

Church & State

# **An Irish History Magazine**

*And Cultural Review Of Ireland And The World*

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## **Nationality** *Real And Imagined!*

**Unmarried Mothers From 1800 On**

**WW1 Blockade of Germany**

**Sinead O'Connor**

**The Great Tricolour Stitch-Up**

**Another Irish Cultural Revolution?**

*Genocidal States Of Mind*

**George Borrow**

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# Football Crazy!

The *Irish Times* editorial of July 3rd was on the subject of *Defining A National Identity*. It informed us that three members of the English soccer team contesting the European Football Cup “*are products of the Irish diaspora; two of them even played for Ireland under-age level*”, and, on that basis, it appealed for Irish support for the English team. But, surely, if they once played for Ireland but now play for the senior English team, that must mean that they have chosen to be English when they had a choice in the matter?

Nationality, as a sentiment, is a matter of little practical concern for men who live in the financial stratum of professional footballing, especially if their language is English.

Professor Roy Foster, hailed as a master-historian by the Establishment of the Irish State a generation ago, told us that England gave us “*the priceless gift of the English language*”. So it did. And it wouldn’t take *NO* for an answer!

Winston Churchill, after he lost the British Empire by continuing the War on Germany after England had lost both the will and the power to prosecute it with its own resources, and who had won only by bringing Communism to dominance in Central Europe as the only Power capable of defeating Nazi Germany, then set about raising up a world force against Communism under the rubric of “*the English-speaking peoples*”.

But the Irish were an *English-speaking people* which had refused to behave as such in the War, and which refused to subscribe to the Churchillian vision after the War for a whole generation. What it has become during the past generation is uncertain. The Irish national body has now rejected so much of the developments that went into its making, and has moulded itself so closely on the Amnesia advocated by Professor Foster, and the subversive Nihilism preached by Eoghan Harris and practiced by Micheal Martin, that the only thing for it to do now—the only prudent thing—is to give up the ghost.

It might be that that would be what Edmund Burke, the philosopher of prudence, dismissed contemptuously as “*reptile prudence*”. But surely that is the form of prudence that is appropriate for reptiles.

If the *Irish Times* has become an Irish newspaper—and it is now widely regarded as being the foremost Irish newspaper—then the following paragraph in Burke’s *Regicide Peace* may be taken as applying to the relationship between Ireland and England now:

“The rules and definitions of prudence can rarely be exact; never universal. I do not deny that in small truckling states a timely compromise with power has often been the means, and the only means, of drawling out their puny existence. But a great state is too much envied, too much dreaded, to find safety in humiliation. To be secure, it must be respected. Power, and eminence, and consideration, are things not to be begged. They must be commanded: and they who supplicate for mercy from others can never hope for justice through themselves. What

justice they are to obtain, as the alms of an enemy, depends upon his character; and that they ought well to know before they implicitly confide...”

In this passage Burke is not referring to relations between Britain and Ireland. There was no Irish state then. There was a Protestant Kingdom of Ireland, set up about a hundred years earlier, on the foundations of what Mitchell called *The Last English Conquest Of Ireland. Perhaps*. It had an independent Parliament, attended and elected by members of the Church of England in Ireland, which was called the Church of Ireland. Burke wrote a well-known account of the Penal Law system established by that Parliament against the Irish.

““It was a machine of wise and elaborate contrivances, and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man” (*The Works Of Edmund Burke: With a Memoir*, p84, 1835).

His description of the Penal Laws has been subjected to quibbling criticisms. The system was not rigorously enforced. But was that a point in its favour? It was genocidal in principle, and it was applied with enough rigour to degrade the populace by depriving it of property, education, and representation in political life, while tolerating furtive religious observance. It was continued in one way and another from the conquest in 1690 to the ‘Famine’ in the mid-1840s.

In the course of a hundred and forty years the conqueror failed to hegemonies the conquered population. For most of that period he did not wish to hegemonies them, seeing them as a helpless subjugated population to be exploited economically for the building of aristocratic mansions.

Purposeful political development began in the populace only at the end of the ‘Famine’, which reduced the population by half—a progressive measure according to English political economy—and stimulated the Young Irishlanders to engage in reform by playing the measures of English political economy against it.

Then, only about seventy years after Gavan Duffy’s Independent Party got a degree of representation in Parliament—which was promptly corrupted from under him by Whitehall—there was an Irish state: a state which the famous, and representative, Dean Inge of St. Paul’s saw as a bewildering fact which disgraced the name of England.

And now this Irish state does not quite know what to do with itself.

Almost fifty years ago it joined the European system. If it had done so of its own volition, as an independent act which would put it on firmer ground against England, that would have been all to the good. But it joined Europe in association with England and in search of an escape from an existential crisis which had overtaken it.

It asserted a right of sovereignty over the Six Counties which were retained within the British state. By doing so it de-legitimised British authority in the eyes of the large Nationalist minority in the North, but it did so without having any earnest intention of ever doing anything to make its sovereignty claim effective.

Britain, when conceding statehood to the greater part of Ireland, retained six counties within the British state but did not allow these counties to function within the actual democratic life of the state, which was party-political. It set up a subordinate system of government in those Counties and insisted that they must have a separate political system of their own, apart from the state system.

The only way that arrangement could work out was by the governing of the large local Nationalist and Catholic minority by the Unionist and Protestant majority. The Unionist population had to return a majority at every election in order to remain within the British state, and meanwhile they had to govern the Nationalist minority in the local hot-house set up, in which there were no real functions of State to be carried out. All the vital services of State were supplied by Whitehall. It was a diabolical arrangement, and the aggravation it caused led to an anti-Catholic pogrom in 1969 and a Republican Declaration of War on Britain in 1970 in support of the Southern sovereignty claim over the North.

The Dublin Government panicked. It would neither withdraw the sovereignty claim nor work out a *modus Vivendi* with the Northern minority that was acting in an attempt to give effect to it.

The opportunity to escape from its dilemma presented itself in 1972. It joined Europe in company with Britain, and it was said that the Irish national conflict would be somehow dissolved in the medium of an imaginary European post-national culture.

Ireland joined Europe as part of a pair with Britain. The European arrangement was supposed to be based on an agreement between a small number of clearly delineated states which shared some degree of common culture.

But the Irish state was not clearly delineated from the British state. The Irish state asserted a right of sovereignty over a region of the British state, and declared Britain to be an Occupying Power which usurped legitimate authority in that region. And the War which had been declared on the British state in that region, in the name of Irish sovereignty, continued for twenty-six years after both states had joined the EEC.

Britain, which always has many irons in the fire, did not make an issue of that anomaly. It needed to get into Europe for reasons that had nothing to do with becoming European. Its purpose was to hinder the development of Europe as a united force.

When the European project was launched after the World War, Britain—which still had a vast Empire—refused to participate in it, and expected it to flounder. When it flourished, with American backing, Britain applied to join it. Its application was rejected by France and Germany on the grounds that Britain was not a European state and that its interests were hostile to European development.

General de Gaulle knew from his wartime experience just what Britain was with relation to Europe, as did Chancellor Adenauer who had been a close observer of British policy towards Germany and France between the Wars. But the next generation of European leaders, who were rather

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## Church & State

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bookish in their understanding of politics, admitted Britain in a spasm of idealism—and Ireland along with it.

The Irish State, which had armed itself against Britain as best it could in 1939 to ensure that it was not forced into Britain's second War on Germany—the one which brought Communism to central Europe and divided the world in two—should have had a degree of understanding of European affairs comparable to that of De Gaulle and Adenauer. But in 1972 the Irish state was in a panic over the War that had been declared in the North against the Occupying Power in support of the sovereignty claim, and it was incapable of thought.

It joined Europe to escape from itself, and subjected itself to a long course of Anglicisation as Britain's second voice in Europe.

Then Britain left the EU, when it judged that a situation had arisen in which it could damage it more effectively by leaving than by remaining.

As Ireland was joining the European project, an article by Raymond Crotty of Trinity College was published in the *Times* (3 July 1972). The gist of it was that nationalist Ireland had been debilitated economically and culturally by “*the establishment of an independent Irish state*”, which “*put a political boundary through the British Isles resource market*”.

Britain ought to take Ireland in hand again. Military reconquest would be out of keeping with the spirit of the time but intellectual conquest was feasible as Irish society was “*the most sheepishly conformist in the world*”, and was dead intellectually.

Crotty went on to found the anti-European *Irish Sovereignty Movement* with Anthony Coughlan of the “Connolly Association”. Britain responded to his appeal, and the era of a revisionist re-writing of Irish history in the English interest began.

We do not know what the source of Crotty's article in the *Times* was, but it seems highly probable that it appeared by prior arrangement. The *Times* was still central to the British Establishment in those days and it would not have published such an article just because it got it through the post and found it interesting.

The idea that Irish sovereignty needed to be won from Europe with British assistance appears bizarre on the

face of it. The converse was the case. British influence on Irish life remained strong half a century after an Irish state had been set up. Irish money was English money with a green overprint, and the Irish Budget was in many ways a dependency on the British Budget. The banking system was geared to depositing savings in London.

If the Irish State had been motivated by a national will to increase its independence, membership of the European project would have greatly enhanced its power to do so. (And, when Irish money was eventually made independent of sterling, it was done in the context of the European project by the only really European Taoiseach there has ever been: Charles Haughey.)

\*

(The notion of a European threat to Irish nationality is the weirdest of all bogeys. It was played by the British Government over two centuries ago, shortly after the Act of Union, when a French conquest was still on the agenda. Walter Cox, a United Irishman in the 1790s, who was the moving spirit in a new national development after the *Act of Union*, dealt, in his *Irish Magazine* in 1811, with the alleged danger to Irish national development that would be posed by a French occupation of Ireland in the war with Britain. He did this in the form of an imagined *Address* by Napoleon to an Irish Parliament:

“England viewed Ireland as a *rival*. And Ireland was sacrificed, not to cruelty and ambition alone, but to jealousy and avarice... France never considered Ireland a *rival*. The total dissimilarity in extent, nature of productions, numbers, and consequent political strength, preclude the possibility that any growth of Ireland could ever amount, in the eye of France, to a dangerous rivalry...

“Look at the speech of the minister Howick, where he openly avows the English policy of taking off the danger to England, by *wasting what he calls your superabounding population*. At this instant, then, England avows her *safety* can be maintained but by the *destruction of your offspring*.”

“A reason, which may appear paradoxical, exists, why the lot of Ireland, even as a province, would be milder under the government of any other country, than it has been under the government of the glorious constitution of England. It is the

total dissimilarity of laws, customs, and language, between the other countries of Europe and Ireland. Many of the evils which have fallen upon Ireland, have been owing to the *similarity* between her and England in these particulars, which, having been gradually introduced, have been at length established. To this *similarity* has been owing that the hours of peace have, for Ireland, been almost as wasteful as those of war...”

(*Napoleon's Address To An Irish Parliament* was reproduced in a pamphlet published by Athol Books, 1996, *Wolfe Tone: Address To The People Of Ireland* (1796). The publication is available from Athol Books, £5 postfree.)

\*

We don't know if Professor Crotty was in consultation with Desmond Greaves of the British Communist Party and the Connolly Association when making his appeal to the British Establishment to take nationalist Ireland in hand. But Greaves's apostle, Anthony Coughlan (a Trinity-based sociologist) continues the themes of both Crotty and Greaves, though denying all knowledge of the Communist Party. He advocated an Irish exit along with the British exit, and is an honorary member of the Brexit movement.

Greaves's position on the European development was entirely coherent, given that he was an active member of the British Communist Party under Moscow direction. The world was divided in two as a consequence of Britain's blundering second war on Germany. Communist Russia defeated Germany after Britain had entirely failed to do so. In order to defeat Germany it had to drive the German Army back home, occupying territory along the way.

It organised the stretch of Eastern Europe which it occupied in accordance with its own system. The American did likewise with the stretch of Western Europe which it managed to occupy before meeting the Russians. Then Western Europe, on French-German initiative, organised itself under American auspices into what evolved into the EU.

It was in the Russian interest to obstruct a coherent development of Western Europe against it. And Greaves, as a member of the Communist Party, was committed to the Russian interest. And, if he encouraged the idea that West European development was a threat to Irish nationality, it is reasonable to suppose that he did so because of his position on the international situation.



But that was then. The situation now is altogether different. The Soviet system collapsed thirty years ago. The Irish State is in a stronger position *vis a vis* the British State by virtue of its membership of the EU—but the strength of its position is largely external to it, and cannot be effectively availed of because of the drastic decline in national will that it suffered during its forty years as Britain's second voice in Europe.

The realistic implications of the *Irish Sovereignty Movement* (and the *Irexit* movement) are Anglophile. They are pro-British, but rest on a false idea of what Britain is. And the Government is caught between European and Anglophile impulses.

De Valera had to choose in 1932 between giving practical priority to uniting the island and developing the state. If he had chosen to prioritise the ending of Partition, he would have failed—and he knew it.

There was only one way to unify the island and that was by rejoining the United Kingdom. It could not be done by force, because the force was not available. And it could not be done by appealing to a common bond of Irish national sentiment which was allegedly lurking in the British community in the North, because it did not exist, and everyone who looked closely at the matter knew it did not exist, though obliged to equivocate.

Professor Crotty said in effect that the Irish impulse of national development had exhausted itself, and he appealed to Britain to put things right. Britain supplied the rubbishing of Irish national history that is called *Revisionism*. It would have been infinitely preferable if Crotty had founded a movement for rejoining the UK, instead of the absurdly entitled *Irish Sovereignty Movement*. A strong case could have been made that the Irish national development damaged itself irreparably when, under Redmond's leadership, it put a minority Liberal Party in government, and helped it to carry contentious English measures against the Tory Party, in exchange for a legislative *Home Rule Bill*, which was certain to be met with strong Ulster Protestant resistance, and then relied on the British Army to carry it through.

(Redmond was warned about the likely outcome of this approach by the movement led by William O'Brien and Canon Sheehan (which has been writ-

ten out of history). He pressed ahead regardless, causing two hostile Volunteer Armies to be raised, and only avoided a military outcome of that approach by throwing the movement into an alternative military adventure: the British war of destruction on Germany.

That was the position of things which he bequeathed to Sinn Féin, and in the excitement of the times Sinn Féin could hardly withdraw from it.)

The EU has clearly been damaged by Brexit. The purpose of Brexit was not merely to reassert complete British sovereignty. Damaging the EU was part of it. And the Irish Sovereignty Movement appears to be in sympathy with the British object of breaking the EU into its component parts.

The stability of the EU depends on Franco-German cooperation. It is essentially a Franco-German project. France and Germany recently attempted to move towards an accommodation with Russia. They were prevented from doing so by a number of states which had played no part in constructing the EU, including Ireland. The Irish Government was presumably acting in accordance with Washington's wishes when it helped to veto the *rapprochement* with Russia.

There was a time, not very long ago, when prayers were offered up in Churches in Ireland for the Conversion of Russia. Well, Russia has converted. It is Christian again, and capitalist too. But the Irish Government is still not satisfied with it. Could it be that Christianity is now the problem?

Then there is the problem of "*the rule of law*". Ireland has been sharply critical of Poland and Hungary for breaking the 'rule of law'. The Hungarians asked for the law to be pointed to them which they had broken. The Irish spokesman did not seem to understand the question. It was obvious to him that the Hungarians had broken the law because that was what was being said, and he would not quibble about pettifogging details.

The issue seems to be that Hungary has, quite constitutionally, introduced a law to prevent homosexual propaganda in schools and leaving heterosexuality on a par with reproductive sex.

It is not very long since the British Government brought in a law prohibiting homosexual propaganda in schools. There was no talk then of Britain having broken the European *Rule of Law*.

The British Government changed its mind later, and the situation now is that teaching about homosexuality is obligatory in schools. And Muslim parents who protest and want to make other educational arrangements for their children have been told sharply by the Labour Party that the law must be obeyed.

Is it this British change of mind that has led the Taoiseach to think that there is a European law in the matter which the Hungarians have broken?

Basic to the EU as formally established is the discretionary power of national Governments to make their own arrangements in matters like this. But the law, as worked out by negotiation and written down, is now being overruled by popular fashion in a number of states. And the Dutch Prime Minister has told the Hungarians that, if they don't like the new approach, they should leave.

The *Irish Times* editorial on English football concludes:

"Under the classy leadership of Gareth Southgate, the team embodies some of the traits the Irish people admire most about England and its people... As a collective, this multi-ethnic team represents the inclusive, open country many Irish people know and love. Many immigrants from Ireland and elsewhere in the EU have felt a chill in England of late. After five tough years since the Brexit referendum, when Anglo-Irish relations have come under strain and the British government has been captured by a narrow mean-spirited conception of Englishness, this team reminds us that the battle for a more progressive and generous idea of England is still being fought. In the long view, it may even be winning."

Does the *Irish Times* really believe that anything but the desire to be a winner motivated the English to accept the 'lesser breeds' into its football team? In all England's Imperial wars down the generations, they have always accepted foreign auxiliaries in subordinate capacities. But the fruits of those wars were never shared with the Irish, Indian etc. foot soldiers deployed. Winning the game was what mattered. And it was always an *English* win. Never a multi-cultural one!

Anglo-Irish relations were put under strain by Brexit because the Irish State, after forty years in Europe, found it difficult to be European without Britain.

And it has looked for new friends, not in the core European countries, but amongst British look-alike countries: the Scandinavians and the Dutch.

Within British politics, mean-spiritedness is much more in evidence in the Labour Party, led by a Remainer who is floundering in his efforts to find a new orientation, than in the Brexiteer Government, which has notions of nursing Britain back to the status of an independent World Power. In English history, broadness of spirit has usually been an Imperialist attribute.

It is because of Empire that English society is “*multi-ethnic*” to some degree. The British State, as an Empire, dedicated itself to destroying viable states around the world, which it did very effectively, and remaking their populations in the English image. And the English population put so much effort in this project that its own national self-sufficiency ended. It even ceased to reproduce itself as it became increasingly wealthy, and it came to need large-scale

immigration for both demographic and economic purposes.

England in the course of the Imperial development exterminated many peoples in the cause of Progress, and it was proud of it. It disabled others politically and culturally and used the populace as a labour force. In Ireland it embarked on a course of genocide but, for one reason and another, it never carried it through to the extermination of populace, which it used as a labour resource instead. But when other states do to subject populations what England did in Ireland, it is often described as genocide by British Governments.

When England as an Empire governed Ireland, it banned Irish sports by law, but did not apply itself thoroughly to rooting them out. And, as an Empire, it sought to establish English sports as world sports.

The *Irish Times* makes the point that English clubs have many followers in Ireland. They appear to have followers all over the world. But these clubs

ceased long ago to have any organic connection with the places they are named after. They are clubs in England, run by international finance, rather than English clubs. And there seems to be parallels between them and sporting activities in the later days of the Roman Empire.

It is a sad state of affairs for the *Irish Times* when it looks to an English victory in the Euros as the last hope of consolidating an Anglo-Ireland relationship outside the EU.

Denis O’Brien—one of the very few Irish national-capitalists (and roundly hated by the Anglo Establishment)—proposed a few years ago to set up an Irish newspaper in place of the *Irish Times*. His proposal was to employ the staff of the *Irish Times* to produce it. Overnight they would carry the paper out of the shadowy world of secret Oaths and mysterious financing left behind by the Union and give it a clear national existence.

They refused. How different their position would be today if they had agreed.

## Nick Folley

An unpublished letter to *Irish Times*

### *Treatment Of Unmarried Mothers*

#### Introductory Note

There’s a lot more I would have liked to put in to the letter below, but I knew it wouldn’t get published or would get edited. For example, I wonder how many impoverished Irish girls who went into service in the local Big ascendancy House ended up pregnant because of abuse or seduction in that situation? While I broadly agree with Eoghan Harris’s remarks (*Sunday Independent*, 10.1.21) saying that the families bore some responsibility, my suspicion is that what Anne Harris wanted to say in her *Irish Times* article (29.6.21) is that there is something genetically askew with the Irish as a nation: inhumanity and mean-spiritedness is in our blood, and we can’t just blame Church or State (now that these have been successfully demonised by the *Irish Times* for years) but the blame lies with our very selves!

Never mind that the whole system was a foreign import to begin with, and much of the poverty that created that society was a result of colonization and plantation.

#### Mother And Baby Homes

A Chara, [I note the *IT* likes the *cupla focal*!]

While the conclusions of the Mother and Baby Homes inquiry are correct that Irish society as a whole was implicit in the scandal, Ireland was not unique in that regard: the whole ‘social reform’ system began life in Britain and the United States thanks to the views of late 18th century Enlightenment social reformers like Benjamin Franklin (Anne Harris, “There’s no healing without home truths” *Irish Times* 29.6.21). It’s all too easy to see the past through the comfortable goggles of today and while we might be rightly scandalised

at the inhumanity and injustice of these institutions, our assumptions about the society that produced them require some comment.

The sub-division of small Irish land holdings among large families had been a major contributor to poverty and famine in the first half of the 19th century, and memory of this may have prompted the practice of ‘primogeniture’ in ensuring farms remained viable. In a society with levels of grinding poverty that we can only imagine today, it’s easy for us to marvel at the spectacle of the remaining sons and daughters ‘forced’ into a choice between a religious vocation and emigration and at levels of piety in general.

Paul Dubois might be amazed at the hordes of pious peasants in 1900 ‘kneeling on the flagstones in silent prayer’. Perhaps they were quietly asking God why their wealthier neighbours and the kingdom in which they lived were ignoring Christ’s admonition to care for the poor and love one’s neighbour as oneself.

In school we learned that Peig Sayers chose marriage and harsh Blasket Island life to going back ‘into service’

in the local Big House again. In encouraging their children into religious orders, where they would receive at least rudimentary education and solid meals, impoverished parents were trying to do their best by them. The alternative might literally have been starvation or emigration. Unfortunately this custom may also have created many priests and nuns without any real vocation, coming even to resent their situation, and in turn inflict their own bitterness on their unfortunate charges in the Mother and Baby Homes.

*Mise le meas* , Nick Folley  
(29.6.21)

PS: A Further Consideration!

I've also been giving some thought lately to the whole concept of *primogeniture*. It came into Ireland by way of the Normans and while it co-existed here with the Brehon system, in England (more thoroughly conquered by the Normans) it became the sole system, especially in inheritance of the Throne. We might think it an unfair system these days, as Thomas Paine a little unfairly put it, "*a system that favours the first son and makes bastards of the rest*". But the roots may stem from the time of Charlemagne and the original Frankish King-

dom. Charlemagne passed the Empire onto his sole legitimate surviving son, Louis the Pious. After Louis' death, the Empire was divided between his sons, and in this manner one of the most coherent geopolitical entities since the fall of Rome gradually broke into lesser kingdoms and principalities.

In other words, primogeniture was an effort to ensure the ongoing cohesion of territory, which was generally in the interests of those who lived in it. In the days before the rise of Nationalism, this can be seen to make a good deal of sense, which is what I mean by needing to see the past through the eyes of those who lived in it.

