Church & State

An Irish History Magazine

And Cultural Review Of Ireland And The World

Romanism!

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Editorial

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Romanism?

Is the Roman Empire finally coming to an end? Is its continuation as the Roman Church on the point of collapse? If it is, what is to replace it? What will Europe be without it? President McAleese Emeritus does not seem to have given any thought to that question.

It is clear that she wants to dissolve Christianity into a morass of individual subjectivist notions, free of structures. Not very long ago she was a militant ultra-Romanist, but now she wants to end the inculcation of children into the doctrines of Christianity, beginning with the ending of baptism of infants.

She appears to be saying that Christianity has been superseded by the *Universal Declaration Of Human Rights*, as issued by the United Nations when it consisted essentially of Communist Russia and *laissez-faire* capitalist America, and which therefore had no hard and definite meaning.

How will life be lived in a Europe from which Christian culture has been rooted out comprehensively? Will it be lived matter-of-factly, transparently, without illusions, in the Crystal Palace imagined by Chernyshevsky scientifically in his novel, *What Is To Be Done*? About a century and a half ago?

Lenin tried to give effect to Chernyshevsky's objective vision of matter-of-fact transparency in social relations a generation later. Dostoevsky reacted vehemently on its publication with his *Notes From The Cellar.*

Lenin constructed a State to give effect to Chernyshevsky's streamlining of life. It didn't work out. Dostoevsky's resentment of the attempt at a scientific objectification of life remains in circulation.

Sigmund Freud, a Jew in Vienna, surrounded by a very civilised form of Christianity, from which he was detached by a culture preceding Christianity, approached the matter from a different angle with his book on *The Future Of An Illusion*.

Freud is famous for tracing personal psychological trauma to the repression of sexual impulses, and treating all human energy as sexual in its source. He is less famous for saying that the existence of civilisation is dependent on mass suppression of the sexual impulse, and that the force of suppression, which made the remarkable European civilisation possible, was Christianity—which he saw, of course, as an illusion.

The form of Christian suppression of the instincts on which European civilisation was raised was the form which was woven into the structure of the Roman Empire.

The form of Protestantism which broke off from it a thousand years later, and became a major force in the British state, presented itself as a return to original pre-Roman Christianity but was in fact a splinter broken off from the Roman form. It would not have been possible without Rome, but it condemned Rome for making compromises with paganism. To mark its difference with Rome, it set about suppressing Art and corralling it into a kind of streamlined Christian Chernyshevskyism—which broke down very quickly.

The Roman system lasted for so long, and produced the culture which culminated in the Renaissance, by making provision within its ecclesiastical structure for a wide variety of impulses—manifesting as Orders emphasising different aspects of the Christian ideal—and by not expecting that the mass of the lay members would ever live as Saints!

John Martin

What is Life?

In 1940 De Valera invited Erwin Schrodinger to head the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies. The Taoiseach was even prepared to accommodate the great scientist's unconventional domestic arrangements so as to secure his residency in Ireland.

This does not accord with the present-day image of De Valera as being narrow and illiberal.

But his initiative did not go unnoticed by an institution that pretends to be 'liberal'. *The Irish Times* noted that, in a lecture entitled *"Science and Humanism"*, Schrodinger suggested that there was no logical basis for the belief of a first cause or divine creator. Also, the Celtic scholar, T.F. O'Rahilly, outlined his theory that there were two different Christian missionaries to Ireland—Palladius and Patrick—who had been confused historically as one figure, St Patrick.

It might be thought that this was an interesting intellectual development in the life of the country. But the 'paper of record' would have none of it. It deployed its court jester, Myles na gCopaleen (Brian O'Nolan), to sneer. He commented that—

> "the fruit of this Institute, therefore, has been an effort to show that 'there are two Saint Patricks and no God'. There was a risk, he alleged, that the Institute would 'make us the laughing stock of the world'…" (note 1).

But the ruminations of *The Irish Times* did not disturb the

Institute unduly. It had more pressing matters to attend to. In February 1943 Schrodinger gave a ground-breaking series of lectures. The following year the Institute published a book based on those lectures entitled: *"What is Life?"*

Schrodinger wanted to know what life was made of and how it worked.

He realised that this was not an easy question to answer, but suggested that it could be solved if scientists from diverse disciplines could work together. He noted that even the most distinguished scientists had very limited knowledge of developments outside their own area.

With that in mind the winner of the Nobel prize for physics in 1933 felt it necessary to apologise in advance for his foray into this new unfamiliar subject which became known as molecular biology.

But what could a physicist like Schrodinger contribute? At the beginning of the book he suggests that some of the tenets of Physics and particularly quantum theory—with which he will always be associated—may not be applicable to the new science.

He observed that, when dealing with small numbers of atoms, there is disorder or *"entropy"*.

Furthermore:

> "Only in the co-operation of an enormously large number of atoms do statistical laws begin to operate and control the behaviour of these assemblies with an accuracy increasing as the number of atoms involved increases."

But:

> "How can we, from the point of view of statistical physics, reconcile the facts that the gene structure seems to involve only a comparatively small number of atoms (of the order of 1000 and possibly much less), and that nevertheless it displays a most regular and lawful activity—with a durability of permanence that borders on the miraculous".

So, the laws of physics don't appear to apply to living organisms. A small number of atoms in the chromosomes of a living organism can produce order and direct its growth.

However, as Schrodinger examined the subject more closely, he noted that quantum theory may after all be relevant to living organisms. Change, variation and growth can occur through quantum leaps, it is not necessarily continuous. Gregor Mendel noted that heriditary units were discrete. In mathematical terms they could be thought of as whole numbers, rather than fractions.

As well as acknowledging the contribution of Gregor Mendel, Schrodinger discussed the work of the German Scientist Max Delbruck.

While experiments on viruses and bacteria have confirmed Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection, Delbruck was able to prove that, contrary to Darwin's theory, random variations did not produce change in a species. It was necessary for a mutation, which might be in two or three out of tens of thousands of the species.

This accorded with Schrodinger's quantum theory. Transitions from one state to another often involved a *"quantum jump"*.

Furthermore:

"... a number of atomic nuclei, including their body guards

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P. Maloney,
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of electrons, when they find themselves close to each other, forming a 'system', are unable by their nature to adopt any arbitrary configuration we might think of. Their very nature leaves them only a very numerous but discrete series of 'states' to choose from."

These ideas are not unlike Marx's principles of dialectical materialism, where the quantum jump is analogous to a qualitative or revolutionary change.

Also, the fact that there is a *"discrete series of states to choose from"* means that the number of choices is finite. This enables the change to be codified or programmed: something that would not be possible if the choices were on a continuum with an infinite number of possibilities.

Schrodinger thought the chromosome structures were:

> "...law-code and executive power—or, to use another simile, they are architect's plan and builder's craft—in one"

So, in summary, the task that Schrodinger had set for his fellow scientists was to decipher the code of life.

Unfortunately, the Soviet Union ruled itself out of the race. Under the direction of Trofim Lysenko it rejected Mendelian genetics, which was the starting point for any investigation of the code of life.

This resulted in some communists in the west leaving their party. One such person was the distinguished French scientist, Jacques Monod. Interestingly, he didn't blame it on Stalin. He thought it was all down to the influence of Rousseau on socialism. The idea that man was good and society was bad seemed to contradict the emerging scientific evidence that what defines man as a species, and different men as individuals, is very largely biological rather than social.

By contrast, in the same year as Schrodinger's book was published, there was a scientific breakthrough. But, as has often been the case in this field, the significance was not appreciated until many years later.

In 1944 the American scientists, Oswald Avery, Maclyn McCarty and Colin MacLeod revisited a famous experiment performed by the British scientist Frederick Griffith in 1928.

In the original experiment Griffith injected a benign strain of bacteria into mice. The mice survived. He then injected a lethal strain of the bacteria into the mice. Not surprisingly they all died. Then he killed the lethal strain of bacteria by heating it up. When he injected this dead bacteria into some more mice they survived. In the final part of his experiment he mixed the dead (formerly lethal) bacteria with the live benign bacteria. After injecting the mice with this mixture the mice died.

Some material substance in the dead bacteria had 'transformed' the formerly benign bacteria into a lethal strain. But what? Griffith didn't know.

In 1944 Avery *et al* succeeded in splitting up the dead bacteria into its component parts. They could therefore identify which part was causing the transformation. It was found that, when *deoxyribonucleic acid* (better known as DNA) from the dead bacteria was added to the benign bacteria, it killed the mice. No other part of the dead bacteria did this.

So, it appeared that DNA was the repository of the code that determined the character of a living organism. But the scientific community did not believe the results. They thought that the DNA must have been contaminated. Also, the lead scientist, Oswald Avery, was himself very tentative about his own experiment. No one believed that DNA could carry the code. It was thought that it was a 'stupid' molecule whose only function within the chromosome was structural.

It wasn't until 1952 that the issue was resolved. Alfred Hershey and Martha Chase, in a very different experiment using bacteriophage (viruses that attack bacteria), finally convinced the scientific community of the importance of DNA.

This provided a new focus for Schrodinger's question. Scientific resources were redirected towards understanding DNA.

Horace Judson in his classic work, *The Eighth Day Of Creation*, describes the race to define the structure of DNA very well. The story is quite amusing because the reader can see highly intelligent scientists oblivious to the pitfalls that Schrodinger had anticipated.

Some scientists that were highly knowledgeable in one area were ignorant of the basics in another area relevant to the question. Other scientists who had designed ingenious experiments were unable to interpret the results. In at least one case researchers in one part of a building were unaware of results obtained in another part of a building that would have cleared an impasse . . . and so on.

The winners of the race were the American scientist, James Watson, and the British scientist, Francis Crick, working from Cambridge University. There is some doubt as to whether they deserved the accolade. They didn't conduct any experiments of their own, but relied on the research of others.

A key event on the road to discovering the structure of DNA was a visit to Cambridge from the Austrian scientist, Erwin Chargaff. Chargaff knew that all living things had four chemicals: Adenine, Thymine, Guanine and Cytosine. The proportion of these chemicals varied from species to species but there "appeared" to be a one to one relationship between Adenine and Thymine, as well between Guanine and Cytosine, in all species from the e-coli to the elephant.

Unbelievably, before he made his visit, Crick and Watson didn't seem to be aware of this. Chargaff's account of this momentous meeting with two of the most celebrated scientists of the twentieth century is highly entertaining:

> "I seemed to have missed the shiver of recognition of a historical moment; a change in the rhythm of the heartbeats of biology... The impression: one (Crick), thirty five years old; the looks of a fading racing tout, something out of Hogarth ("The Rake's Progress"); Cruikshank, Daumier; an incessant falsetto, with occasional nuggets glittering in the turbid stream of prattle. The other (Watson), quite undeveloped at twenty-three, a grin, more sly than sheepish; saying little, nothing of consequence... I told them all I knew. If they had heard before about the pairing rule, they concealed it. But as they did not seem to know much about anything, I was not unduly surprised" (note 2).

And:

> "They impressed me by their extreme ignorance. Watson made that clear! I never met two men who knew so little—and aspired to so much. They were going about it in a roguish, jocular manner, very bright young people who didn't know much. …It struck me as a typically British intellectual atmosphere, little work and lots of talk... Watson is now an able, effective administrator of science. In that respect he represents the American entrepreneurial type very well. Crick is something else—brighter than Watson, but he talks a lot, and so he talks a lot nonsense."
>
> "...if in our day such pygmies throw such giant shadows, it only shows

how late in the day it has become`' (note 3).

All very well! But Crick and Watson won the prize. Perhaps there is something to be said for talking! And they were not the only ones who had forgotten about the Chargaff pairs. The American double Nobel prize winner, Linus Pauling, also neglected to consider them and, as a consequence, his proposed structure for the DNA molecule collapsed in ignominy.

The problem was that Chargaff, like Avery before him, was too tentative. He didn't actually say that the relationship was one to one, but thought they were approximately one to one.

In the history of science it would be difficult to find anyone more diffident than the Augustinian friar, Gregor Mendel. He was of such a nervous disposition that he was incapable of sitting a science exam. And yet, unlike the urbane and sophisticated Chargaff, he was capable of making that final inductive leap and develop the necessary implications. In Mendel's experiments he *"knew"* that the ratio was three: not *"approximately"* three.

In the case of Chargaff, it was left to Watson and Crick to make that final inductive leap for him. The ratio was one, not *approximately one*. Perhaps that was the source of the anger, or maybe the Austrian recognised that the intellectual centre of science had moved from Central Europe to the Anglo Saxon world—a long process which began with the emigration of the best scientific minds to America and the UK in the 1930s. Chargaff himself was working for an American university.

What became known as the Chargaff rule was the final piece in the jigsaw. In 1953 Crick and Watson unveiled the *"double helical"* structure of the DNA molecule. In plain man's terms a double helix is a twisted or spiral ladder.

The scientific community was amazed at how simple the structure was. The outer rails of the ladder consist of a regular pattern of phosphates and sugars. The rungs or what scientists call *"bases"* consist of the four chemicals Chargaff identified: Adenine, Thymine, Guanine and Cytosine. Adenine always matches with Thymine and Guanine always matches with Cytosine. The sequence of bases gives the specificity or character of genes. That is all there is to Mendel's *"hereditary factor"*. But, of course, even a simple life form like Covid 19 has about 30,000 bases.

Legend has it that, following their discovery, Francis Crick announced at a cocktail party that he had discovered the *"secret of life"*: it is 20 angstroms wide; there are 3.4 angstroms between the bases and 34 angstroms between each turn (1 angstrom equals one ten billionths of a metre).

Well, if Schrodinger had been present at the party, he would have said:

> "My dear Francis. You have done very well but you have not quite won the pretty girl. All you have done is describe the structure. You don't know how DNA relates to the rest of the chromosome and you have not at all discovered the code!"

But it must be admitted that knowing the structure gave clues to the outstanding questions. Very soon afterwards scientists figured out how DNA replicated itself. The twisted ladder first straightened itself out and then spilt vertically in two. Each section is used as a template to form a new section to make the DNA molecule whole again; always obeying Chargaff's rule.

But from then on progress seemed to stall. Francis Crick with the status he garnered from establishing the structure of DNA, became an unofficial chairman of a scientific club dedicated to finding the code.

It is interesting to note the approach adopted by this group. It took an attitude of scepticism towards all experimental data unless it fitted into a coherent theory. Its reasoning was that measurements at a molecular level could not be relied upon.

This seemed to be at variance with the scientific method. A second element to their approach was what became known as the *"central dogma"*. This was the view that DNA creates Ribonucleic acid (RNA), which in turn creates the proteins which are the agents of the life processes.

The members of the club cheerfully admitted that the evidence for this was quite flimsy, which was why they called it a dogma. Their justification for it was that, since they were operating in a vast desert, they needed something to hold on to in order to direct their research which, even if it was a mirage, was better than nothing.

In the early period a lot of the effort of the group was directed towards finding the code.

When nature is considered as a whole there are very few variables which can nevertheless be arranged into an infinite number of combinations. For example, there are only 94 natural elements. And even these can be reduced to three items: protons, electrons and neutrons. So, while there appears to be a qualitative difference between copper and gold, the difference is in fact quantitative. Copper has 29 protons (and electrons) while gold has 79 protons.

As regards living beings, we have already seen that, within the DNA molecule, there are only four chemicals that give specificity or determine the character of the living organism.

One of the members of Francis Crick's club, the Russian physicist George Gamow, noticed that there are only twenty amino acids which are the building blocks of proteins in living organisms.

This reduced the coding to a very simple mathematical problem. If there are only four variables (Adenine, Thymine, Guanine and Cytosine) that select one out of twenty amino acids, how big must the code be? Well the code cannot be just one character long because with four variables there would be only four possible combinations. If the code had two characters, there would be sixteen possible combinations (4x4), which would still not be enough. So Gamow speculated that the code must consist of three characters which could have sixty four combinations (4 x 4 x 4)—more than enough for the twenty amino acids. This code of three characters was called a *"codon"*.

And that was about it. It became a little embarrassing. Every year Francis Crick would stand up in front of prestigious scientific conferences only to express his frustration at the lack of progress being made.

When a breakthrough eventually was made, it came from outside the club. At a Conference in Moscow in 1961 an American scientist, Marshall Nirenberg, collaborating with German scientist Johann Matthae, announced that they had managed to create synthetic RNA and were using it to decipher the DNA code.

By the mid 1960s all the code had been deciphered. It turned out that George Gamow was right all along about the codons. There are indeed sixty four codes, consisting of three characters. Three of the codes signify a stop sign or end of program; the remainder represent an individual amino acid. But, since there are more codes than amino acids, the same amino acid can have more than one code.

And it also emerged that the *"central dogma"* was substantially correct. In broad brush strokes the DNA splits into two strands. The RNA uses a strand of the DNA as a template to produce code. The RNA—consisting of a single strand of code—enters a structure containing ribosomes. When this apparatus interprets the code, it not only knows what polypeptide chain or protein it is required to produce but also where in the organism that protein is to be dispatched.

The secret of life had been revealed. It was a bit late for Erwin Schrodinger who died in 1961, but it could be said that all the questions that he had asked in his 1944 book have been answered.

Of course, the question *"what is life"* is not just a scientific question; it is also a philosophical one. The present writer doesn't propose to delve into this aspect. But it is interesting to record what some of the scientists thought they were doing.

Francis Crick defined molecular biology as *the "borderline between living and dead things"*.

When Max Delbruck won his Nobel prize in 1969 he was delighted to learn that Samuel Beckett had won the prize for literature. Perhaps he thought they were at the same game—stripping life back to its essentials. Delbruck was looking forward to meeting his hero at the ceremony. But in a case of life imitating art the scientist was left waiting. The writer failed to show up!

Here and there, as the spectre of genetic engineering loomed, doubts began to creep in. Maurice Wilkins, who shared the Nobel prize with Watson and Crick in 1962, liked to quote the Austrian writer Robert Musil:

> "…knowledge is an attitude, a passion. Actually an illicit attitude. For the compulsion to know is a mania: it produces a character out of balance. It is not at all true that the scientist goes after truth. It goes after him. It is something he suffers from."

And, of course Chargaff remained sceptical:

> "I am against the over-explanation of science, because I think it impedes the flow of scientific imagination and associations. My main objection to molecular biology is that by its claim to be able to explain everything, it actually impedes the flow of free scientific explanation. But there is not a scientist I have met who would share my opinion" (note 3).

Finally, and to return to the beginning of this article, it need hardly be said that Erwin Schrodinger was not a *"laughing stock"*. ***Au contraire!***

There can hardly be a scientist in the field of molecular biology who had not read *"What is Life?"*. James Watson often said that the book had a *"decisive"* influence on him. The physicist Maurice Wilkins said the book made him *"interested in putting physics to work on the complexities of living processes"*.

Francis Crick thought the book *"suggested that biological problems could be thought about, in physical terms—and thus it gave the impression that exciting things in this field were not far off"*.

There is no doubt that, during his time in Dublin, Schrodinger made a substantial contribution to molecular biology which is a science whose ramifications continue to extend and whose implications for humanity have yet to be determined.

Note 1 p130, *The Irish Times: A History*, Mark O'Brien, Four Courts Press, 2008).
Note 2 p633, *The Eighth Day of Creation*, Horace Freeland Judson, Cold Spring Harbour Laboratory Press, 2013.
Note 3 p120, *The Eighth Day of Creation*, Horace Freeland Judson, Cold Spring Harbour Laboratory Press, 2013.

Donal Kennedy

An Asian Journey

In May 2020 Michael Portillo's *Great Railway Journey* took him to Java, the beautiful, fertile Indonesian island which includes its capital, Jakarta ,and other major cities. A place which, you might believe, as I do, was created by a benign God, so that its inhabitants will not be disconcerted when they leave it for an even more beautiful heaven. Elsewhere I have described how one million people were murdered there in 1965, in a coup orchestrated by Britain and the USA, and how between 1945 and 1950 the Dutch, recently liberated at home from the German Occupation, waged bloody war on Indonesia (See *Jude Collins* blog). In early 2020 the Dutch King belatedly acknowledged those shameful years (see BLOG, *"King Willem Regrets"*, ibid) .

What emerged from Michael Portillo's programme was that, in the best of times under the Dutch, the inhabitants were enslaved and died in their droves of famine, whilst their country was robbed.

Portillo, a highly intelligent and cultured European, showed empathy with the people, and did nothing to underplay the inhumanity of the Dutch settlers and the capitalists back in Holland who grew rich from that criminal enterprise.

The week before, Michael Portillo was in Vietnam, another beautiful country whose people suffered from Imperialism: French, Japanese, French again, then American—with their Australian hangers-on. Portillo was a sympathetic guide, and his questioning about Ho Chi Min confirmed the impression I got reading *Time* Magazine (on a flight from London to Dublin in the 1960s when Irish Newspapers were on strike): that Ho was essentially a Sinn Feiner at heart, and Communism an instrument to gain freedom for his people. Until then,like most of my generation in Ireland, I had swallowed a lot of Western Cold War propaganda.

It seems to me that Indonesia suffered more under the Dutch in any five year period than the Dutch did under five years of Hitler. And that Vietnam suffered more under the French in the five years after D Day than France did under Hitler and his French collaborators together.

The sufferings of Indonesians and Vietnamese under Western Liberal-Democratic regimes were comparable to those of Poles and Russians under occupation or attack by the Nazis. And none of the Western despots had the decency shown by Hitler when he shot himself. Portillo appears to me as a chameleon, who hitched his wagon to Margaret Thatcher's star, and posed as a soul-mate of the appalling Norman Tebbit. Of Tebbit it was said (by Michael Foot)—*"every time he rises, he gives his famous imitation of a semi house-trained polecat"*.

I'm not myself convinced it was merely imitation in Tebbit's case. But I think it was a pose with Portillo, who, freed from Parliament, his old political cronies, and the ambition of further promotion in that sphere, has found happiness in conducting himself as a paid-up member of the human race. ✻

Brendan Clifford

Sir Bob Geldof On Yeats

BBC television on December 10th broadcast a long programme, about an hour and three-quarters long, on W.B. Yeats by Bob Geldoff. I watched it because I knew little about Yeats and thought it might tell me something. All I knew about Geldoff was that he was a pop celebrity from Dublin who detested the culture he had grown up in. That fact did not prejudice me against him. I was about thirty when I first saw Dublin and I was astonished by the narrowness of life in it as compared with the life of the Irish countryside n which I became what I am.

All that I knew about Years was his verse, and his Senate speech on the *Divorce Bill* in which he declared that the people he came from were *"no petty people"*. The only book I had read about him, written by a woman whose name I forget, was about the harem of women who surrounded him as he approached old age and dedicated themselves to the task of causing him to have an erection.

In the 1970s I spent a lot of time going through old newspapers in the Linenhall Library in Belfast, within hearing of literary discussions that were going on. A professor or lecturer on English literature at Queen\s University was implanting an idea of what poetry was. I forget his name. The idea seemed to be that it was not rhyme and metre. And, if that was the case, could Yeats's verse be considered poetry at all?

I gather that Geldof has been knighted and I will therefore address him appropriately. Knighthood cannot be inflicted on anyone who does not desire it, and I would guess that Yeats did not desire it, being beyond such things.

