

Church & State

A Pluralist Review Of Irish Culture

Dark Forebodings *Muslims, Demographics, Ireland And The West*

Between The Mountains And The Gantries

The History Boys

Fr. D'Arcy

Cadamstown

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Editorial

Dark Forebodings

—Muslims, Demographics, Ireland And The West

Mary Kenny warns us that we are losing the demographic race.

Who are "we" to an English Tory from an Irish radical background? The Christian Europeans perhaps? Or at least the Europeans who are not Muslims.

The Muslims are outbreeding us—that is Mary Kenny's warning to the world. And we must take them on.

And how are we to do that? By breeding faster?

But this is the same Mary Kenny who, in her days as a mini-skirted Dublin radical, broke the contraceptive ban by buying condoms in Belfast, bringing them to Dublin by train, and waving them about for the newspapers to see.

By that combination of things she exemplified an essential of the modern culture which, she now says, threatens us with extinction—free sexual display dissociated from reproduction.

So what can one say about her warning thirty years later that we are losing the demographic race, except repeat that refrain from Moliere's play: *Vous l'avez voulu, George Dandin!*—This is what you wanted, by George!

J.J. Campbell, leader of the Nationalist Party in the North after the retirement of Joe Devlin, warned his people seventy years ago of the danger of race suicide through contraceptive culture. He was of course a bigoted male chauvinist reactionary, and we would not dream of suggesting otherwise. But we have remarked on a number of occasions that his comment was not illogical, and did not fly in the face of experience.

There was a time, not all that long ago, when the Irish were, in the words of the Young Ireland song that James Connolly liked to quote, *The Aliens Of The West*. In those days we belonged with the great bulk of humanity that was regarded as alien by the *West*—a word that took the place of "*Greater Britain*" after Britain found it expedient to discontinue that term.

But we are no longer aliens. We have joined the elite of the world. We are the most globalist of the globalists. The common ruck of humanity has become alien to us. And we demand that the aliens should be kept down.

Mary Kenny may have transmogrified into an English Tory. And she may have become a good Catholic. And Celtic Tigger Ireland may have sloughed off its Catholicism. And the *Irish Independent* may be an expression of those tendencies which are causing us to be losing the demographic race. But Mary Kenny is not out of place in it. Extremes meet.

Gerry Gregg (the Stickie-minded television producer) proclaimed in the *Sunday Independent* (4 Dec.): *The Battle Continues For The Divided Hearts And Minds Of Irish Muslims*:

"40,000 Muslims now live in Ireland"[which is about 1% of the population]. And "57% per cent of young Muslims favour the imposition of Sharia Law". And that is a danger to our "Western values".

And what are our "*Western values*" just now? (If you take your eyes off them for a minute you find that they've changed.) For Gregg they seem to be "*tolerance and integration*". And our virtue of tolerance now seems to mean that these aliens cannot be tolerated, but must be integrated. And that means that they must stop being Muslims and offer themselves up to be re-made into whatever it is that we are. And that is

problematical because the most definite thing that we are in the Dublin 4 view seems to be that we are not Muslims and that we can't stand Islam.

We are a tolerant people who cannot stand intolerance. And we are in imminent danger of having Sharia Law imposed upon us by that 57% of the youth of the 1% of the population. And that danger to our "*inter-ethnic harmony and social cohesion cannot be evaded by politically correct wishful thinking. Nor will that 57% be appeased by lofty presidential appeals to a common civil spirit or a shared humanity*".

Not even though "*Mary McAleese is popular with Irish Muslims—some 82% like her. Maybe that's because she shows respect to the Muslim big-wigs and knows her place when visiting Saudi Arabia*".

So the watchword is: No appeasement of Islam either at home or abroad. And if want Saudi money, let them beg us to accept it; and let not the President observe the customs of the country if she must go there.

There is only one right way to behave anywhere in the world, and that is the way we behave. The old maxim of behaving like the Romans when in Rome no longer applies.

We live in a new era since 9/11. Diversity is no longer acceptable at home or abroad. The War On Terror requires uniformity. In order that we should triumph, the rule is that he who is not with us is against us.

But it doesn't all fit together. The two states on which we depend most as a basis for enforcing our will are Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and they are the most Muslim states in the world. And Saudi Arabia is perhaps the most stable state, being feudal in composition. Pakistan, a military dictatorship, appears less stable, but it is a reliable enough ally for the time being in what we find it necessary to do to the world.

President Bush hinted a couple of years ago that the time had come for Saudi Arabia to be democratised, but he soon fell quiet on the subject. Somebody close to him told him what he should have known as a matter of course—that a democratised Saudi would probably destroy our world. It would, at the very least, by a major addition to the *Axis of Evil*.

Saudi stability does not rest merely on oppression. The state is a creation of a fundamentalist tribal/religious upheaval in the 19th century, and it is permeated with clan and (extreme) religious loyalties. And if either its feudalism or its religious fundamentalism was destroyed, and a force of democracy was generated, the world as we know it—the world that runs on petrol—would never be the same again.

Saudi tribal fundamentalism is a corner-stone of our world. For practical purposes it is part of the liberal-democratic world order. It is unlikely that it would remain so if we bombarded it with liberal-democratic propaganda and gave tangible support to internal elements of dissent. Which is why we do not do that.

In Pakistan a sort of elected liberal Government was overthrown by Musharraf's military *coup*, and President Bhutto was tried for corruption and executed. (And by the standards applied by Judge Moriarty in his Tribunal, there can be little doubt that he was very corrupt.)

Pakistan is a congeries of clans and fundamentalist religious bodies, but, unlike Saudi, it is not a state self-made by these forces. It has no traditional ruling aristocracy or clan or religious hierarchy. It has a formal state structure at the top which is unrelated to the society underneath, and which is required to present a face to the world as if it was the representative of a society of a very different kind. And Musharraf governs by mediating between the society that actually exists in Pakistan and what we require Pakistan to do, and to pretend to be.

He does this with exceptional skill and flair.

Last year he made a kind of internal treaty with the tribes of Waziristan, on the border with Afghanistan, whom the British used to police by bombing in the 1920s (after they had won the Great War for democracy and the rights of nations). He was criticised for this by Washington. It didn't look good in the new war for democracy—a supposedly modern Government making a treaty with lawless and fundamentalist bodies of its own citizens. That was when Musharraf let it be known that in 2001, when Washington divided the world into those who were for it and those who were against, Pakistan was threatened with nuclear obliteration if it did not take its stand decisively with the forces of Good against the forces of Evil.

That is one way, if not quite of gaining friends, at least of disposing of possible enemies. But it stimulated Musharraf to press on with making a Bomb for himself. And his revelation of the threat silenced criticism of his treaty with the Waziris.

But the US could not let the matter rest. Late in 2006 a peaceful *madrassar*—a Muslim school—in Waziristan was bombed from a great height, because Washington had informed the Pakistan authorities that it was a haven for terrorists, and everybody was killed. But, when the Waziris exacted a fearful revenge on the Pakistan Army a short while later, the world took little notice. And Musharraf appears to have accepted it philosophically, as a legitimate *quid pro quo*.