## Martin Tyrrell

a commentary on Avner Offer's analysis of the impacts of the  
Allied Blockade of Germany

### The Blockade in Numbers

Avner Offer is sometimes credited with falsifying the claim that around three-quarters of a million German civilians died as a result of the Allied Blockade during the First World War. Hew Strachan, for instance, in his contribution to Paul Addison and Jeremy A. Crang's, *Firestorm: the bombing of Dresden, 1945* (2006), writes "*in the 1920s and 1930s nobody really disputed that figure*", before adding, by way of an endnote, "*However, Avner Offer has done so...*" And Niall Ferguson, in *The Pity of War* (1998), also draws on Offer's analysis when he concludes "*the evidence that anyone starved—much less the fantastic figure of 750,000 still cited by some otherwise sensible historians—is not to be found...*"

The book in which Offer allegedly refuted the claim that more than seven hundred thousand German civilians died on account of the blockade—*The First World War an Agrarian Interpretation*—was first published by Oxford University Press in 1989. Regarding Germany under the blockade, he writes: "*the siege economy did not give rise to famine. People did not, as a rule, drop dead in the streets*", and: "*The German people were often cold and hungry. But whatever their complaints, Germany did not starve*". Austria-Hungary, which was subject to essentially the same blockade,

is a different matter. Offer states that the official ration there had dropped to 760 calories a day, somewhere around a quarter and a third of the recommended daily intake at that time. As a result, he says, "*Austrians were dying of starvation*".

The official German ration had dropped to around a thousand calories a day before the Germans pulled the plug on the war and I cannot see how having 240 calories—two slices of bread—more than the Austrians can have made that much difference. If the Austrians were starving on 760 calories a day, what was the condition of Germany on not much more than that? Avner Offer appears to see starvation, not as a process of ongoing deprivation, but only as the final stages of that process, when the people who have been deprived are actually dying.

Ancel Keys was an American physiologist who, during the Second World War, conducted a questionable experiment on behalf of the US military authorities to see what would happen to people deprived of food: The way participants responded to deprivation in a controlled experiment would indicate how ordinary people might bear up during real world shortages. Keys recruited some conscientious objectors as volunteers, whom he then put on their regular 3,200-calories-a-day, diet for twelve

weeks, after which their daily calories were halved for a twenty-four week test period (with the diet itself consisting of the type of food people might eat in near famine conditions—turnips, Jerusalem artichokes and similar, and very little meat). The well-being of the group declined markedly over the twenty-four weeks, both psychologically and physically. But no-one starved. Not if by starvation is meant the end-stages of a famine. No one dropped dead on the laboratory floor. The process of deprivation was stopped well before it got to that stage—as the participants would have surely known.

There was no such certainty in First World War Germany. All that people there could say for sure was that their deprivation, which was the result of a tightening blockade, would continue unless they managed to get the blockade lifted. By almost any definition, they were starving—were finding themselves increasingly deprived of vital nutrients. But, even by Avner Offer's definition, they were nearly there with just a couple of hundred calories a day to go. If they were not yet literally starving, the way the Austrians were starving, they must surely have seen that that was on the cards. Their options for countering the Blockade were limited, but they did try. The submarine campaign, for example, was an attempted counter-Blockade as Offer, to his credit, acknowledges. The German submarine campaign, he says, was "*a scheme to starve Britain before Germany itself was starved out*". But neither the submarine campaign nor diplomacy proved capable of raising the Blockade. Even the Armistice did not end it and in fact made it worse. What finally finished the Blockade was the Treaty of Versailles.



The Allied blockade of Germany began early in the war. It was intended to undermine the German war effort by depriving Germany of essential imported commodities. These included food, fuel, animal feed, textiles, fabrics and fertiliser. Direct German trade was gradually closed down but indirect trade was also largely prevented, or significantly restricted, through the coercion of Germany's neutral neighbours. The resultant shortages of food took their toll on the entire population, civilian and military. But the greatest suffering was found among: the urban, civilian poor; the old; the institutionalised; and the chronically ill. The Blockade reached its greatest extent in the months following the Armistice and ended only when there were German signatures on the Treaty of Versailles. It was either the main reason, or one of the main reasons, the Germans sought terms in November 1918, and it was surely the main reason they signed the eventual Treaty.

Over the time of the Blockade, the number of German civilian deaths rose sharply. There were more civilian deaths in each of the war years than there had been in the last full year of peace, 1913. Also, this excess civilian mortality increased in each of the war years, in step with the intensification of the Blockade, eventually reaching a total of 763,000. This total is not an estimate, or a projection, or the result of statistical modelling. Though Niall Ferguson has described it as 'fantastic', it is not the product of either fantasy or the imagination. It is an actual, arithmetical figure calculated by netting off official civilian mortality figures for the war years against the peacetime base year of 1913. (AC Bell, author of the official British history of the blockade, takes no issue with this German analysis and indeed commends the professional achievement of the statisticians responsible for it.)

The Blockade is the only compelling explanation for why the number of wartime civilian deaths was more than three-quarters of a million higher than the peacetime equivalent. The likely causality is clear enough. Shortages arising from the Blockade left many people increasingly colder, less well-fed, and in less sanitary living conditions than in the pre-War period and to an extent that was detrimental to their health. As a result, they became more susceptible to disease and more vulnerable to existing medical conditions, with many dying sooner than would have otherwise been

the case. This situation was turning critical by late 1918 and remained so for most of 1919. Many visitors to Germany noticed it and commented on it, remarking on the numbers of people, children especially, that showed clear signs of malnutrition (depression, listlessness, hunger oedema). H.N. Brailsford and Joseph Roth wrote about it. The charity, *Save the Children*, was set up to try to do something about it.

If no-one starved in Germany in 1914-19, if no significant numbers of people died on account of the ongoing deprivation caused by the Blockade, then some alternative explanation is needed for the 763,000 excess civilian mortality recorded in wartime Germany. I have never seen one and I have been looking at this area on and off for a good fifteen years. Avner Offer does not challenge the figure itself but does believe that not all of it should be attributed to the Blockade. Attributing the entire 763,000 to the Blockade was, he comments, criticised shortly after the war when a lower (Offer says "*more sober*") figure of 424,000 was proposed instead (by the Health Department in Germany's post-war Weimar Government. This lower figure is an estimate. It is an estimate that cautiously assumes that a little over half of the excess civilian mortality in wartime Germany was due to the Blockade, and that the rest was down to other factors. It does not dismiss the 763,000 and is, in fact, based on it. A more recent estimate, by the American historian Jay Winter, puts total Blockade-related deaths at around 478,000.

These lower figures—the 424,000 and the 478,000—are not in any sense small. They are several times the number of people officially estimated to have died in all of the air raids in Germany in the Second World War, and more than the total killed in the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That they are significantly lower than 763,000 should not obscure the fact that, however cautiously you interpret the relevant wartime civilian mortality data, a very large number of German civilians died on account of the Blockade.

Offer writes that "*food supply was bad in the last three years of the war*", which I take to mean mid-1916 to mid-1919. (The 'last three years' of the war is an odd way to describe the last three years of a war that lasted five years. Three years of a five-year war is the greater part of that war.) Offer agrees

that Germany's food supply was put under unprecedented pressure and seems to accept the "*more sober*" claim that more than four hundred thousand people died as a result. So far, so conventional. But then he homes in on some research that suggests something different—a Household Survey undertaken by Walter Kruse and Kurt Hintze in Leipzig between 1917 and 1920 that gathered data on families and their diet. Kruse and Hintze's main finding was that most of the families in their survey consumed an appropriate amount of calories (on average more than the official ration would have allowed them) but were short on protein and fat. The suggestion is that these shortages, coupled with the monotony of the wartime diet, might have led people to believe that they were worse off than they actually were, particularly since the pre-War diet had been, for many, so lavish. The wartime diet might also have left people feeling less energetic than previously. But Kruse and Hintze suggest no marked health issues.

There is always some risk in generalising from a small sample to a wider population. The sample might not be representative, with the result that some atypical feature of it is accidentally attributed to the population as a whole. Researchers generally try to prevent this type of problem by using a relatively large sample—a thousand or so people, for example—and selecting its members at random.

The families that participated in the Leipzig research do not appear to have been randomly selected. Not only was the sample small, it was short on representatives of the city's poor, the very group that suffered most from wartime shortages. Also, the surveyed families appear to have kept their own diaries of what they consumed and to have provided their own reports on their weight, which left open the possibility of exaggeration. The researchers estimated the nutritional value of the food itemised in the diaries and its adequacy. But, since wartime food was frequently poorer in its nutritional value than it had been in the pre-war period, the researchers' estimates might not have been accurate. The sample comprised 59 families at the start falling to 33 when data collection ended in 1920, a drop-out rate of nearly half. Finally, the research project began when the Blockade was already well underway and did not therefore include a proper baseline.

Generalising from this small, and



surely unrepresentative, survey—conducted in a single city—Offer suggests that the German civilian population might have been deprived in terms of the variety and diversity of the food it could access, and short on luxuries, but that it was not nutritionally disadvantaged. Rather, Germans had “*a relatively sufficient diet, combined with a deep sense of deprivation*”. (“*Instead of sausages and beer*”, writes Niall Ferguson, “*they had to make do with nasty ersatz products and East European wine*”). But shortages and second-best and a deep sense of deprivation cannot account for so high a level of excess civilian mortality.

Offer goes on to say: “*Although less food was available per head [to the families in the Leipzig sample], a smaller ration still answered the basic energy needs once people had lost sufficient weight and limited their exertions somewhat...*” Note those two qualifications. The food available to the Leipzig families was sufficient, so long as people exerted themselves less and lost weight. Losing weight, Offer writes, is “*a great adaptation to food shortages*”, since people who weigh less need less food. And exerting themselves less is also good since it conserves precious energy.

Many who lived in Germany during the blockade did indeed lose weight, and quite a lot of it. (When the biologist Rudolf Otto Neumann tried to live on the official ration, says Offer, he lost 20 kilograms in weight—three stone). Exerting themselves less—by not working, for example, or not working so much—would have been more of a problem. Most people need to work, for themselves and for others, and in wartime this becomes all the more the case. The people in Leipzig, and in Germany as a whole, would have had increasingly less to eat, and would have been losing weight which would in theory have enabled them to get by on the less they had. On the other hand, they would have had to keep working, and working harder than ever in many cases (women having to do the heavy industrial and agricultural work previously carried out by men, older people doing the work of the young, untrained and poorly skilled people having to learn fast and to put in the extra time to make good their lack of ability). In this stressful context, they would have had no choice but to fall back on the third of the coping strategies that Offer suggests—suffering.

Part of Germany’s problem, Offer alleges, was that not enough people

were prepared to adapt to changed circumstances. Aside from adaptations like losing weight, working less, and suffering, they could have tried Fletcherism. Named for its founder, Horace Fletcher (who was able to buy a Venetian Palazzo on the proceeds from his bright idea), Fletcherism was a dietary fad that held that you should give each mouthful of food a good forty chews before you swallowed it. That way you would eat less and what you did eventually eat would be better absorbed and energised. Horace Fletcher himself—the ‘*Great Masticator*’ as he was known—hypothesised that this was because the act of chewing triggered a microbiological reaction that fooled the body into thinking it was sated. (Others, however, argued that the mechanism was less remarkable—the more time you spent chewing, the less you spent eating.) Fletcher is discredited now, I believe, though the forty chews still crops up from time to time as pop dietetics. And Avner Offer here thinks he might have been onto something: that, if the Germans had taken him more seriously, they might have weathered the Blockade a little better.

Similarly vegetarianism. Germany, Offer comments, was too dependent on meat, which is more wasteful than grains and vegetables. The feed that is given to an animal has more nutritional value than the eventual animal carcass after it has been butchered and cooked. If the Germans had gone vegetarian, more of them might have survived the wartime shortages because, with less grain going to feed livestock, there would have been more of it to feed the people. Offer is aware of the practical problems here—the surely impossible task, even if there was a will to do it, of revolutionising a stable and long-standing culture and economy based on meat-eating. Still, he writes: “*Is it too much to ask whether Germany would have started (sic) a war in the first place if the price had been a conversion to vegetarianism?*”

The German Government did, as he notes, try to shift from livestock to arable and had, experimentally, slaughtered a large number of pigs. However, the resultant shortage of pork pushed up its price, which in turn incentivised farmers to raise pigs. This was the story of German food policy in the first two years of the war, Offer says—various piecemeal interventions that made the problem worse, which is the story of many an intervention in established and reasonably well-functioning markets.

Germany’s wartime interventions in its agri-food sector were improvised in character and a response to sudden and unprecedented shortages. It is fine, with hindsight, to criticise these initiatives, and better responses might indeed have been possible. But the Blockade was not imposed in the expectation that the Germans would grudgingly adapt to it. The Blockade did not set a puzzle with a solution that the Germans somehow failed to twig. It was a tactic of war intended to cause serious and destructive shortages. To this end, its impact was regularly monitored to see if the actual effect of it matched the intended, destructive, effect. And, where the destruction was less than intended, the Blockade was enhanced. Loopholes were identified and, if they could be closed, were closed.

The greatest loophole of all was the Baltic Sea, across which Germany operated a reasonable wartime trade, despite an Allied submarine war that was waged in an attempt to prevent it. Only in 1918, following the Armistice, was this trade closed down. Offer, elsewhere, accepts this: “*It is wrong*”, he writes, “*to blame the German food crises on mismanagement. Blockade made them almost inevitable*”.

The clearest evidence that Germany was in crisis is that, when the Germans tried to pool their supplies and then ration them out, which they did in 1916, this failed to prevent what Offer describes as “*a winter of absolute shortage and real starvation*”. Already in 1916, the official ration—the apportionment of total estimated food supplies across the population—was providing well below the recommended daily intake of calories. It was about two thirds of it in 1916 and was down to a third the following year, around a thousand calories a day, significantly less than the volunteers in the deprivation stage of the Ancel Keys experiment received.

Offer refers to black markets several times during his discussion of the effects of the blockade in Germany. He speculates that one reason the families in the Leipzig study might have been able to eat a level of calories somewhat above the official ration (but below the level needed in normal, peacetime conditions) is that they had access to black market supplies. That is entirely possible. Black markets can pop up in wartime when they illegally deliver scarce or controlled goods to people who are prepared to purchase them. What a wartime black

market generally cannot do is replicate a legitimate peacetime market in quantity, quality, diversity and price competitiveness of supply. In Germany, in the First World War, goods that had once been plentiful, were made scarce by the Blockade. The supply of many essential goods diminished sharply. Although some of what was now scarce could be obtained clandestinely, it was not the case that Blockade-related scarcity was easily by-passed and that there was plenty available if you knew where to look, or could afford it. Germans did not do without because they were clueless as to black markets, or too high-minded to use them (or because they were exercising that old favourite, consumer choice). Germans did without because there was no longer enough, whether upfront in the legitimate market or behind the scenes.

Offer’s principal assessment of the impact of wartime living conditions on German mortality is based on a comparative analysis of female mortality in Germany and England in the immediate pre-war period, the War years, and the immediate post-War period. (The analysis is of England, not the United Kingdom, because England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland each had its own decentralised registration of births, deaths and marriages. The female mortality figures cited for both Germany and England comprise all age groups—women and girls. Male mortality is not considered in this analysis as Offer is using female mortality as a proxy for civilian mortality. In Germany, female civilian mortality went from 14.3 deaths per thousand (female) population in 1913 to 17.6 per thousand in 1917. There was then a further increase, to 21.6 per thousand in 1918, the year of the global flu pandemic. In England, over the same period, the corresponding figures were 12.2 per thousand in 1913, 11.4 in 1917, and then 14.6 in the pandemic year, 1918. These are set out in the table below.

**Female Mortality in Germany and England, 1913 to 1919**

	Germany	England
1913	14.3	12.2
1914	15.2	12.4
1915	15.3	13.2
1916	15.2	11.7
1917	17.6	11.4
1918	21.6	14.6
1919	16.7	11.9

Here, the German mortality rate is above the pre-War rate in all of the war years and even in the first partial year of peace, 1919. All this is consistent with the gradual working through of the negative effects of Blockade-induced deprivation, what the American naval theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan described as the “*noiseless pressure*”, with its “*striking and awful*” impact. In contrast to Germany, the English rate rises a little in the early war years and again in 1918, the pandemic year. But English female mortality is actually lower than in the immediate pre-War period in two of the War years and again in 1919. In other words, while German female mortality increased, English female mortality *decreased*, which points to the unlikely situation that English women and girls were healthier during the War than they were before it. I doubt that this was so and certainly the figures are too small to allow any firm conclusion. What I do think they show is that the War had no obvious impact on the well-being of women and girls in England. And, since female mortality is here being used as a proxy for all civilian mortality, no obvious impact on the civilian population. Only in 1918, the year of the pandemic, did English mortality increase, but that was the year mortality increased everywhere.

The mortality rates in the table are calculated as the number of deaths per thousand population. The population of Germany in 1913 was about 65 million and the female population was probably around half of that—32.5 million. Applying the mortality rates for each of the war years to a female population of 32.5 million gives an estimated German female civilian excess of 435,500 for 1914-1918, a figure entirely consistent with a total civilian excess of 763,000.

Doing the same for the English data gives an estimated excess of 39,000, less a tenth of the German total and due, if anything, to the pandemic.

Offer comments that, in Germany, the majority of excess wartime female deaths was caused by respiratory conditions such as pneumonia and tuberculosis. “*These infections*”, he writes, “*are sensitive to hunger, cold and insanitary conditions*”: “*the war at its worst*”, he goes on to say, restored German mortality to what it had been at the start of the century; it reversed a decade or so of public health achievement.

But “*the war at its worst*” for Germany’s civilians was the Blockade. It can only have been the Blockade. There was nothing else that could have matched the Blockade in destructive power. For the Blockade to have eroded some ten years of progress in public health—in diet, living conditions and sanitation—is no small thing.

Even before the War, and the Blockade, Germany had had a somewhat higher mortality rate than England. This was primarily because Germany had had a high rate of infant mortality. A very high percentage of German infants died before their first birthday. For a rich country with modern medical services, this was concerning and also frustratingly difficult to explain and prevent. A seeming paradox of the war years is that Germany’s infant mortality decreased during them and this is sometimes cited as evidence that the Blockade might not have had so negative an impact after all.

One reason Germany’s infant mortality rate decreased was that the German Government deliberately skewed resources towards post-natal support services. More important, however, is that the number of German births decreased sharply during the War; Offer says that there were several million fewer new-borns in the War years than in peace. This is a common feature of a country at war. With so many young men conscripted, there tend to be fewer marriages, births, young parents, and first-time parents. Consequently, those who became parents during the war would have tended to be older than those who became parents in peacetime. And older parents would, in general, have been better-off parents since they would have been working for more years than younger parents and have had time to build income and savings. They would also have been less likely to be first-time parents. Therefore, the profile of wartime parents would have been different to the profile of parents in peacetime—older, better off, and more experienced in raising children. All of this—together with increased healthcare and other support services—would have contributed to a decrease in infant mortality. What is notable is that, *despite* the decrease in infant mortality, in a Germany where infant mortality had made up a disproportionate share of total mortality, total mortality still increased significantly during the war years.

Offer says something perplexing about Germany’s wartime dead. He says that if you tot up the excess civilian dead,

and the servicemen killed in battle, and then you add in the three million or so babies that would have been born but for the war, you get something like five million. If wartime resources were scarce—made so by the Blockade—there was also less pressure on them; there were some five million fewer German mouths to feed over the war years. And if you look at it like that, the dead—and the not born—were, for Germany, a kind of asset!

It is a curious way to construe the situation, to look upon non-existence as an asset. The Blockade dead—whether the 424,000 of the sober estimate or the ‘fantastic figure’ of 763,000—are a subset of this asset. Their deaths, which were due to the shortages, are here assessed to have made those same shortages easier to manage.

What defeated Germany? Was it the Allied onslaught against a German army that was hard-pressed to prevent a rout, or was it the silent assault on the Home Front, damaged and demoralised by the blockade? It is not easy to disentangle the effect of these two. Although it is sometimes argued that Germany prioritised feeding its army over feeding its people, the army was short of rations in the final years of the War to the extent that the Americans were able to persuade German units to surrender on the understanding they would afterwards be fed. In the latter stages of the War, the weakness of the army reflected the weakness of the Home Front, notably its industry which was no longer capable of resourcing the war effort. Factories underperformed for want of supplies and, I suspect, want of labour.

Offer cites an Allied Intelligence Report of 1918 which commented:

“Germany’s difficulties do not end with the feeding of the front line. The problem for her is how to maintain the strength of underfed munitions workers to bolster up the morale of a dissatisfied nation, and to renew every year the struggle against falling production and depreciating quality of food and materials. The strain is working havoc among the civilian population...”

And it was civilian pressure, says Offer, that led to the Armistice. Ludendorff had initially favoured seeking terms, he writes, but became more resistant when Wilson made clear that peace would require significant change in Germany. Germany’s military position was parlous but not so poor as to rule out a defence of the national territory that would have

cost the Allies lives and money. But the people thought otherwise. Offer comments: “*Once a Wilsonian peace had come out of the bottle, there was no pushing it back in again.*”

In Offer’s opinion, the Allies, for their part, were unwilling to prolong the war for long enough to enable a conquest of Germany. But in a sense they did not need to as they had the Blockade. Although Offer is agnostic as to whether the Blockade brought about the Armistice, he is in no doubt as to its effectiveness after it. “*After the armistice*”, he writes, “*the blockade became decisive. In the diplomatic struggle that followed the armistice, the food blockade is what finally forced the Germans to surrender and sign the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919*”.

He recognises that the German civilians had supported the Armistice in order

to have the Blockade lifted and that, in this respect, and in many others, they were disappointed.

No one starved in Germany. That is the message of Avner Offer’s book that has been picked up by more mainstream writers like Niall Ferguson. No one starved, but many were suffering the ill-effects of deprivation, succumbing, in their weakened, undernourished state, to serious, fatal conditions like tuberculosis, pneumonia and, in 1918, a new and virulent strain of influenza. This explains the marked spike in German civilian mortality. Offer does not dispute that there was significant mortality or that much of it was down to the Blockade. Nor does he doubt that the Blockade led to the Armistice and the Treaty. All told, there is nothing in his book to challenge the accepted version of the Blockade.

## Peter Brooke

### Book Review:

Sinéad O’Connor: *Rememberings*, Sandycove (Penguin Books), 2021

## Sinead O'Connor: *an event in Irish History*

I was living in France through the 1990s and not paying any attention to developments in ‘pop’ music, so I missed the impact Sinéad O’Connor made with her first and second albums, *The Lion and the Cobra* and *I do not want what I have not got* and in particular the very successful single, Prince’s song, ‘*Nothing compares 2 U*’. The news that an Irish singer had torn up a photo of Pope John Paul II on Irish television may have got through to me and may have raised a flicker of interest but I probably assumed it was a publicity stunt.

I started taking her seriously late in the day, after my return to the UK. Thinking I should try to catch up with what was happening, I bought the CD *100th Window* by the English band, Massive Attack. It features three songs sung by her. I was immediately struck by the song ‘*Prayer for England*’. Truth to tell, I think I misunderstood it. When she sang ‘*Let not another child be slain*’ I had in mind the children killed by the sanctions imposed on Iraq. 2003, the year in which *100th Window* was released, was the year of the Iraq ‘war’ (difficult to dignify anything in which the odds are so heavily weighed on the

side of the aggressor with the word war). Re-reading the words I think she was talking about killings of children closer to home (‘*Let not another child be slain/ Let not another search be made in vain*’). Though I could still be right:

"Jah calls the ones whose Beliefs kill children to Feel the love of you and be healed And may we all cry too For representing you So badly so badly"

(She uses the Rastafarian word ‘Jah’ to refer to God).