Sir Bob envies him his experience of London in the late 19th century. Other cities, he says, might be known in a day but London would take a lifetime to know. By crossing the sea Yeats entered a wonderland. *"It was like the sixties, fuelled by hashish and mescalin"*. And, within it, there were all kinds of wonderful and crazy goings-on which helped to shape his imagination.

I went to London in the mid-fifties as the *Angry Young Men* were coming on the scene. I found it very dull after Slieve Luacra. The Protestant Sabbath was still the law and there seemed to be little public discontent with it. Little societies of the kind listed by Sir Bob were still there in odd corners: Theosophists, Occultists, Swedenborgians, Scientologists. I looked up some of them. They seemed to be the hobbies of people who otherwise lived very conventional lives in the lower bourgeois/upper working class region of the system.

The rebel philosopher was Colin Wilson, whose existentialist borrowings from France were hailed as a masterwork by either the *Times* or the *Telegraph*. The most daring native cultural event of the late fifties was a play about Luther by John Osborne, which was eventually performed after censorship requirements by the Lord Chamberlain had been met. The cinema was heavily censored. The most interesting thing artistically was the performances of Wagner in German at Covent Garden with German singers done, it seemed to me, in a spirit of the British almost apologising for the War—a spirit that evaporated soon after.

Profile

Yeats came of the Anglo-Irish gentry. He was born in the Irish region but, according to Sir Bob, his family moved to London when he was two years old. He was educated in England. Thereafter he moved back and forth, apparently being at ease in both regions of the British state, with much the same kind of company in both, but with nationalism developing strongly in the native society in Ireland. His father had moved to England in order to become an artistic Bohemian drop-out doing his own thing. Under the combined influence of Bohemian and Occultist circles in London, and of native life in Co. Sligo, Yeats became interested in fairies and folk-tales. He made a collection of folk-songs and began to write poetic plays about prehistoric Ireland, and this laid the foundation for an Irish nation, according to Sir Bob. (In the following extracts, some parts are quoted and others are summarised. All the extracts from the programme appear in a different typeface to that used in the text:)

In 1966 I was 14 and Ireland marked the 50th anniversary of the 1916 Rising. Across that Easter Week the one TV station that most of the country could receive was filled with the most appalling, mawkish, emotional, nationalistic stuff. I felt divorced from my own country. I was engaged in the now, and not what seemed to me the prehistoric. For others it stirred the politics of hatred that found a response in the killings in the North of the island a mere two years later. In my classroom a priest began to read the poetry of W.B. Yeats. Now here I recognised immediately was the country I belonged to. Here was Ireland articulated, a modern, plural, open, generous country…

So who was he, this poet? He was the oddest, bravest, downright weirdest of revolutionaries. He never killed a living soul. Yet it was his revolution that won in the end: the revolution of the Irish mind…

But it was the uprising against the British, fought mostly in Dublin's General Post Office across Easter Week a century ago, that continues to be the central point of both celebration and controversy. Over the course of a few days hundreds died in a shambolic engagement. What happened next, when the British executed the Rebellion's leaders set the tone of Ireland's often tragic political situation for the next 100 years.

I want to say that the poet, W.B. Yeats, not only deserves a plate in the national Pantheon of Liberation occupied by the men and women who fought and died in this building but actually in front of them.

Yeats *sang* this country into being by imagining the creation myth so necessary, so required for building the modern, pluralist, intellectual underpinnings and institutions necessary for the national state, as Gogarty said, *'There is no Free State without Yeats'*, and by that he meant that Ireland doesn't exist without the poet.

Modern Ireland was not born a hundred years ago but seventy years before that in the Charnel House of the Irish Famine. Inconceivable hundreds of thousands died of mass starvation while millions of others, escaping the horror, slipped away on migrant ships bound for viability. The land lay empty. This was Ireland's Year Zero. Centuries of dispossession and defeat had dulled the brain to anything other than brute survival. Just over a decade later Yeats was born into the Protestant landown-

ing ruling caste. With devastation all around, the authority of that class, his class, was destroyed. Ireland itself, and its language, was in flux, desperate to be remoulded into the new. We just needed someone to magic us into life…

Willie Yeats was born in interesting times and into an interesting family. His father, John Butler Yeats was a South Dublin barrister with good prospects. Everything was perfectly Victorian and lovely and proper. His dad then decided that this wasn't going to be for him. He suddenly dropped his family, dropped everything and heads off to London, where he ends in the Slade School of Art and from then on they live a life of complete poverty. Now I think this is an act of great bravery. His family thought it was an act of insanity. But, in so much else at that time, I think his father was really feeling the moment. This was a point of soon-to-be revolution: cultural revolution as opposed to armed insurrection. There's a difference. And he was completely rejecting the background that he had inherited. He was the ultimate Bohemian. And he set out to live the ultimate Bohemian's life. He was determined not to bring his children up as he had been brought up, with these expectations. He kept them away from school. Why? Because, he said of Willie Yeats: the boy must learn to believe in art and poetry and the sovereignty of the intellect and the mind.

Cultural Milieus

To escape this Bohemian penury, Willie Yeats's mother would regularly take her children to her family, the Pollexfens, a prosperous trading dynasty based in Sligo town…. Susan Yeats, bring her brood to Sligo, is the birthplace of WB's dreamlike vision of Ireland.

[To Roy Foster:] It's said that his mother is left out of the equation so much. Take me through the family.

Roy Foster: Yeats's mother's family is in some ways much more important in his background than his father's family. They provide the background that the kids go to in Sligo in the Summer. They're in Merville [?], this nice Big House with servants, with fires, with ample everything, and very much integrated into that world of the Protestant bourgeoisie of a prosperous Irish provincial town. But its hinterland is the magic landscape of lakes, mountains and myth and magic, which is conveyed to them by the servants, who tell them these stories, and the local children with whom they play… that is their absolute formative experience.

[View of Rosses Point, a few miles from Sligo town]

This is the place where this crazed imaginative family took off… Out here Willie was immersed in fairy lore. But this was not Peter Pan stuff. This was dark, pagan and malevolent, and completely believed.

[*The Stolen Child*, read by **Edna O'Brien**.]

Yeats was caught in the half-light, the Celtic twilight, a moment where nobody knew who or what they were. Everything could be remade, rewritten. The ancient folk tales and fairy stories that Willie heard here ignited the lifelong fascination with Irishness and with The Other: a kind of escape from reality where he could find imagery and metaphors for his writing. Yeats wrote: *"The mystical world is the centre of what I do, think and write. All of that stated here.*

[**Olivia O'Leary** reads part of *The Song of Wandering Aengus*.

Photo of title page of his book *The Celtic Twilight. Men And Women, Dhouls And Fairies*.]

While Sligo ignited his mystical, spiritual side, in London with its vast swirling stew [?], the centre of global political, economic and cultural action, Yeats found himself thrillingly at the very heart of European revolutionary ideas. Depending on the state of the family finances, the Yeats's flitted between lodgings in Dublin and London. He was educated between the two cities, actually trained to be an artist like his dad and brother. It was a time of new ideas: Socialism, Anarchism, Marxism, Darwinism, the Death of God, a search for new answers, opening different doors of perception. It was like the Sixties fuelled by hashish and mescalin. Willie became obsessed with the numinous, the mystical and spiritual, mingling with Theosophists, Rosicrucians, Cabbalists, Gurus, Swamis and the secretive, bizarre Order of the Golden Dawn. You have to envy Willie and the wild London he arrived into. You can do Dublin in two days… You can't do London in a lifetime. Getting lost here is one of the best educations you could possibly have.

But this was also the era of Salon culture, Decadence, Symbolists, literary clubs and endless debate… By the time 22 year old WB arrived in 1887, full of fairy tales and Celtic mysticism, London would have loved him… London and Europe were alive to what would eventually be called *The Celtic Revival.* Young Willie found himself in the right city at the right time, and in the right house.

[In an artists' colony at Bedford Park.]

It's hard to think about the absolute poverty this family lived in. There was often literally no food in the house Clothes never changed for anything new. And, even when it was down to literally the last penny, there was a vote in the family as to what to spend it on, and the majority chose to spend that last penny on the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

[But he was invited for lunch with the Wildes, who spoke about how bad the Irish were at poetry, and he was told it wasn't enough to be a poet, but you should look like a poet, and act like a poet. This was the beginning of a fascination with image. This was when Yeats, the poet we know, was born, both as man and myth. All he needed was the Muse, and Maud Gonne turned up at the lodging and took him in tow. He became a nationalist under her gravitational pull. But he *"found a way of expressing that, of focussing on it through her, in a way that never killed anybod*y".]

[The *Folly Of Being Comforted* read here by **Ardal O'Hanlon**.]

Sir Bob: She needs a country and a cause, and in Yeats he found the troubling of his life and she found a poet for the cause. Isn't that really it?

Roy Foster: They're both in search of authenticity, but it's a different kind of authenticity. Yeats is also looking for an authenticity because he is this marginalised, odd, at an angle to the Universe Protestant. She's looking for an authenticity because she's a rootless peripatetic. Her beloved father died. She doesn't have a mother. Neither of them in a sense has a mother. It's interesting. And I think they're looking for something to cling to…

[*When You Are Old* read by Damian Lewis and Dominic West. *Adam's Curse* read by Richard E. Grant.

Roy Foster suggests that having this kind of stuff sent to you is a big turn off.

The Cloths Of Heaven read by Colin Farrell, Sir Bob, and Edna O'Brien.]

Sir Bob: "If he came along to you and said, 'Edna, when you are old, and tired, and grey and full of sleep, take down this book and read and dream with it', would you swoon, and just shag him?"

Edna [rather stiffly], "Probably, Yes".

No doubt she helped focus those dreams at a time when Charles Stewart Parnell was leading a democratic charge for Irish Home Rule, while the Irish Republican Brotherhood was stirring the boiling pot of revolt. But W.B. Yeats simply believed in Ireland, in its stories, its legends, its dream time and its people. He wanted to go back beyond oppression and rebellion, beyond Famine, beyond Christianity to an earlier time of Homeric warrior heroes. And he was doing it afresh, in the English language, making it modern, relevant, full of magic and wonder.

[He visited Douglas Hyde in Roscommon and discovered Lough Kee. Contact with A.E. and the Theosophical Society. Met John O'Leary and almost certainly took the IRB Oath:]

And he may very well have done that because he believed it, or to be with the lads, or to further his career, or to tip the wink to Maude that *I'm a fellow-traveller, you can count on me. I'm with you all the way! Now can we shag?*

He lost his virginity at 31, possibly to Olivia Shakespeare. The sex was no good. He failed to perform. Lady Gregory takes him away to her estate of Coole Park where they search for fairy footprints.

[**Adam Lomax** collected stories in the Appalachian Mountains and the American South:] Now Yeats did that. There's just no question of it. He gave the Irish, in a moment of great confusion and loss, he told them who they were. He said: It's not all dispossession and defeat: go back, long before the English fighting and invasion. Have you heard of Fionn MacCumhail? have you heard of Cu Chulainn? They had, not in the sense of this glorious, elegant, dignified.

A nation is the political expression of a people. If it isn't a people, you can't build a state. And the only way you can build a state, the scaffolding upon which a Constitution can hang,

[The Abbey Theatre *"our national theatre"*.]

Joseph O'Connor: "He writes somewhere that he realises that the Irish don't read, that that whole part of our culture is not a big thing, but they might go to shows. It's just fantastic to see the stern, austere figure of Yeats with the light bulb moment: 'Maybe if we opened a theatre, they might come along'…"

Liberation

It was the punk aspect of it: you know the punk thing was a reaction against the professionalism, the 72 track structure of the thing, the prog rock musicality of the bands. No. Strip that out. Go back to Attitude. Go back to the Roots of the music, and anyone can do it. But I can't play! But that doesn't matter. Pick it up and make a noise. Yeats and Gregory and Synge were going to make a noise. Even if you were an amateur two years ago, like Synge, you were going to make a noise. Even if you were an amateur like Gregory, you were going to make a noise. It was this central group of revolutionaries who were provoking, who were disturbing, who needed the debate to happen. It could not just be owned by the advanced nationalists, i.e. those who were prepared to pick up the gun and go.

The war-drums were beating louder. WB and Maude had shared a Committee to celebrate the centenary of the failed 1798 rebellion. There had been violent protests at Queen Victoria's Jubilee, and later at her visit to Dublin.

Yeats himself publicly supported the Boers in their fight against British colonialism. In this boiling pot he was challenged by more hardline Republicans to write a nationalist play. It is not his finest hour. Co-written with Augusta Gregory, it was a star vehicle for Maud Gonne, essentially playing Ireland. The play is not important because of his genius, far from it, buts its impact. And it happened in this very room—where they are now, to Willie's dismay, I'd imagine, build a nail bar and having xxxx And this is where the appalling *Kathleen Ni Houlihan* was first staged.

So the old woman who represents Ireland says:

> 'Sometimes my feet are tired and my hands are quiet, but there's no quiet in my heart. When the people see me quiet they think old age has come on me, and that all the stir has gone out of me. But when the trouble is on me I must be talking to my friends.
>
> *Bridget*: What was it put the trouble on you?
>
> *Old Woman:* My land that was taken from me.
>
> *Peter:* Was it much land they took from you?
>
> *Old Woman:* My four beautiful fields.'

[Sir Bob strikes a pose:] Which is the pose you see the photograph of Maude Gonne striking. Precisely this. Fuck Off!

But it was that stuff that sent a very astute critic, Stephen Gwynn, reeling. And he wrote in his Diary: "The effect of Kathleen Ni Houlihan on me was that I went home asking myself if such plays should be produced unless one were prepared for people to go out and shoot and be shot?" Maybe not. But the atmosphere which he created—and we're talking about a monstrous Box Office hit for those days—and it was played again and again—certainly contributed to the overall war-drums being beaten ever more feverishly.

[*Man and Echo*, extract read by **Tom Hollander**:] "All that I have said and dare, now that I am old and grey, turns me to a question till I lie awake night after night and never get the answer right. Did that play of mine send out certain men the English shot? Did words of mine put too great strain on that woman's reeling brain?" [The next couplet is not read: "Could my spoken word have checked that a house was wrecked?"]

Culture

Yeats's nationalism and his belief in an independent Ireland was never in doubt. But his old mentor, John O'Leary, had said 'There are some things a man must not do to save a nation'. Whatever way the road forked, WB's path was cultural revolution. The pen *not* the sword. What ultimately distanced WB Yeats from the revolutionary cause was a broken heart. Maude Gonne, in the cauldron of national fervour, married John MacBride, a Republican hero who had fought with the Boers against the Empire. He was also a drinker and this perfect rebel marriage was doomed.

[It seems that Yeats, in disgust at the marriage and Catholic conversion of his Platonic Sex Object with a grossly vulgar man who took revolution to be the sphere of material action, withdrew from the nationalist world that he had been dabbling his toes in, and wrote *No Second Troy* when leaving it behind. This was read for Sir Bob by **Bill Nighy**:]

"Why should I blame her, that she filled my days with misery, or that she would have taught to ignorant men most violent ways, or hurled the little streets upon the great, had they but courage equal to desire… Why what could she have done, being what she is? Was there another Troy for her to burn?"

[It's a curious image. Helen, a free barbarian woman—that is, a Spartan, not an Athenian chattel—went off with Paris to

live the civilised life in Troy, and the Greeks united in a war of destruction on Troy. With Maud it was the other way about. But there was no longer any force in the wilting civilisation that Maud took her leave of to join the ignorant man. It's true that the man proved to be too crude for her and she left him, but she did not leave his world to return to the world she had left. This appears to have been incomprehensible to Yeats.

Sir Bob tells us that—]

Yeats put his voice and his support behind John Redmond and his Irish Parliamentary Party and democratic freedom. In 1914 the Home Rule Bill is passed. Ireland has finally and peacefully secured its independence. But it's deferred because of the Great War and implacable Unionist opposition.

[Part of the disillusioned poem of the years of Redmondite democracy, *September 1913*, is read by **Bono**:]

"What need you, being come to sense, but fumble in a greasy till and add the half pence to the pence, and pray the shivering prayer until you've dried the marrow from the bone, for men were to pray and save. Romantic Ireland's dead and gone. It's with O'Leary in the grave."

Well, that's peaceful democratic development isn't it? Did not the Pollexfens fumble Puritanically at the greasy till before they built up the capital by which they obliged others to do it for them? Or did they have the capital to start with from some other source? I don't know. But it is what the many must do in order that the few should be able to do something else in the market civilisation engineered by England, which England saw as its Miltonic destiny to make all others comply with.

Ten years later Yeats and the Catholic Hierarchy in its most Cullenite form became pillars of the Free State. Did Yeats then write verse depicting the meanness of the mode of life which he was fostering as a politician? I know only of his protest in the Senate over the trivial issue of ending the degree of divorce that was possible under English law (by an Act of Parliament in each instance),which he said was an affront to his people, who were *"no petty people"*.

Where could another people be found to rival them in pettiness? They were given a country to run and they made a complete mess of it.

Blood Sacrifice

In between there was the World War, and there was the Easter Rising. The second was made possible by the first.

Sir Bob is appalled by the loss of life in the Rising—a couple of hundred people killed in the course of the whole week of it. Probably that number were killed in the first ten minutes of the Battle of the Somme, which went on for months. He says nothing about the Somme, or Paschendale, or a dozen other encounters that dwarfed the incident in Ireland.

Roy Foster contributed the opinion that the Rising was a blood sacrifice and that there is evidence that those who undertook it sacrificed themselves deliberately, with an eye to the propaganda effect on the populace.

What was the casualty rate of the Irish Army in 1916? I have never seen an estimate of it. I doubt that it was higher than the casualty-rates of British regiments sent walking into German machine-guns.

Peace-loving Redmondites, having a pretty good idea of casualty rates in France, recruited Irish nationalists into the British Army using the rhetoric of chivalry.

The Liberal Government would have liked to fudge the Great War casualty figures, but *The Times* disagreed. It also disagreed with the Liberals about the nature of the War, insisting that it was not a moral Crusade but was a proper Balance of Power War to enhance Britain's position of dominance in the world. A series of popular books was published with the titles, *The First Hundred Thousand*, *The Second Hundred Thousand*, *The First Million*. These were the mass armies, on a scale never before seen in Britain, which were recruited in 1914-15, before the introduction of Conscription, and used up.

Did the spirit of Blood Sacrifice play no part in the voluntary offering up to the State of these mass armies? Was it all just mindless activity of a British herd populace directed by the cracking of a whip, or was it the purposeful activity of an Imperial people which was willing to suffer casualties on an unprecedented scale for an Imperial purpose?

There was plenty of explicit blood sacrifice verse published in England in 1914-15. The first I came across was by the Prime Minister's son, published in a popular newspaper in late 1914. It rejoiced in the fact that the drudges of capitalist routine were being given the opportunity to live real lives, however briefly, before disappearing from the world. And, amongst the intellectuals there was Rupert Brooke, leaping into the purity of battle, and Julian Grenfell, seeing the earth being fertilised by blood.

The Cockneys of course found humour in it: *"If you want the old Battalion, I know where it is/ It's hanging on the old barbed wire"*.

I know of nothing like this in the Republican culture of 1916. The Republicans understood that war involved casualties. That is all.

Perhaps they had some illusions about what the British State was prepared to do in order to crush them—illusions which they should not have had after the Boer War fifteen years earlier. But that is not the kind of criticism that critics of the Easter Rising care to make.

The activity of peaceful, democratic Redmondism in the Great War blooded nationalist Ireland, and it also enabled a Republican Army to assemble and train openly. Without what Redmond did from September 1914 to April 1916, there would have been no possibility of Pearse and Connolly doing what they did in April 1916—and it seems unlikely that they would have wanted to do it.

Sir Bob skips over all of this. I assume that he does so because Yeats did so. Certainly in the *Collected Poems*, ***Easter 1916*** comes from nowhere.

It was a shocking event. Those little people, their faces lit up by delusion, with whom he had once consorted patronisingly, those clerks and shop assistants, had taken themselves in earnest, as if they had been people of quality, and had gone to war in support of their delusions and upset the applecart.

They had been joined by a couple of women of the quality, who had made themselves into Things by ideology. But the fact was that the applecart had been upset and could never be put right again. The upset applecart is an accomplished fact.

Sir Bob finds this difficult to cope with. Yeats founded the nation on Ossianic mythology. He gave it dramatic expression with a symbolic play in the Abbey Theatre. The implications of the drama were shocking. He backed away from his creation. But others kept it alive and in 1916 they did what Stephen Gwynn saw as the logical outcome of the myth. And Yeats disowned it. He made a memorable poem about it which in the outcome accepted it as a dreadfully accomplished fact which set the scene for the future.

Sir Bob is angry:

The Easter Rising lasted six days and left nearly 500 dead, the leaders were captured and executed by the British. The ensuing outrage led to more carnage and death, and ultimately, many think, to Irish independence. But I believe the glorification of what happened in the GPO stained my country's history in blood for decades.

[Scene with Sir Bob in an empty GPO:] There are no creation myths here. It's just a Post Office. This isn't a foundation stone of anything. This

isn't the crucible of revolution—that's over in the execution grounds of Kilmainham. This isn't the credo of our national Bethlehem. This is the original sin of a mismanaged, misgoverned, often abusive and corrupt State. This is the foul rag and bone shop of the national heart, which, as Yeats so brilliantly reminds us, is where all the ladders start.

I find myself very conflicted by the idea of the blood sacrifice and heroism, the delirium of death. Dying is very easy. I've been around it a lot. It isn't radical to die. It's inevitable. Staying alive is hard. Life is hard. Staying alive to change and implement change must be what it is about. Dying for a cause! Whose cause? …

W.B. Yeats didn't die for Ireland. He stayed alive to fight for Ireland, the better, progressive, inclusive version of Ireland, and the fight against the version I eventually fled—petty, censorious Catholic narrow-mindedness, fixated with the false glory of martyrdom…

A Diversion On Burma

When I heard this, I wondered what Sir Bob's familiarity with death came from. I knew him only as the name of a famous pop-singer, but did not know any of his songs. I have now learned from an article by Dave Alvey in *Irish Political Review* that he has become an international figure in the politics of Charity and Peace, and that, in that capacity, he compared the 1916 Rising to a Jihadi Bombing in Lahore in 2016. And also that he had demanded that Dublin City Council take some action against Aung San Suu Kyi, whom he had previously supported. (January 2018: this issue can be found online at **freemagazines.atholbooks.org**).

About thirty years ago Cathal O'Shannon condemned, on RTE, the complicity of neutral Ireland with Fascism, through having given refuge to European refugees after 1945 and allowed them to become useful citizens. He contrasted this with his own anti-Fascist activity as a pilot in the RAF in the Burma Campaign. I pointed out the indisputable fact that the British *Burma Campaign* was an Imperialist attempt to reconquer Burma, which had declared its independence under Japanese protection after 1941. That Declaration of Burmese Independence, under the leadership of Aung San, took root. Cathal O'Shannon's efforts were in vain. Burma would not rejoin the Empire. The Labour Government at Westminster had to accept as an accomplished fact what Aung San had achieved with Japanese support. It recognised Burmese Independence, while Churchill in Opposition was demanding that Aung San be put on trial as a War Criminal. A couple of years later Aung San was assassinated, along with his Cabinet. About ten years ago it was revealed on BBC Television, by the Foreign Office, with Fergal Keane (the pretentious one) acting as spokesman, that the assassination was carried out by the British Secret Service.

