions while there is still time.

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