Church & State

An Irish History Magazine

And Cultural Review Of Ireland And The World

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Brendan Clifford

Meandering

The development of individualism as the medium of social conformity seems to have been the distinctive achievement of Progress in the last three or four centuries.

It is agreed by those who are paid to know that this development is intimately connected with the growth of Protestantism and Capitalism into the dominant forces—or force—in world affairs.

Native Ireland lagged behind in this development. For why? *Ce'en fa?* [Cén fáth]

For that, even though it was delivered over to a regime of Progress for two centuries, it refused to conform to it. It remained lodged in the collective comfort of the Catholic morass, instead of rising to the call of Individualism and conforming.

It was punished for its obdurate backwardness. Progress stood for the freedom of the individual to save himself by living his own exclusive life, qualifying himself to be a member of the Elect in the hereafter by doing well in the here and now.

It must be admitted that Progress did its best for the Irish. It destroyed the props of their backwardness—the clan aristocracies, the priesthood, the language and the poets, the untidy forms of pre-capitalist property—It freed them from all the traditional inducements to backwardness, and left them with nothing to lose and everything to gain by conforming to the requirements of free, self-seeking, individualism.

And what did the Irish do when they were freed for Progress by the Penal Laws which punished backwardness? They entered dreamland and remembered times when *"an Aifreann binn"* [the sweet Mass] was said in the great houses of their own chiefs, while furtively attending subversive gatherings at Mass Rocks, where everything Roman was stripped away except the spirit.

The Romanist religion was idolatrous, materialistic and customary. One of the severely Protestant Bronte sisters—the one who lived in Belgium for a while—summed up the typical human product of Romanism as being fat, stupid and happy.

The Protestant regime in Ireland removed from them the conditions for being fat and happy and did all it could to reinforce their presumed stupidity, but in exchange it offered them access to the higher things in life—beginning with soup.

It shepherded them towards it—but they refused to pass through it and seize the future.

Something in them *Prevented The Future*, as an academic work of recent times put it.

Why didn't they just give in, become Protestant, and gain the world? What was it that made them so stubbornly attached to ignorant, poverty-stricken bigotry that they refused the truth when it was pressed on them so forcefully by the strongest Power in the world?

Protestantism began by repudiating the world. Its purpose was to assure the isolated self of a place in the hereafter. It repudiated the strain of Christianity which allowed itself to be woven into the structure of the Roman Empire by Constantine. It abhorred the sensuality of graven images and burning incense and melodious chanting. It stood for the simple life, lived abstemiously in the sight of God. And yet it happened somehow that in Ireland it was the Romanists who lived abstemiously, without the ornamental and seductive fripperies brought over from paganism, while the worldly life was lived in the Protestant Big Houses that dotted the country.

Protestantism, which repudiated the world to start with, became the dominating World Power within a remarkably short period—an essentially destructive power with regard to everything else but itself.

I refer, of course, to the Protestantism which came to dominate the world by becoming the State religion of England at the moment when England declared itself an Empire. In its founding centres in South Germany and Switzerland, Protestantism remained a local affair. Zwingly may have hoped to make Zurich the centre of a world empire, but he failed at the first local hurdle.

Protestantism became a world force as the religion of the Empire created by England. And, during its rise as an expansionist and intolerant Protestant State, England was governing Ireland. And yet the Irish insisted on remaining what they were, despite the chastisements and inducements applied to them. They survived the Protestant onslaught. They were deprived of all visible means of support, and yet they maintained themselves as an existential fact.

Would they have retained their unique essence, if they had saved themselves grief and turned Protestant? Or would they have simply become a component of the Imperial state, as did other special cultures around England?

Now their intelligentsia, instead of investigating how they survived—and also investigating the nature of the English frenzy—apologise on behalf of the bigotry of the generations that obstructed the course of Protestant *progress*.

Official Ireland today apologises for the thoughtless survival of the Irish, who had no concern for others when the others were intent on extinguishing them. It is in denial of its history, and therefore of a major dimension of its existence.

The German philosopher, Schopenhauer, gave a meaningful description of human existence as being made up of *Will and Idea*. The Irish world scarcely exists today in the realm of the Idea. In the Schopenhauer analysis, the form of art which exists independent of the Idea is music, which is a direct expression of the Will. And Plato set music apart as a form of art that would not be tolerated in his *Republic* because it was insidious in its influence and was capable of by-passing and subverting the best-constructed ideas.

When official Ireland retreated from itself in the realm of ideas in 1970 by reneging on the obligations it incurred by its assertion of sovereignty over the Six Counties, unofficial Ireland compensated with a musical resurgence. *"Folk culture"* flourished. The decline of the language revival halted. Fifty years of official sponsorship had reduced it to a shell, but in the seventies

it began to acquire unofficial substance, but as an expression of will, rather than a medium in which ideas were developed.

The Arms Trials and associated events in 1970 left the State poverty-stricken in the sphere of ideas—suggesting that there is an intimate connection between the intellect, no matter how fancifully it dresses itself up, and the will, and that, when it is not driven by the will, the intellect becomes pretentious and brittle—a thing observed by Nietzsche long ago, and even acknowledged in a backstairs kind of way by the supreme philosopher of the intellect, Kant.

The threadbare intellect of *Fianna Gael* floundered after its Great Denial of 1970. It had asserted a right of sovereignty over the Six Counties, thereby denying the legitimacy of the British Government in them, but it condemned the War that was launched against the illicit British regime. What sense—what reason—was there in that? Surely a usurping regime is fair game!

A revolutionary organisation appeared on the scene and began to do its thinking for it—the Official IRA.

For thirty or forty years 'an illegal organisation' had been a well-understood part of the structure of life. The understanding was that it was made necessary—or at least unavoidable—by the existence of the usurping regime in the Six Counties. It was a product of circumstance, therefore it could not be crushed, even though it could not be given official approval either, even by naming it. It was just *"an illegal organisation"*, regrettable but indispensable. It was preserved by circumstances—and sooner or later those circumstances, which were irreformable, would ensure that its day would come.

In 1969/70 that 'illegal organisation' became the Official IRA. It decided to enter the official life of the state in Dublin and to expel from itself those elements which remained pre-occupied with war against the usurping regime in the North. This happened just as the form of the usurping regime in the North began to break down. The expelled elements formed themselves into a Provisional IRA and they found things to do in the old-fashioned way in the Northern turmoil.

The formal occasion of the split in the illegal organisation was its decision to enter the Treaty Dail, and part company with the historic Second Dail, but it was the turn of events in the North that gave historic substance to the split.

And it was undoubtedly because of its outstanding success in handling the Northern situation that the Provisionals are now the major party in the Treaty Dail and the clever Officials are scattered all over the place.

But the Officials had their day. In the seventies they were driven by hatred of the Provisionals and had plenty to say against them, while Fianna Gael could only trot out arid clichés. So they became the spearhead of the anti-Provo conspiracy of the state, and thrived in what was then called the *Ideological State Apparatus*—RTE and the educational and newspaper media, and one of them is now a member of the House of Lords: Lord Bew.

Their idea was, roughly, to counterpose class against nation. They stood for class against nation. They were in that sense revolutionaries out to overthrow the bourgeois state. But the class force required for revolution was a complicated ideological construct of the advanced Marxism of the time rather than something that actually existed, while the national force in the North, on which the Provisionals based themselves, had actual existence: and it was looking for an effective means of develop-

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ment in 1970 when all the Civil Rights demands had been conceded and were seen not to have touched the essence of the situation.

As Provisional Republicanism grew stronger—its strength deriving entirely from the make-up of Northern Ireland—the Southern State felt obliged to denounce it because it was making an official claim on the North. It might have said that it was the legitimate sovereign authority in the North, with the right to decide on war and peace there. That was the formal position under the 1937 Constitution, but it was not a position which Dublin Governments felt it was politically advisable to assert in the 1970s—although it was stated in its Defence Plea in Kevin Boland's Court action against it over the Sunningdale Agreement. It stated it so as to ward off a Court finding against it on the grounds of the constitutional imperative, but then it tried to forget it.

Therefore its condemnation of Provisional Republican action in the North could only take the form of a condemnation of political violence in principle, which rang hollow when it came from Governments of a state founded on it.

Official Republican condemnation carried more bite because of its vehemence, which was given to it by the fact that it regarded the Provisionals as being in rebellion against its own legitimate authority, and because Officialism operated within an ideology which it originated, and its actions and condemnations were consistent with that ideology. The ideology may have been fantasy, but it was fashionable fantasy of the moment in Western Europe, was taken in earnest by its Stickie advocates, and gave their utterances a feeling of conviction that was lacking from Fianna Gael. And that gave it such an edge that it almost took over RTE.

(They were known as Stickies in Belfast because in 1970 their Easter Lily badges were attached to the lapel with gum instead of pins.)

The Stickies characterised the Provos as Fascist from an early stage because they were nationalists, and they gave priority to the national will over the schematic understanding of the strictures of social science.

The Provos were far from being national-bourgeois in the manner of the founder of Sinn Fein, Arthur Griffith. In class terms they were predominantly working class with an occasional petty bourgeois tinge. The Stickies, insofar as I was acquainted with them, came from a social stratum above the Provos. I thought they would have acted more coherently and effectively if they had recognised themselves as national bourgeois and applied themselves to revitalising bourgeois life in the Republic. But it was probably because they came from a higher social stratum, and got their ideas from the University, that they dismissed the appearance of things as illusion and lost themselves in the mysteries of social science.

The Provos in the North were not anti-socialist—as the *"illegal organisation"* had often tended to be. They were common or garden socialists, and they learned quickly how to use the British welfare state as a resource, but they were socialists within the parameters of nationalism in Northern Ireland. They were not internationalists. International socialists were welcome to support them, but the support was not reciprocated. This was made clear by Gerry Adams at a meeting laid on for him in London, in the late seventies I think, by the international socialist movement which had a noticeable presence at the time.

The Stickies were scientific socialists. They seemed to be living in the early days of the Communist International, when the understanding was that the class conflict of Capital and Labour had worked itself through to the point where further development could only come about by the overthrow of bourgeois dictatorship and its replacement by the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

Capital and Labour were then at a stand-off. The Capitalist system could only revive if they were brought back into combination. Labour was destined by the working of the system to overcome Capital. But Mussolini, a revolutionary socialist before the First World War who had helped Britain bring Italy into the War, came up with the forging of a national development of Socialism—which was at variance with the presumption that Socialism was possible only as Internationalism. He established a form of National Socialism to be run jointly by Labour and Capital. That was Fascism. It was reactionary in the sense that it obstructed the necessary course of events as predicted by Scientific Socialism.

The Stickies projected a class development which would override national dissensions. The Provos put themselves at the head of a nationalist revolt in the North, spoiling the game as Mussolini had. And nationalism gave priority to the will to act over scientific understanding of what should be done in order to be in harmony with the necessity of things.

It was not put as clearly as that, but that is the sense I got from a number of Stickies (not Army people) in Belfast and Dublin in the early and middle seventies.

Provisionalism was a national exertion of will, without class analysis, which appealed to tradition: it was Fascism.

Folk culture was a major part of tradition, and was a conspicuous feature of the Fascism of Germany: National Socialism. A Stickie I knew in Dublin was a producer of Irish folk-culture for Radio Eireann. He told me one day that he would have to give it up because he had come to understand that it was one of the important sources of Nazism.

Traditional music was officially banned on Radio Eireann by Conor Cruise O'Brien when he was Postmaster General. As a Civil Servant, he had been a professional Anti-Partitionist, but as Labour Minister in the Coalition he did penance for that.

In the early seventies he engaged in a public debate with Tomás McGiolla, leader of Stickie Sinn Fein. At that moment O'Brien and McGiolla saw themselves as the rival parties in the wave of the future which would sweep away the rubble of the past—but they were the ones that were swept away. They acted as if the state of affairs they aspired to bring about had already been brought about, and in the confused situation that existed they were left clutching at straws.

O'Brien took a stand on Liberalism. Charles Haughey, who wrote very little, wrote some articles on Liberalism for the *Sunday Press* showing that it was not a substance one could stand on. It was not itself substance. At best it was only the mode of a substance. It had no content of its own.

(Liberalism was in origin the ideology of Manchester Capitalism, *laissez-faire* capitalism, freedom of conflict, every-man-for-himselfism.)

The Stickies became rivals of the Communist Party for the patronage of the Kremlin of those times, and sank with it.

The Provisionals declared War on the British State in the North, fought it for a generation, negotiated a compromise end to it, held themselves together while ending it, and indicated to the Dublin

Establishment that it was time for it to end its sovereignty claim over the North. They then made themselves a major party in the South, while still being reviled as fascists or criminals by Fianna Gael, which they had disobeyed in 1970.

And they outdid all the liberals in their liberalism, casting all tradition to the winds, and declaring the State constructed in the South to be worthy only of being melted down into raw material for recasting. It seems possible that, after the next Election it will not be possible to form a Government without Sinn Fein. In that event, it will be interesting to see how Fianna Gael handles a situation which, according to its own rhetoric, would resemble Germany in 1933.

In all of this religion has been of no account. It has just melted away.

When this magazine was founded 50 years ago, it carried in its early issues a series of articles explaining that the Roman Catholicism of Ireland was anomalous in European terms, and had been established in Ireland only in the mid-19th century, chiefly by reason of British default. It did not have deep roots, stretching back over a millennium, as in Austria for example.

It was Cardinal Cullen's creation. His reforms were resisted in much of the country, which was at ease with Gaelic Catholicism. The resistance was given expression by William O'Brien and Canon Sheehan—both of whom were written out of history by the Establishment.

We suggested that the Church/State situation should be normalised by a *Concordat*. The Church—Daniel O'Connell's free Church in a free state—wouldn't hear of it. And the anticlericals, given voice by Gene Kerrigan, looked forward to a simple destruction of the Church by the irresistible spread of Monopoly Capitalism from the United States—which did in fact happen.

Catholicism is, in any case, a different kind of religion from Biblicalist, Individualist Protestantism. Fundamentalist Protestantism is internalised and autonomous. Canon Sheehan gives a memorable description of its Individualist as carrying his world around with him as the snail carries his house—as being just the same as the multitude of other, completely distinct and yet identical, mass-produced individualists.

That may be the Irish future, but it has not yet been achieved!

Peter Brooke

Jesus And The Imperial Power

Introductory Note

This article was published thirty years ago in *The Heresiarch*, a paper established by Joe Keenan, who died recently. It was part of a larger discussion between myself and Joe on the 'problem of evil' —that endlessly embarrassing problem that faces anyone who believes that the world was created *ex nihilo* by a God who is a) all-loving, b) omnipotent and c) omniscient, and also that those who fail to please this God are destined to eternal torment. Whilst *Church & State* concerned itself chiefly with political aspects of the Church/State relationship, *The Heresiarch* was chiefly concerned with the philosophical criticism that could be made of Christian theology. It seems appropriate that the present article, concerned with the political aspect of the early Christian Church, should appear in *Church & State*.

"Resist Not Evil"

In his article on the Christian idea of evil and eternal damnation (*'Deliver us from evil'*, Heresiarch 1) Joe Keenan says:

> "Like Jeremiah, Jesus supported the imperial power against zealotry. Jesus was, in short, a very eccentric and consequently very interesting Jew. Very, very interesting. But, of himself, no more than interesting.
>
> "The real founder of Christianity, the failed Pharisee, Paul, was an altogether more substantial figure."

The basis for the argument on Jesus' support for Imperialism is the large number of sayings that can be summed up in the three remarkable words: "*Resist not evil*" (Matt 5.39). We all know the sayings in question and they have been causing difficulties for Christians ever since — turn the other cheek; if a man compels you to go with him one mile, go with him two; love thine enemy; love those who despitefully use you; he who lives by the sword shall die by the sword.

In the context of the situation in which the Jews found themselves at the time of Jesus' life, these passages must refer to the relations between the Jews as an oppressed people and the Romans as their oppressors. I am not suggesting that that is their only possible application. It is characteristic of scripture that it has many different possible applications, can provide nourishment for the soul in a wide variety of different circumstances, and can therefore maintain its central importance over many centuries of human history; but, at the time Jesus was speaking, the great 'evil' being experienced by the Jews was Roman domination, and Jesus was urging them to accept it and not to attempt to resist it by the use of force. He is not even encouraging the 'passive resistance' advocated by Gandhi. It is in this sense that Joe Keenan can argue that "*Jesus supported the imperial power against zealotry*".

'*Zealotry*'—the determination to overthrow the Roman yoke by force—was not the only Jewish response to the position in which the Jews found themselves. The Sadducees seem to have been quite prepared to collaborate with the Romans and the puppet 'Jewish' monarchies they had foisted upon the country, so long as the formalistic practice of the Jewish religion was tolerated. The Pharisees seem to have wanted a Jewish religious revival—the Jews were to defend themselves against Roman corruption by affirming the force of their own religious idea, through rigorous observance of the law which was to be rewarded, not by triumph over the Romans, but by eternal life—a new and controversial idea in Judaism that was resisted by the Sadducees. John the Baptist seems to have gone further, arguing, as did the Essenes, that Judaism itself was now part of the same evil that was represented by the Roman Empire, and that what was required was a revolutionary new religious life based on a total opposition to 'the world', meaning the Roman and Jewish world.

Of these tendencies, the Zealots took up the sword and perished by the sword as Jesus prophesied they would. As a result of their efforts, the Temple and the Jewish state were destroyed by the Romans and with it went the collaborating tendency in

Judaism, the Sadducees, who had no spiritual idea which could resist the destruction of the material institutions of Judaism. The Pharisees seem to have formed the basis for the rabbinical movement through which Judaism was reorganised and able to survive through two thousand years of dispersal and persecution —one of the unquestionable miracles of religious history. The most radical tendency —that of John the Baptist —folded into Christianity (it is tempting to think that the so-called 'Christians of St John', the Mandaeans or Sabaeans of Harran, an obscure Syrian sect which was still in existence in the nineteenth century and which recognised John the Baptist but not Jesus, were the successors of John the Baptist who refused to fold into Christianity. However, the texts which exalt the station of John the Baptist appear to be quite late in their history).

I have said that the radicalism of John the Baptist's movement was that it rejected both the Roman Empire and traditional Judaism. From the religious point of view, the Zealots were not at all radical. They were just a movement of national independence wanting to restore the status quo ante —to undo the Roman conquest, to put the clock back. Using modern terminology, they were reactionaries.

The Subversion Of Jewish Culture

From the Jewish point of view, the teachings of John the Baptist and of Jesus were immensely destructive. They were opposed to, or—perhaps better—they devalued the very institutions the Jews relied on to maintain their spiritual integrity against the inroads of the Roman and Greek worlds—family, temple, law. They proclaimed a loyalty to and faith in God that transcended these merely material loyalties. In Jesus' teaching, the love of the enemy transcends even the love of the family—bedrock of the Jewish sense of community:

> "But I say unto you. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you ... For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans so?" (Matt 6.44 & 46)/
>
> "And the multitude sat about Him, and they said unto Him, Behold thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And He answered them, saying. Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him and said. Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister and mother" (Mark 3.32-5).
>
> "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and.children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 15.26).

It was for this reason that the Jewish religious leaders wished to crucify him, and from their own point of view they were perfectly right. Jesus was preaching the destruction of the coherence of the Jewish community, and we can easily understand how Pilate, the most obnoxious and arrogant of Roman procurators, saw no harm in him. Similarly, it is easy to see why the early Christian community was persecuted by the Jews and defended by the Romans. The Jews, who were being crucified in their thousands, must have been morally appalled by the Christian fixation on the crucifixion of one Man as the greatest and most unforgiveable sin of humanity. And they must have been disgusted by the complacency and even triumphalism with which the Christians regarded the destruction of the Temple—which, the Christians believed, had been prophesied by Jesus.

What the Romans, the Jews and Joe Keenan have all failed to recognise, however, is that when Jesus says "Resist not evil", he is still affirming that evil is evil. When he says "Pray for them that despitefully use you", he is not denying that the Jews were despitefully used by the Romans (or that, a little later, the Christians were despitefully used by the Jews, or that, later still, the Jews wer e despitefully used by the Christians). The enemy is still the enemy and evil is still evil. What Jesus is proposing is a different way of dealing with it.

Jews And Romans

In what way was the Roman Imperial Power evil, an 'evil empire', to use Ronald Reagan's phrase? One of the better scenes in Monty Python's Life of Brian shows the Zealots addressing an agitated crowd and asking "What have the Romans ever done for us?" This prompts the crowd to start thinking about what the Romans have done for them and by the time the scene is finished the list has become long and impressive. In its military, technical and administrative achievements, the Roman Empire merited its claim to greatness. Roman Law continued to dominate Christian Europe to the extent that the Pope was obliged to justify his claim to temporal power through the forged 'Donation of Constantine'—the Vicar of Christ seeking his legitimacy from the Imperial Power.