But the intensity of the singing (the ‘*Massive Attack*’ backing is pretty good too), and the fact that it takes the form of a prayer and is sung with such sadness, raises it to a level of generalisation independent of whatever specific horror she may have had in mind. The song is about the relationship between humanity (I suppose I have to use the non-gender specific term) and God.

### The Cruel Mother

There are many relationships that were important to Sinéad O’Connor. As she says in *Rememberings*, “*I have four children by four different fathers, only one of whom I married, and I mar-*



ried three other men, none of whom are the fathers of my children". But, though many of these relationships are reflected in the songs, there are two that stand out very clearly — the relationship with God and the relationship with her mother. The two come together in this story from *Rememberings*:

"I love Jesus because He appeared in my head one night when my mother had me on the kitchen floor. I was naked and had cereal and powdered coffee all over me. My mother was saying all this scary stuff, and I was curled up so she could kick me on my bottom. Suddenly, there Jesus was in my mind, on a little stony hill, on His cross. I never asked Him to come; He just arrived. He had on a long white robe and blood was flowing from His heart all the way down His robe and down the hill and onto the ground and then onto the kitchen floor and into my heart. He said He would give me back any blood my mother took and that His blood would make my heart strong. So I just focused on Him. When my mother was finished with me, I lay on the floor until I knew she had closed her bedroom door. Then I tidied up all the stuff she'd thrown about and set the table for breakfast."

It's not difficult to think it's her mother she has in mind when she sings in 'You cause so much sorrow':

"Why must you always be around? Why can't you just leave it be? It's done nothing so far but destroy my life. You cause as much sorrow dead As you did when you were alive."

But we learn from *Rememberings* that it's also her mother she has in mind when she sings, in 'Feel so different':

"I should have hatred for you but I do not have any and I have always loved you Oh you have taught me plenty."

And most surprising she says,

"The huge single from the album, my cover of Prince's 'Nothing Compares 2 U', was a song I was always—and am always—singing to my mother. Every time I perform it, I feel it's the only time I get to spend with my mother and that I'm talking with her again."

'Nothing compares 2 U' is a love song if ever there was one.

The album in question is her second, *I do not want what I do not have*; and in *Rememberings* she tells the story of how the title song came about. She talks about herself and her sister Éimear (later curator of the Crawford Gallery in Cork) and how they used to spend hours wandering round Dublin begging because they were afraid to go home:

"We did anything to stay out because only battering would happen at home. Some nights we just rode the bus from the first stop to the last and back in the hope that Mother would be asleep when we got home. We were a strange mixture: middle-class kids with filthy clothes that had not been washed for years, begging. We were good at begging; we had to be or we would have starved."

After she died:

"I went to see a medium and my mother came through. My mother asked my sister to forgive her for what she had done to all of us. But my sister would not forgive her. And while I understood this, it made me very, very sad for my mother's soul. I was so young and didn't know any better. That night I had a dream in which my mother came to me for the first time since she had died a year and a half earlier. In the dream, I told my mother I was sorry that Éimear couldn't forgive her. My mother said, 'I do not want what I haven't got'. What my mother meant was that she didn't deserve my sister's forgiveness and that she knew she didn't deserve it so that I shouldn't feel sorry for her."

What she does with the phrase is interesting:

"I'm walking through the desert and I'm not frightened though it's hot I have all that I requested and I do not want what I have not got."

"I have learned this from my mother—See how happy she has made me I will take this road much further though I know not where it takes me".

## GOD

God doesn't get much of a look in in *I do not want what I have not got* except perhaps in the song 'Three babes' — "about three miscarriages that I experienced":

"Each of these my three babes I was not willing to leave though I tried I blasphemed and denied I know that they will be returned to me each of these my babes has brought you closer to me."

The 'you' in question could be the father of the babies but I think it is God. And it makes an interesting contrast to the Gary Numan song, 'Prayer for the unborn', also written in response to a miscarriage — one of several — suffered by his wife:

"So, I prayed  
But you weren't listening.  
Making miracles?"

So, I begged  
But you were far away.  
Saving souls perhaps?  
So, I screamed  
But she was very small  
And you have worlds to mend  
So, she died  
And you were glorious  
But you were somewhere else"

But I can't leave *I do not want what I do not have* without referring to the song 'Black boys on mopeds'. It could be seen as an anticipation of 'Prayer for England'. Granted that 'Prayer for England' was prompted, not by the Iraq 'war', but by some common or garden case of a child being murdered, 'Black boys on mopeds' also concerns an item that might have got tucked away at the back of a local newspaper. She says:

"'Black Boys on Mopeds' is based on a true story involving two young teenagers near where I lived in London. They had taken a cousin's moped without asking permission; the cops were called and gave chase; the boys got frightened, crashed, and died."

She takes it as symbolic of the atmosphere of tension she encountered when she arrived in Margaret Thatcher's England:

"England's not the mythical land of Madame George and roses It's the home of the police who kill black boys on mopeds."

But why 'Madame George'? 'Madame George' is the title of a song by Van Morrison which celebrates the courage of a transvestite not afraid to live his conception of himself to the full. But it has nothing to do with England, it specifically references Belfast and Dublin. The explanation comes in *Rememberings*. Soon after first arriving in England from a Dublin she had experienced as extremely repressive, she met up with two cousins living in South London, one of whom was a transvestite: "My girl-dressing cousin took me to Kensington Market and there I beheld a smorgasbord of size 12 patent-leather stilettos for men. England was officially the greatest country on earth".

*Black Boys on mopeds* also features a discreet but definite reference to God:

"remember what I told you  
if they hated me  
they will hate you ...  
"remember what I told you  
if you were of the world  
they would love you."

In case anyone reading this doesn't know these are among the words Jesus spoke to the disciples shortly before the crucifixion.

## What Did The Pope Do Wrong?

We learn from *Rememberings* that O'Connor's feelings about her mother and her sympathetic identification with black people played a role in the famous incident of tearing up the picture of the Pope. It was a very carefully planned gesture — and a very lonely one. She had no accomplices (after it occurred, she says, her manager locked himself in his room for three days and unplugged his phone).

She was singing two songs on a live programme, as the name suggests, *Saturday Night Live*. The second was an a capella version of Bob Marley's song 'War', based on "a speech given to the United Nations by the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie in New York in 1963 about racism being the cause of all wars". During the rehearsal she held up —

"a photo of a Brazilian street kid who was killed by cops. I ask the cameraman to zoom in on the photo during the actual show. I don't tell him what I have in mind for later on. Everyone's happy. A dead child far away is no one's problem."

The photograph of John Paul II she used had been taken from her mother's bedroom. She had been carrying it around with her ever since her mother died. When she tore it up she shouted 'Fight the real enemy.' There is a story behind that as well.

While living in New York she had got involved with a group of Rastafarians, a lifelong attachment:

"Jamaicans don't do small talk. At first this is a bit uncomfortable because Irish people are always filling the gaps. I find myself in silence in fish-filled vans making deliveries, just like I did with my grandfather. I thought they didn't like me was why they were silent. But it ain't anything other than they are watchers. They're watching out for God everywhere. They're like God's security detail. That's how they see themselves, and that is exactly how they are. They're like Saint Michael leading God's angels to war against Satan. Like zillions of Saint Michaels all rolled into one huge pyre of prophecy. They're watching for the devil too. That's the enemy of God. The devil is their Lee Harvey Oswald. They only speak when it's about Scripture."

However, just before she left New York, her particular friend, Terry, who ran the juice bar where they all met, took her aside and informed her that he was about to be killed. It turned out that he was a dealer in drugs and guns. He used children as "mules. They have guns and drugs in their schoolbags, not books". He

had trespassed on someone else's territory and knew they would get him. She realises that her friends — some of them at least — are fake Rastas. When it comes to *Saturday Night Live* she decides she's —

"gonna change a few lines to be a declaration of war against child abuse. Because I'm pissed at Terry for what he told me last night. I'm pissed he's been using kids to run drugs. And I'm pissed he's gonna be dead by Monday. It also happens I've been pissed off for a few weeks because I've been reading *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* (a contrarian, blasphemous history of the early church) and also over a brief article, buried in the back of an Irish newspaper, hinting that children have been abused by priests but their stories are not believed by the police nor the bishops their parents report it to. So I've been thinking even more of destroying my mother's photo of JP2. And I decide tonight is the night... I yell, 'Fight the real enemy!' (I'm talking to those who are gonna kill Terry.)"

That was on Saturday. Terry was killed on Monday.

The time she spent in a reformatory run by nuns (consequence of her becoming a teenage kleptomaniac, following the example set by her mother) also contributed to her feelings. The reformatory was attached to a hospice that looked after women who had worked in the Magdalen laundries. The two institutions were kept strictly separate. One night however, as a punishment for running away, she was sent by herself to sleep in the hospice:

"I never ran away again after my night in the hospice. In the morning when I woke, I knew what Sister Margaret had been trying to tell me. The worst part was, I knew she wasn't being unkind. She was being a nun I'd never seen before. She deliberately hadn't told me why I was to go to a part of the building I'd never known existed, climb a flight of stairs I would never have been allowed to ascend if I'd asked to, knock on a door I would previously not have been permitted to touch, and enter such a scene with no staff present. She let me figure it out for myself — if I didn't stop running away, I would someday be one of those old ladies."

Still, it may seem unreasonable to blame all that on the Pope. An explanation might be found by turning again to 'Prayer for England':

"See the teachers Are representing you So badly That not many can see you".

She sees the problem as essentially religious.

## Priesthood

The photo-tearing incident occurred in 1992. 'Prayer for England' was issued in

2003. In between the two, in 1994, there was the album *Universal Mother*, which largely concerns her own experience of motherhood, but it also evokes God as a mother; and in 1999, she was ordained as a priest by Bishop Michael Cox of the *Irish Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church* — a church derived from Pierre Martin Ngo Dinh Thuc, elder brother of Ngo Dinh Diem, assassinated President of South Vietnam.

Archbishop Thuc had separated from the papacy in protest against Vatican II. Cox, the previous year, had ordained Father Pat Buckley as a Bishop. In his book, *A Sexual Life — A Spiritual Life* (self-published in 2005), Buckley says that, though he himself agrees with the ordination of women, he was unhappy about O'Connor's ordination first, because of a suggestion that money had been involved, and then, while expressing great respect for her personally, because he didn't feel that she had been sufficiently prepared for the role.

As a result, he separated from Bishop Cox and instead received a "conditional consecration" at the hands of Bishop Peter Paul Brennan of the US Ecumenical Catholic Church. A whole world of independent Catholic Churches of which I was quite unaware is opening out before my eyes!

It's one of the disappointments of *Rememberings* that Sinead says nothing about her ordination, though it does include a photograph of her in her priest's outfit. She does say, however:

"I'm certain part of the reason I became a singer was that I couldn't become a priest, given that I had a vagina and a pair of breasts (however insignificant). I always had an interest in working with dying people, because I was always a person who believed very much in an afterlife and in the lack of need to fear death, which I discerned from having had the Gospels drilled into me. I figured that was Jesus's reason for coming to Earth. That seemed to sink in to such a degree that only now, as I'm writing about my songs, have I become aware that an awful lot of them are about death or talking to dying people or where the narrator is a dead person."

And again: "I should have been a missionary, in fact, but the next best thing was music."

The year after she was ordained as a priest she produced an album with the promising title *Faith and Courage*. It contains sentiments, though, that are surprising — maybe absolutely without precedent — coming from a newly ordained priest, for



example, in a song addressed to her father, *Daddy I'm Fine*, expressing her feelings when she first arrived in England:

"Sorry to be disappointing  
Wasn't born for no marrying  
Wanna make my own living singing  
Strong independent  
Pagan woman singing  
And I feel real cool and  
I feel real good  
Got my hair shaved off  
and my black thigh boots  
I stand up tall with my pride upright —  
And I feel real hot when the makeup's nice  
I get sexy underneath them lights  
Like I wanna fuck every man in sight".

She also addresses God as a goddess, for example in another song addressed to her mother, *'What doesn't belong to me'*:

"I'm Irish, I'm English, I'm Moslem,  
I'm Jewish, I'm a girl, I'm a boy And the  
goddess meant me for only joy."

Youtube features a video of her singing *'What doesn't belong to me'* from 2012, dressed in her priest's outfit. Although it's one of the ugliest pieces of clothing ever devised she, of course, looks very good in it. By this time she's over forty years old but with her shaven head she looks like a ten-year old boy. That she did, or does, in fact see herself seriously as a priest, or a missionary, or a preacher, comes over clearly in the song *'The Lamb's book of life'*:

"Out of history we have come  
With great hatred and little room  
It aims to break our hearts  
Wreck us up and tear us  
all apart  
But if we listen to the preacher  
man  
He can show us how it can be  
done  
To live in peace and live as one  
Get our names back in the book of life of  
the lamb

Out of hopelessness we can come  
If people just believe it can be done  
'Cause every prayer ever prayed is heard  
Take power in the power of the word

Out of history we have come  
With great hatred and little room  
It aims to break our hearts  
Wreck us up and tear us  
all apart ...

But if we listen to the Rasta woman  
She can show us how it can be done  
To live in peace and live as one  
Get our names back in the book of life of the lamb".

It is a constant theme with her that God, however understood, is a reality and that a lot of the problems in the world come from the fact that people don't feel that reality, and that a major reason for this is the way God is presented, not as a reality but as an idea, or as a bundle of clichéd sentiments, in religion. But she does see the need for preaching. And she does see the need for Scripture.

## Theology

Which brings us to what I see as her masterpiece — the double album called *Theology* (2007). But first we should take account of *Throw down your arms* (2005). This is made up of very straightforward versions of quite well-known Jamaican Reggae songs. As such it could be said to follow on from *Sean-Nós Nua* (2002), made up of very straightforward versions of quite well-known Irish songs. She says in *Rememberings* that *Sean-Nós Nua* "contains the very best singing that I ever did in my life", but this article is concerned not with the quality of her singing (always beautiful or powerful in all the phases she went through) but her adventures in religion, and thus primarily with the words she wrote herself.

In this respect *Sean-Nós Nua* is mainly notable for the absence of anything to do with religion. Nor does it include any rebel songs, though a powerful version of *'The Foggy Dew'* appears on Youtube and *Universal Mother* features the song, *'Famine'*. She says of this:

"'Famine', of course, is a song about Ireland and how everyone believes there was a nineteenth-century famine, but in fact, there was lots and lots of food in the country, it was just being shipped out of the country. It was just that you were shot dead if you were Irish and you went near anything but a potato."

But *Throw Down Your Arms* is both religious and rebellious, despite its very charming cover which shows her own first communion photograph, with a decoration of Celtic scrollwork on either side. They're all Rastafarian songs. Lamenting exile from their homeland and calling on Jah to free them from their bondage to Babylon. She says of it:

"In 2005, I was lucky enough to go to Kingston, Jamaica, and record *Throw Down Your Arms* with Sly and Robbie (Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare) and the most incredible band on earth. I got to perform some of my favourite and most inspirational songs, which are all very male Rastafari numbers. I had the time of my life in Kingston with a friend of mine, who was very gay, for three weeks; at the time in Jamaica, you got ten years' hard labor for being gay. So I had to keep poking my friend's chin to make his mouth close every time he was staring at the lovely-looking men ...

"I also felt so strongly about making *Throw Down Your Arms*, I paid four hundred thousand dollars of my own money for the record's production. I was heading toward my next record, *Theology*, which is an album, believe it or not, that I had wanted to make since I was seven years old. *Throw Down Your Arms* was very much the precursor to *Theology*, which I

also paid for personally. (I can't remember how much that one cost me.)"

She says of *Theology*:

"Around the year 2000, I went to college for a brief period to study theology. The books of the prophets were where my passion lay. We had the most beautiful teacher, a priest, who was able to bring God off the page when he was discussing the prophets. Particularly Jeremiah; he'd be going, "My poor people, my poor people", and his eyes would be streaming tears ... I wanted to do the same thing musically that he was doing when he was teaching, bringing God off the page. Let everyone see the humanity of God, the vulnerability, the moodiness, the emotionality ... There's a very fine line between corny and cool when it comes to writing religious songs, and I grew up in the 1970s with all these terrible charismatic Christian songs on the airwaves. So I didn't want to risk making that mistake."

On the actual CD cover she says:

"I would like to thank Father Wilfred Harrington, to whom this record is dedicated, for his inspired classes on the prophet Jeremiah and for his suggestion that I should set some scriptures to music. Also, as usual, thanks to all Rastafari for having been doing exactly that for fifty years; and for having me as a daughter."

*Theology* is a double CD, one recorded in London, the other in Dublin. The London sessions have a full band backing, the Dublin sessions a very simple acoustic accompaniment—herself and another guitarist. There are the same songs on each of the different sessions, except that the London sessions include the Tim Rice song, *'I don't know how to love Him'*, which, she admits in *Rememberings*—rightly—was a mistake. She also says the Curtis Mayfield song *'We people who are darker than blue'* was a mistake. Insofar as it isn't Scripture-based, she might be right but it's still a very impressive version of a song which — like the songs on *Throw down your arms* — one might think only a black person could sing, protesting as it does against black on black (or indeed, as it expands to include brown and yellow, non—white on non—white) violence.

It may be that she feels it is her Irish identity that gives her the right to sing such songs. As she says in *Rememberings*:

"I'm Irish. We're different. We don't give a shit who you are. We've been colonised by the very worst of the spiritual worst and we survived intact."

The rest of *Theology* is scripture-based.



Although there is no hint of reggae, the Rastafarian influence is still present. God is referred to as Jah and all the scriptures used are from the *Old Testament*—from Jeremiah (*‘Something Beautiful’*, which starts as a song in her own voice but turns into an anthology of God’s complaints against Israel taken from different parts of Jeremiah), the Psalms (*‘Out of the depths’*, *‘33’*, *‘The Glory of Jah’*, *‘Whomsoever dwells’*, and *‘Rivers of Babylon’*), *Song of Solomon* (*‘Dark I am yet lovely’*), Job (*‘Watcher of men’*) and Isaiah (*‘If you had a vineyard’*). If she never did anything else, her life on earth would have been justified by her version of *‘If you had a vineyard’*:

“Jerusalem and Judah U be the judges  
I pray Between me and my vineyard.  
This is what God says What more could  
I have done in it That I did not do in it?  
Why when I ask it for sweetness It brings  
only bitterness

For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts  
Is the house of Israel And the men of  
Judah His pleasant planting And he looks  
for justice but beholds oppression And he  
hopes for equality but hears a cry”.

*‘Out of the depths’* contains, interspersed into words from Psalm 130, what almost amounts to a personal creed as well as a statement of intent:

And I’ve heard religion say you’re to  
be feared But I don’t buy into everything  
I hear And it seems to me you’re hostage  
to those rules That were made by religion  
and not by U

And I’m wondering will U ever get  
yourself free Is it bad to think U might  
like help from me? Is there anything my  
little heart can do To help religion share  
us with U?

For oh you’re like a ghost in your own  
home Nobody hears U crying all alone  
Oh U are the one true really voiceless one  
They have their backs turned to you for  
worship of Gold and stone

And to see U prisoner oh makes me  
weep Nobody hears U screaming in the  
streets And it’s sad but true how the old  
saying goes If God lived on earth people  
would break his windows

I long for U as watchmen long for the  
end of night”.

The statement *‘U are the one true really voiceless one’* evokes a passage in *Rememberings* in which she is reflecting on the loss of her father as a child when her parents separated and custody was given (as it always would have been at the time to the woman) to her mother:

“I don’t go looking for any father  
because I have God. And God sends me  
stuff because I talk to Him. Naturally  
He’s the number-one father. But I’m a

kid. I need a father’s voice, and poor  
God don’t have a voice. I like voices for  
some reason. I dunno why.”

## Keeping A Diary

In *Rememberings* she says:

“Please be aware that every album represents a diary and each song is a chapter in that diary. And my collection of albums represents my healing journey. When I was younger, I wrote from a place of pain, because I needed to get things off my chest. Once I came to the *Theology* album, which is all Scripture, I worked from a place of healing. And the first album I wrote totally from that platform is *I’m Not Bossy, I’m the Boss*. And it is from that platform I continue to write. After all, there is no point setting out on a healing journey if you’re not going to find yourself healed.”

So I think there is a logic in stopping here. She did, as it happens, have to go through a whole new bout of pain when, in 2015, she had a hysterectomy:

“I’d had to have the surgery because I had chronic endometriosis. I didn’t actually need my ovaries taken out too. The doctor just decided he “might as well” whip them out.”

The result was a ‘total breakdown’, a period of a couple of years when she disappeared from public view and was obsessed with suicidal thoughts. She says that this explains the imbalance in *Rememberings*.

She had already, prior to 2015, written about the events leading up to *Saturday Night Live* — her childhood, the relationship with her parents, her discovery of the Rastafari. After 2015 her memory was shot to pieces, hence the more perfunctory account of events from 1992 to 2015.

It was in 2018 that she converted — she would say ‘reverted’ — to Islam. I do not think for a moment that this can be ‘explained’ by the consequences of her hysterectomy but they do provide the context in which it occurred. As she says towards the end of *Rememberings*, *“trouble is only God in disguise”*.

For what it’s worth I think I can see two things that might have drawn her to Islam. The first is the theological simplicity of it. Sunni Islam at its most basic posits a very simple two-way relationship between God and Man (which in this context should be recognised as a non-gender specific term, better than ‘humanity’ or ‘the individual person’ because it refers to the universal humanity of the individual). And that is the theme of all her religiously orientated songs.

The second thing that might have attracted her is the hijab. In a television interview which can be seen on Youtube she says she isn’t a very devout Muslim, she doesn’t say her five daily prayers, but she does always wear the hijab. Describing her time in hospital following her breakdown she talks about an old Vietnam veteran who is *“utterly bewildered but still waits every day for me because he never saw a heterosexual woman with no hair before. He doesn’t realise I’m actually asexual”*. The hijab would be a better protection than a shaven head against the sexual tension which obviously surrounded her all her life.

So I don’t think the ‘reversion’ to Islam, or even the hysterectomy, alters the fact that she’d reached her ‘place of healing’ with *Theology*.

I’ve written this article because I consider Sinéad O’Connor’s career to be an important event in Irish religious history. It is the story of a woman with a strong religious sensibility living through the period when the credibility of the Irish Church collapsed. It’s important to stress that the incident of tearing up the photograph of John Paul II occurred before it became easy (all too easy) to attack the Church or to call out clerical child abuse.

She was right at the beginning of that particular process and at the time the general assumption was that she had wrecked her career. What is remarkable about her (apart from the wonderful voice and stage presence) is the extent to which her career has been pushed by deeply-felt necessity rather than calculation. She isn’t, thank God, a clever person (like, for example, Bob Geldorf or Bono). And she obviously loved the Church as much as she hated it — you only have to hear her singing *‘Regina Caeli’* (on the compilation album *She who dwells in the shelter of the most high*) or, on a radio programme available on Youtube, *‘Veni Emmanuel’*, to be sure of that. Similarly with her mother and similarly with Ireland (she rarely has a kind word to say about Ireland but she couldn’t have recorded *Sean-Nós Nua* if she didn’t love it).