These are some of the ways that the world is being governed since it was re-created in 1990, when it was saved from Communism.

But to get back to our theme: How is Sharia Law to be imposed on us by 57% of the youth of 1% of the population? (Let us say, at a rough estimate, by 0.3% of the population.)

The matter was gone into on *Tonight With Tom McGurk* (RTE radio, 21.09.06). Muslims made no secret of the fact that they preferred Sharia Law to our English Common Law, modified in recent years by borrowings from the Spanish Inquisition. And it would be introduced when the Irish people voted for it—when 1% became 51%.

David Quinn, former Editor of the *Irish Catholic*, and ardent Thatcherite economist and Imperialist, saw in this a deadly danger to our way of life.

Paddy O'Gorman, who had a connection with this magazine in the distant past—if we were Buddhists, we would say in a previous incarnation—now pokes at odd corners of Irish society for RTE to see what moves in them. Recently he poked at Muslim communities in Ballyhaunis and Kildare and asked about Drink and Girl-friends and Marriage. And he got nowhere with them. Here were people with a culture that was formed centuries before Brian Boru usurped the High Kingship of Ireland, living amidst the most modern culture in the world today, and being entirely unimpressed by it. If David Quinn and Gerry Gregg listened to those programmes, they must have had nightmare for weeks afterwards.

O'Gorman's questions were answered freely, matter-of-factly, without embarrassment, and they uncovered no latent resentment of the restrictions imposed by the Muslim way of life. Bachelors and married men were questioned about arranged marriages, and all seemed to think it was at least as good a way of getting married as any other. If you were taken with the appearance of a girl you tried to get a marriage with her arranged. Or it might be that friends or family directed you towards a girl who might be suitable. Then, when you got married, you discovered if appearances led in the right direction. And they didn't think that having a succession of girl-friends was a better guide to successful marriage than their way. Because either way you couldn't really know until the marriage was actually contracted.

It was evident that they had not sealed themselves off from

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

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the life that surrounded him. They had observed it, reflected on it, and found no great attraction in it.

But the real difference was not brought out by Paddy—perhaps because it is virtually unthinkable to anybody who lives in the Irish media today. It is that Muslims still have the idea of marriage as an existing reality, while in contemporary Ireland, perhaps even more than in Britain, it is a superseded idea—a name left over from the past—a piece of romantic nostalgia. There are, of course, many thousands of individuals who still contrive to make marriages in the substantial form. But Marriage has ceased to be a public institution, encouraged and sustained by the prevailing culture.

There was only one woman on Paddy O'Gorman's programme. The old, fundamental, division of labour still applied. The woman reared the family,

and the man provided the means of life.

Ruth Lee of the Institute of Directors in Britain recently criticised some marginal Budget proposal in favour of the family with the categorical statement that having children is "*an individual lifestyle choice*", and that the state had no business encouraging it. And the Irish state has now gone even farther than the British in strict economic individualisation.

This is in accordance with the highest values of the European Enlightenment, which proclaimed that the individual is an end and must never be treated as a means to an end. And this view was incorporated into Christianity and declared to be an essential Christian position—though it is hard to find it in the Bible.

If, in the prevailing culture of a society, the individual is an end and the having of children is a "*lifestyle choice*"

of which the state should take no account, that must mean that the reproduction of the species is an optional extra. And, if that is part of the value system of 'the West', then 'the West', in order to be true to its values, should take no account of the demographic race.

In raising a scare about the demographic race, and demanding that something be done to prevent Islam from winning it, Mary Kenny is on the verge of abolishing the most vital distinction between Islam and Christianity in contemporary affairs.

Peoples have lived contentedly within the culture of Islam for more than a thousand years—and not only Muslims. The peoples who are now trying to exterminate each other in the Middle East under the impact of Western Christian military power and ideology, lived side by side peacefully within the Ottoman Empire—not only Shia and Sunni, but Jews and many ancient varieties of Christians.

But they lived in "*the dark Egyptian night*" (as Kipling put it in *The White Man's Burden*). They lived in the variety of their traditional forms, unprogressively, not driven by demonic elements in their ways of life to abolish each other for the purpose of establishing globalist uniformity.

It is intolerable to us that there should be multitudes of people who do not live like us, and who in submitting to our irresistible military power, do not give up their own ghost and give in to ours. They threaten us by refusing to give in. How might we make them give in?

The *Irish Times* of 4th November carried an article entitled, *What Is Missing In Islam Is Need For Modern Theological Insights* by Andrew Furlong who, according to the blurb was the Dean of Clonmacnois in the Church of Ireland, and was sacked "*when his doctrinal views were considered unacceptable by his church*".

Furlong's argument is both self-contradictory and to the point. If Islam had a theology, it would be vulnerable to us, because we could argue with it about God. On the other hand God is something we can know nothing about—is that why Furlong was sacked by his Church?—and therefore theology (the science of God) has for its subject a "*hypothetical reality*".

When Paddy O'Gorman tried talking to Muslims about doctrine, they suggested that he should go and discuss it with the Imam. What their religion was to them was not a set of metaphysical doctrines, but a satisfactory way of life—a thing which Christianity has comprehensively ceased to be for the Christians.

Report

Mary Kenny On The Moral Maze

(BBC Radio), 15th November 2006

(The subject was whether there should be a law against incitement to religious hatred. Nick Griffin, the leader of the British National Party was against such a law, as was Mary Kenny, who came on after him.)

A Panelist: It seems that you're very comfortable sitting in the same seat as Nick Griffin expressing a pretty much identical view on this question. Does it worry you that you're in such company.

Mary Kenny: Well, that's your analysis. It's not mine.

Q: So you deny that you're making the same argument that he made.

MK: I don't have the same views that he has.

Q: Not about other things. But on this issue... you are making the same argument that he made.

MK: If you say so.

Q: Well, you are... He knows that there is very powerful latent anti-Muslim feeling there to be played with and encouraged politically. And that's what he's doing. And he's doing it because he favours a predominantly white white-supremacist Britain. How comfortable are you with that?

MK: Well, I mean there *are* problems with Islam, and we do have to talk about them. And we do have to talk about them in a very open and honest way. And we can't sort of tiptoe around and say, Gosh, we mustn't talk

about this because it involves ethnicity. I mean the Muslim birth-rate in Europe is three to five times higher than the Christian, or post-Christian, or Judaeo-Christian birth-rate, if you like. That is actually a very serious subject. They are winning the demographic race, if you like. No pun intended. And that means there will be changes in our culture. Let's talk about it. Let's be open and talk about it. And let's not pretend it's not happening.

Q: Is it right to have laws which prohibit incitement to violence by racial hatred?

MK: Well, I think, as far as I understand it, laws should be judged on their outcome.

Q: We have a law like that. Do you think that law should be repealed?

MK: I'm not in favour of hate laws, because I, because I do think it's a very slippery—

Q: —So we should repeal the law which outlaws incitement to violence through racial hatred?

MK: I'll have to think about that.

Q: Well that would lead to racial hatred. That would lead to violence, wouldn't it?