Using modern ideas of 'progress', the Roman Empire was undoubtedly 'progressive', largely because, through administrative and technological means that were very advanced for the age, it was able to organise human life on a much larger scale than had previously been possible, enabling the development of 'civilisation'—the city as the centre of social life, served by a more or less rationally organised but subservient countryside. (The term 'pagan' means 'country dweller' and is a term of contempt, rather in the way in which we use the word 'peasant'.)

The Jewish hatred and contempt for the Roman system was of a different character to that of other subject peoples, who may simply have yearned for their ancient freedoms and resented the domination of the foreigner. What exasperated the Jews was that they felt themselves to be vastly superior to their new masters. The basis for this feeling of superiority was, of course, religious. The Romans had a great civilisation, but no religious idea worthy of the name. The Jewish culture was in thrall to the Roman civilisation, but the Jews had a powerful religious idea embodied in a literature that was unparalleled in its spiritual force and grandeur. Through the deployment of merely material force, a civilisation that was spiritually trivial was lording it over a culture that was spiritually great.

There is a close parallel to be drawn with Islam in the present day. The Muslims, though notionally independent, are nonetheless dominated at every turn of their economic, and therefore political and cultural life, by the spiritually impoverished civilisation of the West.

The mark of Cain, of the Beast, of the evil of the Roman Empire was its superficiality. There was nothing in it that could touch the depths of the soul. No-one could talk to Caesar as Job or David spoke to God. The love and fear excited by the Emperor was an empty thing compared to the love and fear excited by God. Through the love and fear of God, a fullness of human nature was realised that was completely inaccessible to the merely material and commercial civilisation of Rome.

Roman man was a dull, boorish, machine-like thing compared with Jewish man—just as American man was a dull, boorish, machine-like thing compared to American Indian man. Seen from a spiritual, or human, point of view, 'progress' often consists of the victory of the lesser over the greater, of 'evil' over 'good'. Unlike the American Indians, however, the Jews were able to evolve a religious idea that was capable of subverting the civilisation that was destroying them.

The Subversion Of Roman Culture

The process by which Judaism subverted the Roman Empire (the materially weak subverting the materially strong) is

described by Nietzsche, especially in The Antichrist, The Twilight of the Gods, The Genealogy of Morals and in the notes that were assembled together as The Will to Power. Nietzsche may be described as the last Humanist (that is how Berdyaev describes him)—that is, the last great representative of the impulse associated with the Renaissance towards an exalted human spirituality independent of God.

The Renaissance and, through it, classical Rome, is Nietzsche's ideal, and he gives us a good idea of how Judaism and Christianity must have appeared to the cultivated Roman who continued to resist them. I say 'Judaism and Christianity' because, after the dispersal, Judaism independent of Christianity was also making great inroads into the Roman consciousness. St. Augustine describes Judaism as having prepared the way for Christianity throughout the Empire. The Jewish prophecies were already widely known before the Christians appeared claiming to fulfil them.

Nietzsche's criticism of the Christians, seen from the standpoint of the cultivated Roman, was that they were hypocrites. They talked about love and humility but were full of hatred and arrogance. They hated and despised Roman civilisation. The effect of Christianity on the hearts of those who were converted by it was to fill them with a great loathing and contempt for 'the world' that surrounded them—the world that was determined in all its aspects by the impressive material achievements of the Romans.

We do not have to look very far to find this loathing and contempt. There is an elemental expression of it in the Revelation of St. John, which we may see as the book in which the Christians lay claim to the spiritual succession of the Essenes. The climax of John's revelation is a radiant vision of the final collapse of the Roman Empire. Those who have been attracted by Communism will recognise the target of John's spleen. Nowadays, it is called 'Capitalism'. This is how John, the beloved disciple, the disciple who, according to tradition, was closest to Jesus, "supported the imperial power against zealotry":

> "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lighted with its glory.
>
> "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.
>
> "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies...
>
> "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her...
>
> "And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more…
>
> "…the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones; and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyme, wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble...
>
> "The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,
>
> "And saying: Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones and pearls!
>
> "For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off.
>
> "And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city?
>
> "And they cast dust on their heads and cried, weeping and wailing, saying Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate…" (Rev 18.1-19).

Jesus And 'Christianity'

Joe Keenan may reply that the John of Revelation was not John the Beloved Disciple, and that his book does not reflect Jesus' teaching. He takes the view that Jesus was not a Christian; that Christianity was invented by St Paul who was "an altogether more substantial figure" than Jesus. I take the view that Christianity as we know it did flow from the initial impulse given by Jesus and that Paul's conversion was genuine. I do not know if Jesus actually spoke to Paul on the road to Damascus, but I do know that Paul, the persecutor of Christians, suddenly realised that the Christian idea was much stronger than the Jewish idea. It was much more subversive of the evil represented by the Roman Empire.

We may assume that Paul —the 'failed Pharisee', to use Joe Keenan's phrase—persecuted Christianity because he saw it as subversive of the Jewish religious idea and its institutions, which were already being undermined by the Roman spiritual corruption. Jesus had argued that the religious idea was greater than the Jewish institutions. It was universal and could not be confined to the Jewish community. The evil was not just the political evil of Roman domination. The distinction between Evil and Good did not coincide with the distinction between Roman and Jew, oppressor and oppressed.

The Evil was the absence of God, which in turn meant the absence, or trivialisation, of love in the absence of any object large enough to embrace the human capacity for love in all its enormity.

The Roman Empire was, to use a certain type of modern jargon, structured by the absence of God and it therefore had a low idea of the nature of man. But this evil did not lie in the institutions of the Roman Empire, which were merely a symptom of it. It lay in the human heart—to a greater or lesser extent in every human heart. If anything, the Romans were less culpable than the Jews because God had never been offered to them as an object of love. Instead, then, of urging the overthrow of the Roman yoke and building a smug, self-satisfied little Jewish statelet, Jesus was cultivating the discontents, questionings, soul-searching which was such an intimate part of the Jewish religious tradition, and urging the Jews to go out and spread that spirit of discontent, questioning and soul-searching among the lost sheep, the beggars and the strays who had not been invited to the wedding, along with the Samaritans: in short, the non-Jews.

The advice that he gave to his disciples was not very useful from the point of view of state-building—as the Christians were to find when they took over the Roman State in the fourth century; but it was immensely practical for the purpose of building an international Christian community, in exile, far from the confines of the Jewish community.

St. Paul's epistles are largely an attempt to work out the implications of this larger vision given by Jesus and to explain them to Christians who still thought Christianity was just another reform of Judaism. St. Paul certainly developed Christianity and addressed the great question of who exactly Jesus was and why he had the right to say what he said and expect to be obeyed—by everyone, Jew and gentile. But this development was an organic development of Jesus' teaching, not a contradiction.

While it is certainly possible to argue that Christianity would not have spread without the rationalisation provided by St. Paul, it is equally certain that Christianity could not have done what it did in the world if it had been based uniquely on Paul's epistles, without the words of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels.

Brecon, December 1991

Stephen Richards

Notes On The Long Island

Lewis

I'll try to stay as far away from New York as possible in what follows.

If the question arises, what is the third largest island in the British Isles ("*the Isles*", as Norman Davies calls them), you might be surprised by the answer: Lewis, far out in the North Atlantic. As with the island of Hispaniola, encompassing the Dominican Republic and Haiti, there are two distinct polities on one island: Harris on the south, where the Harris Tweed comes from, though I think it's also manufactured in Lewis, and Lewis proper. Administratively I suppose they're all one these days, but culturally and historically rather different.

A GP friend, who had some professional experience of both parts of the island, told me he found the Harris people easier to deal with, easy-going and equable. His Lewis patients tended to be more emotionally volatile, intense, and brooding; and there was a greater prevalence of alcohol-related problems. No doubt this was an unscientific verdict, and no doubt these cultural idiosyncrasies, as far as they existed, are being steadily flattened out as our vibrant, culturally diverse society becomes ever more monochrome. If everywhere is culturally diverse, then nowhere is culturally distinct. There's even a mosque in Stornoway now I believe.

Another Lewisian trope relates to the extreme intelligence of its inhabitants, especially the MacLeods. There may be plenty of MacLeods in other parts of the West Highlands but Lewis is their indisputable homeland. ven the Gaelic name for the island, *Leodhas*, gives a clue. And the MacLeods were indeed for a long time the masters of the island, until in the early seventeenth century they were supplanted by the MacKenzies, amid scenes that did little credit to either clan.

About the intelligence: some may recall Iain MacLeod, the Conservative Chancellor who never was, due to his untimely death shortly before Heath won his election victory in 1970. Maybe he would have made less of a Horlicks of the British economy than Anthony Barber. More recently, the Lewis genes made it into the White House, with the election of Donald Trump, his mother having been Mary MacLeod from Lewis, who emigrated in 1935. It's perhaps doubtful if Gaelic was her first language, but she would almost certainly have been bilingual. Some of the emotional volatility may have come out in her son, but there's no doubting his intelligence, or that there was method in his madness.

For most of what follows my Virgil will be another MacLeod, John, erstwhile of *The Scotsman* and the *Scottish Daily Mail*, but also the essential historian of Lewis. There are other worthy Highland historians, but, as Bertie Wooster says of Jeeves, MacLeod stands alone, first on account of his *Banner in the West, A spiritual history of Lewis and Harris* (Birlinn, 2010), and then because of *None Dare Oppose* (Birlinn 2010), dealing with the Egyptian captivity of the Lewis tenantry during the forty-odd years from the 1840s to the 1880s, at the mercy of the despicable Donald Munro, Chamberlain of the Lews, whose psychopathic behaviour was more or less winked at by the lord and lady of the manor, the Mathesons.

This is probably one of my top ten desert island books. It would be impossible to speak too highly of it. He's chronicling the cruelties inflicted on his own ancestors, in a community where family lineage was central to identity. The book could so easily have descended into a rant. Certainly the anger is there, but it's controlled. He's shrewd, waspish, analytical, at times very funny, but he's above all curious to understand how it all could have happened, and what people could have been thinking. It's a restless, disturbing book.

The same *encomiums* apply to his very ambitious *Banner in the West*, where he once again avoids lazy equations. It must take a particular skill to write a panoramic history and not end up being bland or simplistic. Without wanting to state a universal truth, I would suggest that the best journalists can turn out to be the best historians, as well as the most readable. MacLeod was Scottish journalist of the year in 1991, for what it's worth.

The only other of his books that I know of came out around the same time, and I haven't read it yet. I might just find it too painful. *When I Heard the Bell: The Loss of the Iolaire*, deals with the disaster on New Year's Day 1919, when a yacht chartered at Kyle of Lochalsh to bring home the Lewis and Harris men from the War, foundered on a reef at the entrance to Stornoway Harbour. Of the total complement of 284 men 205 were drowned, 188 of them being returning soldiers. The commander—whose body was washed up, wearing two life jackets—had never made the crossing before, and there was some evidence that drink had been taken.

The irony was that a fair proportion of the men who were lost would have been aware of the reef, *"the Beast of Holm"*, and would have been capable of piloting the yacht safely in to harbour. But the subjunctive mood never saved a life. The damage was done and the islanders had to endure it. The trauma affected the community so deeply that it wasn't until the end of the next war that they could even bring themselves to put up a memorial.

Trouble In Paradise

MacLeod's father, Donald, now aged 80 plus, is equally famous, at least in Free Church circles, some would say notorious. One-time Professor of Systematic Theology and indeed Principal in the Free Church College, Edinburgh, he was latterly a frequent contributor to the *West Highland Free Press*, which I believe no longer exists in the form it once did, and also the *Observer*. Politically he came over as broadly socialist—certainly anti-authority—and on the ethical issues that agitate the churches generally he tended toward the 'liberal' side of the fence.

The notoriety relates to a Sheriff Court trial in 1996 when MacLeod *pere* was charged with, and ultimately acquitted of, indecent assault, charges arising from the statements of four or five different female complainants (one an Australian) whom the Sheriff concluded were all engaged in a conspiracy to bring him down, for theological reasons. In Free Church terms, the argument runs, MacLeod was seen as a dangerous modernist. But, if that was indeed the agenda, it failed monumentally, because he emerged with his reputation intact. His opponents argue that this was because he was actually being protected by the big guns in the denomination, so that his acquittal ranks with that of O. J.

Simpson as a miscarriage of justice. This was the *cause célèbre*, the outworkings of which led to the *Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)* casting itself off from the mother ship four years later.

Northmen And Gaels

But Lewis wasn't always a hotbed of ecclesiastical scandal and bloodletting among the Calvinists. Indeed until the early 19th century it was a potential mission field for the Scottish kirk, which however from Reformation times onwards had shown little interest in evangelising the wild Hebrideans. It wasn't until 1801 that a complete Scots Gaelic translation of the Scriptures was produced; and the educational deficit was such that the words were going to fall on largely arid soil. Mediaeval and early modern Lewis was more familiar with internecine strife that was not at all Gospel-related.

The Viking incursions and subsequent settlement left a defining mark on the character of the island, more intense towards the north. As they settled down and became farmers, shipwrights and craftsmen, the Vikings *"were gaelicised by the local women"* (MacLeod), giving rise to the distinctive ethnic fusion that has been an abiding cultural feature. Many of the place-names in Lewis, and nearly all the oldest ones, are of Norse origin: such as all of the places ending in *"-bost"* (settlement); and Stornoway, Carloway etc. Some of these names may be no more strange-sounding than Scunthorpe, but it gives one a strange *frisson* to come across them in the last great fastness of Gaeldom in these islands. Besides that, nearly all the nautical words in Gaelic are Norse loan words, and on Lewis some of the main clan names are Scandinavian, such as MacAulay (son of Olaf), Nicolson, Morison, and, of course, MacLeod itself.

Early mediaeval Lewis therefore became a fiefdom of the Norwegian crown, but the Norwegian kings struggled to control their far-flung outposts, as the resident ethnically Norse nobles were continually straining at the leash in a series of rebellions, culminating in the Battle of Largs, in north Ayrshire, in 1263, in which Scots troops also participated, which finally broke the Norwegians. Three years later, by the Treaty of Perth, the Isles and the Kingdom of Man were ceded to the Scottish Crown, in the shape of Malcolm III, by King Magnus of Norway. Strangely, the Hebridean Church would continue to answer to the Archbishop of Trondheim until 1350.

It was certainly not a case of happy ever after, and for the next three and a half centuries the Isles were troubled by issues of overall sovereignty and, at a micro-level, on Lewis itself, by vicious feuding. The rise and fall of the MacLeods reads like something out of *Game of Thrones*. Just as the Campbells were the Seed of Diarmuid, so the MacLeods, or the most powerful *sept* of them, were Torquil's Seed, *Siol Torcuil*, here described by James Fraser, a late-seventeenth century minister:

> "The Clan Torkil in Lewis were the stoutest and prettiest men, but a wicked, bloody crew whom, neither law nor reason could guide or model, destroying one another, till in the end they were expelled that country, and the McKenzies now possess it."

At a macro-level, the closest that the Isles came to real governing authority was in the *Lordship of the Isles*, exercised by Clan Donald, the descendants of Somerled, a suzerainty that was generally allowed to be legitimate, even if rather misty. But just as the Stewart kings couldn't resist scheming with the French to do down the English, so Clan Donald kept intriguing with the English to try to extend their own sphere of influence. Their luck ran out when they came up against James IV, the ablest of the Stewarts, and, incidentally, the last one who could speak Gaelic. Ultimately, in 1493, the Lordship of the Isles was forfeited to the Scottish Crown. The title now attaches to Prince Charles.

The Flowers Of The Forest

This left a power vacuum which was filled neither by the Crown nor by anybody else. James IV showed no interest in consolidating his newly-won authority, though it's debatable whether the century of chaos that followed was any more dire than what an attempt at *"Scotticisation"* might have led to. These Renaissance princes had little notion of the business of winning hearts and minds.

Again, just as the English kings down to Henry VIII were seduced by the prospect of conquest in the rich lands of France, and wasted their substance in pursuit of this chimaera, so James IV was persuaded that it would be a smart move to mount an invasion of England at a time when the English were preoccupied with French adventures. As we know, that typical exercise in Scots *hubris* ended very badly, with the loss of his life and the wipeout of most of the Scots nobility, on Flodden Field in Northumberland in 1513, a catastrophe that marked the beginning of the end of Scotland as a viable independent state.

It's evident that somewhere along the line the Scottish monarchy must have lost its connection with its Celtic, even Dalriadan, roots. Arguably the rot had set in a few centuries previously, with the marriage in 1066 of Malcolm Canmore (Macbeth's nemesis) to the Saxon-Hungarian princess Margaret, grand-daughter of Edmund Ironside. She later became St. Margaret, and was undoubtedly a very pious lady, but she despised the Gaelic language, and worked to sideline the post-Columban Celtic Church in favour of a centralising, Romanising tendency. Some of the later power struggles with the English were at bottom Anglo-Norman dynastic rivalries, with the crown of Scotland as the prize.

The Non-Plantation

This not to deny the already existing linguistic and cultural gulf separating eastern and lowland Scotland from the rest, but the Scottish Crown might have seen it as its mission to act as a unifying force. The 'rough wooing' at the hands of the English in the 1540s was later echoed in the behaviour of James VI in his sponsorship of the *Fife Adventurers*, assembled for the invasion of Lewis. Theirs was a bloody and squalid enterprise, legitimised by Act of Parliament, and launched in October 1598, under the command of the Duke of Lennox and with the aggressors accompanied by the Minister of Anstruther (in Fife), Robert Durie.

As for Durie, as MacLeod explains:

> "He was there not as a missionary but as a padre to the bandits… and an accomplice in the policy shamelessly declared. It was a programme of genocide, of 'ruiting out the barbarous inhabitantis' by such slauchter, mutilation, fyre-raising, or utheris inconvenieties… not by agreement with the country people but by extirpation of thame'… and henceforth no land was to be 'disponit in feu, tak [tack] or utterways but to Lowland men.' …
>
> "In the event, the mission of the Fife Adventurers was a bloody, humiliating failure, a sustained, glorious, car-crash of an enterprise still of high satisfaction to anyone of Lewis descent."

Sustained it certainly was: the invasion wasn't finally beaten off for good until 1613. But the MacLeods had been fatally weakened during this whole period. As they say in the world of rugby, their indiscipline let them down. It was one thing to hold their ground against their familiar rivals, the Macaulays of Uig and the Morrisons of Ness, quite another to try to keep their heads above water while plotting against and murdering one another, and in the meantime forfeiting their little remaining credit with the authorities in Edinburgh.

Under New Management

The beneficiary of all this mayhem was Ruairidh Mor ("Big Roderick") MacKenzie, otherwise known as the Tutor of Kintail, tough, far-sighted and calculating. The MacKenzies—the future Earls of Seaforth—had been gradually consolidating their position over the previous century by cosying up to the Stewarts over the Lordship of the Isles. Acting as Regent, or Tutor, to his infant nephew, Roderick was able to obtain a commission from the Scots Privy Council to seek out and destroy (*"with fire and sword and all kinds of hostility"*) Niall Odhar, the last of the MacLeod warlords, and all his adherents. And, like the manufacturers of the Covid vaccines, he was given immunity from prosecution for any misdeeds along the way. So, Niall was duly beheaded at the Mercat Cross in Edinburgh in 1613, and *"it would be very many years before it was safe to be known, on Lewis, as a near kinsman of the princely house"*.

But, as MacLeod goes on to say:

> "Sympathy should be limited; the MacLeods had themselves won Lewis in a disgraceful fashion from the Nicolsons, and subsequently hunted all conceivable Nicolson claimants to extinction with no less impressive industry".

If the MacKenzie (ultimately the MacKenzie-Stewart) era was later looked back on as a golden age, it must have been only by way of comparison with the chaotic supremacy of the later MacLeods. The Highland clan system, if we can call it that, when it was bad it was horrid. The question was, what kind of society was to replace it? And no matter that some of the MacKenzies, by the standards of their day, were reasonably conscientious proprietors, what we find is going on, especially as we enter the eighteenth century, is that a poverty-stricken but free people is slowly being reduced to an equally-poverty-stricken but almost serf-like status.

The Sweat Of Their Brow

Before we fast forward to the mid-nineteenth century, I should say something about the system of modern landlordism as it existed in the Western Highlands. It was comparable to but not identical with the Irish situation. And the reforms in Scotland were even more piecemeal than in Ireland. In particular, Scotland never experienced anything like the *Wyndham Acts*. Tenant farming has continued to be a way of life for a sizeable proportion of Scottish farmers up to the present day. A problem with this is that there has been much less of an incentive to carry out improvements to farmhouses and farm buildings, as a drive through the Scottish countryside will often testify.