So, moralise about all of that, if you can.

Yeats In 1916

Returning to Sir Bob's programme: Yeats seems to have been very much preoccupied with himself in 1916. The date by which he must be married had been determined by consultation with the Occult, and time was running out. He proposed again to Maud Gonne, she being free as a result of the Rising, which had done away with her husband—

the *"drunken, vainglorious lout"*, MacBride. She rejects him. So *"he turns and walks along the beach to her 22 year old daughter, Iseult, and proposes to her"*.

At this point this verse is read out by **Sting**, another famous pop-singer:

> 'Oh you will take whatever's offered,
> and dream that all the world's a friend,
> suffer as your mother suffered,
> be as broken in the end.
> But I am old and you are young.
> And I speak a barbarous tongue'.

Iseult says No. In this emotional meltdown, Willie thinks, *Well, who else do I know?* So the now hysterical Yeats heads straight back to England and proposes to Georgie Hyde Lee, the daughter of a friend, who says OK. Within days of the horoscope deadline, the happy couple arrive at a London Registry Office…

Yeats, although now married and on his honeymoon, was still in a complete panic. Had he let down Maud, or Iseult? Was he betraying his new wife by not being fully committed to her? That's when Georgie displayed her true talents.

[SCENE: an Occult bookshop. Shelf of books in the category *Golden Dawn*. Discussion with the bookseller, **Christina Oakley-Harrington**:]

Sir Bob: So he'd met the deadline. He had. Hurrah! He'd found somebody less than half his age who was willing to marry him. That's a great success?

Christina: Yes. That's not a failure, that's a success. So they get married. They go on honeymoon. They go to this little hotel south of London, and the first night nothing happened sexually. Second night nothing happened sexually. Third night, it's really disconcerting for her. It's really distressful. And they, between them, decide to [go in for] automatic writing. And she——

Sir Bob——Wasn't that bonkers actually——

Christina——No, it wasn't bonkers—

Sir Bob——to go along with it? Well, you would say that, wouldn't you, selling bonkers books in this bookshop…

Christina She comes from an Occult background. It's a thing that she knows about. It's a thing he knows about. It's a thing that he's very keen that she does. And she sits down to do it, and she starts, and they get some results. But he loved it. He absolutely loved it."

So it seems that Sir Bob had not quite sloughed off his Catholic conditioning by priests. He could not believe in the Occult. It was a basic contention of Catholic teaching that the Occult was the fall-back position of the human mind if it rejected the complex structure of understanding forged by Thomas Aquinas by bringing Roman statecraft and Greek philosophy to bear on Christian mystery in coping with the world. And I did notice when I went to London that such things did actually place a part of daily life there.

Anyhow, that's what Yeats was doing in 1916, instead of dying for Ireland—a thing that there was not the slightest possibility that he would ever have done. He neither died, nor lived, for Ireland. But he wrote that poem. He was a poem writer, and that was the thing to write about.

Roy Foster accepts 1916 as a scenario-changing event. Pearse calculated the Catholic 'thing' about martyrdom, they got themselves killed, and it worked.

Sir Bob Fine. Meanwhile at the end of all that you get 500 people dead. I mean, *how dare they?*

Foster You will say 'How dare they?', but for them the 500 people dead were worth the reward, which was a revived radical Republican Ireland.

Sir Bob And Stalin was of exactly the same opinion.

Foster Perhaps.

Sir Bob he people of 1916 are an elite, a revolutionary elite, blinded by, you know, blood-dimmed revolutionary lust.

Foster You say that. I didn't say it.

Sir Bob I'm saying it.

Foster They're certainly a revolutionary elite. And they're bent on—

Sir Bob He would have approved of that—

Foster They're bent on the vertigo of self-sacrifice. And that's how Yeats will commemorate them, and remember them.

[**Olivia O'Leary** reads Yeats' *16 Dead Men*:]

'O but we talked at large before
The sixteen men were shot,
But who can talk of give and take,
What should be and what not
While those dead men are loitering there
To stir the boiling pot?
You say that we should still the land
Till Germany's overcome;
But who is there to argue that
Now Pearse is deaf and dumb?
And is their logic to outweigh
MacDonagh's bony thumb?
How could you dream they'd listen
That have an ear alone
For those new comrades they have found,
Lord Edward and Wolfe Tone,
Or meddle with our give and take
That converse bone to bone?'

[But**, Sir Bob** commented:]

One person wasn't so sure that Yeats got it right. His inspirational Muse and great love of his life, Maud Gonne, and now, because of the Rising, fanatical Republican icon, was a widow. Maud was outraged by this *Easter 1916*. She thinks he's betrayed the actual Rising itself.

Foster: 'No, Willie, I do not like your poem' began this terrific letter. I think it's one of the greatest political poems because of its ambivalence, but it does reflect the upheavals of his own life during the Summer, with Maud, or with her daughter Iseult. The Stanza about the stone of fanaticism in the stream of life is very much about——

Sir Bob ——The obsession with one idea that blocks any other.

Foster: Maud is the unspoken presence in that poem. It's probably his last great love poem to her. But I think the main [thing] is that the man is in the throes of a nervous breakdown. He is at the absolute edge of self-control. It's the fall-out of 1916 into 1917. His horoscope had told him all sorts of world-shattering things are happening. He's looking for certainty everywhere, as he's done in the strangest places over the last four years.

Fanaticisms

The *stone that troubled the living stream*, which Foster takes to mean *fanaticism*, is from the 1916 poem. Yeats himself had *"lived where motley is worn"*. He had been play-acting a make-believe revolution. Those with whom he had played it for a while—all his social inferiors, except for Maud, his erotic ideal—had not been playacting. They had been biding their time. That means that they were fanatics. This fanaticism caused 500 people to be killed. What monsters they must have been to do something that caused 500 people to be killed in a military encounter in Europe in 1916!

Herbert Henry Asquith did something which had caused something in the region of twenty million people to be killed in Europe between 1914 and 1918, of which 20,000 were Irish—or was it 40,000? Or does it not matter which?

The Irish fanatics, supposing that they did immolate themselves in a blood sacrifice for the purpose of stimulating the populace to seek political independence more actively, achieved their aim. Foster admits it.

Did Asquith achieve his purpose? What was his purpose? It was not to prevent a German march through Belgium. He could have prevented that by informing the German Ambassador that, if the German Army crossed the Belgian Border, the British Empire would join the French and Russian Empires in war against Germany.

It would be realistic to describe his action as being a bid for final world conquest, but let's take it at the face-value it presented. It was *The War To End War*, by destroying the one thing that stood in the way of *Perpetual Peace*—Prussia. How close did the sacrifice of 20 million come to achieving that?

It was fought as a Crusade—as can be seen from any Liberal newspaper from 4th August 1914 onwards. Asquith himself was not sealed up in a Biblicalist world outlook. He was one generation removed from that. But his backbenches were filled with Biblicalist enthusiasts and their enthusiasm had to be fed in order to energise Liberal war-making. The War of Imperial interest had to be presented as a Crusade against the Evil that was spoiling the world. And where could it end up except Jerusalem?

So let's retain some sense of proportion when considering the little affray in Dublin in April 1916. Was Pearse a fanatic and Asquith not? Well, perhaps Asquith is best described as a manipulator of fanaticism. What is the name for that?

What's It All About?

This verse was much repeated in the course of the programme:

'Out of Ireland have we come.
Great hatred, little room maimed us at the start.
I carry from my mother's womb a fanatic heart.'

I always wondered who were the *"we"* in that sentence. And was the wealthy Mrs. Pollexfen really a fanatic? And, by the way, the metre of the line requires the stress of *fanatic* to be on the *fan*, not on the *atic*, which is not how it was read. I'm sure that's how Yeats spoke it in his strange way.

Finally, about Maud, there is this memorable little verse, written much later I think, when he seems to have been trying to scandalise the Free State which he had fostered:

"A woman may be stiff and proud when
on love intent,
but love has pitched its mansion in place
of excrement.
For nothing can be sole or whole which
has not been rent."

(This was not read on the programme.)

I don't know how close he got to Maud's place of excrement. But if Maud is ever-present to him, as Foster assumes, that must relate to her. However, Yeats seems to have been rather like Ruskin with relation to his ideals, not earthy like Swift, who was disturbed by similar thoughts about Stella or Vanessa. And I think this matter is at the heart of some existential problems encountered by some kinds of Feminism. Nature is most inconsiderate in its arrangements.

Yeats' verse is in some ways like Dryden's rather than Swift's, though his life was utterly different from Dryden's. Dryden lived the political life 17th century England to the full, being in turn a Cromwellian anti-Catholic, a Restoration Anglican Protestant and finally a Roman Catholic with James II, while Yeats lived in the shadow of actual politics, except insofar as he was a fascist Free Stater. Dryden saw merit in a viable *status quo*, even though he wrote:

"When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat.
Yet, fooled with hope, men treasure the
deceit,
Trust on, and think tomorrow will repay.
Tomorrow's even falser than today."

But life must go on anyhow. Shelley, though a Platonist, has the same thought:

"Lift not the painted veil which those
who live
Call Life: though unreal shapes be
pictured there,
And it but mimic all we would believe
With colours idly spread…"

He knew one who lifted it, only to find nothing behind it.

Life is action. Action takes place in the medium of what is taken to be reality. Dryden and Shelley acted within the reality of their times. Yeats by comparison fantasised in the afterglow left behind by his people, who had engaged in disdainful domination of the populace for two centuries and were evaporating rapidly as their monopoly of Church and Land was eroded by the despised populace. And yet he had this thought:

"Civilisation is hooped together, bro
Under a rule, under the semblance
of peace
By manifold illusion; but man's life

is thought,
And he, despite his terror, cannot cease
Ravening through century after century,
Ravening, raging, and uprooting that
he may come
Into the desolation of reality
Egypt and Greece, good-bye: and
good-bye, Rome! "

If Athens rather than Germany was the source of Europe, then this analytical destructiveness was implicit in it from the moment when Plato's Socrates said: *"The unexamined life is not worth living"*. The questioning of the appearances in which actual life has always been lived led Yeats, little though his experience of actual life was, to the conclusion that, behind the appearances, there is only desolation.

This verse was not read out on the programme: If it had been, it would have questioned the whole basis of the programme.

Fascism

I don't know what Yeats contributed to the literature of the Fascist movement. His *Collected Poems* do not indicate which were the poems of his Fascist period. Sir Bob makes light of it all, saying lightly that fear of Communism led him to misguided dabbling with Fascism, and that he soon saw that the Blueshirt movement was just a Cabal of the Catholics whom he despised.

Well, they were earnest middle class Catholic upholders of the Treaty regime, behind which he threw his weight by taking public Office in it, at a time when it was finding it hard going against the anti-Treatyites. I imagine that the situation was that he was an aristocratic Fascist trying to give currency to a spent aristocracy in a fluid situation, while the substance of the movement was middle-class and plebeian with little time for the remnants of that frivolous aristocracy.

The poem that struck me as being most clearly Fascist was *Ben Bulben*. But its fascism, substituting for aristocracy was nostalgic yearning for a kind of aristocracy that was destroyed in Ireland when his people took over the country as a Protestant caste in the 1690s.

It sits very uneasily with Sir Bob's anguish over 1916:

"You that Mitchel's prayer have heard
`Send war in our time, O Lord!'
Know that when all words are said
And a man is fighting mad,
Something drops from eyes long blind
He completes his partial mind,
For an instant stands at ease,
Laughs aloud, his heart at peace."

And the gravediggers *"but thrust their buried men back in the human mind again"*.

I don't recall that any of that was read in the programme.

Towards the end of the programme, Sir Bob—the democratic, egalitarian hater of heroes who sacrifice themselves for a cause—admits that Yeats was not a democrat at all. And it appears that Sir Bob's democratism has a tendency to forget itself.

One moment the programme was at April 1916, and the next was four years on:

Ireland was now in the middle of a vicious war of independence, and Yeats was rightly outraged by the atrocities committed at Coole and Ballilee by the warring peoples.

The peoples were at war because an Election was held in 1918 and the people who lost—the British—were not willing to let the people who won get on with what they had voted for. That factual detail is not even mentioned.

The next sentence is:

He finally publishes his Easter rebellion poetry and nails his nationalism to the mast.

But surely what he nailed to the mast by publishing his 1916 verses is his 1916 ambivalence.

Nationalism in 1920 was Sinn Fein. I never heard that Yeats joined Sinn Fein or wrote verses in support of it. But only Sinn Fein was nationalist in 1920. This was no longer a matter of rival political factions, or rival military conspiracies. A democratic election had been held—the first of its kind. It mandated the establishment of Irish government independent of the Crown. The other parties asserted loyalty to the Crown and refused recognition of the authority of the democratically elected Irish Parliament.

The Redmondite Party of course criticised aspects of the conduct of the Crown in its war on the Sinn Fein Government, but it was to the Crown that it swore allegiance.

Yeats, according to Sir Bob, criticised the Crown, in a speech to the Oxford Union in 1921, for not upholding Victorian standards of conduct in Ireland. Then:

"The Anglo-Irish Treaty brought about a compromise which Yeats supported: the Irish Free State. He accepted a role as Senator in this new Government. This was no token position. Ireland was now in a Civil War. Senators were being attacked. Houses were being burned. His own new home in Merrion Square was shot at and had armed guards. He was going in to the Senate to ensure that the revolution that he had helped to engender, and the unique literary revolution that he hoped should become the soul of the country—which in fact it did—should endure and should be ensured…"

Not a word is said about this *"Civil War"*. It was not a 'civil war' at all in the proper meaning of that term. It did not happen because Britain recognised the national independence asserted and fought for by Sinn Fein, and Sinn Fein then split over how it should be governed. It happened because Britain refused to recognise Irish independence, but offered an enhanced form of Home Rule under the Crown, threatening that, if this offer was refused, all the resources of the Empire would be mobilised for a thorough conquest of Ireland by the terrorist methods applied in the Boer War. This was what split Sinn Fein.

One faction undertook to do the British bidding. Britain insisted that it should crush the faction that held out for the Republic, and supplied it with armaments and finance. The Republican Army that had fought the British Army for two and a half years split, the greater part remaining loyal to the Republic. The terrorist methods threatened by Britain were then put into force by an Irish Army armed and financed by Britain. Yeats had nothing to say about all of this in his poems, which is not surprising.

Insofar as the heroism of the *Fianna* acted as an inspiration in this war, it was on the other side. The anti-Treatyites—country Volunteers in Cork and Kerry and Tipperary, for the most part—knew all about Fionn Mac Cumhail, though not from Yeats. It was just in the culture, never having left it.

The Free State fought the War by British methods—Boer War methods—regimented armed force ruthlessly and relentlessly applied, without heroism. This was supplemented by exemplary murder of prisoners directly by the Government—a thing not done by the British Government. The heroes of the piece were all, from Yeats's vantage point, unknown nondescript people.

A Clerical Coup?

Sir Bob continues:

The new conservative Catholic Free State, despite their declaration, did nothing for the rights of women and sidelined important and vocal Protestants into the Senate. The plurality which the Rebellion had promised had been replaced with what in effect was a Catholic clerical *coup d'etat*. Unbelievably, a later Government even sent a telegram to the Pope desiring to repose at the feet of your Holiness and our devotion to your August person. But nobody would muzzle W.B. Yeats. He stood up against legislation that he saw not only as unjust but that might alienate Protestants and rule out any chance of a united Ireland.

Insofar as anything resembling a Catho-

lic clerical coup occurred it was a part of the process of establishing the Free State in place of the Republic under pressure of a British ultimatum. The spirit of 1916, and the spirit of 1919-21 (which were not quite the same), were against the Free State. This spirit was dormant in the IRA. Without the active support of the British Government and the Catholic Hierarchy, the Free State would probably not have carried the day against the Republic.

The establishment of the Free State was an exercise in *realpolitik*, devoid of Republican spirit. What it had going for it spiritually was the authoritarian element in the Roman Catholic structure. Many of the Bishops issued Decrees of Excommunication against Republicans opposing the establishment of the Free State. Catholics who were amenable to that kind of influence were therefore drawn to the Free State. Catholics who remained active Republicans were not susceptible to clerical influence in politics. *"Plurality"* was on the Anti-Treaty side.

When I was a child a feature of religious life in the Parish of Boherbue was a denunciation of the priest on the altar in the middle of the Mass on a certain Sunday each year, which was the anniversary of the Decree of Excommunication against the Republicans. The priest had to put up with it because the congregation saw nothing wrong with it: the Church had to be kept in its proper place.

Yeats was part of the Free State alliance at that time. Could he really have been blind to what was so obviously happening?

"The Protestants"

As to the Protestants: they were not a unity in Ireland. Yeats's *"people"* were a colonial ruling stratum. They were not a ruling stratum evolved out of social developments in the general population. There was, in a sense, no general population. There were three populations, very different from each other in kind. By far the greatest was the Irish, or Catholic, population. That population had considerable assimilative power on foreigners sent to rule it, until England became fanatically Protestant. In 1691, following the ferocious Williamite conquest of the Irish a Protestant colonial caste was set up by England as a regime of State in Ireland. That caste had not emerged from the Irish and did not seek to establish any human social connection with them. It established Penal Laws against the Irish. And if any Protestant married an Irishwoman his property could be taken from him by his nearest Protestant relative.

But the Irish population outlasted the Protestant regime of State. They were oppressed as Catholics for the better part of two centuries. They survived as Catholics, and through that survival they became more systematically Catholic than they had been before the regime of Protestant State oppression was imposed.

By 1921 this Protestant body was a spent force. In 1912 it had opposed Home Rule but in 1921 it welcomed the 'Treaty', which gave the natives much more power than Home Rule would have done, because in 1920 they feared that a complete break with Britain was on the cards. And, as far as I can recall from reading the *Church of Ireland Gazette* many years ago, they rather welcomed some of the restrictiveness of the Free State.

But the Anglican Protestantism of the South had little bearing on the political unity of the country. It had failed utterly in the job it was given in 1691 and had to submit—and was treated handsomely for submitting.

It was the Ulster Protestants who prevented political unification. And they were a people in the full sense of the term, which Yeats's *"people"* were not. The Ulster colony developed as a rounded society, with a commercial class, a tenant farmer class, an industrial capitalist class, a working class strongly organised in Trade Unions, and from the late 18th century, even an aristocracy of its own.

It was also seriously religious as an actual way of life, which Anglicanism as a Church run by Parliament could not be, and much more diligent than Catholics, in my experience, were.

They had no real sense of affinity with the aristocratic Protestantism of the South. And the Anglicans seem to have been bewildered by the great Ulster Revival of 1859, which was a watershed event. And what they were when they disputed with Cromwell's Puritan Secretary of State, John Milton, in 1649, they still seemed to be when I came across them about fifty-five years ago. But Yeats seems not to have noticed this indisputable people at all, nor Sir Bob either.

"How The Protestants Invented Catholic Ireland"

Sir Bob, after describing how Yeats spoke out against the Free State, which he had helped to found, comments—

This film could actually be *called How The Prods Invented Catholic Ireland*. You know, so many of the great heroes of this story, going way back, its great revolutionaries, Emmet, Wolfe Tone, never mind literary figures, Douglas Hyde, so critical to the realisation of national self, coming to a sort of apotheosis in Yeats's genius, were of course Protestants. And Yeats wasn't going to let that pass. He was deeply proud of his caste, and his background, and his people, and their rallying call of nationalism. At every turn Yeats constantly had to fight against the narrow-minded worldview of this new Young Ireland.

Well, the Irish state that began to be formed after the 1918 General Election was not a restoration of the British Protestant Kingdom that the British Government caused to be abolished as a menace to public order in 1800. Both its horizons and its narrownesses were different.

The abolition of the Ascendancy Parliament, and its particular restrictions, made a new development possible. Before that new development took root, there was briefly a radical movement for the restoration of the Crown Parliament in Ireland. It seemed to me that Emmet thought that the judge who hanged him was part of that movement.

The Anglican colony behaved as an exclusive caste with a monopoly of power from beginning to end. The caste was officially the Irish nation. It was absurd, and potentially disastrous, for the vast bulk of the population of the nation-state to be excluded from the life of the state as a foreign element. Grattan attempted to phase the Irish gradually into that Irish state, under the hegemony of the ideology of the Glorious Revolution of 1688. When that failed, Tone sought to do it by radical methods. And, for a number of years after the Parliament was abolished, there was a Restoration movement, in which Emmet came to grief.

Then, about five years after that, Walter Cox, who had been a United Irishman, wrote off the 1688 Revolution and fostered the growth of a nationalist movement in the Catholic population.

In the 1840s there was an attempt to broaden the Young Ireland movement by appealing to the Protestant gentry to support it. The appeal fell flat.

In 1910 Canon Sheehan, the Catholic novelist and intellectual, launched a Manifesto against Redmond's Home Rule Party, which had woven a Catholic secret society, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, into the structure of the party. He had before that defeated the attempt of the Parliamentary Party to preserve the grievance of landlordism by stifling the subsidised Land Purchase arrangement arrived at between William O'Brien's land agitation and the Unionist Government. His attitude was that every grievance that could be remedied within the Union should be remedied, leaving the national movement to be an expression of a positive sense of nationality. The 1910 Elections were fought on his Manifesto, by the *All For Ireland League* against the Catholic Ascendancy tendency of Redmondim, and Redmondism was broken in County Cork and seriously eroded in the surrounding Counties.

Sheehan's novels were not anti-English, they were just non-English, and they expressed a realistic understanding of England as seen from an entirely independent viewpoint.

Yeats asked if his mythical play had sent out *"the men the English shot"* in 1916. I find it unimaginable that they might have done. And I take it a virtual certainty that the men who fought the War of Independence had been influenced by Sheehan's novel, *The Graves At Kilmorna*, published posthumously in 1913. Sheehan was widely read by the populace in Munster in that era, and for a long time after. He never found favour in English literature, but he did on the Continent, and there was a European dimension to his writing that was soon lost and has never been recovered.

In 1910 he appealed to the gentry, now that their monopoly of land ownership no longer lay between them and the people, to join the national movement as Protestant country gentlemen and ward off the simplification of public life that would otherwise occur. The gentry responded to his appeal no more than they had responded to Davis's appeal.

The Catholic simplification of public life was in the main due to the gentry holding themselves apart right through to the end. It was aggravated by the reliance of the construction of the Free State on the Catholic Hierarchy in place of Republican sentiment, and by the parody of Protestant participation performed by Yeats.

So the idea that the Prods invented Catholic Ireland is not absurd. If the aristocracy put in command by England in 1691 had not governed by means of anti-Catholic Penal Laws until their Parliament was abolished in 1800, or if they had not during the following century opposed British reform in the Catholic interest, the Irish state, when it was eventually formed, would have been very different from the Free State—and would possibly not have been formed at all.

O'Casey

Yeats was given the Nobel Prize in the early 1920s. **Olivia O'Leary** commented:

> The winning of the Nobel Prise showed that there was a world recognition of this poet and of the literature that he championed. And so, you know, we didn't have to feel ashamed of or feel in any way that it was second rate or whatever. This had been recognised internationally and we could embrace it without any feeling at all that we were embracing the colonialists' language.

