

Church & State

A Pluralist Review Of Irish Culture

The Harlot Of D'Olier Street

"The press lords waged their war persistently, but in the end ineptly. When Rothermere actually put in writing a demand to see the composition of the next Conservative Cabinet as a condition of support by his newspapers, he over-stepped the limit... At one of his meetings Baldwin rounded on the press lords in words borrowed from his cousin Rudyard Kipling which still echo across the years: *'What proprietorship of these papers is aiming at is power, power without responsibility—the prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages'...*"

(Robert Blake: *The Conservative Party From Peel To Churchill*).

A comparable situation exists in Ireland today in the relationship between the Government and the press, but with a difference that make the irresponsibility of the press infinitely greater than it was in England in the crisis of 1931.

Rothermere and Beaverbrook made money by selling vast quantities of newspapers to the same body politic that elected the Government. They made their money and achieved their influence honestly, as these things go. The source of their influence as press barons was transparently obvious. And there was no question of their power owing anything to interference from beyond the body politic of the state. But that is not the case with the *Irish Times*.

Baldwin and Beaverbrook were players within the same democracy. That democracy proved to be incapable of producing an adequate form of government for itself, and therefore the state was in crisis. The press barons exploited the popular discontent to sell newspapers. But the press barons were no more able than the democracy to produce better government.

The democracy was discontented with the Government. That means it was discontented with itself, because the Government came from nowhere else than from the democracy. But the way to sell newspapers is not to tell the democracy that it is itself entirely responsible for the Government of which it complains. (And if that is not the case, then either the state is not a democracy, or democracy is not what it pretends to be.)

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In most Western states newspapers are products of the political life of the state, and they service the political conflicts of the state. The obligatory form of what is called democracy is the conflict of two political parties which present themselves to the electorate. The democracy exercises its only sovereign function by choosing between the two every four or five years.

Where there are more than two parties the ability of the electors to choose is diminished. The choice passes from the electors to the elected.

The logic of the system is that there should be a couple of major, well-defined, parties, with one or two minor parties in the offing.

In Russia, after the pulling down of the Soviet system, the electors were given a wide choice of parties, parties were ill-defined, and they did not persist over a series of elections, but came and went with great rapidity. The consequence was that the choice presented to the electorate was illusory, and Russian democracy was therefore a shambles.

In Irish politics, as remade by Britain in 1922, it was intended that a plurality of parties should ensure permanently weak government. But strong government emerged despite Proportional Representation. There was strong authoritarian government by the Treaty Party to begin with. And this was followed by strong democratic government by Fianna Fail.

The party structure of the state has been unbalanced since 1933. Political life has been dominated by the anti-Treaty party, which was defeated in the 'Civil War' in 1923.

Resentment of the 'Treaty', after the danger of invasion had passed, led to the rapid growth of the anti-Treatyites as a political party, and to the decline of the Treatyites.

But the Treaty itself was not wholly responsible for the unbalanced party structure of the state since the early 1930s.

The Treatyites had to do what they did in 1922 in order to ward off re-conquest by Britain. But they did not have to do what they did between 1927 and 1932.

Instead of facilitating the entry of the anti-Treatyites into the political life of the Free State, the Treatyite Government tried to prevent it by use of the Treaty Oath, not only for sitting in the Dail, but for contesting elections.

A change of government was possible in 1927. It would have been a Coalition led by Fianna Fail. If that had happened, a balanced two-party system would probably have developed.

The opportunity was lost by one vote. The notorious Jinks was kept away from the Dail by an *Irish Times* journalist (who became Editor). As a result, the Treatyite party was given a further five years, during which it did itself irreparable damage, and never won another election.

It governed from 1927 to 1932 as if the British Government was breathing down its neck with the British Army poised to strike if it deviated from the Treaty by a harsbreath. That had been the case in 1922, and the electorate knew it and made allowance for it. And the electorate also knew that it was no longer the case in 1927 and it punished the excessive Treatyite zeal of the Government.

And then, when the Treatyite party lost the elections of 1932 and 1933, it went Fascist and remained Fascist until the Second World War.

The party structure of the state has remained basically unchanged since the early thirties. It might be described as one whole party, one half-party, and one quarter-party.

The complete party has been in office for by far the greater part of the 74 yeras since 1932, with the half and quarter parties occasionally getting together with Independents to provide it with a few years of relief.

A party-political democracy, which is the only kind now recognised as authentic, needs party newspapers for its proper functioning. And the two major parties had party newspapers until a generation ago, when the Fianna Fail newspaper was put out of business. This left the field to the *Irish Independent* and the *Irish Times*. The *Independent* is the Fine Gael newspaper, and is opposed to Fianna Fail on the normal partisan basis of party politics in a democracy.

The *Irish Times* is opposed to Fianna Fail on altogether different grounds. It does not represent a party capable of taking office as the Government of the state. Its opposition to Fianna Fail is not an expression of party-politics within the state. It is more in the nature of hostility to the state—or to the ethos and sense of purpose which took the state from under the British wing and enabled it to act independently.

The *Independent* made its money in the market place in which it also conducted its politics. It may recently have

An Error Of Judgment

IRISH TIMES, 28th September 2006

"The removal of a Taoiseach from office can be a long and painful process, as both Charles Haughey and Albert Reynolds found to their cost. Now their successor, Bertie Ahern, is struggling to retain the confidence of the Fianna Fáil parliamentary party and the public at large. ...

An Apology Is Not Enough

IRISH TIMES, 2nd October 2006

"What a breathtaking exposition of the culture of Fianna Fáil we have witnessed in recent days...

...The country is convulsed by the revelations...

What he did was wrong and he must say so. An apology is not enough."

We Are To Hold Our Noses

IRISH TIMES, 4th October 2006

"So, we are to hold our noses. The Fianna Fáil/Progressive Democrat Coalition Government is safe, the Opposition parties didn't quite come up to the wire and the semantics over the difference between the loans and gifts received by the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, in the circumstances in which he received them while he was minister for finance in 1993 and 1994, won the day. Nothing that was done was wrong. But, warts and all, that is our democracy. This is looking at ourselves and, through our elected representatives in the Dáil, our political values.

...It is wrong for a serving member of government to receive monies from personal friends for any purposes..."

become the plaything of Sir Anthony O'Reilly, the Heinz multi-millionaire, but it remains discernibly what it always was—allowing for the fact that the rather strained devoutness that characterised it during the generations when piety was the fashion has been replaced by a rather doctrinaire expression of the licentiousness which is now the fashion. And Sir Anthony is a recognisable product of the society which his paper serves—even in the inferiority complex of the middle class boy who has become very wealthy and feels the need of an English knighthood to lend him distinction.

The *Irish Times* is something else. Its ownership is mysterious—or it was mysterious until it chose to attack the Aubane Historical Society and Aubane responded by discovering how it functioned. And its financing was mysterious and remains so.

The *Irish Times* was the paper of the Protestant Ascendancy in its last phase. It remained committed against Irish national development to the bitter end. When it failed a ward off independence, its readership base shrunk away as many of the Anglo-Irish chose not to live outside the British state and returned home and many of those who remained became Irish in a more than a nominal sense and lost the Ascendancy viewpoint on things.

But the *Irish Times* survived the half-century after independence, with a minuscule readership, while retaining the staff and the appearance of a major paper. Its circulation during that half-century was in the region of 35,000. But it kept going without visible means of support, and it was financed to take advantage of the political disorientation that set in after the upheavals of the Arms Trials.

Aubane (where the *Irish Times* was never seen until the past few years) discovered that it was supposedly owned by an Educational Trust, but that the Chairman of the Trust, a returned British Army officer, Major MacDowell, had a golden share which enabled him to outvote all the others combined. And it discovered from the British State archives that, in the crisis of 1969, Major MacDowell discussed with Whitehall how the paper should be conducted. There is no evidence that it ever discussed this with the Irish Government.

Then John Martin undertook some real investigative journalism for the *Irish Political Review* (very different from the 'investigative journalism' of leaks and handouts which is the usual thing) and found that, under a nominal Editor, the paper is conducted under the active supervision of a Directory, and that the Directors are bound to secrecy about the affairs of the paper by an Oath which they—along with the Editor—take annually.

It has long been evident that the paper was conducted on
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Subliminal Manipulation

The *Irish Times* consistently uses the word "payments" to describe the help Minister for Finance Ahern received from his friends in 1993. The *Chambers Dictionary* definition of payments is:

Pay "to give what is due (in satisfaction of a debt, in exchange, in compensation, in remuneration etc.); to give in satisfaction of a debt."

Payment "the act of paying; the discharge of a debt by money or its equivalent".

Using the term *payment* suggests that Ahern was paid to do something by his friends, rather than that he was given money as a loan or gift when he needed it at a time of personal crisis.

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The web addresses for the Church & State and associated sites are as follows:—

Church & State: <http://www.atholbooks.org/magazines/cands/index.php>

The Heresiarch: <http://heresiarch.org>

Athol Books: <http://www.atholbooks.org>

Aubane Historical Society <http://aubane.org>

There is a great deal of interesting reading on each and all of them. Go surf and see!

Church & State

Editor: Pat Maloney

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behalf of an interest which was not part of the political life through which the government of the state was conducted. And this is the mechanism by which it was done.

An internally-based paper, grown out of the body politic, which stood beyond the party-politics of the state and subjected it to impartial criticism, would be one thing. But that is not what the *Irish Times* is. It is the representative of an outside interest which manipulates internal discontents for the purpose of eroding the ethos of the state.

Around 1970 it began to harness to its purpose the discontent of 'revolutionary socialists' of various kinds who, left to their own devices, would have achieved nothing in the way of a revolution, but who displayed a certain flair in destructive journalism against the Irish state, from a platform that was laid on for them. And it finds it easy to enlist the existential discontent of the Labour Party—the perpetual quarter-party of the state—for the view that its frustrated condition is due to something sinister and Machiavellian in the conduct of Fianna Fail.

This magazine was launched to oppose the undue influence of a foreign power in Irish affairs. The influence of Rome has declined, only to be replaced by another, which claims a comparable exemption from the rules binding on others.

The *Irish Times* campaigns for transparency but shields itself in obscurity. It campaigns against corruption but conceals the sources of its financing. It demands that the inquisitorial law of the Tribunals should be rigorously applied to others, but expresses outrage at the prospect of it being applied against itself. And it has recently begun to boast that its purpose is to destabilise Governments.

Isn't it about that somebody in authority said to it what Baldwin said to Beaverbrook?

After a misconceived speculation (in GPA of which he was a Board member), Garret FitzGerald had over £200,000 written off by Allied Irish Bank, under his protegee and fellow Fine Gaeler, Peter Sutherland—but nothing much was made of that.

The following are Directors and Governors of the *Irish Times*. Do they support the irresponsible attempt of their paper to overthrow the elected Taoiseach?

A) Non Executive Directors and non "Trust" Members

1) Brian Patterson (Chairman)

- Director of Waterford Wedgwood Plc and of the Ogilvy Group
- Chairman of the Irish Financial Services Regulatory Authority
- Governor of the board of the National College of Ireland
- Trustee of The Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma and Transformation
- Former Chairman of the National Competitiveness Council

2) Alex Burns

- Former Senior Partner in KPMG Accountancy firm (formerly Stokes Kennedy Crowley)
- Former Chief Executive of The National Development Corporation Limited
- Former Director of Norwich Insurance and Wessel Industries

3) Gregory Sparks

- Partner in Farrell Grant Sparks Accountancy Firm. Farrell Grant Sparks advised the Dublin Printing Group of Unions on the

restructuring process in The Irish Times Ltd.

- Former Programme Manager to Dick Spring during his period as Tanaiste

4) John Fanning

- Executive Chairman of McConnells Advertising (The largest Irish owned advertising agency).
- Director of the National Theatre (the Abbey) from 1993 to 2001.

B) Irish Times Ltd Directors who are also Governors of The Irish Times Trust Ltd.

1) David McConnell

- Chairman of The Irish Times Trust Ltd since December 2001.
- Professor of Genetics in Trinity College Dublin
- Member of the European Molecular Biology Organisation and the Royal Irish Academy
- Former president of the Zoological Society of Ireland
- Former Chairman of the Adelaide Hospital and Fota Wildlife Park

2) Gerard Burns

- Former Northern Ireland Ombudsman

3) Dervilla Donnelly

- Emeritus Professor of organic chemistry at University College Dublin
- Chairwoman of the Government Commission on Assisted Human Reproduction (since March 2000) and of the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies

C) Executive Directors

Geraldine Kennedy (Editor)
Maeve Donovan (Managing Director)
Michael Austen (Deputy Managing Director)
Paul O'Neill (Financial Director (?))
Liam Kavanagh (Company Secretary)
Eoin McVey (Managing Editor)

Governors of The Irish Times Trust Ltd who are not Irish Times Ltd Directors

The other governors are Ruth Barrington, trade unionist David Begg, former ambassador Noel Dorr, David Went the financier, Judith Woodworth and Esther McKee.

(Three of the above are very well known.

- Noel Dorr was a very well known Irish diplomat. I think he was ambassador to the UN.
- David Begg was President of the ICTU and Chief Executive of Concern. He was also the head of the Communication Workers Union during the Telecom Eireann Privatisation.
- David Went is a former Chief Executive of the Ulster Bank. I think he is the current Chief Executive of Irish Life and Permanent TSB.)

Double Standards ?

After a misconceived speculation (in GPA of which he was a Board member), Garret FitzGerald had over £200,000 written off by Allied Irish Bank, under his protegee and fellow Fine Gaeler, Peter Sutherland—but nothing much was made of that.

The Pope And Benjamin Kidd

European Christianity has been sickening of itself for a number of centuries, and it calls this sickness *tolerance*, and proclaims it to be a great virtue. But what particular merit is there in tolerating ridicule of something you can't stand?

Islam has not sickened of itself. Generation after generation, century after century, for over a thousand years, peoples have lived within Islam and not found it intolerable. It does not have built into it the aggravating element that makes Christianity intolerable to Christians.

But Christians who insist on a right to ridicule Christianity as the only way of making it tolerable, also insist on the right to ridicule Islam and that's where the trouble lies.

Of course the trouble did not begin with Christian ridicule of Islam. Voltaire might ridicule Mohammed to his heart's content and no Muslims picketed Ferney that I ever heard of. It was only when the forces of West European militarism (for which Voltaire became a sacred icon) went out and destroyed the Muslim Empire, and Balkanised the Middle East, and set up a series of subordinate 'nation states' for which there were no grounds in actuality, and imported a Jewish population, and set up a Jewish State against the opposition of all the states and peoples of the region, and then set about devaluing protest against what was being done by ridiculing Islam, that the chickens came home to roost.

In the days of Voltaire there were hardly any Muslims in Europe west of Vienna. They had been driven out of Spain and they had been blocked in the

Balkans by the Hapsburg State, assisted by the old Kingdom of Poland in its last action of European significance.

Today there are millions of Muslims in Britain, Germany and France. They are there because they are needed. They are needed as workers, not as Muslims, but they brought Islam with them when they came.

Europe is too wealthy to do its own manual work, so it imports workers.

In olden times—roughly, before Britain's Great Wars of the early 20th century—the existence of countries that were too wealthy to do their own work was hardly imaginable. It came about through the consolidation of Finance Capitalism as an international system. Money as the "*universal equivalent*" acquired a greatly extended sphere of action and, under an international division of labour of a new kind, some countries made money and other countries worked for them.

It was in connection with the German "*economic miracle*" of the 1950s that one first heard of a domestic economy requiring large quantities of imported labour to function.

(There was only token "*de-Nazification*" in West Germany after 1945. The rapid emergence of Cold War between the victorious allies forbade it. A new Government was set up over the modernised system established by National Socialism, and it boomed. Germany was not de-Nazified in the way that Iraq was de-Baathised and reduced to a shambles.)

Then Britain, following the establishment of the Welfare State, began to experience a labour shortage, where before there had been surplus

population.

The social reform movement that began in Britain in the late 19th century was held to be conditional on Imperialism. The view was that Imperialism provided the means for alleviating internal class conflict in Britain. And the Government that constructed the Welfare State after 1945 also launched the barbaric Imperialist war in Malaya. It was said that Britain simply had to have control of Malayan tin and rubber at that juncture in order to remain an effective player in the world market (which was largely its own creation).

Wealthy classes, which did not do their own work, tended to acquire sophisticated lifestyles that were not conducive to human reproduction, and the same seems to be true of countries. The import of people then becomes necessary for reproduction as well as work.

Ireland is a newcomer to the wealthy side of this international division of labour. And its arrival clearly hinged on Haughey's remarkable Financial Services Centre. I don't know if reproduction has yet been substantially affected by Voltairean lifestyle, but it is quite obviously the case that large-scale import of people is an economic requirement.

Through this development the world has divided into wealthy but unstable of ways of life postulated on an accelerating expansion of consumption year on year (which might be called Christian), and ways of life conducive to human reproduction, which supply the wealthy countries both with workers and with population. And Islam counts for a large part of these ways of life.

The terms on which Islam is ridiculed have therefore changed radically since Voltaire wrote *Mohammed*. The impunity has gone.

But the need to hate Islam has not diminished since the time of Voltaire.

Taoiseach Bertie Ahern: '... I look forward to going into the Dáil to make available all the information I have'

NEWS OF THE WORLD,
1st October 2006

"...The events that have come into the public arena following an illegal leak have dragged my family and friends to centre stage. I am deeply sorry for the distress they have all suffered.

Politics, sport and serving my community are my only outside interests. I neither have nor crave personal wealth or the trapping of affluence...

Never, in all the time I have served in public life, have I taken a bribe or in any

way put my personal interest ahead of the public good. I have served this country and the people I have the honour to represent in Dáil Éireann honestly.

I have for many years endured all sorts of false allegations and they have proven to be false...

I have provided more details about my personal finances than any person in this House who has ever held office.

I have shown that I have not abused any office I have held and I have never used public office for personal financial gain. Somebody who has access to confidential documents decided to leak them to a newspaper.

With contempt for the courts and the tribunal process, this person made a sinister

calculation. They thought if they could leak this information about me and my family, they could destroy me. They are wrong...

People made secret allegations about me - like I had €15 million stashed away, or that I had bank accounts in exotic places such as the Dutch Antilles and Mauritius. These were lies. In disproving the lies, I provided my details to the tribunal - and now someone has leaked those details in an effort to throw up more material to damage me.

The people who are pushing this story have one objective in mind. They want to drive me from office. They will not succeed.

However, on a positive note, I do want to say that I have been overwhelmed by the huge level of support and encouragement I have received from people across Ireland..."

His *Mohammed* (which was praised by his Pope) might be considered a product of sceptical high spirits. It served no vital internal purpose in the life of Europe. Europe was dominant militarily. It was secure within itself—as secure as its own inherent instability allowed it to be—and it had not yet through its conquests made itself dependent parasitically on Islam either for its energy or a labour force.

Islam is now a component of the European world, by reason of the necessity of European control of the oil in the Middle East, and of the influx of Islamic workers into Europe. And the destruction by Europe of the Islamic State 88 years ago did not result in the atrophy of Islam as a religious culture, but in its re-invigoration. It is sceptical liberalism that has gone into decline. It is no longer maliciously high-spirited and good-humoured, as it was with Voltaire. It is now frenzied, as with John Waters in the *Irish Times*.

Lapsed Christian Europe has realised that, for all its lapsing, it is still Christian. It became intolerable to itself, and ridiculed its beliefs. But, faced with Islam as an internal component of its world, it becomes apparent that its ridicule of Christianity was only a form of *modus vivendi* with Christianity.

The Pope dug up a forgotten argument between a Roman Emperor and an Islamic intellectual in the late 14th century, so that he could quote the Emperor as saying: "*Show me just what Muhammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached*".

How could a frantic liberal sceptic of our times possibly be hostile to him after that opening?

He then went on to tell Europe that Europe itself was a creation of the form of Christianity, forged from a synthesis of Greek philosophy and Roman administration, that became Roman Catholicism when the Roman Empire adopted it. As far as I noticed, there was no real protest from the liberals.

Macaulay's remarkable prediction, during the high tide of English liberalism, that Papal Rome would outlast liberal England, seems to be coming true. Macaulay is now all but forgotten by the world at large. He was the most influential Liberal writer of the era of English dominance. His doubt that the foundations of liberalism were sound—or that it existed on its own foundations—is a reason not to forget him.

It is a curious fact that actual Greek Orthodox Christianity appears as a stable component in a traditional way of life,

with little of the turbulent Hellenistic spirit that remained active in Western Christianity.

The Pope's characterisation of Islam as a religion of violence and Christianity as not being so is absurd, of course. But it was his hook for catching attention.

He would not himself be a Christian if Christianity had repudiated violence. The conversion of the Germans by Charlemagne, I seem to recall, took the form of a succession of major wars. But for the proselytizing effect of the sword, Regensburg and Freising would still be living in contented paganism, instead of being in throes of existential *angst*.

Leaving that aside as necessary spin, there is not much to disagree with in the rest of the speech. Certainly not the dismissal of the Irish theologian:

"In contrast with the so-called intellectualism of Augustine and Thomas, there arose with Duns Scotus a voluntarism which ultimately led to the claim that we can only know God's *voluntas ordinate*: Beyond this is the realm of God's freedom, in virtue of which he could have done the opposite of everything he has actually done. This gives rise to positions which clearly approach those of Ibn Hazn and might even lead to the image of a capricious God, who is not even bound to truth and goodness. God's transcendence and otherness are so exalted that our reason, our sense of the true and the good, are no longer an authentic mirror of God, whose deepest possibilities remain eternally unattainable and hidden behind his actual decisions. As opposed to this, the faith of the Church has always insisted that between God and us... there exists a real analogy, in which unlikeness remains infinitely greater than likeness, yet not to the point of abolishing analogy and its language (cf Lateran IV). God does not become more divine when we push him away from us in a sheer, impenetrable voluntarism."