As for crofting, it's a commonplace of Scots law *that "a croft is a piece of land surrounded by legislation"*, but it certainly wasn't always thus, and the process of effective protection for tenants didn't get under way until the *Crofters' Party* started to make inroads from the early 1880s on. Besides that, the explosive events in Skye in 1882 had brought the plight of the crofting community to the attention even of the Westminster Parliament, which set up the *Napier Commission* to investigate. There followed the *Crofters Holdings Act* (1886) by which crofts were recognised for the first time as heritable tenements.

A problematic figure in the Highland rural economy was the *tacksman*. Traditionally this would have been a close friend of relative of the chief, who had land gifted to him as a reward for service or status. He held his *"tack"* as a kind of chief tenant, sometimes farming it himself, but also with crofters holding under him, more or less as tenants at will. But the tacksman could also be any man of means able to obtain a formal lease of land from the proprietor. Depending on character or circumstance, he could act as a force for stability and restraint on behalf of the tenants, or he could be as rapacious as any proprietor. Sometimes he could be both at the same time. MacLeod contends that, all things considered, the slow eclipse of the tacksman class tended more to the detriment of the crofters' interests.

Within the general framework of the landlord system there was considerable variability by time and place. It wasn't necessarily to your advantage if your landlord happened to be the old chieftain dressed in his new Victorian clothes; and those activist landlords with bees in their bonnets about developing their estates were perhaps the most to be feared. Again, the policy of eviction to make way for sheep farms and deer forests wasn't at all uniform. Though the oppression in Lewis may not in general have taken the form of mass evictions, that didn't make it any the more bearable.

The Counties of Ross and Sutherland suffered the most from evictions, as well as islands such as Mull, the very large island adjacent to Iona. My only first-hand experience of the results of a certain kind of landlordism was 25 years ago, when I was walking over the Paps of Jura, those pointy hills just visible from the north Antrim coast on a clear day. The whole of the interior of the island is one big deer park, with just a couple of villages on the coast. In Highland Scotland there are vast unpopulated tracts, which phenomenon isn't totally explained by geography.

The Lambs On The Green Hills

Reading Ian Mitchell's very entertaining discussion of the Scots legal system, *The Justice Factory* (Second Edition, Create Space, 2014), I came across the *Pet Lamb Case*, an 1882 saga that seems to encapsulate the state of power relations in the great Highland estates, albeit this one had a happy ending.

On the one hand we have Murdo Macrae, a humble cottar and shoemaker on the MacKenzie lands in Kintail. A *"cottar"* was something less than a crofter, even pre-1886:

> "A cottar simply had his "cot", or house, and potato ground plus, in some cases, the grazing of a cow, though that was usually no more than a tolerance on the part of the laird."

In the other corner was William Louis Winans, from Baltimore, a railroad millionaire, who on Whitsunday took a 21-year lease of the Kintail estate from the Seaforth MacKenzies. We're talking about 200,000 acres, or 350 square miles. His idea was to turn it all into a deer forest, and he appointed one William Ross, not from the locality, as his gamekeeper. Mitchell carries on the story:

> "Ross noticed that Macrae kept two sheep near his cot and decided that he should not. If Macrae allowed his sheep to nibble the laird's grass, Winans's deer would be disadvantaged. Worse still, if this trespass were condoned, Mcrae's neighbours might feel they had a right to permit similar trespasses by their own sheep."

And so this standoff continued, until Macrae removed the sheep, but rural harmony wasn't restored:

> "Soon afterwards [Macrae] found a lamb in the ditch when he was out cutting peats. It had obviously lost its mother and was so near death that he decided to take it home. Macrae's wife nursed it back to health…
>
> "The lamb became a pet in the household, following Macrae and his children around wherever they went. The eagle-eyed Ross soon spotted the little creature, which, at the time he sighted it, was twenty yards from Macrae's house and therefore within his master's deer forest. He reported this fact to Winans, who told him to order Macrae to get rid of the lamb."

Macrae countered by arguing that his lamb was only grazing the roadside, but Ross wouldn't be put off.

Macrae then had his 'Here I Stand' moment:

> "Devil of a hair of the lamb will I put away for Winans. Instead of putting

away this lamb I am only thinking of getting more sheep, or a cow. Let Winans go his length and I will meet him".

Winans filed papers in the local Sheriff-court seeking an interdict, that is, an injunction. Macrae was successful at first instance, but lost on appeal. By this time the costs against him would have been overwhelming, so, with nothing to lose, preferring to be hanged for a sheep as a lamb, he lodged an appeal to the Court of Session in Edinburgh, the highest court in the land. And he won.

The most substantive judgment was that of Lord Young. For Mitchell this is a key exhibit to support his thesis of *"Show me the judge and I'll show you the law*", or what we might call legal realism, though its main proponent, Karl Llewellyn, was hardly born at that time. You identify the desired outcome and then find plausible means to arrive at it. Common sense has to lead the way in the absence of any real precedent. The trouble of course is that where common sense and natural reasoning are politically inexpedient the judges will weave all kinds of intricate webs to catch the unwary litigant. Here is Lord Young:

> "I decline, by any interdict, to protect unenclosed lands against trespass of this kind. To talk about the lamb growing into flocks of sheep and herds of cattle is really to talk in a way which makes no impression on my mind whatsoever. If a man wants to protect his lands from being invaded in this way—against children toddling on the grass at the roadside, or a lamb going on to it, or a cat, or a kitten—I say, if he wants to exclude that he must do so by other means… but not by applying to Her Majesty's judges for interdict."

Mitchell comments perceptively:

> "There was no law involved in Lord Young's vision of ordinary Highland life. There was no Impossible Life in the Highlands (Prevention of) (Scotland) Act on the British statute book. The case turned entirely upon Lord Young and his colleagues' view of how life should go on in late nineteenth century Ross-shire. It was a purely personal view, and not just of what custom was, but what custom ought to be, as their Lordships thought".

The rich man now had to pay all the costs, totalling around £3,000.00, which was an astronomical sum in an agricultural economy in those days. Winans complained it would have been cheaper to commission a solid gold effigy of the lamb and present it to Macrae. The victory of the small man was a straw in the wind. Whether the case would have been decided the same way ten years earlier must be doubtful.

Strange Meeting

Back in Lewis, in mid-century, power relations were fraught and were going to be more so. There is a telling story from John MacLeod, dating to the Matheson period, which is the focus of his book:

> "About 1855, Lady Matheson herself decided to sally forth from the new, stately, Lews Castle to have a look… When the little party reached Pairc Shiabost to inspect the latest feat of Matheson beneficence, it was practically deserted. There was only one person to be seen, a middle-aged woman, labouring in her water-logged field…
>
> "Lady Matheson was naturally gratified to see someone, and sent her coachman at once to fetch the peasant over. She padded humbly to the carriage, wiping earth and filth from her hands. She could not look Her Ladyship in the eye. And, of course, Catherine had scarcely any English; Lady Matheson had not then, and never would, make any effort to learn Gaelic. The coachman was pressed to service as an interpreter…
>
> "Lady Matheson had felt very tickled by this encounter… …She had so enjoyed meeting Mrs. MacLean, she said. Well, I am most honoured to meet Your Ladyship. Would Mrs. MacLean like to get a bolt of new cloth for a dress? I could not possibly be putting Your Ladyship to such trouble… And what colour of stuff might Mrs. MacLean like? I could not presume to advise Your Ladyship—whatever colour Your Ladyship sees fit. Well, fine cloth would be on its way, declared Lady Matheson, and bade farewell, and instructed her coachman to proceed back to town…
>
> "Days later, family lore records, a bolt of beautiful red fabric… was delivered to that island black-house. But the ordeal my great-great-grandmother endured through those long tense minutes—when one false word, a single mis-step before a great and august personage, could cost them home and land—still clutches today. Catherine, after all, was daughter of a blinded hero of the wars against Napoleon, happy wife to an industrious and literate man… Indeed Angus MacLean himself, a great-grandson of a chiefly MacLean of Coll who had fled to Lewis in 1689 after fighting for his king at Killiecrankie, was a descendant of princes, of the early Stewarts and The Bruce himself. He was, by blood and heritage, arguably of nobler stock that James Matheson. And Angus's wife… was in every important respect save riches and standing more than Lady Bountiful's equal. But… the protracted humiliation of their encounter rings down through the decades to her descendants like a slap across the face.

The Shape Of Things To Come

This brings us straight on to the Matheson era on Lewis, which began at Whitsun, 1844, with James Matheson's purchase of the island, its rents and profits, for £190,000.00. Donald Munro was already in post, as solicitor for the estate and procurator fiscal, from November 1841, so the Mathesons aren't to blame for introducing him to the island, however much they're to be blamed for giving him free rein increasingly thereafter. In those the dying days of the MacKenzie-Stewart era, Munro had started as he meant to go on, with the eviction of hundreds of tenant families from their holdings in the area of Loch Shell, in the south east of the island. Despite the decrees becoming effective only after the crops were taken in, there was an attempt at the destruction of the townships in the month of June, 1842, without any recourse to law being possible, there being no independent legal advice available; and no money to pay for it if there had been.

What happened in the event was that the officers carrying out the orders were set upon and driven off by a party of women, after which wiser counsels prevailed, and there was a stay of execution till the end of May of the following year, when the tenants departed quietly. This more humane outcome was largely due to the efforts of local tacksman Lewis MacIver and his son. The same MacIver however had no compunction about charging his tenants the antique duty of *thirlage*, whereby the tenant had to pay his landlord a *multure*, a percentage value of the corn milled at the landlord's mill, which mill was maintained in working order by the tenantry, at no cost to the landlord. Not only that, but the duty was payable, even if the tenant (or his wife) ground out the meal at their own quern. There were later edicts by the Mathesons forbidding private milling.

These interesting varieties of light and shade characterise MacLeod's writing, except when it comes to the Mathesons' bulldog, Donald Munro, where the picture is painted as black as pitch. Before we move on to the sharp end of the narrative, it's going to be necessary to say something about the Mathesons, who they were and where they came from, and about the great trading concern of Jardine, Matheson and Co, merchant princes of the old East India Company, and indeed of the Indian Empire that succeeded it. This will all have to wait till next time. ■

Hayden Talbot/
Hannah Sheehy-Skefficnton

Chapter ten,

Michael Collins' Own Story

The Murder Of Francis Sheehy Skeffington

[Introductory Note:

This account of the murder of the pacifist, Francis Sheehy Skeffington, while in the custody of the British military in Dublin during the 1916 Rising, is taken from *Michael Collins' Own Story, Told To Hayden Talbot,* published in London in 1923 (Chapter 11).

Talbot was an American newspaper correspondent who established contact with Collins at the end of 1921 and gained his confidence. He arranged for Collins to write a series of articles for newspapers he represented. He then put it to Collins that publishers were demanding a book about him, written by himself or by Talbot. Collins said he did not have the time to write it himself, and did not think it could be done by anybody else. But he gave Talbot a number of interviews from which he composed this book. And, for matters beyond his own experience, Collins referred Talbot to Eoin MacNeill and Arthur Griffith.

Some Chapters of the book were first published as newspaper articles. They were condemned as forgeries by Piaras Beaslaí, then a Free State General an Chief of the *Irish Censorship Bureau*, who threatened to use the law to prevent publication of a book. Talbot replied that he had ample evidence of Collins' collaboration with him. The book was published.

I came across it back in the 1960s but set it aside because of the challenge to its authenticity, expecting that somewhere, sometime, I would come across a disproof of Beaslaí's claim. But in all that time I have never seen a single reference to it. When minds were focussed on Collins on the Centenary of the 'Treaty', I remembered the book, and concluded that it was too good not to be authentic.

It has many things in it besides the Collins story. The most remarkable fo these things is the account of the Sheehy-Skeffington affair by Hannah Sheehy-Skeffincton of Kanturk, his wife. **Brendan Clifford**]

The Murder Of Francis Sheehy Skeffington

Collins' disinclination to dwell on instances of cruelty practised by the British armed forces in Ireland led to my making independent enquiries. Quickly I learned in a general way of the murder of Francis Sheehy Skeffington at Portobello Barracks, April 19, 1916, by a firing squad of seven men under the command of Captain J.C. Bowen-Colthurst, Royal Irish Rifles. It seemed to be the one instance that came to every Irishman's mind when I asked for authentic cases of brutality.

The murder and a British court-martial's finding Colthurst "guilty, but insane", were extensively commented upon by the world Press, but the real story has ne°ver been published. I obtained the story from Skeffington's widow—a unique figure in Ireland today in that she is the only woman whose husband went to a martyr's grave who does not wear mourning, and who never tried to be elected to Dail Eireann. It seems to me to merit inclusion in these pages—if only because it is indirectly another testimonial to Collins' genius for helping others to outwit the British Secret Service.

Behind Mrs. Skeffington's reticence regarding her escape from Ireland and her trip to America by means of a counterfeit passport there is the plain stamp of Collins' handiwork. It was Collins who smuggled Mrs. Skeffington out of the country—and back again—just as it was Collins who enabled De Valera and Boland and the others to evade the British watchers and cross and recross the Atlantic without genuine passports.

In great part the facts as told me by Mrs. Skeffington are verified by the official records of the Royal Commission of Enquiry set up by the command of the King in August, 1916, at the Four Courts in Dublin.

"My husband", Mrs. Skeffington began, "was an anti-militarist, a fighting pacifist, a man gentle and kindly even to his bitterest opponents, who always ranged himself on the side of the weak against the strong whether the struggle was one of class, sex or race domination. Together with his strong fighting spirit he had a marvellous, an inextinguishable good humour, a keen joy of life, a great faith in humanity and a hope in the progress towards good.

"Several months prior to the Easter

week rising my husband was sentenced to one year's imprisonment for making a speech 'calculated to prejudice recruiting'. He went on hunger strike, and was out after six days with a licence under the Cat and Mouse Act. Shortly after his release he went to the United States where, in February, 1916, *Century Magazine* published his article entitled 'A Forgotten Small Nationality'.

"Although as a socialist and a pacifist he was opposed to all militarism—even Irish—his great sympathy for and belief in the general movement for Irish freedom led him to return to Ireland where he believed he was most needed. He felt the British authorities realised perfectly—as of course they did—that he was resolutely opposed to the use of force, and therefore, in their eyes, a relatively unimportant figure. His record as a publicist for many years—as special correspondent of labour papers such as the *London Herald*, *New York Call*, *Manchester Guardian*, and as author of the "Life of Michael Davitt", and as editor and founder of the *Irish Citizen*, a pacifist and feminist Dublin Weekly—established him as a man to whom the thought of militarism was abhorrent.

"Equally well-known was his opposition to Arthur Griffith, whose ideals were anti-socialist. Altogether then, although he was openly associated with James Connolly in the revolutionary Irish labour movement and was one of the founders of the Irish socialist party, he was not an undesirable in British eyes in the sense that rebel suspects were.

"Of course, neither he nor I would have been surprised had he been deported to England on his return from America. But murder without trial we did not foresee.

"My brother, Eugene Sheehy, an attorney, volunteered as a follower of Redmond for service in the British army during the war. He became a lieutenant in the Dublin Fusiliers, and later won a captaincy. My sister's husband, Professor Tom Kettle, was also a lieutenant in the same regiment and was killed in action in France in September, 1916. My father—then a member of Parliament for South Meath—supported England in the alleged 'fight for small nations'. Thus my husband and I were in a small minority in our family.

"Finally, my husband was sympathetic to the idea of an Irish Republic in so far as it made for a worker's commonwealth, but he was distinctly opposed to the use of military methods to achieve that end. I emphasise this point, because it bears directly on the fact that his murder was so completely without justification as to compel English military chieftains to admit as much officially.

"And they knew his attitude. In March, a month before his murder, my husband published an open letter to Thomas MacDonagh—one of the signers of the Irish Republic Proclamation—and made his position clear. In the course of this letter he stated:

" "As you know I am personally in full sympathy with the fundamental objects of the Irish Volunteers. When you shook off the Redmondite incubus last September I was on the point of joining you… I am glad now that I did not. For, as your infant movement grows towards the stature of a full-grown militarism its essence—preparation to kill—grows more repellent to me.

" "High ideals undoubtedly animate you. But has not every militarist system started with the same high ideals? You are not out to exploit or to oppress; you are out merely to prevent exploitation and to defend. You justify no war except a war to end oppression, to establish the right. What militarism ever avowed other aims—in its beginnings?

> " "I advocate no mere servile lazy acquiescence in injustice… but I want to see the age-long fight against injustice clothe itself in new forms, suited to a new age. I want to see the manhood of Ireland no longer hypnotised by the glamour of 'the glory of arms', no longer blind to the horrors of organised murder… We are on the threshold of a new era in human history. After this war nothing can be as it was before. The foundations of all things must be re-examined… Formerly we could only imagine the chaos to which we were being led by the military spirit. Now we realise it. And we must never fall into that abyss again."

"Surely there was nothing in this openly distributed document to earn British censure. On the other hand there was his arrest to prove that he was none the less offensive to the British authorities. His article in the *Century* was not calculated to improve his standing. In that article he had referred to the sentence of a fortnight meted out to a Dublin boy for kicking a recruiting poster! As a matter of fact, subsequent events proved that his description was circulated to the military immediately after the Easter Monday rising.

"So much for my husband, and his record.

"Captain Bowen-Colthurst had had sixteen years' service in the British army. His family had settled in Ireland in Cromwell's time and been given grants of land confiscated from the Irish. At the court-martial held in Richmond Barracks, Dublin, June 6, 1916, fellow officers of Colthurst's testified to his cruelty to natives in India and to his having tortured dumb animals while on service there. After the battle of Mons, according to the testimony of Major-General Bird, Colthurst's "eccentricity" (which had expressed itself in his recklessly sacrificing his men and practicing cruelty on German prisoners) resulted in his being sent home from the front.

"When the Easter Week rising took place Colthurst was stationed with the 3rd Royal Irish Rifles in Portobello Barracks. The battalion's commanding officer, Colonel McCammond, was absent on sick-leave. Captain Colthurst, although not the equal in rank of Major Rosborough, was the senior office [sic] in point of service and, according to all the evidence, considered himself at liberty to ignore his brother-officers.

"If this statement seems incredible to persons who have implicit faith in the unvarying discipline enforced in all units of the British army, let it be remembers that what I have just said was stated by a British officer at Colthurst's court martial. More, it is easy to prove that there was open animosity between all the Irish regiments, as regards those recruited in the north-east and in the south of Ireland. Although they all wore the British uniform and served the same king, they were bitterly hostile to one another. Between the Royal Irish Rifles, for instance, and the Dublin Fusiliers there was constant friction. The former was an Orange regiment from Belfast.

Through my family's connections with the British military forces I had become acquainted with Captain T. Wilson, then a despatch rider in the Dublin Fusiliers. I appealed to him—after rumours had reached me that my husband was being held prisoner in Portobello Barracks—to go there and make enquiries. He refused point blank, asking me if I wanted him to go to his death. When he realised I didn't understand the situation, he explained. He dared not go near the Royal Irish Rifles. He was a Catholic!

"So much for Colthurst and the conditions affecting army discipline in Dublin at the time of the Easter Week rising.

"When the outbreak began on Easter Monday my husband was near Dublin Castle. He learned that a British officer had been gravely wounded and was bleeding to death on the cobblestones outside

the Castle gate. My husband persuaded a bystander to go with him to the rescue. Together they ran across the square under a hail of fire. Before they reached the spot, however, some British troops rushed out and dragged the wounded man to cover inside the gate.

Throughout that day and the next my husband actively interested himself in preventing looting. He was instrumental in saving several shops; he posted civic guards, and enlisted the help of many civilians and priests. He pleaded with the crowds and persuaded them to return to their homes. But by Tuesday evening the crowds were getting out of hand. Everyone feared the worst. My husband called a meeting for that evening to organise a civic police. We met at 5.30 and had tea. I went home by a roundabout route, for I was anxious about my seven-year-old boy. I never saw my husband again.

"It was between 7 and 8 o'clock that evening that my husband passed Portobello Bridge on his way home. At this point Lieutenant M.C. Morris, 11th East Surrey regiment, was in charge of a picket. Recognising my husband from the circulated description of him he ordered his arrest. He was unarmed, carrying a walking-stick, and was walking quite alone in the middle of the road. At Portobello Barracks, wither [sic] two soldiers escorted him, he was searched and questioned. No papers of an incriminating character were found on him.

"Lieutenant S.V. Morgan, 3rd Royal Irish Rifles, the adjutant at Portobello Barracks, reported the arrest to headquarters, saying there was no charge against my husband, and asking whether he should release him. Orders were given to detain him. But the charge sheet—produced at Colthurst's court martial—showed the entry against my husband's name was 'no charge'.