In this conflict with the Church, I’m not declaring her to be right and the Church to be wrong. I’m not taking sides. But I would suggest that if religion is to survive in Ireland — and so far as I’m concerned that means if a worthwhile Irish culture is to survive in Ireland — some sort of accommodation between the two sides will have to be found.

Catholic priesthood) in 1795, the era of these colleges had passed its zenith. In the 1820s France paid compensation for the losses incurred by the colleges during the Revolution. But they paid the money to the British Government, which used part of it to build Marble Arch in London. Marble Arch is believed to be on the site of Tyburn Tree, which ironically St. Oliver Plunkett, Archbishop of Armagh and an alumnus of the Irish College in Rome, was executed in 1681.  
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## An English Catholic!

"Shirley Williams, the Lib Dem peer who died yesterday, enjoyed the rough and tumble of politics. At 29 she attended a rally for Malawian independence with her husband, the philosopher Bernard Williams, and was assailed by a racist mob. She repeatedly punched a burly man in the stomach, before Bernard was sent flying over some chairs. "Rather exciting", she said of it. As an MP she tired of having her bottom pinched in crowded division lobbies and told lady MPs to wear appropriate footwear next time. "Few things hurt more than stiletto heels driven into the foot", she advised. As always, she was willing to put her foot down until her opponent got the point" (The TIMES, London obituary, 14.4.2021).

Her marriage to Bernard Williams was dissolved in 1974. She later fell in love with a friend, the journalist and political scientist Anthony King, himself a widower, and they would have married but for Williams's profound Roman Catholic faith. She sought an annulment of her first marriage which was submitted to more than one ecclesiastical tribunal and was not granted until after she and King had parted in 1976.

Baroness Williams was buried at the end of April in a small Catholic Church in a village in Hertfordshire— Furneux Pelham.  
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## Harvey Duff

Tommy Fitton, aged seven, and Dan Hanrahan, aged nine, two school children — from Newcastle West in Co. Limerick, were arrested on 12th April, 1881 on a charge of seditious whistling. The two children were arrested after whistling the tune of 'Harvey Duff' at police as they passed by. Harvey Duff was a villainous character and police informer from Dion Boucicault's play The Shaughran. To call someone Harvey Duff or whistle the tune in their presence was akin to calling them a traitor.

The police took the two boys and lodged them in the black hole at the barracks in Newcastle West, where they were held overnight. Dan Hanrahan was beaten by one of the policemen. The next day, the police, who completely over-reacted in this case, marched the two little boys to the courthouse under an armed guard. They were given a telling off by the magistrate and released without charge.

Later that year, in August, another man whistling the tune in Newcastle was arrested and charged with abusive language. The following year, a policeman named Basset struck a little girl at Cappamore in Co. Limerick and killed her after she and her friends had whistled the Harvey Duff tune in his presence.

There were numerous other incidents in relation to the Harvey Duff tune. The police attacked a fife and drum band in Dublin for playing it in 1882 and it was said that a donkey in Derry became famous because of its ability to bray the tune. (Ireland 366, A Story a Day from Ireland's Hidden History, New Island, 2013)  
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## The Thirty Irish Colleges

Between the destruction of Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly in 1552 (founded as a seat of learning over one thousand years before, in 545 AD) and the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, the Irish established a network of some thirty colleges on the European mainland to educate their young men, mainly, but not exclusively, for the priesthood. This network extended from Lisbon to Prague and from Louvain to Rome.

Salamanca in North-West Spain, established in 1582, was the earliest college established. With the destruction of many colleges during the French Revolution of 1789 and the foundation of Maynooth College (the national seminary in Co. Kildare for students for the

## Euthanasia

At the last General Election (17.10.2020: Turnout-82.2%, New Zealanders also voted in two referendums — one on "assisted dying" (euthanasia) and the other on legalisation of cannabis. In the case of the former, legislation had been enacted but the statute included a provision that it must be put to voters and if rejected the enactment would fall. In the referendum Kiwis voted by a clear majority to accept the law.

It is now due to go onto the statute book in a matter of months. However an issue has now arisen: what happens if an "assisted dying" procedure (and it is a medically administered procedure) goes wrong, is botched, does not work or works only eventually and involving great distress?

No one raised this issue in the course of the campaign. Advocates of euthanasia concentrated exclusively on the libertarian/individualist 'right to die' and had no interest in raising messy complications such as these. Opponents of the measure also said nothing, presumably on the grounds that however relevant such a line of questioning would face accusations of scare-mongering. Yet now, within months of the measure due to become law, such difficulties are being raised by medical and related professionals. (F.O'R.)

Note: The 2020 N.Z. cannabis referendum was a non-binding referendum. 50.7% of voters opposing the legalisation and 48.4% in support.  
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## Demographic Disaster?

The lowest fertility rates in the world are to be found in Europe and East Asia. In June, this year, China announced that married couples could now have three children. In 2016, it dropped its notorious one-child policy, which punished couples who had more than one child and sometimes forced women to have abortions.

It is now forecast that, unless China can somehow reverse the situation, its population will decline from around 1.4 billion people today, to around 732 million by the end of this century. And it will be much older too.

The fertility rate in Ireland is now around 1.7 per couple. Amazingly, this is still one of the highest in Europe, and that is almost certainly boosted by the number of young migrants living here. But it is still below what we need to keep our population from ageing rapidly, and declining sharply in the coming decades without massive amounts of inward migration.

Last year, almost 4,000 fewer babies were born in Ireland than in 2019. Ireland's population is actually forecast to grow a little to 5.44 million by the turn of the century, mostly because of immigration.

However, in Africa, the number of people is projected to sky-rocket. For example, the population of Nigeria is expected to grow from 200 million today to almost 800 million by 2100, meaning it will have overtaken China.

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## Social Welfare Comparisons!

### IRISH REPUBLIC:

Children's Allowance or Child Benefit is currently €140 (£120 ster.) per month for each child (2021). Fourth child: €560; Eighth child: €1,120.

The annual amount of Child Benefit per child is €1,680.

Child Benefit is paid up to the Eighth birthday, if in full-time education.

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### UK

Child Benefit: 2021/22, Weekly: Eldest only-child: £21.15 (€24.75); Other children £14.00 (€16.29).

Child Benefit stops on 31 August on or after your child's 16th birthday. When a young person aged 16, 17, 18 or 19 leaves full-time non-advanced education or approved training, your entitlement to Child Benefit will usually end a few weeks later.

Moreover, the two-child limit means that, since 2017, third and subsequent children in a family are not eligible for support through the child element of Child Tax Credit and the equivalent in Universal Credit.

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After 6th April 2017, the cut in UK child welfare supports for the third or subsequent children born into families struggling financially may have gone unnoticed in the Republic, but it is causing "deeper poverty" in the North.

Under the two-child limit, in the North and Britain, families are not able to claim child benefits for any third or subsequent child born on or after 6th April 2017. It's believed that there are about 3,000 families being affected by the two-child limit. Job losses due to Covid were also causing a weekly rise in poverty as people were forced onto Universal Credit.

The effects are certainly being felt in the Six Counties as 21.4% of families in the North have three or more children compared to the UK average of 14.7%. The average number of children per family in the Republic remained at 1.38 in 2011 and 2016.

According to the Cliff Edge Coalition NI, a group of over 100 organisations from across the North, which came together to highlight concerns about the potential 'cliff edge' of the end of the welfare reform mitigations, the two-child policy is causing families with three or more children to be financially disadvantaged by £2,780 per year, per child, for their third or additional child.

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### The 'Excuse'!

"Four out of five households across the UK have two or fewer children, and this policy ensures fairness by asking families in receipt of benefits to make the same financial choices as people who support themselves solely through work. There are also careful exemptions and safeguards in place to protect people in the most vulnerable circumstances" (UK Government, The Irish Catholic, 17.6.2021)

A lot of parents are forced go back to work full-time in order to try and cover the cuts in Child Benefit.

The Children's Commissioners of Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland wrote to the UK Government late last month, calling for the two-child limit to be scrapped.

The joint letter, sent to Pensions Secretary Thérèse Coffey, said the policy is a "clear breach of children's human rights".

The administrations in the North, Scotland and Wales are concerned: as the control of benefits is not devolved, that limits their power to make changes.

The two-child limit is having a significant negative impact on religious communities where larger families are more prevalent. Amongst the general population, 31% of children live in households with more than two children.

The Women's Resource and Development Agency, who said in a report the policy —

"will disproportionately affect families from specific cultural and religious backgrounds where there is a trend for bigger families or a moral opposition/conscientious objection to contraception, emergency contraception and abortion, such as Orthodox Jews, Catholics or Muslims. This may also breach Articles 9 & 14 of European Court of Human Rights (freedom of religion and anti-discrimination)".

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### Community Blow

"Father O'Leary Boys Club played a central role in the lives of young boys on Cork's Northside for the best part of a 100 years" (The Echo, 29.10.2020). "Bernard Spillane who volunteered at the club for 54 years said that the writing was on the wall for himself and John Ford and that the club could no longer run with just two volunteers.

"The traditional clubs that I used to know are held on by the tips of their fingers, the clubs where you'd have football, pool, tennis, arts and crafts, and board games.

"Kids now—their attention span is absolutely shocking.

They play pool for two minutes and they throw the cue away, it's very hard to keep them active.

"If we got our building wired for wifi we could have 100 kids in there sitting on their laptops or mobiles but nobody chatting to each other and there'd be no interaction and our function is to get people active."

"In its early days, the club was the only entertainment in the parish and every house here on the Northside way back in the 40s and 50s had a boy going to our club", he said.

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### Anointed?

"One main reason why the Queen will absolutely not abdicate is unlike other European monarchs, she is an anointed Queen," the royal historian Hugo Vickers told The Guardian, referring to the pact she made with God during her coronation. "And if you are an anointed Queen you do not abdicate"... (The Guardian, London, 11.4.2021).

Did Pope Benedict XVI not abdicate his office on 28th February 2013?

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## The Great Irish Tricolour Stitch-Up

My aunt and her 14 year old daughter were visiting us from the Woodvale district, in Belfast. She was a political activist for the Unionist Party. It was 1943. I was 11 years old. The beautiful young Peggy had done something to my heart. I couldn't understand the feeling. I was dumbstruck.

Occasionally they would take me back with them from Carryduff, where my family were living. Peggy was an only child and they must have wanted a boy in the house on those occasions. My aunt was obviously not getting along with her husband. He was a hand-riveter in the shipyard. They weren't getting along because my aunt and her daughter used the same bed. On visits, I slept between them.

I rarely saw the husband. When I did he would say nothing at all to me, not even greeting me, or saying goodbye. My aunt said to ignore him – he hated Catholics. My aunt wasn't too fond of them either but she had a few Catholic friends, and she liked visiting us even though my mother was a Catholic, as were my sisters.

My aunt sometimes said things like: *If you hear me say things about Catholics (she didn't use the Roman bit) ignore me. That's how I was brought up.*

When they visited we didn't discuss the stoning of our house by elements of the local Protestant community nor mention the almost daily sectarian insults, and the constant fear they were trying to drive into us as a family. That, in Northern Ireland terms, would be insulting my aunt and her daughter. My father also didn't mention any of this to his favourite sister.

But the aunt was allowed to blabber on about her work as a Unionist militant and her joy that the Unionist candidate was unopposed in the coming by-election.

Generally the aunt and her daughter were a loving couple. Before their visit we always bought a dozen eggs and a pound of butter from a local farmer, on the black market, for them to take away

with them. They would arrive about 10 am and leave around 10 pm. We all looked forward to their visit. There was no point inviting the husband: he was never going to come on a visit.

There was a bus to Belfast at around 10.15 pm and my father, two sisters, and I would go with them to the bus stop, which was about five minutes walk away. Carryduff was pitch-black at night and the few houses around had blackout blinds because of it being WW2. The bus and the odd car or tractor had cowed head lamps, mere slits that threw no light on to the road in front of the vehicle. We literally had to take my aunt and cousin by the hand to guide them to the bus stop. They were city people and couldn't see in the country-darkness.

Belfast no longer had full street lightning, electric or gas, but they had some.

In the silence of the countryside we listened for the bus. As children we could describe what vehicle was coming, though it was miles away – an Austin 7; a Morris 8; a single-deck bus, or a double decker; a British Army vehicle, usually a lorry or an ambulance; or a US military vehicle that could be a lorry, a jeep, a beep, or an ambulance. This time it was a single-deck bus of the Northern Ireland Transport Board.

We now had to attune our ears to different buses. Buses from Yorkshire, Lancashire and as far away as London, were now on the NI roads. There was a lot more travelling going on, what with people who had moved out of the city because of previous German air raids now having to go to work or school, and the enormous amount of travelling by US Armed Forces, when off-duty: three hundred thousand being stationed in NI, in and near all the border towns.

Belfast was where they went for entertainment – a large ballroom, *The Plaza*, had been taken over by the American Red Cross. They were policed by their own Military Police and Shore Patrols, who carried around heavy wooden batons, making them swing and whirl like the Hollywood gun-toting Wild West

actors. You felt the US Army was now in charge of NI.

The NITB single-deck blacked-out bus came and another visit was over.

My father and mother then discussed their visit. It seemed a pity that this lovely young girl could get nothing better to work at but as a stitcher in a clothing factory. She had just left school at 14 and was working in a blacked-out windowed factory in dull artificial light. Already a needle had gone through her finger and was pulled out by a mechanic with a pair of pliers.

The factory was making military clothing and now they had suddenly gone over to making Irish Tricolours of all shapes and sizes. The aunt wasn't too pleased about that. Her daughter was bewildered when the packers were putting US Army labels on them, and they were being picked up by US Army lorries. It was best to keep quiet because the walls of the factory had posters saying:

*Work and Shush up.*

*The walls have ears.*

No matter how young you were, WW2 caused anxiety. Part of the Nationalist community looked on the US army as occupiers and knew such a mighty force could easily strike South across the Border.

My father was putting two-and-two together about the Irish Tricolours. There were fights going on between US troops and the locals in such places as the majority Nationalist Downpatrick. The papers said it was about the local girls taking a fancy to the US troops in their area.

I wondered if we had been invaded, or would we be invaded by the German Army, even the Japanese. I had nightmares about them. The news about the bayoneting of doctors, nurses and patients lying in their beds in a hospital in Singapore brought on those nightmares.

On another visit my aunt and cousin took me back with them to Woodvale. I was 11 years old and still considered young enough to sleep between them in the bed. That was Friday. On Saturday, about 7 pm, my cousin was getting ready to go out dancing. She was making quite a show of it in dolling herself up and I suddenly became insane with jealousy. She was going to a dance at the American Red Cross. It seems she was invited by

a US army driver picking up the boxes of Irish Tricolours from the factory she worked in. My aunt noted my agitation and said:

*You're in the box room tonight.*

I didn't understand what she meant by that. I was glad because I was embarrassed by her singing as she took her corsets off. Even my cousin hid her eyes. Generally it was a normal uninhibited period.

I realise now how my aunt gave her daughter the freedom to go out and dance at the age of 14. The general expression then was:

*She's hardly out of ankle-socks and now she's going out with an American soldier.*

Most of the US soldiers were themselves teenagers and many came from areas of the US where girls could marry at 13. I heard my cousin come back about two in the morning.

Before I got the bus back to Carryduff she gave me an item wrapped in brown paper. I got on an old bus with a Yorkshire company logo displayed on the sides and opened the gift.

It was a small Irish Tricolour with a note saying she had sewn it. What that meant I had no idea. She was probably very proud of her work stitching and this was the only sample she had.

It was the equivalent of a bomb in the area I was now re-entering so I stuck it deep in my pocket.

14 April, 2021

## Hugh Duffy

### Unmarried Mothers Prior To Independence

I read with interest Brendan Clifford's Article "*Where Did The Free State And Its Social Welfare System Come From* [Church & State 144, Spring 2021].

On page four Mr. Clifford writes on his section of the *Mother And Baby Homes Commission Of Investigation Final Report* that, despite that the report tells its readers that there is a chapter 3 dealing with the situation prior to 1922, Mr. Clifford was unable to find it.

I was interested in finding out what happened to Irish Women who had children outside of wedlock. I researched the period before 1922 and sent my findings to Minister Zappone TD, who suggested that I sent my findings to the Commission which I did, and the report I sent was acknowledged by a lawyer working with the Commission... [and which will appear in] my Memoirs to be published in September

What happened is set out below. In addition to the document entitled *Pre-cursor of Mother and Babies homes and adoption scandal*", there are a number of letters I sent to the *Independent* all of which were not published. These letters are entitled *Tuam Babies and the Pope*, which is a letter is sent in reply to a letter by M/S Merritt setting out my experiences as an Altar boy in Mullingar in the early forties. The second letter is drawing attention to a circular issued

in 1946 by the then Minister for Local Government and Public Health which drew attention to the fact that "*many local Authorities*" were not paying attention to the administration of Maternity Homes. The Circular also stated that the CEO of the local Authorities should report on the number of deaths that happened in the homes in their county: this did not happen. It is interesting for the views of Mr. Darby, the secretary of the Department.

Finally, another report in the State files in 1935 sets out an investigation in the number of Irish unmarried pregnant women travelling to the UK. The Report says that the "*First Fallen Women...*" discovered in England should be sent back to Ireland. This should answer Brendan Clifford's point in which he asks why should the UK send Irish Citizens back to Ireland as there was free movement. The reason was that the Irish Government requested that the "*first fallen women*" discovered should be sent home. The next letter concerns the Tuam Babies and the Magdalene Asylums. Finally there is a letter concerning the Taoiseach's statement in the Dail reminding that W.T. Cosgrave removed two important points from the first Constitution dealing with child welfare and child's free education.

I enjoy you Irish History Quarterly Magazine.

## Martin Dolphin

Letter to Editor

### That Famous Contraceptive Train!

*Remembering Margaret Gaj,  
a social activist in Dublin  
in the 1960s and 70s*

In 1971 I was in Connolly station (then still Amiens Street), waiting for the train full of contraceptives to arrive from Belfast.

When the customs people insisted on checking the bags of everyone on the train, large quantities of contraceptives were thrown over the heads of the customs people to the enthusiastic crowd in the station beyond.

We all grabbed what we could.

I was unlucky and only managed to get my hands on a small square white box which I viewed with some puzzlement.

Margaret Gaj who was close by shouted at me: "Well done, Martin. You've got a diaphragm. You will just have to find someone it fits."

I attempted, probably unsuccessfully, to cover up my embarrassment.

## Appendices

### Submission Of Information That I Believe May Be Helpful To The Commission

Hugh Duffy

I am an 85 year old retiree from both the Public and Private enterprises and my hobby is the forensic study of history. I am a frequent contributor to the letters pages of the *Independent* which publishes three or four of my letters each month. I also have occasional letters published in *History Ireland*.

When the Commission was set up to carry out an investigation into Mother and Baby homes in the period 1922 to 1998 I was curious as to what happened before Catholic Emancipation and the establishment of Mothers and Babies homes. I sent details of my research to Minister Zappone TD. She suggested that I send my findings to your Commission.

My research is into parts, *one* historical and *two* my personal observation as a ten year altar boy in 1940. I will deal with them separately. I might add that I submitted both letters to the Editor of the *Independent* and neither were published. These letters form part of my submission.

As I mentioned, in my curiosity to examine what was the fate of infants pre 1922, I explored their fate during the lifetime of Grattan's Parliament and later when we were part of the UK between 1800 and 1918.

I was aware that, in these periods from the social history, that unmarried mothers were a feature due to young Catholic Women being raped by British Soldiers stationed in Ireland and by landlords and their agents. I was also aware that the only refuge for young Catholic Women was the local Poor House and that infants could receive no care in those institutions. This phenomenon was not just something that happened in Ireland but was a feature of British Colonial Rule as set out in Ronald Hyam's book *The Empire And Sexuality*.

I was aware of the Foundling Hospitals, the only one documented was the London Foundling Hospital, closed down in 1820, which, like the Dublin Foundling Hospital, was "*characterised by corrupt administration, poor diet, disease, infestation and cruelty*". This information came into my knowledge with the Publication of the *Cambridge History Of Ireland* in four volumes in 2018. Volume III, edited by James Kelly, a Professor of Irish History specialising in the period 1700-1850. London, however, did not forget their unfortunate inmates by opening *The Foundling Museum* which outlines "*the plight of London's forgotten children*" and is visited regularly by members of the British Royal family, the latest in March of this year.

While the *Cambridge History* gives a very good pen picture of "*women, men and the family from 1830-1880*" (Chapter 9 of Volume Three), and tells of the closing of the Foundling Hospital in 1828, it does not elaborate on the operation of the Hospital from 1730 till its closure.

Continuing my research, I came across an English Historian: James Anthony Froude. From his upbringing amidst the Anglo-Catholic Oxford movement, he intended to become a clergyman. But doubts about the doctrines of the Anglican Church drove him to abandon his religious career and turn to writing history. He wrote about forty histories, including a six-volume *History of England*. He also visited Ireland, where he stayed for two years, doing research for his three-volume history, '*The English In Ireland*'. Because of his credentials as an English Historian, he was given access to the parliamentary papers of Grattan's Parliament, and also, more

important, the correspondence between London and Dublin Castle. These documents left Ireland in 1922 and were not available to the New Irish Historians as far as I know.

His findings are set out in *Appendix I* below.

On the second portion of my evidence is a letter to the *Independent* (unpublished) of my memories as a ten-year old Altar Boy in the Forties of the role fulfilled by the Mother and Babies Homes when there was no alternative home for deserted pregnant young women who were 'discarded' by family and society. (Appendix II.)

I believe that the least the current British Government could do is to provide a suitable Memoriam Plaque to be erected on the grounds of St. James Hospital and the New Children's Hospital, as shown by the Commission set up by Grattan's Parliament in 1790 to be the burial place of between 100,000 and twice that amount of Irish babies when the control of affairs was held by the then British Government.

There is also scope for further research into the '*Houses of Industry*', set up as the precursor of the infamous 'Industrial Schools' and closed down as a result of an Investigation by John Wesley, commencing with his visit to the 'House of Industry' in Ballinrobe near Tuam.

Below:

**Appendix 1:** The story of the precursor of the Mother and Babies Homes.

**Appendix II:** My memories of the story of Discarded Young Pregnant Women in Mullingar in the Forties.

**Appendix III:** A letter to the *Independent* (unpublished) containing details of a circular containing warnings that '*Local Authorities were not paying attention to the Administration of the registering of Maternity homes under the Maternity Homes Act 1934 issued by the Minister for Local Government and Public Health Sean Mac Entee in 1946*'. Later Tom O'Higgins of Fine Gael approved a number of Maternity Homes under the provision of Section 25 of the *Health Act 1953*. The letter was dated 1957 and among others covered the Bon Succour's Mother and Baby Home in Tuam.