But wasn't Yeats colonialist? Hasn't Sir Bob described him as being colonialist?

Olivia says that he was *"a more important Ambassador for our state than any statesman who was Taoiseach"*. Sir Bob asks: *"But did the new state fail him?"* Olivia: *"Yes. It was petty"*. Doesn't this just mean that it wasn't Anglo-Irish, and that for a certain strain of Irish journalism in recent decades England has become the standard of normalcy in Ireland, which is now seen as a **Successor State**.

> In 1926 O'Casey's *The Plough And The Stars* was played in the Abbey. It was—
>
> …a less than reverent take on the holy Rising… written by a man who was a committed socialist and revolutionary who had every right to his opinion… Already the GPO, 1916 are shibboleths… They are utterly totemic… O'Casey's very hard core about it. He's saying 'What was all that for? That didn't really work. Who are we? What is it we wanted to be?'
>
> "All hell breaks loose… In the same way that *Playboy* had held up a mirror, this newer Ireland had a mirror held up to itself. And they couldn't stand it. But this time he ain't going to debate anything. This time there's a real rage, because he genuinely, like Synge, thinks 'Here's the new one. Here's the new genius'. So he walks out in the stage, and the cartoon would show you that stance. Here, right here, at this point. Staring at them. He shouts at them 'You've disgraced yourselves again. You've disgraced yourselves again [in 'Irish' accent]'. It's not a headmaster chastising the class, it's the disappointed leader. I'm not sure Willey had it in him any more. He was getting old and jaded. Perhaps the grubby and pious Ireland he had found himself in was not the romantic Ireland he'd dreamed of.

How exactly was O'Casey a revolutionary? What revolution did he take part in? He had played some part in 1913. He then wanted the Citizen Army to make a socialist revolution, but I could not find that he had more than an empty notion about it. When the International collapsed, and the organised working classes of the various states went to war against each other, Connolly reckoned that the future of practical socialism lay with Germany and that was the reason that Britain launched a war of destruction on it, and he joined forces with the middle class nationalist forces to make war on Britain.

O'Casey stood aside. He then wrote a play mocking the Rising—and, as far as I recall, mocked Connolly with "Jenevsky's Theses". He then moved on to become England's favourite Irish playwright, a member of the Communist Party, and a friend of future Tory Prime Minister, Macmillan.

An English equivalent of *The Plough*, mocking a foundation event of the state, could not have been performed in an English theatre. The English Theatre, like the English Church, was an instrument of the State. It was curbed by the first Cromwell, abolished by the second Cromwell, and brought back under strict licence by the restored Monarchy. The censoring of scripts by the Lord Chamberlain was still going in 1960, when I lost interest in the matter.

Irish Anglophiles seem to have a blind spot for English censorship, which was very strict indeed.

If we are to apply English standards, then the most significant thing about *The Plough* from a libertarian viewpoint is that it was performed in a public theatre in Ireland.

*

My vantage-point on affairs in Southern Ireland is that of a labourer in what was a small-property owning democracy, in which I lived as a labourer into my early twenties, being out of joint on the point of religion from the age of thirteen but not harassed about it. Thereafter it was Belfast.

I left Slieve Luacra on the eve of the 2nd Vatican Council and for a while was a bus conductor in London, and noticed the striking headlines on the morning papers about what the Council was doing. Later on I visited Dublin from London and was struck by its alien character.

Sir Bob attributes the near collapse of Catholicism in Ireland to Yeats' influence operating with a half-century delay. I'm sure it had much, much more to do with the disruptive influence of Vatican 2—and with the surge of finance-capitalism through the world. Gene Kerrigan wrote in the 1970s that Socialists need not bother with the Church because free-ranging capitalism would dispose of it.

The other thing that has happened is the relative decline of rural Ireland. It was the driving force in Irish national development for a generation before the 1918 Election and for half-a-century after it, but has now been overtaken in numbers and influence by urban Ireland, and that is problematic.

The only unembarrassed social assertion of Irish nationality since the mid-seventies has been that of the Provisional Republicanism in the North. But that was driven by the profoundly undemocratic system of government devised by Westminster for the Six County region of the British state.

With the reforms in the North, and Britain leaving Ireland alone in Europe, the future is left open to the appearance of a determining force. But I cannot see that force as being Yeats's verses, much though they offer consolation to Sir Bib in his desolation. ✻

Martin Tyrrell

James Joyce's Nollaig na mBan

It looks like there is no getting away from George Orwell. Reviewing for the *New Statesman* in January 1941, he reacted badly to some recently published short stories.

> "Nothing ever happens in them", he complained. "There is no vulgar "plot", no dénouement, no surprise at the end... Nearly always the formula is the same: a pointless little sketch about fundamentally uninteresting people…"

All in all it was small stuff, Orwell reckoned, particularly next to the great stories of the recent past—Joyce's *The Dead*, say, in which, as he put it,

> "A well-meaning, prosing idiot, stuffed with pudding and self-esteem, is suddenly punctured and, as it were, purified by the knowledge that a dead man is more alive than himself."

It is not a bad summary, as far as it goes.

The Dead is the closing piece in *Dubliners*, James Joyce's only collection of short stories. It is almost certainly the most widely read of all that author's writings ('read' as in 'read at least once and from start to finish'), helped along no doubt by its having been a school text for English literature, not to mention John Huston's film version in 1987. Public recognition is high, especially of the famous closing paragraph:

> "A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight…Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every paårt of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves…falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead."

That is familiar enough to have inspired a Christmas TV advertisement for Guinness, which has been running for a good few years now, and the story itself might, given time, become a kind of Irish equivalent of *A Christmas Carol*. Like Scrooge, the central character in *The Dead*, Gabriel Conroy (Orwell's "*prosing idiot*") undergoes a profound change in the space of a single evening. His transformation is not so full-on as Scrooge's, but probably more credible. By the end, Gabriel senses that he is absurd and inauthentic and that he needs to be different. Soon he will be dead and have left no worthwhile trace. He resolves to journey westward. Not to America, but to the west of Ireland, and to a place and people he has up to that point resisted.

Written in 1907, when Joyce was 24 and living in Trieste, *The Dead* is about two years older than the other stories in *Dubliners*, which was already under consideration by an English publisher, Grant Richards. But Richards dithered, fretting that Dubliners' sexual content might land him in court—this type of thing:

> "The blood went bounding along his veins; and the thoughts went rioting through his brain, proud, joyful, tender, valorous…Moments of their secret life together burst like stars upon his memory…moments of their life together, that no one knew of or would ever know of, broke upon and illumined his memory…the first touch of her body, musical and strange and perfumed, sent through him a keen pang of lust."

Frustrated by Richards' indecision, Joyce eventually sent the manuscript to an Irish firm, Maunsel and co, who initially seemed more enthusiastic. They actually got to the point of publication before themselves reneging, this time for fear of libel. The proofs of the text were burnt prompting Joyce to dash off his bitter poem *Gas from a Burner* wherein the 'burner', having set out his broad-minded credentials—he has published controversial works before—denounces this upstart Joyce as a step too far.

> "…I draw the line at that bloody fellow
> That was over here dressed in Austrian yellow,
> Spouting Italian by the hour
> To O'Leary Curtis and John Wyse Power
> And writing of Dublin, dirty and dear,
> In a manner no blackamoor printer could bear."

Joyce was fortunate. Grant Richards' interest in the book now revived and he agreed to publish it, in 1914, nearly ten years after Joyce had first approached him. By then, however, Joyce had abandoned the short story and was building his reputation as a novelist.

The events of *The Dead* take place on the evening of 6 January 1906, the feast of the Epiphany and also *Nollaig na mBan*. What happens by way of plot is straightforward enough and pretty much as Orwell said. Gabriel Conroy and his wife Gretta attend the annual party hosted by Gabriel's aunts Kate and Julia Morkan and their niece Mary Jane. This is a family tradition of some standing ("*It was always a great affair, the Misses Morkans' annual dance. Never once had it fallen flat*"). Gabriel is the guest of honour. None of the others present can match him in social status as he is all too well aware ("*The indelicate clacking of the men's heels and the shuffling of their soles reminded him that their grade of culture differed from his*").

Though he publicly eulogises his aunts, he privately considers them "*two ignorant old women*". With his brother Constantine a rising priest, it is Gabriel who is the head of the family, and who will carry on the Conroy name. He seems all too pleased with this role, liking 'nothing better than to find himself at the head of a well-laden table'. There are hints that he is somewhat dictatorial at home, insisting, for instance, that his wife wear galoshes, that his children eat stirabout like it or not, and that his son do a daily regime of physical training.

Gabriel's main task of the evening is to deliver a before dinner speech. But from the start of the story he is not so sure that he has pitched it right for the guests. "*He would fail with them…*" he decides at one point. "*His whole speech was a mistake from first to last, an utter failure*". He has quoted Browning in it, a quotation which he now condescendingly suspects might go over most people's heads. He wonders might it have been better to include something from Shakespeare or Thomas Moore, something the other guests might actually know. His anxiety over the speech gives the story what suspense it has. Will Gabriel's speech fail? This is the immediate concern, but it leads on to the wider

question, will Gabriel himself fail? And is he, in fact, already a failure?

By the end of the story, he has moved from a state of confidence, a near smug self-regard, to one of self-reproach. He sees himself as "*ludicrous*", a "*sentimentalist*", he has "*clownish lusts*", he is "*the pitiable fatuous fellow he had caught a glimpse of in the mirror.*"

Fittingly for a story that takes place on *Nollaig na mBan*, what takes Gabriel from a state of confidence at the beginning to a state of self-doubt, if not outright self-loathing, at the story's close is his interaction with three of the female characters, each of whom reacts to him with something less than the enthusiasm and reverence he has come to expect.

Right at the start, he botches an attempt at pleasantry with Lily, the Morkan sisters' maid. Later he has an even more spectacular failure with the gaelgeoir Molly Ivors. Finally, he fails with his wife. Lustful, he hurries with her from the dwindling party to their hotel room eager for sex, but her mind is on the past, on her first love, Michael Furey, whom she believes died for her.

The three women who (inadvertently) undermine Gabriel's confidence and push him towards his epiphany at the story's end are neatly balanced by three women who boost him up—his two aunts and their niece Mary Jane. In his speech—as saccharine and pat as he feared—he returns their support with fulsome if insincere praise. But it is the undermining and unsettling three that are interesting.

Lily, for example. 'The men that is now is only all palaver and what they can get out of you,' she says to Gabriel after he has, in passing, suggested that she might soon be getting married. And Gabriel, who is after all, himself, a man 'that is now' is instantly unsettled. Is he too 'only all palaver' as well, all smooth talk, all take and no give?

Elsewhere, she pronounces Gabriel's surname with three syllables—'Con-er-roy'' rather than 'Conroy', a touch of dialect that a man on the rise like Gabriel would already have had standardised out of his speech. An American, say, who heard Gabriel and Lily speak might not realise that Gabriel was Irish, might well mistake him for English, but would not be as likely to make the same mistake with Lily. Lily, less empowered, less advantaged—she is a servant and the daughter of a servant—is also more Irish-sounding; Gabriel, in becoming more empowered and privileged, sounds less Irish. As part of his empowerment he has become more anglicised; he has assimilated. But not completely so. While an American might mistake him for something like an upper class Englishman, few English people, especially upper class ones, would.

There is a sense that Lily is discontented and that it's starting to show. "*I'm sure I don't know what has come over her lately*", Gabriel's Aunt Kate says of her. "*She's not the girl she was at all*".

In contrast to Lily, the gaelgeoir Molly Ivors is a kind of female counterpart of Gabriel. In some ways, she is his equal. Like him, she has had a university education; she teaches; she likes to travel; she too has read Browning and would not be puzzled by a quotation from him. But in many important respects she and Gabriel are unequal. As a woman, in 1906, she would not have had the vote, for example, or been able to stand for election, and would have had little immediate prospect of achieving either. Even as a graduate, her career options would have been much more limited than Gabriel's. Likewise, her prospects in any of the careers that were open to her, including the career, teaching, that she has chosen. Although both she and Gabriel are graduates, her route to a degree would have been different. Gabriel was, like Joyce himself, a student at UCD, which did not at that time admit women students. An Irishwoman in 1906 who wanted a degree would would have had to enrol at one of the women's colleges that allowed them to sit degree exams externally.

Molly Ivors has had a generally bad press, unfairly so, I think. Joyce depicts her from Gabriel's perspective so that in the narrative she is almost always referred to formally (and faintly dismissively) as 'Miss Ivors'. But I don't think Joyce's perspective is the same as Gabriel's.

Gabriel seems confused by her ('the girl, or woman, or whatever she was,' he thinks at one point, as though she defies easy categorisation) but also intimidated—he takes greater offence at her than is merited by anything she actually does or says. This might be because she is similar to him in education and is therefore not as readily overawed by him as the other guests, or because she is more radically nationalist than he is. Or because her criticism, especially that he is a West Briton, hits home. Just as Aunt Kate thinks that Lily has changed, so Gabriel thinks Molly has changed, at least in her relationship to him—"*There had never been any ill-feeling between them until that night*."

She is the only woman who does not defer to him, and who engages him seriously and intellectually. Yet he smarts at the encounter and puts a petty, put-down into his speech in a bid to get at her. However, she leaves early and therefore misses the speech, and the put-down. Gabriel then wonders if it is on account of him that she is leaving early. (In John Huston's film of *The Dead*, she is leaving to attend a political meeting, but there is no indication of that in the text).

Molly Ivors is the only person at the party that Gabriel actually fears. She is the only person he suspects might have seen right through him. And yet he imagines her more of an adversary than she actually is. Though she teases him for reviewing for the *Daily Ex*press and calls him, jokingly, a West Briton—a comment that is not without justification but which seems to hurt Gabriel a great deal—it is she who then defuses the situation. Having unsettled Gabriel and left him speechless, she takes his hand "*in a warm grasp*" and speaks to him "*in a soft friendly tone*" for, in fact, she likes the review he has written, which was of Browning.

Only when she suggests that Gabriel and Gretta go with her and her friends to the Aran Islands does the argument revive. Gabriel is not interested, not in the islands or in the language that is still spoken there. It is continental Europe, the east (but, significantly, not Britain) that interests him. When she reminds him that Gretta is from Connacht, Gabriel responds "*shortly*": "*Her people are...*" Eventually, she provokes him to exclaim: "*I am sick of my country, sick of it!*" And when, later, Gretta says that she is up for a trip to the west, Gabriel says "*coldly*" "*You can go if you like…*" Towards the end of the story, for all his hurt objections at having been called a West Briton, he thinks dismissively of Molly Ivors as "*that Irish girl*".

Finally, Gretta. Gabriel's mother, who opposed the marriage, called her "*country cute*"—'cute' as in crafty or self-interestedly manipulative—a withering and disrespectful description. In Gabriel's mother's eyes, a "*country cute*" girl from Connacht was not the right match for her son who had been to university—someone from the rural west, the least anglicised part of Ireland, marrying into the urbane Catholic middle

class just as its historic, Redmondite moment was about to happen.

Like Lily, Gretta uses Irishisms. Her speech is unselfconsciously rich in them: "*the stirabout*"; "*the dumbbells*"; "*I was great with him*". Gretta seems to side with the children against the regime that Gabriel has tried to impose on them. She is fearless in the snow where he is cautious and apprehensive.

Elements of Joyce's own life feature in *The Dead* as they do throughout *Dubliners*. His great aunts kept a finishing school at Usher's Island and were the model for the Misses Morkan. (Plans to use that house for a commercial project recently raised some public criticism, which is perhaps further evidence of the story's reach). Nora Barnacle, Joyce's partner, is the model for Gretta, and Nora's relationship with Michael Bodkin is the basis for the Gretta/Michael Furey relationship. Gabriel is Joyce's alter ego; what he might have been had he not become a bohemian writer, kept solvent by language teaching and wealthy patrons).

Like Gabriel, Joyce was born into the blossoming Catholic nationalist middle class. Joyce's father had been a committed Parnellite, bitter at how the Party had treated its erstwhile leader and Joyce was of a similar mind. *Gas from a Burner* includes the following:

> "This lovely land that always sent
> Her writers and artists to banishment
> And in a spirit of Irish fun
> Betrayed her own leaders
> One by one.
> Twas Irish humour, wet and dry,
> Flung quicklime into Parnell's eye."

Some Italians in Trieste who paid Joyce to teach them English remembered into their old age how often and how passionately he spoke about Parnell.

The Redmondite party which was on the rise while *Dubliners* was being written does not seem to have fired his imagination to the same extent, or indeed at all. At UCD, however, where the playing of *God Save the King* at graduations had begun to provoke unrest, Joyce would have seen the stirrings of a more militant Irish nationalism. He appears to have had a fling with Sinn Fein, the Irish language movement and socialism at around this time. His brother Stanislaus would later describe him as a "*failed Sinn Feiner*", and Joyce himself said he was interested in the party's abstentionist strategy. Two people associated with republicanism—William O'Leary Curtis and John Wyse Power—are referenced in *Gas from a Burner* in a way that suggests they were friends, or at least associates, of Joyce. When Joyce issued a circular to the press describing how Maunsel and Co. had messed him about, *Sinn Fein* was the only periodical that published it in full. The apparent secularism of Sinn Fein might also have interested Joyce though he went off the party some time after 1916.

Joyce also took some Irish lessons from Padraig Pearse although he did not warm to him and soon gave up. He might have been less interested in the language than in Elizabeth Cleary, one of the women who was studying it. Elizabeth Cleary is generally thought to have been the model for Molly Ivors despite an earlier claim for Kathleen Sheehy, Conor Cruise O'Brien's mother. (The Sheehy family was an influence, however. Richard and Eugene Sheehy, sons of the Home Rule MP David Sheehy, were classmates of Joyce at Belvedere College and possibly helped open him to new political and cultural movements).

Northern Protestants feature occasionally in Joyce's writings, generally as negative characters—alien, humourless, and officious like Mr. Alleyne in Counterparts with his quick temper and his "*little egg-shaped head*". There is no sense that Joyce imagines they pose any serious political threat. He would have been aware of Unionism and its opposition to Home Rule but he seems to have discounted its ability to do anything more than protest. Despite militant Northern opposition, backed by the Conservative Party, the Liberal Unionists and the House of Lords, the prospects for Home Rule were probably better than they had ever been by the time Joyce was writing Dubliners. It was a policy backed by the Liberal Party, then in government with a massive majority and it seemed reasonable to expect that Home Rule legislation would soon be carried. As soon as that happened, there would be a new, semi-independent Ireland dominated by the rising Catholic middle class. And people like the Sheehys and the Joyces would be its elite.

Most of the people in *The Dead* are from this new Catholic middle class. The Conroys and the Morkans certainly. But the Misses Morkan themselves are not so well-off. Their niece Mary Jane is their principal breadwinner, earning money as a professional musician and music teacher. Her pupils are the children of the more substantial Catholic burghers and she makes sure that those of them who attend her aunts' party receive the best slices of goose. For all their affectations of wealth, this is a somewhat down at heel ruling class in waiting; people who are not quite where they want to be and might yet be relegated.

Mr Browne appears to be the only Protestant at the gathering and, significantly, he is a faintly disreputable person ('that Browne' says Gabriel, who seems to think that Browne is a bad influence on the other disreputable, Freddy Malins). Browne's lack of respectability suggests that even this refined Catholic family cannot attract Protestant guests, that they and their counterparts live in opposite worlds that do not often overlap.

Though the people at the Misses Morkans' party are a recent and fragile middle class, they generally romanticise the past and hold that things were better in previous decades than today, that the modern is suspect and the past—that which is dead and gone—is good. ("*I fear that this new generation, educated or hypereducated as it is, will lack those qualities of humanity, of hospitality, of kindly humour, which belonged to an older day*", runs Gabriel's stuffy speech, and his dig at Molly Ivors). In reality, the past, however it is now dressed up, cannot have been good for previous generations of Conroys and Morkans any more than it can have been good for previous generations of Joyces.

And yet the romanticised past is a kind of default setting for most of the guests. When the Morkans and their guests talk of singers, the consensus is that the singers of their youth or of their parents' time, have no contemporary rivals. The great operas are no longer performed because there are no longer the voices to perform them, the great appetite for opera that was once in Dublin has gone. As if to illustrate, Aunt Julia sings Arrayed for the Bridal from I Puritani. Although in John Huston's film of *The Dead* and in Frank McGuinness' 2012 stage play Aunt Julia's singing is embarrassingly bad, this is not the case in the story. On the contrary, "*Her voice [was] strong and clear in tone… she did not miss even the smallest of grace notes. To follow the voice…was to feel and share the excitement of swift and secure flight*". The poignancy is not how she sings but what she sings. Though she sings of a forthcoming marriage and though the unctuous Browne

condescendingly presents her as his "*latest discovery*", Gabriel can only flash forward to her death, and then to all of their deaths, which leads him to his own moment of self-awareness.

> "One by one they were all becoming shades. Better pass boldly into that other world in the full glory of some passion…than fade and wither dismally with age…His soul had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead."

"*Hosts of the dead*" seems faintly military and military references abound in this story. Mary Jane "*leads her recruits*" and Aunt Julia carries "*a column of table napkins*". A blush "*invades*" Gabriel's forehead during his exchange with Molly and when Aunt Julia sings, she "*attacks*" the runs of the aria. There is an "irregular musketry of applause"; the decanters stand "*as sentries*"; and there are "*three squads of bottles of stout and ale and minerals, drawn up according to the colours of their uniforms…*" At the dinner table, itself, there is "*the noise of orders and counter orders*". When they sing "*For they are Jolly Gay Fellows…*", Freddy Malins is described "*as an officer with his fork held high*". And so on.

What might it all mean? I think it is an unsubtle reminder that in this uncertain bourgeois gathering the actual past is darker than any of the nostalgists at the dinner table would concede—a past of conquest, colonisation, and the attempted eradication of the colonised. Here at the Morkan sisters' table are those who came through it.

There is a hint of this past in the handed down story Gabriel tells of his grandfather Patrick Morkan. In Gabriel's telling it becomes a scornful and dismissive account of, as he puts it, "*the late lamented Patrick Morkan… commonly known in his later years as the old gentleman…a glue boiler*". Aunt Kate, the said glue boiler's daughter, tries to correct him saying that her father had had a starch mill. And when Gabriel sarcastically says that Morkan drove out from his "*ancestral mansion*" in shabby Back Lane, Kate again intervenes dutifully to say that he did not live in Back Lane, that was simply where he had his mill.

But Gabriel is clearly enjoying himself performing this well-rehearsed anecdote and will not allow facts to get in the way of it. Patrick, he says, owned a horse, Johnny, that he used mainly to turn the mill in his factory or to pull his trap. One day, however, Morkan decided to saddle Johnny and ride out to join the 'quality' at Phoenix Park. But Johnny proved unreliable, stopping at the equestrian statue of William of Orange that used to stand in College Green. He stopped at the statue and circled the plinth, either smitten by King William's horse or, more likely, because he thought himself back at the mill.