"Told he was to be detained overnight, he asked that I be informed, but the request was refused. No message was ever allowed to reach me; no notification of his death—no announcement of his first or second burial was every issued.

"At about midnight Captain Bowen-Colthurst came to Lieutenant W.P. Dobbin, 3rd Royal Irish Fusiliers, captain of the guard, and demanded that my husband be turned over to him. This, of course, Dobbin had no right to do, but he did it. Colthurst had my husband's hands tied behind his back, and then led him out with a raiding party along the Rathmines road, the raiders firing at houses as they went along.

"Opposite Rathmines Catholic church the column came upon two boys who had been attending the service that evening and were returning to their homes. Colthurst stopped and asked them if they did not know that martial law had been proclaimed, and that they could be 'shot like dogs'. The elder of the boys, J.J. Coade, a lad of 17, made no reply but started to walk away. 'Bash him', Colthurst ordered, and a soldier broke the boy's jaw with the butt end of his rifle, knocking him down. Colthurst whipped out his revolver and shot him dead. The body was later carried to the barracks.

"My husband protested against this wanton murder and was told by Colthurst to say his prayers as he probably would be the next.

"Evidence as to what happened next is conflicting, although it is abundantly plain that Colthurst committed another murder a few minutes later. The official enquiry report on this subject had this to say:

> " "The evidence of the different witnesses can only be reconciled by inferring that more than one case of shooting occurred during the progress of Capt. Colthurst's party… None of the evidence offered any justification for the shooting of Coade; it is, of course, a delusion to suppose that martial law confers upon an officer the right to take human life, and this delusion had in the present case tragic consequences."

All evidence of these atrocities were omitted at Colthurst's court marital. It was only against the strongest protest from the military that Sir John Simon insisted that testimony in this matter be presented to the commission holding the enquiry. But nothing was ever done about two other murders which responsible eye-witnesses declared Colthurst committed later in that week. The commission ruled that they were "not within their scope".

"At Portobello Bridge, Colthurst posted part of his men under Lieutenant Leslie Wilson to whom he turned over my husband with instructions to shoot him "forthwith" if there was any sniping at him and his raiders. Then Colthurst led his party on over the bridge and to Alderman James Kelly's tobacco shop. Before entering it they flung live bombs into the place. Then they sacked the premises and took prisoners the shopman and two editors—Thomas Dickson and Patrick Macintyre. Together with my husband they were all marched back to the barracks.

"As it happened Dickson, a cripple, had published a loyalist newspaper, the *Eye Opener*, and Macintyre's paper, the *Searchlight*, was also a loyalist publication. Alderman Kelly had helped to recruit for the British army. But Colthurst had mistaken the latter for Alderman Tom Kelly, a Sinn Finer, and their combined protests were unavailing.

"Shortly before 10 o'clock the next morning Colthurst again demanded my husband from the guard, together with the two other editors. Besides Wilson and Dobbin, Lieutenant Tooley was in charge of the guard of 18 men. To them he stated he was "going to shoot Skeffington and the other two". According to their own testimony these subordinate officers delivered the three prisoners to Colthurst without protest. They also told off seven men with rifles to accompany Colthurst to the barracks' yard.

"This yard was about 12 feet long and 6 feet wide. As the three prisoners walked away from the firing squad, and when they had reached the end of the yard, Colthurst gave the order to fire, and all three dropped in their tracks, dead.

"The British authorities prevented my ever seeing my husband's body, and when I attempted to have an inquest held, refused permission.

"Colthurst presently made a report of the triple murder after Major Rosborough ordered him to do so, and it was duly sent to headquarters at Dublin Castle. The report was altogether a fabrication and, subsequently, he was ordered to make a second report. Meantime, however, he kept his command without even a reprimand.

"Later in the day of the murder of the three editors, Colthurst was in charge of troops in Camden Street when Councillor Richard O'Carroll—one of the labour leaders in the Dublin City Council—surrendered. Marched to the barracks' yard, his hands above his head, O'Carroll walked to his death. Colthurst shot him in the chest. To a soldier who expressed doubt as to the effect of Colthurst's bullet, the latter replied, "Never mind, he'll die later". Then he ordered the unconscious man to be dragged out into the street and left there. The driver of a bread van picked him up, but the military interfered, and took him back to Portobello Barracks. Ten days later he died—in his wife's arms. They had sent for her at the last, and she arrived in time to hear him whisper a dying statement in her ear—a statement she later repeated to me.

"Three weeks later Mrs. O'Carroll gave birth to a son.

"On the same day Colthurst arrested a boy whom he suspected of having Sinn Fein information. When the boy denied it, Colthurst ordered him to kneel in the street and, as the boy raised his hand to cross himself, shot him in the back.

"In both these cases the British author-

ities refused to order an enquiry.

"Meanwhile, I was vainly seeking my husband. All sorts of rumours reached me: that he had been wounded and was in a hospital; that he had been shot by a looter; arrested by the police. I also heard that he had been executed, but this I refused to believe—it seemed incredible. I clung to the belief that even if he had been condemned to die, he would be tried before a jury, for martial law did not apply to non-combatants, and that I would be notified. Of course, the reason of the silence is now clear. It was hoped my husband's case would be like that of so many others who 'disappeared' and whose whereabouts could never be traced. Thirteen days after the murder of my husband and the other two editors, Mr. Tennant stated in the House of Commons in answer to a question that "no prisoner has been shot in Dublin without a trial".

"All day Wednesday and Thursday I enquired in vain, and Friday came without my having any positive information of my husband's fate. On Friday I tried to see a physician connected with the Portobello Barracks, but the police stopped me. I discovered I was under police supervision—as I continually was for several years afterwards. Meantime, houses were being raided and pillaged. Mme. Markievicz's home was broken into on Wednesday and all her pictures and other valuables stolen. Whole streets were ransacked and the inhabitants terrified; the soldiers ruining everything within reach of their bayonets.

"Soldiers wren everywhere selling their loot openly in the streets. Officers were shamelessly displaying souvenirs".

"To allay my terrible anxiety my two sisters, Mrs. Kettle and Mrs. Culhane, agreed to try to get into Portobello Barracks. On their arrival they were immediately put under arrest and a drumhead court martial held upon them. Colthurst presided. Their crime was that they had been seen talking to Sinn Feiners. Colthurst refused to give them any information, declaring he knew nothing whatever of Sheehy Skeffington. Finally, they were marched off under armed guard and admonished not to mention what had taken place.

"That afternoon I managed to find the father of the murdered boy Coade. He told me he had seen my husband's body in the barracks' mortuary when he had gone for his son's body. This a priest later confirmed, but he could give me no other information.

I went home shortly after 6 o'clock, and was putting my little boy to bed when the maid noticed soldiers lining up around the house. She became terrified and dashed out the back door, carrying my son with her. I ran after them, for I knew the house would be surrounded and feared that they might be shot down if seen running. As I ran down the hall a volley was fired through the front door and windows. The shots were fired without warning, and without any demand having been made on us to open the door.

"They broke in the windows with their rifle butts and swarmed all over the house, some going to the roof. Colthurst was in command. He rushed upon us and ordered us to throw up our hands. Behind him was a squad of men with fixed bayonets. The raiders numbered about 40 and included Colonel H.T.N. Allat, Royal Irish Rifles, who was later killed in the vicinity of the South Dublin Union. On this occasion, however, he exercised no command.

"Colthurst ordered us to be removed to front room—to be shot if we stirred. For three hour they searched the house while we stood motionless, closely guarded by men with drawn bayonets, with others outside the house with levelled rifles pointed at us. The house was sacked, everything of value being removed—books, pictures, toys, linen and household goods. I could hear officers and men jeering as they turned over my private possessions. One of the soldiers (a Belfast man) seemed ashamed, and said, "I didn't enlist for this. They are taking the whole bloomin' house with them".

"All my private letters, including many from my husband before our marriage, his articles, a manuscript play—the labour of a lifetime—were taken. Colthurst had brought my husband's keys, stolen from his body, and with them opened his study which he always kept locked.

"Throughout the raid, Colthurst's demeanour was that of a sane man. He addressed several questions to me, and was coldly insolent in manner. But he was quite self-possessed. His men took his orders without question. My sisters are certain he was sane when he questioned them at the drumhead court martial. He was not the same man, unquestionably, a friend would have found him on the golf links, for instance. But British officers are all like that. It is only on occasions like this that one sees them as they really are. Of insanity, there was no suggestion. Colthurst was simply the Englishman with the veneer removed.

"It was during this raid that he came across some papers which later he falsely endorsed as having been "found on Skeffington's person". This was proved at the enquiry.

"A second raid was made May 1, during my absence, and this time a little temporary maid was taken under guard to the barracks. She was held there a week, the charge against her being that she was found in my house. On this same day, Major Sir Francis Vane, the second in command at Portobello, was relieved of his command by Lieut.-Col. McCammond for his persistent efforts to have Colthurst put under arrest. He was told to give up his post and hand it over to Colthurst. Thus the latter was *promoted* six days after the murders. Later he was sent in charge of a detachment of troops to Newry, and not until May 11 was he put under "close arrest". Are these facts consistent with the theory of lunacy?

"Sir Francis Vane made a genuine effort to see justice done. Finding his superior officers at Portotbellow would do nothing, he went to Dublin Castle and saw Colonel Kinnard and General Friend as well as Major Price, head of the Intelligence department. They all deprecated the "fuss"—and refused to act.

"By order of Colonel McCammond, bricklayers were brought to the barracks, Sunday, May 7. They removed the blood-stained bricks in the wall and replaced them with new bricks.

"Sir Francis Vane crossed to London early in May, interviewed Lord Kitchener, before whom he laid the facts, and I have reason to believe it was Kitchener who ordered Colthurst's arrest. But the order was disregarded by General Maxwell, then in command in Dublin. The net result of Sir Francis Vane's efforts was that he was dismissed the service—by secret report of General Maxwell—deprived of his rank of major and refused a hearing at the court martial. Yet previously he had been mentioned in despatches by Brigadier-General McConochine for bravery.

"Without my knowledge my husband's body was exhumed and reburied in Glasnevin, May 8. Originally it had been put in a sack and buried in the barracks' yard. The remains were given to his father on condition that the funeral would be at early morn and that I be not notified. My husband's father consented unwillingly to do this on the assurance of General Maxwell that obedience would result in the trial and punishment of the murderer.

"On that day I managed to get to John Dillon and told him my story. Three days later he read my statement in the House of Commons in the course of his wonderful speech describing the horror he had seen in Dublin. It was that speech that compelled Mr. Asquith to cross at once

to Ireland. Regarding my statement, Mr. Asquith said:

""I confess I do not and cannot believe it. Does anyone suppose that Sir John Maxwell has any object in shielding officers and soldiers, if there be such, who have been guilty of such ungentlemanlike, such inhuman, conduct? It is the last thing the British army would dream of."

"He went to Ireland, and found every word of my statement true, as verified at the enquiry. He found other horrors—the North Kings Street atrocity, for instance—surpassing mine. Yet the military shielded the murderers and hushed all enquires. The Royal Commission that was appointed to enquire into the causes of the rebellion early in May did its work thoroughly, but no enquiry was permitted as to the atrocities committed by British troops in Dublin.

"The enquiry connected with Colthurst's murder of my husband and the other editors was limited in scope to the consideration of only these three murders—collateral evidence of other murders of which he had been admittedly guilty being ruled out. Witnesses were not sworn. Colthurst himself—at that time committed to Broadmoor Insane Asylum—was not present.

"Colthurst had been found insane by the earlier court martial, a wooden tribunal presided over by Lord Cheylesmore and twelve senior officers. All the witnesses were military. I was not allowed to present evidence. My counsel, Mr. Healy, declared that, "Never since the trial of Christ was there a greater travesty of justice".

"During the court martial Colthurst was under no restraint. He stayed at the Kilworth hotel in Dawson Street with his family, and for several weeks after he had been found "insane" he continued at liberty. When Dublin feeling began to run high, he was finally taken to Broadmoor Asylum to be "detained during the King's pleasure"—but he still held his rank as captain and drew half-pay for several months. Eventually he was "retired", but was not dismissed from the service!

"In an attempt to force the British Government to administer justice, I went to London in July to interview editors and members of Parliament. My efforts resulted in my being sent for by Mr. Asquith, July 19. I brought with me as a witness to the interview, Miss Muriel Matters, a well-known suffragist. Mr. Asquith received us at 10, Downing Street and began by explaining the difficulties in the way of holding an adequate enquiry. The House, he said, would refuse a sworn enquiry, and that alone could be satisfactory. He wanted to know if I would be satisfied with an inadequate enquiry which was "the best" he could offer. I told him I should not be satisfied with any enquiry that he told me in advance would be inadequate. I told him also that if I were not satisfied I should take further action.

"I had even then in view a visit to America to tell an honest country what British militarism could do.

"Then Mr. Asquith carefully broached the subject of "compensation" in lieu of an enquiry. Previously proposals had been made to me, from various unofficial sources, to accept compensation, most of the arguments being based on my boy's future. Mr. Asquith put the proposition ever so delicately, but it was obviously his only object in sending for me. He was mellow and hale, with a rosy, chubby face and silver hair, suggesting a Father Christmas. But he never looked me straight in the face once during the interview! I listened to his persuasive talk about compensation, and finally told him the only compensation I would consider was a full, public enquiry into my husband's murder. He finally said he would give his answer to Mr. Dillon, and so our interview ended.

"Out of this interview came the setting up of the Commission of Enquiry with Sir John Simon at its head. But Asquith narrowly restricted the scope of the enquiry as I have pointed out. My counsel was not allowed to examine or cross-examine any witness. All witnesses who might have testified damagingly to the military were either dead or scattered to points where they could not be reached. And yet the report of the commission established many important facts: the promotion of Colthurst, the dismissal of Sir Francis Vane, and the raids on my house for incriminatory evidence after the murder. Doubt was cast on the insanity of Colthurst, and grave censure passed on the military.

"Finally, let no one imagine that my husband's case was isolated, the one mad act of an irresponsible officer. It was part of an organised programme. There is evidence, sworn and duly attested, in Irish hands to-day of almost fifty other murders of unarmed civilians and disarmed prisoners—some of them boys and some women—committed by British soldiers during Easter Week. The North Staffords murdered 14 men in North King Street, and buried them in the cellars of their houses. In the British official reports two such murders are admitted. They are 'justified' in a statement made by General Sir John Maxwell at the time as follows:

> ""Possibly unfortunate incidents, which we should regret now, may have occurred. It did not, perhaps, always follow that where shots were fired from a particular house the inmates were necessarily guilty, but how were the soldiers to discriminate? They saw their comrades killed beside them by hidden and treacherous assailants, and it is even possible that under the horrors of this peculiar attack some of them saw red. That is the inevitable consequence of a rebellion of this kind. It was allowed to come into being among these people and could not be suppressed by velvet-glove methods"."

Mrs. Skeffington left Ireland for America in December, 1916. She went with the fixed purpose of exposing British atrocities to the people of a then neutral country. She hoped to damage British prestige in the United States, and especially to do her best to prevent America from entering the war. As she herself has stated, she was under police and military surveillance at this time, a fact that stamps her eluding them a feat equal to some of Collins' best. This is her own story of her outwitting the British authorities.

"I managed to obtain a passport by assuming another woman's personality", she began. "With the help of her Scottish family I learned to dress and make up like her in every way. I cannot give further details on this point as others are involved and our fight for independence is not yet over.

"My first goal was a Scottish port from which it had been arranged I was to take ship for an American port. The boat I took for the Irish Sea crossing did not, as was usual, stop at Liverpool for mails. Ordinarily all passengers were questioned and searched at that port, but I was unfortunately [sic] spared that ordeal as a result of a submarine scare which caused us to make a wide detour away from the English coast.

"Before starting on the journey, perhaps the more risky because I insisted on taking my boy with me—I had carefully arranged an alibi to account for my absence from Dublin. I let it be generally known that I had fallen ill and had gone to the home of a friend in the country to be nursed. Letters I had prepared were posted by this friend every day while I was on the high seas and in America.

"Providence again came to my aid—although it did not seem so at the time—when my seven-year-old son developed diphtheria on the eve of our departure

from the Scotch port. It was necessary to put him in a hospital at once, and there he was isolated for ten weeks under the assumed name which I had adopted. Finally, when he was released, to my astonishment, he was not only very changed in appearance, but had acquired a strong Scotch accent!

"To further my chances of eventual success, and realising that I could be of no use to my boy while he was in the hospital, I returned to Dublin. I had recovered from my 'illness', and resumed my former occupation as a teacher. Thus I put the sleuths off the scent. My second trip across the Irish Sea—in possession of the false passport—was a relatively easy matter. At Liverpool the authorities subjected Greeks, Americans and Irish aboard the boat to a rigorous examination, but my Scotch passport and passable 'burr' let me escape with a question or two.

"The most difficult part of my task was travelling in Ireland itself. There was, of course, no chance of my leaving from the port of Dublin. I had to go north by a roundabout route, during the course of which I adopted a variety of disguises. At one stage of the journey I was an elderly invalid; at another I was a touring actress. These were necessary transitions from my own identity to that of the Scotch woman named in my passport.

"Of course the passport was bogus, but, like my make up, it was good enough to deceive the authorities who examined it. The turning out of these bogus passports is a story by itself which, one day, perhaps, can be safely told. But as yet no one in Ireland knows how soon bogus passports may again become vitally necessary!

"My little boy was obviously an invalid, and as such an object of compassion—a fact that served to distract attention from me. Also I encouraged him to chatter in the hearing of the British authorities, and his suddenly acquired Scottish burr was better for my purpose than a dozen passports!

"I remained in the United States for eighteen months, lecturing on "British Militarism as I have known it". In this period I addressed audiences in every large city from New York to San Francisco, and from the State of Washington to Texas. I spoke at women's clubs, at universities, including Harvard, Chicago and Columbia, at peace and labour conferences, and, of course, Irish assemblies. I was arrested in San Francisco for speaking against conscription *for Ireland* after America had entered the war. But I was not detained nor even charged.

"For several weeks I lobbied Congress and the Senate, and obtained an interview with President Wilson. I found him sympathetic but guarded.

"The British in America were not idle at this time. They tried many times to put an end to my activities. Once their agents attempted to get me into Canada by inducing me to board the wrong train out of Buffalo. They approached me as an Irish reception committee. A stranger put me right just as the train was about to pull out of the station. Had I remained aboard, I should have been deported to England the moment I was in Canada.

"The American people were very kind to me. Individually and collectively they are extremely warm-hearted, hospitable and sympathetic. I made many enduring friendships with Americans that have stood the test of time. I found American women especially helpful—women like Jane Adams and Mary McDougall of Chicago, Alice Park of Palo Alto, and Katherine Lecky and Dr. Gertrude Kelly of New York. If for any reason I had to live outside Ireland, I should choose the United States as a second home.

"Having readopted my own personality as soon as I landed in America, the task of returning to Ireland was no easy matter. At last, after much difficulty and delay, I obtained a passport from the British under restrictive conditions. It permitted me to go to Liverpool only; I should not be allowed to go to Ireland, but must remain in England. I told them I was willing to chance their being able to keep me in England, and so took passage to Liverpool, where I arrived in July, 1918. There I was closely examined by the military who threatened me with dire penalties if I failed to report regularly to the police or tried to leave Liverpool. These threats I naturally ignored.

"First, one of my sisters obtained permission to come to Liverpool and take my little boy back to Dublin. Then I disappeared for a fortnight—with the help of friends, a fast car, and some disguises. Eventually I landed in Ireland—at the end of July—as a stowaway in a tramp steamship. For two nights and a day I hid in the pitch dark, grimy hold without food or water. We landed south of Dublin and, after some delay, I was smuggled ashore, clad in ship's dungarees, in the small hours of the morning.

"The British still believe I managed to elude them by disguising myself as a nun, and nuns were searched regularly for weeks before it was discovered I was back in Ireland.

"Almost as soon as I resumed my ordinary life—having in the interim transacted some special business which I cannot divulge at this time—I was arrested and deported to Holloway jail in London for the duration of the "disorder" in Ireland. I hunger struck, was released, and finally permitted to return to my home.

"By this time Colthurst had been released from the insane asylum 'cured'. So far as I know it is the only case on record of a man found guilty of murder but insane, who has ever obtained his release from an English criminal lunatic asylum. It was the fact that he had been released that undoubtedly led the British authorities to permit me to return to Ireland. Public opinion in England itself was aroused. It was going too far—Colthurst at liberty and his victim's widow imprisoned!

"Since then I have been arrested several times; my home has been raided several times, and on one occasion I suffered concussion of the brain as a result of having been clubbed with the butt end of a rifle in the hands of a Royal Irish Constable.