I know nothing about Lateran IV. I believe I did once but I have forgotten it. But I think there is no room for doubt that the God who made our world was a controlled God, not a free agent.

The dominant forms of Christianity—both Roman Catholicism and the Protestant revolts against it—are products of the Roman Empire. The God of Rome and Canterbury is an agent of Imperial power. He was shaped by Rome, and England in breaking with Rome did not discard him but made him an English subject.

England began to see itself as the successor of Imperial Rome, and it took over the Roman God as its God, and subjected him to its policy requirements,

just as Rome had done.

"is the conviction that acting unreasonably contradicts God's nature merely a Greek idea... I believe that here we can see the profound harmony between what is Greek in the best sense of the word and the biblical understanding of faith in God... biblical faith, in the Hellenistic period, encountered the best in Greek thought at a deep level, resulting in a mutual enrichment... Today we know that the Greek translation of the Old Testament produced at Alexandria—the Septuagint—is more than a simple (and in that sense perhaps less than satisfactory) translation of the Hebrew text; it is an independent textual witness and a distinct and important step in the history of revelation, one which brought about this encounter in a way that was decisive for the birth and spread of Christianity. A profound encounter of faith and reason is taking place here, an encounter between genuine enlightenment and religion. From the very heart of Christian faith and, at the same time, the heart of Greek thought now joined to faith, Manuel II was able to say: Not to act "with logos" is contrary to God's nature."

The original Christianity, whatever it was, was caught in the net of Greek philosophy in its "Hellenistic" continuation five centuries after Plato). The Pope continues:

"The New Testament was written in Greek and bears the imprint of the Greek spirit, which had already come to maturity as the old Testament developed."

So: In the beginning was Greek philosophy.

If there was something there before Greek philosophy took it in hand, it is something that we know nothing about, because what we know is its expression in the language of Greek philosophy. And its transference into Greek was not a mere translation, but was part of the process of revelation.

But there was a hankering to get at whatever Christianity was before it became Greek philosophy:

"Dehellenization first emerges in connection with the fundamental postulates of the Reformation. Looking at the tradition of scholastic theology, the Reformers thought they were confronted by a faith system totally conditioned by philosophy, that is to say an articulation of faith based on an alien system of thought... Metaphysics appeared as a premise derived from another source, from which faith had to be liberated in order

to become once more more fully itself. When Kant stated that he needed to set thinking aside in order to make room for faith, he carried this programme forward with a radicalism that the Reformers could never have foreseen. He thus anchored faith exclusively in practical reason, denying access to reality as a whole."

The attempt to dehellenise Christianity, and "to return simply to the man Jesus and to his simple message, underneath the accretions of theology and of hellenisation" led, says the Pope, to the view that Jesus "put an end to worship in favour of morality".

I know of only one practical attempt at dehellenisation (and de-Romanisation). It was made in England in the 18th century by William Law, and it had some effect in Ireland through Law's influence on the Brooke family of Co. Fermanagh and thereabouts, and especially on Charlotte Brooke, who made English translations of Gaelic poems, which were included in the Gaelic Magazine, *Bolg An Tsolair*, published by the Belfast United Irishmen in 1795.

I thought it was worth finding out how a very devout Protestant, during the high tide of the Protestant Ascendancy, came to be a translator of Gaelic poems. That is how I discovered William Law, a very elegant writer through he had little time for elegance, who tried to embed Christianity in a philosophy that was in harmony with it, and detach it from the classical cultures of Greece and Rome, which tended to erode it. He failed. His enemy, Bishop Hoadley, succeeded.

English Christianity, after a century and a half of theological turmoil, which included three revolutions and a civil war, was not entirely suitable to the requirements of Empire (which was the object of the Glorious Revolution and gentry). Bishop Hoadley tamed and made it serviceable to the Imperial State, which became a major source of disturbance in the world.

Law set himself against the burgeoning Imperialism of his time, and developed a form of Christianity appropriate to the living of a settled life—or a "*Devout and Holy Life*", as he put it, which is really much the same thing. And he published a pamphlet against Britain's first World War, the Seven Years' War. (All of this will be found in the biography of Charlotte Brooke, in the Athol Books 1999 reprint of *Bolg An Tsolair*.)

Law's Christianity, as I found out about it, appeared to me to be rather similar to Islam as I have observed it.

I was surprised to see the Pope quoting a Muslim theologian who was a

metaphysical philosopher. I knew that Islam preserved Greek philosophy during the ages of European barbarism, but I had the idea that they preserved it as philosophy and did not make it part of their theology—and that they did not even have a theology of the Christian kind, which is an absurd science.

On the assumption that there is a God, theology is impossible. All that can be known is what he chooses to reveal. But it is entirely possible on the assumption that he does not exist, but is made up by the theologians, and that what they are doing is elaborating their own notions.

The *Koran* appears to me to set out a way to live, which it presents as a message from God. It is a book of instruction and devotion. I cannot recall that it contains anything in the way of metaphysics or theology. It does not speculate on whether the God who sent the message in the *Koran* might have sent an entirely different message—or on whether what is good is what God says should be done, or whether there is a standard of goodness that somehow exists independently of the God who created everything, which God might violate and therefore be evil. And it contains no injunction to engage in conquest and genocide, as the Christian or Jewish God does in the *Books of Deuteronomy* and *Joshua*, which seem to me to be the Books of the Bible which are taken most seriously today, and are being put into effect most earnestly. And it contains nothing like the *Book of Job*, in which God torments, for the hell of it, a man who is doing his best to be good as per instructions.

I suppose a short way of describing Islam is that it is a religion designed for living in contentedly, rather than generating existential *angst*. And, from a Christian viewpoint, that means it is evil, doesn't it?

It prohibits usury (the making of money out of money). And a world without usury lacks an essential element of progress. And the combination of 'no usury' with 'no problematical metaphysics' must make it absolutely intolerable to Western Christianity.

*

Benjamin Kidd, a Protestant from Bandon, was an influential English writer on Darwinist sociology about a hundred years ago. In *Principles Of Western Civilisation* (1908) he set out to show the evolutionary function of Christianity, and the inadequacy of Greek and Roman cultures until Christianity was added to them, which seems to me to be of a kind with the Pope's view of the inadequacy of Islam—leaving aside the nonsense about violence. (The Byzantine Emperor cited

by the Pope was governing a Byzantine remnant put together after the Empire was broken up and the city of Constantinople was stormed and plundered in 1204 by the Fourth Crusade (which sought to put an end to the scandal of the schismatic Greeks. The restored rump of the Greek Christian Empire fell to the Muslims about a generation after the time of Manuel II and, as far as I know, they did not behave any worse than the Latin Christians of the Fourth Crusade.)

Islam, with its uncomplicated God, makes arrangements for a contented life in this world. It lacks the cataclysmic ideal through which Western Christianity energised Greek philosophy and Roman administration for demonic activity within, and against, the world.

Kidd's critique of Greek philosophy for its lack of a disturbing ideal bears a strong resemblance to Nazi criticism of Judaism for being exclusively concerned with worldly survival. (I included Kidd in *Union Jackery* as a contributor to the Fascist element in British culture.)

And he praises the early Councils of the Church for suppressing the heresies which were in conflict with the Darwinist function of Christianity:

In Greek philosophy and in the Roman Empire, "a single governing principle held all others in subjection. It was the world of the ascendant present. It was the world in which the ultimate meaning that every human institution yielded on analysis was, that, as there was nothing more important than the present, so there was nothing higher than the forces which ruled the present... It was the present that had lived in Greek art. It was the present that had reasoned in Greek philosophy. It was the ruling present which had made virtue and enlightened self-interest synonymous in the State... It was the present which... had found the highest expression for virtue in the egoisms of Roman Stoicism" (p138). "...no progress could be made towards that second and higher stage of social evolution, in which the future begins to control the present, until natural selection had first of all developed a people or a type of society able to hold the world against all comers in the present—the significance of the conditions into which the new ideal has been projected begins to hold the imagination" (p202). "there is one distinguishing characteristic of the Christian religion to which all the phenomena thereof with which science is concerned are essentially related... It is the opening in the individual mind of the terms of a profound antithesis, of which the characteristic feature always remains

the same; namely, that it is incapable of being again bridged or closed by any principle operating merely within the limits of present consciousness" (p211).

"Throughout all the phases of Greek thought... virtue was regarded as a kind of stable equilibrium... There was no conception of any antitheses in the mind of the individual... The wise man was essentially the virtuous man... All virtue was, in its essence, regarded as conformity to nature" (p211-2).

"The conception of virtue as conformity to nature has absolutely vanished. 'Of the abyss of man's conscience', says St. Augustine, 'my groaning beareth witness... I am ashamed and renounce myself...'" (p215).

"In the great Gnostic controversy... of the second century... the spirit of the ancient philosophy under the forms of neo-Platonism struggled with Christianity... In the Arian heresy we have in view a similar spectacle. We see the same profound instinct of the religious consciousness resolutely opposing a tendency made in the same direction. We see it persistently resisting any weakening whatever of that main concept of the Founder of Christianity upon which the antithesis rested... In the Pelagian controversy... we have the same spectacle... Through a century of conflict, from the Council of Ephesus in 431 to the Third Council of Valence in 530, we have the attempts again and again repeated to close the antithesis. But we still have the spectacle of the religious consciousness set unchangingly against the doctrine of the individual, and, therefore, against the conception of virtue as conformity to his own nature in the conditions of the world around him. Once more we have the emphatic assertion of the antithesis in its most inflexible terms, in the doctrine of the entire insufficiency of the individual in respect of his own powers to rise to the standard required of him, or to fulfil, in virtue of his own nature, the conditions held to be necessary to his salvation" (p221-2).

And where does it lead, the divine antithesis, which overcomes the present in the interest of the future? As far as I can see, to unrestricted usury, to ever-

Pope's Earlier Remarks On Islam

If you go on to the internet: [www://atimes.com](http://www.atimes.com) you will find an interesting article on the Pope's recent statement on Islam and why he said it.

writes **Wilson John Haire**

increasing credit, to Sunday shopping, and to permanent mortgaging.

The fashionable liberal demand of the moment is that there must be a Muslim Reformation. It is strictly mindless. Islam has always had what the Reformation introduced to Christianity —*the Book* for everybody and the abolition of an authoritative Hierarchy

between the people and the *Book*. What Islam lacks in order to make it a stable component of the world order is a strong, secure state. But the Islamist state was destroyed by Britain in the Great War, and the proposal to restore it is classified as terrorism. What the West wants is to destroy Islam. It is intolerable to the lapsed Christian West that anything but itself should exist in the world.

Jack Lane

A view of the Irish condition in the 1830s

A Frenchman Looks At Ireland

"I have seen the Indian in his forests, and the negro in his chains, and thought, as I contemplated their pitiable condition, that I saw the very extreme of human wretchedness; but I did not then know the condition of unfortunate Ireland. Like the Indian, the Irishman is poor and naked; but he lives in the midst of a society where luxury is eagerly sought, and where wealth is honoured. Like the Indian, he is destitute of the physical comforts which human industry and the commerce of nations procure; but he sees a part of his fellows enjoying the comforts to which he cannot aspire. In the midst of his greatest distress, the Indian preserves a certain independence, which has its dignity and its charms. Though indigent and famished, he is still free in his deserts, and the sense of this liberty alleviates many of his sufferings: the Irishman undergoes the same destitution without possessing the same liberty; he is subject to rules and restrictions of every sort: he is dying of hunger, and restrained by law; a sad condition, which unites all the vices of civilization to all those of savage life. Without doubt, the Irishman who is about to break his chains, and has faith in futurity, is not quite so much to be bewailed as the Indian or the slave. Still, at the present day, he has neither the liberty of the savage, nor the bread of servitude."

In the context of today's revisionist dominated history writing such a statement would be dismissed as the ranting of a demented, rabid nationalist. They are in fact the considered conclusions of Gustave de Beaumont, a very sober and rational Anglophile Frenchman writing in the 1830s (*Ireland: Social, Political And Religious* by Gustave de Beaumont, republished by Belknap Press of Harvard University Press). It is the conclusion of much research, travelling and discussion with his close associate Alexis de

Tocqueville—and who was more insightful and rational than Alexis? It was a conclusion reached with sadness and mystification. How could advanced, admirable England allow such a situation to have developed in its state? de Beaumont was essentially non-plussed despite his thorough research and analysis. He clearly found it impossible to grasp that a Government could have allowed such a state of affairs to come about.

One of the aspects that really puzzled him was why the England that conquered Ireland in the name of the Pope and who then rejected the Pope also expected the Irish to follow suit and accept a rabid anti-papal government. Why should they? This clearly did not work and therefore should not have been pursued in all its ferociousness across centuries. To de Beaumont there was clearly something more important for government to do than pursuing, by any and every means possible, a policy that the vast majority clearly rejected. There was, for example, the interests and well-being of society as a whole to be considered. He could not conceive that such considerations did not enter the head of the English Government in relation to Ireland and tried to blame the Protestant Ascendancy—while knowing full well that its members were an intrinsic part of the Government. And he sought to bring them and the Government to see sense. He failed and a separate Ireland, which he considered lunacy, is living proof of his failure.

But his book is a most informative and worthwhile read that has the virtues of a view from the outside.

I would particularly recommend this book to Robin Bury. Robin told us recently in one of his many letters to the papers that sectarianism has been with us in Ireland since the Reformation. However, Robin went silent when I suggested we discuss this further (see *Robin Bury's Strange Silence in Church*

& *State* No. 81, Summer 2005). This book would confirm Robin's point absolutely and fill it out in great detail.

In a footnote, de Beaumont gives a classic illustration of the mentality of the people who tried to impose the reformation on Ireland, and how their methods were based on the impeccable and irrefutable logic of their own assumptions. He is attempting to give a feel for the slogan "*to plant and nurture the tree of true religion*" and explains:

"This was the cant of the sixteenth century; its meaning is best developed in the following resolutions adopted by the puritans of Massachusetts when about to seize on lands belonging to the Indians:

'Resolved, That the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

'Resolved, That the Lord hath given the inheritance of the earth unto his saints

'Resolved, That we are the saints" (page 90).

One is tempted to add QED. No doubt, this created a reaction among the non-saints in Ireland and elsewhere. As I understand it, Mr. Bury would describe their reaction as sectarianism and would probably be very keen to give us all the gory details as was done in 1641. If he insists on this way of looking at it, then he is inevitably giving sectarianism a good name. Is that what he wants, because it is what he will achieve?

Note: Speaking of saints, one of the things that the Vatican is ridiculed for, ad nauseum, is its system for the creation of saints. It goes to enormous lengths to prove the candidates' credentials by establishing some good that they had achieved via miracles etc. Another qualification is that he/she must be well and truly dead—so there is no benefit for the individual concerned. Compare this to the self-declaration, and the purpose of sainthood as expressed above. Is not the Vatican's system a most admirable, objective, well-intentioned and benign system—if you have to have saints? Which system does Mr. Bury favour, I wonder?

highly stylised piece had put me in mind of nothing much and nothing so much as the Midgard Serpent coiled upon itself as on the world biting its own tail. Its title seemed self-referential in some way that did not immediately occur to me, the absence of which I think I could have managed to live with.

Going back to it armed with Margarita Cappock's explanation of it I still could see nothing much in it so much as the possibility of Northern European references. I couldn't see a monkey or a dog. And as for Billys and Micks oh so crudely in the round, given that the colour scheme of the sculpture is blue and red, I couldn't see any of that at all.

Which leaves the really very obscure reference to monkeys and dogs in the oeuvre of Mrs. Midnight. And that in my inconsequentially contrary way I do happen to know something about. So now then who is this Mrs. Midnight?

Well, she is a he and he said: *Hey Joe, Take A Walk On The Wild Side*.

The Madness Of Poets

From Sweeney on the Irish have had mad poets aplenty. Even strait-laced blue-shirted William Butler Yeats flirted in verse with a wild bad madness that he was socially incapable of letting rip in the exuberance of. But Yeats was only Anglo—one of those tongue-tied sons of black Cromwellian bastards' bitches or whatever it was that Joyce called the half-hearted half-breed heirs of our darling Spenser—Irish. He had only half the wit to be wonderfully witless.

Percy's Reliques Of Ancient English Poetry has a separate category of mad poetry which it claims is a speciality of English versification, giving six examples and claiming very many more, then wondering if it is something racial or something in the climate or the water that makes old English poets mad. But W. B. was only Hiberno-English. He was not the full Queen's shilling of a true born Englishman. The real mad poetry of that ilk wasn't in him.

Mad Tom Of Bedlam in all its versions and influence is a couple of dozen of the broader stuff that Percy cited. And grand wild stuff it is. But Mad Tom is just a mad poem with nothing to suggest it was written by a fully fledged mad man.

The real true born English Poet who was categorically mad with a career in Bedlam to prove it is Christopher Smart: marvellously mad author of the most glorious religious verse.

The poetry of Smart's lunacy isn't really mad in the sense of Percy's *Reliques* which is concerned with "*songs and ballads on the subject of madness*".

Joe Keenan

An Anecdote

Mrs Midnight In The Garden Of Good And Non-Sectarian

In the last issue of *Church & State* I perpetrated a diatribe against the misconceived notion of non-sectarianism which I described as—

"...a pattern of social and cultural behaviour set foul to cripple the anti-sectarian purposes of constructive political engagement. It replaces a combative spirit with politeness and in so doing disables thought."

And I commented that: "*It even disables poetry.*"

Well, a visit to the renovated Dublin City Gallery in July has shown me that the less immediately intellectual world of the plastic arts is not at all immune from the depredations of non-sectarian habits of thought.

One of the exhibits on view at the Hugh Lane is a sculpture by John Kindness (who I remember fondly from years ago in the South Belfast Young Socialists' den of iniquity in Salisbury Street) entitled *Monkey and Dog*. And in and of itself it is an aesthetically pleasing, entirely inoffensive, piece of work that I don't really have the specialised vocabulary to describe at all adequately. I certainly didn't find it politically problematic.

But then I read Margarita Cappock's critical appreciation of the piece in the catalogue of the permanent exhibition. She is Head of Collections at the Gallery and, by the testimony of an obsequious blurb, a major stockholder in the industry surrounding the life and work of the appalling Francis Bacon. And this is what she had to say about John Kindness's *Monkey and Dog*...

"John Kindness...His work frequently contains irreverent satirical representations of the two opposing factions in his native Northern Ireland. "In *Monkey and Dog* Kindness uses animal allegory to encapsulate the bitter sectarian conflict between Catholics and Protestants. A Republican dog is locked in combat with a Loyalist monkey. The artist's choice of animals was suggested by an eighteenth century print of Mrs Midnight's performing animals in which a monkey town is besieged by dogs. The image reminded him of depictions of the siege of the city of Derry.

"The eternal circular stalemate depicted leaves no possibility of resolution, with the animals inextricably intertwined and evenly matched..."

Well then, on first viewing, the very

Smart's poetry is not written on the subject of madness. It is quite possibly unique in simply being of a piece with his lunacy.

This is the lunacy as Dr. Johnson described it for his Boswell to set it down:

"Madness frequently discovers itself merely by unnecessary deviation from the usual modes of the world. My poor friend Smart shewed the disturbance of his mind, by falling upon his knees, and saying his prayers in the street, or in any other unusual place. Now although, rationally speaking, it is greater madness not to pray at all, than to pray as Smart did, I am afraid there are so many who do not pray, that their understanding is not called in question."

(Incidentally, that casual remark is all the insight that a couple of centuries later was painstakingly elaborated into a complete system of radical psychiatry by R. D. Laing in his once infamous, now I think mostly forgotten, *The Divided Self*.)

And this, a very brief section from *Jubilate Agno*, which was written while Smart was confined in St. Luke's Hospital and other private asylums, is an example of the lunatic's mad poetry:

For I will consider my Cat Jeoffrey.
For he is the servant of the Living God
duly and daily serving him.
For at the first glance of the glory of God
in the East he worships in his way.
For this is done by wreathing his body
seven times round with elegant
quickness.
For then he leaps up to catch the musk,
wch is the blessing of God upon his
prayer.
For he rolls upon prank to work it in.
For having done duty and received
blessing he begins to consider himself.
For this he performs in ten degrees.
For first he looks upon his fore-paws to
see if they are clean.
For secondly he kicks up behind to clear
away there.
For thirdly he works it upon stretch with
the fore paws extended.
For fourthly he sharpens his paws by
wood.
For fifthly he washes himself.
For Sixthly he rolls upon wash.
For Seventhly he fleas himself, that he
may not be interrupted upon the beat.
For Eighthly he rubs himself against a
post.
For Ninthly he looks up for his
instructions.
For Tenthly he goes in quest of food.
For having consider'd God and himself
he will consider his neighbour.
For if he meets another cat he will kiss

her in kindness.
For when he takes his prey he plays with
it to give it a chance.
For one mouse in seven escapes by his
dallying.
For when his day's work is done his
business more properly begins.
For he keeps the Lord's watch in the night
against the adversary.
For he counteracts the powers of darkness
by his electrical skin and glaring eyes.
For he counteracts the Devil, who is
death, by brisking about the life.
For in his morning orisons he loves the
sun and the sun loves him.
For he is of the tribe of Tiger.
For the Cherub Cat is a term of the Angel
Tiger.
For he has the subtlety and hissing of a
serpent, which in goodness he surpasses.
For he will not do destruction if he is
well-fed, neither will he spit without
provocation.
For he purrs in thankfulness, when God
tells him he's a good cat.
For he is an instrument for the children
to learn benevolence upon.

For that is something of Christopher Smart, mad bad and difficult to know in a Bethnal Green Bedlam in the middle of the eighteenth century. Seventeen Sixty Odd and getting odder. Now back to the question: Who was Mrs. Midnight?

The Badness Of Women

Well, before Christopher Smart took to praying on passers-by along the public highway he was unquestionably sane. And in those the days of his sanity he spent his nights as the Witch of Midwifery, Milady Misrule—Mistress Mary Midnight.