Gabriel is perhaps thirty at the time of the story. That would place Patrick's birth around the time of Catholic Emancipation (Joyce's own grandfather was born in 1827). The pre-emancipation time would have been a living memory for Patrick; he would have grown up in its shadow, part of a generation of Irish Catholics, some of whom would have been coming into new and unaccustomed freedoms, and some of whom would have been getting used to what freedoms they had had being taken from them—it was a condition of Catholic Emancipation that the granting of it was accompanied by a narrowing of the franchise. As a result, many of those Catholics who had supported emancipation were, as a condition of its being granted, denied any future political participation.

By conceding Catholic political participation to the relatively well-off, and removing it from the relatively poor, the prospects of emancipation resulting in fundamental change were reduced. And by limiting participation to the relatively well-off, there was always the possibility that Catholic solidarity might be disrupted, that there might be a break between the better off Catholics and the rest, with the better offs gradually assimilating, becoming in effect West Britons. Gabriel himself bridles at the accusation that he is a West Briton, and yet in this scene that is surely what he seems. He cannot see the poignancy of the Patrick Morkan anecdote, or the insensitivity of his telling it in the style that he tells it, and in the presence of Morkan's own daughters. He sees only the comedy, the pathos of his own recent ancestor.

The 'quality' would have laughed at Patrick Morkan had he made it to Phoenix Park just as the urbane Gabriel laughs at him now. He shows no respect for his grandfather's memory, no sympathy, no empathy. He "*was a very pompous old gentleman*" he says, without irony.

Yet he himself later senses his own pomposity. The ridiculousness of Patrick Morkan is clear—a relatively poor man trying to present himself among the ruling class; an excluded man trying to fit in. Is Gabriel himself any more included? Each of them—Patrick and Gabriel—is the colonised man in his own way trying to match the colonist and failing ineptly. We know with hindsight, that the Redmondite elite of 1906 did not get Home Rule. Joyce could not, of course, have foreseen this. But he would have known that Home Rule was ultimately in the gift of the government at Westminster and therefore subject to the vagaries of British party politics. Moreover, since Joyce was aware of Sinn Fein, he would have been aware of its argument that Home Rule was a minor thing compared with proper independence. He was aware, too, of cultural nationalism, of reimagining the nation and was, himself, however briefly, attracted to it.

In his speech, Gabriel takes a cheap shot at Molly Ivors and, by extension, the various malcontents of his own generation. He suggests that they are antithetical to traditional Irish hospitality. But the hospitable Irish are, arguably, also the docile Irish, the stage Irish. The rising generation has attitude, and it is redefining itself. In his epiphany that concludes the story, Gabriel seems to come round somewhat to Molly's way of thinking: "*The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward*".

Joyce blew hot and cold on Irish nationalism and Irish revivalism, and by the time of his great fame out of sorts with them and their achievement. But here in *The Dead*, I think, this coolness is less obvious. Here, it seems, the authentic, less colonised Ireland of the west offers Gabriel his redemption. In journeying west, he might cease to be ridiculous. ✻

VOX

Two Cork City Comedians: Eoghan Harris and Niall Toibin!

Peter Sutherland

Gay Byrne

Births

Metamorphosis!

Glitzed?

Fewer Irish?

PAT

Two Cork City Comedians: Eoghan Harris and Niall Toibin!—

> "Niall told Brian [MacLochlainn, RTE producer] of a political epiphany he had one night: [in New York] 'This Jewish stand-up, facing a Jewish audience, most of whom had lost relatives in the Holocaust less than 25 years before, was making these gallows jokes about gas chambers—and they laughed! Walking back to my hotel I asked myself: 'If the Jews can get over the Holocaust, surely we can get over the Famine and all that followed, and forgive if not forget?'
>
> "Niall Toibin, pluralist and patriot, loved to share his island" (*Holly Bough, Cork*, Christmas 2020, p.97).

Perhaps the Cork 'Solomon', Harris might tell his Israeli friends to do a little sharing before its too late?

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Share of total net wealth (%) in Ireland:

Under 35 years	4.2%
35 to 44 years	13.4%
45 to 54 years	23.8%
55 to 64 years	30.6%
65 years and over	28.0%

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Peter Sutherland

"Leading international business and political figure and one-time adviser to Pope Francis, Peter Sutherland, has left more than €2m in his will (*Sunday Independent*, 20.9.2020).

"The Dublin barrister, who rose to become Ireland's EU Commissioner and was later chairman of Britain's then biggest company, oil giant BP, was said at one time to be worth €153m.

"Most of his wealth came from a windfall shareholding in the global finance company Goldman Sachs when it was privatised in 1999. Mr Sutherland, who was chairman of Goldman Sachs International, was said to have made $120m from his shareholding after just four years with the company. (*ibid*.)

Mr. Sutherland, who had homes in Dublin, London and Spain, died in St. James's Hospital, Dublin, at the age of 71, having never recovered from a fall caused by a heart attack while walking to Mass in central London in September, 2016.

The premier Irish "*globalist*" : his life's work was to destroy all traditional ways of life.

Sutherland was launched on his political trajectory from his base in Allied Irish Banks by Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald (some time after his AIB bank debts were written off).

Appointed a European Commissioner, though not elected to the Dail, Sutherland went on to mould the *World Trade Organisation* into a Globalist force, before going on to make his fortune in the US Goldman Sachs finance house.

Sutherland acted with the best of intentions and manifested his good will by promoting charities such as the St. Vincent de Paul! After all, one must be charitable towards the victims of Globalising Capitalism.

The modern Tower of Babel, in which the world has "*only one way of speech*", apparently is going from strength to strength, but there are signs that a different way of life may be about to assert itself.

According to his will, Peter Denis Sutherland, a company director of Eglinton Road, Donnybrook, Dublin who died on 7th January 2018, left an estate valued at €2,115,371.

He left everything to his wife Maria Pilar Cabria de Sutherland.

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Gay Byrne

The Grand Old Man of RTE, left €1.1m in his will. *"For a man who broadcast countless hours of radio and television, his will, which was made just 12 days before his death last year, was short and to the point"* (Sunday Independent, 26.7.2020).

In just three clauses, he made a bequest to his grandchildren, appointed his wife Kathleen as one of his three executors and left the "entire residue" of his estate to her.

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Births

The number of births in Ireland continues to fall as the average age of mothers rises, while teenage pregnancies have dramatically decreased (Irish Independent, 31.10.2020).

The Vital Statistics Annual Report 2018 was released by the Central Statistics Office and provides information on births and deaths in 2018.

Births had fallen by 18.8% in 10 years and 1.3% since the previous year, 2017.

The average age of mothers has continued to rise to 32.9 years.

The majority (77%) of mothers identified as Irish, while 12% came from the European Union, 2% from the UK, and 9% identified as other nationalities.

Mothers under the age of 30 accounted for 27.1% of births in 2018 compared with 10 years before when they accounted for 39.3% of births.

Mothers giving birth over the age of 40 in 2018 had risen by 42% since 2008.

The number of births from teenage mothers dramatically decreased, with a 60.2% drop from 2008 to 2018. There were 956 births to mothers under 20 years of age in 2018, down from 2,402 in 2008.

More boys were born in 2018. Out of 61,022 live births in Ireland in the year, 31,306 were male and 29,716 were female.

Some 37.8% of all births were outside a marriage/civil partnership.

There were 174 deaths of infants aged one year or less in 2018, an infant mortality rate of 2.9 per 1,000 births. This is down 0.1% from 2017.

In total there were 31,140 deaths in Ireland in 2018, an increase of 722 or 2.4% on the 2017 figure.

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Metamorphosis!

"Winston Churchill said his purpose was to ensure the continuation of the British Empire. He came to Office as the British and French Armies, which had declared war on Germany [1939-1945] were being defeated by the German response.

He brought the remnant of his Army home from the battlefield, but refused to call off the war on terms which would have left the British Empire intact. He then set about spreading the war, and did it with such success that Britain was reduced to a minor party in it, and the Empire was brought to collapse.

Then, after the War, he reconceived British affairs under the category of "*the English-speaking peoples*".

But, forty years before that, the very influential Protestant editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, W.T. Stead, had published *The Americanisation Of The World*. He saw the United States as the product of the fundamentalist Protestantism that had to escape from England in order to flourish. And, in its flourishing, it had superseded England. The essential Biblicalist England had become America" (*Irish Political Review*, November, 2020, p.2.)

Glitzed?

"The wedding industry in Ireland continues to suffer, due to the ongoing pandemic. [Our reporter] spoke to Cork people in the industry and is impressed by their resilience and hope" (Sub-head in *Cork Echo*, 28.10.2020.)

Fewer Irish?

The natural increase in the country's population fell to its lowest quarterly level in five years.

Central Statistics Office (CSO) data state that the natural increase in population has fallen to its lowest quarterly level for five years, new vital statistics for the first quarter of 2020 show. (CSO, August, 2020)

The data shows a fall in the number of registered births and a slight increase in registered deaths between January and March this year, compared to the same period last year.

The data, however, does not include any deaths from Covid-19.

In the first three months of this year, 8,674 deaths and 14,371 births were registered, yielding a natural increase in population of 5,697 people — the lowest natural increase in any quarter over the past five years.

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Wilson John Haire

Remembering Robert Fisk, *Journalist*

In 1983, shortly after it was published I bought Robert Fisk's book: *In Time of War* (Ireland, Ulster and the Price of Neutrality 1939-45), a heavy tome running to 565 pages that included index, references.and acknowledgments. I took it to be a defence of Irish Neutrality and a criticism of the British reaction to it. I remembered the photos, especially one of the Irish Army wearing Nazi-type German helmets that had been made in Belgium. The British media described this as a suspicion that Eire was more on the German side in neutrality than on the British side, as if Ireland had no will of its own and had to opt for one side or the other.

The North had a sort of neutrality itself through not having conscription. Enforced conscription on the Catholic population might have caused serious civil disorder. Looking back I realised our war-games at school as children, in re-enacting our WW2 environment, had us poised against each other as Germans against English.

There were no Ulster regiments in our imagination, seemingly rendering us neutral. But Robert Fisk, in his book, picks out Protestant workers in the war industry of the North as being as scared as hell as German reconnaissance planes flew overhead, that had them running for the shelters, though air-raid warnings were coming over the tannoy, and this was what they were supposed to do when enemy aircraft were overhead, reconnaissance or not.

Though not a Protestant, my sympathies were with them as a former worker in heavy industry. Also, my father, a Protestant, had worked as a fitter building the Stirling bomber. He had been retrained from being a joiner to being a metal worker through being consigned to what was known as the Belfast Tec for a couple of months.

I wondered what Robert Fisk was implying: Should Protestant workers, as the British, not be on the front line, instead of idling on the benches of the war industry?

A decade earlier, in the 1970s, I was to come across Robert Fisk at the Europa Hotel. I wasn't an employee of the BBC but I was working for them as my TV film script was to be filmed on the streets of Belfast, with all that entailed in meetings with the Para-Military leaders, supposedly unknown to the BBC Belfast and BBC London, in order to got permission to film in their areas.

Working at the Europa I met up with a number of journalists who were also staying there. Robert Fisk was rarely in their company. He kept to his room a lot and the sound of his typewriter could be heard continually passing by it. Neither did he come down to the bar, nor was he seen in the bars across the street. He could have been working on his: In Time of War, and as I've mentioned, it was an enormous work.

He was also a Middle East correspondent where reporting didn't have the same war news limitations: things were not as difficult as in Northern Ireland.

The British Army had its censors. I had to hand over a copy of my script to a Major in the Intelligence service, or else he would stop any filming in the streets. In full uniform, but unarmed, he hung around the Europa Hotels for days, more drinking and chatting than observing.

Most journalist have fixers. I knew one in London. He had been a journalist himself but had discredited himself through heavy drinking. Knowing some German, he specialised in showing German journalist the ropes in London. He had been a journalist in the Middle East and had had fixers himself. These knew the lay of the land and would do reconnaissance trips into war zones before taking foreign journalists there.

So much the same in Belfast, but this time they were three young women, serious young women, who hung around the Europa Hotel. I don't remember any of the journalists going to scenes of mayhem by themselves. Mostly they were either Britons or Americans and they

didn't know the areas. They might follow army or police convoys to the scene, but, as far as I could see, they hung around the hotel exchanging stories. A favourite thing was to go to the roof, 51 metres up, and look over the city for bomb blasts. An extra big one had them excited and some would rush down to the fixers and ask to be driven there.

On the way they could be lectured, by the girl-fixer, about the reason for the war. This annoyed the Brits but if they wanted to be driven to a serious incident in a Catholic area they had to put up with it. With her they were safe. Whether they were PIRA girls I don't know. But if they weren't around in the lobby of the hotel for any length of time it was better not to be there, in case this was going to be one of the 36 bombings the hotel was to suffer in its war-time existence. That meant glass cascading down the front of the hotel like a waterfall.

Mostly this was caused by bombs outside the hotel. A few bombs had been carried into the hotel but had been defused by the British Army bomb squad. These were bombs that exploded on being touched. There was always someone there who could explain how it was made—a young Catholic working in the kitchen staff, standing outside with the rest of the occupants, shivering with the cold, impatient at the length of time it took to defuse the bomb.

One American journalist decided he wanted to know more about the composition of NI and the reason for the War. He had been interviewing me on my past for US radio and now his appetite was whetted. He would then drive off with one of the girl fixers on a number of occasions. Later he disappeared from the hotel.

His radio station plus a newspaper had sacked him. With his expenses not being paid, and with his wife also staying at the hotel, they were forced to move to a B&B nearby. Then his wife left him and flew to London. Now he is living with the fixer in her area. This all happened within a week. The journalists at the hotel whispered that he was living with an IRA girl and become a pariah. But when he visited the hotel they all eagerly surrounded in case they would pick up a story.

I think Robert Fisk missed all of this as he furiously typed out his *In Time of War*.

*

Stephen Richards

Part Three

Empire And Home Thoughts

I remember in the late 1960s and indeed beyond I used to come across advertisements in the *Reader's Digest* which were no doubt placed by the Australian High Commission. These depicted a typical nuclear family, with a boy and a girl aged between perhaps eight and ten. You saw them standing side by side looking absolutely miserable, with waterproofs on and the rain pouring down. Below that was an upside down view of the same family, but this time they're in T-shirts, all smiles and freckles, under an Australian sun. It was the era when the Australian Government was promoting white immigration. The motives for this were mixed. The Australian population was still very low at that time; there was a sense that additional manpower was going to be needed to provide the necessary developmental engine; and white settlement was favoured, not only for reasons of kith and kin but also because of a residual fear that the country was situated too close for comfort to the teeming millions of China.

None of this is very shocking. What is extremely shocking is the way in which young single mothers as recently as that time were persuaded to give up their children on a promise of opportunities in Australia such as would make it almost selfish of them to keep their children at home. Children's homes and orphanages were complicit in this. The stories that filtered back years later from many of the grown-up children often featured appalling physical and/or sexual abuse, child labour, isolation from their peers and separation from siblings. Contemporaneously, and on similarly spurious grounds, Aboriginal children were often kidnapped and given to childless white couples. These well-documented scandals cry out to heaven. There has certainly been a fair bit of contrition on the Australian side, but perhaps not so much on the British. I don't know to what extent, if any, the Irish State has anything to apologise for here.

Anyway, in my youth, Australia and New Zealand were still seen as desirable destinations for family betterment. More recently, following the implosion of the Celtic Tiger, there was a desperate scramble among well-qualified young people from all trades and professions to get out and seek their fortune in Australia, repeating the late nineteenth-century pattern. Many have come back, but many have stayed, which reminds me of a Kieran Goss song from that period: *Reasons To Stay*. I was struck by a comment on Radio Eireann some years ago by someone who had gone to Sydney at the height of this exodus and had been there a week before he came across an Australian.

The Green Fields Of Canada

Traditionally among Ulster Protestants, indeed Presbyterians, the migratory urge focussed on Canada, more specifically the Toronto area. It could nearly be said that the Toronto Establishment had a distinctly Ulster cast to it, represented by the likes of such iconic institutions as *McClure's Magazine* and *Eaton's Stores*. The well-known folk group *The Irish Rovers* were emigrants from Ballymena, and our local Rugby Club meets at Eaton Park, just across the river from where I'm sitting. The Twelfth of July in Toronto was a big day, until probably the early 1970s. The flow of immigrants from these parts has dried up, if not totally from lack of trying. As I discovered from trying to assist clients with a Canadian application, it's necessary for applicants from these parts to demonstrate that they would not be depriving resident Canadian citizens of a job if they were successful, which is a seemingly impossible requirement to meet. The Ulster cultural influence in Toronto has been in sharp decline in recent decades, and any residual enthusiasm on the Twelfth would be dwarfed by the Chinese New Year celebrations. And, of course, at the Ulster Protestant end there's not the same percentage of youth and energy as there once was. To quote one of my favourite cultural commentators, Mark Steyn, the future belongs to those who show up for it.

Home And Away

For Buchan, and indeed for some more modern writers such as Nevil Shute (see *A Town Like Alice*) the idea

of England—sorry, Britain—being in an indissoluble union with her Imperial possessions is foundational. This may involve all sorts of Conferences and Governmental Mechanisms but at bottom it's a cultural thing. The British at home and abroad are the *Volk*, not necessarily in terms of race, though that comes into it, but rather by virtue of a shared set of assumptions about hard work, fair play, honesty, integrity, courage, and so on, qualities which are almost peculiar to them, but and with which they can permeate the lands where they settle. I think Buchan sees the British people as really the salt of earth.

A recurring motif in Buchan is that of the most ardent spirits from the homelands taking leave of their humdrum lives and setting out for the unexplored wilderness. This can become a spiritual quest for healing, but of course the accompanying physical hardships force his characters to man up. In *Sick Heart River*, his last and possibly finest novel, the protagonist is, unusually, a French-Canadian. Buchan could quickly imbibe atmospheres, as he had done in his early days in South Africa, and in the years leading up to his death he was, as Lord Tweedsmuir, Governor-General of Canada. Perhaps the novel where the pioneer theme is seen at its most concentrated is *Salute To Adventurers*, a story of colonial Virginia. Incidentally, the word *"adventurers"* has an unfortunate lineage in Scotland, associated with the Fife Adventurers of 1596, who, with the approval of James VI set out on a bloody and thankfully unsuccessful, mission to seize the island of Lewis for the Scottish Crown and to subdue, or, better, liquidate, its inhabitants.

The Call Of The Wild

Even back in his Oxford days, this idea dominated his imagination. An effort on the subject won him the Newdigate Poetry Prize for 1898. The winning poem has to be at least 300 lines long, and it's quite worrisome to think that Buchan's was the best, though it's an interesting one, with Keats, Tennyson, Milton and the King James Bible jostling for mastery. It's entitled *The Pilgrim Fathers* and some of it goes like this:

"What came ye out to seek? A wilderness
Untilled, untouched, a home of loneliness
Set in some forest haunt whose trackless deeps
Darken the shining dawn? The wild deer sleeps
On fields which ye must sow, and by the spring,
Which now is stirred but by the merefowl's wing,
The austere chant of thanksgiving must rise
And rugged hearths smoke to the morning skies."

Towards the end the intensity mounts:

"And as in desert sands the holy race,
Fleeing from Egypt to their destined place,
Nursing their hope through pity and distress,
Set up a shrine amid the wilderness;
So we, lone outlaws in these evening lands,
Yet to the past hold forth unfaltering hands,
And bear old faiths in vanguard of our wars,
And set our eyes upon the ancient stars."

It was hardly "*a shrine*": the Old Testament tabernacle was the opposite of a shrine, but, all niggling aside, Buchan's vision is unmistakable. He may have been mixing with cynical men of the world like Raymond Asquith, but his soul had not been polluted.

Death Of Old England

Forward now to *A Lodge In The Wilderness*, 1906, only eight years later.

Mr. Lowenstein, the financier, has the floor and starts off with a lengthy quotation from Ruskin, *The Crown Of Wild Olive*, with this opening line:

> "Are [England's] dominions in the world so narrow that she can find no place to spin cotton in but Yorkshire?"

Ruskin envisages a great collaborative industrial and cultural project. Lowenstein agrees, his premise being that England has sacrificed everything else to the cause of industrial production, and has been industrialised to the point of exhaustion.

This seems to us to be a very fatalistic understanding of a sophisticated economy at the height of its power, and Lowenstein's dismissal of the agricultural sector is particularly striking. But we have to remember that the great agricultural depression of the 1870s had broken the back of the rural economy. This in turn had been ultimately a consequence of the repeal of the Corn Laws. The working man could be fed more cheaply on the world market. Agricultural production at home couldn't compete. The first seeds of globalism were producing their first bitter harvest, with the results we can see all around us today. Hence Lowenstein:

> "We are urban and industrial or nothing. The ordinary large works are situated in some densely inhabited and highly rated neighbourhood. Their working expenses are enormous, and their margin of profit variable, since it depends upon so many undetermined conditions. Let there be a shortage in the foreign crop which furnishes their raw material, or a new tariff clapped on their manufactured article by some large consumer, or a new Factory Act, or a fresh rate, and the whole system gets out of gear. The work for the labourer is therefore generally speculative… He finds the housing problem insoluble, and he labours generally under conditions which break his health; and he is at the mercy of the organisation of his own trade, and may find himself called to sacrifice his own present comfort for the assumed ultimate advantage of his class…
>
> "Even the skilled workman finds himself frequently out of work, while the vast class of the unskilled… feel the insecurity more deeply… Industrialism has eaten us up, and, like all monopolies, has become a morbid growth, taking our life's blood and giving us little back… It is like a quantity of hot charcoal which, if spread through all the rooms of the house, would have pleasantly warmed them, but if collected in one chamber will asphyxiate the inmates. And the result is the starving poor in our streets and in every great city some quarter which is a sink of misery and crime".

Isn't this a somewhat of a Marxian analysis? I think it supports the view that the British ruling class at that time was well aware of Marx and was engaging with, and indeed assimilating, some of his diagnoses, if rejecting utterly his overall trajectory.

Home Is Where The Hurt Is

In the next section Buchan/Lowenstein is even more modernistic:

> "There are of course a hundred proposals. Some maintain that the State should turn itself into a kind of Universal Employer, and use the derelict classes on public works devised for no other purpose than their relief. I do not think such a course would do much good. The State, by its large outlay on unproductive and unnecessary works,

would be lessening the wealth of the country, and thereby lowering industrial well-being and adding indirectly to that evil of unemployment which it purported to cure. Some again are prepared to nationalise the means of production, and make all industry a State concern. No doubt that course would effect many startling changes, but it would overturn the foundations of our society… and I do not think the English people will be inclined to burn their house down in order to cure the damp in the cellar."

Next Lowenstein points out the craziness of breaking up the landed estates to create a nation of peasant proprietors, which was the policy being implemented in Ireland even as he spoke. The Tory *Land Purchase Scheme* in Ireland was perhaps one of the few successes of the Distributist philosophy of Chesterton and Belloc, itself derived from a Papal Encyclical of Leo XIII. But in England at any rate there wasn't enough decent land to go round; and not everybody has the ability to make a go of farming. And I suppose in England many of the tenant farmers, the sturdy yeomen of story and song, were well enough off as they were.