MK: Well, all sorts of things lead to violence... I'm not comfortable with the idea that action is judged according to how the victim perceives it. I think that's a very dangerous area of law. It's a bit Alice In Wonderland... Let's be a little bit more robust about this. You can disapprove of things. I disapprove of Gordon Ramsay effing and blinding all the time all over the television. But that doesn't mean, But that doesn't mean I want to prohibit him...

The former Dean of Clonmacnois writes:

"theology is seen by modern scholarship as a human product, which is not to deny that God may be real. For example, in a previous era it might have been believed that the gods revealed to humanity that each had taken the initiative to choose an ethnic group to support, protect and fight alongside in battle. Now it is recognised that such beliefs are simply human claims. Despite asserting that they have knowledge about the character and will of God, all the religions also contain the contrary idea that God, if such a reality exists, is beyond comprehension and unknowable to us in this present life. All we have, therefore, are our speculative ideas about this awe-inspiring but hypothetical reality. Although the Hebrew and Christian scriptures were once believed to be inerrant and dictated from heaven, the majority of scholars no longer accept this. Similarly with Islam, does not the Koran need to be recognised for what it is—a historically and culturally conditioned human product... What is the reason for taking it literally when it is so ambiguous and contradictory, just like other scriptures? Has it divine authority or is it a human, culturally-conditioned product? ...As human beings, we are nearly all free to search for meaning, wonder and values in the face of the implacable mystery of our existence. Why are we here at all? But, given that we are here, we need to search for spiritual and political visions for living. As global citizens today, could we not think in terms of a resource of wisdom and spirituality fed by religions, by art and culture, by history and science" etc.

There is in fact no global citizenship, unless it be citizenship of the world-dominating United States, and perhaps its British adjunct. Even the European Union is not part of it, despite its pretensions, and must play second fiddle.

And if we reach the conclusion that sacred scriptures are not divine revelations but human constructs, why should that lead to Muslim theology—which on that assumption is the science of a non-existent subject?

Presumably because Furlong knows that theology—the inheritance of Christian Rome from the philosophy of Greece, which decreed that "*the unexamined life is not worth living*"—must be destructive of the religion which goes in for it.

There is little or nothing in the Koran of what Europe calls theology. There is

no anthropology, or zoology, of God. There is no Joshua, no Job, no Paul, no Revelation. What there is, is a guide to living, which is said to be a message from God. And, if it is found to be a satisfactory way of living, how is it devalued by the fact that "*modern scholarship*" holds that it was devised by a man? It has lasted because of what it is. And what could be of greater value in human terms than a satisfactory way

of life in this world.

Paddy O'Gorman kept asking his Muslims about Drink. Here they were in the country of pubs, and had they really never been in one? And it seemed that they just couldn't see the point in alcohol.

Imagine the awfulness of it. Contentment without the help of theology or alcohol.

David Quinn And Others On Sharia Law

David Quinn:

"The fear of the Europeans is that they won't be able to assimilate the ever-growing Muslim publications, and that the ever-growing Muslim populations don't want to be assimilated. And that what the ever-growing Muslim populations want to do is at some point introduce or impose Sharia Law upon the countries in which they live. I mean I've interviewed Muslims about it. I've interviewed Muslims in Clonskea Mosque about this. And I put it to them: If we ever had a majority Muslim population in Ireland, would you want to see Sharia Law introduced, and the answer was, Of course. Now my opinion is, if you have a large body of Muslims wanting Sharia Law introduced, which is so utterly incompatible with Western constitutional democracy, then you have got a major problem. I think that is one of the key issues—the attitude of your average Muslim to Sharia Law being introduced into European countries."

In response, the Secretary of the Irish Council of Imams said he thought it was democracy when the majority of the population established the kind of law that it thought best. And Professor Fred Halliday, of the London School of Economics, who was an enthusiast for the 1991 war on Iraq, and can hardly be accused on being soft on Islamic Revolution in Iran, pointed out that there is no Book of Laws in the Koran as there is in the Bible, and that the term Sharia Law is not any specific body of law, Muslims in each situation being free to arrange it for themselves.

But David Quinn's fears were not calmed. He appears to live in the certainty that the one per cent are destined to become 51% in Ireland, that we will lose our English Common Law, that the contentment of the dark Egyptian night is about to descend on us, that we will be relieved of our recently acquired existential *angst* (a thing unknown to our Gaelic ancestors), and that life will then not be worth living.

Tonight With Tom McGurk
(RTE Radio 21.9.06)

Report

Eric Kaufmann took up a biological position akin to Mary Kenny's in *Prospect*, a British magazine, in an article entitled *Breeding For God*, which formed the cover story of the November issue. This was flagged as follows: "In Europe, the fertility advantage of the religious over non-believers has historically been counterbalanced by the march of secularisation. Not any more. Secularisation in Europe is now in decline, and Islam continues to grow. Europe will start to adopt a more American model of modernity"*.
Brief extracts from Sean Swan's reply appear below.**

Breeding And Religion

Eric Kaufmann's biological determinism predicts a world of increasing religiosity and increasing conservatism (*Prospect*, November 2006). His argument rests on two pillars: first, that religious people have more children than secular people, and second, that increased religiosity will lead to increased conservatism in politics. Self-evidently true? Perhaps not.

...
The link between religion and radical movements is historically undeniable, from the Peasants' revolt riddle "*When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?*" to the role of the Anabaptists in the peasant wars in Germany, to the Diggers in the English revolution, to liberation theology in South America. The politics of religious people is not decided by theology, but by political factors. Take the example of two theologically identical churches, the Dutch Reformed church in South Africa and the Dutch Reformed church in the Netherlands, which occupy diametrically opposed poles on the conservative/liberal spectrum. The defining factor is not religious, it is the social conditions in which the believer exists. A further example is provided by

a comparison of the politics of two southern Baptists, WA Criswell and Martin Luther King. Their opposing positions on the civil rights question in the 1950s and 1960s clearly owed more to their, and their congregations', respective skin colours and the social implications of that difference in the southern US at that time, than to Baptist theology.

In fact WA Criswell's own life reveals another significant factor: religious conservatism is not itself immune from liberalising social attitudes. In 1956 Criswell addressed a joint session of the South Carolina legislature on the subject of integration: "Let them integrate," he declared, "Let them sit up there in their dirty shirts and make all their fine speeches. But they are all a bunch of infidels, dying from the neck up." However, by the time he wrote his autobiography in 1991, he had decided that? "Racism was, is, and always will be an abomination in the eyes of God." Given the fact that throughout his preaching career a defining point of his theology was faith in the literal word of the Bible, it must be assumed that this change of heart was due to non-religious factors.

□

Kaufmann foresees an upsurge in "religion as identity" in a future ethnically divided Europe. He points out that "in ethnically divided Northern Ireland, sectarian conflict fuels far higher religiosity than in other parts of Britain." This is correct: church attendance in Northern Ireland is 63.3 per cent, while in Britain, it is only 18.9 per cent. But the wrong comparison is being made. The comparison should be with the Republic of Ireland, which has a very similar church attendance rate of 67.5 per cent—and none of the ethnic divisions of Northern Ireland. What we are seeing here is a common Irish religiosity in contrast to British secularism. Religion and identity have overlapped in Ireland and the Balkans at the end of both the 19th and 20th century, but these are the exceptions, not the rule.