For ten years or so Smart trod the boards at the Castle Tavern in Paternoster Row and the New Theatre in the Haymarket in petticoats and such as Mrs Midnight, a caricature of a character he had come across and up with some years previously in a journal he edited on Grub Street called *The Midwife*. And this is Mrs. Midnight:

"I am what the World calls an accomplished LADY...I am married, and have several children, but I leave the poor little things to the care of my husband; my peculiar qualifications consist in the art of painting my face, and dropping my fan; I have acquired the most engaging motion of the eyes and lips; I can cheat at cards tolerably well, and in one word, I am possessed of all the qualities that make up an accomplish'd woman; I beat my husband one hundred times every day and spend twice the rent of his estate every year; I love pleasure, and give a ball at my own house every week."

Her later performances were in *Mrs Midnight's New Carnival Concert* in which the canons of established theatrical, literary and artistic taste were overturned, parodied and burlesqued. All to the accompaniment of troupes of performing dogs and monkeys. Which is more or less where we came in. So let's move on.

The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even

With a literary work the medium imposes meanings on its object and in consequence the meanings of the work, however encrypted, obscure or downright befuddled, are at least discoverable. And there is an aesthetic of exploration.

Though there are very many 'literary' artists (Gustav Klimt for too many by half), works of art (objects produced by way of painting, sculpture, architecture and the like; things painted, stacked, cut, carved, blown, turned, woven, baked or simply found) are not meaningful within any similarly transparent system of words and the rules that enable their significant use.

But, bachelors though we are, we insist on stripping art's bride down to her syntax, only to discover she's not wearing any.

So bachelorette Ms Cappock was impelled to strip *Monkey and Dog* down to what she could make of the concept of it. That is an obscene act and it resulted in an obscenity.

There is nothing eternal about the conflict in Northern Ireland. It is neither stalemated nor incapable of resolution. The problem in Derry is not that a bunch of monkeys are besieged by a pack of dogs. That is a reasonable description of how the cultural concerns which amuse the Southern establishment in its final decadence are played out. It has nothing to do with the real lives which really alive people are making for themselves, without benefit of any gallerified art that reflects or elaborates or as much as remarks reasonably upon them (dogs and monkeys that they are).

Unexplained, *Monkey and Dog* was colourful and pleasant enough to spend a minute with between Jack Yeats and Renoir. Explained by way of what 'high' culture imagines of the rest of us, in the concepts of a rarified non-sectarianism, it is...of itself, just what it was before.

The bride is innocent of her bachelors and what they make of her. And art is innocent of beaureaucrats and critics. I just wish John Kindness could have made more of an inspiration that began, if indeed it did so begin, with the magic Mrs Midnight.

For art should brisk about the life. And be an instrument for the children to learn benevolence upon. *

**Fianna Fail And Henry VIII
Tip-Toe Through The Pews
Franciscans To Sever 700-year Link With Town
Jesuits: Limerick Sale
Of Things Material
Land Sale In Ennis**

Fianna Fail And Henry VIII

On 4th February 2006, the Minister for Education, Mary Hanafin (Fianna Fail) stated that Separating the Church from schools was a backward step.

Parents and school teachers should work together to help develop children's faith, the Education Minister said.

With Principals calling for the Church and Education to be separated, the Minister insisted a two-pronged approach to religious learning was the best way forward.

"Personally, obviously I would believe that parents should be involved in the whole faith element, of ethos, of values that they want their children to have", "A partnership with the schools is the way to go."

A debate over the relationship between schools and churches was sparked last week after Principals said they wanted preparation for first Holy Communion and Confirmation taken out of the classroom and handed over to parents.

They claimed it was time for Churches to pull back from front-line involvement in the provision of education in a modern, secular, multi-cultural society.

And the controversy continued when Labour Party leader Pat Rabbitte called for an end to Church control of more than 3,000 primary schools around the country.

Ms Hanafin insisted that splitting the role of Churches and schools would be a backward step.

"One argument is people saying they should not be teaching the sacraments and the other is Pat Rabbitte saying that the churches should move out of involvement in school management", she told RTÉ Radio.

"If Pat Rabbitte wants to be Henry VIII and force them all to surrender I think it would be a very, very retrograde step."

Tip-Toe Through The Pews

Then along comes the Ombudsman, Emily 'Tip-Toe' O'Reilly and tells us that Ireland has been on a 'massive bender' for the past ten years and it is high time we realised there is a limit to hedonism and materialism.

"Miss O'Reilly, who was once a journalistic thorn in the side of the Catholic Church and, as a champion of

the liberal agenda, delighted in the nickname 'the Blonde Bombshell', has also revealed she has started going to mass again" (Daily Mail, 6.2.2006).

"I go to Mass now and I bring my children with me, something I didn't do for a number of years and that was actually as much laziness as anything else.

"I've five children and the idea of getting babies up and dressed and dragging them to Mass was more than I could bear."

"She claimed rising violence and drunkenness were evidence of a deep-seated spiritual malaise and suggested the time had come for people to 'tip-toe' back to the Church" (ibid).

Do you know something — I think Bertie is a Saint, having to endure all this!

Franciscans To Sever 700-year Link With Town

A sharp decline in religious vocations is set to sever the Franciscan Order's 700-year link with the south Tipperary town of Carrick-On-Suir.

The Friars will announce their departure date within the next two months, while the Order is also planning to take its leave from neighbouring Clonmel before the end of 2008. The Friary Church building in Carrick-On-Suir is to be donated to the Respond Housing Association, which is promising to do its utmost to preserve the artifacts, including the stained glass windows.

The Order says its decision to leave Carrick-On-Suir, where it has had an uninterrupted presence since 1306, is a "very painful experience".

The Franciscans' Minister Provincial, Fr. Caoimhín Ó Laoide, said they desperately want to stay everywhere they have a presence but their age and health profiles are working against them.

In a statement the Order says it cannot sustain the commitments they were able to manage with ease when they were 400 strong and had plenty of vocations.

"We want to return what has been entrusted to us, and we desire to do so in a way that will best honour the values we have learned from St. Francis and benefit those most in need in the community", the statement continues. "The diocese of Waterford and Lismore was offered the property

but did not feel able to accept it."

The Friars say that as a consequence they decided to give the friary to Respond, which has to date supported housing for more than 700 elderly people nationwide. They were confident, their statement added, that Respond will use the friary for similar accommodation for the people of the town.

Town Mayor, Sylvia Cooney-Sheehan said she is very saddened that such a long-established institution is about to come to an end in the town and the departure of the Friars truly will mark the end of an era.

"The Friars have been there with us when times were tough and when people needed them. They have always been extremely accommodating they were never intrusive, and relied on the charity of the townspeople."

She said it is a reflection of the times that something that was really good had ceased to be of need and it showed people's concept of religion has changed.

Jesuits: Limerick Sale

Two of Limerick's great landmark properties—the Jesuit Residence and the adjoining Sacred Heart Church at The Crescent, were offered for sale by tender by March 3 last. The sale was expected to make over Euro 4 million.

There are only three Jesuits under 40 in the Irish Province of the Order at present. The Order intends maintaining "a strong presence in Limerick". They plan to acquire premises to open a centre of spirituality in addition to the Crescent College Comprehensive School, which they have been running since 1974.

As talks on the completion of the sale of the Jesuit Church in Limerick continued, another religious order said they will discontinue ministering in the city in two years' time.

However, the Franciscan Order said they will not be selling their Church and Friary at Henry Street, which will be retained for the benefit of Limerick's citizens.

Franciscan Guardian, Fr. Philip, said the people of Limerick had supported the Order for over 700 years.

"There will be no sale of the friary..."

We will want to do something meaningful with the building that will benefit the people of Limerick who have been so good to us for centuries."

Meanwhile, talks to finalise the sale of the Jesuit Church and residence at The Crescent are believed to be at an advanced stage.

One bidder is believed to be former Cork hurler John O'Halloran, who purchased the Jesuit Crescent College building adjacent to the church. It now houses the Limerick Tutorial Centre.

The Crown Campaign Against Protestant Neutrality In Cork During The Irish War Of Independence

Modern day Bantry continues to bear witness to an event that in 1920 caused a bit of a stir in England and helped throw light on one aspect of the activities of the Crown forces in Ireland during the War of Independence.

The central characters were Mr. and Mrs. Annan Bryce, an old couple who had made their home in Bantry. John Annan Bryce was the younger brother of Lord Bryce, one-time Chief Secretary for Ireland (December 1905-December 1906 in the Campbell-Bannerman administration) and later British Ambassador to the US. John Annan Bryce was born into a Protestant family in Belfast but moved to Scotland at an early age. He embarked upon all the usual adventures that Imperial Britain offered to a young man born to affluence in the late 19th century. After completing his education he went to Rangoon in 1875 in pursuit of a career in commerce. He sat on the Legislative Council of Burma as a member and later, Chairman, of the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce and, being of an adventurous spirit, during his time there embarked on a number of explorations into unknown regions of Burma and Upper Siam. The results of his explorations were communicated to the Royal Geographical Society and he sat for two terms on the Council of that Society.

He moved to India in 1883 where he was head of a large commercial concern in Bombay. He subsequently decided on a political career and in 1906 was elected Liberal Member of Parliament for Inverness Burghs but lost his seat as a result of the redistribution of constituencies in Scotland in 1918. Although as an MP he had been a firm supporter of Home Rule for Ireland, he was very much of the British establishment, being a director of the Westminster Bank, the Bombay, Baroda and Burma Railway companies, the English, Scottish, and Australian Bank, and the Atlas Assurance Company as well as being Chairman of the British Westinghouse Company.

His wife, Violet, came from a British military family and when war was declared she, like her husband, was eager to serve King and country. Towards that end in 1916 she purchased the Eccles Hotel in Glengarriff and converted it into a convalescent home for officers in

Ireland—the first in the country. Under normal circumstances the couple would have adopted a quiet but active retirement in Cork. He with his interest in gardening and she with her hotel. However, they were living in difficult times and found themselves in a situation where the society around them was in the process of giving birth to a new state but where the old state was refusing to give ground and attempting to compensate for its lack of social support by reliance on military power.

Despite the turmoil of the military situation in Ireland in 1920 the establishment credentials of both Mr. and Mrs. Annan Bryce would seem to have been a guarantee of protection by Crown forces. He, after all, was the brother of an ex-Chief Secretary for Ireland and in his own right a respected member of British society and she, coming from a British military family, had been the benefactor and comforter of British soldiers in the country during the previous war. Then, in late September 1920, came a letter from John Annan Bryce that caused a stir among the British establishment when it was published in *The Times* of London.

Reporting The Irish Situation In *The Times*

The Times since Henry Wickham Steed assumed the editorship in 1919 had begun to make serious efforts to use its influence to formulate a solution to the Irish crisis. Steed was by no means the champion of Ireland but he was a faithful servant of British interests and viewed the Irish problem as something that got in the way of those interests. He was eager to ensure that post-WWI Britain adjusted to the new world situation which saw an emerging US increasingly calling the shots. He viewed post-war British interests as requiring a re-drawing of the map of Europe particularly the break-up of Austria-Hungary (a project on which he had been actively engaged on behalf of the British government during the War). The ratification of the Treaty of Versailles and the involvement by the US in the emerging League of Nations would help ensure the sustainability of the new Europe and it was therefore important that the US sign up to it. Although President Wilson had agreed to the terms of the Treaty it was

necessary to have it ratified by the US Senate and Congress. Thus, much of Steed's concern during his editorship was to have the Treaty ratified. (Although the US never did ratify the Treaty and never joined the League of Nations, it was not until the Treaty of Berlin in August 1921 when the US went its own way in formally ending its war with Germany, that the possibility of US ratification was laid to rest).

As far as Steed was concerned, the Irish problem was getting in the way of American co-operation and therefore every effort had to be made to find a solution short of offering the country full independence. Aside from the stubborn insistence of the Irish to have independence another major obstacle was closer to home. Steed recognised that the failure of the old Imperial Unionists within the establishment to see the new geopolitical reality was something that needed to be neutralised. It was therefore necessary to utilise middle-class public opinion in the new British democracy to shake them up. But, as someone who continued to believe that the retention of Ireland within the Empire was also critical to British interests he was forced to tread a very delicate line. One way he did that was to ensure a regular publication of honest reports of what was happening in Ireland alongside the views of Imperial Unionist as well as the propaganda of the Irish military establishment.

The Times & Crown Intimidation Of Protestant Loyalists

That then is the context of the following series of letters published in *The Times* of London in 1920. It is one old couple's account of their treatment at the hands of the Crown forces. What gave it its impact was the fact of who this old couple were, what they experienced, and their tenacity in pursuing what they viewed as a gross injustice. All headings are as they appeared in the paper.

From *The Times*, September 30, 1920.

"REPRISAL THREATS: Notice by Circular.

"To the Editor of *The Times*

Sir—on September 16, at 9.45 a.m., a lorry full of soldiers from Bantry stopped in front of the Eccles Hotel, Glengarriff, where I have been staying since August 19. The manageress went to the door and was handed by a soldier an envelope addressed in handwriting 'The Manageress, Eccles Hotel, Glengarriff.' It contained an unsigned and undated slip worded as follows:-

'In some districts loyalists and members of his Majesty's forces have received

notices threatening the destruction of their houses in certain eventualities. Under these circumstances it has been decided that for each loyalist's house so destroyed the house of a republican leader will be similarly dealt with. It is naturally to be hoped that the necessity for such reprisal will not arise and therefore this warning of the punishment which will follow any destruction of loyalists' houses will be widely circulated.'

'I at once sent a copy of this notice, mentioning the circumstances, to General Sir Nevil Macready, and said that, as it was contrary to his recent proclamation against reprisals, I presumed it was issued without his authority or knowledge. I received, to my surprise, the following reply:-

'Sir,—Sir Nevil Macready asks me in reply to your letter of the 16th instant to state that he is acquainted with the distribution of the notices, a copy of which you enclosed. Truly yours, William Rycroft, Major-General i/c Administration, Ireland, G.H.Q. Parkgate, Dublin, 18 September, 1920.'

'On the 17th inst. I wrote a similar letter, with copy of notice to the O.C., Bantry, asking that, as on the night of August 15 the large garage of this hotel had been burned by the police who had also threatened to burn the hotel itself, he would give an assurance against further molestation. I gave him as a special reason for protection that the present proprietress had acquired the hotel in 1916 for conversion into a convalescent hospital for officers, that it was the first such hospital in Ireland, and that with the title of 'Queen Alexandra's Home of Rest for Officers,' first under the Red Cross and afterwards the Dublin Command, it had—she being commandant—housed hundreds of wounded officers, while the only return for her pains and expenditure of many thousand pounds, which both the Red Cross and the War Office refused to repay, had been the burning of the garage. To this letter I received the following Gilbertian answer:-

'To J. Annan Bryce, Esq., Eccles Hotel, Glengarriff. In reply to your letter of September 17, 1920, addressed to O.C. Barracks, Bantry. It appears that slips similar to the one to which you evidently refer are being distributed about the country. On investigation I find that an officer of my battalion picked one of them up. This officer having seen similar slips in Bantry and other places thought it would be a good thing to hand it in to one of the hotels in Glengarriff as he passed through. As yours was the most convenient, being close to the road, he put it in an envelope and addressed it to the manageress and handed it in as he passed. L.M. Jones, Lieutenant-Colonel, Commanding Troops, Bantry and commanding 1st Battalion The King's Regiment. Bantry, September 20, 1920.'

'I also wrote to Sir Hamar Greenwood, but have received no reply. It will be seen that neither Sir Nevil Macready nor Colonel Jones disavows the notice, and that Colonel Jones makes no answer to the request for an assurance of non-molestation.

'I may add that there is no justification for the issue of such a notice in this district, where the only damage to loyalists premises has been done by the police. In July they burned the stores of Mr. G.W. Biggs, the principal merchant in Bantry, a man highly respected, a Protestant, and a lifelong Unionist, with a damage of over £25,000, and the estate office of the late Mr. Leigh-White, also a Unionist. Subsequently, in August, the police fired into Mr. Biggs's office, while his residence has since been commandeered for police barracks. He has had to send his family to Dublin and to live himself in a hotel. Only two reasons can be assigned for the outrages on Mr. Biggs, one that he employed Sinn Feiners—he could not work his large business without them, there being no Unionist workmen in Bantry—the other a recently published statement of his protesting—on his own 40 years' experience—against Orange allegations of Catholic intolerance.

'The July burning was part of a general pogrom, in which a cripple, named Crowley, was deliberately shot by the police while in bed and several houses were set on fire while the people were asleep. A report was made to Dublin Castle by Mr. Hynes, the County Court Judge, who happened to be on the spot for quarter sessions. Questioned in the House of Commons, the Government refused to produce this report on the ground that production would not be in the public interest, which means—as Parliamentary experience teaches one—that it was damning to Government.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
J. Annan Bryce
Eccles Hotel, Glengarriff, County Cork,
Sept. 25."

[In point of fact Sir Nevil Macready was being disingenuous in his reply to Annan Bryce. It was on his personal instructions that the circular was drawn up and distributed—see his autobiography *Annals Of An Active Life*, vol. 2, page 497. Needless to say, he does not mention the Annan Bryce incident in his autobiography.—ED]

The Arrest of Mrs. Bryce

Mr. and Mrs. Annan Bryce were obviously a strong-willed couple. John Annan Bryce was over 77 years old when he confronted his persecutors in September 1920 and his wife could not have been much younger. Incensed by her treatment, just over a month later she agreed to visit Tonypany in Wales to address a meeting on British reprisals in Ireland. Her experience is again told in a letter by her husband to *The Times*.

From *The Times*, November 1, 1920.

"IRISH REPRISALS: *The Public Claim to Truth.*
Arrest of Mrs Annan Bryce

"To the Editor of *The Times*.

"Sir—as reported in the papers today, my wife was arrested at Holyhead, deported to Kingstown, lodged in Bridewell there, and released without charge after four hours' detention. Such arrests are of daily occurrence in Ireland, where any and every interference with liberty had been legalized by recent legislation, but I am not aware under what authority they have become lawful in Great Britain.

"My wife had been invited to address a meeting in Wales about reprisals, a subject on which she is a competent witness. As stated in my letter which you were good enough to publish on September 30, I mentioned that in 1916 she opened at Glengarriff the first convalescent home for officers in Ireland. Having lived there ever since, she has been able to see the effect of the policy of reprisals, and has suffered from them in her own person. Her garage has been burned (the claim for compensation had been passed by the County Court Judge), she had been repeatedly threatened—once officially, as described in my previous letter—with the burning down of her house, and on one occasion was in imminent danger of death from the rifle of a policeman.

"Apart from the question of legality, and of the infliction of indignity on a person who at great trouble and expense has given patriotic service without any recognition, the arrest raises an issue of public interest. Government spokesmen minimize or altogether deny the reprisals. The Chief Secretary, in the debate of the 20th inst., even went so far as to deny that one single case had been put forward to justify Mr. Henderson's resolution, and last week had the assurance to impugn the statements of the correspondents of great English newspapers, men whose reputation for accuracy is at least equal to his own. The summary of outrages issued at the public expense by Dublin Castle as propaganda rarely mentions reprisals, and, when it does, leaves them to be ascribed to Sinn Fein. Government refuses to produce Judge Hynes's report on the Bantry reprisals of July 19. It prosecutes the Freeman's Journal before a tribunal of its own officials, but does not dare to prosecute before an English Court English newspapers making the same statements.

"All this seems to indicate a determination to prevent the British public from learning the truth, and the arrest of my wife, when she attempts to perform what is surely the duty of a good citizen, appears to corroborate this view of the Government's attitude. The public has a right to demand that the truth shall no longer be concealed. If the Government has nothing to hide why does it not grant an impartial inquiry, such as that which investigated the German outrages in Belgium? The reprisal outrages in Ireland, if proved, are worse, in that Ireland is still part of the

United Kingdom, not territory occupied in war. It is to be hoped that Lord Robert Cecil, whose intervention was greatly welcomed in Ireland, will again press for an inquiry, and that he and others on his side will, on the next occasion, support their speeches by their votes.

"The public must not be fobbed off with a whitewashing inquiry like that into the Sheehy-Skeffington group of murders, the result of which only deepened Irish distrust of English justice. The inquiry must be comprehensive. Its purview should cover not only the reprisals themselves, but the authority under which they were committed, and the character and antecedents of their perpetrators. There is no reason to believe that some at least of the Black and Tans have been recruited from the same class as the notorious Hardy, released, at the instance of Mr Macpherson, to enter Government service after nine months of penal servitude under a sentence which required a minimum imprisonment of several years.

"If Lord Robert Cecil returns to the charge, there is one point which he should bear in mind. Mr. Lloyd George, with apparent reason, retorted upon Mr. Asquith's accusation of the hellish policy of reprisals with a denunciation of the equally hellish policy of murder, but he did not remind the country of the fact that under Sir Henry Duke there were, for two years after rebellion, no murders of police, and that these murders began only after Mr. Shortt and Mr. McPherson, by their policy of repeated re-arrests on suspicion without charge, created a numerous class of active young men, who, deprived of the chance of legitimate occupation, took desperate courses. The same thing happened after Mr. Forster's Coercion Act of 1881.

"There is another point worth notice in connexion with my wife's arrest. She asked the arresting officer whether he was acting under the authority of Sir Hamar Greenwood or Sir N. Macready. He could not tell. In Ireland today one never can tell. In my letter to you of September 30 I mentioned that I had received no reply to my letter to him of September 16. I have since received the following answer:-

Dublin Castle, October 2, 1920.

Dear Annan Bryce, I am in receipt of your letter of the 16th ultimo regarding the notice served by a military officer on the manageress of the Eccles Hotel, Glengarriff. I am passing your letter on to the Commander-in-Chief. Yours sincerely, Hamar Greenwood.'