It should be noted that the Secretary of the Department of Health in 1954 found the report of the Galway CMO [Chief Medical Officer] was objectionable due to deficiencies in the provision of services. Finally, in this section the State files as early as 1935 reported that "*the first fallen Women, penniless, that arrived in the*

*UK should be encouraged to return to Ireland as there are a number of special homes for mothers of illegitimate children*".

Appendix IV: a letter sent to the *Independent* (unpublished) of comments on the Foundling Hospital in Dublin, the Foundling Museum in London, and the treatment of 250,000 orphans in New York, the product of dysfunctional families, one third of which were Irish, in the 75 year period ending in 1929. Overall the Politicians in all countries were not all that interested in what happened to what the sociologists described as the '*underclass*' and this class had to depend to a large extent on charity to survive.

Appendix V: a letter, unpublished, concerning the removal by the Cumann Na Gael Government in 1922 from Arthur Griffith's 1918 Constitution of provisions for the child welfare and free education.

## Appendix One

### Precursor of Mothers And Babies Homes And Adoption 'Scandal'.

This is the latest headline grabber: an apology from An Taoiseach and a promise to investigate. His 'scoping' exercise will be aimed mainly at Catholic Adoption Societies and Mother & Baby Homes.

I would respectfully suggest that politicians who castigate the Catholic Church should immediately purchase copies of the recently published *Cambridge History of Ireland* from 600 AD until the present. They might then understand that unwanted pregnancies only became a problem, a contamination of our 'Gaelic Catholic Society', as a result of successive colonisation by anti-Irish and anti-Catholic forces.

This is borne out in the deliberations of Grattan's Parliament where, in 1793, Sir Lawrence Parsons stated he was in favour of allowing Catholics to sit in Parliament only if the franchise excluded 'the mob of Catholic peasants' from a voice in the elections. His reason being that it 'would allow a situation where the Catholic Clergy would insist on equality with the Protestant clergy'.

In Volume III of the above *Cambridge history* is a chapter entitled '*Women, Men and the Family 1730-1880*' which analyses the removal of children from families to Charter schools and the Foundlings Hospital.

In the beginning of the 18th Century the increasing abandonment of children, especially 'illegitimate' children, became a matter of public concern. The reason for the increase was that young Catholic girls were easy prey for landlords and their agents, by the occupation soldiers and unfortunately by some Irish gomben men.



From 1703 the newly-established 'House of Industry' was charged with receiving foundling children between the ages of 5 and 16 in order to educate them to the Protestant faith and then to apprentice them to Protestant masters. As a matter of interest, following complaints, John Wesley visited a school in Ballinrobe and found conditions as atrocious. Inspections carried out towards the end of the Century revealed massive abuse of the system with children being used mainly as farm labourers or weavers and subject to squalid conditions and disease.

By 1730 there were so many illegitimate children being born in the workhouses that the Government opened a Foundling Hospital, the precursor of our Catholic Mother & Baby homes.

If our Government feels that the Mother and Baby homes are a stain on our history, there is no word to describe the Foundling Hospitals, in which 88% of the babies that entered died.

Sir John Blaquiére brought this scandal before Parliament in 1790, reporting that: "*Of the 'governors' of this institution 21 never attended meetings, merely delegated responsibility to their 'Treasurer' (who was bedridden for 6 years)*". Blaquiére pointed out that, of the 2,180 infants admitted in 1790 2,087 (96%) were dead or unaccounted for. In the previous 10 years 19,368 babies were admitted of which 17,043 were dead or missing (88%). As the Government inspectors reported, the Foundling Hospital was characterised "*by corrupt administration, poor diet, disease, infestation and cruelty*" until the Government ordered its closure in 1820. Leaving a void until 1829.

He reported that the annual running costs of the Foundlings Hospital were 16,000 pounds P/A and, on the basis of those saved, each baby cost 110 pounds. "*The wretched little ones were sent up (to the Foundlings Hospital) from Workhouses from all parts of Ireland; ten or twelve of them thrown together into a knish*" (the anglicised version of *ciste*, the Irish for basket), "*forwarded in a low backed car, and were so bruised and crushed that at the journey's end half of them were taken out dead and flung on the dung heap*" (Minutes of the Irish Parliament, 12th March 1792).

One Parliamentarian appealed to his fox-hunting friends, asking whether they would not be more careful in transporting the whelps of their hounds.

Thank God for Daniel O'Connell and Catholic Emancipation 1829, which allowed the Volunteerism of the Nuns to provide an alternative to the dung heap.

## Appendix Two Tuam Babies And The Pope

I refer to Ms Merritt letter published

in the *Irish Independent* of 14th April where she suggests that the Pope should visit Tuam.

There is another side to the Tuam and similar institutions which I witnessed as a ten year old altar boy, serving in a garrison town during the Second World War. It was not uncommon for young girls to become pregnant. In those days the present-day scanning was not available and the signs of pregnancy became visually apparent.

There were only two choices: get married or go to an institution similar to Tuam. There was no help available from your family as you had disgraced them, and your family did not want you in their Parish and indeed even in their own County.

If the marriage option was pursued, the marriage took place at six o'clock in the morning to avoid the further disgrace of marrying a soldier. I often stood there watching if the Groom would arrive and, when he did, the priest and servers would go the Altar Rails, never inside the Rail, as that privilege was only for the *petite bourgeoisie* and the *haute bourgeoisie*.

When the Groom did not turn up, the pregnant young woman, with her friend or sometimes her sister—both in tears—left Tuam or somewhere similar. The same cohort that want the Pope to go to Tuam and apologise should join with him in prayer to ask God to forgive the fathers and mothers who drove those young women out: anywhere, provided it was far enough away as to not bring shame on he family.

Before the Nuns took over this job, which I am sure has got them a set in Heaven, their detractors and the Bishops who should be defending the nuns should study the *History of the Foundlings Home* in Dublin and the treatment of 'Un-wanted Babies' on their trips from the Poor Law Workhouses around the country where the mortality rate on the journey was 50%.

I can sense the grief in Ms Merritt's letter, and to get an understanding of the young women who ended up with the Nuns, I respectfully suggest she should visit the Foundling Museum in London, to see what life was like for the deserted mothers and babies in Ireland.

## Appendix Three Culpability Of The Catholic Church In Current Scandals

The Catholic Church is currently taking a lashing from commentators and the general public for happenings in the Fifties and earlier. It is important to realise the nuns were employed as cheap labour by the State to carry out its constitutional obligations. Furthermore, as happens now in various shortcomings that come to light, there were no supervision by

those paid to do so by the taxpayers.

In 1946 the then Minister for Local Government and Public Health Sean Mac Entee issued a circular stating that it had come to his attention that many Local Authorities were "*not paying attention*" to the administrations of the registration of maternity homes under the *Maternity Homes Act 1934*. Particular attention is drawn also to Section 11 of the Act regarding the obligation of the person registered to report to the CEO of the supervising Authority any deaths which occurred in the Home. This apparently did not happen, nor did the CEO of Galway County Council do anything about it.

Later Tom O'Higgins of Fine Gael approved a number of Maternity Homes under the provision of Section 25 of the *Health Act 1953*. It states that the approval as a Maternity Home can be revoked "*at any time if the Minister deemed such circumstances justified him taking such action*". Mr. O'Higgins later served as Chief Justice of Ireland and was a member of the European Court of Justice until 1991. The letter was dated 1957 and, among others, the Bon Secours Mother and Baby Home in Tuam was approved. Under Section 25 of the *Health Act*, the Health Authority (which in those days were the County Councils) should make payments to the approved institute.

The delivery of local public health matters rested with the *County Medical Officer* and the *Health (Duties of Officers) Order 1949* required, as soon as possible after the close of each calendar year, and in the form and dealing with such subjects as the Minister may direct, to prepare a Report and furnish the County Council or Corporation and the Minister with such Report.

By the early 1950s the utility of these Reports was being questioned within the Department of Health. John Darby expressed reservations in a wide-ranging minute, the final conclusion was "*that it seemed extraordinary that the county Medical Officer is not only allowed to criticise his employer but that he can do it at the public expense*". He went on further to state that he "*did not think that these reports were necessary or justified*".

A good example of what the Department did not like, and the type of criticism that Mr. Darby found objectionable, was the report of the Galway County Medical Officer in 1954 on schools. He said that many were badly kept. The cloakrooms were often used as turf houses and there was a disinterested attitude by those responsible for their care and maintenance.

In the commentary on child welfare clinics, the CMO states that, due to the shortage of staff and other demands on

these clinics, particularly for immunisation and school health work, child welfare clinics had not been provided on a wide scale. Many of the CMO in the West had already outlined deficiencies in much stronger language.

Finally, another report in the State Files was an investigation into the number of Irish unmarried pregnant women travelling to the UK in 1935. The report says that the “*First Fallen*” Irish women discovered in England should be sent back to Ireland. In a memorandum, prepared by the Department of Local Government and Public Health, it was stated that they fully realised these more or less penniless girls, when they arrive in England, should be encouraged to return to Ireland as there are a “*number of special homes for mothers of illegitimate children*”.

The nuns or the Bishops did not write these reports.

#### Appendix Four

##### Tuam Babies And Magdalen Asylums

There is an ongoing enquiry on the Tuam Babies. There is no dispute that an orphanage existed in Tuam between 1925 and 1961, catering by and large for unmarried mothers and their babies. This home was like the Magdalene Asylums, of which by 1900 there were 300 such homes in England and 30 in Scotland. In Ireland the first Magdalene Laundry was a Church of Ireland-run institution.

*The Magdalene Asylum for penitent females* in Ireland was opened by Lady Arabella Denny. The final such institution was in Waterford, which closed in 1996. Parallel institutions were run by Catholics and Presbyterians. Similar institutions were run in Australia, Canada and the United States.

There is little doubt, given that there was very little funding from Governments, life was harsh—as it is currently for families existing in hotel bedrooms, surrounded by the most affluent society that ever existed. Before these institutions existed, The Foundlings Hospital existed in the UK and Ireland.

A visit to the Foundling Museum in London should be an essential trip for the members of Enquiry Committees into Baby Homes. The past practice was of abandoning infants in the hope that they would be rescued. *Baby Hatches* were a feature of the Poor Law Workhouses. These were baskets outside Workhouses in which unwanted babies were deposited. After the setting up of the Foundling Hospital by the efforts of retired Sea Captain Thomas Coram, the infants were sent to that London hospital.

Women travelling to the UK in 1935: the report says that the “*first fallen*” Irish women discovered in England should be sent back to Ireland. In a Memorandum

prepared by the Department of Local Government and Public Health, it was stated that they fully realised that these more or less penniless girls, when they arrived in England, should be encouraged to return to Ireland as there are a “*number of special homes for mothers of illegitimate children*”.

The Nuns or the Bishops did not write these reports.

#### Appendix Five

##### The Taoiseach's Response To The Tuam Tragedy

Taoiseach Varadkar's response to the Tuam tragedy is the most hypocritical statement ever made in the Dail. It was his Party's first leader, W.T. Cosgrave, that overturned the only two provisions in Sinn Féin's first Constitution written after their Election success of 1918 that were child-friendly.

Relating to child nutrition and health, the first clause read as follows: “*To encourage the proper physical development of the children of the Nation by the provision of meals, the introduction of dental*

*and medical examination in schools and the organisation of national pastimes*”. For reasons that were not recorded, this Article was removed. It was probably, by the standards of the day too radical, introducing State-sponsored medicine and welfarism.

A second clause was “*To promote the extension of educational facilities by easy access from primary to higher schools so that all the children of the nation have the opportunity for the fullest training of their mental facilities*”.

At a meeting on 25th April [1922], two days before the Constitution was adopted, Kevin O'Shiel, Legal Adviser to the Government, found the clause unacceptable. It took another 45 years for the energy of Education Minister Donogh O'Malley to introduce it. Its unacceptability by the W.T. Cosgrave Government is easy to understand. The thought of allowing the “*Great unwashed underclass*” an education that might and did over time replace the College-educated upper class in the positions of power was unthinkable.

Cleggan, Co. Galway, 3.5.2021

Leaflet distributed at a big meeting on the Truce,  
held in Cork on 8th July

## What was the Truce?

The Truce occurred because the British were not winning the military war against the IRA and they were clearly losing the war for ‘hearts and minds’.

This was confirmed by the results of the two local government elections of 1920 when Republicans won the overwhelming majority of seats. And the more overwhelming victory of Sinn Féin in the general election of June 1921 when it won uncontested in every single electable seat in the 26 counties. These election results confirmed the unshakable commitment for independence that the people had voted for in 1918 and whose rejection of that Election result by Britain had caused the war in the first place.

But the shooting war was only suspended on the British side on 11 July 1921. There is no state more experienced at war than Britain and they never see the end of the shooting as the end of a war if the objective has not been attained. The objective was “to not lose Ireland”, to keep it within the British Empire by some means or other. This objective was not attained by July 1921.

The World War that Britain launched in August 1914 to destroy Germany did not end on 11/11/1918. It ended when Germany was starved into submission by the food blockade – killing about ¾ of a million Germans – and thereby laying the basis for the next war.

The negotiations that followed the Truce were a continuation of the War of Independence by other means and succeeded in splitting the Independence movement under the threat of renewed war and a so-called Treaty that abolished the Republic that had been voted and fought for.

Britain insisted that the shooting war be resumed in June 1922 to ensure the military defeat of those who wanted to maintain the Republic and the Independence movement.

## Brendan Clifford

### Book Review:

Eugene Jordan, *(The Irish Attack On Christianity:  
How the Irish came to hate the Irish*  
(Tafanóer Press, 2021)

## Another Irish Cultural Revolution?

“I, like many of my cohort, left school as a confirmed atheist. The church and others have seemingly never asked themselves why so many Catholic and Protestant schools have produced generation after generation of atheists and apostates... For the record, I no longer apply the label ‘atheist’ to myself. I am a fallibilist, particularly on God’s existence. That is one who believes that humanity lacks the intellectual capability to figure out the answer to life’s biggest questions...

“In the early stages of apostasy, anger with the old religion is a common characteristic, but some people never get over the rage, and consequently are driven to seek out evidence to validate their newly acquired beliefs...

“...Some turn to false beliefs in science... Others accept neo-paganism—Buddhism, Islam and more—but apostate Catholics are not jumping over to Protestantism... Atheism and apostasy are the most significant drivers of mass hysteria... It permeates through every level of Irish society... even within organisations like the state broadcaster.

“Radio Telefís Éireann has set itself up as one of the chief purveyors of anti-Catholic sentiment for the better part of the last two decades. Since its inception as 2RN, *clurichaun* [ineffectual person] syndrome has been evident through pretentious fake upper-class English accents... The station’s pro-English bias is not surprising given that the organisation is located in the home territory of Union Jackeenism... When Catholicism became associated with Irishness, RTE had no difficulty incorporating it into its organisational *clurichaunism*...” (*The Irish Attack On Christianity*, p255).

When Jordan says “school”, I assume he means College or University. In rural Ireland in the 1940s *school* meant the elementary National School, at which attendance was compulsory up to the age of 14. Nobody went to it a day after his 14th birthday. Most stopped going during their thirteenth year. Many, with something better that needed doing—as

many farmers’ sons had—did not attend when it was inconvenient. For a number of reasons my schooling ended effectively when I was twelve. In the last two years there was a subject called *Apologetics*. I think it was reasoning about God, as distinct from repeating answers from a Catechism. I missed it.

In my experience, nobody—young or old—talked about God. He was a presumed existence about which there was nothing much to be said.

Mixed up with this there was some native paganism. There was *Oisín*, who in the prime of life was whisked off to *Tír na nÓg* by a goddess who fancied him so that he could live on agelessly. After a few centuries eternal life began to pall on him. He wanted to see the real world again, in which there was hunting and shooting and cavorting. Arrangements were made for him to return to it for a look, but he was warned that, if he touched it, the lost years would catch up with him.

When he returned he found that Christianity had come while he was away and it had weakened the spirit and muscle of the people. He argued the matter with St. Patrick. Feeling sorry for the enfeebled people he tried to lend them a hand, and the years caught up with him.

That story, which carried many salutary messages, was present alongside the story of Christianity, and I would say more forcefully present.

(A somewhat similar message came from John Paul, the German Protestant writer of strange novels, who was Canon Sheehan’s favourite, with his nightmare vision: *Message of the dead Christ from the Universe, that there is no God*.)

Also present was the druid goddess, *Cliona*, who had an insatiable sexual appetite for young men.

And we knew about the rakish poet, Eoghan Ruadh [Ó Súilleabháin], who had an insatiable appetite for young women, and who, when he died after a brawl in Knocknagree, had a naked

young woman placed alongside him to make certain he was dead before he was buried.

And there was the other poet of the region, O Bruadair, who, when he felt the end was near, said he was going to meet “*na flatha faoi raibh mo sean roimh eagh de Chroist*”—princes under whom my ancestors lived before the birth of Christ”.

And, in my time, a poet in the townland of Ruhill, a cousin of my O’Connor mother, tried to celebrate the village of Boherbue with a not very good poem which had two striking lines: *With truth and pretence as a mixture/ This world is a puzzle profound*.

These were some of the strands of the cultural mix that I grew up in. And, as far as I could judge from the outside, Christianity survived much better as part of that mixture when the collapse came than it did in urban cultures where it was more simply doctrinal.

I left that region of the Cork/Kerry/Limerick borderland when I was in my early twenties. I had never really been out of it until then. I had never felt the urge to visit the cities. As a child I had briefly seen Limerick city, and I had seen Cork city even more briefly, and had the idea that city life was stifling. My idea of Dublin, got from Joyce’s novels that were available in the mid-fifties, was a feeling of claustrophobia.

In the piece of rural Ireland that I knew, there was no bookshop, and no library, and yet there were plenty of books. These books, as I later realised, had been hanging about since the days of Young Ireland and the All For Ireland League, when the shape of contemporary Ireland had for the most part been laid.

Canon Sheehan, whose novels were still read in the fifties, carried with him the culture of Young Ireland, the Fenians and the All For Ireland League, and also the spirit of 1918 Sinn Féin, even though he had died five years earlier. Those novels were also steeped in European culture, German and French. Books by Goethe and Schiller were available even though there was no bookshop or library. And I read a book of reflections, in French, by Xavier de Maistre, because it presented itself: *Voyage Autour De Ma Chambre*.

The townland I grew up in had, I later discovered, once been dense with hedge-schools. I assume all of this was a residue of them, although it was entirely detached from contemporary schooling.



Classics were central to the hedge-schools. I don't know what part they played in the Colleges in the early 1950s, but I read Aristotle's *Prior And Posterior Analytics* just because it was there. And I read Lucretius's *The Nature Of Things*, and was briefly taken with the beautiful, clean world of material atoms that it described, until I saw that it was an empty world.

English literature was also present, particularly Byron, Shelley and Coleridge, and it seemed to me that the Ruhill world that was a mixture of truth and pretence was the same world as that of Shelley's *Lift not the painted veil*".

After I left Slieve Luacra the only place I felt at home was Belfast—a city which had not been made by others who had left it behind, but had grown out of its surroundings, and was what it was without pretensions.

I know from experience the small corner of rural Ireland that produced me. But there was another Ireland that I did not know at all. It was in part the encroachment of that Ireland on the rural life in which I lived that squeezed me out of it. I don't know whether that Ireland should be called *urban Ireland*, or *educated Ireland*. Rural Ireland, in my experience, was literate but uneducated. It would probably be too much to say that Urban Ireland was educated but not altogether literate. But certainly a great change came over Ireland when mass education beyond elementary level was introduced, and, simultaneously, urban Ireland became dominant over rural Ireland.

Sinéad O'Connor denounced the Pope as the source of Evil in the world, and expressed her determination to make war to the death on him by tearing up a photograph of him before he cameras. Was she delusional? Apparently not. A former President, and a Canon Lawyer to boot, is now doing much the same thing.

Peter Lennon made a film called *The Rocky Road To Dublin* and it won a Prize at the Cannes Film Festival. That film told us that during the Second World War we were not allowed to call it the World War. We were only allowed to call it *The Emergency*.

I went to the newspaper library to assure myself that I was not hallucinating when I remembered reading about the World War in the *Cork Examiner* and the *Irish Press*. I wasn't. We knew all about the World War. But we took *Emergency* measures to ensure that we were not forced into it by Britain. (And I remember a moment when British invasion was seen as an immediate

prospect, and my uncle took down all the local signposts and hid them.)

But the academic historians now tell us, in their peer-reviewed history books, that we called the World War the *Emergency*. Professor Brian Girvin says so, as does Professor Fearghal McGarry. I don't know of any Professor who disputes the matter.

The Irish state chose not to place itself at the disposal of Britain for its second war on Germany within a generation (which it chose to fight as a World War, rather than actual war of alliance with Poland against Germany), and, by refusing to participate in it, it denied the existence of the War: That seems to be the logic of it.

I had almost forgotten the word "*clurichaun*" when it sprang out at me from Jordan's page. It conveys the idea of feebleness of character, and it seems entirely appropriate as a description of the generation of journalists and academics created by the vast expansion of University education that was rapidly brought about in a population that had lived quite competently without it.

The mental/manual division of labour common to Western Europe scarcely existed at all in Slieve Luacra. It was brought into being by a forced development organised by the State, apparently because it had got the notion that the War in the North was caused by lack of education.

Watching the BBC programme on *The Road To Partition*, in which a score of academics said their pieces, I was reminded of Sean O'Falolain's remark that Irish city-dwellers were only "*urbanised peasants*". It misses the mark but it is somewhere thereabout. Our academic structure is certainly not an evolved development out of the peasantry. Peasant virtue has been entirely lost in it. Neither is it an evolution out of bourgeois life. It is going through the motions of being something which it is not.

It is the product of a cultural revolution ordered by the State but shaped by an external force. And it cannot be at ease with itself. I cannot explain how it was produced, but I can see that what Jordan describes does exist.

Fifty years ago, when I was outlawed as a Two-Nationist, I anticipated a collapse in national culture because of the way in which it was maintaining a hectic anti-Partitionism by refusing to acknowledge the existence of a basic fact of life in the North. But I barely noticed the actual occurrence of the collapse because I was pre-occupied with Northern Ireland politics at the time.

I have vaguely assumed that Vatican 2—with its assault on the easy-going Catholic routines in which I grew up, and its wholesale abolition of local saints, with their Feast Days which were Carnivals, and the apparent ambition to transform the Church of Everybody into a participating Church of Saints, had damaged the foundations. And possibly it was that, combined with denialism about the North, that did it.

Jordan does not describe the process of collapse. What he does is deal with the *Mother And Baby Homes* report—and the propaganda surrounding it, which presents the Church as a force which destroys children born outside of marriage—in the light of the actual history of the Church in the matter, and of practices which are common to all Churches and to purely secular movements.

Nature is a spendthrift in the matter of reproducing species, and is particularly inconsiderate in its arrangements for the human species. It overproduces lavishly, and it has to be curbed.

Bernard Shaw envisaged humans in the long run, as a matter of good taste, dropping the mammalian method of reproduction in favour of the reptilian—i.e., by means of eggs hatched in incubators. Andrea Dworkin, who sees human sexual intercourse as a form of rape—as many women apparently do, and as the Church provided for—suggests that the thing to do is to restore in human life the pre-human system in which sexual activity is controlled by the female going on heat. But neither of these solutions is likely to be applied to the problem just now.