"The last I heard of Colthurst he was occupying a minor official post in Essex. His stay in the Broadmoor Asylum lasted about eighteen months—from July, 1916, to February, 1918. His release was effected by a campaign conducted by the *Morning Post* and the *Spectator*, both of which newspapers insisted—quite correctly—that he was not insane. I go further, and declare that he never was insane! So far as I have been able to discover, no formal steps were ever taken to establish his restoration to sanity.

"His family no longer live in Ireland. Some of his property—he owned some castles in Cork—was burned to the ground last year. It would seem to be fairly safe to assume that Ireland has seen the last of Captain Bowen-Colthurst.

"One final word about Adjutant Morgan, the only Catholic in the Royal Irish Rifles, and the only man at Portobello Barracks who treated my husband kindly. Very shortly after my husband's murder he was removed from the regiment, deprived of his adjutancy, and sent to the front 'under a cloud'. There he was killed in 1917.

VOX

Surveyed
Prince Philip
John Mitchell
Conundrum!
A ROSE by any other gender!
It's Magic!
Full Circle
Male Loneliness

PAT

Surveyed!

People don't generally know that the Ordnance Survey was originally a military undertaking. The forerunner of the work of that great institution was the Great Military Map of Scotland which was the result of a survey undertaken between 1747 and 1755 in the wake of the Jacobite rebellion.

The man who led that survey was an army engineer, Major-General William Roy, and the cost was justified on the basis of the security advantages it offered the army in the event of another uprising. Roy went on to be the convincing voice that led to the establishment of the Ordnance Survey in the late 18th century.

The fact that Ireland, around 40 years later became the focus for what was up to then the biggest and most ambitious undertaking by the Ordnance Survey also had a military justification.

The *"one inch to the mile mapping of Ireland"* was an astonishing achievement because of its detail. (Every copse, wood, river and major stream, land elevation road, and individual house of rural Ireland was shown.)

Such detail and draughtsmanship : were never emulated in the mapping of Britain where such maps provided a poor comparison.

The maps were engraved onto copper plates for printing and are (or were in the 1980s when I visited) still held in storage in the Ordnance Survey of Ireland headquarters in the Phoenix Park (it was then still under the management of the Army —though this time the Irish army).

I was told on my visit (I was working for the British Library Map Library at the time and on an official visit) that the engravers were hired from all parts of the U.K. and were treated with great consideration by the army both in terms of pay and conditions. They had coaches laid on for them to take them from their lodgings in the city to the Phoenix Park where they would do their work. The resultant surge in demand for such engravers was also a factor in the emergence of illustrated journalism, with weekly illustrated papers like the *Illustrated London News* and the *Graphic* arriving in the scene shortly afterwards.

This one inch survey of Ireland was also a pre-requisite to the early arrival of railways in the country and there was also a military aspect to that development. Amazing work it was. You will find triangular blocks of cement on the tops of mountains today that remain a monument to their work.

Brian Friel's 'Translations' covered this event pretty well and poignantly. It's interesting that the maps of Ireland were more detailed than those of Britain: an accurate map was necessary for military and tax control of the country. In a sense, it was Ireland's *Domesday Book*, and a reminder that, when Bureaucracy and Officialdom takes a sudden interest in the minutiae of your life (as it is these days, with the 'pandemic'), it's rarely just for your own good and you'd better run for cover! (*A Reader*)

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Prince Philip

> "In September the president of the family division of the high court, Sir Andrew McFarlane, ruled that the will of Prince Philip should be hidden from the public for 90 years, after a secret hearing that media organisations were not told about and were barred from attending." (*The Guardian*, London,18.11.2021)

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John Mitchell

> "After the years in Tasmania and the escape to America, Mitchel continues the *Journal*, [*Jail Journal-John Mitchel-U.S.-1854*] and reveal a fine penetration of world affairs—the philosophy of a Radical Conservative, one who is in revolt because he wishes to conserve. His daughters Isabella and Henrietta thus:
>
> "Our eldest daughter, Henrietta, has this winter became a Catholic. It was no whim on her part, for long since, while we were living at Washington, she had formed the same wish very strongly, influenced partly, as I suppose, by her intimacy with two young ladies of a Maryland Catholic family, who were our next door neighbours. I know also that she was influenced by her very strong Irish feeling, and had a kind of sentiment that one cannot be thoroughly Irish without being Catholic."
>
> "He tells us how the parents required Henrietta to abstain, while she was very young, from a public step. If she should persevere in her wish for two or three years, he would not dissuade her. She did persevere, and, having been placed at a Sacred Heart convent school in Paris, declared that she "could not live without being a Catholic" The Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Moilot, required Mitchel's written consent to the girl's reception, which he instantly gave, and Henrietta was baptised" (*The Black North*-Aodh de Blacam-M. H. Gill & Son, Ltd. Dublin-1940-p.120).

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Conundrum!

Now here's a conundrum for the virtuous legions of amorphous humanity.

What if a white person who identified as black (what has been called "*passe noir*") was also a transgender woman being criticised by a black lesbian for the cultural appropriation of womanhood. In such circumstances which constitutes the greatest sin of cultural appropriation?

Maybe we need a weighted table of such sins so we can infuse our response with the appropriate level of indignation.

By the way there's a good film on Netflix called "Passing" which deals with the more prevalent question of black women passing themselves off as white during the "Jim Crow" era in the US. It stars Ruth Negga, an Irish-Ethiopian actress.

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A ROSE by any other gender:

> "Married and transgender women can compete in this year's Rose of Tralee." (*Irish Examiner*, 23.12.2021)

The significant change to the competition rules was confirmed by festival chief Anthony O'Gara this morning.

Speaking on RTÉ's *Morning Ireland*, Mr O'Gara said transgender women have never been explicitly ruled out from entering the festival, but it had been pointed out to them that *"a clear policy*

stating that trans women are welcome as opposed to just presuming that they feel welcome" was needed.

> "It's important to be proactive in that area and make sure that we reach out to people and make sure that they're comfortable," he said. (*Irish Examiner,* 23.12.2021)

This transgender campaign has been sustained by a media that's become obsessed with it. What other topic would warrant national news coverage in the way that the original protests by a small number of students did.

This willingness on the part of the media in turn incentivises the politically immature who feel they have found an important social issue to invest their energy in and so it goes on.

I think maybe the explosion in the use of social media over the past decade or so is partially responsible. It's a medium that is dominated by young people and to a large extent it reflects their perspective on the world which is encouraged by the ever present assertion that we can all be what we want to be.

That perspective is for the most part harmless and concerns itself with the trials and tribulations of their social lives. But it's when these young people seek to grapple with the wider issues of life and meaning that they are easily diverted into areas that can be, not only a waste of time, but harmful.

In the meantime the biggest injustices remain beyond the focal point of most of these young cause-seekers as they remain hidden beyond the life style they seek to emulate. That much of this is driven by students in the unnatural world of universities is not, in my mind a coincidence.

Nor is it a coincidence that the transgender issue has proved such an attention grabber for the British and Irish media. After all it has all the ingredients involving sex and oddity that has long excited the curiously of the Puritan spirit as a covert and vicarious pleasure.

Transgender people have a right to do what they want and define themselves as they like but they do not have the right to compel the wider society to redefine themselves along lines that denies the basis of the reproductive sexual definition.

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It's Magic!

"Through the deep night a magic
mist led me
like a simpleton roaming the land,
no friends of my bosom beside me,
an outcast in places unknown."

Eoghan Rua O Suilleabhain
(1748-84):

'Ceo Draiochta' *('Magical Mist')*

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Full Circle!

The founder of Dubai, Sheik Rashid, was asked about the future of his country, and he replied,

> "My grandfather rode a camel, my father rode a camel, I ride a Mercedes, my son rides a Land Rover, and my grandson is going to ride a Land Rover... but my great-grandson is going to have to ride a camel again."

Why is that he was asked?

His reply was,

> "Hard times create strong men, strong men create easy times. Easy times create weak men, weak men create difficult times. You have to raise warriors, not parasites.
>
> "Add to that the historical reality that all great empires...the Persians, the Trojans, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, and in later years, the British... all rose and perished within 240 years.
>
> "They were not conquered by external enemies; they rotted from within. America has now passed that 240-year mark, and the rot is starting to be visible and is accelerating. We are past the Mercedes and Land Rover Years.... The camels are on the horizon.
>
> "The greatest generation consisted of 18-year-old kids storming the beaches at Normandy. And now, two generations later, some 18-year-old kids want to hide in safe rooms when they hear words that hurt their feelings. They also want free stuff from the government because they think they are entitled to it."

The *"camels are on the horizon"* for sure. Something to ponder. History has a way of repeating itself.

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Male Loneliness

> "Why men are lonelier in America than elsewhere!
>
> "Marrying later, working harder and being better parents have diminished male friendships…
>
> "As people in rich countries work longer hours, marry later and spend more time with their children, not friends, research suggests loneliness is increasing. A study by the University of Pennsylvania found a direct link between social-media usage and loneliness. More time spent online means less time building friendships.
>
> "The problem may be particularly severe in America. A large international study by British academics found that people in individualistic countries (a measure on which America scores highest) reported greater loneliness. America also has one of the highest divorce rates; men may be more likely to lose mutual friends after a split.
>
> A strong work ethic and geographical mobility (meaning friendships are liable to be lost or weakened as people relocate) is likely to exacerbate the problem" (*The Economist*, London, 1.1.2022)

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President made right decision to decline church service invitation

"I welcome President Michael D Higgins's decision to decline an invitation to attend the commemorative church service alongside Queen Elizabeth II marking the centenary of the partition of Ireland.

In Northern Ireland a minority section of the population suffered 50 years of oppression in various, well-documented forms. It began with an attempt at ethnic cleansing – thousands being put out of their jobs and homes during 1920-22. The dominant, contrived, majority justified the discrimination that maintained its privileged position. In 1955 Thomas Wilson, economic adviser to the Stormont government, explained that Roman Catholics were made to feel inferior because "they often were inferior". In 1960 the ruling Unionist Party debated whether Roman Catholics could join and concluded: No. Ian Paisley articulated nakedly sectarian views unionists had promoted, which led to the forced resignation of Northern Ireland prime minister Terence O'Neill in 1969 when he looked favourably on the political accommodation of Catholics. A sectarian force policed this sectarian system.

Notwithstanding the fact that Stormont was a subordinate parliament to Westminster, a British government blind eye was turned to a unionist monolith ploughing its own exclusive furrow. …"

Tom Cooper *Irish Independent*, 22.9.21

Wilson John Haire

Not Much Joy For Unionism!

Clifton House is described as an impressive Georgian building set in tranquil landscaped gardens in the heart of Belfast. Opened in 1774 by the Belfast Charitable Society, the building was the original Poor House in Belfast until the 1880s. For the next 120 years it was a hospital for older people.

Mary Ann McCracken (1770-1866, the sister of Henry Joy McCracken, one of the hanged leaders of the 1798 Rebellion, had a long association with Clifton House. Today it is reported to still provide residential and sheltered housing for older people and continues to be the home from which the Society delivers it philanthropic work to address disadvantaged old age.

Sounds wonderful and Mary Ann Mc Cracken was no doubt a caring woman from her childhood. But I remember, when monopoly Unionism controlled Stormont, they weren't so caring for Mary Ann. The people who cared for Mary Ann, and her brother Henry Joy, were the Catholic poor of the Markets area, taking in Cromac Street and Cromac Square.

The Markets area was developed on marshy land reclaimed from the mill dam of the Joy family's paper mill, which was situated at the junction of Cromac Street and Ormeau Avenue during the 18th Century. Joy Street was mostly developed between 1825 -1840. Ormeau Avenue was where buses were parked that went south to Saintfield, Downpatrick, Ballynahinch, Castlwellan etc. As a 14 year old shipyard worker, I caught the Ballynahinch bus to Carryduff. I noticed the stickers on the walls around Ormeau Avenue and Joy Street. They read:

Who Fears to Speak of '98.

It wasn't something the Unionist Government would have liked, though the Joy family were Protestants and were only being remembered by the Catholic poor of the Markets area. The RUC tore the stickers from the walls but they started being put higher up the walls, as if someone had brought along a stepladder during the night to post them out of reach.

Marches by militant Protestants through the markets area had been banned since 1935 but in 1966 the Reverend Ian Paisley, and his followers in the Free Presbyterian Church, decided to march through Cromac Street and Cromac Square. They were met with resistance by the local Catholic people, re-named Republican IRA personnel by the Protestant press. This caused severe rioting.

1966 became a year of civil disturbances in the North, with a lot of petrol bombing and killings by the UVF. Four Catholic barmen, coming off work to drink in a bar near the Shankill Road, were gunned down. One died from his wounds.

Paisley had been active from the 1950s in targeting Catholics, calling for the Protestant right of way to enter any Catholic area they chose to parade in. 1962 is rarely mentioned, but it was a scene of the RUC sledge-hammering the Irish Tricolour out of a Sinn Fein shop window, at the insistence of Paisley, or else he and his followers would do it themselves.

Resistance to this showed young Catholic men rounded up and chained into gangs by the RUC, reminiscent of the US Southern chain-gangs. All of this was leading to a shooting war breaking out, led by PIRA. There is all the evidence there that the Catholic North had been forced into defending themselves in the absence of a protective police force.

The mistaken slogan of fighting for a United Ireland covered the real reason for the PIRA war against the British State, which had built this enclave of Northern Ireland with armed Protestants *looking after the Catholics*. The provocation—the bear-baiting, and, when that wasn't working, the killing of Catholics—was the last straw, with the need to fight in order to survive.

There can be no apologies for having to go to war in order to save the Catholic community.

To get back to the Mary Ann McCracken era: A smithy in Carryduff was associated with the 1798 rebellion, and a McKeown was the blacksmith. He was almost hanged on the suspicion of making pike-heads. I passed it every day on my way to school as a boy, and I witnessed it being allowed to fall into dereliction, and then finally to be demolished. It was to be many years later, when I was living in London, that I learnt of the significance of the smithy, and its association with the descendants of the McKeown family, of Carryduff, one of the few non-sectarian families in the area. Local Protestants, mostly now actively sectarian, kept quiet about it.

So now Mary Ann McCracken has become an image-maker for Unionism generally.

Yet, what she would have welcomed—like the NHS and the welfare system—was something that had to be forced on Unionism by an Attlee-led Labour Government.

Mary Ann McCracken has been portrayed as the embodiment of the modern welfare system. Of course things weren't like that back in her day. The whole system of charity was quite harsh and remained so for a very long time.

Charles Dickens writes of Victorian charity as one of regimented harshness, epitomised in the Workhouses. Belfast was no different. Special hospitals were built in England called Infirmaries, meant for the sick of the Workhouses. Their harsh architecture is still around in London, though converted to fit in with NHS requirements. Though Clifton House is now presented as a fine Georgian building, its innards during the time of Mary Ann McCracken would have seen some pretty dire scenes of reluctant care and absolute butchery, as recorded in the Infirmaries of England. Because they had no money, they couldn't be proper human beings. Philanthropy had its price.

Kilburn Street, off Donegall Road, Belfast, during the 1930s had half the houses vacant and many of the other houses looking vacant, because of people having to sell their furniture in order to buy coal for the fire, and to have money for the electric and and gas meters, and to buy food. When that money ran out then it was cooking on a fire consisting of plaited old newspapers, (very) old rubber shoes, and potato peelings. The air stank.

Starving children knocked on doors for a slice of bread, dipped in milk and sprinkled with sugar, cheaper than margarine or butter. They died of pneumonia, scarlet fever and diphtheria and walked the winter streets bare-footed.

Many people disappeared into the

workhouse. The ironical thing was Kilburn Street was a comparatively new build of parlour houses, meaning an extra bedroom and an extra living room which was called a *parlour*, with special furniture and used for special occasions like entertaining guests, or where the engaged son or daughter might entertain their beaus.

Parlour houses were mostly occupied by the skilled worker. *Kitchen houses*, used by the unskilled, had no parlour or hallway and the front door opened from the street directly to and into what was called the kitchen, or living room, with the actual kitchen being known as the scullery, where the gas stove was, plus the large Belfast *jaw-tub* or *jaw-box*. (*Jaw* is an old Scottish word meaning water trough.) It was big enough to bathe children up to five years old in. Kitchen houses were two-up-and-two-down, parlour houses three-up-and-three-down.

Houses were still being built in that street in 1937, as I remember as a five year old. Most of the build was on reclaimed land called the *bog-meadows*. Just above the doors was a holder for a small flag–the Union Jack of course. Despite the poverty I remember a group of men coming round to plant all the holders with these small flags. After they were gone my father lifted me up to take the flag out of the holder. People might have be too preoccupied with survival to notice, my father hoped, for the removal of that flag was to indentify someone, a family, who shouldn't be living in that street.

But the missing flag didn't go unnoticed, despite the poverty. It was the flag of that nationality who claimed to be British. A loyalist group, with links to the German SS (Manus O'Riordan has given the exact details of this organisation, which I can't remember), with RUC members, was killing lone Catholics.

The reason my parents moved to Kilburn Street was to get away from Glasgow Street, off York Road, because a Catholic woman had been shot dead next door, and my father was pushing the furniture against the door every night for security. Now, with no flag above the door, I was given the flag to run around the street and play with for a few days. That was a compromise to stave off attacks. But it was never to be above the door again.

Though he removed the flag in defence of my mother, a Catholic, she thought the removal was big mistake. She often said they could never remove her beliefs and what she felt. My father insisted he removed the flag as a socialist, not as a Protestant. Try telling that one to a loyalist street.

The parlour was at the front of the house and anyone passing the house could see through the windows that there was nothing but bare floor-boards in most of the houses. The man from the Labour Exchange had visited to record all unnecessary luxuries like settees, armchairs, carpets, cushions, sideboards and paintings hanging on walls. (Beds, a table and their chairs was all that was allowed.) The *luxury* items had to be sold before any Unemployed Benefits were paid. Proof had to shown that these items had been sold. The money from these items then had to used to live off before the starvation-level Unemployed Benefits could be paid: and that was for a restricted period of time.

After that it was ODR (Outdoor Relief), where men worked on road mending for food tokens but no cash. It was a slow grinding down of the population.

There had been unemployed riots and a march of both nationality groups together, on one occasion, something which socialists recalled for decades afterwards as the beginning of hope for the working class. But that hope would always be blighted by the fact the Catholic and Protestant communities had a different view on history, and the Catholic view was totally unacceptable.

Organised looting of large food chain-stores, like Stewarts, went on for a while but as the RUC used their batons liberally on unprotected heads, during the marches and sit-downs, so they protected the large food stores with armoured cars, and threatened to shoot looters. There were always plenty of RUC around, plus a big section in plain clothes. Arrests were made and people went to prison, where they were fed bread and water. It was hard to know if it was better inside or outside.

Some people disappeared into the countryside to live in derelict barns and survive by stealing vegetables from the fields. Then there were the ex-army huts from WW1—or bungalows people preferred to describe them as—on a hill in Clontonacally, Carryduff, County Down, at a very cheap rent, with one outside water tap to serve all the huts.

Now and then they would be besieged by debt collectors from Belfast. You locked the door, as all the residents did and turned down the wick of the oil lamp, if they pounced at night. My family moved there with us as three children under 6 years old. Next door an elderly couple moved in. The back garden grew nothing but nettles. My mother noticed the old woman putting two blankets on the line. One had written on it in bold letters, *Belfast Workhouse*, the other said *Clifton House*. I couldn't read then but my parents, still in their 30s, discussed the horror of it all. It might have been some relief to them as they felt they had hit the bottom of the league, but no, there was a bit yet a person could fall to.

The elderly woman's husband spent his days scouring the countryside for sprigs and branches to light the fire. He was just too old to go down to the gasworks in Belfast and buy a sack of coke, which was much cheaper than coal. He wouldn't have had the bus fare, and there was also the problem of being allowed on the bus with a sack of coke. Most bus conductors had compassion for the poor but some days there was just no compassion and it would be a six mile walk back to the huts on the hill called Fairview Gardens, but known by the residents as *Fuck You Gardens*.

Bread and lard seemed to be the diet and the local school smelt of larded breath. The local fields could be raided for vegetables, sometime after midnight by groups of women, using their children as human shields in case of irate farmers. Dogs were generally kept outside back then and treated as live stock. The children of the huts were tutored to get to know the dogs by going to play with them during daylight. Before the raids on the fields, the children would creep out first and approach the farmyard dogs and renew their friendship with them in order to keep them quiet.