"As the reply is dated two days after the publication of my letter giving the answer of Sir N. Macready, Sir Hamar's only apparent object can have been to disclaim responsibility. Sir N. Macready disclaims responsibility for the Black and Tans. At one time Sir N. Macready was said to have authority over the police, but lately Sir H. Greenwood seems to have re-assumed responsibility for that force, and the other day he stated in the House that he was head of the Irish Government. All three—Sir Hamar, Sir Nevil, and General Tudor—disavow connivance at reprisals—

in face of the fact that the reprisal threat described in my previous letter was typed on official paper bearing the Government water-mark S.O. and a crown. Condonation they cannot deny, for no one has been punished. Government should be pressed to declare under which thimble the pea is to be found, that one may not be shuttlecocked from one authority to another in search of redress.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
J. Annan Bryce
35 Bryanston Square, London. October 31."

The House of Commons and the arrest of Mrs Bryce.

Following the publication of these letters in *The Times*, questions were asked in the House of Commons. Mr. Hogge (Edinburgh E.L.) asked Sir Hamar Greenwood under what legislation Mrs. Annan Bryce had been arrested at Holyhead. Greenwood replied that she had been arrested under the powers conferred by the Restoration of Order (Ireland) Act. The following interaction then ensued:—

"Mr. HOGGE.—When and how have the Government power under the Restoration of Order (Ireland) Act to arrest a British subject in this country? Is it not the fact that that Act applies only to Ireland? This lady, the wife of an ex-member of this House—The SPEAKER interrupts—The hon. Member must give notice of that question. It requires research.—Mr. Hogge.—I did give notice of this question as early as half-past 11 o'clock this morning. The reply is:—'Under the Restoration of Order (Ireland) Act'. Anybody in this House knows that that Act was passed for Ireland. I am not asking a question about Ireland. I want to know under what authority the arrest was made in this country under an Act which applies only to Ireland.—The SPEAKER again—If the hon. Member puts that question in the ordinary way he will get a reply. Mr. HOGGE later asked leave to move the adjournment of the House in order to call attention to Mrs. Annan Bryce's arrest as a definite matter of urgent public importance. On the Speaker putting the usual question, 36 members rose in their places, Lord R. Cecil being the only supporter on the Ministerial side. As the matter fell short of the necessary number by four, leave was refused." (Report in *The Times*, 2 November 1920.)

A couple of days later the issue was once more raised in the House:—

"Major ENTWISTLE (Kingston-upon-Hull, S.W. L.) asked the Chief Secretary under what authority the officer who arrested Mrs. Annan Bryce at Holyhead made the arrest.

Sir H. GREENWOOD.—I would refer the hon. member to Regulation 55 of the Defence of the Realm Regulations, and number 55 of the Restoration of Order (Ireland) Regulations. The officer who arrested her was duly authorised by the

competent military authority, and it was unnecessary therefore, for him to produce a warrant for her arrest.

Mr. MACVEAGH asked whether the Restoration of Order (Ireland) Act applied to Holyhead, which happened to be in Wales (Hear, hear). Sir H. GREENWOOD.—In some cases. In my opinion, it does. Mr MACVEAGH—Will the right hon. gentleman tell us exactly what offence was committed by Mrs. Annan Bryce?

Mr HOGGE asked whether he would state under what authority persons were being arrested and detained in this country without the authorities producing a warrant or making any charge.

Sir G. HEWART, Attorney-General (Leicester E. C.L.), who replied said:—I do not know what cases, if any, are referred to in the question, but Regulation 55 of the Defence of the Realm Regulations provides that any person authorised for the purpose by the competent naval or military authority, or any police constable or officer of Customs or Exercise, or aliens officer, may arrest without warrant any person whose behaviour is of such a nature as to give reasonable grounds for suspecting that he has acted, or is acting, or is about to act in a manner prejudicial to the public safety of the defence of the realm.

Mr. HOGGE asked whether it was under this authority that Mrs Annan Bryce was arrested and detained at Holyhead?—Sir G. Hewart.—I cannot say. Mr. Hogge—Will my right hon. friend inquire if I put down a question two days hence? Sir G. Hewart.—I will certainly inquire. (Laughter)." (Report in *The Times*, 4 November 1920.)

The issue remained in the House over a week later when Lloyd George, the Prime Minister became involved:—

"Sir H. GREENWOOD, in reply to Mr. Hogge, said that the officer who effected the arrest of Mrs. Annan Bryce was under the control of the Secretary of State for War, but he (Sir H. Greenwood) was prepared to take full responsibility for that arrest. It was not the case that it was admitted that there was no ground for arresting Mrs Bryce, and in view of the fact that the documents found on her contained gross libels on the Royal Irish Constabulary, he could not agree that any apology or redress was due from the Government.

Mr. HOGGE asked the Prime Minister whether he could state the offence which Mrs. Annan Bryce was suspected of having committed, and whether he, as a Liberal, agreed with this invasion of personal liberty.

Mr LLOYD GEORGE.—The actions taken by Sir H. Greenwood and those associated with him in the Government of Ireland are for the defence and protection of liberty (cheers), and, therefore, I certainly, as a Liberal support fully the action taken (cheers). Sir D. MACLEAN (Peebles and Southern, L.).—Is the Prime Minister aware that very high legal authorities are of opinion that the action of the Executive in arresting Mrs Bryce

was wholly illegal? (Cries of 'Name' and 'Take action then'). Mr LLOYD GEORGE—If any illegality was committed, it was committed in this country, and the courts are open, and, therefore, if that is the case it is not for me to advance any opinion. Mr. DEVLIN (Belfast, Falls, Nat.)—If Mrs Bryce was arrested for an offence, why was she not tried for it? Mr. LLOYD GEORGE—When there are so many outrages committed in Ireland, and when there is a widespread conspiracy, the police are entitled to take precautions. (Hear, hear). Whether in this particular case the precautions were necessary or not, Sir H. Greenwood has already given the answer, but they are entitled to make an examination and to search where there is suspicion. That is the only way they can protect themselves. (Cheers). Replying to further questions, Mr. LLOYD GEORGE said he was making no suggestion at all about Mrs. Annan Bryce. He was only saying that the police were entitled to take steps of this character where they suspected that any person had got either information or documents which they thought would interfere with the carrying out of the law in Ireland. (Cheers). If you interfered with the discretion of the police in this respect and said, 'You must not exercise your functions if a person happens to be eminent' it would be quite impossible afterwards to expect them to take the risks which they were taking in carrying out their duties. (Cheers)." (Report in *The Times*, 12 November 1920.)

The Final Revelations

In the meantime a final long letter from Annan Bryce was given a prominent position in *The Times*.

From *The Times*, November 9, 1920.

"IRISH REPRISALS.

Arrest of Mrs Annan Bryce: A sinister portent.

To the editor of *The Times*.

Sir,—I have now received particulars of the arrest of my wife. Illustrating as they do the spirit and methods of the Irish Government, they are of general interest.

"My wife crossed from Dublin by evening mail steamer on Friday, October 29. When about to leave the boat at Holyhead she was stopped on the companion stairs by an officer, who said, in a strong Ulster accent, 'You are wanted, and must go below.' The officer, a Captain Gallagher, refused to produce a warrant, and said he could not tell whether his orders came from Sir H. Greenwood or Sir N. Macready. Calling a woman dressed as a nurse, but whom my wife calls a wardress, he said, 'Take her in and search her.' That was done. Mrs. Bryce, aware of the dodger, usual in Ireland, of 'planting' compromising objects before a search, refused to let her luggage out of her sight, so Captain Gallagher proceeded to search it in her presence. Taking from her dispatch case a

book entitled 'Ireland and Agriculture', he examined it curiously till shown the date, 1845. He then tore open her dressing-case, though offered her oath that it contained clothes only. 'I'm not believing your oath', he retorted and went on searching. As a result of the search he impounded only two papers, which I shall describe later. They have not been returned. Mrs Bryce had all through been protesting loudly, unwilling that the steamer staff should take her for a thief or murderer. She told the officer he should be ashamed of himself, whereupon he said gruffly to the wardress: 'Take her back, search her again, and take off her shoes.' Asked by Mrs Bryce what he proposed to do with her, he said he was awaiting instructions from Ireland, but that she would not be allowed to land and could sleep in a cabin with the wardress. This she refused to do, and went on deck, followed about by the wardress and soldiers. After an hour Captain Gallagher came and sat by her. He was now quite polite, Mrs Bryce gathering from his change of demeanour that he must have had fresh instructions from Ireland.

"Eventually Mrs. Bryce was allowed to sleep alone in a cabin with a wardress outside. On the return of the steamer to Kingstown she was handed over by Captain Gallagher to an officer and five soldiers armed with rifles. The officer, cigarette in mouth, told her she must go to a motor, and marched her up the long length of the pier under the gaze of the occupants of the lines of trains about to depart for every quarter of Ireland. Arrived on the roadway at the pierhead she found the motor to be a common military lorry, open at both ends. Refusing to enter it, she was lifted in and pushed on to a seat. The soldiers and wardress got in, and the officer mounted beside the driver. A soldier next to her was smoking and kept his rifle between his knees. The jolting of the lorry, driven at high speed kept jerking this rifle over, so that at every bump it pointed at her face. She asked the officer to tell the soldier to hold his rifle so that it might not point at her. He replied, 'No, I won't.'

"They drove to the Bridewell in Dublin, where Mrs Bryce was put into a bare-floored cell, all of stone, bitterly cold, dimly lighted, with wooded seats, and an open latrine in the corner. Breakfast was procured from an inn at her cost. After two hours, unable longer to bear the cold and stench, she rang a bell continuously till the turnkey let her out to sit with the warders in the corridor between the cells. After another hour and a half a young officer arrived from the Castle. Asked by Mrs. Bryce what was to be done with her, he said, 'I don't know. Isn't it true that you have been making political speeches in the South of Ireland?' She replied with indignation, 'It is absolutely untrue. I have made no political speeches in the South of Ireland. The whole thing is absolutely scandalous!'

"She might have added that the only meetings she had addressed in Ireland were a recruiting meeting at Glengarriff in 1914 and various meetings there for the formation of an agricultural society, whose

affairs she conducted with such success as to warrant a large grant from the County Council. It may further interest the 'competent military authority' under whose orders she is said to have been arrested, to hear that her grandfather, Sir George L'Estrange, Chamberlain under four Viceroy's of Ireland, was rewarded by a commission in the Guards for having raised a regiment in the Peninsular War; that her father was a first captain (major) in the Royal Artillery, and a resident magistrate in Ireland for 30 years; that she herself, before equipping and opening the convalescent home for officers at Glengarriff, worked for many months with the French Army at Compiègne, and that on her suggestion the band of the Irish Guards was sent over to Ireland, with an excellent effect on enlistment. After another hour a warder told her she might go, there being no charge against her.

"My wife is brave and has been strong, but she is severely shaken by ill-usage on this and previous occasions at the hands of servants of the Crown. For such opprobrious maltreatment she might have expected from a gentleman in the position of Chief Secretary, when he found the case to have been trumped up, an offer of reparation with a frank apology. But no: he proceeded to aggravate the offence by an injurious insinuation wrapped up with a grudging admission. Answering Mr. Hodge, he said that Mrs. Bryce had documents, but not of sufficiently serious a nature to lay a charge, the implication being that they were of a serious nature. Moreover, the mere use of the term 'document' itself was calculated to produce a misleading impression on the ordinary mind, which thinks of a document as something formal and important. The word is not properly descriptive of the papers taken from my wife. As I have already said, they were in number two. One was a writing-pad with jottings for her speech in Wales. If this paper incriminated anyone it was the Government, not herself. The other paper was a cartoon from a London newspaper, the Catholic Herald. It represents a black and tan dog with a pool of blood in front, while John Bull and Uncle Sam look on, the latter —'This dog is mad. If you don't look out it will bite you soon.' Some people are disposed to regard this sinister prediction as already far on its way to fulfilment.

"The Chief Secretary told Mr. Devlin last week that he would welcome the evidence of eye-witnesses, but when a competent eyewitness of repute tries to land in England he arrests her without warrant, deports her back to Ireland, and confines her in a noisome jail with every circumstance of indignity. When such treatment is inflicted on a person against whom no charge can be made, who has performed national service of many kinds, and who can make her voice heard, your readers may judge what chance against treatment infinitely more savage have thousands of men, women and children, innocent of politics, low in station, and powerless to make their voice heard. As a local official, who feared an irruption of

Black and Tans, said to me: 'We poor Hottentots of Irish can't make our voices head in England.' They suffer constant threats of reprisal, raids by night and by day, continual lootings, prohibition of markets and fairs, wreckings and burnings of houses, shops and factories, bombings, shootings, killings, and countless other outrages, many never reported. My own village of Glengarriff was shot up in August. Every soul fled to the mountains, woods or fields, work was suspended for weeks, and even now many fear to sleep in their houses. We used to call Prussian methods brutal and stupid. The methods of the Irish Government are not less brutal, but more stupid, for while the Prussian methods had the approval of the German people the Irish methods, once they are known of the British people, will be loathed, except in the House of Commons.

"My narrative involves other questions, one of importance to every citizen, that of the legality of arrest without warrant. On Monday last the House of Commons with as little care for liberty as the Star Chamber days, twice lent itself to the burking of discussion. In the afternoon only three members of the old law and order party, Lord Robert Cecil, Mr. Mosley, and Mr. Bottomley, and one Liberal Coalitionist, Major Breese, supported Mr. Hogges.

"The Chief Secretary now seems to feel that he was on doubtful ground when on Monday he based himself on the Irish Act. By Wednesday he had consulted Sir Gordon Hewart, and now puts his reliance first on D.O.R.A., with the Irish Act as second leg. The straddle won't work. A ship at Holyhead is either in England or it is not. If it is and D.O.R.A. supposed for such purposes to be dead, is yet alive, the British people have notice that on the whim of an official they may be arrested, deported, and imprisoned without warrant. The Chief Secretary goes further. In his opinion even the Irish Act can in some cases be applied in England. The British people should take good note of that. This is a matter which cannot be allowed to rest.

"There is another point not yet made clear. From whom is my wife to obtain redress? Who is the competent military authority under whose order the arrest was made? Under which thimble is the pea in this case? The Chief Secretary says he is head of the Irish Government. Was the arrest made with his knowledge? It is incredible that he can have countenanced anything so foolish. Nor do I believe that the order came from Sir N. Macready. From whom, then? Presumably from General Tudor, who seems to act independently of, though, as the Granard reprisals show, in combination when necessary, with, the other two arms. In Ireland people think that the Castle, that is, the civil authority, has nothing to do with the present policy, and that view has corroboration from the rapid successive supersessions of Inspectors General Byrne and Smith, the latter an Ulsterman and strong Unionist. The belief is that the motive power at present lies with a clique in London whose orders are executed by

General Tudor, with the assistance, when required, but without the foreknowledge, of Sir N. Macready and the Castle.

"Some of the incidents of the narrative throw an unpleasant light on the conduct of the Army in Ireland. The smoking of officers and men on duty, trivial in itself, indicates a decline in discipline. Till this year soldiers and people were still on the best of terms, but most of the soldiers are mere boys taking their colour from evil surroundings, and the decay of discipline has of late, with reprisals, being increasing in frequency, and in savagery has become more marked. The position is regarded with alarm in the highest quarters, and experienced officers tell me that it would be impossible to send abroad the regiments now serving in Ireland. Sir Nevil Macready long ago saw the danger and in August issued a proclamation against reprisals, but his delicacy about acting on it has had results ruinous to the Army, disastrous to Ireland, and detrimental to the prestige of the Empire.

J. Annan Bryce.
35, Bryanston Square, London. Nov. 8."

This letter was John Annan Bryce's final salvo in his struggle with the Crown authorities in Ireland and he died in 1923. His wife also appears to have been discouraged from taking any further public stance on the issue of reprisals (a result that was undoubtedly the intention behind her arrest and harassment).

Protestant Loyalist Neutrals During The War Of Independence

The above correspondence is important in a number of ways. Not least because of the insight it offers into the difficulties of those Protestants in Cork who were placed in an impossible position by the Crown authorities. As Annan Bryce points out in his first letter (30 September 1920), in his experience, the only damage to loyalist premises in his area had been done by police and he cites a number of examples including the burning down by police of the stores owned by G.W. Biggs, a Protestant and lifelong Unionist. His explanation for this treatment is that Biggs employed Sinn Fein workers (a situation which Bryce states was difficult to avoid in Bantry where most of the local workforce were Sinn Fein supporters) and that Biggs had the audacity to have published a statement contradicting Orange claims of Catholic intolerance against Protestants in the area. The situation of neutral Protestant loyalists was further exacerbated by the proclamation of General Strickland some months later. Here is a report, again from *The Times* that reveals the difficulties in which many Protestants were placed by the action of the British military authorities.

From *The Times*, January 27, 1921.

"Rebels in British Uniform.

(from our correspondent)

"New facts concerning the execution by a Republican Court-martial of a Protestant farmer named John Bradfield, on his farmstead, near Bandon, Co. Cork, last Monday, show the terrible position in which loyalists in the martial law area are placed.

"Under General Strickland's proclamation they are required to give information, under pain of prosecution, of facts which may be within their knowledge of arrangements for ambushes, carrying of arms, and so forth—in short, it is an offence to remain neutral. Yet if they give such information they incur the risk of rebel vengeance. This state of things has aroused many protests from loyalists in the South of Ireland, who point out that, if it became known that they intended to comply with the Government's order, their lives would not be worth 24 hours' purchase. On the day before his death John Bradfield was visited by six men in military uniform, ostensibly officers of his Majesty's forces, who questioned him about the movements of Sinn Feiners in his district. What information he gave, if any, is not known, but it is now stated that his visitors were Republicans masquerading as British officers, and the unfortunate man fell readily into the trap laid for him. After he was shot, a note was found pinned to his clothing stating that he had been shot following a Court martial held the previous night, at which he had been found guilty of having attempted to inform the enemy of the presence and movements of Republican troops."

I cannot comment on the veracity or otherwise of the claim that Republicans disguised themselves as British officers as no source for this claim is provided. Although it should be said that such a tactic would be rather inefficient as it could only be used once before actual informers got wind of it and provided the wrong response by pretending to deny information to any would-be visiting 'British Officers'. What cannot be denied however, is the existence of General Strickland's proclamation. What was unofficial policy in the Crown's treatment of the Bantry Protestant loyalists like the Bryces and the Briggs became official with this proclamation. The Crown was undoubtedly frustrated by an apparent lack of proper co-operation from this section of the population—a co-operation that they felt entitled to (see General Sir Nevil Macready's autobiography *Annals Of An Active Life*, page 461, vol. 2). The military authorities began with unofficial intimidation and when that did not provide an adequate result, they made it official. This policy was not intended to protect the Protestant loyalists in the community but purely to press-gang them into becoming agents and spies

and in the process drive a wedge between them and their local community. As the above report in *The Times* states, they were simply not allowed to be neutral. There was obviously a number of Protestant and indeed Catholic loyalists who were only too glad to assist the military during the War of Independence but there was also a significant element that recognised the fact that their local community had decided to turn away from the State with which they as loyalist identified. In that situation, and having experienced no hostility because of their known beliefs, they decided to accept the reality and continue to function in the community as best they could. This however was not acceptable to the military authorities and these Protestants loyalists were placed in an impossible position.

Those like John Annan Bryce and his wife and Mr G.W. Biggs, who were prepared to work with the local community while retaining their traditional loyalties, found themselves at the wrong end of Crown reprisals. Others no doubt succumbed to Crown intimidation and found themselves unwilling (albeit no less dangerous to the IRA) agents and spies. What makes Mr. and Mrs. Annan Bryce unusual is that they were not prepared to accept their treatment at the hands of Crown forces but fought back in a way that, for a few weeks at least, occupied the attention of the House of Commons. In the process they identified with their local community and in a different way became rebels themselves. However, there must have been very many who found the situation that the Crown had placed them to be absolutely impossible and were compelled to leave their areas in order not to be put in that position. This category of displaced Protestants does not figure in the reasoning of modern day revisionists who seek to categorise the IRA as sectarian and point to the thousands of Protestants who were forced from their homes during the War of Independence as evidence. It is time they took their deserved place in the equation and the role of the Crown forces was acknowledged in the persecution of people who were unlucky enough to find their world turned upside down by events outside their control.

Incidentally the firm of G.W. Biggs continues to prosper in Bantry and was recently named as one of the top 1000 Irish companies by the *Irish Times*. Mr. and Mrs. Annan Bryce also continue to have a presence in Bantry. In 1910 they had purchased Garnish Island (Illnacullin) from the War Office and employed the famous garden designer, Harold Peto, to construct an Italian

garden. They also planned to build a mansion on the 15 hectare island and although the mansion was never built (an extended cottage was used by the family while living on the island) they did succeed in their plans for the garden. George Bernard Shaw stayed there in

1923 while writing his play, *St. Joan*, and today the gardens are recognised as one of the most important in the British Isles. The Bryce family gave the island to the Irish nation in 1953. It is open to the public and maintained by Duchas, the Irish Heritage Service.

Editorial

Ireland In 1921: Dr. Fitzpatrick Puts Mr. Bury's Foot In It

Robin Bury is a propagandist of the 'Reform Society'. The Reform Society, which has the British Ambassador in the Republic as a patron, is a front organisation of the Orange Order. The central point in its propaganda is that there was ethnic cleansing of Protestants in the South of Ireland during the War of Independence and its aftermath. The *Irish News* (Belfast) published a letter from Bury on July 15th. It includes the following paragraph:

"Here is what the Presbyterian journal, *The Witness*, reported on June 17, 1921: 'The plight of Protestants in the south and the west, (the 26 counties) is sad in the extreme. They are marked; they are watched; they are raided; some of them have been dragged out and shot like beasts; an air of suspicion and dread is about them day and night. The small Protestant minority is at the mercy of local bands of lawless men who have learnt the use of the revolver for obtaining the property of others which they covet. The small Protestant communities in the towns and the isolated Protestant farmers whose industry and character have developed comparative prosperity are considered "fair game" to cover sheer covetousness and personal dislike.'"