Kaufmann's thesis is, superficially, very convincing, however the reality is rather more complex.

* This can be read in full at http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/article_details.php?id=7913

** This can be read in full at: http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/article_details.php?id=7933

Sean Swan has just completed a PhD on the Official Irish Republican Movement at the University of Ulster. He is currently working on an existential justification for social democracy, since published as a book. More information at <http://www.lulu.com/content/600047>

Robert Burrage

Letter To Editor

Family Customs And Pakistan

In *Church & State* No. 86 Autumn 2006 Brendan Clifford in "The Pope And Benjamin Kidd" writes that the unwealthy parts of the world, much of which is islamic, follow a way of life that is conducive to human reproduction and which supplies all parts the world with workers and population.

I write this to amplify his comments:

In September of 2006 I spent two weeks in Pakistan, nearly all of it in the North West Frontier Province. Much of my time in the NWFP I spent at a boy's boarding school.

Nearly everybody, including children, asked me how many children I had. Some boys, being slightly less egalitarian, asked me how many sons I had.

At no time in the NWFP did I see a woman working in a store or shop.

One young boy, when I told him that I had been married for just over a decade and that I had no children, looked puzzled, as if he had heard something against the natural order of things.

Whilst many people in Pakistan speak English and watch British and American films, news items, and documentaries, for financial reasons not so many have visited the UK and the USA, and some aspects of Western life have escaped them.

I encountered quite a few educated but untravelled people who did not realise that having multiple wives in the UK and the USA is a crime.

Not knowing that it was a crime, quite a few people suggested to me that I should acquire a second additional wife, and even, a pakistani wife. This I heard not just from men, but on three different occasions from wealthy married women who could be described as secular muslims.

When I mentioned the idea of having multiple wives to men at my american work place, they appeared to be terrified at the thought of having two wives.

With the exception of two senior police officers with whom I had short meetings, and who were I assumed too busy for an in-depth interrogation into the state of my domestic situation,

everybody in Pakistan with whom I had a conversation, asked me how many children I had.

Many adults wanted to talk about the state of families in the West. How badly we looked after our aging parents. How poorly we looked after our children. Pakistani family values were a point of pride.

Wesley McCrum

A new anthology of poetry, *The Blackbird's Nest*, was launched in the Autumn of 2006 as part of the Belfast Festival at Queen's. Edited by Frank Ormsby, Head of English at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, and more famous as an anthologizer than a poetizer, it purports to be a celebration of poets associated with Queen's University. The young, vibrant and innovative poet Wesley McCrum was unaccountably omitted from the collection, presumably because of his lack of any connection with Queen's, or (more likely) because of his frequent drunken vituperative references to Dr. Heaney as "Famous Séamus" and "Ole Snake-Eyes". Here he takes his bilious revenge.

The Blackbird's Nest

In the Great Hall at Queen's a Christian Englishman, solid, boring, monotonous,
Tells us to reverence not the Trinity
Gregory Nazianzen hymned;
Rather the Trinity wealth-producing:
Heaney and Longley and Paul Muldoon.
Add John Hewitt—a sop to the
Protestants;
Add Frank Ormsby—a Taig made good;
Add them all up on your desk calculator:
Make your cost-benefit analysis smile!
Here's a new concept: Queen's has the
copyright
Whether you stayed there a week or a
year,
All of your *oeuvre* is now pure Queen's
poetry
And the Vice-Chancellor's baring his
teeth.
Call his grin wolfish or call it avuncular,
Never did engineer so court the Muse!

Wilson John Haire

BETWEEN THE MOUNTAINS AND THE GANTRIES

A memoir by Will Morrison,

Appletree Press Ltd, Belfast

(ISBN-10: 0 86281 851 6)

A Lost Belfast World

Will Morrison entered Harland and Wolff's shipyard in Belfast in 1947.

He was 14 years old. He was assigned a job as a messenger boy in the Main Offices of the shipyard until when he was 16 and therefore ready to start his five-year apprenticeship as woodworker. He lived in a working-class Protestant area of Belfast.

His father was a shipyard labourer, his mother a former shop assistant. He has a brother and two sisters. His early life, by today's material standard, could be called impoverished and deprived. The family lived in a two-up-and-two-down-house. The children slept in a double-bed in one room and the parents in the other. Downstairs was a scullery and a kitchen. These were the kitchen houses built for the unskilled labourer. Skilled labour had a parlour house—an additional bedroom upstairs and a parlour downstairs.

He left the shipyard in 1954, a journeyman joiner, and entered Trinity College, Dublin where he got a BA. After that he became a Presbyterian Minister. In 1960 he emigrated to Canada. His wife and two children were to follow him later. Eventually he gave up the ministry and became a lecturer in philosophy and English literature at a university college in British Columbia. How did he achieve this? In this book he doesn't tell us, but there are clues to his development as his story unfolds. He seems more intent on telling us about his childhood and he tells it very well. He is good on the small details of every day life. At first you are left wondering why he is going into the mechanics of threading a needle for his grandfather for example but as the story unfolds all the minute details begins coming together.

In his book he begins with a chapter called *Plundering*. Daddy is at work and mammy has to do some shopping so the four children are left on their own in the house for a while. This opportunity they take to go through any documentation the parents may have stowed away from prying eyes like the marriage certificate, birth certificates and any letters they shouldn't read. They want to know who they really are and who their parents are. I did this myself along with my four sisters when my parents were out and

I'm sure it is what most children do. Will and his siblings discover military memorabilia from WW1, part of a uniform and a steel helmet belonging to a relative. Belfast would have been full of that kind of stuff in both Protestant and Catholic areas. Most of the survivors of WW1 were still alive. A mere twenty-one years after 1918 WW2 was beginning.

Across the street other children had also been plundering their parent's memorabilia. One boy rushes out of a house delighted at discovering he had been adopted. Although genetics weren't spoken of in scientific terms like today there was the basic belief then that a lot of family traits were copied down the generations. The introduction of the psychotherapist and the behaviourist school of thought submerged genetics for a number of years. The adopted boy, in my understanding, was joyful at not belonging genetically to those who had taken him in. So he couldn't have thought much of this family. Misbehaving as a child I could be told by either parent that they must have picked up the wrong baby in the maternity ward, that I probably belonged to a criminal. In retaliation I was inwardly delighted.

WW2 covered so much of the author's most formative years of childhood. It militarises the young soul, most games are military, all talk is of warfare, but of conventional warfare with tanks and ack-ack guns and .303 British Army rifles and brass regimental badges. Catholic children in the North on the other hand seem to have an instinct for guerrilla warfare. Their games are of hidden dugouts, of sudden attacks and withdrawal tactics, ambushes and searches for supposed arm dumps.