As children we were also very good walkers. There was a small local shop that sold everything but the prices were high. That meant a mother going to Belfast, to shop for cheaper prices. And to save money just walk it with a son or daughter for company. It was six miles there and six miles back carrying groceries. Sometimes we would bump into Eddie, a labourer in the Ormeau Road gasworks. He walked back and forth to his job from the huts, a round 12 miles, six days a week. He couldn't afford the bus fares from his meagre labourer's wage, with two children and a wife to support.

In a countryside of plenty—full-cream milk, cheese, farmhouse butter and locally baked soda and potato bread, skimmed milk was sold from a horse car, which came among the huts.

A couple of the male residents seemed to be off their heads—veterans from WW1, *shell-shocked* it was said, shouting at themselves. It was most likely their demons playing up from having to do some awful things during that war. That was 1938, twenty years from the end of WW1 in 1918.

Then 1939 and WW2, and the shipyard and aircraft factories and engineering factories re-opened for the war effort. Skilled workers were the first to escape from the huts, to better accommodation further up the road, or to return to Belfast.

Post WW2 and the NHS and welfare system in 1948: yes, but things were slow to develop and adjust. I was, as a young teenager, in the communist Young Workers' League.

At a meeting, a girl student at Queens University, from England, was giving a report on Clifton House. She worked there part-time, to subsidise her paltry university allowance. She told of a an elderly woman being put into the yard *to cool off,* in the middle of winter. It was a regular practice and it could be all night if the person persisted in their bad behaviour.

These elderly people could have had *dementia*, of which little was known about back then. She wanted to send her report off to the *Daily Worker* but the CPNI felt she would get the sack from Clifton House, and they feared she would also be unable to keep up her studies and might return to her parents in England. She was seen as an asset, and she was indeed.

I went somewhat reluctantly with her to The Picture House, Royal Avenue – reluctant only at her choice of film as I felt these English do like their murder themes, while I would like something more substantial. The name of the film was *Death of a Salesman*, written by Arthur Miller, a US playwright about to face the McCarthy HUAC – *House Un-American Activities Committee*. Based on his theatre play, it was another view of the *American Dream*. That one film changed my thinking, took me out of living under Ulster Unionism for a while.

18.11.2021

Donal Kennedy

The Irish Christian Brothers And The First World War

In September 19144 the Irish Christian Brothers launched a monthly magazine, *Our Boys*, which was probably the first Periodical ever produced for Irish Youth.

It was still going strong when I left St. Fintan's in Sutton in 1959. Previous to that, and subsequently, the country was inundated with English comics with no roots in Irelandd.

Indeed I am advised by Scots friends that that the *Beano* and the *Dandy*, two comicsproduced in Dundee, had two strict rules—they employed no Catholics and did not recognise Trade Unions.

Our Boys, so far as I know, was produced by the Christian Brothers themselves, which were not affiliated to any Union.

By an unhappy coincidence Britain, chose 4th August 1914 to declare War on Germany and Austria. It was recognised by Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne, a devout Conservative Catholic as a squalid trade war: the Archbishop was largely responsible for two referenda which saved Australians from Conscription.

At the other end of the planet, the devout Marxist, James Connolly, formed the same opinion. Two years previously Connolly had co-founded the Irish Labour Party, intending to contend for seats in the Home Rule Parliament which the British Liberals had promised John Redmond. Insurrection had not crossed Connolly's mind in 1912.

But Britain's European War changed everything.

The great humanitarian, Roger Casement, who knew the inner workings of the British Foreign Office, described the War as a *Crime Against Europe*, and his authenticated writings on the subject make convincing reading.

As it happens, *Our Boys* each month commented on the disaster that had befallen just weeks before, and continued to do so each month.

In 2007 Athol Books republished the commentary as far as September 1918, with an Introduction by Brendan Clifford. Brendan intended then to publish a second edition with "*extensive supplementary material*".

Brendan, who had no experience of the Christian Brothers or other non-lay teachers, says he sought for evidence to support Conor Cruise O.Brien's 'take' on the Brothers, along with Professor Roy Foster' adoption of it, and came across *Our Boys*.

He comments:

> "I Searched for evidence that the Christian Brothers, even though they did not teach revolution against England, did at least inculcate hostility to Britain's Imperial War, and that there was something that was true in what the revisionists were saying about them. WhatI discovered was that in this case the revisionist assertion was the opposite of the truth—and the evidence was crystal clear and easy to find.
>
> "The Christian Brothers supported the British war on Germany. And its support was altogether more impressive than that of the Home Rule Party. Its monthly report of the war was calm, deliberate and well informed and was without the hysterical edge of the Home Rule propaganda. O'Brien's image would be more accurate in reverse—perhaps inside every Christian Brother there lurked a Redmondite hysteric of the T.M. Kettle kind. I don't know that there was. I saw no sign of it. But it would be a pity to lose the image altogether."

Behind the scenes of the Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiations, 100 years on

Exactly 100 years ago, the Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiations were entering their closing hours. In this extract from Gretchen Friemann's *The Treaty*, a pacy, page-turning history of the talks between

Britain and Ireland, explains that—while the British team of Lloyd George, Birkenhead, Churchill and others were clear about what success looked like—the Sinn Féin delegation was riven by rivalries and ambition.

In the century that has elapsed since the signing of the Treaty on December 6th 1921, much has been made of the naiveté and relative inexperience of the Irish negotiators compared to their British counterparts.

There can be no disputing this: David Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, was a past master at the art of diplomatic deal-making, and the Cabinet colleagues he relied upon most in the negotiations —Austen Chamberlain, Lord Birkenhead and Winston Churchill—were all experienced statesmen.

But there was another advantage: clarity on what success looked like. In a situation where unholy compromises were inevitable, the Irish were conflicted about where their red lines lay, and from the outset the Sinn Féin delegation was riven by simmering personal rivalries and divided political ambitions.

It was against this background of dissension that Arthur Griffith, on November 13th, gave his famous written pledge to Lloyd George, in which he promised not to obstruct the Prime Minister on his plan for a Boundary Commission.

Most of the key players in the delegation were back in Dublin at this point, and would not learn of the document's existence until the final, dramatic hours of the talks. They had left London because the British had told them that there would be no significant developments in the negotiations until after the annual Conservative Party Conference, which was to be held in Liverpool on November 17th.

But days before this the British changed tack, and summoned the absent Irish delegation members back to London, where, in a disorientating change of pace, they were plunged straight into the drama generated by the draft Treaty.

It arrived at lunchtime and looked more like an anonymous memo than an official document. But, if the presentation came as a surprise, so too did the content. Ireland was to remain within the Empire and assume Dominion powers along the lines of those possessed by Canada.

Its army would be limited to 40,000 men and the responsibility for coastal defence would fall to Britain until the two countries mutually agreed an alternative arrangement.

There were to be no trade restrictions, although both Governments were free to impose Duties to prevent dumping and unfair competition.

In essence then, the draft differed little from the July 20th proposals, except in one important respect: the accommodation on Northern Ireland. Craig's Government would have up to a year to opt out of the new Irish state but faced higher taxes and a share of the Imperial debt burden if they pursued this path.

The frontier between the north and the south would be redrawn by a Boundary Commission. Crucially though, and in a stipulation that assumed renewed significance years later, these alterations were to be made "*in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants*".

In the radically different political climate of Spring 1924, John Chartres, a Principal Secretary to the Sinn Féin delegation, pointed out that the draft Treaty had imposed "*no limitation whatever*" on the Commission's remit, and maintained that Griffith would never have warmed to Dominion status if he believed only "*minor rectifications*" to the border were possible.

But it was the compromise on the Crown and Empire that infuriated the delegation's hardliners. Childers, Barton and Gavan Duffy demanded a delegates' meeting, with Gavan Duffy insisting that Lloyd George must be written to at once and informed that his Treaty was "*unacceptable*". He told Griffith, "*We shall draft another*".

Griffith dismissed the suggestion, reminding his agitated colleagues that it was the eve of the Liverpool Conference, so there was not much point in kicking up a fuss at this stage. That triggered another round of bickering, with Barton hurling accusations about their ill-treatment—how they had been frozen out of the talks, and "*not told enough*".

Collins, meanwhile, retreated to the relative calm of Cadogan Gardens. The boredom and discomfort of sitting most of the day for Sir John Lavery, who was painting his portrait, had soured his mood. "*Absolute torture*" was how he described the experience to Kitty Kiernan in a letter that afternoon, for he had been "*expected to keep still... a thing I cannot do*". Lavery never complained though; in fact, quite the opposite.

Leo Whelan, who painted Collins in 1922, characterised him as the "*worst sitter he ever had*". Perhaps that explains why neither artist captured their subject's restless energy, let alone anything approaching his nature or essence.

The Collins who emerges from Lavery's portrait is an insipid, uninspiring figure; fleshy-cheeked, dew-eyed and one-dimensional, devoid of soul, character or presence.

Yet, given the pressure of events, it is hardly surprising that Collins felt conflicted at idling away his time in an artist's studio. It was there that he met the beguilingly beautiful Hazel Lavery and the friendship that sprang up between them ensured her name became indelibly linked with his.

After his death, those close to Collins dismissed Lady Lavery as a "*fantasist*". More recently, she has been cast as a fearless manipulator, a siren who promoted and then profited from the salacious interest in their putative affair.

The historian Peter Hart labelled her a "*super groupie*" and presented her as someone who fed off Collins' celebrity status. Regardless of the truth, the rumours of a sexual liaison between them thrilled and titillated London's high society, and, over the decades, the nature of their relationship has remained a source of enduring fascination.

In his letter to Kitty that afternoon, Collins made no mention of Lady Lavery. But he also omitted any reference to the more pressing matter of the day: the fatal shooting of Cork alderman Tadhg Barry at Ballykinlar Internment Camp.

News of his death ignited a firestorm of outrage in Ireland after it transpired that the 39-year-old republican had been shot by a British sentry for venturing too close to the wire. Collins instantly made preparations to attend the funeral, to be held that weekend in Cork city.

Meanwhile, the British, anxious to ease tensions, promised an independent inquiry to follow the inquest. As it turned out, however, there was no inquiry, and the inquest into Barry's death, which apportioned no blame, was adjourned until after the Treaty, when all internees in Ireland were released.

The next day, Thursday November 17th, with the Ballykinlar incident still dominating the Irish media, the Sinn Féin delegates attempted to turn up the heat on the British by firing off a formal letter of protest to Lloyd George, condemning the conditions at another Internment Camp in Co Kildare, where two prisoners were bayoneted while attempting to escape.

Childers, who drafted the missive, called for "*immediate action*". But, by this stage, both sides felt they were moving into the endgame. Collins had said as much in a letter to Kitty Kiernan,

declaring that "*they were getting into the heart of things now and I don't suppose we will be here much longer*".

The renewed pressures strained the feuding delegation to breaking point. Earlier in the day, as Childers noted witheringly in his diary, he had gone through the draft Treaty "*paragraph by paragraph [with the delegates]... slowly disillusioning*" them, and yet throughout, Griffith "*affected indifference... to its demerits*".

Back in Dublin, de Valera's patience was wearing thin. I n his view, there had been too "*much beating around the bush*" and he urged Griffith "*to get down to definite business and send them... our final word*".

In a letter written in response to the draft Treaty, he underlined how important it was to maintain "*the consistency of our position*". That meant presenting the British with Draft Treaty A, "*modified somewhat to meet the exact position*".

He wanted the delegates to serve up another offer of *External Association*.

But, by this point, Collins had virtually reconciled himself to Dominion status, seeing it as "*beneficial*", if only as a temporary settlement. In a letter to his friend, John O'Kane, written in early November, Collins categorised it as a "*first step*", arguing that, for the moment, more "*than this could not be expected*".

His views must have been partly influenced by the *rapport* established with Birkenhead, and the close ties forged with Griffith, although he also read widely on the subject, particularly Smuts' pioneering arguments in favour of a "*decentralised Commonwealth of Nations*".

He pored, too, over a memorandum Curtis had produced earlier in the Conference, which purported to show "*how Dominion status actually works*". From this, Collins concluded that the Commonwealth states were moving gradually, but inexorably, towards full independence; meaning that what Dominion status offered was the freedom to achieve freedom.

His chief problem, and Griffith's, was not so much the dissent in the delegation but the attitude in Dublin. Collins constantly blamed the Cabinet for its inadequate and confusing instructions, and frequently complained about the futility of their task, knowing that any settlement opened them up to accusations of apostasy.

In a swipe at de Valera, he told O'Kane at one point that he had been—

> "warned more times than I can recall about the one [i.e., de Valera]. And when I was caught for this delegation my immediate thought was how easily I walked into the preparations. But having walked in I had to stay".

On November 17th, he wrote in a similar vein to his friend, describing Griffith as

> "particularly dour today. He said to me—'You realise what we have on our hands?' I replied that I realised it long ago. He meant [the] Dublin reaction to whatever happens here"

—adding that Griffith told him, "*We stand or fall in this together*".

The Treaty: The Gripping Story of the Negotiations that brought about Irish Independence and led to the Civil War by **Gretchen Friemann** is published by Merrion Press, merrionpress.ie.

Martin Tyrrell

Máirín Mitchell—An Unconventional Republican
Part 1

Storm Over Spain

Máirín Mitchell's *Storm Over Spain*, an account of Spain and its Civil War was published by Secker and Warburg in 1937. Frederick Warburg later wrote that he had published it because he saw a gap in the market for a pacifist account of the war and thought that Mitchell's book might fill it. In this he was disappointed; the book sold badly and has never been republished (although plans for a first Spanish edition are currently underway).

Mitchell, in *Storm Over Spain*, does not present herself as a pacifist and does not appear to have been a member of any organised pacifist group (such as the Peace Pledge Union, then at its peak). But her pacifism is clear enough from what she writes, in the book's final chapter especially. It is a strict pacifism, which she says was inspired by Francis Sheehy-Skeffington—an opposition to war in general rather than to particular wars, and ultimately religious in character. Throughout, she strives to be fair to all—Francoists and Republicans alike:

> "I cannot rejoice", she wrote, "when I hear of disasters overtaking the "Right" (any more than I can when I hear of "Left" reverses) when I think of workers' lives being lost. Nor those of the bourgeoisie among whom are such splendid people… That's what I have against foreign left-wing papers (and the Spanish ones themselves when they're purely propaganda)—this over-simplification seems to me to be absolutely pernicious".

The Catholic workers' groups on the Franco side, she argued, could hardly be covered by the catch-all *"fascist"*. And, in Mitchell's view, the Irishmen who had volunteered for the war were courageous, whatever side they were on. She took issue with those English critics who *"meanly attacked"* Eoin O'Duffy, but who themselves *"would run from a pop-gun"*. O'Duffy's volunteers, she thought, were motivated by religious faith, something she believed would be incomprehensible to any left-wing materialist.

"Our enemies are brothers from whom we are estranged" she wrote, quoting Terence MacSwiney, and elsewhere she suggested that MacSwiney's hunger strike had been more effective than any military action. At the same time, she never oversold the prospects for peace, which she believed were poor. The policy options offered in *Storm Over Spain* are vague and improbable. Russia might disarm unilaterally and perhaps shame Nazi Germany into following suit, she suggests towards the end of the book, or the Pope might pronounce against war and be taken seriously.

George Orwell, who at that time was also a pacifist albeit of the more qualified, revolutionary socialist kind (opposed to war but not to revolution), gave the book a favourable review in *Time and Tide* in December 1937, commenting that Mitchell was "a Catholic, but very sympathetic to the Spanish Anarchists". Shortly after, Mitchell's was one of several books on Spain that he mentioned favourably in a letter to the *Time and Tide* Editor. Both review and letter were republished in *An Age Like This, 1920-1940*, the first volume of Orwell's posthumous *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters* and again in the

1998 *Complete Works*, whose Editor, Peter Davison, mentions that Mitchell wrote to Orwell to thank him for his positive review but also to put him right. She was Irish, she said, not English as he had assumed. Also, having read *The Road to Wigan Pier*, she reckoned they might not be politically on the same wavelength.

Orwell had been home from Spain around six months when he reviewed Mitchell's book, working on what would become *Homage to Catalonia* but keeping up his reviews and other journalism on the side. As a writer who had rejected the mainstream view of the Spanish Civil War, he was generally favourable towards others whom he felt had done the same—Mitchell, Franz Borkenau, Frank Jellinek. The mainstream view, which has proven robust, was that the Spanish Republic, established in 1931, was a positive and progressive development, worth defending against Franco and that its goal—to transform Spain into something like Third Republic France—was commendable. In a functional democratic republic, it was argued, Spanish socialists could advance electorally whereas under Franco they would go nowhere, save underground or prison.

Orwell said that this was how he himself had seen things when he arrived in Spain in the last few days of 1936. However, sometime during the first three or four months of the following year, he had changed his mind and grasped what he thought was the *"real nature of the struggle"*. His *Homage to Catalonia* is, among other things, an account of that change.

Orwell, on his arrival in Spain, had enlisted in the militia of *the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista* (POUM), rather than the bigger and better-known *International Brigade*, which was Soviet-sponsored. The POUM was a small, dogmatic Marxist-Leninist party that had been Trotskyist before breaking with Trotsky a few years prior to the war. Its militia was also relatively small but open to non-Party members. Orwell himself, by his own account, was no true-believer when he joined up, but he was more or less on message by the end of his time in Spain, and the POUM's influence would linger for many years after (in the wartime pamphlet *The Lion and the Unicorn*, for example). Reflecting on his time in Spain, he regretted not having joined the POUM, and though he refers from time to time to points of disagreement with the Party, he never gets around to discussing them.

The POUM, having broken with Trotsky, had helped form a trans-national bloc of socialist parties variously known as the *International Revolutionary Marxist Centre*, the *"Three and a Half International"* (i.e. between Stalin's Third International and the Trotskyist Fourth), or the *London Bureau*, after its British constituent, the Independent Labour Party (ILP), which provided the secretariat. Orwell, having tried and failed to secure credentials for Spain from the Communist Party, which would have taken him into the International Brigade, obtained them instead from the ILP where he was better thought of. Being ILP credentialed, he ended up with the POUM. And, since the POUM had a presence in Catalonia, that was where he went—to Barcelona, where he saw the socialism of the anarchists apparently flourishing.

Anarchism had become a mass movement in Spain in the late 1800s. It ran a massive union—the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (CNT)—and had a more secretive and exclusive faction, the *Federación Anarquista Iberica* (FAI), that set the agenda. It operated services such as education at local level and, when required, could organise strategic unrest regionally and nationally. When the Republic was declared in 1931, the anarchists gave it their conditional support for a couple of years until, frustrated by the slow pace of reform, they urged an electoral boycott. A few years of right-wing government followed, accompanied by significant disruption. Then came the Popular Front, and more unrest, then the *coup* and the Civil War.

The *coup* of July 1936 might have been just that—a right-wing military *coup* resulting in a right-wing military government. But it prompted a spontaneous resistance that afforded the Republic the time to organise a reasonable military response. In Catalonia, the initial informal resistance was anarchist and took an immediate revolutionary turn. Farms and factories were collectivised. In some places, money was abolished but, in others, the newly collectivised factories were run as profitable market-oriented cooperatives. Orwell witnessed this a little before its fall, and *Homage to Catalonia* opens with a somewhat romanticised account of it. But he later acknowledged that the anarchy he admired in Barcelona was already past its prime when he first saw it at the start of 1937 and that it would be all but gone by the end of his time in Spain some six months later. It is therefore a complication of Orwell's account of the Spanish Civil War that the part of it he most admired was already more or less gone for good by the time he got round to writing about it.

Nonetheless, Barcelona with its anarchist shoeshine boys and now mandatory informality, was the Spain he thought worth defending and which he considered the exceptional and historic event. This revolution was what mattered, he said. The real struggle was not the Republic versus Franco, but the revolution against both Franco and the Republic. There is capitalism, he said, which is now *"late"*, in the sense that it is past its best, and there is fascism, which is capitalism in crisis, stripped of affectations like democracy. A state like the Spanish Republic might be formally a democracy, but that was no great matter to Orwell. As a capitalist democracy, it was already on the road to fascism, as were all capitalist democracies. To support the incipiently fascist Republic against the military coup was therefore pointless since both were going the same totalitarian way. Indeed, in fighting fascism, the incipient fascism of the democracy would come out all the more! In Orwell's opinion, one fought fascism like one fought a dragon, at the risk of becoming one.

An additional complication of Orwell's analysis is that, although throughout *Homage to Catalonia*, he generally describes the people the POUM militia is fighting against as fascists, he also comments at some length that Franco was not really a fascist, more a traditional conservative. If Franco had been an actual fascist, he reckons, then the Spanish middle class, or the bulk of it anyway, would have been on his side. In practice, however, a substantial part of that middle class was in fact pro-Republic, and its parties governed in coalition with the left in all its forms. In Orwell's view, this could only be because Franco was insufficiently fascist to have significant middle class appeal. But it also confirmed for him that the Republic, for all its lefty progressivism, was fascist at the base because it was capitalist at the base, and capitalism, however you dress it up, is fascism.