Mr. Bury acknowledges "*the help of Dr David Fitzpatrick of Trinity College, Dublin*" in compiling his letter. Perhaps Professor Fitzpatrick provided him with the extract which he has quoted and he is unaware that the Editorial of *The Witness* makes a very different case indeed.

The Reform Society asserts that Protestants were targeted by the IRA because they were Protestants and not because of anything they did in the War, and that action against them was therefore purely sectarian. *The Witness* says something quite different: that because they were Protestants they were impelled by their belief to act against the Republic in defence of the British Empire in Ireland.

Its Editorial, *The State Of The Country*, begins as follows:

"The Honourable H.M. Pollock, D.L., M.P., the Minister of Finance in the Northern Parliament, presented the Report on the State Of The Country in the General Assembly last Friday, and called attention to certain deplorable facts of which we are all more or less cognisant."

This is interesting in itself. A Minister of the newly established Government of Northern Ireland reports to the governing body of a Church on the state of the country. Now, if a Sinn Fein Minister of the elected Government of the Republic had reported to the Catholic Hierarchy at Maynooth—but let that hare sit.

The Editorial continues (and we have italicised the part quoted by Mr. Bury).

"He referred in particular to the sufferings and persecution of Protestants, which undeniably form a part of the Sinn Fein policy of vengeance upon those who in any way stand opposed to this crusade of wickedness and wish to see the law of civilised society prevail. The Sinn Feiners, of course, deny that Protestants as such are persecuted, and there is an amount of truth in their contention, for their vengeance falls upon all who hinder them without regard to creed or class. But it is easy to see that this does not invalidate Mr. Pollock's assertion of the persecution of Protestants, for Protestants are loyal and law-abiding, and feel it as a duty which they owe to God and their own conscience to support the forces of the Crown in the repression of crime. There is no blinking the fact that this is the line which divides Roman Catholics and Protestants in general at the present time in Ireland. The vast majority of Sinn Feiners are Roman Catholics, and while there must be many Roman Catholics who hate and disapprove of the evil deeds of Sinn Fein, yet the Roman Catholic population as a whole have provided Sinn Fein with a sphere of influence and moral, or rather we should say, immoral, support which render their foul work in Ireland possible. Protestants, on the other hand, are the bulwark of liberty and justice and the due administration of law, and it is only natural that Sinn Feiners should look upon them as enemies and wreak their anger upon them. Sinn Feiners

may say that they do it, not because they are Protestants, but because they betray their cause; yet since Protestants cannot do otherwise in virtue of their religion, it comes to the same thing whether we say Protestants are persecuted for their religion, or are persecuted because they will not fall into line with Sinn Fein. Mr. Pollock is, therefore, perfectly right when he calls attention to the persecution of Protestants and evokes the sympathy of the Church in their behalf. *The plight of Protestants in the south and the west, (the 26 counties) is sad in the extreme. They are marked; they are watched; they are raided; some of them have been dragged out and shot like beasts; an air of suspicion and dread is about them day and night.* The Government has failed in its first duty of bringing criminals to justice and of protecting the innocent. The resolutions which were passed in connection with the Report are entirely in season, one of which is: 'The Assembly would strongly urge upon the Government the solemn obligation of taking whatever steps may be necessary to protect the lives and property of all citizens irrespective of creed or class'. If the Government had done this, its duty from the beginning, things would never have come to be as they are. There can be no settlement of Irish affairs till this is done by some Government, cost what it will. The Liberal party under the regime of Mr. Asquith and Mr. Birrell poisoned the fountain of Government in Ireland for years by what they did, and more by what they left undone. They ruled by sentiment, by opportunism, by stroking the tiger and calling him 'poor puss', thinking that would change his nature. They had little else but corn for the loyal subjects of the King, and little else but praise for his enemies. Have they changed? Have they not aided and abetted Sinn Fein in all its criminal extravagances? Have they not strengthened the unrest by putting ten words of blame upon those who were tracking down criminals for every one they applied to the criminals themselves. It is not our purpose to defend the crimes of the Black and Tans, or any other servants of the Crown, but to fail to recognise that the anterior guilt is in the Sinn Fein conspiracy with which these men are beset is unpardonable. Even to this day the policy of the Liberal party has no other meaning for the Sinn Feiners than 'go and win'. One of the bright particular stars of this school, Lord Buckmaster, speaking at Oxford the other day, constituted himself not only the apologist, but the unblushing champion of Sinn Fein. His words are amazing to read, and we trust our readers will read them. They help us to

understand how Sinn Fein has been able to grow up and wax strong in our midst. He said—'Sinn Fein as a political faith was a thing of which no one need be ashamed, and the cruel deeds by which that cause had been stained did not touch the heart of the faith'. He distinguished between Sinn Fein and its cruel deeds, and justifies the one while professing to condemn the other. The distinction has no existence, except in his hair-splitting imagination. Sinn Fein and the cruel deeds are the same. Sinn Fein is the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Sinn Fein is the gunmen. Sinn Fein is crime and violence and terror. There is not a child in Ireland but knows this. Sinn Fein has passed far beyond its sentimental infancy, and is now a diabolic agency, out to destroy the British Isles and the British Empire. How is it that Lord Buckmaster cannot see that it is only the loyal and law-abiding people of Ireland, who can save the situation? What is wrong with his eyes if he cannot see that Sinn Fein is something to be ashamed of? Is it no shame to men when they make murder their work. If decent men are not ashamed of Sinn Fein, let us begin at once and canonise all the criminals of history for they never thought or wrought worse than this. If the true character of Sinn Fein is not recognised at the present time, it is not because Sinn Feiners are not taking all possible pains to make it known..."

The Editorial makes no reference to the fact that Sinn Fein was acting on the authority of a General Election victory in 1918.

By June 1921 Sinn Fein had in fact two electoral victories under its belt. The second, in 1921, was more sweeping than the first. The Home Rule Party had contested most seats in 1918, but had lost all but a handful. But the 1918 Election was held on the British system of 'first past the post', under which the winner usually gains a number of seats out of all proportion to his percentage of the vote. But the 1921 Election was not a British Election. It was an Irish Election, held under a system specially designed by Westminster to weaken Sinn Fein—Proportional Representation. And yet the Sinn Fein victory in 1921 was greater than in 1918.

1918 might be described as a landslide of the ordinary British kind. But 1921 expressed a sea change. In consequence of the 1918 Election the Home Rule electorate of that year became Republican. The difference between a Home Ruler and a Republican in 1918 was not a difference of ideal or principle. The Home Rule leadership itself had

never in any previous General Election presented Home Rule as being preferable in principle to a Republic. It had said that Britain would only allow Ireland to set up an independent Government if Ireland had defeated it in war and, since Ireland could not muster sufficient force to defeat the British Empire at war, the best thing to do was to demand no more than Britain might possibly agree to.

That was the Home Rule position in the previous election, in 1910. And Redmond himself had often expressed it.

Voting for one's second preference was habitual prior to 1914. (Only Cork had kicked the habit, rejecting the Home Rule candidates in 1910.)

A habit may become so ingrained that it acquires the virtual status of a principle. Perhaps in the course of a further generation the will would have been hammered flat by the influence of practical reason and would have become incapable of desiring anything else than Imperial Home Rule—an acknowledged and organised Irish presence in the counsels of the Empire.

But the habit was broken by Britain itself—or by the British themselves. It began with the *Ulster Is British* rebellion against the Home Rule Bill and continued with the reckless Home Rule lurch into British Imperialist militarism in the Autumn of 1914.

The Russian biologist, Lysenko, had a phrase, "*shattering the heredity*". Maybe it didn't apply to wheat—at least not in the way he thought—but it certainly applies to states.

Look at Iraq. It had acquired considerably stability as a Baath nationalist state. The Shia had on the whole become Iraqis and played their part in the long war against the Islamic Republic. And life for the great majority of citizens had become a routine patterned on the bourgeois liberalism of the West. Then Ameranglia comes along with overwhelming force and destroys the framework of state within which this normality was developed—and people began doing things which a short while earlier they would have found inconceivable.

(Afghanistan appears to contradict this principle. Though subjected to the same kind of "*shock and awe*" as Iraq, it has been largely unaffected by it. But the reason for that lies in its refusal to become a state.)

The heredity of the Northern Ireland Catholics, their reflex of resigned subordination, was shattered by the assault on them by the forces of the state

in August 1969, and they would never again live in sullen quiescence as they had done for two generations.

And so it was with Irish nationalism after 1914. The Home Rule to which it had resigned itself was snatched away, and it was precipitated into militarist activity for a declared purpose which was refused at home [the rights of small nations]. Life could never be the same again for it. The elements of its being were thrown into violent motion. The kaleidoscope had been shaken (to use a favourite image of the warmongering Prime Minister of our own time) and God only knew how the pieces would fall to rest again.

Elections were suspended for the duration of the war. That was OK in England, which was engaged in its primary business and wanted no political interruptions of it.

But Irish civil society was not accustomed to warfare. It had been thoroughly pacified by the Williamite conquest and the Penal system that followed. It had been unable to rouse itself out of its intimidated lethargy in the face of extreme provocation by the Orange regime in 1797-8, or even by the Great Famine. But what it had been unable to do for itself, the Ulsterish rebellion and the British State did for it in 1914.

The 'respectable' classes cannot go to war for the first time and remain just as they were before.

The Home Rule Party decided to go to war, and to recruit nationalist Ireland into the British war effort. And it had considerable success in arousing popular enthusiasm for the War. But it acted very imprudently in going along with the suspension of elections.

In late September 1914 John Redmond did something for which he had no semblance of an electoral mandate. British parties do not need a particular mandate for war. War has been taken for granted there as part of normal political life ever since the time of Algernon Sidney, prophet and martyr of the Glorious Revolution, who proclaimed that the business of England was the combined activities of war and trade, and that attack was the best form of defence. But it would have been prudent for the Home Rule Party to implicate the electorate in its militarism by seeking a mandate. It might have done this by resigning its seats and re-fighting them in by-elections (which continued to be held during the War). Those by-elections would have amounted to an Irish General Election. And, when the idealistic blood was up in the Autumn of 1914, the electorate would probably have voted for war.

We have seen it said that that electorate supported Home Rule participation in the War by responding enthusiastically to the war speeches and by enlisting. But to cheer a war speech is not the same thing as voting for war. It is by voting that a body politic expresses its will. In its response to demagogic speeches it is only a mob.

Pearse said that the history of 19th century Ireland might be summed up as the efforts of a mob to realise itself as a nation. O'Connell's achievement was to create a mob and seed it with expectation. In 1913, when Pearse said those words, it appeared that Ireland was about to become one of the willing nations of the British Empire. A Home Rule appeal to the electorate a year later might well have consolidated it in that position.

It is by voting that an electorate commits itself. It has a stake in what it has voted for. In its emotional response, to demagoguery it is only a populace, and its will remains uncommitted.

The Irish electorate, hereditarily shattered by the events of 1914, remained free, uncommitted, unbound by itself, during the next four years while other shattering events were happening. When eventually required in December 1918 to express its will as an electorate, to settle itself down into something definite, it did so in a way that was beyond its wildest imaginings at the previous election in 1910.

It did so by majority determination in the first instance. But the minority that was still in the grip of the Home Rule habit in December 1918, quickly discarded that habit in the course of the following year, and a settled Republican body politic came into being.

Republicanism, which had been too daring to have any presence in the 1910 Elections, was established as the conservative position of Irish political life in 1918-19. The terrorist campaign of the British Government only toughened it, and it survived even the disruption of the Treaty War.

The Witness makes no reference to the 1918 Election or what it signified. Its implicit position is that the British Government should never have allowed Republicanised Sinn Fein to become the dominant electoral force in Irish political life, and that, since that should not have been allowed to happen, it should be treated as not having happened. Although Sinn Fein had won every democratic constituency in the 26 Counties in the election of xxx 1921, and no Home Rule, or British, candidate had been fielded against it, it should still

be treated as a criminal conspiracy.

It might have been argued in 1919 that Ulster Unionists who supported British military rule in Ireland, against the electorally expressed will of the Irish democracy, did so in defence of themselves. But that can no longer be argued in June 1921, after the country is Partitioned, and the Unionist Council given a Government of its own, and the 33% Catholic minority placed under that Government is being lashed into quiescence.

The Unionist position on Irish affairs becomes strictly anti-democratic and Imperialist at this point. There was no electoral opposition to Sinn Fein within the democracy of the 26 Counties, but it must be put down, "*cost what it may*", because it is "*a diabolic agency, out to destroy the British Isles and the British Empire*".

And how might Sinn Fein Government in the 26 Counties "*destroy the British Empire*"? By seceding from it. It did not have the power to go on the offensive against it. It was barely holding its own against a minimal exertion of British military power at home.

Ulster Unionism, which had just been constituted into a governing power by the Parliament against which it had rebelled seven years earlier, did not address the problem of how to make its authority tolerable to the 33% of the population that could play no part in its governing system, which was organically connected with the Orange Order. But the meeting of the Presbyterian General Assembly did not address that problem at all—or it saw it as being resolved as a by-product of the crushing of Sinn Fein government in the 26 Counties.

The Witness, as the title suggests, was an earnest religious publication, and therefore a strange source of truth for a present-day propaganda group in Dublin, which purports to be engaged in a liberal critique of the 26 County State. It was *gauche* of the Reform Society not to have used a liberal source from which it might have got the same message. We suppose the reason is that the inner life of Protestant Ulster is *terra incognita* for Southern Protestant Unionists no less than for the rest of Southern society.

The *Northern Whig* (which ceased publication shortly before Ulster Unionism went berserk in 1969) was the organ of political liberalism in the North. It was founded in the 1820s by a printer who had served a kind of political apprenticeship with William Drennan and other survivors of the United Irish movement in the early decades of the

19th century. But, by 1921, it was scarcely distinguishable from the Tory press or the fundamentalist Protestant press:

"Sinn Fein in its present form is much more than a rebel movement, a manifestation of discontent. It has become a deadly moral pestilence. A large proportion of the people have come under the influence of the corrupting miasma which emanates from it.

"Those professional slaughterers, the gunmen, seem to take a ghastly delight in their hideous work. In this they resemble *Carrier of Nantes*, *Joseph Lebron*, and other depraved monsters who won infamous notoriety by their atrocious cruelties during the Reign of Terror in France. British advocates of a policy of pusillanimity in Ireland tell us that 'there is no murder gang'—because the agents of Sinn Fein, who number defenceless women, feeble old men, and bedridden hospital patients among their victims, and never by any chance encounter military and police on equal terms, have persuaded themselves that to compass the deaths of their fellow-creatures by violence is not sin... What, rightly considered, is the strongest possible evidence of the demoralisation wrought by Sinn Fein is actively pleaded in extenuation of its guilt! Sinn Fein has deliberately debased the moral currency; has been the means of making thousands of Irishmen, and, alas, Irishwomen also, think of homicide as lightly as it is regarded by the head-hunters of the Solomon Islands or the Congo cannibals. And we are told... that this abysmal lowering of conduct... is to be allowed to rank as a valid defence against indictments for murder! No more damnable doctrine has been preached since the days when the European religious wars were at their height, and monarchs who embraced the cause of a purified faith and an open Bible, like *Elizabeth of England* and *William the Silent* went in mortal danger from fanatics and hired assassins" (*Northern Whig*, 13 June 1921).

Readers not be entirely familiar with the "*Carrier of Nantes*". He constructed barges with false bottoms, filled them with Catholic royalists, sent the barges into the middle of the Loire and opened the bottoms. Presbyterian Belfast was not shocked by that in the early 1790s, when it counted. But, a century and a quarter later, that drastic Jacobin way of dealing with Papists was somehow felt to be an appropriate comparison for whatever small degree of pressure Sinn Fein applied in the South against Protestants who defied the democracy and acted with the military regime.

There was an odd-man-out at the Presbyterian General Assembly:

"Rev. J.B. Armour said for 29 years he had taken a certain stand, and he believed if the General Assembly had taken his advice the country would not be troubled with Sinn Fein as it was at the present time. He could not see that the Northern Parliament would be successful. If it was successful he would be as pleased as anyone... He would like to see Belfast keeping its position as the first city in Ireland, and one of the first in the Empire; but he did not see how it could if things went on in that way. He objected to the new Parliament on the ground that they were cutting off three or four hundred thousand people of the same creed and faith, and those people were very much disgusted with the people of the North for accepting that Parliament. In the Parliament they had forty people who agreed entirely, and there was no Opposition. He would like to know what Parliament it would be where every member had the same opinion on everything. They were handing over their destinies to the landlord Church of Ireland party... He hoped the Ulster Parliament would turn out well; but he was afraid what Grattan said about the Irish Parliament would probably be true— 'I have watched by its cradle, and I have

followed its hearse.' Sir James Craig deserved better than to be a wet nurse for that kind of Parliament and in his opinion Sir James would be glad to see the hearse arriving" (report in *The Witness* 17 June 1921).

The Moderator said that Rev. Armour would always enjoy the respect of the Assembly, regardless of his opinions, but if he lived to follow the Parliament to its grave "*he would be a very old man*".

In the event it lasted for 50 years. And it lasted that long because Craig, who had voted against its establishment, minimised political activity in it, as did his successor (after the Andrews hiatus), Basil Brooke. When Captain O'Neill replaced Brookeborough and took it for real, and Lemass browbeat the Nationalists into pretending that it was the democratic legislature of a state, it blew apart within a few years.

It took no great acumen on the part of anybody who was reasonably well-informed about the preconditions of functional politics and who was not absorbed in the waging of religious war, to see things as Armour saw them.

VOX PAT

continued

Of Things Material

The Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary Order is to sell a portion of its remaining lands at Bessborough, in Mahon (Cork), right alongside the Mahon Retail Park and DIY giant B&Q.

It originally owned several hundred acres of land at Mahon peninsula, the former Pike estate, much of it acquired by the then Cork Corporation in the 1970s by CPO.

The Order still has some 40 acres of spectacular land, some in farmland, which has zoning restrictions, plus the period house, preserved Turner conservatories and buildings.

However, the Order has determined to sell its land to a user which will bring a social or community gain. This may include private hospital, nursing home, caring voluntary bodies dealing with education, disability, health or special needs, single parents and other suggestions.

Estate agent Tom Kelly of CCM Property Services is handling the sale of the more than seven acres, in four lots laid out as serviced sites of one to 3.6 acres, and he guides them in price terms at c Euro 1.5 million an acre.

The Order could have sought to maximise full commercial value, at perhaps c Euro 3 million an acre, but has maintained a tradition of providing services and facilities of a social nature, he stressed.

Bessborough has had a long history of

caring for single mothers and their babies. It also accommodates fathers and other children, and recently a new 80-child creche, designed by Magee Creedon architects, has opened through the Government agency ADM.

Also on the Bessborough campus are the Alzheimer's Association, with a new day-care building almost complete, while the Irish Wheelchair Association are building an administration and training centre on a serviced site next to the serviced site now for sale. A new social housing project for single parent and families in a safe environment is in the planning process, and the Order's former Maternity Hospital has now been taken over by the Health Executive to care for children and adolescents at risk and with particular needs.

Ennis Land Sale

A College has landed an Euro 8.5m windfall after selling 35 acres of land donated to it in the 1940s by a farmer.

St. Flannan's College in Ennis, Co. Clare, made the sale while developers are buying land near the Euro 190 million Ennis bypass, under construction.

College President Fr. Brendan Moloney said he did not know the identify of the buyer. The sale places a Euro 242,857 price per acre on the land.

The College had moved to sell the land after the boarding school closed last month. With the zoning, the site will be able to accommodate 560 houses, valuing the development at over Euro 100 million. ✿

Joe Keenan/Dennis Kennedy

The following letters about the allegation that Protestants were driven out of Cork in May 1922 appeared in the *Irish Independent*

Protestant Refugees: Semantics Or Accuracy?

Questioning Cork Pogrom

The claim by your correspondent Mr Myers (Irish Independent, June 28) that Cork Protestants and others fled . . . "*the sectarian wrath of the IRA in May 1922. Many thousands of Protestants fled their homes in terror as a wave of murder, violence, intimidation and boycott convulsed the county, and many other parts of southern Ireland also*" is put in question by details quoted in the Unionist Denis Kennedy's excellent book, *'The Widening Gulf'*.

"In its first interim report in November 1922, the Hoare Committee said that in the period from 12 May to 14 October it had dealt with 3,349 applicants, many of them married men with large families.

"Not all of these were in need of immediate assistance, but of the 1,873 cases approved for emergency relief, about 600 were Protestant, and just over 1,000 Catholic. (Fewer than 100 of these cases were from Northern Ireland.)"

So, it would appear that a majority of those fleeing to Britain from the anti-Protestant pogroms which disfigured the birth of the Irish Free State were Catholics. Further to this, Mr Kennedy points out that aid from the Northern Parliament to Protestant refugees was almost non-existent.

"A private committee was set up under the Chief Whip in Craig's Government . . . There is no accurate record of the numbers who actually did flee North. In September 1922 Craig wrote to Churchill mentioning 'some three hundred and sixty (refugees) now being maintained by private generosity in Ulster'. The money spent by the Dixon Committee was limited; in October 1923 Dixon sent a certificate of money expended to date, for é495.0s.6d., to the Home Office, seeking a reimbursement."

That certainly does not bear out Mr Myers' extravagant claims.

And Mr Kennedy concludes his examination of this important matter: "*What is clear is that there is no evidence of any large-scale transfer of population across the border at this period*". **Joe Keenan** (3.7.06)

The Facts About That 1922 Exodus

Joe Keenan, (Letters, July 3) quotes accurately, and at some length, from my

1988 book *'The Widening Gulf'* in support of his criticism of Kevin Myers' assertion that many thousands of Protestants fled their homes in Cork and other counties of southern Ireland in the face of IRA murder and intimidation in 1922.