As they say, we can see where all this is going. What can they know of England, who only England know? And how can England's existential socio-economic problems be addressed in the context of England alone? Answer: it can't. *"You may arrange your beans in different ways, but you will never make more than five; and if you want a square meal you must get more beans."*

He goes on:

"What would we think of a landowner whose fields were grossly overstocked and his animals starved, although he had a rich farm at the other side of the country which was wholly ungrazed?… Back to the land may be a foolish cry in a country where the soil refuses to support its owners, but the same thing is not true of the whole globe. There are countries which need above all things men, that commodity of which we have enough and to spare. They will take our raw human material and shape it for us. And they will take our industries and plant them in places where the men employed can live a free life."

The flaws in this thesis are too obvious to need pointing out: not all advanced European societies had the benefit of such rich farms going to waste; and how had England managed to obtain these farms? Not by fair purchase on the open market anyway.

The Reversal

As the century unfolded, it became clear that Britain no longer had enough men and to spare. Two World Wars, the Contraceptive Pill and the 1967 *Abortion Act* saw to that. Lowenstein would be puzzled by the tendency of the United Kingdom after 1945 to become a net importer of people, and by the huge increase in its population that has come about thereby. Ironically he has been proved accurate on some of this. It was predicted that the Yorkshire textile industry would die out for lack of labour, so there was an open door created for large numbers of immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, mostly from Pakistan, to Bradford, Dewsbury, Halifax and Keighley. But the mills closed anyway because they were unable to compete in cost with imports from . . . the Indian subcontinent, an emerging economy. The Second World War had put an end to any idea of these industries being established under British patronage.

Capitalism In Its Place

It's Carey however who puts his finger on the essential dilemma of the Imperial project, which is what to do about the capitalists. Without the capitalists and their buccaneering ways (of which Rhodes was a fine example), the Empire would stagnate, and there would be no flourishing enterprises for the hungry ambitious emigrants to latch onto. It's a dirty job but somebody has to do it; and so to that extent the capitalists must be given their head:

"I do not think that men will ever spend themselves with the same fervour on behalf of a remote entity called the State as they will on their own private adventures."

At the same time, the Imperial economies are all so related in such a complex way, and within each economy the reach of the State is now so profound (this in an era when income tax had hardly yet come in!), that the capitalist is going to have to be constrained by the discipline of the Greater Good. He can't be allowed to run amok. I suppose this is how the Fascist dictators envisaged the role of the capitalists: their genius has to be channeled into the service of the state. But, before that day will come, *"the State must have learned more in the way of administration than it knows at present"*.

So far so uncontroversial, but Carey now launches into a remarkable prophecy, transcending British Imperial preoccupations. It's as if Buchan has pulled back the curtain and given his readers a glimpse of a world that is all too familiar to us. Like the Old Testament prophets, he saw things he didn't really understand and it's our generation that can join the dots:

"There is one thing to be said, however, which may give us hope. The capitalist of the future, we agreed, will not be the ordinary dull rich man. He will either be a great criminal or a considerable patriot. If he is the first, I hope that the law may be strong enough to keep him in bounds, but if he is the latter he may be a great ally of the State. The millionaire who makes his money solely to spend it on his pleasures is a cumberer of the ground… But the man who with such a narrow soul will make a great fortune in the future will be rare indeed. He may make a million by rigging the market, but he will do little good at that serious exploitation which is closely akin to statecraft… They [the new breed of capitalist] will find their hobby not in rare furniture or on the Turf, but in doing, so far as the individual can, the work of the State."

Remorseless Moral Purpose

I for one am less concerned about the dodgy capitalist harmlessly heaping up his ill-gotten gains *"where moth and rust do corrupt"* than I am with the horrific picture of the capitalist as master of the universe, given scope by a quiescent political class to pursue his hobbies and fidgets. As for We, The People, we are just the *lumpenproletariat* who, like the Trump supporters, are maddeningly resistant to being preached at, *de haut en bas*. As much as possible has to be smuggled past us without us knowing, much less being given any choice in the matter. To take one example, just when was it decided, and by whom, that *The Climate Emergency* is the greatest challenge of our time? Sensible environmental policies have been jettisoned in pursuit of a megalomaniac vision that makes the cartoon Canute seem a positively modest figure.

So, step forward Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, George Soros and all their acolytes in the supine western media. Unfortunately they are not *"doing the work of the State"*. It's worse: the State is doing their work for them. I admire men and women who have the money-making gene in their DNA, and wouldn't have minded if I'd been born with some of

that aptitude. But I dispute the right of King Midas to dictate my politics or my ethics. As C.S. Lewis remarked sixty years ago, the benign dictatorship exercised over us for our good may be the most oppressive of all. Better to be ruled by robber barons.

Off With Their Heads!

Next to appear on the stage is Lady Warcliff, who, we remind ourselves, is wife of the GOC India, and so not intended to be a marginal or maverick figure. In 'real life' she is apparently modelled on Lady Lyttelton, doyenne of one of the great English houses, related to Buchan's wife Susan (nee Grosvenor), also to the Wyndhams, and I would think an ancestor of the jazz trumpeter Humphrey Lyttelton.

It is she who is chosen to deliver the hard Darwinian blows to the solar plexus of Edwardian do-goodism. We mustn't imagine that Buchan endorses what she says, but undoubtedly hers is a legitimate voice in the symposium.

> "We shall never get one step further until we recognize that the destitute must be divided sharply into two classes—those who may be saved and those who, being past hope, should cease to exist…
>
> " We shut up criminals and lunatics and yet we allow these people, who are certainly a leprous spot in our society, to go on marrying and perpetuating their worthless stock and hampering the activity of the State. Sharp surgery is the only cure. I want to see these hordes of thriftless, degenerate, scrofulous pariahs treated as what they are, irredeemable outcasts from society, and compelled by the state to keep their noxious influence away from the saner parts. This however is beside the point. It is the people who are worth saving that I wish to talk about".

Not so much beside the point, we might think. The not so holy grail of eugenics has been a motive force in the thinking of British intellectuals, especially on the Left, for the past hundred and fifty years. See for instance G.B. Shaw*: "the only fundamental and possible socialism is the socialization of the selective breeding of man"*. Marie Stopes, 1880-1958, whose eponymous clinics seem to have abortion as their *raison d'etre*, was a rabid eugenicist. This dark secret rumbled away for a while but eventually gained traction, so the clinics are eponymous no more, from 17th November 2020. She believed in a master race, but apparently there is little evidence she actually believed in abortion, so maybe there is justice somewhere in the mix.

Anyway, with Lady Warcliff we have a ratcheting up of the concept of the undeserving poor: not only do they not deserve to be helped, they don't deserve to exist.

About the deserving poor, she doesn't really believe in the rescue and rehabilitation of individuals through charitable endeavour, as with throwing starfish back into the sea. The underlying societal causes have to be tackled.

> "This is the creed of socialism, and so far we all agree with it… Where we part company is the method of this reform."

She thinks that the necessary reform can't be accomplished through what in our time has been disdainfully called a 'tax and spend' policy, so as to equalise economic conditions to a greater degree. So, what is her solution? Not surprisingly the Empire is once again *deus ex machina*. But she takes this to a further degree. The emigration scheme is to be *"organised"* (enforced?) by the State:

> "If [voluntary emigration] were the unfailing cure for poverty the poor would long ago have found it out for themselves. I advocate State-organised emigration within the Empire, because it is only under these conditions that you can have it scientifically organised and supervised. Emigration is the least easy art in the world. It needs careful selection, long preparation of the land and people for each other, and it wants at the back of it all the authority of the State… The State must be the great Emigrator. It alone has the power to collect full information and decide whether this or that scheme is justifiable…
>
> "If you send the right man to the right place in the right way you will manufacture citizens out of material which at present is sinking into the slough of despair. You will give our empty lands population and reduce the congestion of our English slums… We Imperialists look forward to our people becoming more mobile, and seeking a home wherever life can be lived freely and sanely, instead of choking within the limits which were sufficient for the fathers but are too narrow for the sons."

And so it goes on. One begins to wonder if the liquidated undeserving poor might be getting the better end of the deal under Lady Warcliff's commissariat.

The State, like the Sabbath, was made for man, not *vice versa*. Surely the idea of men and women being moved around like pieces on the Imperial chessboard is antithetical to the whole Common Law tradition that the chief purpose of the law is to regulate our economic interactions, not to determine them in advance. In other words, we are free to live our lives without the State telling us what we can and can't do, where we can and can't go, who we can and can't socialise with. Surely the State in our Common Law jurisdictions would never behave in such a *dirigiste* fashion, would it?

Lady Lucy Gardner develops this theme, strongly advocating enforced migration among the subject peoples to where they are needed most, and urging that any "laissez-faire croakings" be ignored. It's unclear what degree of compulsion is to be involved. She seems to rule out forced deportation of Chinese coolies to South Africa but is happy to insist that they be forcibly deported back when their tour of duty is done. Closer to our time, the West German Government seemed to believe that the Turkish *Gastarbeiter* would go back home. Some did, but most stayed, and one of their descendants is now a German soccer international, Mezut Ozil.

Perhaps too in 1906 it hadn't quite dawned on the ruling class that the State is not particularly good at running large-scale enterprises, because it's not attuned to underlying market developments. Lady Warcliff's scheme is not unlike the great Chinese project, a form of state-directed capitalism, which works all right in a comparatively low-wage economy (albeit with a dearth of invention and innovation) but at a terrible human cost. What were Lady Warcliff's young hopeful citizens to do about their aged or infirm parents? They would be sailing away from what is termed their family support networks. Their children could end up living a continent away from their cousins who had lived beside them at home. The Empire is like the god Moloch, to whom the children were sacrificed in *Old Testament* times.

There are some half-hearted expressions of *"Goodness Gracious"* and *"Well, really, Susan"*, and yet nobody seems particularly outraged.

The Imperial Soul

I haven't left myself much space for the place of religion and the arts within the overarching *schema* of Empire. Some

of the ladies expatiate on the meaning of Art as the source of individual and societal integrity, but is there such a thing as Imperial Art, a sort of Socialist Realism for the Imperial air? The answer seemingly is *yes*, or so thinks the musical and dreamy Mrs. Deloraine:

> "If we limit Art to simple men and a little nation, we assume that her spiritual power is so slight that she will be overwhelmed and coarsened by a richer material environment. What warrant have we for so low a view of the fire in her heart? I grant you that in a great empire she walks in dangerous paths, but then the goal is more splendid."

She confesses that in earlier life she had been repelled by the brass band culture of the Empire, *"half mercantile, half Jingo"*, but:

> "As I grew older I came to live less in the past, and looked more to the realities of the world around me. Art came to be less a thing of dainty memories, and more and more something solemn and tragic, and yet instinct with immortal humour, the voice of God speaking through the clamour of his creations. And then I felt the need of a wider horizon… and suddenly I saw that I had been blind and deaf to the new world of which simple folk had long ago entered into possession".

So, we have to lay down our Henry James and our Chopin *ballades* and listen for the voice of the popular imagination. I think there's a false dichotomy somewhere here. I detect too the idea of the world of the Empire as being akin to the Kingdom of Heaven, to enter which we must become like little children. The Empire is bigger than us, and it's bigger than our petty pretentious preoccupations: "*ubi magnitudo, ibi veritas*"* is her apt quotation from St. Augustine. Unfortunately for the rest of the world these wild vast horizons are ordained to be the particular preserve of the English-speaking peoples!

> "Where there is greatness there is truth". A bit like the other Augustine quotation which is translated, "the judgment of the whole world is a safe bet", for which the Latin is I think "securus judicat orbis terrarum".

Sir Edward, who is some kind of explorer, agrees with her, in a significant passage:

> "The Frenchman always wants to draw a clear line and say that all on one side is civilisation, and all on the other side is barbarism, and he doesn't care a cent what becomes of it… At heart he fears the wilds, while we love them. Our people won't admit any final march where they must stop short and pitch their tents. They must always be pushing on and possessing some new country. And therefore there is no limit to their hopes, for any evening may bring them to the Land of Promise".

When Buchan's characters venture to the fringes of what we might call Religion, a cautionary note begins to intrude. Imperialism is in itself no substitute for Art and Religion but in some unaccountable way provides a better foundation for both.

If Buchan was a true prophet he was also capable of writing some unutterable tosh. I'll close for our all-round edification with this lengthy and astonishing extract from a long windy speech of Lord Appin:

> "We [the Imperialists] do not pretend to teach a religion, but, if we are not theologians, we are in a sense ecclesiastics. The State, remember, has now taken the place of the mediaeval church. Once we had popes and bishops supervising the lives of their flock….But their pride crumbled….. because they sought to imprison the longings of the human spirit within the narrow walls of creed and ritual. Religion has triumphantly proved itself stronger than ecclesiasticism, and today we see a revolt…..against all that savours of formality. And yet man cannot advance except through organised action, and if his Church is destroyed in one guise he will revive it in another. …..The old church can never be re-established, for we have travelled too far from the sanctions which gave it strength. But we can no more do without a church than without a religion. Only we have learned nowadays that the true and lasting work for which such an organization is adapted is rather political than doctrinal, and that the Seal of the Fisherman is better affixed to State decrees than to edicts against conscience. I maintain that our view of empire gives that empire something of the character of a church. We are a brotherhood, banded together in a common quest….In the midst of all our failures the work advances, for the plan is greater than the builders…..All around us are the frontiers of barbarism—I use the word as the Greeks used it. It is this environment which will perfect our brotherhood and give us something of the old crusading fervour. And if we have this clear purpose, not untouched with emotion, our empire will be another, and more truly Catholic, church. Then—to use Plato's phrase—the quest of truth will not lack the warmth of desire".

I think this passage would need another five thousand words of commentary, but I desist!

La Fontaine

Cathy Winch

A Very Unsentimental Ode To Liberty

The Wolf And The Hound

A wolf there was, grown wan and thin;
Little, indeed, but bone and skin,
So staunchly did the watchdogs do their duty.
At length a hound strays by his lair—
Sleek, fat, and passing debonair,
And no less well-endowed of strength than beauty.
Happily would Sire Wolf attack him,
Pummel him, thwack him,
Hack him to bits.
Ah, but to do so meant that he must fight;
And clearly they would not be quits
Before Sire Mastiff—able (quite!)
To hold his own—might lay him low!

LE LOUP ET LE CHIEN

Un Loup n'avait que les os et la peau ;
Tant les Chiens faisaient bonne garde.
Ce Loup rencontre un Dogue aussi puissant que beau,
Gras, poli, qui s'était fourvoyé par mégarde.
L'attaquer, le mettre en quartiers,
Sire Loup l'eût fait volontiers.
Mais il fallait livrer bataille
Et le Mâtin était de taille
A se défendre hardiment.
Le Loup donc l'aborde humblement,
Entre en propos, et lui fait compliment
Sur son embonpoint, qu'il admire.

And so our wolf draws near, in humblest wise,
Flatters his plump and portly bearing. “Oh?”
Replies the hound. “If you admire my size,
The choice is yours, good sire. If you
Would fatten up like me, do as I do:
Come, leave this dire and deadly wood behind.
What good does it do you and all your kind?
Poor devils, starving wretches, who
Ever must brave the blade for every crumb.
Never to feast their fill! Come, come…
A fairer fate awaits.” “But…but,”
Queries the wolf, “what must I do?” “What?...What?”
Echoes the hound. “Why, almost nothing, friend:
Chase away beggars, churls with sticks…Attend
The household folk…Do all you can to please
The master… In return for which
Fine table scraps—delicacies
Of every sort—will be your rich
Reward: squab bones, and chicken bones, and such…
What’s more, you’ll know the loving touch
Of master’s fond caresses.” The wolf, thereat,
Weeps at the happy thought. But, on their way,
He spies the hound’s bald neck. “What’s this, I pray?”
“This what?” “That!” “This? Why, nothing!” “Nothing? That?”
“Almost, that is…It’s where my collar sits.
The one they use to tie me down. It fits
A trifle snug.” “Tie down? Then you’re not free?
You can’t go where you choose, run where you will?”
“Not always. But who cares?” “Who? Me!
Keep your fine feasts! I’ll keep my liberty!”
Whereat our wolf went running off. He’s running still.

Il ne tiendra qu'à vous, beau sire,
D'être aussi gras que moi, lui repartit le Chien.
Quittez les bois, vous ferez bien :
Vos pareils y sont misérables,
Cancres, hères, et pauvres diables,
Dont la condition est de mourir de faim.
Car quoi ? Rien d'assuré, point de franche lippée.
Tout à la pointe de l'épée.
Suivez-moi ; vous aurez un bien meilleur destin.
Le Loup reprit : Que me faudra-t-il faire ?
Presque rien, dit le Chien : donner la chasse aux gens
Portants bâtons, et mendiants;
Flatter ceux du logis, à son maître complaire ;
Moyennant quoi votre salaire
Sera force reliefs de toutes les façons:
Os de poulets, os de pigeons,
.....Sans parler de mainte caresse.
Le loup déjà se forge une félicité
Qui le fait pleurer de tendresse.
Chemin faisant il vit le col du Chien, pelé :
Qu'est-ce là ? lui dit-il. Rien. Quoi ? rien ? Peu de chose.
Mais encor ? Le collier dont je suis attaché
De ce que vous voyez est peut-être la cause.
Attaché ? dit le Loup : vous ne courez donc pas
Où vous voulez ? Pas toujours, mais qu'importe ?
Il importe si bien, que de tous vos repas
Je ne veux en aucune sorte,
Et ne voudrais pas même à ce prix un trésor.
Cela dit, maître Loup s'enfuit, et court encor.

Contributed by **Cathy Winch**

Fable 1.5, 16668. translation by Norman Shapiro 2007

Rinuccini in Sliabh Luachra

Introduction by *Jack Lane*

In 1645 Pope Innocent X sent Cardinal Gianbattista Rinuccini to Ireland as Papal Nuncio at a time when the Irish, under the Confederation of Kilkenny, were fighting to roll back the plantations, and trying to fight off invasion by anti-Catholic English Parliamentarians and Scottish Covenanters,

Rinuccini brought money and weapons to help the Confederate cause. Unfortunately he also used his influence to prevent an alliance with the Irish Royalists, with fatal consequences for the Irish cause.

However, one legacy of the intervention is an account giving valuable insights into 17th century Ireland from an objective source.

Source

The following is an extract from the *Commentarius Rinuccinianus* translated from Latin. The *Commentarius*, 1645-1649, was compiled by Fr. Barnabas O’Ferrall and Fr. Daniel O’Connell in the 17th century and edited from the Manuscript by Fr. Joaness Kavanagh [Fr. Stanislaus], in 6 volumes, for the *Irish MSS Commission* in 1932-49. This is is a collection of documents on the Nuncio’s mission to Ireland but they haven’t yet been translated and published in English.

The accounts rely quite a lot on Rinuccini’s views on the area, as described by his Secretary, Dionysius Massari. This extract, by one of the priest authors, takes up the story of his visit after landing at Kenmare on 21st October 1645. The Nuncio went to Macroom, via St. Gobnait’s shrine in Ballyvourney. He spent a week in Macroom and was then persuaded by Boetius MacEgan, the future Bishop of Ross, to go to Dromsicane, the seat of a junior branch of the McCarthys, and to Clonmeen, the home of Donough O’Callaghan. He would have had to go via Millstreet for this part of his journey. He then went on to Kilmallock and Limerick on the way to the Confederation at Kilkenny.

Commentarius

“Thus far I have described the journey of the Nuncio from Rome to Ireland. It now remains to tell what happened after he landed. Related to this are the things written by the Most Illustrious Massari in his letter from Ireland to Florence, a small part of which I have inserted above. He followed it with one in Italian. I shall append mention of the relevant matters in Latin, having omitted the sections dealing with the pirate’s

attack, since I have already given these facts from the Nuncio's records.

Following the customary practice of the ancient Irish, whereby title and estate pass always and only through the male line, the whole area of Glanarought at the time was Mac Carthaigh Mac Fionnain territory. Their sphere of influence extended to that fort and harbour on the coast, called Kenmare by the locals. It was here that the Nuncio landed. There was, however, at that time a Mac Fionnain who was also very famous on account of his peculiar virtues. He was Donnchadha Mac Carthaigh Mac Fionnain of the royal and most ancient Clann Mhic Carthaigh, a family with very numerous and very flourishing branches spread broadly throughout that region. Since remote antiquity this family had clients, so that related bloodlines of less noble but yet wealthy and powerful families—namely both the Ua Suileabhain Mor and the Ua Suileabhain Beara, as well as the Ua Ceallachain, the Ua Caoimh, and many other families partly local and partly neighbouring—were all remarkably filled with a desire to see the Nuncio, and desired to grant him every honour, upon hearing he had arrived. Mac Carthaigh Mac Fionnain, and his most famous and noble wife Catriona Xic Carthaigh, daughter of Cormac "the Blind", of the dynasty of Muskerry, received with utter kindness as many of these relatives as had suddenly come to Ardtully, as well as the Nuncio and his retinue, along with all those Irishmen who had arrived from abroad.

Meanwhile, the Nuncio oversaw the installation of no small part of the military equipment that he had brought with him into Mac Carthaigh Mac Fionnain's fortress at Ardtully. But he ordered other equipment to be transported by sea to Waterford. When he had rested there for two days with a mind beset by so many great anxieties and a body wearied by labours, and when from that same place he had written the three letters to Rome which are printed (f.887v) above, he really wanted to depart; but he was hindered from doing so by problems which were neither small nor few in number. This was because Ardtully was located near the base of Mount Mangerton, in a charming area towards Limerick, which obstructs the road that had to be taken through the rest of County Kerry, through the mountains of County Cork, and its rough and uneven roads, and that marshy tract of country which in Irish is called Sliabhluachra, a location exceedingly blessed, which does not suffer the feminine excess and luxuriousness of carriages or the intrusive racket of horses and buggies of the sort from which in Paris one does not receive any respite by night or day, for the peace and quiet of one's soul before God.

Besides this the Nuncio's dry skin and itching were growing worse all over his body and, accordingly, the itching grew worse day by day as he scratched; also at this point he was limping, as he was unaccustomed to travelling on foot. Furthermore, he was emaciated by a pre-existing illness from which he had not yet well recovered. Thus he was not easily able to travel on the aforesaid road by horse or on foot. Therefore the aforesaid Lord Massari followed what the enthusiasm of the people had suggested. Concerning Ardtully he said: 'The Most Illustrious Lord rested there for two days, after which he reached Macroom, the seat of Lord Viscount Muskerry, who is the first prince in the kingdom, by means of the convenience of a litter constructed from boards, osiers, and tarpaulins as best as we are able to tell. Moreover, the son of the aforesaid ruler of that place, who was accompanied by fifty armed knights, walked three miles to meet his Most Illustrious Lordship, who had been transported to that place, and honourably received him.

When we were already near to the castle we came upon a formation of infantry and (next to them), stationed in the order of a solemn supplication, were all the Churchmen both secular and regular, by whom the Most Illustrious Lord was received with a cross. He sat on his horse until he was a mile distant. He was thereupon conducted into a church, into which a huge number of people had poured. All of these people prostrated themselves and gave applause and signs of joy in order to get a blessing from His Most Illustrious Lordship. From the church His Most Illustrious Lordship was moved to the palace. At the gate of the palace he was received by the Lady Viscountess, since her husband was absent, being then in camp or at any rate engaged in peace-talks as Commissar in Dublin. She, however, with her family and all her children knelt at his feet and kissed His Most Illustrious Lordship's clothing, and so obtained his blessing (as she had requested) with the greatest devotion.'" (*Commentarius Rinuccinianus* Vol. II, part 1.)