German planes can now reach Belfast and the shipyard and aircraft works are targeted with parachute mines, a number of which drift with the wind into parts of the Catholic area of the Bone with terrible consequences. The three German raids causes almost two thousand dead and thousands wounded. Whole areas of the city are totally demolished. The author gives a good and accurate account of these raids as he was there with the bombs falling in the next street to his family home. Living in Carryduff, seven miles from Belfast, I heard the German

planes above our house followed by seven explosions as each plane dropped seven bombs in distant Belfast. One lone ack-ack gun yards from our house shakes the roof and walls as it fires hopelessly at the planes during the second raid. My father goes out to have a look and is driven indoors again as a British army officer points a revolver points at him.

Will and his family hide under the table or under the stairs as if that will save them should the house fall on top of them. There are air-raid shelters in the street but one has taken a direct hit with 88 men, women and children killed on the Protestant Shankill Road. So they are not place to be in. Thousands take to the roads leading to the countryside each night. Machine-gun fire from the German fighter escorts accompanying the bombers sweep the streets. Flax mills burn fiercely, Despite all of this the shipyard and the aircraft factories are up and running again within three months. I was once told by a leftist RAF pilot back as far as 1950 that there was no such thing as strategical bombing, that the object was to kill the skilled workers living around the factories. Factories can be rebuilt but a highly skilled worker like a tool maker, for example, can't be replaced for years. Some of the horror of this type of bombing is given a good account of in this book.

Anyone looking for politics won't find any opinions here. The book merely reflects the Protestant working-class in its everyday life. Except for the blitz, life is mostly quiet and unruffled but occasionally torn by lack of money and the lack of cigarettes. The author's parents are not particularly religious. The granddad once stopped the boy from singing *The Sash*—an Orange song—in his home. The boy's father isn't in the Orange Order and therefore the son won't be in the junior Orange Order. The author, as a boy, is very religious so we are informed of the complexities of the Protestant faith. For a while he attends a mission hut at the end of his street and tells us that he has been *saved* many times. Apparently he doesn't agree with the way they portray his faith but he does enjoy going there to sing hymns on a Friday evening. At school he is plagued by a teacher who is a member of the Plymouth Brethren and sermonises in the middle of an algebra lesson. The boys catch on to this and if they being taught a subject they don't like they will ask the teacher about something out of the bible. This has the teacher telling them biblical stories for the rest of the afternoon.

Because of the bombing of Belfast many of the children are evacuated to the rural areas. The Morrison family

children and their mother end up on an Armagh farm—the father stays in Belfast to continue his shipyard job. The Protestant farmer and his wife have no children of their own so they find it hard to handle the children. They have a farm hand working for them. The boy discovers he is a Catholic. I suppose his reaction is like that of a white American suddenly discovering a native American lurking in the woods. They are frightened of Catholics and in Belfast they never enter Catholic streets. The family isn't anti-Catholic but they have this illogical fear of them. My own father, a Presbyterian, also had this fear of Catholics though my mother was a Catholic and we children were brought up as Catholics. I suppose if I were a Jungian I might make an attempt to explain that fear but I am not a Jungian. My father also said that I could bluff my way in Protestant areas but there was no way he could bluff his way in Catholic areas. So if a father and son can't make sense of one another how can two communities? So I sort of envy the same-religion family of the Morrisons. If a Protestant father is beating his Catholic son the Catholic son is liable to feel that it is the Protestant in the father who is punishing him. One day he could knock his father down if he tries it again. I did.

The Morrison children love the country, love the pigs, love the hens, the cows but testosterone-loaded roosters are out, for they don't run when chased but stand and glare at them. Here is an imagery of the hens:

"Their beady eyes swivelled in their bobbing heads like miniature pinwheels and in their nippous cackling beaks you could see their tongues fluttering like tiny pink flames blown in a breeze."

And when the Morrisons attend a Church in this Armagh rural area along with the farmer and his wife:

"In the small Reformed Church, reformed in the sense of going back to a Presbyterian past before such diabolical inventions as the church organ and the dubious theology of hymns corrupted true worship, we sang a capella, the psalms of David from a Psalter which contained metrical psalms in tonic solfa for the tenors and sopranos, altos and basses sprinkled among the congregation. The Psalter's pagination was such that you could match any tune to any psalm. Sometimes the little choir and congregation drew out every syllable of a line as if to lose even one would send the rest scattering like pearls from a broken necklace; at other times the cantor whose voice led the rest like the bass of a pipe organ, set a steady pace and the psalm raced along with a spirited air."

Every now and then, especially in England and Protestant Scotland we are regaled with the idea that Catholics have a priority to emotion of guilt—Catholic guilt. It is as if the Reformation and its propaganda will never end. Doesn't this human condition also affect the Buddhist, the Hindu, the Muslim, the Jew, the Protestant and any other faiths out there? Ian Paisley, the elder, is a master at instilling guilt into his congregation. The author of this book as a boy can sometimes be racked with guilt and finds salve for his soul in his faith.

I was never a believer in God or any god, even as a child. I have no idea what that feeling must be like. I am continually puzzled by people who believe. I can't understand it. I have been through the motion of religion, loved the Catholic catechism as pure poetry, had my First Communion followed by Confirmation, have been to Mass on a regular basis as a child, especially loved Benediction and the smell of frankincense but the idea of God made no sense to me nor never will.

After it is realised the Germans won't be back, because they desperately need the planes because of the advancing Red Army the Morrisons go back to Belfast. Will Morrison can't remember it ever raining down in Armagh when he was a boy. But he decides it must have because the shough is full of water and that's where the pigs make for when they escape from their pens in order to roll in the mud.. Come to think of it I can't remember any rainy days during my own childhood. The sun always shone. When the snow fell it was great delight. One morning the children are told by the farmer that they must stay in the house as the pigs are being brought to market. This puzzles them until they hear the pigs squeal loudly one after the other followed by the pump handle sounding and water running. The pigs are being killed and their blood washed away. Again familiar territory for me—coming across a farmyard where the pigs are being sledge hammered on their tough skull before having their throats cut by the butcher wearing a rubber apron and a fearsome variety of knives in scabbards on his belt. When he told you to clear off you did.

With Will Morrison a former Presbyterian minister, I thought I was in for a sanitised version of things but what I got when reading this book was someone letting rip with words like arse, shite, fuggan, bastard, cow's clabber, and all the other words used genuinely in a work-language. There is no gratuitous swearing. Observations on sexual activity also has healthy connotations. A *squeeze* is mentioned which turns out

to be a lady the man from the Prudential insurance has found on his rounds while the husband is at work. Sixty years later the British tabloids have discovered this word *squeeze* to mean a new girlfriend of a celebrity. He also gets the Belfast accent correctly (seeing he's been away for over fifty years) and he even remembers his father's lazy Ligoniel pronunciation and quotes sentences which are difficult to read sometimes and maybe even more difficult to understand verbally. Ligoniel is a small area of streets. A good example of the type of lazy pronunciation might be Northern Ireland rendered as Norm Iron. Yet another set of streets could have you scratching your head in attempting to understand some words.