I should point out that the passages quoted refer, in the main, to refugees moving from southern Ireland into Northern Ireland.

Protestants in Donegal and other border counties were certainly subjected to violence and intimidation, particularly at the hands of the anti-Treaty forces, and numbers of refugees turned up in Enniskillen and other northern towns.

Contrary to popular belief, however, there is no evidence to indicate that there was any large scale transfer of population from south to north. While numbers of families settled permanently inside Northern Ireland, it seems many others returned within weeks to their homes.

The figures for refugees fleeing from southern Ireland to Great Britain are much larger, and are evidence of widespread violence against two particular groups, Protestants, and Catholics who had served in the army or the police.

The Hoare Committee dealt only with refugees crossing to Great Britain, and the total of almost three and a half thousand applications for support in the six months from May to October 1922 can represent only a portion of the numbers actually forced out of their homes.

Applications were normally made by the head of the family, so the figure would have to be multiplied several times to get an idea of the number of individuals involved.

In addition, only those actually seeking aid from the committee are recorded. Families with relatives in England, or with private means of support, may well have felt no need to apply to the committee.

Taking these factors into account, it would seem clear that the 600 Protestant refugee families actually assisted by the Hoare Committee in those six months are sufficient indication that the total number fleeing, not just their homes, but all of southern Ireland, in the middle of 1922, and crossing to England, must, indeed, be numbered in thousands.

I appreciate Mr Keenan's kind words about my book, but must decline the gratuitous and erroneous label of "Unionist" which he attaches to me. **Dennis Kennedy** (5.7.06)

Protestant 1922 Exodus

I must thank Mr Dennis Kennedy for his response to my letter quoting his book *'The Widening Gulf'* (Letters, July 5). I had not realised that the Cadogan Group of which Mr Kennedy is a

member no longer wishes to be described as Unionist. Several of the other members of that group have very publicly acted as advisers to former UUP leader Mr Trimble, which is why I used the term.

But Mr Kennedy objects to being so described and I, of course, apologise for my error.

The figures I quoted from Mr Kennedy's fine book were intended to illustrate a simple thesis which has two strands.

First, that much of the Protestant emigration attendant upon the creation of the Irish Free State was an economic relocation of persons whose livelihood depended on the structures of the British state. When the only possibility of their continued employment in those spheres moved across the water so did they.

As Mr Kennedy acknowledges, these were largely members, both Catholic and Protestant, of the army and police services. I do not believe that any great proportion of this emigration was forced. Evidence other than raw figures will have to be brought forward to establish that, to my mind mistaken, contention.

Second, that the short lived movement across the border was just that, with the great majority of those concerned returning to the Irish Free State within a matter of weeks.

To me, this indicates that once the fears which occasioned their flight had been shown to be groundless these people were happy to return to their homes. Mr Kennedy does agree that a large proportion of this population movement was short lived.

Mr Kennedy is mistaken in his suggestion that the violence along the border in the Spring and Summer of 1922 was part of a campaign by anti-treaty forces. It was in fact directed by Michael Collins and Eoin O'Duffy. There was anti-treatyite involvement in gun-running for and training of the Northern IRA (Dan Breen and Ernie O'Malley, for example, were active in the Free State Army's training camps for Northern recruits).

But the organisation involved was a Free State body set up by O'Duffy on Collins' orders—the Army Council of the North.

Its commanding officer was future anti-treaty Chief of Staff, Frank Aiken. His deputy was the future Free State Major General Sean MacEoin, the heroic Blacksmith of Ballinalee. If he wishes I will be very happy to provide Mr Kennedy with appropriate references in this matter. **Joe Keenan** (10.7.06)

Protestants Driven Out

Joe Keenan (Letters, July 10) distorts the debate by merging two distinct issues—the large exodus of Protestants

from southern Ireland in the period up to and following partition, and the specific question of intimidation of Protestants in mid-1922.

My letter, and the quotations Mr Keenan used from *'The Widening Gulf'*, dealt with the second, narrower issue.

I repeat that there is ample evidence that large numbers of Protestants, probably thousands, did indeed leave their homes in some fear during mid-1922, and move out, mainly to Britain rather than Northern Ireland. There is sufficient evidence of acts of violence, including murder, against Protestants to suggest that their fears were not unfounded.

Mr Keenan misrepresents, or possibly misunderstands, my statement that the violence of mid-1922 was directed against two categories "*Protestants as such, and secondly Catholics who had served in the army and police*". I did not say, as he writes, that the people who left "*were largely members, both Catholic and Protestant, of the army and the police services*."

It was not my intention to imply that all intimidation of Protestants in border counties was the work of anti-Treaty forces, and I do not dispute Mr Keenan's contention that violence in the border area in 1922, presumably including attacks on Protestant families, was also perpetrated by supporters of the Treaty settlement.

Finally, the Cadogan Group has never claimed to be a Unionist group. It is not linked to any political party. **Dennis Kennedy** (13.7.06)

The Protestant 1922 Refugees

In reply to Mr Dennis Kennedy (Letters, July 13), I was initially quoting the figures from Mr Kennedy's *'The Widening Gulf'* in response to Kevin Myers' contention that "*in May 1922, many thousands of Protestants fled their homes in terror as a wave of murder, violence, intimidation and boycott convulsed the county, and many other parts of southern Ireland also*."

I do not believe that the figures which Mr Kennedy records in his well-researched book bear out this picture of floods of refugees fleeing the Irish Free State with their few remaining possessions on their backs.

In Britain, the Irish Distress Committee spent some of a fund of £10,000 on 1,873 cases, about 600 of the recipients being Protestant and just over 1,000 Catholic.

In Northern Ireland, where no official aid was forthcoming, a private committee spent £459.0s.6d on at most 360 refugees.

Those sums are paltry and simply do not bear out Mr Myers' claim of a flood of refugees fleeing "*a wave of murder,*

violence, intimidation and boycott" (just who would flee a wave of boycott? what could such a thing be?). It remains to be explained how this flood of refugees left almost no official trace in either Great Britain or Northern Ireland. Are we to believe that the British and Northern Irish authorities left thousands of refugees to starve on the streets?

I did not say, as Mr Kennedy paraphrases me, that the border violence of 1922 "*was also perpetrated by supporters of the Treaty settlement*". I

said that the border violence of 1922 was a campaign directed by Michael Collins and Eoin O'Duffy. Anti-treaty elements played an interesting role in the logistics of Collins and O'Duffy's border campaign but had no part at all in launching, fighting or ending it. That is a very different thing from the Free Staters being mere also-rans.

The unionism of the Cadogan Group is clearly a matter of definition. At this point I am happy to accept Mr Kennedy's definition. **Joe Keenan** (19.7.06)

Seán McGouran

Part One of a series on the *Irish Distress Committee*

Robin Bury's Faulty Witness

Robin Bury of the Reform Society has claimed that there was "*a sectarian campaign against Protestants in west Cork in April 1922*", adding that "*the British forces had left long before April 1922*" (letter replying to an article by Niall Meehan on *The Wind That Shakes The Barley*, *Irish Examiner* 10.07.06). He rejects the idea that the people killed were "*informers or members of some loyalist underground*", but takes the killings to represent a deliberate ethnic cleansing carried out against Protestants by republicans. In support of his thesis he cites a series of disconnected quotations without a context, and adduces the reports of the Irish Distress Committee, an English institution.

A major oddity of Mr. Bury's letter is that he quotes in support of his argument "*the Presbyterian journal The Witness*" of 17th June 1921—eleven months before the events under discussion. This paper alleges: "*the plight of the Protestants in the South and West is sad in the extreme...*" There follows a catalogue of the intimidation of "*the small Protestant minority*", the usual sad sequence of 'ethnic cleansing'. The list ends with a bit of Protestant triumphalism about the "*industry and character*" of the prosperous farmers who are "*fair game*" "*for lawless men who have learned the use of the revolver*". The motive for these acts is "*sheer covetousness*" and also "*personal dislike*". (*The Witness* was "*Printed and Published by John B. O'Neill*" in Belfast. It was not in any way the official product of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and, by the standards of the time, was fairly moderate in tone.)

I wonder whether Mr. Bury has examined *The Witness* himself? The quotation cited in his letter to the *Examiner* runs together two different articles from *The Witness*, though he

does not indicate it. More to the point, neither *The Witness* nor other Belfast papers report any particular anti-Protestant violence in the 'Free State' area in June 1922.

Mr. Bury further displays his learning when he mentions the Irish Distress Committee which, he says, "*was established in London to provide help to those who had fled and those who had stayed and been persecuted*". They were "*almost all Protestants, though also members of the RIC*". Is Mr. Bury saying that the Protestants who needed help were also members of the Royal Irish Constabulary? Or is he suggesting that members of the RIC were assisted as well as Protestants? The point is of some significance as his essential argument is that the IRA was sectarian and targetted Protestants indiscriminately on account of their religion. But the RIC was 90+% Catholic. If the RIC was attacked, that suggests that the motive of the Volunteers was political rather than sectarian. And, in fact, research has shown that the Irish Distress Committee helped more Catholics than it did Protestants. One of the most prominent Catholics that it assisted was D.D. Sheehan, the former collaborator of Canon Sheehan in the All For Ireland League and activist in the Land and Labour Association. Sheehan was later heavily implicated in recruiting cannonfodder for the Front in the Great War.

Robin Bury invited Niall Meehan to "*study the 3,143 files*" in the British National Archives and to draw his own conclusions "*about the evidence of murder and persecution of Protestants*". The implication of this challenge is that Mr. Bury himself has done so, and is providing an accurate account of what is in those files.

Unable to reconcile Mr. Bury's

conclusions with my own knowledge of the facts, I have determined to take up his challenge and have started what will be a lengthy investigation of the doings of the Irish Distress Committee. Readers of *Church & State* will be kept informed of my researches.

The Irish Distress Committee was established in response to agitations by various groupings. It was later called the Irish Grants Committee. The most powerful of the pressure groups was the *Southern Irish Loyalists' Relief Association*, which had the Duke of Northumberland as President and the Marquess of Salisbury as Secretary. The only 'Mister' on its list was Neville Chamberlain. The Duke of Northumberland's son, Lord Eustace Percy MP was later made Chair of the Irish Distress/Grants Committee.

So far I have read some of the Distress Committee files and have read a number of the Books of Minutes prepared by the officials who serviced the Committee.

There were four members of the Committee, which was established in May 1922. Lionel Curtis of Lord Milner's *Kindergarten* and *Round Table* group drew up the terms of reference of the Committee and attended its first few meetings. The terms of reference were:

"(a) To investigate applications by or on behalf of persons ordinarily resident in Ireland who for reasons of personal safety have come to Great Britain and are represented to be in urgent need of assistance.

(b) To furnish the Irish Office with reports on the adequacy or otherwise of their reasons for leaving their homes, and so to enable the Irish Office to make detailed representations to the Provisional Government to secure their return to their homes at the earliest possible moment.

(c) To authorise the Irish Office in cases of proved necessity to advance money sufficient for immediate needs.

(d) To advise the Government from time to time on any further steps which may owing to the further development of the situation, be required to deal with the problems of Refugees from Ireland."

It will be noted that there is no suggestion that it is particularly Protestants who are in need of assistance and that there is an assumption that people have been temporarily displaced

Sir Samuel Hoare was the Chairman of the Committee, but was replaced by Lord Eustace Percy. The Secretary was Major A. Reid Jamieson. Mark Sturgis, who had some experience of Dublin Castle and was a civil servant in the Irish Office (which was superseded by the Colonial, then the Dominions Office), conducted a lot of the corres-

pondence with officialdom. He served from the first meeting until April 1926. The fourth member was E.T. Crutchley.

The Distress Committee disbursed around £70,000, which it obtained from the British Treasury.

In March 1923 it was renamed the Irish Grants Committee, with new Terms of Reference, but remaining under the chairmanship of Lord Eustace Percy MP. The Terms of Reference were:

"To recommend to the Secretary of State for the Colonies what grants or loans should be made to refugees from Ireland and what advances should be made to claimants for compensation under the Criminal and Malicious Injuries Acts or other legislation for the time being in force in Ireland, and to advise the Secretary of State generally upon the position of such persons.

That the Committee should be empowered to recommend the Secretary of State for the Colonies to authorise loans up to a limit of £1,000 in any one case to claimants for compensation both in respect of the pre-truce and post-truce periods.

That in cases where the Committee think it desirable to exceed this limit, the Treasury would send a representative to meet the Committee with the discretionary power either to approve the recommendation of the Committee or to reserve it for Treasury sanction.

That in connexion with the following sub-heads on page 9 of the Estimates for Unclassified Services (Criminal Injuries (Ireland) Compensation etc. Estimate)

sub-head C. £ 3,000 (Pre-Truce damage)

sub-head D. £50,000 (Post-Truce damages)

sub-head E £25,000 (Refugees)

in the event of the provision under D and E proving insufficient arrangements will be made with the Treasury to render funds available from C."

These sums of money were provided from the British Treasury. The Committee also disbursed money from the Irish Exchequer.

The Irish Distress/Grants Committee appears to have been somewhat inefficient. One of its activities was to advance rent to landlords who had been unable to collect it from their farm tenants. But the landlords were no better at paying up than their tenants. Even after order had been re-established in Ireland, they failed to repay the loans they had received from the Irish Distress Committee. A sub-committee was established on foot of a recommendation of "*the Minutes of September 23rd, 1925*". It pointed out that advances of money "*made on the security of arrears of rent due under the Irish Land Act of 1923*" (a

Free State enactment), had essentially, been reneged on. The sums in question were:

Advances made up to December 1925 :

£28, 520. 0. 0.

Recovered : £ 2, 241. 5. 0.

The upshot of this and other matters was that the Committee was reorganised in 1926. The weekly meetings were suspended in April and re-started in October with different personnel, except for Jamieson. The new members of the Committee were Sir Alexander Wood Renton (Chairman), who had a medical background; Sir James Brunyate, who was from the India civil service; and Sir John Oakley. There were new terms of reference, which I hope to produce in a future article. The Committee queried elements of their new Terms of Reference.

In their first minutes (18th October 1926), Major Jamieson was appointed Contradictor, a Devil's Advocate to dispute the claims made. Examples of filled-in forms can be found in Kew PRO (PRO,CO 762/26).

The Distress/Grants Committee minutes were pasted into a ledger (PRO,CO 762/207). The reorganised Grant Committee's minutes are bound in four large volumes (CO 762/208 etc.).

In 1930 144 members of the *Irish Loyalists Association*, whose Hon. Secretary was W. M. Boland of Ballina, an ex-RIC man, signed a plea that the Irish Grants Committee be not disbanded. (They were coordinated by a Sligo Solicitor with the apt surname *Argue*.) (PRO, DO 35/343/3).

This second incarnation of the Irish Grants Committee had (according to a note dated 10.1.'30) paid out, "to March 1929" the sum of £1,386,664. 0. 0.

Many of these payments were in the form of straightforward hand-outs of four-figure sums, the lowest figure was £25, and it stands out from the rest. The Committee also "*purchased*" many "*annuities*": mostly in respect of sums like £250 and £500. To put this in context, this was a time of mass unemployment and Depression. A highly skilled worker would have had to work sixty hours a week—at least—to earn £5.

Much of this money went to people who were resident in Ireland. On 23rd January 1930 the Southern Irish Loyalists' Relief Association wrote to the Grants Committee, asking that it to destroy letters from the Free State which asked for money. This strange request was complied with. There may be a number of explanations for this, ranging from tax evasion to fraud. However, the suspicion that England was cultivating a Fifth Column really cannot be excluded.

There is a great deal more to be investigated and written about this matter.



Stephen Richards

Part 2 of Review of *God's Politics* by Jim Wallis

The Non-Conformist Conscience Rides Again

Those of us who live in the British jurisdiction have to look forward to a regime of unremitting righteousness when Brown succeeds Blair as Prime Minister. It's the self-important righteousness of a debased godless pseudo-Calvinism, unshaped by the narrative of sin, grace and redemption. War and overseas aid are the displacement activities of the moralistic state, questioned only by irresponsible cranks. Of course we don't go to war on patriotic grounds or to defend clearly stated national interests. We are wafted on a blast of windy rhetoric about freedom, democratic values, and "*the terrible events of 9/11*". This was Blair's speciality, to which his healing the wounds of Africa was only incidental. With the coming of Gordon Brown, the mission-speak and creep will move decisively to debt relief and the plight of the Third World economies.

A hint of things to come was dropped in late September, with Hilary Benn's little diatribe opposing the policies of the World Bank, which apparently has been attaching too many conditions to its Aid packages. Benn is more worldly-wise than his father and doesn't want to be on the wrong side of the boat when the great helmsman takes over. Nick Robinson, probably on the basis of some spoon-feeding from sources close to the Chancellor's office, writes in *The Times* of 23rd September that, "*alongside the war on terror there's likely to be a war on global poverty that Mr. Brown believes feeds support for terrorism. The Chancellor has campaigned to wipe out Third World debt. Less well known is his proposal for an economic plan for the Middle East.*" Tellingly he adds that "*Brown believes that economics lies at the root of most problems*". If only. I had thought even the Marxists had abandoned that idea.

We will see how all this works out in practice but I'm not optimistic. St. Augustine spoke slightly of the unjust state being on a par with the robber baron. But, as C.S. Lewis pointed out, while the robber baron might lose interest for a while in tormenting his subjects, the ruler who thinks he's doing God's will, or who is otherwise convinced of his own moral infallibility, never will.

I worry that Jim Wallis sounds very

like Gordon Brown, and has even been an influence on him. This from Brown's back cover blurb:

"Two great issues of our time are addressed by Jim Wallis and his thought-provoking answers make powerful reading for anyone interested in social change. Jim Wallis challenges us to create a society that both addresses injustice and stresses personal responsibility, and his call for a global covenant through which rich countries meet their obligations to the poor will have a resonance across the world."

Very fittingly Wallis gives Brown some air time in his text, quoting a 2004 Brown speech:

"And let us be clear: it is not that the knowledge to avoid these infant deaths does not exist; it is not that the drugs... do not exist; it is not that the expertise does not exist; it is not that the means to achieve our goals do not exist. It is that the political will does not exist. Now, with science, technology and knowledge available, we must face the truth that the real barrier is indifference. "If we let things slip, the Millennium Goals will become just another dream we once had, and we will indeed be sitting back on our sofas and—I am afraid—watching people die on our screens for the rest of our lives. We will be the generation that betrayed its own heart."

Correction: the means don't commonly exist. The most massive famine relief event of modern times was the Geldof and Michael Buerk inspired response to the Ethiopian Famine of 1984-85. Just as Colonel Mengistu used the famine as a political weapon, so he used the food aid: to reward his followers and to withhold from those sections of the population whose support for him was less than whole-hearted.

Wallis goes on to trumpet at great length the achievements of the Jubilee 2000 campaign, and to advocate an extension of fair trade policies, a new Marshall Plan, and an intensification of the anti-Aids programme:

"more than twelve million orphaned children in Africa alone demand our response. There can be no excuses. It is a moral imperative, as well as a political necessity. For all of us, it is a matter of faith..."

The name *Jubilee 2000* was of course not picked at random, but has an Old Testament reference in the Book of Leviticus, which laid out a scheme whereby debts were cancelled and Israelite slaves set free in the year of Jubilee, which came every fifty years.

At least Wallis thinks it's a matter of faith. I hope he doesn't think God will look favourably on half-baked initiatives which have a lot more to do with moral posturing and mutual back-slapping among the awakened social consciences than with the plight of the people of Africa. I don't know if the quality of mercy blesses him who gives, regardless of whether it blesses him who takes. Jesus said we were not to let the left hand know what the right hand was doing, so we should think a bit less about ourselves in our giving and maybe more about the situations we're giving into. I'm increasingly convinced by the old dictum that defines overseas aid as money that flows from poor people in rich countries to rich people in poor countries. And this is the other thing I find bothersome from a Christian perspective: domestic taxation may be part of the social contract (within limits!), but foreign charitable giving is not, so it can't or shouldn't be compelled by the state. Forced giving is no real giving at all. Such is the burden of taxation on the poor (the Lord Levys of this world can hire smart accountants) that voluntary giving to good causes of choice is a luxury that many in the population can't afford. Without getting bogged down in the complex theological concept of merit, we can safely say that God is pleased with us when we give. Compulsory giving through taxation strikes me as equivalent to compulsory church attendance in Elizabethan times.

We may criticise the Americans all we like for their conspicuous consumption, and for the vast social inequalities in their society, but their charitable giving as a proportion of their average incomes far exceeds ours. That may be a cultural characteristic; it may be to do with the numerical strength of the churches; or it may simply be because they don't have a tax system that crushes them half to death.

If it's a matter of faith for Wallis, then what about Brown? Brown is like the 'Conscience' character in C.S. Lewis's *Pilgrim's Regress*. When questioned about the need to walk thirty miles a day, he replies that that's the rule:

"So you do believe in the Landlord after all."

"Not at all. I didn't say it was the Landlord's rule."

"Whose rule is it then?"
"It is my own rule. I made it myself...
I have made the best rules I can. If I
find any better ones I shall adopt them."

I can't find any sense in Brown's insistence that global poverty is a vital issue for the UK state, so that he should commit increasing amounts of our money towards his strategy for alleviating it. It may be vital for us as human beings, whether Christians or not, but where lies the interest of the state? Does he imagine that (to lapse into Brown-speak) "*targeted*" aid will be a catalyst for increased trade? Surely a simpler way of going about that would be to campaign to dismantle EU tariff barriers to African goods. At least this is an area where he might have some real influence. And is the real barrier indifference? Hardly, in view of the overwhelming response to the *tsunami*. People will give generously, even sacrificially, where they think it will make a difference. People don't like pouring money down black holes, even if governments do.