A Glimpse of Ireland In The 1640s

[A priest member of Rinuccini's entourage, wrote accounts of this visit and there is a letter of his to Rinuccini's brother in Florence in 1645. Because of the date, the comments reproduced below are likely to be based on what he saw and experienced in the Cork/Kerry area He wrote:]

"The courtesy of the poor people among whom my Lord the Nuncio took up his quarters was unexampled. A fat bullock, two sheep, and a porker, were instantly slaughtered, and an immense supply of beer, butter, and milk, was brought to him; and even we, who were still on board, experienced the kindness of the poor fishermen, who sent us presents of excellent fish and oysters of the most prodigious size in the utmost abundance.

While we were crossing along in the frigate, in the track of the Nuncio, I observed a harbour about half-a-mile in length, and a pistol-shot in breadth, so very beautiful, that curiosity led me to take the boat and go onshore, for the purpose of examining the wonders of the place. In a short time I was surrounded by an immense multitude of men, women, and boys, who had come running down from different places in the mountains to see me; and some of them happening to observe the crucifix which I wore on my breast, they all made a circle around me, and kissed it one after another.

After this, they made signs of the greatest affection and friendship to me, and conducted me, almost perforce, to one of the nearest huts, where I was seated on a cushion stiffed with feathers; and the mistress of the house, a venerable lady, sat down beside me along with her daughters, and offered to kiss me, according to the usage of the country; and had I not explained by signs, that it would not be becoming in one who bore Christ crucified on his breast, and who accompanied the Nuncio as priest, I think they would have been offended. The lady then brought me a wooden vessel, a great draught of most delicious milk, expressing the utmost anxiety that I should drink it. As it was of a most excellent flavour, I drank copiously of it, and was quite revived by the draught. They all endeavoured to stand as close as possible, and those who were able to touch me, considered themselves happy; so that it was with difficulty I could disengage from them,

in order to return to the frigate; on the contrary they wished to escort me to the very water edge, and some of the young men wished to accompany me altogether. What is most remarkable, is, that in these wild and mountainous places, and among a poor people who are reduced to absolute misery, by the devastations of the heretic enemy, I found, notwithstanding, the noble influence of our holy Catholic faith, for there was not one man, woman, or child, however small, who could not repeat the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Creed, and the commandments of the Holy Church.

"The country, through which we have passed, though mountainous, is agreeable; and being entirely pasture-land, is most abundantly stocked with cattle of every kind. Occasionally one meets a long tract of valley, interspersed with woods and groves; which, as they are neither high nor densely planted, partake more of the agreeable than the gloomy. For seventy miles the country which we met was almost all of this character; but having once crossed the mountains, we entered upon an immense plain, occasionally diversified with hills and valleys, highly cultivated, and enriched with an infinite number of cattle, especially oxen and sheep; from the latter of which is obtained the very finest of what is called English wool..

The men are fine-looking and of incredible strength, swift runners, and ready to bear every kind of hardship with cheerfulness. They are all trained in arms, especially now that they are at war. Those who apply themselves to letters are very learned; and you meet persons of every profession and science among them.

The women are distinguished by their grace and beauty, and they are as modest as they are lovely. Their manners are marked by their extreme simplicity, and they mix freely in conversation on all occasions without suspicion or jealousy. Their dress differs from ours, and is somewhat like the French. They also wear cloaks reaching to their heels and tufted locks of hair, and they go without any head-dress, content with linen bands bound up in the Greek fashion, which display their natural beauty to much advantage. Their families are very large. Some have as many as thirty children; all living; not a few have fifteen or twenty, and all these children are handsome, tall and strong, the majority being fair-haired, white-skinned and red-complexioned.

They give most abundant entertainments both of flesh and fish for they have both in great abundance. They are constantly pledging healths, the usual drinks being Spanish wines, French claret, most delicious beer and most excellent milk. Butter is used abundantly on all occasions with all kinds of food and there is no species of provisions which is not found in great abundance. As yet, we have all accommodated ourselves to the usages of the country. (A line is here effaced).

There is also plenty of fruit—apples, pears, plums and artichokes. All eatables are cheap. A fat ox costs sixteen shillings (a pistole), a sheep fifteen pence (thirty bajocchi), a pair of capons, or fowls, five pence (a paul); eggs a farthing each, and other things in proportion. A good-sized fish costs a penny (soldo), and they don't worry about selling game. They kill birds almost with sticks and especially thrushes, blackbirds, and chaffinches. Both salt and fresh water fish are cheap, abundant, and of excellent flavour and for three pauls we bought one hundred and fifty pounds of excellent fish; as pike, salmon, herring, trout, &c all of excellent quality. We got a thousand pilchards and oysters for twenty-five bajocchi.

The horses are numerous, strong, well built, and swift. For five pounds (twenty crowns) you can buy a nag which in Italy could not be got for a hundred gold pieces."

(*From The Dublin Review*, March 1845.)

A Comment On This Account

This is a startlingly positive description of the people, which contrasts sharply with the image usually painted by most travelers from Britain.

What is noticeably absent from the vast variety of food described is the potato! This refutes the idea that the Irish were in some way addicted and dependent on it. The society became dependent on it when the structures and customs of the society described above were systematically destroyed during the following centuries. Those structure were quite capable of planning and uitilising all the varied resources of the society.

The Nuncio's Italian retinue clearly enjoyed themselves immensely and found everybody and everything very much to their liking—apart from the political development of the Confederation.

JL

Donal Kennedy

Cork Opera House: Chasing A Hare!

The *Irish Examiner* (27.9.16) has a headline—"*City in song and verse—new anthology shows off the best of Cork writing*" for a laudatory piece by one Colette Sheridan for a book launched by the Collins Press entitled "*On the Banks: Cork City in Poems and Songs*" for which they are asking 17.99 Euros per copy.

Perhaps the praise is in inverse proportion to the book's merits and the publishers should not expect to laugh their way to the banks just yet.

It has been compiled by one Alannah Hopkin, who is described as a writer and journalist, born in Singapore but living in Kinsale since 1982. She is the author of two novels, one of which is called "*A Joke Goes A Long Way in the country.*"

It appears that, for a joke, the anthology carries an anonymous verse claiming that Republicans burned down Cork's Opera House in 1955. The Opera House did burn down that year, resulting from an electrical fault, and in the sixty-one years since then nobody suspected arson by the Republicans or anyone else.

Had anyone suggested, much less asserted, that Jehovah's Witnesses, Plymouth Brethern, the Orange Order or the Society of Jesus had been guilty of burning the much-loved Opera House down, there would, rightly, be an almighty row. (I pick such communities at random and from my own experience can vouch for the decency and inoffensiveness of the Witnesses and the Brethern).

Letter, *Irish Examiner* (27.9.20)

Peter Brooke

Solzhenitsyn's Two Centuries Together.
Part 16: *Kishinev (The Pogroms, Part 5*

Some Background To The Second *'Aliyah'*

The 'Bund' And Russian Social Democracy

Just as the first '*aliyah*' ("*ascent*"—emigration to Palestine) followed the pogroms of 1881-2, so the second *aliyah* followed the pogroms of 1903 and 1905-6. But much had happened in the interim, most notably the development of a more militant and self consciously Jewish politics, together with the influence of Marxism and the appearance, with the First Zionist Conference, held in 1897, of trans-national Zionism.

1897 also saw the formal establishment in Vilnius (Lithuania) of the Jewish Marxist organisation, the '*Bund*'—the General Jewish Labour Union in Lithuania, Poland and Russia—six months before the formation of the Russian Social Democratic and Labour Party (RSDRP—*Rossiiskaia Sotsial-Demokraticheskaia Rabochaia Partiia*). The RSDRP's first Congress was held in Minsk in March 1898 with eight delegates, five of whom were Jewish, including three members of the Bund, two of whom joined the initial three-member Central Committee. The main weight of what the RSDRP was soon to become was still in exile, mainly in Switzerland.

Jonathan Frankel, whose book *Prophecy And Politics* will be the main source for this article, says that the early history of Socialist Zionism in the Russian Empire has not yet been sorted out but he believes that the first use of the term '*Poale Zion*' (workers of Zion) was in Minsk, also in 1897. It may be noted that Minsk and Vilnius, and in general the areas where these political developments were taking place, were far removed from the South East of the Pale of Settlement, Ukraine, where most of the pogroms occurred.

The Bund originated in a Marxist self-education group in Vilnius in the 1880s. One of the leading figures at that time was Lev Yoghikes, who went on to join Rosa Luxemburg in the Social Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland (later, 1899, Poland and Lithuania), founded in 1893-4 [1] in opposition to Pilsudki's Polish Socialist Party (PPS) with its emphasis on Polish national separatism. In the 1880s, the Jewish group was being encouraged to move into an international culture—Marx and Darwin—by means of the Russian language, in other words to cease being distinctively Jewish. This changed with the arrival from prison early in 1890 of Aleksandr Kremer ('Arkadii'). He and his colleague, Shmuel Gozhansky, began to push for an emphasis on agitation specifically directed at the Jewish community, using Yiddish as the language. In Frankels's account this was opposed by the working class membership who saw themselves being sent back into a milieu they thought they were escaping:

> "Previously, the movement had acted as a way of escape for the worker from the old environment into a completely new world with a new language (Russian), a new culture (Russian libraries), a new faith (socialism), a new peer group (the intelligentsia), and ever widening horizons (the international socialist movement). But, as now envisaged, the movement was to become that of the Jewish working class, with Yiddish as the language, the local workshop as the focal point, and "trade unionism" or *kassy* and economic strikes—as the major form of activity" (p.180).

The new tendency was also opposed by Luxemburg and Yoghikes, who saw it as potentially a Jewish equivalent of Pilsudski's national identity-oriented PPS. But it was supported in an influential speech delivered in Vilnius in 1895 by 'Martov' (Julius Osipovich Tsederbaum), later leading theorist of the Mensheviks and, as we shall see, opponent of the Bund.

On of the problems for Jews inspired by Marxism was that there wasn't a large-scale Jewish proletariat. Jewish workers were typically artisans working in small-scale workshops. Kremer argued that, paradoxically, this could be seen as an advantage. Quoting Frankel,

> "An artisan employed in a workshop did not fear dismissal as much as a factory hand because there were innumerable other small shops where he could find work, and this was doubly true if he was skilled. If the worst came to the worst he could even set up on his own. Further, as a class these skilled workers were better educated than the factory proletariat and were more easily organised... True, he admitted, domestic and handicraft production was doomed and would ultimately be replaced by large scale industry. But this fact made it doubly important that the workers in small-scale production face the harsh transitional period as a united entity. Otherwise they would be exposed to limitless exploitation and degradation. The goal should be to provide the worker with the means of defence whether he remained where he was or moved to a new industrial setting. "We are lucky", he concluded, "that we live in an epoch where the process of change is so clear that we can foresee all the subsequent stages. To know that process and not to use that knowledge would be to commit a major historical error"…" (pp188-9).

Kremer and Gozhansky also argued for a distinct Jewish organisation on the grounds that Russian democracy couldn't be trusted to defend Jewish rights. Referring to Gozhansky's *Letter to the Agitators* which, he says, was probably written late in 1893, Frankel says:

> "There could be no doubt, he wrote, that in the foreseeable future the Russian Autocracy would fall and be replaced by a constitutional system, but it was no longer possible to assume that a more democratic regime would automatically bring with it political equality for the Jews. Recent history clearly demonstrated that even parliamentary systems could deprive minorities of their rights, either through legislation (as in Roumania) or through intimidation and privilege (as in Austria-Hungary). Indeed "in

1 Frankel gives both years on the same page. The confusion may be due to the difference between the Julian and Gregorian calendars. In my use of dates - as with my transliteration of Russian or Hebrew names - I have in general just followed my sources without researching the matter myself. The 'Kingdom of Poland' was the area of Poland that had come under Russian suzerainty in the wake of the Napoleonic wars (ie not as a result of the repartitions in the eighteenth century) with its capital in Warsaw. Pilsudski's party, with its nationalist ambitions, was organised across the whole territory of what was deemed to be historic Poland.

constitutional Roumania, the Jews have fewer rights than in autocratic Russia"…" (p.189).

The position was summed up by another supporter of the new line, John Mill [2], declaring:

> "that the Jewish worker suffers in Russian not merely as a worker but as a Jew; that in agitation all forms of national oppression should be stressed more and more; that, together with the general political and economic struggle, the struggle for civil equality may be one of our immediate tasks; and that this struggle can best be carried out by the organised Jewish worker himself" …" (Frankel, p.190).

Bund domination of the RSDRP didn't last long. Already in late Spring 1897, before the formal establishment of either the Bund (September 1897) or the RSDRP (March 1898), Kremer had had what Frankel calls a "*disastrous*" encounter with Plekhanov (who was accompanied by Akselrod and Vera Zasulich). The disagreement seems to have been that, whereas Kremer argued for a sharp worker/capitalist division, Plekhanov was arguing for a temporary alliance with bourgeois liberalism in opposition to autocracy. Perhaps as a result of this confrontation Kremer seems to have decided that a definite Jewish structure (the Bund) needed to be established prior to the expected formation of a Social Democratic Party in Russia (a Russian Social Democratic Party Abroad existed already) if the Jewish voice was to be heard.

Kremer was arrested in 1898 and in his absence the Bund in 'Russia' became more internationalist, less concerned with Jewish autonomy, but in Berne, the Bund leadership in exile was developing in the opposite direction, arguing for a Jewish national autonomy—a right of the Jews within the Russian Empire to decide democratically their own affairs without, however, demanding a distinct territory of their own. The case was put by Mill in an edition of the paper *Der yidisher arbeter* published in 1899:

> "No less a person than Karl Kautsky, Mill noted, had recently argued in the name of Marxist principles that to divide the Austro-Hungarian Empire into independent national states would solve nothing, for the problem of oppressed minorities would live on in the new states. Indeed, Kautsky suggested, the fate of the Jews and the Ruthenians in an independent Galicia would not be an enviable one. The optimal solution, therefore, was a reorganisation of the Hapsburg Empire which would grant each national group autonomy" (Frankel, p.218).

Lenin, when he met Plekhanov in Switzerland, found him fiercely opposed to the Bund—indeed, according to Lenin's account, to the Jews in general:

> "He declared straight out that this is not a Social Democratic organisation but simply an organisation of exploitation—to exploit the Russians. He felt that our goal is to kick the Bund out of the Party, that the Jews are all chauvinists and nationalists, that a Russian party must be Russian and not "give itself into captivity to the tribe of Gad", etc. ... G.V. was not to be moved from this position. He says that we simply have no knowledge of the Jews, no experience of conducting affairs with them" (p.229).

In June 1903, in preparation for the second congress of the RSDRP to be held in Brussels in July, the Bund held its Fifth Congress in Zurich. This was in the wake of the Kishinev pogrom and feelings were running high. In Frankel's account:

> "Because the congress was held abroad, the nationalist wing enjoyed a much stronger position than in 1898 or 1901; it was numerically much larger and it had a chance to hammer out its position at a preliminary conference held in Geneva. Its leading spokesmen at the congress (Liber, Medem, Kossovosy and Zhenia Hurvich) demanded that the Bund finally develop a totally coherent ideology—unequivocally for national autonomy, for national as well as class agitation, for the right of the Bund to represent and work among the Jewish proletariat throughout the Empire…" (pp.240-241).

A maximal demand was formulated which would have established a federal structure for the RSDRP but there was also a minimalist programme "*beyond which there was to be no retreat*":

> "Of the ultimata, the central one was the demand for recognition that "the Bund is the Social Democratic organisation of the Jewish proletariat, enters the RSDRP as its sole representative, and is not subject to any geographical restriction"."

In the event, though, when they arrived in Brussels, they found to their surprise that their position within the RSDRP was the very first item on the agenda and they were subject to withering attack by almost all the other delegates led by the 'Iskrovtsy', who was associated with the party journal *Iskra* founded by Lenin and Martov (and printed as it happens on a clandestine printing press in Kishinev, conveniently placed as it was near the Roumanian border). As the Conference proceeded, however, other divisions emerged, notably, among the Iskrovtsy themselves, the division that was to separate Bolsheviks and Mensheviks—the division between the advocates of a small, tightly-knit body of professional revolutionaries (Lenin) and those who wanted a mass party (Martov). In these quarrels the Bund representatives generally supported Martov. The Bund's own resolution, defining themselves as the "*sole representative of the Jewish proletariat*", unlimited by geographical bounds, was not voted on until weeks later, after the Congress had moved to London. It was defeated by forty-one votes to five (with five abstentions), whereupon the Bund representatives walked out, depriving Martov of their support and giving Lenin's supporters the majority that gave them the title, '*Bolsheviks*'.

Zionism And 'Territorialism'

The same issue of *Der yidisher arbeter* (No 6, 1899) which contained Mill's call for a non-territorial Jewish national autonomy also contained an article, '*Socialism or Zionism*', attacking Zionism, by Chaim Zhitlovsky, a friend of the Bund leaders in Berne, but himself more closely associated with the populist Social Revolutionaries (the Agraro-Socialist League formed in 1899, which became the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries in 1902, successors of the pre-Marxist Peoples Will and Black Repartition movements).

Zhitlovsky criticised Zionism as a middle class response to anti-Semitism whose solution to the problem was impractical: "*with a tiny state of two million Jewish inhabitants one cannot help the entire Jewish people which in Russia, Poland and Galicia alone is over six million people*". Nor was there any prospect of establishing a Socialist state in Palestine. One could not "*carry through in Turkey what is still impossible in Europe*" (Frankel. pp.272-3). But what was worse was that the influence of Zionism was imposing

2 Mill's Jewish name was Yoyself Shloyme Mil. It may be a reasonable speculation that he adopted the name 'John' rather than his own 'Joseph' or the Russian 'Ivan' in homage to J.S.Mill, much admired in Russian liberal and nihilist circles.

on Jews a passivity that rendered them useless for any sort of militant political activity: *"It has to be shown that the entire Jewish people is God-fearing, innocent and far—so help us—from today's revolutionary ideas; that the Jewish worker will not bring the terrible plague of socialism and class war to Turkey—Heaven forbid!"*

This was indeed a problem for the Zionists of the time. There was no prospect of a mass transfer of Jews to Palestine without the consent of the Ottoman rulers. Herzl was dismissive of what had been achieved by the colonists of the *'first aliyah'* (discussed in an earlier article in this series [3]):

> "Should the powers show themselves willing to grant us sovereignty over a neutral land, then the Society will enter into negotiations for the possession of this land. Here two regions come to mind: Palestine and Argentina. [4]
>
> Significant experiments in colonisation have been made in both countries, though on the mistaken principle of gradual infiltration of Jews. Infiltration is bound to end badly." [5]

Given the impossibility of a direct exodus to Palestine, Herzl in 1902 thought in terms of territory close to Palestine, territory held by Britain, traditionally sympathetic to the Zionist idea. In October 1902 he obtained an interview with Joseph Chamberlain, at the time Secretary of State for the Colonies under Salisbury as Prime Minister. According to his diary: [6]

> "I expounded to the immovable mask of Joe Chamberlain the entire Jewish Question… my relations with Turkey, etc.
>
> '"I am in negotiation with the Sultan", I said. "But you know how it is with Turkish negotiations. If you want to buy a carpet, you must first drink half-a-dozen cups of coffee and smoke a hundred cigarettes; then you proceed to family-gossip; and, from time to time, you throw in a few words about the carpet. Now, I may have time to negotiate, but my People have not. They are starving in the Pale. I must bring them immediate succour ..." and so on.
>
> "At the bit concerning the carpet, the Mask [his characterisation of Chamberlain's style—PB] laughed.
>
> "I then came to the territory which I want to get from England: Cyprus, El Arish [a town in the North of Sinai—PB] and the Sinai Peninsula.
>
> "Chamberlain began by saying that he was only at liberty to discuss Cyprus. The rest concerned not him but the Foreign Office. But, as to Cyprus, this was how the matter stood. That island was inhabited by Greeks and Moslems, whom he could not evict for the sake of new-comers. On the contrary, he was in duty bound to take their side. If the Greeks—encouraged perhaps by Greece and Russia—were to resist Jewish immigration, the deadlock would be complete. He personally had nothing against the Jews. And, had there been a drop of Jewish blood in his veins, he would have been proud of it. But, *voilà*, he had no such drop. He was, however, willing to help if he could; he liked the Zionist idea, etc. Ah, if I could show him a spot in the British Dominions where there was no white population yet, then we could talk! …
>
> "…he had no idea where El Arish was, and so we went over to a big table, where he hunted out an atlas, among other big books, and looked in it for Egypt. As he did so, he said, "In Egypt, you know, we should have the same difficulties with the natives (as in Cyprus)."
>
> '"No", said I, "we won't go to Egypt. We have been there before."
>
> "At this he laughed again, stooping low… over the book. It was only now that he understood fully my wish to have a place of assembly for the Jewish people in the neighbourhood of Palestine.
>
> "In El Arish and Sinai, the country is untenanted. England can give it to us. In return she would gain an increase of her power and the gratitude of ten million Jews. All this… impressed him.
>
> '"I summed up:
>
> '"Would you agree to our founding a Jewish colony on the Sinai Peninsula?"
>
> '"Yes!" he replied, "if Lord Cromer [Consul-General of Egypt—PB] is in favour."…"

As Chamberlain's biographer, Julian Amery, comments*: "a Jewish colony in Sinai might prove a useful instrument for extending British influence into Palestine proper, when the time came for the inevitable dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire*."

The following day, Herzl returned:

> "Yesterday, I believe, was a great day in Jewish history… At 2.15 I entered Chamberlain's office-salon. For that is what the Colonial Secretary's office reminds you of: the drawing-room of some shipping magnate.
>
> "Chamberlain rose, very busy. He could only spare me a few minutes. But he said it in the most engaging manner…
>
> "He said to me:
>
> '"I have arranged a meeting between you and Lord Lansdowne [Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs—PB]. He expects you at half-past four in the afternoon. I have already prepared the way for you. Put the whole matter before him, but do not mention Cyprus. The Cyprus part of it is my concern. Be careful to tell him that your projected settlement is not a jumping-off place with the point directed at the Sultan's dominions."
>
> "He positively beamed as he said that. Altogether, the Mask was amazingly alive to-day and full of sustained mirth.
>
> "I said:
>
> '"Of course there can be no question of that, as I want to go to Palestine only with the Sultan's consent."
>
> "He looked at me with amusement, as if to say: "The deuce you do." But aloud he said:
>
> '"Reassure Lord Lansdowne that you are not intending a Jameson raid from El Arish upon Palestine."
>
> '"I shall reassure him, Mr. Chamberlain!" said I, laughing in my turn…"

Soon after this encounter, Chamberlain went to East Africa, and on 21st December 1902 noted in his diary: *"If Dr. Herzl were at all inclined to transfer his efforts to East Africa, there would be no difficulty in finding suitable land for Jewish settlers. But I assume that this country is too far removed from Palestine to have any attractions for him."*

He had found a suitable *"spot in the British Dominions where there was no white population ..."*

Herzl met Chamberlain again in April, by which time a Zionist Commission had visited Sinai and reported on it negatively. On that occasion Chamberlain floated the idea of 'Uganda' (actually a fertile region in Kenya). At the time Herzl was unenthusiastic:

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3 *Church and State*, No.141, July-September, 2020 and http://www.peterbrooke.org/politics-and-theology/solzhenitsyn/aliyah-1/

4 The establishment of Jewish agricultural colonies in Argentina was a particular project of the banker, Baron Maurice de Hirsch, founder of the railway linking Constantinople and Europe and in 1891 of the Jewish Colonisation Association.