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The Catholic Church has been widely, almost universally, depicted as a sadistic force, intent on doing away with illegitimate babies. Jordan asserts that it was the major force in European history which made arrangements for the preservation of illegitimate babies:

"When murder became a crime... is lost in the mists of time, but we know when it became a crime to kill an infant. The momentous day occurred in AD 589, a year after the Council of Constantinople (AD 588) declared that the abandonment of infants outside of designated places, was the same as homicide. [Those left in the designated areas would be looked after.] Soon after, the Spanish government decreed that infanticide was a crime, and eventually, all the secular powers in Europe followed their example...

"So far, the historical evidence dem-

onstrates that, for the best part of two thousand years, the Catholic Church had been involved in saving the lives of thousands of children and possibly millions. Why then in the 21st century Ireland should it stand accused of murdering babies in what has been called “Ireland’s Holocaust”?

“Central to the notion of a group of Irish women providing an infant killing disposal service is the assumption that their motivation was a hatred of illegitimate children... If such a claim is left to stand, then Catholicism cannot be blamed because this ‘holocaust’ only occurred in Ireland, and it can only be due to Irish women’s viciousness...” (p47).

By ample quotation from politicians of all parties and from newspaper headlines, Eugene Jordan shows that this claim was made. And, by investigating detail, he shows that it is groundless. So why has the claim taken hold?:

“While there is an element of commercialism driving the wild claims in the media, at least some journalists appear to be genuine in their beliefs. These unfortunates suffer from Disneyland type of magical expectations... Clearly Irish journalism has educational issues. It would seem that the Walt Disney Company was also engaged in designing several academic courses, including many for the university history department. These magical expectations are necessary to deploy the most favoured artillery piece of the Irish propagandist: the logical fallacy called the Nirvana Fallacy...”

“I am interested in getting to the bottom of why people are susceptible to creating and believing in myths...” (p58-9).

“...the chief weapon of the *clurichaun* is the Nirvana fallacy, which is both frequent in its use and is the product of some peculiar Irish bias. It is essentially a false comparison... It can also be achieved by making no comparison, thus allowing the human mind to naturally make unrealistic and idealised comparisons. It uses the assumption that we live in a ‘perfect world’ or in a world where impossible standards are achievable. If one believes that society has progressed from the past, especially in the field of medicine, then the past cannot have had higher standards than those of today. Thus, using today’s standards to criticise the past is not only a crime against science, logic and reason, but it is also an utterly buffoonish endeavour...” (p148).

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Catholic Ireland lived for two and a bit centuries after the last British conquest in a Protestant state. For a whole century it was entirely excluded from public life. Its political system and its social arrangements were ground down, and things were

rearranged according to English Protestant norms. The tight nuclear family was the building block of bourgeois/Protestant society, and children born out of wedlock were determined to be illegitimate.

The official Report of the recent Mother & Baby Inquiry uses the word “*illegitimate*” in a way that suggests that it was an essentially false category that should never have been accepted, and that the Irish State was seriously at fault in having it as part of its social arrangements.

The Irish State took over the British system in 1922 and the Irish system which had been developing tentatively in 1919-21 was scrapped. If the Free State, which was consolidating itself with British guns against the Republicans, had repealed British legislation, abolished the nuclear family, declared that there was no such thing as an illegitimate child, and introduced homosexual marriage, it would have been regarded as mad by all sides.

These things have all now been done, and all sense of evolutionary development over time seems to have lapsed, and the past is condemned as a conspiracy against the present.

If that is the state of mind in which nationalist Ireland wants to live, so be it. But the conspiracy which structured Ireland in the way that it now abominates did not have its source in Rome, but in London. And that state of mind, of course, abolishes history, by making what happens to be the fashion just now into an essence that has always been there but was prevented by conspiracy from realising itself until just now.

(Democracy which functions through party-conflict—the only kind that is generally regarded as legitimate—generates wild exaggerations as a matter of course. The art of generating extravagant denunciations and inventing scapegoats and yet not taking them in earnest is not widespread in the world, and it seems to be a disappearing quality in Irish public life, as is the understanding that very different arrangements of human life are possible and legitimate. Irish towns that twinned with Hungarian towns have revoked the twinning because the Hungarian Government is not following the current Irish fashion in marriage law. Irish public life has now adopted the English fashion of taking its own arrangements of the moment as being universally binding, any departure from them being a breach of human rights.)

According to Jordon: “*The point when unmarried mothers became social pariahs*

*began in 1834 with an act of the British parliament, which dictated that all illegitimate children, until they reached the age of 16, were the sole responsibility of the unmarried mother*” (p44).

The general European arrangement was to hold the father responsible for the upkeep of the child.

1834 was two years after the Great Reform of 1832, which inaugurated the Liberal era of British politics. These things which are now condemned in Ireland as products of Catholic/Clerical dominance are classical Liberal measures.

The Liberal era was an era of resurgent Puritanism, following the extension to the capitalist middle class of the Parliamentary franchise.

But it is against the rules of the game to trace the system existing in Ireland to the long era of British rule.

“Individual sections of Irish society engage in a style of debate that is dogmatic, delivered with blunt force trauma, is highly resistant to countenancing contradictory evidence, and has inbuilt tactics to dissuade dissenters. One of these tactics is to accuse anyone who dares to mention the British in a comparative sense to the Irish is to label them as anti-British... For these people, Irish history starts in 1922 when the brilliant colonial governors left, and the Irish took over and made a total mess of running the country. Accordingly the terms of reference for the commission investigating the mother and baby homes have been written to prohibit it from examining the history of child protection before 1922. No doubt, the class of persons who inserted that clause did not want the British to stand accused of even greater cruelty to children because it does not suit their agenda... For the most part, discourse on the subject of Irish society is rarely, if ever, validly compared with other societies...”

“A prime example is that of the British government who brought in a law in 1913, which classified an unmarried mothers as “moral imbeciles”. It thus conferred the right upon the authorities to incarcerate such “offenders” in mental homes and county homes for their own protection...” (p35).

The British Government in 1913 was, of course, a Liberal government. And it was a minority Government maintained in Office by John Redmond’s Irish Party.

There is much else in the book, for instance an account of the *Baby Farmers* and *Angel Makers* that were the Protestant replacements for the Catholic Foundling Homes.



## Genocidal States of Mind

The President of the United States has declared that the Ottoman Empire committed Genocide against the Armenians. In his statement chastising Turkey, President Biden chose not to mention the millions of Ottoman Muslims killed by the actions of the invading Imperialist Powers and their Armenian allies from 1914-22.

According to the US demographer, Justin McCarthy, the total Muslim losses in eastern Anatolia, where Armenians were relocated from by the Ottomans, were nearly 1.2 million. In the city of Van alone, 60% of the Muslim population (mostly Kurds) were massacred by Armenian revolutionaries ahead of the advancing Russian army in April and May of 1915. It was this event which triggered the relocation decree. A further 1.25 million Muslims were killed in Western Anatolia between 1914-21. The US President also chose not to mention the well-documented massacres committed by armed Armenians against Azerbaijanis from 1905 to 1994. At least 500,000 Muslims perished in the Southern Caucasus, mostly at the hands of armed Armenians, and mostly during the 1915-21 period.

These are all low estimates of Muslim mortality, unlike the gross exaggerations of Armenian deaths bandied around by all (which were around 650,000 and not 1 or 1.5 million). Why such an oblivion of history? Are the deaths of the Muslim part of humanity of no consequence and deaths of Christians the only important lives lost?

Of course, President Biden's statement is of no consequence outside of politics. Genocide is a legal definition and no international court has ever found the Ottomans guilty of such a thing. In the historical sphere the issue is hotly contested, but it should be stated that there is no evidence of intent on the part of the Ottomans to destroy the Armenian population and no historian has ever found documentation to corroborate the statement made recently by the current US President.

The Ottoman archives are open (unlike the Armenian ones which apparently

contain damning material relating to the ethnic cleansing and mass killing of Turks, Kurds and Azerbaijanis by the Armenian Republic) and they were in the hands of the British occupation for 4 years from 1918. During this period attempts were made to try various Ottoman officials held in custody and in their absence. But the evidence was declared non-existent or insufficient by the British legal establishment and the case was closed.

Discontent with legal and historical fact, the Armenian lobby has sought to cultivate an atmosphere in which the Ottomans are found guilty outside the courts of law and history – rather like someone who has been found not guilty being later damned by innuendo and the gossip of the rumour mongers. How often do we hear the phrase that “*it is widely accepted*” the Ottomans committed Genocide? By whom, one might ask: the Armenian lobby and the ignorant, lazy, media and pseudo-historians of some parts of Western academia?

Now the rich and influential Armenian lobby have succeeded in hooking the 10 pound trout himself, the Gossiper-in-Chief, the President of the United States.

The current US President may not have altered the legal and historical facts of the 1915 matter one iota but what he has done is drawn attention to an interesting question: Since the President of the United States has now accused the Ottomans of Genocide, is it not pertinent to examine the issue of Genocide comparatively, with particular reference to *genocidal intent*. Intent, after all makes up a large part of a determination if certain acts are criminal. In English criminal law intent is one of the forms of *mens rea* (guilty mind) that, when accompanied by an *actus reus* (guilty act) constitutes a crime. Article II of the 1948 UN Convention stipulates that, for a crime to be identified as genocide, there must be special intent (*dolus specialis*) – a requirement echoed by the International Court of Justice in its 2015 Croatian vs. Serbia judgment. Since we are talking about the extremely serious matter of “*crimes against Humanity*” here intent is surely a fundamental issue in such a question.

So, let us ask the question: in the historical period concerned, which was the

Genocidal State, the Ottoman Empire or the United States? In which State was the Genocidal state of mind located, leading up to 1915?

### The Ottoman State of Mind

The Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II, after taking Constantinople in 1453, opened it to the Armenians and founded the Armenian Patriarchate there. Many Armenian clans joined the Ottomans in the city and were taken on in high position. The Ottoman's Islamic principles dictated tolerance towards Christians and the Armenians were respected for their architectural flair and prowess at banking and accountancy. The Armenian Patriarch was put in charge of the administrative, cultural and judicial affairs of the Armenians, along with the Assyrian Christians. In the 4 centuries of their life within the Ottoman state the Armenians thrived and grew into the most prosperous, educated and well cared for community in the Empire, with the highest life expectancy. They had most of the rich merchants, financial experts, professionals and small business owners in Anatolia.

The Armenians were part of the Ottoman *millet* system, the organisation of the scattered communities of the Empire into non-territorial authority based on religion. The millets cared for the communities they represented in areas like social affairs, education, justice, religion, culture and welfare. The Armenian millet was named *Militia Sadaki* – “*the faithful people*”, to honour those the Turks trusted as their closest and loyal associates among the Christian communities. The Ottomans had a very un-racial view of the world that was unusual for the time, when Europe obsessed about bloodlines and racial pedigree. The 1863 Tanzimat reforms democratised the millet system, making the Armenian Patriarch an executive officer over a representative General National Assembly. This was an “*imperium in imperio*”, representing the most developed form of devolved authority possible outside of the cessation of territory — which was impossible due to the scattered nature of groups like the Armenians, Greeks and Jews, who thrived on being mobile across the Empire.

Count von Moltke rather accurately described the Armenians as “*Christian Turks*”. The Armenians served in significant positions within the Ottoman State throughout its history. Sultans often took Armenian women as wives so the Ottoman line became mixed with Armenian blood – something the English and Americans saw as fatal “*race suicide*”.

There were around 20 Ottoman Min-



isters between 1867 and 1913 who were Armenian. There were 33 Deputies and 7 Ambassadors of Armenian origin during the Ottoman era, and 29 prominent members of the Armenian community were awarded the honorary title “Pasha”.

They also served as Ambassadors, Bankers, Translators, Consuls and Deputies in the Ottoman Parliament – 14 in 1908. The Ottoman Foreign Minister in the year before the Great War was an Armenian named Gabriel Noradukyan. It is extraordinary that the belief exists about an Ottoman desire to destroy the Armenians since they were such an important pillar of the Empire and its functioning.

There was no Ottoman racial literature because the Ottomans did not understand the world in such terms. Their conception of the world was religious, and it was a remarkable religious toleration they exhibited in comparison with sectarian Christian Europe. Where did the Jews seek refuge when fleeing anti-Semitism and Pogrom? The Muslim Ottoman Empire. When did they leave the Balkans and the great Jewish Ottoman city of Salonika? They left with the Muslim population who were ethnically cleansed in their millions by the Christians in establishing new national states in the region.

Can it be imagined Hitler having a Jew as his Foreign Minister in 1938? Were there native Americans or blacks within the US Government?

Not until the 1880s, and the birth of the Armenian Question in England, and Armenian revolutionary societies in the Southern Caucasus, did the Armenian position begin to become problematic within the Ottoman territories. This was became what happened in Bulgaria in the 1870s became the template for the Armenian revolutionaries – Christian uprising, Ottoman counter-measure, Anglosphere Liberal outrage, Imperialist military intervention, eradication of Moslems. That was the desired process of the Dashnak revolutionaries. One thing for certain was that such a process would inevitably result in great inter-communal violence, ethnic cleansings and the massacre of innocents. And that is what the Armenian revolutionaries pursued in the 1890s and then more fully in the Great War catastrophe beginning in 1914. The Ottomans were confronted with an existential crisis of simultaneous invasions on four fronts by the great Imperial Powers (Britain, France and Russia) and a substantial Armenian insurrection behind the lines.

All this suggests that there was no genocidal intent toward the Armenians.

What happened to the Armenian community in 1915 was largely a consequence of the actions of Imperialist Powers taking their war into Ottoman territories, the behaviour of Armenian revolutionary groups intent on eradicating the Moslem population to carve out a great Armenian state, and the Ottoman response, modelled on the counter-insurgency methods employed at the time by the most advanced civilised nations to confront armed insurrections.

### **The American State of Mind (Witness No.1)**

Since it is the Ottoman behaviour toward the Armenians that is in question, it would be appropriate to examine the people who most supported the Armenian cause in the US to assess the validity of the Genocide charge.

Let us take witness number 1, the President of the United States himself, during the pre-Great War period, and one of the greatest and most representative of American Presidents, Theodore Roosevelt. He is carved into Mt. Rushmore itself and there is no doubting he stands with Washington and Lincoln in terms of historical significance.

Theodore Roosevelt was regarded as an expert on the “*Indian Question*” and as President he organised the expansion of the United States from continental dominance toward world power. He built up the US navy, intervened in Cuba and the Philippines on “*humanitarian*” grounds, and thereby began the relentless mission of American interference in the world.

Roosevelt began the process (briefly halted after WW1) by which the US became a dominating world power which interferes in the affairs of those who might show signs of emulating it, on a much smaller scale.

In his State of the Union Message, 1904, President Roosevelt said to the American people:

“There are occasionally crimes committed on so vast a scale and of such peculiar horror as to make us doubt whether it is not our manifest duty to endeavour at least to show our disapproval of the deed and our sympathy with those who have suffered by it... in extreme cases action may be justifiable and proper... The cases in which we could interfere by force of arms as we interfered to put a stop to intolerable conditions in Cuba are necessarily very few. Yet... it is inevitable that such a nation should desire eagerly to give expression to its horror on an occasion like that of the... long-extended cruelty and oppression of which the Armenians have been victims, and which have won for them the indignant pity of the civilized world...”

In his *Address* the US President was justifying American “*humanitarian interventionism*” and the extension of US power

over Panama and Cuba as a matter of the US’s “*manifest duty*” to go along with its manifest destiny on the continent and in the world.

Those who advocate “*humanitarian interventionism*” as a US policy do not point out the selective and ethnocentric nature of their projects. Isn’t it strange that acting in the cause of humanity always seems to involve White Christian Powers, guilty of the most extensive genocides themselves, chastising the non-White, non-Christian states of the world, for transgressions that are much more understandable and limited in scale and often provoked by the Western Powers themselves?

If we need to illustrate this point all we need to do is look at President Theodore Roosevelt.

Two great moral issues confront the US in its domestic history – the extermination of the native peoples it organised across the American continent and the savage treatment of the African population it enslaved to do its work over centuries. These two issues have a linkage after the American Civil War because the Black slaves were freed into a different form of misery by Lincoln whilst the extermination of the native peoples was carried to a conclusion in the course of a generation by the power of State he established. Roosevelt inherited the result and presided over the transition from internal to external genocide.

President Roosevelt saw the completion of the internal genocide as an unquestioned moral obligation for the progressive forces that drove the development of the United States. He wrote:

“I don’t go so far as to think that the only good Indian is the dead Indian, but I believe nine out of every ten are, and I shouldn’t like to inquire too closely into the case of the tenth. The most vicious cowboy has more moral principle than the average Indian. Take three hundred low families of New York and New Jersey, support them, for fifty years, in vicious idleness, and you will have some idea of what the Indians are. Reckless, revengeful, fiendishly cruel.”

Roosevelt was in no doubt that massacres and genocide were progressive events, essential to the development of the United States and its mission in the world. Talking about an infamous one in living memory he noted: “*the so-called Chivington or Sandy Creek Massacre, in spite of certain most objectionable details, was on the whole as righteous and beneficial a deed as ever took place on the frontier.*”

The Sand Creek Massacre had occurred a couple of decades previously in

the Colorado Territory. In the massacre a village of over 100 Cheyenne and Arapaho people was wiped out by the US Army. Nelson A. Miles, an officer who eventually became the US Army's top general, wrote in his memoirs that it was "*perhaps the foulest and most unjustifiable crime in the annals of America*". The assault was led by Colonel John Chivington, who famously said, "*I have come to kill Indians... Kill and scalp all, big and little; nits make lice.*" Soldiers later reported that after killing all the men, women, and children, they mutilated the bodies for trophies.

In a subsequent book, *The Winning of the West*, Roosevelt explained that US actions toward American Indians were all part of the noble endeavour of the great civilising mission of America:

"All men of sane and wholesome thought must dismiss with impatient contempt the plea that these continents should be reserved for the use of scattered savage tribes... Most fortunately, the hard, energetic, practical men who do the rough pioneer work of civilization in barbarous lands, are not prone to false sentimentality. The people who are, these stay-at-homes are too selfish and indolent, too lacking in imagination, to understand the race-importance of the work which is done by their pioneer brethren in wild and distant lands... The most ultimately righteous of all wars is a war with savages... American and Indian, Boer and Zulu, Cossack and Tartar, New Zealander and Maori,—in each case the victor, horrible though many of his deeds are, has laid deep the foundations for the future greatness of a mighty people."

President Roosevelt understood the strong relationship between US democracy and extermination. Genocide was a precondition of the development of the United States as a free-ranging democracy. Roosevelt emphasised the importance of a democratic insistence on race purity. It was aristocratic societies — such as Great Britain and Spain — that had introduced slave labour, while the new democratic states, like the US, acted to save the best portions of the earth as a "*heritage for the white people*" on which functional democracies could be constructed, without the human elements who were unsuitable.

Had these regions been under aristocratic governments, Roosevelt contended, Chinese immigration would have been encouraged precisely as the slave trade was encouraged of necessity by a slaveholding oligarchy, and the result would have been fatal to the white race. But

democracy, with the clear popular instinct of race selfishness, saw the racial enemy, and kept out the dangerous alien through immigration controls. Roosevelt saw the unfortunate and then unwanted presence of the negro in the Southern States as a legacy of the time when America was ruled by a trans-oceanic aristocracy.

President Roosevelt emphasised the world-historic significance of the advent of white democracies which had overcome traditional societies and annihilated their backward peoples: "*The whole civilization of the future owes a debt of gratitude greater than can be expressed in words to that democratic policy which has kept the temperate zones of the new and the newest worlds a heritage for the white people*".

President Roosevelt also made it clear that if ever blacks, Asian immigrants, or the remnant of the native population ever threatened white domination, they should be ruthlessly suppressed:

"What occurs in our own Southern States at the least sign of a race war between the blacks and the whites seems to me to foreshadow what would occur on a much bigger scale if any black or yellow people should really menace the whites. An insurrectionary movement of blacks in any one of our Southern States is always abortive, and rarely takes place at all; but any manifestation of it is apt to be accompanied by some atrocity which at once arouses the whites to a rage of furious anger and terror, and they would put down the revolt absolutely mercilessly. In the same way an Indian — outbreak on the frontier would to this day mean something approaching to a war of extermination."

That statement by a US President should be borne in mind when it is wondered why ordinary Turks and Kurds looked for vengeance against Armenians after their relatives and friends were massacred by armed Dashnaks in cities like Van. 1915 would look very different if the US applied the same standards it applied to its own actions. It certainly would not be given the label Genocide.

In 1900 Roosevelt wrote a book called '*The Strenuous Life*'. Here is a passage from it, explain why it was the "*White Man's burden*" to make war and impose order on the barbarous sections of humanity, who were obviously non-Christian, and required extirpation:

"It is only the warlike power of a civilized people that can give peace to the world. The Arab wrecked the civilisation of the Mediterranean coasts, the Turk wrecked the civilization of *southeastern Europe*, and the Tatar desolated from

China to Russia and to Persia, setting back the progress of the world for centuries, solely because the civilised nations opposed to them had lost the great fighting qualities, and, in becoming over peaceful, had lost the power of keeping peace with a strong hand. Their passing away marked the beginning of a period of chaotic barbarian warfare. Those whose memories are not so short as to have forgotten the defeat of the Greeks by the Turks, of the Italians by the Abyssinians, and the feeble campaigns waged by Spain against feeble Morocco, must realise that at the present moment the Mediterranean coasts would be overrun either by the Turks or by the Sudan Mahdists if these warlike barbarians had only to fear those southern European powers which have lost the fighting edge. Such a barbarian conquest would mean endless war; and the fact that nowadays the reverse takes place, and that the barbarians recede or are conquered, with the attendant fact that peace follows their retrogression or conquest, is due solely to the power of the mighty civilized races which have not lost the fighting instinct, and which by their expansion are gradually bringing peace into the red wastes where the barbarian peoples of the world hold sway."

It is obvious from this that President Roosevelt was determined that the US democracy should take up the previous exterminating work of the Europeans in the 20th Century in the name of Progress. And he was most annoyed when the US failed to make war on the Ottomans when it joined the Great War in 1917.

### The US as Model for the Nazi Racial State

We should now take a short journey round a taboo topic for the United States — how it provided an inspiration and benchmark for the construction of a Nazi Racial order in Germany.

Adolf Hitler, in 1928, made it clear that he modelled his solution to the Jewish question on the United States' solution to the native American question. He spoke approvingly of how Americans had "*gunned down the millions of Redskins to a few hundred thousands, and now keep the modest remnant under observation in a cage*". In 1941, Hitler told confidants of his plans to "*Europeanise*" Russia. It wasn't just Germans who would do this, he said, but other Aryan races like Scandinavians and Americans, and "*all those who have a feeling for Europe*." The most important thing in completing the European civilizing mission was to act with the utmost ruthlessness, like the Americans, and "*look upon the natives as Redskins*."