Orwell does not conclude that it is a matter of indifference who wins the civil war, which is where you might expect his analysis to lead. In practice, he is for the Republic. He is for the Republic because, fascist though it is, it is fascism of, he says, a better kind—with secular schools and land reform. And so it is that Orwell, having grasped what he refers to as the real nature of the struggle, slips back to the conventional view of things, or to something like it.

The main difference is that POUM support for the Republic, and therefore Orwell's support for it, was conditional. The Republic would be supported until

the war was won, after which it would be subverted in the interests of revolutionary socialism. The POUM, while fighting for the Republic while the Civil War was being waged, would keep itself in readiness for when the War was won, whereupon it would subvert the Republic that had won it and on whose side it had lately fought.

What is interesting is that Orwell, right up to 1939—right up to the very month the Republic surrendered—believed that the Republic would either win the war or that the war would end in stalemate with Spain partitioned between the two sides. He does not appear to have considered that the Republic might be completely defeated and a prolonged period of right-wing government begin. This might have been down to his being on the Aragon Front where, by his own admission, there was relatively little fighting, and, also, to his being exposed to the POUM's analysis of the situation.

Objectively, the position of the Republic was parlous. Franco had the best troops and the best officers. Also, both sides—the Republic and the rebellion against it—were officially subject to an arms embargo, which was maintained and policed by Britain, France, Germany and Italy. The embargo was enforced by all four as far as the Republic was concerned but was ignored by Italy and Germany as far as Franco was concerned. Italian and German support for Franco was, in fact, significant and blatant and, as the war progressed, included what amounted to a blockade of the Republic by the Italian navy. It was in this context that Stalin assisted the Government in Madrid.

To add to the Republic's problems, the Republican side lacked unity. It had been less successful than Franco in herding its particular ideological cats, the POUM among them. Though the POUM, thanks to *Homage to Catalonia*, is often seen as the soul and conscience of the Spanish Civil War, some at the time thought it crankish and disruptive. That is how it appears in Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the other civil war best-seller.

The POUM thought the Republic was fascist but, on the Republican side, the tale spread that the POUM that called the Republic fascist was itself fascist, either a veritable Francoist auxiliary or an authentic purism that, in practice, was objectively useful to Franco. When the Madrid Government moved against the POUM in May 1937—an event that Orwell said sparked his lifelong antipathy to the Soviet Union and the official Communist Parties—it was arguably trying to restore internal order in the midst of a war that was not going well. Orwell himself could see the argument a few years later when, in the early 1940s, he went back on most of his earlier Spanish enthusiasms (the idea that the militias alone might defeat Franco, for instance). On reflection, he concluded that the official Spanish Government had, indeed, lost the War, not for want of enthusiastic revolutionary militias, but for want of a conventional army, adequately armed. In these later writings (e.g. *Looking Back on the Spanish War*, *The Eight Years of War: Spanish Memories*), the ambiguity with which he had treated the Republic's penultimate Prime Minister, Juan Negrín, in *Homage to Catalonia*: in that book, Negrín is a *" 'socialist' "*, rather than a socialist—but he is also commended for keeping his head and keeping up the fight. That faint praise is replaced by something more like commendation.

Negrín was one of those in the Republic's Government whose ideal was a conventional State waging a conventional war, with formal, well-trained and well-armed military forces. Inheriting a State whose every situation—military, economic, political—was dire, his strategy was to tough it out until the much-expected European War began and Republican Spain could be part of it.

Orwell, after that European War began, would occasionally write hopefully that the Allies might invade Spain either directly or via its colonies and install Negrín. It was the type of thing the imaginary socialist Britain, which Orwell prescribed in *The Lion and the Unicorn*, would have done. In the world that actually was, however, Spain was a strategic asset by virtue of its geography and its potential as a source of military manpower and goods, and the worry on the Allied side was that it might attach itself to the Axis. But Franco decided that Spain had no skin in the game and that it would sit the War out and be nobody's asset. And the Allies knew a sleeping dog when they saw one, and knew not to wake it!

Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* became a best-seller in the wake of his massive post-War fame. It is either the biggest-selling account of the Spanish Civil War, or the biggest-selling non-fiction account. Máirín Mitchell's *Storm Over Spain*, which he praised, had no such second act, not even on the back of his having praised it. And Mitchell herself is a puzzle and might well remain one.

This much I know. Máirín Mitchell was born Marian Houghton Mitchell in England in 1895 and grew up in Ambleside in the Lake District in considerable affluence. Her Irish connection was through her father, Thomas Houghton Mitchell, a successful GP, who had been born in Limerick in 1863 into a prominent Anglo-Irish family. He studied at Trinity College, Dublin, and in Scotland, rising in the medical world and in the Masonic Order, and marrying an heiress.

It is possible that there was some falling out between Máirín and her family when she reached her twenties, although the evidence for this is mixed. None of her family's wealth seems to have come her way, for instance. When she died in a Catholic care home in England in 1986, she had almost nothing to bequeath, and only one Mitchell, a solicitor in Offaly, was named in her will—he was to be given her signet ring. On the other hand, her first book, *Traveller in Time* (1935), is dedicated to her mother; and the later *Back in England* (1940) suggests a good relationship with her father. But Mitchell can be the most unreliable of narrators. In her 1930s writings, she hints, here and there, that she grew up in Ireland, or had at least spent some significant time there*: "Starting out from the brown bogs, the shining rivers, the brooding hills of Ireland, I have journeyed over a wide space of the world…"*, she writes in *Back to England*. But there is no evidence for this. Following her Ambleside childhood, Mitchell boarded at a private school in Wales, then attended Bedford College in London.

She also claimed, in correspondence, to be of *"Catholic Quaker stock"*, and to be a Catholic *"complicated by Quakerism"*, but again, no evidence. Both her Irish father and English mother were of their respective Established Churches—the Church of Ireland and the Church of England. In *Storm Over Spain* she gives Vaduz in Liechtenstein as her place of residence but, as far as I can tell, she spent at most a couple of weeks there in August 1937, several months after the book had been redrafted and accepted for publication. She might have written the Foreword in Liechtenstein, or made some final changes to the text while she was there, but that is all. More likely, I think, she is trying to imply a more exotic and writerly background than was actually the case. *Storm Over Spain* itself is deceptive, being based on direct experience of Spain *before* the civil war and not during it, which she implies.

If there was, indeed, a break with her family, it might be that her adopted Irishness or Catholicism were the cause of it. Or these might have been a consequence of it. In the end, I do not know what motivated her transformation, only that there was one.

The fact is that, sometime in early

adulthood, Marian Mitchell became a Catholic, became Irish, and became the writer *Máirín*, and may well have become all three at around the same time. She might also have started learning Irish. The Gaelic League's paper, *An Gaedhal*, in its review of *Traveller in Time* describes her *as "one of the most enthusiastic members of the Gaelic League in London"*; and in the earliest of her correspondence that I have seen Mitchell signs herself *Máirín Ní Mhaol Mhiceil*, in the old Irish script, with dots above the relevant letters to indicate aspiration. (Later, for several years, she would use personalised stationery on which her London address was rendered in Irish script.) Her return to the anglicised version of her surname did not indicate any cooling of her Irishness—although that might have come later. Writing to Desmond Ryan in 1936 she describes herself *as "rather conventionally republican"*, and commends the new Republican Congress paper (possibly the *Irish Democrat*), which she suggests Ryan order from Charles Lahr's Progressive Bookshop in Red Lion Street.

Lahr, a German anarchist and pacifist, appears to have had a formative influence on Mitchell. She joined his circle sometime in the late 1920s/early 1930s and was sufficiently close to the Lahr family that she was asked to be godmother to his daughter, Sheila. It might have been through the Lahrs that Mitchell came to know several Irish writers and activists, including Francis Stuart and Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, both of whom frequented Lahr's shop (more cubicle than shop, by all accounts, and more like a free library service cum social space than a viable commercial business), and the various societies and meetings that spun off from it.

Perhaps it was in this environment that the former Marion Houghton Mitchell became Irish and Catholic with a soft spot for anarchism:

> "I… would not have missed those days, among people who were not content with things as they were. Better in youth the endless talk, even the "isms", that divine discontent, than the young who do not question, who never rebel… The veterans were generous in opening their minds to us, and releasing the rich garnering of years of experience, reflection and contacts" (*Storm Over Spain*).

Desmond Ryan, who would be Mitchell's friend and correspondent for more than a decade, was a literal veteran—he had fought in 1916 and in the War of Independence before disillusion set in at the start of the Civil War. Born in England, Ryan was the son of the Parnellite journalist, William Patrick Ryan (the dedicatee of *Storm Over Spain*) who worked on the pro-Labour *Daily Herald*. Desmond Ryan was still a child when William Patrick returned to Ireland in the early 1900s, settling in Navan.

"What was it like growing up under the British occupation?", Ryan is asked in an RTE interview in 1964. As, *a matter of fact*, he says, *it was tedious*—a tedium in which the Parnellite remnant, notably his own father, was initially the only sign of life.

He was a founding student at Pearse's St Enda's and came to share Pearse's politics. Done with fighting by around 1922, Ryan enrolled at University College, Dublin, after which he went into writing and journalism, authoring sympathetic biographies of Pearse and Connolly; a memoir (*Remembering Sion*); and a study of de Valera (*Unique Dictator*). Ruth Dudley Edwards sees Ryan as having romanticised Pearse, but is respectful of his achievement and acknowledges him as having coined the phrase she uses as the title of her own 1979 Pearse biography—*The Triumph of Failure*.

Máirín Mitchell's first book, *Traveller in Time*, was published in 1935 and is essentially a travel book awkwardly (and unnecessarily) dressed up as science fiction. (It may well have begun as a regular travel book—it has the look of one, complete with index—to which the science fiction was added later as a kind of gimmick. It would be a great deal better without this ultimately silly trope.) In an imagined 1942, the book's Irish protagonist, Colm McColgan, has invented *Tempevision*, a system by which events from the recent past can be somehow captured on film and projected exactly as they occurred. McColgan demonstrates Tempevision to an audience in the fictional 1942, using it to show scenes from his travels in the 1930s—which are essentially Mitchell's own extensive travels.

It is not obvious why Mitchell has set her book in the near future in this way, and this was also the view of a reviewer in *An Gaedhal*, who was otherwise positive. The device offers readers neither a glimpse of utopia or of dystopia, the usual reasons for this type of thing. Indeed, between the date the book was written and the future it projects seven years later, all that appears to have happened is that Ireland has become a republic and a citizen of that republic has invented Tempevision. The *An Gaedhal* reviewer recommended the book while admitting that he had not read it all the way through but had dipped into it using the index to find, primarily, the Irish references. All the same, were he to travel, he said, this was the book he would bring with him, along with Wolfe Tone's journals.

Other reviewers (such as the Dublin Communist Leslie Daiken in the *New English Weekly*) were less kind and the book sank without trace.

Only a little of the politics of the mid-1930s features in *Traveller in Time*. Hitler is mentioned just once, and then in passing; and neither Stalin nor Mussolini are mentioned at all. In describing the Basque Country, Mitchell has McColgan note the inevitable parallels between Basque and Irish nationalism, and describe the grave of Sabino de Arana y Goiri (the *"Martir de Euzkadi"*) in Sakarrieta as *"the Bodenstown of the Basques"* (p91). Munich prompts a series of anecdotes regarding Roger Casement, to whom Mitchell refers several times in her published and unpublished work. (Writing to Ryan in 1937, she refers to letters in the *Irish Press* from Noyes and McAlister as *"wiping poor Roddie off the earth"*). All of this is part of a wider and, I think, worthy attempt find links between continental Europe and Ireland—such as Wolfe Tone's engagement with the French Revolution, and Art O'Brien in Paris in the late 1800s—and to depict Ireland as an historic and continuing European nation. Writing in *Storm Over Spain*, she says:

> "If Ireland was late to thinking internationally, it was because she was for so long repressed nationally. Much of her political vitality was even in 1937 spent in controversies rendered inevitable by the imposition, sixteen years earlier, of Articles of Agreement with Britain, accepted by its Irish signatories with the knowledge that the terms did not fully satisfy Irish national aspirations. In her past history, in proportion as her degree of independence was greatest, Ireland's orientation was European" (p244).

Mitchell, in *Traveller in Time*, makes clear that, at this stage in her life, she was no admirer of the *Treaty of Versailles*. That Treaty's proponents, she wrote, *"made pawns of the peoples they played with on their chessboard, cheating at each move"* (p219). In Austria, in 1933, Mitchell, through Colm, senses a coming war against the Versailles settlement and, here and there, she hints at the uneasy, fragmented state of middle Europe. (These are among the many instances in the book where the author clearly forgets her science fiction context—that she is narrating from the perspective of a known, but imagined, future.)

If *Traveller in Time* is a travel book weakened by its awkward gimmick, *Storm Over Spain* is a travel book overtaken by war. Mitchell was in Spain a few weeks

prior to the *coup* that became a war. All the time she was there, she said, she had sensed a *coup* was coming, *but from the left*. One portent of this was the *graffito* she reports having seen just about everywhere she went, she saw—

> "bold drawings of a figure swinging from a gallows. An inscription told us that this would be the fate of the person who voted for Gil Robles [leader of the Confederation of the Autonomous Right]… the artful warning told us this would be the fate of the man who would not vote for the [Popular] Front" (p192-193).

And then there were the wildcat strikes*: "No one knew from day to day what service would be suspended next"*, she writes, *"so a general feeling of insecurity resulted, which was of course just what the promoters of these guerrilla strikes wanted"* (p168).

It is surprising that Orwell could have thought of Mitchell as an English writer, as she misses no opportunity to emphasise her Irishness. It might be that the chapter on anarchism in *Storm Over Spain* was the only one he read in any detail. It is the only chapter, for instance, that is not prefaced with a quotation from an Irish source but instead quotes William Morris, *"There has never been a man good enough to be master of another"*. All the others open with quotations from Irish writers—Connolly, Pearse, Yeats, MacSwiney, Mangan—and, throughout, Mitchell finds a range of often fascinating Irish/Spanish connections. These include Leopold O'Donnell y Jorris, Conde de Lucena y Duque de Tetuan—a descendant of the Antrim O'Donnells who had military and political careers in nineteenth century Spain. Or the Chevalier Charles Wogan, who was Governor of La Mancha in the 1700s and who rescued Princess Clementina Sobieski so that she could marry the Old Pretender.

Storm Over Spain also reflects on the peculiarities of Irish engagement in the war. For example, despite the long agitation in nineteenth century, that would eventually transform Irish tenants into landowners, Irish supporters of Franco—some of them themselves former tenant farmers or their sons—were supporting the side that wanted to reverse the very small steps towards reforming land ownership made by Spain's rural poor under the Republic. And Irish nationalists in the Franco camp were opposing the degree of autonomy, unprecedented in the modern era, that had been achieved by the Basques and Catalans since 1931.

Orwell fails to see Mitchell's Irishness, but not her Catholicism. It surprised him that a Catholic writer should see good in the anarchists when the anarchists were burning churches. But there is no necessary incompatibility between anarchism and Catholicism, any more than there is any obligation on anarchists to burn churches. Anarchy means a state *without government*, but not a state without order. Order without government might come—indeed, might *only* come—from convention or tradition.

Mitchell's ideal, in *Storm Over Spain*, is for a series of communes based on social Catholicism, an ideal she suggests might be beyond our current level of civilisation. In the here and now, she commends the anarchists for their educational work and their anti-militarism, examples of which she saw when she was in Spain. But she saw nothing of their revolution, which happened after the *coup* and after she had left. In reporting the war, she relied on others' accounts, notably those of the London anarchist paper *Spain and the World*, which itself relied on partisan briefings from Barcelona.

The revolution is working, she says, second or third hand. It is marrying the abilities of the producer to the needs of the consumer. It is collectivist, but not dogmatically so. And, if Churches are being burnt, it is not part of any party programme, anarchist or otherwise. It is the result of a wholly individual anger that comes of a deplorable but also understandable prejudice. *"Had the Church as a whole in Spain been the friend of the poor"*, writes Mitchell, *"had the Catholic priests in general supported the social advancement of the toiling masses, it seems unlikely that the Church would have suffered in the Civil war as they did"* (p55).

Orwell, who did see the anarchy first hand, welcomed the destruction of Church property, but only hints at the beatings and killings that accompanied it. Here was a society in which, as he admits, a significant number of people felt obliged to conform to the anarchists' norms in order, as he put it, to *"save their skins"*. Others—like the Communist, John Cornford—were more open about the anarchists' rough justice. And Hemingway gives a lengthy account of it in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Mitchell, even at a remove, could sense that all might not be well with Spain's anarchists, that the pristine theory might not be working out so well in practice.

For a time, the Catalan anarchy was more powerful than the official Catalan Regional Government and might even have unsettled the Government in Madrid. Both therefore took steps to assimilate it, giving leading anarchists ministerial jobs. It was therefore an anomaly of the Spanish Republic at war that it had anarchists in its Government, a bizarre arrangement that, according to Mitchell, was rationalised, by the anarchists, on the grounds that the State was no longer oppressive of the working class so anarchists could be part of it with a clear conscience.

Orwell, as far as I can see, makes no reference to this turnabout, a flip-flop worthy of *Animal Farm*. Though *Homage to Catalonia* bemoans the rolling back of the anarchic order he admired (e.g. by the replacement of the militias with a formal army), it was a rolling back that the anarchists, as Government Ministers, either did not oppose or perhaps even supported.

If Mitchell liked the anarchists, she liked the Basques even more and liked them longer. Her final books are biographies of undervalued Basques like Juan Sebastián Elcano and Berengaria of Navarre.

Basque distinctiveness had been largely eradicated through assimilation in France during the great Frenchification of the late 1800s but it survived in Spain. Where France conformed to the Ernest Gellner thesis whereby the modern centre modernises the lagging periphery and assimilates it, Spain did not. In Spain, it was the peripheries—Basque and Catalan—that modernised. Basque industry attracted workers from all over Spain and Basque nationalism evolved, in part, in reaction to this. The Basques—Catholic, conservative, entrepreneurial—might have fitted better on the Franco side, had Franco not wanted to suppress their nationality. In contrast, the Republic conferred autonomy on the three Basque provinces that were loyal to it. And so, for the nine months it lasted, the Basque polity allied itself to Madrid on the understanding that this was a temporary arrangement and that the Basques' long term goal was independence.

Basque involvement in the War was undermined by a conspicuous act of terrorism, the bombing of Guernica by aircraft from the German Condor Legion. The Germans carried out the raids after the Italians had declined. The Italians declined because they saw how badly it would play back home—the spectacle of Catholic Italians bombing Catholic Basques had the potential to destabilise popular support for Mussolini, and clerical support too. So the Germans took it on instead. German aircraft flew back and forward over the town several times drop-

ping bombs indiscriminately and without initial warning. After the event, the Francoists were reluctant to claim credit for the attack, possibly for the same reason the Italians had not wanted to carry it out in the first place. The story was therefore spread that the town had been the centre of a conventional military engagement and that the Francoists had been on the point of taking it when the Republicans, in retreat, had turned their guns—and their bombs—on the town and its people. That was the official Franco version which would be the official version in Spain until around 1970.

"Cry Guernica till all men burn in shame" writes Mitchell in *Storm Over Spain*, *"the most appalling air raid in the history of modern warfare"*. Orwell comments on it too, noting *"the sheer, wanton brutality of it"* but also comments that this is what bombing is for, *"to slaughter and terrify the civilian population"*.

Though *Storm Over Spain* suggests that Guernica and the Basque defeat would signal the end of the Basques as a national community, in the Franco years the Basque country would develop, with considerable Church input, a successful social economy based on cooperatives and partnership that would be admired and emulated right down to the present.

I do not know that Mitchell commented on this, or if it greatly interested her. She lived to see a European Union dominated, in its great days, by Christian Democrat ideals, and she lived to see Spain accede to it. But her interests, as I will show in the next instalment, went in a different direction. *Storm Over Spain* ends pessimistically and with a prognosis similar to Orwell's in his famous post-war writings. History will advance by its bad side. Capitalism is finished, an authoritarianism of the Left is on the cards.

Mitchell, like Orwell, concluded that war is inimical to democracy, that waging war requires some loss of liberty and that the liberty once lost might not be restored. But she had no cure for this. For Mitchell, unlike Orwell, this prompts a momentary loss of faith in the present and in the material: *"And those of the human race who have already passed through death to an extended dimensional consciousness"*, she writes towards the end of *Storm Over Spain*—

> "having a true sense different from the one we now recognise in our habitual consciousness, may even now be able to see on earth peace to men of goodwill".