One of the boasts of the Jubilee 2000 movement is that it led to G8 involvement in debt relief. So, according to Wallis:

"The limited debt relief provided to these poor countries has made some significant changes in living conditions. Jubilee USA reports, for example, that in Uganda, debt savings were used to double elementary school enrolment; in Mozambique, half a million people were vaccinated against deadly diseases. Tanzania used debt savings to eliminate school fees, and 1.5 million children will be able to return to school this year, while in Honduras, the savings went toward access to junior high school for all young people."

The only 'problems' Wallis identifies are where debt relief has not gone far enough. But here is an extract from Becky Tinsley, who is currently building a girls' boarding school in Rwanda, in the *Daily Telegraph* of 19th July:

"We are in a typical village school in a sub-Saharan African country. Seventy children are crowded into a dark, dank schoolroom, four to a desk. It is so gloomy it is hard to see the blackboard and flies buzz around their faces. Many of the children are so hungry they cannot concentrate on their lessons.

"The teacher conducts the lesson without the benefit of pictures or other visual aids. He reads paragraphs of dry monotonous text from an English-language book he barely understands. The schoolbooks in the local language

never arrived, even though foreign governments gave money to the education department specifically to provide them.

"Asking questions in class is discouraged. A good child is an obedient child. If the teacher does not know the answer he will lie rather than admit ignorance, not least because there are no reference books from which to find answers. Some schools have English-language classes scheduled daily or weekly even though not a single teacher in the school can speak a word of English."

Apparently there is a UN aim that universal primary education will be available to all children by 2015. But overall percentages are the same and in twenty seven countries percentages are going down.

"Nevertheless, the international aid and development 'community' remains focused on building primary schools in the world's poorest places. The aim of all the seminars, conferences and consultants' reports generated by the donors for the benefit of their 'partners' in the developing world is to get little bums on little seats.

"What is lacking is any discussion of the quality of education being offered. Nor does anyone look too closely at how many children complete their primary schooling... Many children in rural areas drop out because it is too far to walk to school, or they can't afford the uniform or books, or their parents want them on the farm.

"The girls especially are under great pressure to stay at home, doing domestic and agricultural chores or caring for relatives affected by HIV/Aids.

"Undeterred, national governments across Africa continue to churn out optimistic statistics for increasing enrolment and improved exam results... According to the UN's Stephen Lewis, the approach to funding education has been 'like so much of internationalism—no one pays attention, the media are uncritical, the commitments and obligations are expendable, and the organizations expected to perform don't perform and yet emerge unscathed, they're almost never called to account.'"

She contrasts with this the example of Lalibela School in Ethiopia, which is an initiative funded by Norman Coward, a retired London banker:

"Why does it work? Coward supplies the money, so he has a personal stake in making sure it is spent well. His regular trips keep everyone on their toes. The staff know it is in their interest to run the school well because

the Englishman can bring them scholastic supplies and help."

The writer goes on to catalogue some of the catastrophic effects of the wars and genocide of the last decade alone on African schools. In addition to this there are the cultural pressures. Clare McIntyre from Broughshane near Ballymena spent eight years teaching in a girls' school in peaceful Malawi. Such is the cultural subjugation of women, she says, that girls are more or less expected to have sex with boys or men who ask them. It is a society where men have to be pleased and women have to do the pleasing. This is not good for the girls' moral and spiritual development, their educational attainment, or the stemming of the HIV/Aids epidemic. Bob Geldof has recently made the same point at a Labour Conference fringe meeting. He admitted ruefully the success of the huge US Aids Relief programme launched in 2003 and channelled largely through faith groups committed to teaching sexual abstinence: "*It works. It's uncomfortable for people to speak these unspoken truths but a lot of that stuff is working.*" He went on to say, "*In general in rural Africa women have no power. They also cannot refuse sexual favours.*" That might be an interesting area for the feminists to investigate.

For a few weeks on Wednesday evenings Radio 4 broadcast a discussion programme called *Hecklers*. The idea was that somebody with a provocative thesis would be given an initial two minute soapbox, and another couple of minutes or so in the middle, to propose and advance their argument, and in between times they would be attacked non-stop by four or five people who were bent on destroying that position. The last time I heard it, the man under attack was a Ugandan called Andrew, who was arguing that Aid and Debt Relief were positively baneful activities for Western Governments to be engaged in. He swatted away his antagonists elegantly, ruthlessly, and unanswerably.

He echoed some of the points made by Becky Tinsley about the massive sleight of hand in the educational statistics, with specific reference to Uganda and Tanzania, which are such success stories for the Aid Industry, but went on to make more fundamental points. Uganda made use of the debt cancellation granted to it to invest heavily in military hardware, no doubt from UK companies, and to take part in the Congolese wars. By the end of it all, the country was far deeper in debt than at the beginning. Much of the money had been used to buy support among

vested tribal interests. This had resulted in the situation where the President had over seventy advisers on big salaries and with big limousines, most of whom didn't ever see the President except on television. Andrew commented that in colonial times the whole administration had been in the hands of seventy two British officials driving beat-up Landrovers. Now there were over seventy Cabinet Members alone and about 4,900 NGO workers, sitting in air conditioned offices.

He said that most African politicians had no concept of the public good, over and above their own personal and family aggrandizement. There was no understanding of the role of enlightened self-interest in government, and no impartial civil service or law enforcement agencies. Such was the reliance on the honeypot of overseas aid that no real effort was being made to collect taxes from the wealthiest members of society, so the situation was akin to that in pre-revolutionary France, except that the French economy managed to support itself. Many of these countries were rich in natural resources. Countries such as Botswana, with few natural resources, which had made a conscientious effort to repay its debts, had to stand by and watch while its prodigal neighbours were rewarded for their corruption. No accountability means no responsibility when things go wrong. Surely Gordon Brown should understand that. He talks as if he does.

The most startling statistic of all is that, in the early 1950s, the GDPs of South Korea and Tanzania were similar. A few decades of Julius Nyerere and his fawning Western sponsors put paid to that. Aid was lavished on his forced collectivization policies and then more Aid on trying to bale him out of the ensuing mess.

The successful Aid programmes are run by Churches, missionary organizations and small charities. There are lots of small-scale development and educational programmes going on that Brown and Benn will never visit or hear about. Some of these are in Europe. In Moldova and its even poorer border region of Transnistria the Vision of Good Hope organization has managed to ship out sophisticated medical equipment, some of it less than a year old, from the Royal and City Hospitals in Belfast, which would otherwise have been dumped by the National Health Service. Derelict buildings have been developed at modest expense and turned into modern well-staffed orphanages, with the result that the deplorable state-run orphanages are now being taken in hand too.

I believe that Charles Dickens is

largely to blame for the British tendency, even stronger since the War and reaching its climax in the Attlee years, to look to the state for solutions to all the prevailing social problems. Now we hear reports of children in care being subjected to abuses that Dickens never dreamed of. It's a pity for Africa that it will end up as the victim of Brown's statist do-gooding

for which Wallis has provided some of the underpinning. It's also a pity for the poor taxpayer who will have to foot the bill.

*** Next month Stephen Richards will consider the place of John Hewitt in the Ulster Protestant canon twenty years after his passing.**

Desmond Fennell

PART ONE

About Behaving Normally In Abnormal Circumstances

A retrospect on my writing so far and a preface for a possible paperback edition of my first book, *Mainly in Wonder*, 1959.

"It was...Lessing who did a man's part in giving the German nation confidence in itself and in its star... Ireland's present condition is incomparably worse than Germany's ever was; and not one but a whole battalion of Lessings would be needed to establish a normal state of mind among us. One can but predicate not one Lessing nor a succession of them, but rather a succession of nationalistic movements, rising and falling, each dissolving into a period of reaction, of provincialism, yet each for all that leaving the nation a little more sturdy, a little more normal, a little less provincial than before."

Daniel Corkery, 1930

"The instinct to think, write or do things which had not been thought, written or done before had been part of my make-up since my student days... I was now regularly thinking, writing and doing things which had not been done before in my environment."

In literate nations it has long been normal that someone occasionally travels to places and peoples quite alien to the nation's way of life and frame of reference, and writes about them for his or her compatriots. But in modern times up to 1959, when my *Mainly In Wonder* appeared—dealing initially with my travels in Central Europe, Italy and Communist Yugoslavia, but devoted mainly to Japan and India—no Irish writer had done this. I say 'Irish' in the unhyphenated sense, and with reference therefore to those Irish, the great majority, whose ancestors were colonised and whose typical religion or cultural background has been and is Catholic. True, Kate O'Brien and Sean O'Faolain had written about journeys in Spain and Italy respectively; but those two countries were seen by the authors and their compatriots as 'Catholic countries like Ireland', and therefore as formally related to the essentially Catholic, Gaelic nation that the Irish of those days believed they constituted. On the non-Catholic world, Irish writing, as I have defined it, was silent. Most strikingly, the intense involvement, over forty years, of thousands of Irish missionaries in pagan sub-Saharan Africa and in the Far East had not resulted in accounts of those countries or scholarly studies of their pagan, Muslim or Buddhist cultures.

In the first chapter of my book *Beyond Nationalism* (1985), written mostly in the 1970s, I gave an account of my writing and other activities in the years immediately succeeding the publication of *Mainly in Wonder*. Summarising, I wrote:

In part there I was referring to my writing excursions into 'alien' territories of which *Mainly In Wonder* was only the first; in part to another innovative feature of my writing which emerged in the early 60s and which I will deal with in its place. The fact that these two features became recurrent resulted in a dual conflict of my writing with the norms of Irish writing generally. I understand better now, in retrospect, the nature of that conflict. So because I can now throw this greater explanatory light on my writing for those who have followed me all or part of the way, I return to that theme, first touched on in *Beyond Nationalism*.

My Asian journey was followed, a few years later, by visits to two countries which were proclaiming their post-Christian breakthroughs: Sweden, then regarded as the avant-garde country of the West on account of its innovative social welfare system and its 'pagan' sexual mores, and the officially atheistic Soviet Union. Having persuaded the London publisher of *Mainly in Wonder* to commission a book on Sweden, I spent a year there researching and writing it. From Moscow, under Khrushchev, I sent a series of fifteen articles to *The Irish Times*, the first account of Soviet life by

an Irish writer to appear in an Irish newspaper.

What caused me, a Gaelic-speaking, Catholic Irishman to travel to that succession of 'alien' places and to write about them? My interest in the human condition in its various presentations—present, past and possible future—and the fact that I was a writer. More precisely, being a writer and with that general interest in the back of my mind, I became successively interested in those particular human realities to the point of entering into them, investigating them and reporting on them, with judgements and conclusions. In so doing, I did what many men and women of many nations had done when similarly impelled, if not always necessarily by travelling. I behaved normally. But in so doing I was stepping outside the norm of writing that held sway in Ireland.

That norm, tacitly accepted by writers, academics, publishers and the public at large, was to the effect that Irish writers and academics wrote only about Ireland or, very occasionally, about Ireland-related matters abroad. {I am not talking about fictive writers who might well, on occasion, set a novel, a poem or a play in a non-Irish milieu; such writing is not an account of any reality. But that distinction made, it is nevertheless true that, because of the physical and mental outreach of their work, I have felt a kinship, as among Irish writers, with the poet Desmond O'Grady and the novelists Brian Moore, Francis Stuart, Aidan Higgins and John Banville.} In the prevalent Irish way of seeing things, realistic writing about the non-Irish world—that is, description, judgement and definition of it, historically or in the present—was a role proper to members of that alien world; or more simply, to Anglo-Irish people, Englishmen, and other foreigners. So omniscient indeed was the role accorded to these non-Irish categories that they might also, if they so wished, join with Irish writers in writing about Ireland! In the prevalent Irish view, the world of mankind was *their* oyster. As a consequence, my normal behaviour was an abnormality, had an alien flavour. Without intention or even awareness on my part, but simply by following where my interest led me, I was breaking a tacit rule of my tribe.

What was it that caused the Irish, in the matter of writing about the world, to perceive that division of roles between themselves and all others? I want to answer that with some precision, and with the view of hindsight. Generally speaking, during the Revolution and the decades that followed it, the Irish saw themselves collectively through the prism of an inherited nationalism which in that period took its definitive republican shape. That nationalism

depicted them as members of the essentially Gaelic and Catholic Irish nation that since ancient times had owned and inhabited all of Ireland, and was therefore entitled to exercise dominion over it as an independent republic. 'Essentially Gaelic and Catholic' paralleled British nationalism's view of its multi-ethnic monarchical nation as essentially Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. {Both nationalisms allowed for membership of the nation by persons who, by descent or religion, lacked the essential attributes, provided they gave their allegiance to a nation and state characterised by those qualities.}

The Irish nation, thus immutably characterised and with 'anti-imperialist' added, was in its nationalist vision further distinguished by something like a superior racial quality from humanity generally, as represented by the Anglo-Irish, the English and other foreigners. Its nature, thus effectively non-human, was superior to human nature because, while in worldly—intellectual and practical respects—its endowments might be less than the norm, in what really mattered—the spiritual and moral spheres—they were greater.

It was a colonised nationalist vision, dwelling in unreality. Colonisation dispossesses a people of reality by taking from them the perception of themselves as human. More precisely, it induces them to regard themselves as constituting a version of humanity which differs radically from the norm, inasmuch as it is seriously deficient in those intellectual and practical faculties, and related autonomies, by means of which human beings tackle and control the world. Colonised by the English, the 'native' Irish shaped a nationalist self-image which took as given this effective dispossession of humanity. But in order to motivate them towards regaining their lost political dominion, that nationalist image transformed their non-humanity into a positive value by affirming the higher nature of spiritual and moral endowments and Ireland's more-than-human possession of these. Thus, Irish non-humanity became a two-tiered thing: an affirmed superhumanity resting on an assumed subhuman base. By not perceiving normal humanity as present in themselves, and thus appropriating it, the nationalists appeared to confirm the absence of man in Ireland which the English had alleged.

The point to note there is the unreality of this Irish self-image and the logical consequences of that. People who are guided by an unreal idea of their nature use judgement, thought and language abnormally. The Irish, guided by their colonised nationalism, judged that, because humanity and its various cultural worlds—the Catholic parts excepted—

were radically alien to the Irish nature, they lay beyond the competence and jurisdiction of Irish mind and word. (It was much as in the matter of government, where the asserted rightful dominion of the Irish was confined to Ireland and its offshore islands; so, too, in the matter of thoughtful language, where the 'related parts of the world' corresponded to our offshore islands.) And even those related, Catholic parts, though not entirely alien, were seen as connected only inasmuch as the Pope recognised them as Catholic; that is to say, in a formal manner, not intrinsically. That these were abnormal judgements for human beings to make is obvious, and that they led to abnormally restricted use of investigation, thought and writing, not surprising.

When I wrote *Mainly In Wonder* and made those other forays abroad, I was, for reasons unknown to me, unaffected by all that. I was absorbed in a personal quest and making progress in it. It is only in retrospect that I see my quest in its Irish nationalist context, and how that made my writing deviant. In *Mainly In Wonder*, particularly in the Foreword, it is obvious that in my approach first to Continental Europe, then to Asia, I was very conscious of belonging to the Irish Catholic people and their peasant history. Obvious, too, is my experience of those non-Irish worlds as, in a certain sense, alien; hence the 'wonder' of the book's title. Both those sentiments are partly explained by the fact that in the 1950s—I had gone to Germany in 1952 as a student, and subsequently worked there and in Spain and travelled widely—Ireland was still many years away from becoming a member of the European Community. Irish people rarely travelled to the Continent; fewer lived there. I was aware, moreover, that 'travelling' as an activity was uncharacteristic of the Irish: "The Irish", I wrote, "become exiles but seldom travellers... your Irishman as a traveller is not a known quantity". So I felt myself both a pioneer scouting for my tribe, and an unknown quantity, in alien territory.

However, the alienness I registered, first in Europe, later in Asia, was not that which the Irish, collectively, perceived in the non-Irish world. Its nature is spelt out in the Foreword. It was not a radical alienness, as of another kind of being. Casually conscious of myself as a human being, and of the people I encountered as human beings like me and my countrymen, I took our common human nature as the basis of my observations. The alienness I registered, and found food for wonder in, was a merely circumstantial thing within that shared humanity. Modern Europe was a social reality the Irish had

taken no part in building; it had 'made itself without our asking', bore no Irish mark. And again, its richness of inherited cultural forms and rituals struck me forcefully as in contrast with our poverty of these. As for Asia, well, obviously, it was culturally a quite other world. But in addition, there was my awareness that, in the partial shaping of it in recent centuries by European colonisers, my people collectively, individual instances excepted, had played no part. So it was in no way, its humanity apart, my world.

A couple of years after returning to Ireland in 1961, I became interested in a debate then going on in England about how Britain was now to proceed, with the Empire gone and a sense of purpose absent. On the one hand, there were the 'angry young men', as they were called; on the other, intellectuals such as Richard Hoggart, Martin Green, and Raymond Williams publishing books that both analysed and offered prescriptions. I decided to write a pamphlet about this, and with the help of Liam Miller as designer and printer, I published it under the imprint 'Sceptick Press'. It was entitled *The British Problem: a radical analysis of the present British troubles and of possible ways of ending them*. By then—this was 1963—I must have become aware of the transgressive nature of my previous writings, for I chose that title and published the pamphlet 'with intent', so to speak. I took pleasure in breaking the self-imposed Irish taboo on serious writing about English or British matters—as distinct from the British-Irish political relationship. I particularly enjoyed, in the title, 'the British Problem' and 'the British troubles' as, so to speak, literal reverse action.

Although it came about by accident, there was a certain logical progression in my four years, 1964-68, working for *Herder Correspondence*; first in Freiburg, then in Dublin. As some will remember, it was a German Catholic magazine which played a leading 'progressive' role in the matters of the Second Vatican Council. Truly international in its contents, it sold in all five continents. When its office moved from Germany to Dublin, with me as editor, I derived satisfaction from the fact that, for the first time, such a magazine was being edited and printed in Dublin. As well as having translations made of articles from our German edition on near and far-flung places and developments, I was commissioning and editing similar articles. Because we had a well-informed correspondent on Chinese affairs, we were particularly strong on Mao's 'Cultural Revolution!' While seeing to it that Ireland was well covered—I did most of that writing—I once again took piquant pleasure in writing an article on an English theme.

'England's Troubles and the Catholic Left' went on to be included in an American book.

However, since my return to Ireland after my Sweden year, Irish matters—the art scene, religion, a debate about industrial design and the approaching fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising—had become central to my attention. After my move to Conamara in 1968, this homing change of focus was completed: Ireland in all its dimensions became the main theme of my writing until the 1990s. This happened despite the fact that I had gone to Conamara with the intention of writing a book about the contemporary western world and ultimately wrote *Beyond Nationalism: The Struggle against Provinciality in the Modern World*, published by Ward River Press. It was the first Irish book to deal broadly with the modern West, and it contained the first study of nationalism by an Irish author. Given our history, that was an odd omission by Irish scholars, but it was also a telling one. Thinking and writing about nationalism *as such* would have meant seeing Irish nationalism in context, as a mere local instance of a common phenomenon, rather than as yet another feature of our *sui generis* and therefore incomparable reality.

When I took flight again in the 1990s various novelties had occurred and there had been an important ideological change. In 1965 Dervla Murphy had published *Full Tilt* in which she told of a journey by bicycle through Afghanistan to India. Supported by English and American publishers, she had gone on to become an internationally known travel-writer. Between the early 1970s and the 1990s, the Irish self-image as an essentially Catholic-Gaelic nation, inheritor of a long freedom struggle, dissolved. No generally accepted national self-image replaced it. War raged in the North. The Republic, along with Britain, joined the European Community. The consumerist-liberal ideologues of the Dublin mass media, with the largely passive acceptance of the political class, promoted an image of the Republic as a post-Christian, post-nationalist, Ameranglian society with a folksy Irish flavour. It was an image that reflected developing fact as well as the desire of its promoters. The increasing wealth, which by the 90s made the Republic a rich country, underpinned both this metamorphosis and the preaching that encouraged it. It also enabled the Irish mass media to have far-flung correspondents. The most eminent of these, Conor O'Clery, wrote several books—published in Ireland because his journalism had made him well known—about the places where he

had been posted. Conor Cruise O'Brien wrote about his experiences in the Congo and another book about the history of Israel. Aidan Higgins wrote about his sojourn in South Africa. Bob Quinn, using film language, stretched the notion of 'Ireland-related' to include Morocco and Tatarstan—thereby suggesting that it might be a boundless notion. Raymond Crotty began publishing, with difficulty, his theory of world history.

However, these changes and occasional novelties left the norm unchanged that had limited the range of Irish realist writing in the 1960s. Scrutiny of *Books Ireland* from its foundation in 1976 to the 90s makes this evident: the magazine publishes, with brief notices, an almost comprehensive list of new books by Irish authors. While Irish academics and writers produced hundreds of books about Irish matters, past and present, travel did not become a recognised genre of 'Irish writing' (see below). Explorations of foreign societies undertaken as personal initiatives, original depictions of the contemporary world or narratives of history other than Irish, did not appear. The fact that still in these thirty years, after all the centuries, no Irish academic or writer produced a book about England or its history—to go no further—speaks for itself. In this respect, our case remained unique in Europe: in Britain, Finland, Denmark, France, Hungary and Holland—to name but a few countries—a standard part of the academic and general writing scene was books by native authors about lands, peoples and histories other than, and often quite alien to, their own.

In the Republic, a developing narrow redefinition of 'Irish writing' and 'Irish literature' doubtless played an influential role. From the 1960s onwards, the use of those terms to denote only Irish fictive writing—prose fiction, poetry, plays—increased until it became standard. In bringing this about, two state-funded bodies, the Arts Council and Aosdána, played decisive roles: the former by confining its subsidising of book publishers to fictive works only, the latter by similarly restricting its writer membership and with that, the payment to writers of an annual bourse. It looked like a societal decision in favour of imagined verbal fictions as against the use of language to explore the real.