5 Herzl: The Jewish State, quoted in Gur Alroey: '"Zionism without Zion"? Territorialist ideology and the Zionist movement', *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol 18, No 1 (Fall 2011), p.5

This and the following quotations from Julian Amery: *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, Vol 4, 1901-1903, London, Macmillan and Co Ltd, pp.259-267.

"…"In the course of my journey I saw the very country for you", said the great Chamberlain. "That's Uganda. The coast-region is hot, but the farther you get into the interior the more excellent the climate becomes, for Europeans too. You can plant sugar there, and cotton. So I thought to myself: that would be just the country for Dr. Herzl. But then, of course, he only wants to go to Palestine, or somewhere near."

"'I can't help myself", I replied. "Our starting-point must be in or near Palestine. Later on we could also colonise Uganda; for we have vast numbers of human beings who are prepared to emigrate. We must, however, build upon a national foundation; that is why the political attraction of El Arish is indispensable to us. ...As a land-speculation the thing would be bad. No one would give a penny for country of that sort. No-one but ourselves, because of that underlying political purpose of ours. But, be it well understood, we are not going to place ourselves under Egyptian, but only under British rule."

"He: "I expect that that is how matters will remain. We shall not leave Egypt. Originally that was our intention. I know what I'm saying, for I was in the Government at the time. In the 'Eighties, we thought we should relinquish Egypt. But we have had to sink so much money in the country, and we have so many interests there, at the present time, that we can no longer get away. Thus, you with your Settlement will be sharing the fortunes of a British Dependency. Should things change in Egypt at some future time, and your Colony be strong enough, I am sure it will not fail to assert itself."…"

It seems to have been the Kishinev pogrom that decided Herzl in favour of the 'Ugandan' offer, as the need for a Jewish homeland seemed to have become pressing. That, and the fact that British water engineers had surveyed Sinai and concluded that the scheme (which would have involved a diversion of the waters of the Nile) was impractical.

It should be said, though, that there were limits to British generosity. According to Amery's account:

> "In its original form, the draft agreement submitted by Herzl presumed the establishment of a virtually independent Jewish State; and Lansdowne minuted on it, "I fear it is throughout an *imperium in imperio*". After some modification, however, by the Foreign Office, a more suitable text was agreed. This provided for the settlement in East Africa of a Jewish community to be organised under a Jewish "Super-Mayor" with a wide measure of "municipal" autonomy."

The Emergence Of Left-Wing Zionism

Herzl announced his 'Uganda' policy at the Sixth Zionist Congress in Basle, August 1903. Also in August he had antagonised Russian Jews by meeting the Interior Minister, Plehve, whom they saw as responsible for the events in Kishinev. In his Address to the Congress he called on his Russian followers to act "*calmly and legally*". In reaction a group of left wing Zionists produced a pamphlet under the title *Neither calmly not legally*. A Conference of left wing Zionists was held in Kiev in September 1903 and the result was the journal *Vozrozhdenie* (Rebirth), first printed in Paris early in 1904. *Vozrozhdenie* was 'territorialist', meaning that, while the Jews needed a territory of their own, it didn't have to be Palestine.

The position of Simon Dubnow and of the Bund, both of whom believed in their different ways that national unity was possible without a coherent territory, was ridiculed, rather prettily, as wanting "*to break the barrel while wanting to keep the wine*" (Frankel, p.280). But territory was regarded as a long-term aspiration. In the meantime they wanted full involvement in the Russian revolutionary movement and supported national autonomy (the wine without the barrel) as an interim demand.

They were aligned with the Socialist Revolutionaries, rather than the Social Democrats, believing in deliberate political action rather than economic determinism as the motivating force for historical change, and supporting 'terrorism', or at least the assassination of fomenters of the pogroms. An attempted assassination of Krushevan [7] had been supported by founder members of *Vozrozhdenie* in a pamphlet: '*What is the lesson of Dashevsky's assassination attempt?*'

Zhitlovsky was converted to their long term territorialism, breaking his connection with the Bund.

In July 1904, the first of three Zionist Socialist Parties—the SSRP (Zionist Socialist Labour Party)—was formed at a Conference in Warsaw attended by Poale Zion groups from Warsaw, Kiev, and Dvinsk (in Latvia), together with representatives from *Vozrozhdenie*. In the event, the populist-leaning *Vozrozhdenie* left them early in 1905. In July 1905 an SSRP spokesman, Nachman Syrkin, attended the 7th Zionist Congress in Basle, claiming to speak as a representative for the 10,000 organised workers said to be supporting the 1905 Revolution.

The SSRP presented itself as the most extreme Social Democratic Marxist group, in competition with the Bund, declaring unremitting class war against the other Jewish classes. The development of Capitalism necessarily, they argued, forced the Jewish proletariat in the advanced industrial countries into sweatshops. The only solution was an exodus to an undeveloped country—it didn't have to be Palestine—where a start could be made with a basically agricultural economy. Necessarily this process would have to be led by a Jewish capitalist class. The immediate task of the Social Democrats would be to defend the interests of the proletariat.

Syrkin, their most distinguished spokesman, who stood for the party in the election to the 2nd Duma, Autumn 1906, was actually (and had been since the 1880s when still a somewhat precocious teenager) opposed to this sort of historical determinism. From 1888 (aged 20) to 1898 he had been a member of the Jewish Academic Society in Berlin, together with the 'Palestinophiles' (this word for the advocates of settlement in Palestine is rather ironic in the light of later developments), Chaim Weizmann and Lev Motskin, but later, at the University of Berne where, as we have seen, the Bund leadership developed its idea of national autonomy, he was expelled from the Zionist Society (an expulsion supported by Weizmann) for slandering the movement.

Following a line of argument associated with Moshe Leb Lilienblum, and also with Zhitlovsky (in his pamphlet *A Jew to the Jews,* 1892), Syrkin argued that the position of the Jews in European society had become impossible. In Frankel's account (pp.298-9):

> "The Jews had been permitted entry, or even invited, into backward and feudal societies in order to fulfil certain specific economic functions which at that time were out of bounds

7 The role of Pavel Krushevan and his journal *Bessarabets* in provoking the Kishinev pogrom, as well as his possible responsibility for the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is discussed in the previous article in this series, *Church and State* No. 142, Oct-Dec 2020.

to the indigenous population, whether nobles, peasants or churchmen… They had acted as intermediaries between the warrior class and its serfs, between one branch of the society and another. Despised by the upper classes and hated by the lower, they had rarely lived anything but a precarious existence. The Khmelnitsky massacres of 1648[8] were only an extreme example of a chronic peril, a process which "runs through the whole of Jewish history like a scarlet thread".

"So long as there was little or no competition from within the ranks of the host nation, the Jews had usually been able to count on a measure of official protection against the popular wrath. But as soon as the indigenous nationality produced a capitalist and middle class of its own, the presence of the Jews became an historical anachronism. Sooner or later the pressure to expel them from their positions in the economy and even from the country became irresistible. It was now the turn of the Jews in the Pale of Settlement, Galicia and Roumania to suffer the fate that had overtaken the Jews in England, France and Spain hundreds of years before. By means of legislation, boycott, discrimination and violence, the rival groups within the indigenous nationalities were squeezing them out of the economic lifestream, creating a "million-headed poverty-stricken Jewish mass"…"

Quoting Syrkin directly:

> ""Eighty percent of the Jewish people... is slowly losing its sources of livelihood and is doomed to disaster. The transfer to productive labour is full of obstacles and, for the most part, blocked entirely... But apart from economic pressure, this ...mass also carries on its shoulders the nightmare of anti-semitism in the government, the police, the middle class and the mob".
>
> "And even those Jews who had become wage-earning workers were confined to the margin of the productive process, to domestic industry and sweat shops—a mere "national reserve army of the international proletariat".
>
> "In the West, the situation on the surface was incomparably better, and many believed that democratisation, the abolition of the Pale of Settlement, the removal of the *numerus clausus* in education and the attainment of equal civil rights would solve the Jewish question in eastern Europe too. But, Syrkin insisted, there could be no form of self-deception greater than this. Political equality, in fact, represented a double threat to the Jews: acid like corrosion within and mounting hatred without."

Through assimilation, the Jews—

> "invariably concentrated out of all proportion to their numbers, in the middle and upper section of the bourgeoisie as merchants, traders, professional and academics" and "this advance up the economic ladder ... was nearly always accompanied by a deliberate attempt on the part of the Jews to divest themselves of their national heritage, to abandon the ideal of an autonomous national existence or a national mission ..."

And at the same time as they lose their own virtue as a people, their very success excites the hostility of the people round them. Quoting Syrkin directly (*The Jewish Question And The Jewish Socialist State,* 1898):

> ""Not the character of the Jews, even though it is a miserable and disgusting caricature... but the open profit motive, the hunger for the wealth of the Jews, the desire to strike the ground from under a competitor, to confiscate his property, to expel him from the country—these are the factors that make them antisemitic"…"

The only solution, then, was a mass exodus to an undeveloped land. But, contrary to the position later developed by the SSRP, he argued that this new state had to be Socialist from the start, not because Socialism was the inevitable next stage after capitalism but on a purely voluntarist basis—that it was a moral necessity that corresponded with what was best and most necessary to be preserved in the Jewish tradition:

> " *"What are the Jewish works—the Pentateuch and the Prophets"*, he wrote in 1900, *"if not a literary memorial to the class war between the haves and have-nots?"* "*It was this people*", he declared in 1902, "*that thousands of years ago said that 'there shall be no poor among you' and made social laws such as the Jubilee, the sabbatical year and all the laws on gleaning in order that justice rule in the world."*
>
> "*"The Jewish people"*, he stated in a speech in New York in 1918, *"is a socialist people not because it lives in want but because the revolution was declared on Mount Sinai."* "*Remove the socialist creativity... from Jewish history*", he declared in Jaffa, "*and we are left without any reason for projecting Jewish history into the future"*…" (Frankel, p.306).

In 1901, he published *A manifesto for Jewish youth*, arguing that the Jewish proletariat needed two movements that would complement each other but still remain distinct. One, like the Bund, would support the Russian revolutionary movement; the other would press for exodus to a new land. Weizmann reading it declared it to be madness, principally because in his view the Zionist movement could only succeed by winning the favour of the existing Powers and therefore had to keep well clear of any association with the Revolution. After the pogroms in Kishinev and Gomel, however, Syrkin's argument began to appear more relevant.

Jewish Emigration

Frankel is primarily interested in the intellectual history of the radical—Socialist and Zionist—Jewish movements of the time. Something should be said about the social circumstances in which these ideas were being developed.

Perhaps the most obvious symptom of the Jewish problem was the steady increase in emigration, overwhelmingly to the United States. Frankel gives as figures 37,011 in 1900, 77,544 in 1904. 92,388 in 1905, and 125,234 in 1906. Solzhenitsyn argues (p.326) [9] that "*Jewish emigration to America remained weak until 1886-7. It saw a brief rise in 1891-2, but it was only after 1897 that it became massive and continuous*." He argues that what made the difference was the legislation introduced in 1896 imposing a state monopoly on the production and sale of alcohol.

According to the *Pahlen Commission* (1886),

> "Jews owned 27% (rounded figures) of all the distilleries in European Russia, 53% in the Pale of Settlment (notably 83% in the province of Podolsk, 76% in that of Grodno, 72% in that of Kherson). They held 41% of the breweries [10] in European Russia, 71% in the Pale of Settlement (94% in the province of Minsk, 91% in that of Vilnius, 85% in the province of Grodno). As for the share of *commerce* in alcohol

8 Discussed in my article in *Church and State* No 132, April-June 2018, also accessible at http://www.peterbrooke.org/politics-and-theology/solzhenitsyn/prologue/

9 Alexandre Soljénitsyne: *Deux siècles ensemble, t.1, Juifs et Russes avant la révolution*, Eds Fayard, 2002. English translations are my own from the French. Nearly twenty years after the French edition it hasn't yet been officially translated into English, though some unofficially translated extracts can be found on the internet.

10 *Brasseries* in the French which could mean either brewery or small café serving alcohol.

held by the Jews, the proportion of the places of fabrication and sale is 29% in European Russia, 61% in the Pale of Settlement (95% in the province of Grodno, 93% in that of Moghilev, 91% in the province of Minsk)" (p.325. Italics in original).

The law taking State control of the production and sale of alcohol therefore hit hard at one of the major areas of economic activity that were available to poorer Jews. It didn't prevent Jewish domination of the sugar industry, the timber industry, the export of grain, railways and navigation, military supplies, the oil industry round Baku and, of course, the financial services industry. Zhitlovsky came from a wealthy timber processing background and Frankel quotes him saying:

> "Samuil Solomonovich Poliakov builds railways in Russia. These railways, according to Nekrasov's famous poem which reflects the true socio-economic fact, are built on the skeleton of the Russian peasantry. My uncle, Mikhail, brews spirits in his distillery for the Russian people... My niece, Liza, sells the spirits to the peasant. The whole shtetl lives from the *Russian* peasant. My father [in Vitebsk] employs him to cut down Russian woods which he buys from the greatest exploiter of the Russian muzhik—the Russian noble... Wherever my eyes rested I saw only one thing... the harmful effect of the Jewish tradesmen on the Russian peasantry'…" (p.263, italics in original. Unfortunately Frankel's reference doesn't give a date).

A major Jewish grievance was their confinement in the Pale of Settlement. Nonetheless Solzhenitsyn says (p.315) that, according to the 1897 census, there were 315,000 Jews living outside the Pale, about 9% of the Jewish population in the Empire (excluding the Kingdom of Poland) and nine times what the figure had been in 1881. Solzhenitsyn contrasts this with the figures of 115,000 Jews in France and 200,000 in Great Britain. Nonetheless their position was fragile, as witnessed in 1891, when the Grand Duke Sergius (assassinated in 1905) expelled some 20,000 Jewish artisans from Moscow in the middle of the Winter. A further 70,000 (families whose presence outside the Pale was technically illegal but who had previously been officially granted a toleration) were expelled in 1893.

Solzhenitsyn (p.343) claims that, despite English protests against Russian Government policy, "*after evaluating the proportions that the flood of emigration risked taking, Great Britain soon brutally closed its doors*". He is referring to the *Aliens Act*, introduced in he last days of the Unionist Government (the Government of Joseph Chamberlain, who offered east Kenya to Herzl and Arthur Balfour of the *Balfour Declaration*) in 1905. This was at least partly a response to anti-semitic riots in South Wales in 1902 and 1903, and to demonstrations by the '*British Brothers League*', formed in 1901, protesting against immigration and claiming some 45,000 members (probably meaning, according to Wikipedia, signatures to its manifesto).

Nevertheless, Solzhenitsyn is exaggerating. According to an account by an academic historian, Jill Pellew of the University of London:

> "The 1905 Act specified that at certain "immigration ports" where immigrant ships would be allowed to discharge passengers, there were to be immigration officers (supported by medical officers) with power to reject those who came within special categories of "undesirable". An "undesirable" immigrant was specified in the act as someone who could not show that he was capable of "decently"supporting himself and his dependants, although a special clause (added through the efforts of [Sir Charles] Dilke and company) made an exception for immigrants who were seeking entry as political or religious refugees... The term "immigrant" was defined as an "alien steerage passenger" although not one who had a pre-paid onward ticket. As far as "undesirables" already in the country were concerned, the secretary of state could deport certain convicted alien criminals if the sentencing court recommended expulsion, and also aliens who, within twelve months of landing, were found in receipt of parochial relief." [11]

But the Act was left to be implemented by the new Liberal Government, and specifically by the Home Secretary, Herbert Gladstone, and his Parliamentary Under Secretary, Herbert Samuel himself a Jew (and later first High Commissioner for Palestine). Pellew goes through their handling of it in some detail. Immigrants were judged to be unable to support themselves if they had less than £5.00 in their pockets. Friends and sympathisers arranged for them to have the £5.00, sometimes passed from passenger to passenger. Initially, boats with less than twelve steerage passengers were exempted. That became less than twenty, and frequently immigrants found themselves waiting until a boat with less than twenty steerage passengers became available. Pellew concludes:

> "The fact was that Gladstone and his party, even though they had come into power with a landslide victory at the end of 1905, did not wish to go through the trauma of bringing the unappetising Aliens Act up again in parliament by proposing its repeal. Gladstone was under parliamentary pressure to relax the regulations, particularly in the early days, Samuel was looked on as an ally of his fellow Jews. Therefore the compromise which they reached between administering the law as its legislators intended and repealing it altogether was to administer it badly…" (pp.378-9).

Returning to the situation in the Russian Empire, another of the motives Solzhenitsyn gives for Jewish emigration was the desire to avoid conscription, which would help to account for the increase in 1904, the year of the Russo-Japanese War.

This brings us to 1905, the year of the Revolution, the formation of the Constitutional Democratic Party (the 'Cadets'), which became the main political vehicle arguing for Jewish rights, the Union for Equality of Rights in which Vladimir Jabotinsky began to make his mark, the role of Parvus and Trotsky in the formation of the St. Petersburg Soviet, a series of pogroms which marked an exponential increase in the number of Jewish deaths (47 in Kishinev in 1903, 800 in Odessa in 1905, according to Frankel), not to mention the subsequent formation of the SERP—Jewish Socialist Labour Party— and ESDRP(PZ) —Jewish Social Democratic and Labour Party (Poale Zion), the return of the Bund to the RSDRP, the second, much more politically-determined *aliyah* to Palestine, and the highly publicised Beyliss Ritual Murder trial.

I had hoped to be able to finish the series with this article, bringing the story to the end of the period covered in Solzhenitsyn's first volume, but so much remains to be said that at least one other article will be necessary.

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11 Jill Pellew: 'The Home Office and the Aliens Act, 1905', The Historical Journal, Vol 32, No 2, June 1989, p.373.

VOX

Death Of Childers

PAT

Death Of Childers

"Everybody is agreed that Childers died bravely on 24th November, 1922. Despite his unorthodox religious views, he asked for Bishop Gregg of the Church of Ireland to attend him. The bishop spent the night with him and was seen to weep several times. Before the fatal moment Childers walked down the line of the firing squad and shook hands with them. He did not want a bandage on his eyes, but when it was put on he called out, 'Take a step or two forwards, lads. It will be easier that way.' He then gave the arranged signal and was shot. Many of the riflemen were wiping away tears before they marched back to Beggar's Bush Barracks.

"The papers of Archbishop Byrne in the Dublin Diocesan Archives have revealed that Molly Childers [his wife] wrote to the Archbishop on 27 November [1922] to tell him that her husband's body would be released on the following day and asking permission for the remains to be received at Whitefriars Street, a Catholic church. She claimed that Erskine had asked for one Catholic priest first and then another before his execution. She said she believed his intention was clear, and she wished to see it carried out. She asked to meet Archbishop Byrne so that she could convince him. There does not seem to be any record of such a meeting taking place." (Irish Rogues and Rascals-Joseph McArdle-Gill & Macmillan-2007-p.p. 83/84)

Archbishop Edward J. Byrne (1872-1941)

Archbishop Byrne did not meet Childers' wife Molly but Byrne *"did personally intervene with the authorities"*, on Childers behalf.

"Another prelate who interceded and probably knew Childers better than Edward Byrne was Patrick O'Donnell, Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh. Writing on the day after the execution, he commented: 'All executions are deplorable, especially that of poor Childers'." (Thomas J. Morrissey, S.J. Edward J. Byrne, 1872-1941, *The Forgotten Archbishop of Dublin*, The Columba Press, 2010, p.99.)

O'Donnell had worked with Childers during the Irish Convention in 1917 and *"he had come to respect and admire him. His execution saddened him unlike any other event in recent years."* (ibid.)

Mrs. Childer's Unexpected Letter

Late in October, 1922, prior to Erskine Childer's execution, Archbishop Byrne "received a most surprising and embarrassing letter from Mary A. Childers"(ibid). She wrote:

"…I know that my husband did not wish to have a Protestant burial, and, though not actually a Catholic, did wish to have a Catholic one. This he expressed to me often during his last years. His religious life was a progress from a rigid Protestant upbringing, through doubts which gave him intense suffering, to absolute faith in God and the Divinity of Christ, and at the same time, as the years passed, often he told me that if he learned his way to a Christian communion none other would be the one he would choose than the Catholic Church." (ibid.)

Archbishop Byrne's reply is not available but Erskine Childers was not received into the Catholic Church.

"Writing to John Hagan, Rector of the Pontifical Irish College in Rome, Cait, wife of Sean T. O Ceallaigh, observed that 'Fr P. Browne (Padraig de Brun) will find it difficult to deal with Mrs. Erskine Childers' wish to have her husband buried with Catholics; he cannot be taken to the church in Whitefriar Street. The Bartons, [Cousins] on the other hand, see it would be just as good to have one Protestant patriot and saint in a Protestant church-yard." Erskine Childers was buried according to the rites of the Church of Ireland.

His remains rest in the Republican Plot, Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin.

De Valera and Gregg

George Seaver in his biography of Archbishop Gregg makes no mention of the Archbishop meeting Erskine Childers in those hours prior to his execution.

Seaver highlighted Archbishop Gregg's warm relationship with Eamon de Valera and in his biography of Gregg, recounts a meeting with himself and President de Valera:

"When framing the text of the Irish Constitution, Mr. de Valera said that he dealt first with all the other articles, and had left to the last the articles on religion, as likely to present no special difficulty. He soon found that he was mistaken. 'At the outset', said Mr. de Valera, 'I was confronted with the question: by what names should our Church and your Church be designated?

"In this perplexity Mr. de Valera, decided to call on Dr. Gregg. He did so, and after a short preliminary discussion, the details of which he has forgotten, the Archbishop rose from his chair and took a book from his shelves. 'Let us see', he said, 'how your Church does in fact designate itself.' The book, Mr. de Valera thinks contained the records or decrees of the Council of Trent. From it the Archbishop read the phrase, 'Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church.' 'This immediately suggested to us both', continued the President, 'that the proper way to deal with the difficulty was to give to each Church the title which it had formally given to itself; your Church being designated, accordingly, the Church of Ireland. I was very happy that in this way my problem had been solved.'"

On the passing of Archbishop Gregg on May 2, 1961, Eamon de Valera stated *"His death…took from us a most learned and kindly gentleman and from me a highly valued friend."* (George Seaver in an interview with President de Valera in 1962.)

George Seaver, John Allen Fitzgerald Gregg Archbishop, The Faith Press, London; Allen & Figgis, Dublin, 1963, p.p. 126/27).

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