Nick Folley

Some Connections Between
Hiberno-Normans And The English Crown, Especially During The Wars Of The Roses, And Its Consequences For Ireland

Anglo-Normans

England's 'involvement' with Ireland is usually reckoned from around 1169, when FitzStephen and his Anglo-Normans landed at Banna Strand with the approval of Henry II. Richard de Clare followed in 1170. Yet this wasn't a straightforward invasion either as the Normans had arrived at the behest of an Irish Chieftain—Dermot McMurrough—recruited as allies against his rival, Rory O'Connor. McMurrough probably envisaged 'business as usual' once the Normans mercenaries had helped him defeat his rival, but the Normans had other ideas and soon established themselves here in their own right. Indeed so successful were they that Henry II felt obliged to clip Richard de Clare's ambitions, fearful he might set himself up as an Irish King rather than submit his lands in Ireland to Henry II as his vassal. The area most under Anglo-Norman control came to be known as *'The Pale'*, centered around Dublin and Leinster. In the north, a large area came under Norman control under John de Courcy. The Normans had thoroughly established themselves as a presence in the country.

Though this is well known, it's important because it sets the stage for future Anglo-Irish relations. From this time, such relations cannot be characterised in simple terms of *Irish v. English*, because within Ireland itself, two 'orders' existed, the older Gaelic order, and the Hiberno-Norman (as I prefer the term) families.

It should also be remembered that, at this time, the concept of *'English'* as we understand the term today, hardly existed. The 'English'—the Angles and Saxons—had been defeated and become second-class citizens in their own country. The language of Court, and—under the influence of Eleanor of Aquitaine—of literature, was French. Even today many legal terms derive from French Norman and English shows three strands of formality in its vocabulary based on whether the words are Saxon, French or Latin at root. Successive English Kings had more extensive lands in what today we would call France than they had in England, although they were also nominally supposed to be vassals of the King of France.

The 'English' identity as we know it only began to emerge under the conditions of the Hundred Years' War with France and the resultant switchover to English in the mid-14th century as the language of Court; and, under the influence of writers like Chaucer and William Langland, of literature.

The Anglo-Normans in Ireland meanwhile became thoroughly 'Irish' in culture—*'more Irish than the Irish'*, despite the 1366 *Statutes of Kilkenny*, meant to prevent this. Intermarrying, adopting the language and customs of their Gaelic neighbours, but retaining the Norman feudal social order and connections to the English Crown, as we shall see, they developed as a parallel strand to Irish aristocracy alongside the native Brehon-based Irish rulers.

Following the Norman conquest, the next major invasion of Ireland came, not from the 'English', but from the Scots. In 1315 Edward Bruce invaded Ulster and declared himself King of Ireland.

While it is true that Henry II arrived in Ireland with an 'invasion' force of 100 ships in 1171, the purpose of this expedition was more about bringing the Anglo-Normans already in Ireland to heel and ensuring the more powerful ones like Richard de Clare did not set themselves up as kings in their own right. The presence of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland gave Henry II the excuse needed to do so, otherwise it would have been an outright invasion of a foreign country, but it did change Irish/English relations, in that the Norman kingdom of England now viewed Ireland as a potential addition to its domains. Henry even named his son John *'Lord of Ireland'* though John's writ was extremely limited in this country.

Returning to Edward Bruce—some of the Irish Chieftains sided with him—notably Donal O'Neill, perhaps hoping an alliance with a powerful leader like Bruce (whose brother Robert had shortly before gained a stunning victory over the English at Bannockburn) was the best insurance policy against the rapaciousness of English monarchs such as Edward I and his son Ed-

ward II. At first Edward Bruce's Irish campaign went well for him with a string of victories. The main opposition to Edward came from the Hiberno-Norman families, such as the Butlers, Sir Richard Clare, the Earl of Desmond and the Earl of Kildare among others, with *their* Gaelic Irish allies. These families were obviously protecting their own interests against Bruce, but also had some nominal loyalty to Edward II of England. After laying waste to swathes of countryside north of Dublin, Edward was eventually killed at the Battle of Faughert in 1318 and the invasion came to an end.

John Barbour (Archdeacon of Aberdeen in the 1300s) left us an account of the Bruce invasion and in it noted the fighting style of the native Irish, who explained their tactics to Edward Bruce as a form of guerilla warfare, harassing the enemy and picking the time and place of battle before melting away again and *"not to stand in open encounter until one side is defeated"*.

French chronicler Froissart leaves us an interesting snapshot of the Irish Lords around this time. He had it from one Henry Crystede, a courtier at the Court of Richard II. This latter man—if his word is to be taken as true, lived a life as remarkable as that of the John Smith who married Pocahontas. Serving in Ireland under the Earl of Ormonde, he was captured during a skirmish on 'the Irish border' (meaning the edge of The Pale) by an Irishman named Brin Costerec, who kept him in his village for seven years, marrying him off to one of his daughters. His escape came about in much the same way—when Costerec was captured by the English and his horse was recognised as Crystede's by the Earl of Ormonde's men and Crystede's release negotiated. Crystede moved to England with his Irish family and, because of his command of the Irish language and customs, was chosen by Richard II to try and *persuade "four of Ireland's most powerful rulers"* to make their submission to Richard II. These 'four powerful rulers' were O'Neill of Meath, O'Brien of Thomond, Art McMurrough, King of Leinster, and O'Conor, King of Connaught.

Crystede confirms John Barbour's account of Irish martial tactics:

> "It is hard to find a way of making war on the Irish effectively, because unless they choose, there is no one to fight and no towns to be found… if they see they have the advantage, can attack the enemy as it suits them, for they know the country backwards and are skilled fighters".

Irish fighters, such as *kern*, would melt away if the battle went against them, the notable exception being the *Gallowglass*, who had their origins in Scotland. The preferred weapon of the Irish Gallowglass was the axe, like their Scottish counterparts. Froissart comments:

> "the Scots do not trouble much about the use of the bow. Instead they carry axes on their shoulders and in battle they approach at once. With these axes they deal some very hard blows".

Gallowglass were expected to hold their position, not flee the battlefield and not surrender, though they sometimes fought an orderly retreat. This in itself made them formidable warriors, but it wasn't simply a matter of honour. If we compare the example of Martin Schwarz, leader of a band of 1,500 German mercenaries hired by the Yorkist cause to fight at the battle of Stoke in 1487, we find that while the rest of the rebel army broke and fled, Schwarz and his men stood their ground and were massacred almost to a man by Henry Tudor's forces. They may have realised there was no better option, as routed troops are usually simply cut down anyway. But, additionally, mercenaries who were known to have fled a battle were unlikely ever to be employed again by anyone. Mercenaries were among some of the most professional soldiers in the Middle Ages, literally and figuratively.

Crystede's mission was to live in the same quarters rented out to accommodate these *'four powerful rulers'* on their visit to Dublin (the heartland of English influence in Ireland) and show them the 'superiority' of English manner and customs. Richard wished to dub them knights *"properly in the English manner"*—the Irish way of doing it not deemed adequate. And, of course, thereby presumably, make them his vassals by sleight of hand.

For the first few days Crystede observed the Irish Lords, much displeased with their 'lack' of table manners. His objection was that they invited their servants and minstrels to sit and eat with them and *"apart from their beds had everything in common"* (unlike the English Lords who would have found this 'mixing of social orders' unthinkable), and was told 'such was the custom of their country'.

Crystede was having none of it and rearranged the tables so the minstrels and servants would have to eat alone. This *"appeared to make [the Lords] very angry"* and they refused to eat, saying it was *"a breach of the excellent custom with which they had been brought up"*. Crystede placatingly informed them they would have to change this custom and adopt English ones as they would be making submission to the King of England. Thus they relented and ate apart.

He goes on to say *"they had another custom [which] is quite general in their country: they do not wear breeches…"* So Crystede had pairs of breeches made up and 'taught' the Irish to wear them. *"I cured them of many other boorish and unseemly habits, both in dress and in other things"*.

In light of the division along religious lines which came to dominate after the Reformation, his comments on the religious outlook of the Irish Lords is interesting:

> "Once I asked them about their faith and what they believed in, but they were not at all pleased with the question and I had to stop. They said they believed in God and the Trinity just the same as us, with no difference whatsoever. I asked them which Pope they inclined to. To the one in Rome, with no compromise".

This dates Crystede's mission to the time of the great Papal Schism (Froissart gives the dates 1394-5, during the reign of King Richard II of England). The English at the time—unsurprisingly given their intermittent ongoing warfare with France—recognised only the Roman Pontiff also.

When the day of the knighting ceremony finally arrived, the four Irish Lords were suitably dressed, *"in rich robes, as befitted their rank"*, were knighted by King Richard II himself in Dublin Cathedral (presumably, Christchurch):

> "It must be said they were thoroughly stared at by the English and other who were present, and not without reason, for they were foreign and different in appearance from the English and other nationalities".

Though, at this time, the native Irish and English shared a common religion and Pope, there was little else to connect them culturally. These Irish Lords had different customs, habits and manners, and sense of the social order. It is likely Henry Crystede would have found his mission all but impossible, had he not spent well over seven years living in Ireland, married to an Irish wife and fluent in the language. It must be noted here that by *'Irish'* we do not mean the Hiberno-Norman families.

Against this background of interplay between old Gaelic Lords, Hiberno-Norman families and English the outbreak of the dynastic struggles known as the *Wars of the Roses* brought fresh connections between the wars and politics of the two countries. Both factions in the struggle—Lancastrian and Yorkist—had connections in Ireland.

Members of the House of York served

as Lords Lieutenant (King's representative) in Ireland for almost 40 years, beginning with Richard, Duke of York in 1447 until his death at the Battle of Wakefield in 1460. His Irish posting was not intended by the Lancastrian faction (led by the King's close advisor, Edmund Beaufort the Duke of Somerset) as an honour but as a means of keeping the head of the Yorkist dynasty as far away as possible from the King's Court and centres of power.

The Duke of York's writ in Ireland probably didn't extend much beyond The Pale but by all accounts Richard was conscientious in exercising his duties and built up a *rapport* with some of the Irish Lords. It was in effect an exile while Lancastrians held sway, but it also started something of a tradition and other prominent Yorkists who served as Lords Lieutenant were George, Duke of Clarence (Richard's second son), John de la Pole, Richard of Shrewsbury (one of the 'Princes in Tower', Edward IV's second son), Edward of Middleham (Richard III's son) and John de la Pole (who led Yorkist resistance to Henry Tudor up until the debacle of the Battle of Blackheath in 1497). Following the defeat of Richard III at Bosworth in 1485, the tradition came to an end and the post was given to Tudor adherents, the first being Jasper Tudor (Henry Tudor's uncle).

Wars Of The Roses

The Wars of the Roses are reckoned to have started at the *First Battle of Saint Albans* in 1455 when the Yorkists were victorious over the Lancastrian faction, but the roots go back a decade or more prior to that. Initially it was not a Yorkist attempt to take the throne, but simply to get a fair hearing with Henry VI, whose Lancastrian-dominated Council kept the rival Yorkist House from access to the King. Several other factors led to the war: the man scions of both houses had good claims to the Throne, tracing their ancestry back to the remarkable fecundity of Edward III.

The Royal practice of rewarding loyal service with estates and titles had led to the creation of many *"overmighty subjects"*— magnates whose power, wealth and ability to raise fighting forces rivaled that of the monarch; the most notable example was Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick. England's *Hundred Years' War* with France had recently concluded with a humiliating defeat of the English at Castillon (1453) and the loss of almost all French possessions held by the English (except Calais). Though the writing had been on the wall for the English in France for some time anyway, Henry V's stunning successes at Agincourt (1415) and elsewhere had led the English to rather unfairly compare his son's (Henry VI) track record with that of the father.

To make matters worse, Henry VI was married to Frenchwoman Margaret d'Anjou, as part of a previous peace treaty with France (1445) and the English rankled at being ruled over by a French Queen. It did nothing to improve Henry VI's standing and Margaret turned out to be an implacable foe of the Yorkist House, doing everything possible in her power to curb their influence and diminish them. The last straw was Henry VI's sudden mental collapse in 1453. For long periods he was incapable of Government, and Parliament made Richard, Duke of York, Protector of the Realm. Henry suffered from repeated outbreaks of temporary insanity, which he may have inherited from his grandfather, Charles VI of France, a member of the Valois Dynasty.

England's humiliating defeat was associated in the popular mind with the Duke of Somerset (a Lancastrian) and his policies. Henry VI soon after lapsed into a mental breakdown and was incapable of government and the Duke of York was made Protector of the Realm, much to the chagrin of the Duke of Somerset, who had had his eye on the post. Richard used the occasion to attempt to limit Somerset's power but when Henry VI recovered his wits in 1454 Richard lost his Protectorate, and worse, now Somerset was clearly informed of Richard's intentions.

The Lancastrians moved quickly to weaken the House of York and called a Council in 1455 to which York was not invited. It was clear the House of York was going to be sidelined and Richard could not permit this to happen without accepting the demise of his House. The result was the arrival of the Duke of York with his assembled forces to St. Albans where the Royal party was staying, demanding an audience with the King. The 'King' (i.e the Duke of Somerset!) refused and a battle that has been described as more of a rumble in the streets broke out and the Duke of Somerset was killed in the fracas. Several other prominent Lancastrians were also killed or summarily executed on the spot. The Rubicon had been crossed.

Richard Duke of York had his moment of triumph but took a step too far when he had the effrontery to place his hand on the Throne, as if he had thoughts of sitting in it. To an embarrassed silence he realised the assembled nobles were not ready to accept him over their anointed Monarch, even if the latter was a weak and occasionally incapable ruler. York had to settle for being made Lord Protector again, during Henry VI's lifetime.

When Henry VI recovered his wits again Richard lost his Protectorate. Another Great Council was called by the King (i.e Margaret d'Anjou and her Lancastrian advisors) and it seemed clear the purpose would be to declare York a traitor. York assembled his forces and allies and the Lancastrians, theirs. The two armies finally caught up with each other outside the Yorkist stronghold of Ludford, near the Welsh border. The Lancastrians heavily outnumbered the Yorkists and had the presence of the King in their ranks, which made any attack on them an act of Treason. There was nothing for it—the Yorkists held a council and that night, and the leaders slipped away into exile. Richard, Duke of York, and his son Edmund, sailed to the safety of Dublin; while his other son, Edward, along with Richard, Earl of Warwick, sailed to Calais. Both Ireland and Calais were to prove prominent in Yorkist periods of exile and central to plots to take (or retake) the Throne from the Lancastrian (and later, Tudor) factions. The Duke of York—thanks to his role as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland— would have had contacts and friends he could rely on in Ireland.

The following day the Lancastrians discovered their quarry had slipped away and took out their rage on the hapless town.

The Earl of Warwick visited Richard Duke of York in Dublin the following year and began to discuss plans for the Duke's return. In June Yorkists landed forces in Kent. At the Battle of Northampton soon after, the Yorkists were again victorious and, not only did the Yorkists *"gain the person of the King"*, but several more die-hard Lancastrians were killed in the fight or executed soon after.

A Yorkist-led parliament quickly reversed Acts meant to curb the House of York and Richard, Duke of York was invited back from Dublin to England. This time not only did Parliament offer Richard the Protectorate during Henry VI's lifetime, it made him heir to the Throne on Henry's death. This was actually the worst possible solution: for the Lancastrians it appeared to reverse their ascendancy over the House of York, and Margaret d'Anjou was never going to accept her son, Prince Edward, being disinherited of his throne.

Further war was inevitable. Richard of York and his eldest son Edmund were killed by combined Lancastrian forces at the Battle of Wakefield in December 1460 and their paper-crowned heads impaled by a vengeful Margaret d'Anjou over Mickelgate Bar in York. This propelled Richard's second son, Edward (later Edward IV), into the limelight as Yorkist heir and leader of the Yorkist cause.

To Be Continued

VOX PAT

Cardinal Logue
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No-Platormed!

Cardinal Logue

On 1st December 1924, the New York based *Time* magazine did a feature on Cardinal Michael Logue, following his passing on 19th November.

Michael Logue remains Ireland's longest-serving Catholic primate. He joined the hierarchy as Bishop of Raphoe (Donegal) in 1879 and was appointed Primate of All-Ireland and Archbishop of Armagh in 1887. In 1893, he was elevated to the Sacred College of Cardinals, the first Primate of All-Ireland to receive the honour. He was a fervent supporter of the 1921 Anglo-Irish 'Treaty'.

Time wrote:

> "In October, an aged Cardinal attended the Catholic Truth Society's annual conference in Dublin. He predicted that next October he would be in Purgatory. Last week he died—His Eminence Michael Cardinal Logue, Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of All-Ireland, 114th successor of St. Patrick, the serpent-killer. He was the only Primate to be made a Cardinal in Ireland's 1,500 years of Christian history. Cardinal Logue lived simply. He had no secretary, few servants. When guests came to his villa, *Ara Coeli,* he would show them to their rooms, carry up their bags. Recently, he guided an American tourist round his Cathedral. The tourist offered him a tip, asked: "What's your name my man?" Replied the Primate: "Oh, some call me 'Old Michael,' and some call me 'The Cardinal.'
>
> "Cardinal Logue could laugh heartily. Once examining a group of tradesmen for confirmation, he asked whether it would not be a sin to conceal the defects of a donkey to a prospective purchaser. "Troth," replied a tradesman, "I am afraid your Eminence would never make a living selling donkeys"."

The Cardinal was an outstanding theologian. He was a statesman who laboured for Irish peace as well as for Irish freedom." (*Time* magazine-December 1924.)

On a footnote: During the Land War, it is alleged that Michael Logue's father was driving the second coach when the assassination of Earl Leitrim, William Clements took place on 2nd April 1878 at Cratla Wood, adjoining Mulroy Bay, outside Milford, Co. Donegal. The Earl's driver and clerk also died. There was no suggestion that the Cardinal's father was complicit in the attack.

Ninety years on, the late Cardinal's nephew would be the inspiration behind the film, *"The Kings Speech"*, a story about the unusual relationship between King George VI of England and Logue, a speech therapist from Australia who helped the monarch overcome his stammer.

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The U.S. and Afghanistan

> "I don't think we were defeated… Our resolve was found wanting, I would say, rather than defeated", US Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace on the withdrawal from Afghanistan

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The Pyramids

> "*Myth debunke*d: The pyramids were not built by slaves—And there were not 100,000 people working on them either…"
>
> "600 of those tombs have been discovered at two levels. The lower-level tombs were simple and contained just bones, pots, and tools of the workers. The upper tombs were more elaborate and that is where the supervisors and architects were buried. The tombs were completely intact because thieves were not interested in them since they contained no treasure…
>
> "The mending of broken bones in Ancient Egypt required a lot of skill and time which was not spent on slaves. But the pyramid workers did get that special treatment…
>
> "But the premium medical treatment was not the only thing the pyramid builders enjoyed. Their diet was at a high level too.
>
> "Fishbones and cattle bones no older than two years were found in the villages, both expensive foods. Since the staple diet of the common Egyptian was bread, the discovery that large quantities of meat were consumed indicated at a well-fed workforce provided with the best food…
>
> "In reality, it took 20,000 people 20 years to build the Great Pyramid of Giza, which consists out of 2.3 million stone blocks with each of them weighing up to 10 tons. Out of those 20,000 workmen, 15,000 of them worked 12 hours a day for three months and then went back to their villages. New builders would replace them. The other 5,000 were core workers and permanent.

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Behan

"Well, if I had to choose between Michelangelo's David and Whistler's mother" (Brendan Behan after being asked if he was gay, from *Joan's Book*, 1994).

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No-Platformed!

An art historian has been banned from speaking at a Cambridge University debating society after offending students with a Hitler impersonation. (*BBC*-9.11.2021)

Cambridge Union President Keir Bradwell announced a new blacklist after Andrew Graham-Dixon spoke at the event.

Mr. Graham-Dixon said he was trying to *"underline the utterly evil nature of Hitler"* but apologised for offending.

Mr. Bradwell, who joked about the speech directly afterwards, has since apologised to members.

While presiding over the debate, he said he was *"quite drunk"*.

Afterwards he said he had had two glasses of wine with dinner beforehand but was *"not impeded in my ability to chair the debate"*.

However, he said it was *"inexcusable"* that he had not halted the parody.

The society, which aims to promote free speech through discussion, had been holding a debate on the concept of good taste on 4th November 2021.

In a letter, published on Facebook, Mr. Bradwell said Mr Graham-Dixon offended members when he used Hitler's *"deplorable"* words about Jewish and black people in his speech.

> ºCaricaturing Hitler is now a blacklisting offence. I'm sure his supporters would agree.

Irony doesn't begin to cover it.

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********** More VOX on page 19