I draw attention to this continuing abnormality of writing by the Catholic Irish simply to make the point that, when my own writing sallied forth again, it was again diverging from the Irish norm. But a question does arise as to why, with the dissolution of our Catholic, Gaelic, republican nationalism, this was so. If we recall the two-tiered nature of the nationalist self-image—Irish natural

superiority in moral and spiritual respects combined with a colonised assumption of natural inferiority in intellectual and practical respects—an explanation seems to emerge. The new, liberal self-image which the Irish in the Republic were being taught to adopt denied them moral and spiritual superiority—suggested in fact their depravity while they remained unreformed. Simultaneously, it represented them as having disproved, in one respect, their allegedly inferior worldly capacity: they were showing a respectable degree of practical ability by becoming rich. Tacitly, however, the assumption that the Irish in the matter of intellect were less than humanly empowered remained unquestioned. In that respect, the world continued to be not an Irish oyster. Something like a conviction of racial inferiority remained. The continuing severe self-restriction of Irish intellectual enterprise was incontestable evidence of this. {Naturally, the self-restriction of intellectual enterprise with regard to the 'geographical' human world was accompanied by crippled intellectual enterprise with regard to the human condition, in whole or in part, wherever occurring. See, among places where I have dealt with this, 'The Irish Problem with Thought' in *Cutting To The Point*, The Liffey Press, 2003, pp.03-31.}

But there was a second factor: that same restriction, because it was evident to all, reinforced the conviction that it was in the nature of things. If young Irish men and women of a thoughtful, wondering, investigative bent read the lists of new books by Irish authors in *Books Ireland*, or simply looked around them at what their elders and peers of similar bent were writing, what were they to think? Clearly they were to believe that the allotted role in the world of Irish people of their bent was to address their minds and writing only to Ireland and matters related to it. Thus their inherited assumption about the natural mental limits of their tribe was reinforced by the evident tribal practice.

As a result, I became once again, by acting normally, a sort of Irish freak. In 1990 there was to be a General Election in Communist East Germany which was likely to lead to the dissolution of that state and to German reunification. Familiar with West Germany, but not with the Communist East, I wanted to take this last opportunity to see it. So I went there and wrote a book, *Dreams Of Oranges*, about my experience

and the death of socialism (it appeared some years later, in 1996). By chance, in 1993, I was offered an opportunity to spend a month in an apartment in Minsk. Wanting to see what life was like in a large provincial Soviet city—the formal end of the Soviet Union would have

made little difference—I went there and wrote *A Month In Minsk* (which remained unpublished). But full flight into deviant realms began when I took a holiday in the American state of Washington. Those six weeks and a subsequent fifteen-month stay in Seattle gave me a new vision of the contemporary USA and of the contemporary West as a whole: the 'Ameropean' West, as I chose to call it. (As it happened, that new vision had an important side-effect: an end to my commitment to the Irish Revolution, or to any similar social idealism, as projects which might be realised in the foreseeable future.) Then, as I developed the Seattle vision in *Uncertain Dawn* (1996) and—after moving to Italy—in *The Postwestern Condition* (1999), I began to query the standard narrative of European history. There was a lack of coherence between the story of the West's progressive 'modern' period and its contemporary condition as I was perceiving this to be. Hence my most recent excursion into territory—the history of Europe—not previously charted by an Irish mind. {See *The Revision of European History*, Athol Books, 2003.}

In the course of seeking British publishers for these books, I discovered something interesting. (Until, for that last book, a chance encounter directed me to Athol—Irish publishers were out of the question.) A mutually reinforcing stereotype had developed between, on the one hand, the long-standing confinement of Irish non-fictional writing to Irish themes and, on the other, British publishing policies. Irish prose fiction and poetry, along with Irish writing on Irish themes, had come to form in British publishing the 'Irish slot'. Accordingly, Irish books dealing with the world outside Ireland, being out of Irish character, were in principle not a kind of book that British publishers wanted. In seeking London publishers for two of my books, my zealous agent Jonathan Williams had much experience of this state of affairs. For British publishers and their market, Irish theorising about the western world or European history, or world history (in Crotty's case), is too much of a contradiction in terms.

Something analogous occurs with the academic pursuit 'Irish Studies'. Engaged in by foreign academics, it consists in studying Ireland mainly in terms of Irish fictive writing and commentaries on such writing, with occasionally a few recent Irish history books thrown in. The fact that Irish writers and academics do not, for their part, show reciprocal active interest in any of the countries to which these foreigners belong, does not strike the

latter as odd. Unusual it may well be by human standards, but they have gathered from their Irish colleagues that it is in the nature of Ireland to be a self-absorbed passivity laid out for scrutiny by itself and all comers; and they prize this as giving to the subject of their study an exotic value which a banally normal country, like, say, Holland or Denmark, could not give.

Desmond Fennell's new book, *About Behaving Normally in Abnormal Circumstances*, will be published by Athol Books early in 2007.

Conor Lynch

Oxfam

The following letter appeared in *Village* magazine of 21st July

Charity: TV and NGOs are too close to the state

Brian Scott of Oxfam implied in his letter (*Village* 13 July) that modern TV news informs us about the iniquities in the world and can spur us into doing something about them. I would say that the Ireland of the '50s and '60s was far better informed about world affairs than the Ireland of the television age. And people were able to have informed views on the world based on knowledge and instinct.

Television operates within parameters set by the state or big business who own or regulate it. It points us towards the "villains" of the day selected by its controllers—Zimbabwe, White Russia, the more popular Muslim states, etc—while largely averting our eyes from evils of which it approves.

NGOs, such as Oxfam, who are seldom off the TV, are the new missionaries in the new world order (or rather, disorder). They do some good works, of course. But they share the values of the new liberal imperialist project.

I am surprised that Brian Scott is so frank about believing that God is on his side: "Our Judeo-Christian tradition has given us a splendid body of values that contributes greatly to our civilisation."

His mission to civilise the world is the mission of Bush and Blair. The methods are different—but each to his role. The underlying complaint of Scott and of other NGOs is that the political leaders are lagging behind in sorting out the world's problems. For instance, Bush and Blair haven't yet got around to giving Sudan a good dose of shock and awe.

Morality And Good Murder

The celebrated murderer and MI5 man, Sean O'Callaghan, and his friend and colleague, Ruth Dudley Edwards, have been in the news again.

Sean is a good murderer—a murderer on behalf of the state—or of the two states which overlap in the strange Constitutional entity called Northern Ireland.

Murderers who murder for the state are good. States spread the cloak of morality over their murderers and other agents. So long as the state remains in being and active, its agents remain moral. Isn't that so? Doesn't it follow from secularist assumptions? If God and all that concerns him have been removed from the political sphere, as remnants of mediaeval superstition, what moral authority is there, beyond the state, that can find the agents of the state guilty of evil-doing when they serve the interests of the state?

The English State asserted an exclusive power to determine morality when Henry VIII booted out Rome and enacted an absolute merger of Church and State. Under this arrangement the State decided what was moral and the Church did what it was told.

The Irish State was reactionary for a couple of generations after it was remade on British authority in 1922 because it took heed of the Church in matters of public morality.

Of course it was right in the first instance, in 1922, that the Church should determine the morality of the situation.

When the British State, after abolishing the Irish Parliament, failed to establish an effective electoral connection between Whitehall/Dublin Castle Government and the people of Ireland, it sought to govern Ireland through the instrumentality of the Catholic Church. It bolstered the authority of the Church by incorporating it into the apparatus of state administration.

A breach opened up between Church and State in Ireland in 1918—between the British State and the Catholic Church—on the issue of compulsory enlistment of adult Irish males in the British Army. And, although the Church did not support the Irish democracy against the British State after the 1918 Election, and did not recognise the Irish Government based on the result of that Election, neither did it give outright support to the authoritarian British State against

the new democratic Irish State.

This breach between the Irish Church and the British State was closed in 1922. The British Government persuaded a small majority in the Dail to dismantle the Republic and set up a new Government under the authority of the Crown, and to fight a war against the upholders of the Republic on the issue.

The persuasive argument by which Whitehall gained a majority against the Republic in the Parliament of the Republic was that, if Ireland did not return to the Empire, Britain would deploy the military resources of the Empire for a comprehensive re-conquest of Ireland.

The Church saw nothing wrong in this militaristic British ultimatum against the Irish democracy. It supported the 'Treaty' signed under the duress of that ultimatum. And it excommunicated those who refused to submit.

The small majority in the Dail against its own Government achieved by the British threat of immediate and terrible war was held to be democratically binding, even though the large majorities for the Republic in the elections of 1918 and 1921 had not been seen by the Church as democratically binding.

Direct British influence in Ireland in 1921 was entirely military. It did not extend beyond a few yards of the barracks, the military convoy, and the assassin's gun. But in 1922 the British State recognised the Church as an instrument of persuasion on the Irish populace. The distinct authority of the Church, and particularly of its excommunicating power, in affairs of state, was thereby enhanced.

In submitting to the British ultimatum of December 1921, the small Treatyite majority in the Dail lost the support of most of the force that had sustained Dail government against the Black-and-Tans and Auxiliaries in 1919-21, and became dependent on British arms, on a new mercenary Army, and on the authority of the Catholic Hierarchy as a separate power.

When the Church had served this final purpose for the British State, in creating a dependent Irish State, its status in the new Irish State, achieved as an instrument of British policy, was useful to British propaganda as a means of denigrating that Irish State, even though it was a British construction.

As British internal politics fell into confusion in the mid-1920s, and the nightmare of the 'Treaty' ultimatum receded, the Irish electorate perked up again, Republican sentiment revived, and the Treatyites were voted out of office in 1932, never to return as a majority

party. The 'Treaty' Oath was abolished and other anti-Treaty reforms were made. But much of the damage done by the Treaty War could not be remedied without a further revolution. And revolutions cannot be plucked out of the air.

The Church retained the exceptional political status conferred on it as a major party to the enforcement of the Treaty.

This journal was launched in the early 1970s for the purpose of identifying the exceptional political status of the Church and creating a public opinion against it. And it would hardly be in order for us to complain that we have been successful.

Anyhow, the Church is not what it was thirty years ago. And people who crawled to it then are kicking it now that it's down. And Ireland has become a normal state of the British kind in which the state is in practice the sole determinant of public morality.

Which brings us back to the celebrated murderer and informer and his collaborator, Ruth Dudley Edwards.

The British State does not prosecute its agents for anything that they did in its service. And they have done pretty dreadful things around the world before retiring on a pension in the Home Counties full of a sense of well being. The moral influence of the state, which is intimately related to its power, guarantees them a good conscience.

The only immoral thing the absolute modern state can do is be defeated and break down. In that case its agents become subject to enemy morality.

There is little danger of that happening to the state, or states, which assure Sean O'Callaghan's good conscience as a murderer, and make it entirely proper for Ruth Dudley Edwards to be his literary collaborator, and the companion of his MI5 propaganda tour of the United States, and to have him as her house guest.

Ruth, whatever she might once have been—when she wrote an admiring though grossly inaccurate biography of James Connolly, the actual military commander in 1916—has long since become a distinguished member of the British Tory establishment. It is therefore entirely proper that she should engage in close collaboration with a murderer in the service of the state.

Opinion in Ireland has not come fully into line with the implication of its modernised state, that the state alone is the determinant of public morality, and that any other opinion only counts if it influences the morality of the state. Widespread opinion persists that

informing is not admirable, and that an informer who commits murder as part of his informing activity is despicable. And persistence of that opinion is not a symptom of residual influence of the Church. It is entirely secular.

And it must be said that Ruth rather encourages it by the way she denies that her collaboration with Sean O'Callaghan has anything to do with MI5—or at least that it was not a collaboration between MI5 members. She rejects the suggestion in a way that implies it would be dishonourable if true. Thus she gives out confusing signals. How can that help the ideological mission she has undertaken?

It makes it appear that she is not at ease with herself in what she has become. And it gives a buzz that would otherwise be lacking to the recent Court case in England in which O'Callaghan appeared as prosecutor. He was house-sitting for her while she was away. One evening, feeling lonely, he went out to a gay bar. He brought back two strangers, who tied him up (allegedly at his request), and plundered the house.

David Morrison

Extract from article in November
Labour & Trade Union Review

Ahmadinejad Points The Finger At The UN System

"The question needs to be asked: if the governments of the United States or the United Kingdom, who are permanent members of the Security Council, commit aggression, occupation and violation of international law, which of the organs of the UN can take them to account? Can a Council in which they are privileged members address their violations?"

(www.irna.ir/en/news/view/line-17/0609207699160531.htm)

These are the words of President Ahmadinejad of Iran in a speech to the UN General Assembly on 20th September 2006. His question identifies the gross inequity at the heart of the UN system—the "privilege" which the US, UK and the Soviet Union accorded themselves in the Security Council after World War II, and granted to France and China as well.

The answer to Ahmadinejad's question is that no organ of the UN can hold the US or the UK to account. They can engage in aggression against other states, as and when they like, as they did against Iraq in 2003, without fear of a slap on the wrist from any organ of the UN, let alone economic or military sanctions.

The Security Council is the only organ of the UN with the authority to pass resolutions binding on UN members and to impose sanctions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to enforce these resolutions. But, since the US and the UK are both permanent members of the Council and have a veto over each and every decision of the Council, it is impossible for them to be sanctioned by the Council. And the same is true for the other permanent members—China, France and Russia.

Veto-wielding permanent members also protect their close allies from sanction by the Council, which is why there was never any question of Israel being condemned by the Council for its recent assault on Lebanon, let alone having sanctions imposed upon it because of its assault. The US ensured that Israel was protected from this. The US even ensured that for a month there were no unwelcome calls by the Council for an immediate ceasefire.

Written In Forever

What is more, the extraordinary privilege enjoyed by 5 out of the 192 UN member states, which was hard wired into the Charter 60 years ago, cannot be changed without the consent of the privileged 5. It cannot be changed because the Charter cannot be amended without the consent of each of the 5 veto-wielding members of the Security Council, none of whom is going to volunteer to give up its extraordinary privilege. Article 108 reads:

"Amendments to the present Charter shall come into force for all Members of the United Nations when they have been adopted by a vote of two thirds of the members of the General Assembly and ratified in accordance with their respective constitutional processes by two thirds of the Members of the United Nations, including all the permanent members of the Security Council."

Thus, whereas it is possible for the General Assembly to recommend an amendment to the Charter removing the privilege—at present it would take the support of 128 out of the 192 member states to do so—no amendment to the Charter can take effect unless it is ratified by all 5 of the permanent members.

Ahmadinejad's Reform Proposals

In his speech to the UN General Assembly, Ahmadinejad spoke about reform of the Security Council:

"Today, serious reform in the structure and working methods of the Security Council is, more than ever before, necessary. Justice and democracy dictate that the role of the General Assembly, as the highest organ of the United Nations, must be respected. The General Assembly can then, through appropriate mechanisms, take on the task of reforming the Organization and particularly rescue the Security Council

from its current state. In the interim, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the African continent should each have a representative as a permanent member of the Security Council, with veto privilege. The resulting balance would hopefully prevent further trampling of the rights of nations."

If there is to be a set of veto-wielding states on the Security Council, then there is an obvious case for spreading them around the globe. Ahmadinejad's proposal seems to be that, as an interim measure to produce some form of balance on the Council, there be additional veto-wielding states which represent groups of states and change from time to time. As it stands, no state in the Non-Aligned Movement (about 120 of them) has a veto, and neither has any of the 56 states in the Organization of the Islamic Conference or the 53 African states. (Some states are in more than one of these groups). The US and EU wield 3 vetoes between them, but the Muslim world with more than twice the population (and around a quarter of the world's population) has none. Asking for one doesn't seem unreasonable. Likewise Africa has a greater population than the US and EU combined (about a sixth of the world's population in all) and no vetoes.

One can but hope that Iran and others mount a campaign for more veto-wielding states, so that a bright light is shone on the inequity of the present system and how it came about. That is not to say that exempting further states from the international rules is a desirable (or achievable) objective, even if the exemption isn't permanent. The principle must be no state is exempt from the rules.

Further articles by David Morrison :
www.david-morrison.org.uk

Ahmadinejad On Palestine

"The roots of the Palestinian problem go back to the Second World War. Under the pretext of protecting some of the survivors of that war, the land of Palestine was occupied through war, aggression and the displacement of millions of its inhabitants; it was placed under the control of some of the war's survivors, bringing even larger population groups from elsewhere in the world who had not been even affected by the war; and a government was established in the territory of others with a population collected from across the world at the expense of driving millions of rightful inhabitants of the land into a diaspora and homelessness. This is a great tragedy with hardly a precedent in history. Refugees continue to live in temporary refugee camps and many have died still hoping to one day return to their homeland. Can any logic, law or legal reasoning justify this tragedy? Can any member of the United Nations accept such a tragedy occurring in their own homeland?"

Speech, UN General Assembly 19.9.2006

Henry Siegman

Report of article by the Senior Fellow and Director for
the U.S./Middle East Project

The Issue Is Not Whether Hamas Recognises Israel

What hope there may still be for avoiding a complete meltdown in the Palestinian occupied territories, not to speak of the hope of ever achieving a two-state solution, lies not with the initiative by Mahmoud Abbas, Palestinian Authority president, to put the two-state formula to a popular referendum but with the ruling Hamas movement's refusal to play by Israel's old rules.

Those rules have in effect eliminated the prospect of viable Palestinian statehood and were intended to achieve that end. Hamas is determined that Palestinian recognition of Israel will not come about without Israel's recognition of Palestinian national rights, and that only an end to the occupation and Israel's acceptance of the principle that no changes in the pre-1967 borders can occur without Palestinian agreement (a principle enshrined in the road map that Israel pretends to have accepted) will constitute such recognition.

The most widely respected Israeli security expert, Efraim Halevy, believes Israeli and American efforts to overthrow the Hamas regime are misguided. A hawk who headed Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency, under five prime ministers and served as Ariel Sharon's national security adviser, Mr. Halevy is convinced these efforts damage Israel's vital interests. His view shocked members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations when Mr. Halevy addressed them recently in New York. He has held it for some time. In September 2003, he said Israel should signal to Hamas that if *"it enter(s) the fabric of the Palestinian establishment, we will not view that as a negative development. I think that in the end there will be no way around Hamas being a partner in the Palestinian government"*. At that time, when Hamas had the support of only a fifth of the Palestinian population, Mr Halevy said: *"Anyone who thinks it is possible to ignore such a central element of Palestinian society is simply mistaken."* How much more so today, when Hamas enjoys majority support.

Asked last week on Israeli television how he could justify advocating engagement with a terrorist organisation that does not recognise Israel's right to exist, Mr. Halevy ridiculed the stale assumptions that underlie that question. Do not look at Hamas's rhetoric, he said, look at what it does: Hamas declared a truce 18 months ago and has committed no terrorist acts against Israel since. In spite of Hamas's refusal to change its theological rejection of Israel, Ismail Haniyeh, prime minister in the Hamas-led government, ordered his ministers to seek practical co-operation with their Israeli counterparts. Mr. Haniyeh also confirmed that Hamas's self-declared truce is open-ended.

Why should Israel care whether Hamas grants it the right to exist, Mr. Halevy asked. Israel exists and Hamas's recognition or non-recognition neither adds to nor detracts from that irrefutable fact. But 40 years after the 1967 war, a Palestinian state does not exist. The politically consequential question, therefore, is whether Israel recognises a Palestinian right to statehood, not the reverse. Using Mr Halevy's criterion of looking at what a government does, not what it says, it is clear that-its many declarations to the contrary notwithstanding-Israel does not recognise a Palestinian right to statehood in the West Bank and Gaza. The position of Ehud Olmert's government is that Israel's right to annex at will any parts of Palestinian territory east of the pre-1967 borders supersedes any Palestinian rights. This is implicit in the Israeli Government's decision that a Palestinian Government that even wishes to place on the agenda of a peace negotiation the territorial changes made unilaterally by Israel in the West Bank, or the question of the Palestinian refugees, cannot be a partner for peace.

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Financial Times, June 8, 2006
<http://www.cfr.org/publication/10870/>

Nick Folley

Who are the real fascists in Middle East?

George W. Bush, with his usual knack for unconscious irony, last week described an "Islamofascist" conspiracy to destroy freedom, democracy and "our way of life".

While it's clear who the Islamic fundamentalists are, who are the fascists? There can be no denying Muslims have carried out terrorist attacks, but how is one supposed to describe what the US and UK in particular are doing throughout the Middle East?

Apart from a growing tendency to try to link Islam and Nazism in the popular psyche, obviously Bush and his ilk never stop to consider how their actions in this regard might be perceived in the Muslim world.

Can anyone seriously believe that any government established in Iraq will be anything other than a western puppet?

One thing is sure: it is far more important to the US and UK that any Middle East 'democracy' is pro-west than that it is truly democratic. Proof of this can be found in their support for the repressive and totalitarian House of Saud and simultaneous rejection of the Palestinian people's choice of a Hamas government. To even the most casual observer, it is clear that Bush and his ilk hate the way of life in the Middle East and regard these societies as backward, medieval and socially inferior. Social Darwinism is alive and well as US and British soldiers bring the benefits of civilisation to the 'savages' of Iraq and Afghanistan down the barrel of a gun.

There was the usual chatter after the foiled terror attack last week about the need for Muslims to fit in with the secular society in which they live in the west. This would be fair enough except that the west expects Muslims to fit in with the secular western model even when they are living in their own countries.

To this end, Bush and his cronies have a fascist tendency to impose their peculiar brand of selective democracy, which is nothing more than neo-colonialism, on Muslim societies, laying waste to those who decline to embrace 'liberation' with open arms.

(Irish Examiner, 16.8.06).