Later when the young Morrison enters the shipyard he secretly takes up elocution lessons. It wasn't something he could discuss with his mates. They would have thought he had a notion of climbing above his station. I had a similar experience when learning Pitman's shorthand, as an apprentice, during the lunch break (sorry, dinner break). I had to go somewhere out of the way in order to study it.

Old Belfast is well described with its horse-drawn bread carts, coal carts, milk carts, its huge shire horses *pishing* a flood in the street or *shitein'* a molehill of dung.

Death is a very serious business in the North and he looks back to his granddad's death sixty years back with the dead person brought to the house and the coffin kept open for the neighbours to have a peek at the corpse. That custom still goes on to this day. Only a few years ago my sister's husband died. His corpse occupied one of the rooms of the house for two days so as everyone could see him who wanted to see him. Complete strangers came to have a look and some of them held their small children up to have a peep. We ate and drank yards from him, laughed and joked and spoke to the dead man. Then he was screwed into his coffin and we carried him down the street until our shoulders ached. A Methodist minister then spoke for about an hour at his graveside. When we returned to the house without the dead man it felt empty and desolate. My sister said she should have kept him one more day at least.

Then there is the plague of boils that seemed to affect a lot of people then. They appear mysteriously on the back of the neck and affect your stance, annoy you when you walk because your shirt or jacket collar is rubbing against it. They throb in bed at night. The author's father goes through hell when he gets one. Worse, it turns out to be a carbuncle. I notice he went to the Mater Hospital

for treatment. The Mater is a Catholic hospital and had a good reputation for healing. The boils just keep coming throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s. I suffered from them myself and in reading about the hell of it I was back in that time eating sulphur and treacle to try and make them go away but they went in their own time. Then suddenly they disappeared as suddenly as they arrived. The North was boil-free again.

A great joy mentioned was bacon fat poured on potatoes, or lamb chop fat or any fat which had to drip down your cheeks before you felt you were eating well and enjoying yourself. But despite that people were still very thin. Heavy work and lots of walking to save the tram and bus fares kept one fit.

Will Morrison is starting his first job at 14 and there is a dilemma—he has no long trousers to wear. His mother can't afford to buy the grey flannels. He has to start work in his schoolboy's gear. Usually at elementary school a boy was allowed to wear long trousers three months before he left school. It was a sort of a rite of passage. The *short trousers* looked up to you and you ceased playing with them in order to tell them that they weren't your equal anymore. You could organise them to play games while you stood back and observed but you didn't join in. By the time you left at 14 you were a seasoned long-trousered wee lad and ready to face your first job. I could still feel Will's embarrassment leaping from the page as he wrote about it sixty years later. There he was walking in the midst of the hundreds of shipyard workers crowding the pavement with him feeling naked from the waist down, his socks pulled up as far as they would go. There were girls to think about as well but with short trousers he had forget it. As a young male he wanted to swagger like the rest of shipyard workers but couldn't in his short trousers.

At the shipyard Main Offices his boss was to be Sergeant Hermann, the Hall Porter, a member of the Corps of Commissionaires a bantam-sized ex-British Army squaddie. There were huge high doors and marble floors. This entrance was reserved for Sir Frederick Rebbek, the chairman and the Company Directors and distinguished visitors. Morrison is reminded of the entrance to a five-star hotel he saw in some Hollywood film. The battalions of clerks, accountants and typists have to use a side entrance. But it was a hotel for the rich and powerful with the phoning for cars for the top echelons, opening doors, brushing overcoats and bending down to wipe the shoes of the high and mighty after they had been among the workers.

He suffers some sexual harassment in the clerk's areas—girls pulling up their

dresses, males dropping pencils and asking him to pick it up and then pretending to rape him. The antics of the girls he could boast about to his mates but the pencil stunt was never to be mentioned, and thinking about it at the time brought tears to his eyes. It was utter humiliation in these posh offices while he thought of his home with the worn oilcloth on the floor. But he seemed to have enjoyed the affluent upstairs suites of the directors' offices—pure white toilet bowls, white tiles in the bathrooms, gold-plated taps, the smell of perfume rather than the lifebuoy soap of his home. Then there was the fug of cigar smoke coming from the offices of the elite. He says:

"The men who occupied this domain spoke in educated English accents, smoked cigars and the best of cigarettes, drank the finest whiskeys and sherries and port wines."

He is amazed at the size of the cigarette butts the directors leave in the ashtrays and is tempted to take them home for his father who could roll them into cigarettes.

There is a French chef for the director's dining room. The Frenchman also acts as the *maitre d'*, changing into a black claw-hammer coat with tails, black trousers with a shining black stripe down the side of each leg, white shirt and black bow tie.

Trays of whiskey and port wine are served during Directors' meetings. This is Belfast 1947 with the end of WW2 just two years gone. Tremendous profits must have made during WW2 in the building of aircraft carriers, destroyers and other naval ships and with merchant ships having to be replaced through losses. Dozens of passenger liners had also to be converted into troop carriers. The workforce was said to have reached 70,000 during that war with thousands of skilled workers being recruited from the neutral south. Now the huge profits were again being made with the building of new naval and merchant ships to replace wartime losses and those troopships had to be converted back into passenger liners. Worker's wage packet also bulged in the shipyard during WW2, but with the severe rationing restrictions very little could be bought officially—however, there was always the black market.

On Christmas Eve his mother tells him to treat himself in a restaurant. He has just been given Christmas boxes by some of the staff at the Main offices and has just over a pound. His starting wage being eighteen shilling a week he is flush with money for a boy of fourteen. He has never been to a restaurant before. In a hilarious episode he sees Welsh rarebit

on the menu and thinks rarebit is Welsh for rabbit. He orders potatoes with it. It turns out to be merely cheese on toast, and the waitress won't bring him the potatoes. He hates cheese but eats it just the same. Hopping on a tram he gets off near his home and goes to a chippie for fish and chips to take home.

The long trousers are a long time in coming, for his mother still hasn't got enough Co-Op dividends to buy the flannels. He reads in the *Belfast Telegraph* that the 17 year old Princess Margaret is coming to Belfast to launch a ship. He tells his mother she will pass through the grand foyer he is working in. He will be on the door to open it for her and he will be so nervous she will see his bare knees trembling. He gets his flannels, the princess arrives and half smiles at him, in entering with her entourage. He waits for her to come out again to see if she really meant that smile and if she meant it she would surely smile again at him. But it seems some fat bastard—Sir Frederick Rebbek, the shipyard chairman—is blocking his view of her and blocking her view of him, would you believe. It was here that I suspended my Republican viewpoint for a moment in order to enjoy or even to feel sorry for this adolescent boy with his first shuddering shock of love-at-first-sight.

At 16 he starts his apprenticeship in the joiner's shop. I myself have already been there for a year. It is the great period of the apprentice and there must be about five apprentices to every twenty joiners. I don't take much notice of newcomers. They are a load of cry babies who want to start making grand mahogany staircases in their first hour here. Instead they must attend to the glue pots and fill up the gluepot boilers with water. They may be told to fetch clamps from the store or to lift raw timber from the racks. It will be a few months before they are given anything to chisel or hammer.