There is a recent book on Nazism by James Q. Whitman's "*Hitler's American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law*" (Princeton University). In it Whitman methodically explores how the Nazis took inspiration from American racism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He notes that, in '*Mein Kampf*', Hitler praises America as the one state that has made the most progress toward a racial conception of citizenship, by "*excluding certain races from naturalization*." A week after the *Reich Citizenship Law* and the *Law on the Protection of German Blood and German Honour* were formally proclaimed by Adolf Hitler, 45 Nazi lawyers sailed for New York under the auspices of the *Association of National Socialist German Jurists*. The trip was a reward for the lawyers, who had codified the Reich's race-based legal order. The purpose of the visit was to gain "*special insight into the workings of American legal and economic life through study and lectures*".

Upon docking in the US, the Nazis attended a reception organised by the New York City Bar Association. Everyone in the room would have known about the events in Nuremberg, but the leading Nazi jurists wishing to learn from America's legal and economic systems were warmly welcomed by the Americans as kindred spirits. The leader of the Nazi group was Ludwig Fischer. He became the Governor of the Warsaw Ghetto half a decade later.

Whitman notes that the discussion of such American influence on the Nazi regime is taboo. He marshals strong evidence to support the argument "*that the Nuremberg Laws themselves reflect direct American influence*".

The US was the global leader in Race Law and America therefore provided the most obvious point of reference for the September 1933 *Preussische Denkschrift*, the *Prussian Memorandum*, written by a legal team that included Roland Freisler, the President of the Nazi People's Court. American precedent also informed other foundational Nazi texts, including the *National Socialist Handbook for Law and Legislation* of 1934–35, edited by the future Governor-General of Poland, Hans Frank, who was later hung at Nuremberg.

A pivotal essay in that volume, Herbert Kier's recommendations for race legislation, devoted a quarter of its pages to US Racial Law. This which went beyond segregation to include rules governing the lives of native Americans, African Americans, and citizenship criteria for Filipinos

and Puerto Ricans as well as immigration regulations, and prohibitions against miscegenation (race mixing) in 30 US states. No other country possessed such a developed set of relevant laws for the Nazi regime to model its racial order upon.

The German lawyer, Heinrich Krieger, was "*the single most important figure in the Nazi assimilation of American race law*". He spent the 1933–4 academic year in Fayetteville as an exchange student at the University of Arkansas School of Law. Krieger's objective was to deploy historical and legal knowledge in the service of Aryan racial purity, and he studied a range of Racial orders, including South Africa, before discarding the Apartheid regime as a model in favour of discovering the foundation he was seeking for Nazi legality in American Law. His writings about the United States included articles in 1934, concerning the subjugation of native Americans. Krieger's overarching assessment of US race legislation formed the framework for his landmark 1936 book, *Das Rassenrecht in den Vereinigten Staaten* (Race Law in the United States).

On 5th June 1934, a Conference of leading German lawyers gathered to exchange ideas about how best to construct a Racist regime in Germany. The record reflects how the most extreme among them, who relied on Krieger's American scholarship, were especially drawn to US legal codes based on White Supremacy. The main conceptual idea that won the day was Freisler's argument that a Racial Policy needed a political/legal foundation to sustain itself. Any social conventions leading to a mixing of the races were to be subdued in the future through political decisions enshrined in Law.

Another Nazi policy that was inspired by America was Eugenics or *Race Science*. Although theoretically it had emerged in England in the 19th Century, it was taken up quickly and with most vigour in the US: in California. California eugenicists played an important role in the American eugenics movement's campaign for Racial cleansing, which involved exterminating all human beings deemed "*unfit*" for existence and procreation. Elements of the eugenics philosophy were enshrined in US national policy through forced sterilisation and segregation laws, as well as marriage restrictions, enacted in 27 states. Ultimately, eugenics practitioners coercively sterilised some 60,000 Americans, barred the marriage of thousands, forcibly segregated thousands in "ghetto colonies," and persecuted numerous others. Before World

War II, nearly half of coercive sterilisations were done in California, and even after the war, the state accounted for a third of all such mandatory surgeries.

Eugenics was extensively financed by US corporate philanthropists, specifically the *Carnegie Institution*, the *Rockefeller Foundation* and the *Harriman* railroad fortune. The US philanthropists worked with America's most respected scientists from the prestigious universities of Stanford, Yale, Harvard, and Princeton. Stanford President David Starr Jordan asserted the primacy of "*race and blood*" in his 1902 work '*Blood of a Nation*', in which the scholar declared that human qualities and conditions such as talent and poverty were hereditary. In 1904, the Carnegie Institution established a laboratory complex at Cold Spring Harbor on Long Island that accumulated millions of index cards on Americans, as researchers carefully plotted the eradication of whole families, bloodlines and groups to improve the Racial Stock. From Cold Spring Harbor, these eugenics lobbyists agitated in Congress, as well as social service agencies.

The most commonly advocated method of eugenicide in America was a "*lethal chamber*" or locally operated gas chambers. In 1918, US Army venereal disease specialist Dr. Paul Popenoe, co-wrote the widely used textbook, *Applied Eugenics*, which argued,

"From an historical point of view, the first method which presents itself is execution... Its value in keeping up the standard of the race should not be underestimated."

'*Applied Eugenics*' devoted a chapter to "*Lethal Selection*," which operated "*through the destruction of the individual by some adverse feature of the environment, such as excessive cold, or bacteria, or by bodily deficiency*".

The United States Supreme Court endorsed Eugenics as compatible with the US Constitution. In its 1927 decision, Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote, "*It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind... Three generations of imbeciles are enough.*"

The Court's decision opened the floodgates for thousands to be coercively sterilised or otherwise persecuted as subhuman. Years later, the Nazis at the Nuremberg trials quoted Justice Holmes's words in



their defence. They were only doing what the US Supreme Court had ruled Constitutional and Lawful in the most progressive state on earth!

The great US endowment organisations financed the Nazi eugenic drive. By 1926, Rockefeller had donated some \$410,000 (\$4 million today) to German researchers. In May 1926, Rockefeller awarded \$250,000 to the German Psychiatric Institute of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, later to become the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Psychiatry. A grant of \$317,000 enabled the Brain Research Institute to construct a major complex and take centre stage in Racial work. The Institute received additional grants from the Rockefeller Foundation over the years. Leading the Institutewas Hitler's medical adviser, Ernst Rüdin. Rüdin's US funded organisation became the main practitioner in the murderous experimentation and research conducted on Jews, Gypsies and others "sub-human" groups.

Only after Eugenics had become standard practice in the United States was the process transplanted into Germany, in no small measure through the efforts of California eugenicists, who published booklets promoting sterilisation as the best means of achieving "Racial Hygiene" and circulated them to Nazi officials and scientists. Hitler informed his colleagues that he closely followed the progress of the American eugenics movement. "I have studied with great interest", he told a fellow Nazi, "the laws of several American states concerning prevention of reproduction by people whose progeny would, in all probability, be of no value or be injurious to the racial stock."

The *Fuhrer* even wrote a fan letter to prominent American eugenics advocate Madison Grant calling his eugenics book, 'The Passing of the Great Race' his "bible".

Adolf Hitler's main inspiration for Genocide was the Anglosphere and what it had achieved through its "civilising mission" of successfully exterminating the lesser races of the world (sometimes referred to as the "cheap races" at the time).

In contrast, he never said "who, after all, remembers the Armenians". The document that is universally quoted by the Armenian lobby and their Western hangers-on, is, in fact, a fraud. We know that because it was examined and rejected at Nuremberg and discarded as evidence by the Allies on the basis that it, alone of the accounts of the same meeting, had this unique line and it was suspiciously typed by a non-German typewriter.

How pitiful looks this fake document attempting to associate the Ottomans with Hitler in comparison with all the substantial facts that show the US as the inspiration for Nazi Germany.

### **The American State of Mind (Witness No.2)**

The other great advocate of the Armenian cause at this time was the Liberal, White Supremacist, James Bryce. Bryce was not an American, but he was very prominent as a celebrated British Ambassador to the US at this time and historian of the US Republic. He represents, perhaps more than anyone else, the Anglosphere continuity in relation to the Armenians, which operated between Britain and its great offspring across the Ocean, to which it would ultimately pass the torch of civilisation and progress.

James Bryce's connection with the Armenians begins with his travels to eastern Anatolia and the publication of 'Transcaucasia and Ararat' in 1877. In this book, written during the Russian/Ottoman war, Bryce made clear he desired the expulsion of the Ottomans from eastern Anatolia and the creation of nations from the peoples of the Ottoman territories. He described the Turks as lazy and lacking intelligence and the Ottomans as a dying government.

Conversely, he suggested that the Armenians were the most industrious and clever race in the region – the highest form of civilisation there. Bryce wrote that "Degraded as they are, after ages of slavery and ignorance, the Christian population nevertheless offer a more hopeful prospect than the Muslims."

Bryce had a racialist conception of the world. While he found Social Darwinism distasteful, he shared many of its preconceptions about the "quality of races" and "racial stock". He argued that the race mixing practised by the Ottomans had made them "incapable of ruling" and that "Turkish government is dying. It has been sick for a long time." The superior breeds and more civilised races needed to take over – namely the Armenians under British tutelage.

Bryce wrote 'The American Commonwealth', published in 1888, an examination of the constitutional system of the US. This became the standard text on the subject in the US. Americans loved it because here was a famed British intellectual flattering their political system. It seemed to confer an extra legitimacy upon it and the achievements of the founding fathers.

It helped establish Bryce with both a high standing in the US and with a degree of leverage which did not go unnoticed in

London. It led to his appointment in 1907 as British Ambassador in Washington DC, a post he held for seven years. During his tenure he greatly improved UK-US relationships.

Britain, at this point, was making provision for exerting influence over this coming force, if it could not prevent its emergence. While he was Ambassador, Bryce developed a strong affinity with Woodrow Wilson, who entered the White House in 1913. These factors added to Bryce's growing political leverage in the US. On his return he was made a Viscount of the Empire for his services, becoming Lord Bryce.

During the Great War Lord Bryce was the frontman for the historian, Arnold Toynbee, working for Wellington House, the secret propaganda department of the British State and producing the Blue Book against the Ottoman treatment of Armenians.

By 1902, Bryce had become an acknowledged expert on race relations in the US. 'The American Commonwealth' had become a compulsory reference work for nation-builders and political science students. In his *Romanes* lecture, Bryce theorised a typology of four possible outcomes of conquest and colonisation in the inevitable and progressive process of "unequal race contact": (1) the weaker races would die out; (2) the weaker race would be absorbed by the stronger; (3) the races would mix to form something new; and (4) racial difference was so great that it must result in social separation. Numbers (1) and (4) applied to the fundamentalist Protestant US, and to the native Americans and African-Americans respectively, which it encountered in its nation-building. Numbers (2) and (3) tended to apply to the less thorough, and less genocidal Catholic colonists of South America who had a weakness for marrying into the local native populations. They saw them as more human than did the Anglo-Saxon colonists their native populations.

Whilst Theodore Roosevelt saw no contradiction between democratic Progress and extermination, James Bryce agonised over the problem of assimilating lesser peoples into the US democracy, acting on the pretensions of democracy as an abstract theory and the grandiose proclamations of the US Constitution.

"To make race or colour or religion a ground of political disability runs counter to what used to be deemed a fundamental principle of democracy and what has been made (by recent Amendments) a doctrine of the American Con-

stitution. To admit to full political rights, in deference to abstract theory, persons, who, whether from deficient education or want of experience as citizens of a free country, are obviously unfit to exercise political power, is, or may be, dangerous to any commonwealth. Some way out of the contradiction has to be found and the democratic southern States of the North American Union and the oligarchical republic of Hawaii, as well as the South African colonies, are all trying to find such a way."

The abolitionist Wendell Phillips Garrison replied to Bryce: "*I fear you will comfort both our Imperialists and the lynchers, for the latter have caste for their stronghold, and it seems to me you justify caste.*" In an extensive review in 'Nation', Garrison regretted that Bryce had thrown "*the weight of his humane authority into the white scale*" noting that he "*pointedly omits to recommend abolition of the laws forbidding intermarriage*".

In this way, Garrison charged, Bryce was denying African-Americans' equal humanity with Whites by supporting America's prototype for Hitler's Nuremberg Laws:

"The weight of the statutory prohibition lies in its perpetuating the doctrine of slavery, that the colored man is, when all is said and done less than a human being. This doctrine has not been eradicated from the white mind in the generation since the war, and it coexists with a logical toleration not only of exceptional punishments for crimes perpetrated by the blacks, but for atrocious cruelty reserved solely for them – the lynchings deplored by Mr Bryce, in which the faggot is ever ready to be applied to the dark skin."

But James Bryce continued to insist on the dangers posed to democracies by any influx of "*half-civilized men*". The admission to the franchise to people who were "*not only ignorant, but in mind children rather than men*" was not, for Bryce, a welcome development for democracy, but would inflict a fatal injury to democratic development. (These quotations can be found in the book '*Drawing the Global Colour Line*' by Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds.)

Bryce, for all his Liberalism, was a White Supremacist, a fundamentalist Christian Supremacist and an Armenian supremacist in Anatolia and the Caucasus. What made him an opponent of Black rights in the US and an exponent of Armenian nationalism was his view of a hierarchy of races with White, Anglo-Saxon, Christian Protestants at the top and lesser breeds beneath, usually on the basis of darkness of skin and lack of Christianity.

Sir Charles Dilke, the Gladstonian

Liberal, in his famous and best-selling 1869 book '*Greater Britain*' praised the Anglo-Saxons as the greatest exterminating race the world had ever seen. He meant it as a compliment, and it was hardly disputable, least of all in the United States and by the Americans who went about their work with relish and never dissented from such praise. The informal subjugation of the emancipated slaves was not challenged officially until the 1960s and the process of phasing them into national life began only a hundred years after their freeing.

The Armenian experience of the Ottoman State was very different. They were an integral part of all aspects of Ottoman social, economic and political life before 1915. That is undeniable. And then they were engulfed by a sudden catastrophe from outside, as a European war came to them, and everything changed. So where was the genocidal intent?

Who, then, has the Genocidal state of mind: Accuser or accused?

#### Final Note

Michael Gunther has made the point that *ex post facto* law is unrecognised by the US Constitution so, even if there was proof found that the Ottomans intended to annihilate the Armenians, no legislation could be passed to recognise this. A *Bill of Attainder* is also illegal under Article I Section 9 of the US Constitution. By not providing for a fair trial of the Ottomans under full judicial process recognition of an Armenian "Genocide" is impossible. This is backed up by the 5th and 14th Amendments of the Constitution.

What the Armenians are attempting is a manoeuvring around the legal basis of Genocide law – which is the only real form of Genocide recognition – by confusing the legal definition and popular notion of Genocide. In popular notions of Genocide the term is understood vaguely as the killing of a sizeable group of people, regardless of context or intention. Under such a notion both Armenians and Ottoman Turks and Kurds are guilty of Genocide. If such were the case, the meaning of Genocide would be effectively nullified by its joint nature. However, what the Armenian lobby tries to do is to apply the popular Genocide label unilaterally as an interest group lobbying achievement. What actual validity has that? It is a cheap shot that President Biden has, however, decided to go along with.

So let us be done with this issue. The President of the US has spoken and got something off his chest. The skies have not fallen. The US apparently has the same strategic interests now as it did on 23rd April. Secretary of State Blinken is putting distance between 'Ottoman Turkey' and 'Turkey' and cosying up to Baku again.

The Pentagon says that Biden can talk about anything, but military co-operation with Turkey remains a strategic priority for the US. Armenians have been let down again. They find they are merely a black pawn on the chess board among much bigger pieces. What has changed in the world?

As an old Turkish proverb says

*"The dogs may bark but the caravan moves on."*

Stephen Richards

George Borrow  
Part Two

## On The Road

It was fitting that we finished last time with an excerpt from Thomas The Rhymer, Thomas of Ercildoune, about to embark on his travels in Faery under the command of the lady in the green kirtle. Whether the folk of that realm are better or worse than us is beside the point. The point is that they're dangerous, unaccountable, and definitely Other. And for George Henry Borrow, an English Protestant youth in his early twenties, in about 1825, the otherness of the English Gypsies was like catnip.

#### Romania And Roma

For a more recent book with something of the atmosphere of Lavengro and

Romany Rye, I would recommend *Along The Enchanted Way* (John Murray, 2009) by William Blacker, who is some kind of relation of Captain Terence O'Neill, Sir Con O'Neill and the rest of them, and who as a very young man at the start of 1990 started out impulsively for Romania.

I think his father had lost most of his money in the Lloyd's debacle. With Blacker you get the same sense of someone just drifting along without any settled plan. As with Borrow, he's not really a tourist but, to use the journalistic phrase, he gets embedded with the people he's living among: in Blacker's case he got even more embed-



ded than Borrow, as he ended up fathering a child with one of two Gypsy sisters he used to hang out with. It's as far as one can imagine from Patrick Leigh-Fermor on his long walk to Constantinople in 1934 with his sheaf of introductions to various titled people in Schlosses.

Even though the setting is Romanian, Blacker's writing about the Roma people there seems to complement Borrow. Maybe the Gypsy culture of Romania thirty years ago was somewhat akin to the England of the 1820s. Blacker's Romania, like Gaul, is a tripartite sort of place: Romanians, Germans and Roma. As I recall, there's not much said about the large population of ethnic Hungarians. Put very simply, the native Romanians are the peasants, living the kind of life that small farmers would have lived in the Ireland of the 1920s; the Germans – Saxons as they are misleadingly known – are stolid citizens, merchants and artisans, with their townships and ancient churches; while the Gypsies are unpredictable airy spirits, drinking, dancing and fiddling, and suddenly starting knife fights, giving no thought for the morrow.

(For a modern English version of this I should mention *The Stopping Places*, by Damian Le Bas (Vintage, 2018), a rather slight, rambling exploration of the writer's Gypsy heritage, that always seems to be building up to something but never quite does.)

Whatever the Germans are, the Gypsies are the opposite. I'm sorry to keep referencing C.S. Lewis, but he comments very interestingly somewhere on the Grimm Fairy Stories that they're not really fairy stories, *Marchen*, at all. Like the culture they sprang up in, they're very earthy, full of woodcutters, charcoal burners, wicked stepmothers, witches and fortunate younger sons. In the Romanian context there are just no points of common sympathy between the Germans and the Roma.

As between the Roma and the Romanians, there's more of what one might call come and go, but relationships are characterised by mistrust. A year or two ago some of these Romanian problems flared up in Ballymena. The days are long gone when local people, including my older siblings as students, worked in the chicken-processing plant, formerly O'Kanes but now owned by the Moypark conglomerate. Locals don't even do summer jobs there now.

About ten years ago our eldest daughter took a job there for a month or so, and reported back that the workplace signs were mostly in Polish. Most of the Poles have now moved up a rung or two on the employment ladder, and increasingly Romanians

were then recruited. I gather that at one time they were brought in for six week stints, put up in pretty congested accommodation by the company, and then they went home again to make way for a new batch.

A whole furore started up when a number of Roma arrived in the town. Locals were accused, I think justly, of harrassing the Roma contingent, but quite apart from that, it emerged that the Romanian workers couldn't stand the Roma, and were horrified to think that they might be lumped together with them. Whatever *modus vivendi* there might have been in Romania, was unable to be transplanted to County Antrim, where there was no societal framework in place to mitigate the damage. Certainly the mood in Blacker's book seems to be one of mutual wariness rather than out-and-out hatred.

This makes the Roma sound a bit like the supporters of Millwall FC, who sing defiantly: "*No one likes us, we don't care*"! The Roma don't seem to care very much, but they have experienced quite a bit of hatred. According to Nazi race theory, the only two European ethnic groups that were so degenerate as to merit extinction were the Jews and the Gypsies. I for one know a lot more about the Jewish Holocaust than its Gypsy equivalent. I have no idea without checking Google just how many Gypsies died in the camps.

In the days before mass immigration from mainly Muslim lands, the Jews and Gypsies were the two subversive groups that were for different reasons unable to be assimilated into mainstream European society. The Gypsies, I suppose, never wanted to be, whereas the problem with the Jews, and for the Jews, was that, when they increasingly started to mingle in the big wide world outside the *shtetl*, they were just too successful for their own good. Young people of East Asian origin in America are encountering the same problems in the present day as they try to get access to the Ivy League. The administrators have shamelessly abused the affirmative action principle to discriminate against the most able applicants.

### Exotica

Borrow's own attitude to the Jews he meets on his travels in Spain and Portugal veers from admiring to sneering, but he has little of the sympathy for them that he shows for the Gypsies, much less the instinctive understanding. While we might tend to take some of Borrow's self-promoting stories with a pinch of salt, we have an interesting independent testimony cited by Edward Thomas in his biography. The passage sounds as if it's straight out of Walter Scott:

"At Seville it was, in May 1839, that Colonel Napier met him. Nobody knew who, or of what nationality, he was – this 'mysterious Unknown', the white-haired young man, with dark eyes of almost supernatural penetration and lustre, who gave himself out to be thirty instead of thirty-five, who spoke English, French, Italian, Spanish, German and Romaic to those who best understood these languages. Borrow and Napier rode out together to the ruins of Italica."

The two of them settle themselves down among the ruins and Borrow begins reciting Byron. Napier then continues:

"I had been too much taken up with the scene, the verses, and the strange being who was repeating them with so much feeling, to notice the approach of a slight female figure, beautiful in the extreme, but whose tattered garments, raven hair, swarthy complexion, and flashing eyes, proclaimed her to be of the wandering tribe of Gitanos. From an intuitive sense of politeness she stood with crossed arms and a slight smile on her dark and handsome countenance, until my companion had ceased, and then addressed us in the usual whining tone of supplication – 'Gentlemen, a little charity; God will repay it to you!' The Gypsy girl was so pretty and her voice so sweet, that I involuntarily put my hand in my pocket.

" 'Stop' said the Unknown. 'Do you remember what I told you of the Eastern origin of these people? You shall see I am correct. Come here, my pretty child', said he in Moultee, 'and tell me where are the rest of your tribe.' The girl looked astounded, and replied in the same tongue, but in broken language; when, taking him by the arm, she said in Spanish: 'Come, Caballero, come to one who will be able to answer you'; and she led the way down among the ruins towards one of the dens formerly occupied by the wild beasts, and disclosed to us a set of beings scarcely less savage. The sombre walls of this gloomy abode were illuminated by a fire, the smoke from which escaped through a deep fissure in the mossy roof, whilst the flickering flames threw a blood-red glare on the bronzed features of a group of children, two men, and a decrepit old hag who appeared busily engaged in some culinary operations.

On our entrance, the scowling glance of the males of the party and a quick motion of the hand towards the folds of the faja (where the clasp-knife is concealed) caused in me, at least, anything but a comfortable sensation; but their hostile intentions were immediately removed by a wave of the hand from our conductress, who, leading my companion towards the sybil, whispered something in her ear. The old crone appeared incredulous. The 'Unknown' uttered one word; but



that word had the effect of magic. She prostrated herself at his feet, and, in an instant, from an object of suspicion, he became one of worship to the whole family, to whom on taking leave he made a handsome present, and departed with their united blessings.”