About a year ago I learnt from the Belfast BBC website that the author of this book had been working in the next squad to mine in this former aircraft hanger back then in 1949. We knew the same people, like the big Finn who had sailed in windjammers in the 19th Century as a ship's carpenter. I myself only wanted to be a woodworker so as I could be a ship's carpenter at twenty-one, but ambitions have a habit of changing in mid-air. There were a lot of 19th Century men around then plus the survivors of two World Wars in this joiner's shop. The big Finn, a mighty figure of a man, could heave a huge heavy teak door on to his bench as "*if spreading a bed sheet*", as Will observes.

When corresponding with Will

Morrison about the shipyard we used the mighty Finn as a landmark. Right at this moment I am trying to identify this religious boy of short stature and the weak bladder in the book who said he worked with the Finn in a state of terror for a while. Was he at the bench to the right of this son of Finland's bench or at the bench on the left of him, or was it the bench at the back of him or at the bench to the front of him? Did I go to the cinema with Will after work once to see Charles Laughton in *Mutiny on the Bounty*? Was it him who had the excellent idea of holding back hunger before getting home by buying a packet of compressed dates. It worked. If it was him then I remember him all those fifty-eight years ago. But I can't be sure. Up to two thousand men and apprentices worked in that joiner's shop but I must have been within *pishing* distance of him.

We had something else in common besides being apprentice joiners and being wary of the mighty Finn—the horrifying gangway accident at the factory whaling ship, the *Juan Peron*. It happened on January the 31st, 1951. My father was working on it as a joiner. The author of this book I am reviewing was working on it as an apprentice joiner. He had been able to get off fifteen minutes early in order to get to his elocution lessons and thus avoided becoming a victim. My father was standing on the gangway which rose fifty feet above the jetty, along with maybe a hundred other men. He forgot his lunchbox and went back to a cabin to get it. The gangway meanwhile suddenly broke in two. Eighteen men were killed and dozens injured. I was to meet my father at the ship at knocking-off time, but when I went round there to the jetty all I saw was the dead and dying and the sound of screaming, moaning and cursing. Will Morrison's father was round there as well, looking for his son. I am sure we must have passed one another among the dead, dying and injured looking for our relatives. The author's father didn't know his son was already travelling on a tram to his elocution lessons. You wouldn't tell your daddy that. It wasn't done in Norn Iron at that time.

The next morning we were all back at work. Today a hundred counsellors would descend in order to have you re-live your trauma and thus deliver you of your demons. We didn't have any demons or trauma only a quiet sorrow on learning favourite workmates were dead. You just didn't talk about what had happened. This silence went on for the rest of most people's lives. Even today a brother-in-law of mine who escaped injury on this ship seems to have erased the whole incident

completely from his mind in a sort of voluntary amnesia.

A vivid account is given about this tragedy in the book. Every day in the shipyard back then a man died somewhere and maybe a half a dozen were seriously injured. This was out of a workforce of 35,000. At one time there was no shipyard doctor, only first aid stations. One doctor was employed eventually. But God help anyone injured at the beginning of the 20th Century. They were usually draped over the bonnet of the early cars and driven on solid tyres over the bumpy square-set road from Queen's Island, on which the shipyard was situated, to a hospital miles away. Not many survived this journey according to one old joiner who had made that trip after being partially crushed as a boy by baulks of timber falling off a four-horse drawn cart.

I read Will's account of having to say Sir to everyone in his job at the Main Offices of the shipyard, and especially in having to say Sir to Sir Frederick Rebbeck, the shipyard Chairman. He describes Rebbeck as being short and fat. Four years later when I met him he had become a scrawny nagging stooping figure. The Apprentices' Strike was in full swing and I was on the Strike Committee. A couple of thousand of us were outside the Main Offices calling for Rebbeck to come out and face us. The chants went something like:

"Come out this very minute ye man ye!"

He did come out and as I approached him the harbour police closed in on me. To his credit he waved them away and then turned to us and said:

"You're no good to me and you are no good to yourselves."

I pointed out to him that I was only earning two pounds fourteen shilling and sixpence a week and that the overalls I was wearing cost a pound. It's not fair. We need that pound a week rise.

He answered in a mocking voice, adding a favourite Belfast ending which seems to be used at the end of most sentences:

"... Two pounds fourteen shillings and sixpence? But it is fair, *so it is!*"

I told him that I didn't come from Belfast but from Carryduff (in County Down) He apologised and made for his plush offices, stopped, turned around and shouted:

"All right, boys!"

A few days later we got the wage rise.

Well, what more can I say, a fascinating book about a fascinating man who

beat the odds. He did so much I wanted to do, like going to university. Having studied the university entrance exam at 21 I passed but I couldn't financially make it. The grant for Queen's University, Belfast, was only £55 a year while for an English university it was £300 a year, *about six pounds a week* (a week's wages then). But I had a need to go to Queens, in my native land, to rise above my environment and build up my self-esteem and put two fingers up at all those who tried to crush me in Norn Iron. Going to an English university was to retreat. I did go to England in the end but as a joiner. I didn't go because of unemployment: I just wanted to leave the joiner's shop and watch them gape at me giving up a good job. They did.

Maybe Will Morrison can write a sequel to his memoir and tell us all about his time at Trinity College, Dublin, and how a poor boy managed to get there. He did say in his book that his home didn't have any literature in it except maybe for the bible.

He had this thirst for reading and was beginning to find children's comics didn't give him enough sustenance. He had to be ten before he was allowed to be a member of the children's library. You can feel the tension in his writing as he counts the day up to that age. His love of books has to go some way to explaining his development.

His motivation for learning is as great as that of Maxim Gorky who describes it in Part One of his memoirs: *My Childhood*.

WJH,
27th October, 2006

Homage To Gearóid Mag Lochlainn

Foc foc foc foc foc foc
Aisling Ghéar!

Ó aontaím leat, a Ghearáid,
aontaím leat!

Ach

Is fuath liom—RAP!
Tá focailín
It.

John Ryan

Book Review: *A Different Journey*—Father Brian D'Arcy—Sliabh Ban Productions—Euro 14.99-2006

Reflections On The Catholic Church

Some phoney radicals shout from the rooftops using popular catch-phrases and are celebrated, but we would often be more productive in considering some who toil over a long time and possibly use soft language and yet in the long haul, make striking and lasting contributions.

Amongst those who wrestle with their conscience on an ongoing basis—and face head-on the internal contradictions an individual typically experiences in the context of their profession, family, community, gender and generation—is Fr. Brian D'Arcy of the Passionists.

He has been dismissed by many for all the wrong reasons — by Dublin Four because he likes Country and Western music, by comics because his method of discourse is to play the ball and not the man. My early memories associated him with defending the indefensible i.e. during the 1986 Divorce Referendum. He is also subject to prejudice on the grounds that he comes from Fermanagh, writes for a tabloid, and at one time was probably over-exposed by the RTE set. It is a great disservice to the man not to see beyond this. He has bought out a book, *A Different Journey*, an unusual combination of autobiography inter-mixed with a potted history of the showband era and an account of a team of employees long serving together within the bowels of *The Sunday World*.