We have another independent witness, the Marquis of Santa Colona, from two years previously. Borrow had hardly arrived in Spain when, seeing some Gypsies lounging around, he went up to them, said something the Marquis could not understand, and then—

“that man immediately became ‘une grappe de Gitanos’. They hung round his neck, clung to his knees, kissed his feet, and so on. It’s almost a Messianic aura that surrounds him, or maybe it’s more like Prospero’s interaction with Caliban. He would seek out the Spanish gypsies, spend weeks at a time with them, work out his Romany translations of the scriptures with them, take them on as guides and servants, yet he would choose to don a rather sniffy English persona when it suited him:

“The Spanish Gitanos are the most vile, degraded and wretched people upon the earth. The great wickedness of these outcasts may, perhaps, be attributed to their having abandoned their wandering life and become inmates of the towns, where, to the original bad traits of their character, they have superadded the evil and vicious habits of the rabble.”

Macaulay himself couldn’t be more contemptuous. And Borrow can at times be almost equally scathing about the Spanish nation. Yet, as Thomas remarks, his problem is that, whatever his principled disdain for the non-English elements in the world, he can’t help liking the Gypsies, the Irish and the Spaniards in practice. His ability to make connections with strangers is accentuated when it comes to Gypsies: the connection with them is electric or telepathic.

By way of footnote, Borrow would be amazed by the present day Gypsy Pentecostal revival in the East of England, historically a Gypsy heartland. Just as I write, at midsummer, there’s an outcry going on about a Christian jamboree of the Traveling People in Rutland, which attracted thousands. Unsurprisingly the attendees mostly failed to wear face masks, or to Observe Social Distancing. Regrettably there were also scenes of unruly behaviour, blamed by the organisers on non-Christian elements who had infiltrated the event.

### Bricks Without Straw

It was many years before his Spanish adventures that Borrow’s travels began,

when, after his father’s death he left Norwich for London, with twenty pounds in his pocket. London was a place to escape to, but it turned out to be bad for his mental equilibrium. He was mesmerised by the dome of St. Paul’s, thinking it was about to fall on him, and by the turgid waters of the Thames, almost to the point of throwing himself in. Amid all this mental distress, he gathered a bunch of disparate acquaintances, from the young Irish Catholic *Trust Fund* kid, whom he calls Francis Ardry, to the old woman who sold apples on London Bridge, to the rapacious Armenian wholesale dealer who wanted to take him for an assistant.

Any ambitions he may have had of making his way on the London literary scene were quickly dashed. The unnamed Publisher, apparently the Sir Richard Phillips whose portrait adorns the National Gallery, was yet another Germanophile with philosophical ambitions. He was also dictatorial, penny-pinching and capricious. His quarterly *Journal* having bit the dust, he forced Borrow and his other minions into all sorts of drudgery, with any rewards deferred. Showing little enthusiasm, not surprisingly, for Borrow’s Welsh and Danish translations, he set him to work on accounts of Newgate trials. This often turned out to be a case of making bricks without straw:

“If, on former occasions, he was continually sending me in quest of lives and trials difficult to find, he now was continually demanding lives and trials which it was impossible to find; the personages whom he mentioned never having lived, nor consequently been tried. Moreover, some of my best lives and trials, which I had corrected and edited with particular care, and on which I prided myself no little, he caused to be cancelled after they had passed through the press.”

Phillips’s rage over the poor reception of Borrow’s German translation of his philosophical treatise put the kybosh on their relationship. But Borrow came into money, to the tune of another twenty pounds. His first notion was to write up the history of Colonel Blood, the seventeenth century Irish adventurer who stole the Crown Jewels, but he cast this aside and settled down over two or three days, and nights with little sleep, to write a kind of novel, *The Life and Adventures of Joseph Sell*, which sold for enough money to get him out of London. At least that is the story as he tells it: suffice to say that nobody has quite got to the bottom of the Joseph Sell story.

### The Reverse Dick Whittington

Sadly London hadn’t possessed sufficient expulsive power to deal with Borrow’s demons. His next strategy, resisting

the entreaties of Jasper Petulengro to stay with him and his family in their gypsy encampment not far from the city, was to try to lose himself in the not inconsiderable byways and hedges of rural England, and, in a picaresque way, to embrace whatever adventures befell him. Of course he was really running away from himself, in a type of reaction encapsulated in a song by the lately deceased John Prine, once hailed as the New Dylan:

“So what in the world has come over you?

And what in Heaven’s name have you done?

You’ve broken the speed of the sound of loneliness;

You’re out there running just to be on the run.”

Since he couldn’t live with his own thoughts, he was determined to enter into the thoughts and imaginations of the people he met on the road; and while he was obsessively curious about their lives, and to some extent sympathetic with their plight, he wasn’t much interested in real personal relationships with them, of any kind. When he eventually married, his bride was a respectable widow woman of independent means, with a teenage daughter, who could provide the domestic stability he needed as he entered middle age.

Borrow has the gift of being able to write about England as if it’s a very strange place. Two hundred years ago I suppose it was. The Enclosures were beginning to choke the life out of what was left of Merrie England, and the economic depression of the post-Napoleonic era still overshadowed the land. Life was very hard for most people, but there was still a strong sense of localism, in that last generation before the coming of the railways.

Indeed the present-day phenomenon of London as a gigantic cuckoo in the nest probably only really dated from the 1920s, a development which unfortunately has been repeated in Ireland over the past thirty years or so with the expansion of Dublin commuter land over the green fields of Kildare and Meath.

Rural England wasn’t going to be affected by the kind of industrial displacement that was happening in the northern and Scottish cities, and that filled Liverpool and Glasgow with an assortment of Irish. The names in the village churchyards didn’t show much change for two or three centuries. There was a mobile population of landless labourers, but that migration was within quite narrow geographical bounds; and the only people who upset the pattern were, to some extent, the military moving between camps, and the gypsies.

### Brief Encounter

Leaving aside Borrow's first meeting on the road with the gentleman with the "touching malady", interesting though the story is, we'll come to the moment where he finally takes his leave of civilisation. This was a chance meeting at a wayside inn, where he treats a hard-up tinker and his wife to a pitcher of ale. In the course of a lengthy dialogue we hear the story of how this man has been bullied off the roads by a sort of ogre who is called only *The Blazing Tinman*, otherwise *The Flaming Tinman*. On an impulse Borrow offers to buy the tinker's horse and cart off him, plus the tools of his trade, and his "beat", for five pounds. But, somewhat Rumpelstiltskin-like, the man holds out:

"I say, young man, I believe you understand a thing or two. Just now you were talking of knowing hard words and names – I don't wish to send you to your mischief – you say you know hard words and names; let us see. Only on one condition I'll sell you the pony and things; as for the beat, it's gone, isn't mine – sworn away by my own mouth. Tell me what's my name?"

Then comes the *piece de resistance* from Borrow:

"Your name is Slingsby – Jack Slingsby... Ten years ago, when I was little more than a child, I was about twenty miles from here in a post-chaise, at the door of an inn, and as I looked from the window of the chaise, I saw you standing by a gutter with a big tin ladle in your hand, and somebody called you Jack Slingsby. I never forget anything I hear or see; I can't, I wish I could. So there's nothing strange in me knowing your name."

While we might have doubts about the veracity of the challenge from Slingsby, this incident has the ring of truth about it; and the child-like vanity in the telling of it is somehow appealing.

### Good And Bad Angels

The story then takes another even more bizarre twist, with the attempted poisoning of Borrow in his tinker dell in the wilds of Shropshire by none other than Jasper Petulengro's mother-in-law, the sinister Mrs. Hearne, who had taken a strong dislike to him in his teenage days. She arranges for her thirteen year old granddaughter to give him a cake impregnated with some deadly herb. Again, this doesn't seem like the kind of story Borrow would have invented about his Gypsy friends. Thirty years later he was still attributing his recurrent depressive episodes to this incident, which may not have been strictly correct, but gives some indication of how large the near-death ex-

perience loomed in his memory. Only the fortuitous arrival of the Welsh Methodist, Peter Williams and his wife save him from Mrs. Hearne administering the *coup de grace* with a tent pole.

These new Welsh friends – and the people they visit in their itinerant ministry – bring us into a whole new atmosphere, of humility and Christian love, recorded for us with all the author's observational skill. Yet Peter himself is a fully-rounded believable figure, still with a hint of Welsh cultural chauvinism about him, and uncertain as to the existence and precise identity of the fairies.

As with most of Borrow's friends on the road, Williams is tormented by his own demons in the watches of the night, in his case by the fear that he has committed the *Pechod Ysprydd Glan*, the sin against the Holy Ghost. This form of OCD [Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Ed.] has for obvious reasons been associated with Christian believers; moreover those of a conscientious, perfectionist cast of mind. Bunyan in his autobiographical *Grace Abounding* describes his own very similar experiences.

### Revival And Renaissance

Peter Williams is an embodiment of a remarkable feature of the eighteenth century Welsh Revival, the movement that had come out of the Anglican Church in Wales, and was spearheaded by such figures as Griffith Jones, Daniel Rowland and Howell Harris. The latter two especially were very closely associated with George Whitefield, 1714-1770, the doyen of English preachers. For some reason the religious revival and the cultural and literary renaissance in Wales went hand in hand, and between them had a transformative effect on the national consciousness. I can't think of any other example of the same phenomenon. The Scottish Reformation, together with the subsequent Covenanting phase, for all its militant piety, turned out to be, culturally speaking, an Anglicising movement.

Maybe the German Reformation forms some sort of parallel but the difference is that Wales already possessed an ancient literary tradition whereas the German lands in the early sixteenth century didn't. German literature was kick-started by the Reformation, whereas in Wales the Revival in a sense re-energised the existing literary heritage, somehow without any real organisation. It just happened. But was the language not a human right? and didn't they need a Welsh Language Act to promote it? Well, it's really up to people to get on with expressing their cultural identity, rather than beseeching the State to do it for them. The State can kill, but it can't make alive.

### Dangers, Toils And Snares

At the brook marking the Welsh border, Borrow and the Williams couple part, with expressions of mutual esteem, Borrow characteristically leaving it to the last minute before confessing his own fluency in Welsh and his familiarity with the poets. He then turns back with Jasper Petulengro, whom he spies quite fortuitously on the other side of the stream crossing back over into England.

Mrs. Hearne, he's informed, has met a miserable end by suicide, which means that he has to fight Petulengro to satisfy honour. Once again turning down the latter's invitation to join the camp, he instead makes his way to a secluded dell known to the gypsies, to set himself up as a tinker and farrier. Here he suffers an extreme panic attack, what he terms *a fit of the horrors*, described with great vividness. Picking up his Welsh Bible he opens it at random at the passage dealing with the madness of King Saul:

"It almost appeared to me as if I was reading of myself; I too had my visitations, dark as ever his were. Oh, how I sympathised with Saul, the tall, dark man! I had read his life before, but it had made no impression on me. It never occurred to me that I was like him, but now I sympathised with Saul."

No sooner has he recovered some sort of equilibrium than he comes up against the Flaming Tinman himself, who lands in the dell with his haggard Gypsy woman Moll in tow, and with them, inexplicably, a very tall, blonde, striking-looking girl of twenty. The Tinman, real name Bosville, goes on the offensive, full of sound and fury, but is knocked cold by a lucky swing from Borrow. Bosville and Moll then depart the scene, muttering to themselves, but the girl elects to stay behind with Borrow.

### Two Lonely People Together

The Isopel Berners section is shorter than one would like it, interesting for what it says and doesn't say. Her story is of illegitimate birth in the Workhouse at Great Melford, where her mother, who had been apparently of a gentry family, died three months later; and then being put out at age fourteen to earn her keep; and of the good, the bad and the ugly she encountered on the road, where she sometimes had to let her fists do the talking.

One might have expected these two loners to be twin souls, ticking all the compatibility boxes, as they co-habit in the dell. But one would be disappointed. The dialogues which are so free and easy with Borrow's other interlocutors, are strangely stilted between the two of them, Isopel



being more touchy than touchy-feely, and Borrow managing to say the wrong thing most of the time, and even wasting his time and hers trying to teach her Armenian.

I'm vaguely reminded of *Blind Date* when the matched couples used to report back to Cilla Black on their romantic get-away, which (according to them) invariably turned out to be pretty scaly.

Edward Thomas puts this all down to Borrow. For all his curiosity about other people, he's scared of, or incapable of, forming strong emotional attachments to anybody. He's also probably scared of having sex. His surprising openness about his extreme depressive episodes is balanced by an emotional reticence; or maybe there isn't much emotional depth there for him to be reticent about.

"He torments her once more with Armenian and makes her speak in such a way that the reader sees – what he himself did not then see – that she was too sick with love for banter. She bade him farewell with the same transparent significance on the next day, when he was off early to a fair. 'I waved my hand towards her. She slowly lifted up her right arm. I turned away and never saw Isopel Berners again.' That night as he was going home he said: 'Isopel Berners is waiting for me, and the first word that I shall hear from her lips is that she has made up her mind. We shall go to America, and be so happy together.' She sent him a letter of farewell, and he would not follow her, he would not try, lest if he overtook her she should despise him for running after her.

"I can only say that it is an extraordinary love-making... There can be little doubt therefore that this incident is truthfully reported. Borrow himself has made a comment on himself and women through the mouth of Jasper. The Gypsy had overheard him talking to his sister Ursula for three hours under a hedge, and his opinion was: 'I begin to think you care for nothing in this world but old words and strange stories.' When, afterwards, invited to kiss the same Ursula, he refused, 'having', he says, 'inherited from nature a considerable fund of modesty, to which was added no slight store acquired in the course of my Irish education' i.e. at the age of twelve".

Borrow is as fond of other peoples' stories as of his own, hence the lengthy stories within the story in both *Lavengro* and *Romany Rye*, which are very readable. But in all the strange patchwork of the two books nothing quite matches the tale of his own adventure with the fifty pound horse, bought for him by Jasper Petulengro from the local innkeeper, and his eventful trip to the great horse fair at Horncastle, Lin-

colnshire, where he manages to sell it to a young Hungarian nobleman for three times that money, later returning Jasper his stake. This is Borrow at his swashbuckling best, like the Don Jorge of *The Bible In Spain*.

### The Man In Black

I'd like to close, though, by turning to another aspect of the darkness that seems to haunt Borrow. The anti-Catholic mania that disfigures both books, especially I think *Romany Rye*, seems to be like an emanation of his deep fear of psychological disintegration. It makes his writing appear at times to be out of control, as happened with John Ruskin, for different reasons, towards the end of *Praeterita*. As one can imagine, the Catholic Church doesn't emerge with any great credit from *The Bible In Spain*, but his attitude to it and to the many priests and religious he encounters is pretty relaxed. And, since it was dashed off comparatively quickly, whereas *Lavengro* and *Romany Rye* were carefully worked over, this calls for some explanation.

I'm going to attempt this, but, before I do, I should describe how this comes out. Most of the anti-Catholic bile is bound up in discussions with the gin-drinking Man in Black – not Johnny Cash obviously! This figure hovers over the narrative and at times takes on almost diabolical proportions. He first begins to cast his shadow from afar, in a story told by Peter Williams. He's then encountered in the village inn where honest men are drinking ale, and later in the dell during the Isopel phase. And again and again, in discussions that become increasingly surreal. The man is evidently a Jesuit, commissioned to corrupt the faith and morals of the English nation. This is part of one of the early exchanges, starting with the Man in Black:

"Shakespeare's works are not sufficient for you; no more are the Bible or the legend of St. Anthony or Saint Ignacio are for us, that is for those of us who believe in them; I tell you, Zingara, that no religion can exist long that rejects a bodily image."

"Do you think", said I, "that Shakespeare's works would not exist without his image?"

"I believe", said the man in black, "that Shakespeare's image is looked at more than his works, and will be looked at, and perhaps adored, when they are forgotten. I am surprised they have not been forgotten long ago; I am no admirer of them".

"But I can't imagine", said I, "how you will put aside the authority of Moses. If Moses strove against image-worship, should not his doing so be conclusive as to the impropriety of the practice; what higher authority can you have than that of Moses?"

"The practice of the great majority of the human race", said the man in black, "and the recurrence to image-worship where image-worship has been abolished. Do you know that Moses is considered by the Church as little better than a heretic, and though, for particular reasons, it has been obliged to adopt his writings, the adoption was merely a sham one, as it never paid the slightest attention to them? No, no, the Church was never led by Moses, nor by one mightier than he, whose doctrine it has equally nullified – I allude to Krishna in his second avatar; the church, it is true, governs in his name, but not unfrequently gives him the lie, if he happens to have said anything which it dislikes. Did you never hear the reply which Padre Paolo Segani made to the French Protestant Jean Antoine Guerin, who had asked him whether it was easier for Christ to have been mistaken in his Gospel than for the Pope to be mistaken in his decrees?"

"I never heard their names before", said I.

"The answer was pat", said the man in black, though he who made it was confessedly the most ignorant fellow of the very ignorant order to which he belonged, the Augustine. Christ may err as a man, said he, but the Pope can never err, being God. The whole story is related in the *Nipostimo*."

"I wonder you should ever have troubled yourself with Christ at all", said I.

"What was to be done?" said the man in black. "The power of that name suddenly came over Europe, like the power of a mighty wind. It was said to have come from Judaea, and from Judaea it probably came when it first began to agitate minds in these parts; but it seems to have been known in the remote East, more or less, for thousands of years previously. It filled people's minds with madness; it was followed by books, which were never much regarded, as they contained little of insanity; but the name! what fury that breathed into people! The books were about peace and gentleness, but the name was the most horrible of war cries..."

And so on. What is this all about? Is Borrow projecting some of his own crisis of faith into this dialogue, so that the Man in Black is really the externalisation of his own sceptical, half-despairing, *alter ego*? It's the only way he can try to expunge the speculative atheism he imbibed in the Norwich circle. It's the only way he can retain his sanity.

### Hearts Of Oak

There may be something in this, but at a less complex level, Borrow is using the Man in Black as a prop to express his English abhorrence of Romanism, which in turn goes back to his concepts of Englishness and of England: the land of bread and cheese and



## John Allen Fitzgerald Gregg: A Protestant Archbishop and the new Irish State

“He made no public comment on the political situation during the regime of the Irish Free State under Mr. Cosgrave which took strong measures to suppress violence, nor during that of the Republican Party—however much he disapproved of its principles and methods—under Mr. de Valera, save once, when he protested against the attacks made upon Protestant churches, homes, and business premises at Kilmallock, Co. Limerick in July 1935. But in this he was supported both by the vigorous denunciations of the Roman Catholic Authorities in that neighbourhood and also by the Government’s prompt reassurance that all damage would be repaired and measures taken to bring the offenders to justice.

“In this and in all other matters where the welfare of the Protestant minority was concerned he found in Mr. de Valera, a strong, impartial, and reliable coadjutor, and gave him in return his personal support in all undertakings for the welfare of the country as a whole, though in his heart of hearts he considered its severance from Great Britain a disaster of great magnitude. His younger daughter was one among the rising generation who did not share her father’s old-fashioned views:

“The British Government was, in his view sacrosanct, and he could not imagine

it acting, except from the most lofty and humane motives. I once exclaimed, after he had declared himself to be absolutely behind the Government in some colonial matter where we sceptics thought we could discern signs of exploitation cloaked by self-righteousness: ‘You’d think the British Government divine arbiters!’ ‘I believe they are’, he said in deadly earnest, and went on to describe how he envisaged the British as the trustees of Christianity in a pagan world.

“Nevertheless, as soon as the Irish Free State became a reality and all hope of reconciliation with the British Government was gone, he exhorted the people of the Church of Ireland to accept the new situation, to co-operate with the new government and to stop clinging to a way of life that had gone for ever, and set them an example by doing so himself. He met, knew and worked with all the builders of the new Ireland, and I remember a letter from him that reached me at school, in England, containing nothing but a lament on the assassination of Kevin O’Higgins. But I think in 1922 he felt that he had been banished from the Garden of Eden...” (John Allen Fitzgerald Gregg Archbishop, 1873-1961, George Seaver, The Faith Press, London, 1963, p.126)

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“De Valera, to whom he bore a striking physical resemblance, respected him, and consulted him in the formulation of article 44 of the 1937 constitution... He was a

robust exponent of the Church of Ireland’s doctrinal position : courteous in debate with Rome, and strongly opposed to any ecumenical involvement with Protestant churches that would in his opinion, compromise the catholic elements in Anglicanism” (Kenneth Milne on Archbishop Gregg, The Oxford Companion to Irish History, Oxford, 1998)

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**John Allen Fitzgerald Gregg** (1873-1961) was born in Gloucestershire, England, though his family was steeped in Anglicanism in Ireland. His father, Dublin-born John Robert Gregg, was an Anglican curate in Gloucestershire and a brother of Robert S. Gregg (1834-1896), who succeeded his father, John Gregg, as Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross in 1898.

John Gregg (1798-1878), John Allen Fitzgerald Gregg’s grandfather was consecrated Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross on 16th February, 1862. He was the first recorded Church of Ireland Bishop to have preached a sermon in Gaelic. The present St. FinBarre’s Cathedral was built (1865-1870) during his episcopate.

The Greggs were part of Scots planters who came to Clare after the Flight of the Earls in 1607. Around 1808, a Gregg married, Barbara, daughter of William Vesey Fitzgerald of Ashgrove in that county—Daniel O’Connell in the famous by-election of July 30, 1829, stood against Vesey Fitzgerald, the sitting MP and won the Clare seat. O’Connell’s election was declared void and a new writ issued. In the meantime, Wellington and Peel saw serious political unrest ahead and, though opposed to Catholics sitting in Westminster, introduced the Catholic Relief Act, 1829.

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**More VOX on page 16**

## George Borrow

continued

ale and the good-hearted simple-minded country people, and “*the decent [Anglican] church that topped the neighbouring hill*”. This for Borrow was the Arcadia which the Man in Black and his cohorts were intent on disrupting. That he himself was about the least likely sort of English specimen it would be possible to meet doesn’t seem to have weighed with him.

But there’s something more here too, as we move in the opposite of concentric circles. There’s the wider question of England around the late 1840s when Borrow was composing these volumes. *Lavengro* was first published in 1851, and the edition I have is 1907, published by the OUP in the

World’s Classics series, so it must have struck a chord with the middle class reading public of his day and beyond. I think he was reflecting as well as articulating a fear that lurked in the English Protestant psyche, of a resurgent and revanchist Roman Church. Newman’s conversion had come only a few years before. The Protestant Crusade in 1830s Ireland had fizzled out, largely due to the Famine, the ascendancy of English as the *lingua franca* of the peasant population, and the newly confident Irish hierarchy.

The English Church up to then had either been latitudinarian or Evangelical. The Oxford Movement had spawned what was to become the keen, proselytising Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church. Maybe it seemed it would be only a matter of time before these young clergy would follow

their mentors, and flee the nest to Rome, taking their flocks with them.

The story of the period 1840 to about 1880 is of a growing Evangelical movement both in the established Church and among the English Baptists and Congregationalists, and, side by side with it, this vigorous new Anglo-Catholic plant. Both sustained damage from the Higher Critical movement from the 1880s on, but the Evangelicals were most severely damaged, because the intellectuals were attacking the Bible. In the fullness of time these curious beings emerged, the liberal Anglo-Catholics, like Michael Ramsay and Robert Runcie, even Don Cupitt, the atheist Anglo-Catholic. What Borrow dreaded in his soul had come to pass: an alliance of the sceptics and the Romanists, both bent on the destruction of old England.