I will concentrate on the autobiographical features though the various elements do overlap to an extent. D'Arcy is a quietly passionate man, a very sharp brain and at times has taken risks people don't appreciate. In Chapter Four of the book, he explains how in 1972, when he was editing a Passionate newspaper called, *The Cross*. He defied the Archbishop of Dublin by publishing an unvarnished interview with Bernadette Devlin. The Archbishop at the time was John Charles McQuaid and the account clearly shows D'Arcy as being jumped from his slumbers realising at the time how tightly guarded was the Bishop's power and how difficult it was for anyone to stand outside it.

In the same chapter, he describes the institutional Church as being a more suffocating place to reside now than in the period a generation ago when in his own words there was at least some hope left. He also talks about Vatican Two in

terms of an opportunity to pursue it's spirit to the fullest sense, stagnant now and so must be put down as a lost opportunity.

Two quotations from Chapter Five fully outline the journey he has come. The first describes how he himself was changed when he undertook a job for concerned parents debriefing their children who had joined cults:

"It suddenly dawned on me for the first time the kind of system I was being processed through. This was the beginning of debriefing myself and learning to thinking outside the loop again." (p65).

The second describes his new thinking:

"You can interpret it any way you like but the basic principle behind all our teaching on sex is flawed. As long as it remains that way the Church will continue to struggle for credibility." (p66).

The US Is The Future!

In the 1980s he went through a process of grappling with theology and challenging his own vocation. In Chapter 10, he remembers how the future Bishop Comiskey advised him to go to the United States where the future was and not to Rome, which would destroy him. While visiting America, D'Arcy noted vibrant parishes, well run by committees of laity for day-to-day management but, at the same time, he found that:

". . . sadly most of the initiatives were stifled by big brother in Rome" (p115).

During that time he did a public relations defence of John Cardinal Cody, Archbishop of Chicago, who at the time was facing allegations of misappropriation of funds, gathering substantial wealth to himself and living the high life.

By the time he returned to Ireland, to Mount Argus in Dublin, D'Arcy became embroiled in a number of situations which involved people who had been kidnapped. He acted as a go-between in a number of high profile cases including that of John O'Grady, who was kidnapped by Dessie O'Hare. At times, D'Arcy was seriously at risk. Yet during this period he was able to address theological issues that were difficult to face for a Passionate priest with a vow

of poverty living in a community used to discipline and acceptance. In Chapter 12, he reflects:

"Too often, our preaching has emphasised that it was our sins that caused Christ's sufferings. That meant scrupulous people were left with a crippling sense of guilt. It is more accurate and encouraging to see Christ's passion as the ultimate proof of Gods love for us." (p128).

In Chapter 16, he trumpets the work of American Trappist monk, Thomas Merton as an inspiration to him. Much of his teaching focuses on the humanity of Christ and stressing that believers ought not to think of humanity as evil. During his lifetime, Merton fell in love with a nurse and was quite open about it, describing it as a life affirming experience even though the relationship eventually fizzled out. At various times Merton was in turn a famous monastic, a hermit and he embraced transcendental meditation. This is hopeful to the author.

Change In The Church

At times D'Arcy is very cryptic. He admits in Chapter 18, he did not at first believe the revelations about his friend of many years, Fr. Michael Cleary, but that later a switch in his head allowed for all the facts to slot into place and make sense. He traces a history of working with Cleary, suggesting that Cleary was always more conservative and pro-authority than himself. D'Arcy opines:

"He was more vulnerable than any of us knew, he allowed himself to be used. That to me was his greatest tragedy of all." (p185).

D'Arcy stayed with the *Sunday World* though he felt they had sensationalised the Cleary story. He notes his regret that in his experience Cleary never learned to ask new questions.

In Chapter 19, while recollecting his number of journeys to South Africa, it emerges how the author came to the realisation of the need for married and woman priests and is open enough to admit:

"Until then I was reluctant to say anything which would disturb the clerical club" (p195).

He then reveals by way of a number of anecdotes what highlighted this for him. He met a laicised Irish priest in South Africa who was by then married and a family man. Yet he served on the altar as a Eucharist minister assisting D'Arcy. The author decided that his colleague was as qualified as he was and could have been left to do the Mass alone. On another occasion, Fr. Brian

discovered that an area with a great shortage of clergy was celebrating the arrival of a new parish priest. Ironically, the man was one of the Anglican converts and arrived with his wife. D'Arcy experienced a twinge that such a clergyman was being imposed simply because he couldn't countenance the idea of a woman on a Church of England altar.

On one visit to South Africa just after the introduction of democracy, Brian D'Arcy was contemplating leaving the priesthood. He truly struggled with this desire.

There are a number of Chapters on Child Abuse and, what has to be said, he unapologetically champions the victims at all costs.

He outlines a famous public clash with Cardinal Daly, and explains his determination to continue to be outspoken. He painfully recalls his own suffering of mild sexual abuse both as a child and as a young seminarian. He is now determined not to be pushed out.

In Chapter 21, his words are strong and mean something as his actions back them up and he is shown to have a real impact as a healer and a recorder of the truth for posterity. He speaks from the heart:

"One sees it, when it is spoken out of love... will always be interpreted as disloyal. The closer one gets to the truth, the more deep rooted the denial and the rejection." (p220).

"What annoyed many of my colleagues most was when I said that the institutions of the Roman Catholic church in this matter are rotten to the core." (p220).

So clearly, D'Arcy has taken some real risks where he was liable to lose a lot.

In this new work, he gives insights to the slavery of life in a seminary in the early Sixties and outlines the ways individuals might be groomed towards a Bishopric along with his own re-evaluation of what the church ought to be into the future.

He also suffered serious personal loss as when his friends in the Miami Showband were murdered by Loyalists. Perhaps we will all know more about collusion in Loyalist gangs by security forces before too long. The author has an ability to see hope when other consider there to be little less than dystopia.

He befriended Gordon Wilson, a retired Unionist of moderate views, born in Co. Leitrim, who was thrust into the world limelight by the Enniskillen bombing, but who went on to serve in

the Irish Senate with a view to helping others.

Bravely, D'Arcy has described the clericalist Church he knew as dying, and deservedly so. Yet he sees seeds of a new Christian community which in time

will prove to be better than anything with which we may be familiar. Such a desire would surely be positive and preferable to the current vacuous public space of designer secularism which allows for no substantial building of strong, sustainable communities.

Stephen Richards

Theatre Review: *The History Boys* by Alan Bennett at the Opera House, Belfast

Famine In The Land

On the basis of the film version of Alan Bennett's piece, the play itself had its Belfast premiere, straight from Broadway, at the newly reopened Opera House in Belfast in early November 2006. Feeling more than usually waspish with a bad cold, but too mean to do the sensible thing and stay at home, I went up with my wife and eldest daughter to savour the occasion, mix with the civilised classes, and drink from Bennett's creative springs.

I was disappointed all round. The new lobby, or whatever it is that has been bolted onto the Opera House, is exceedingly bland on the inside, whereas on the outside it seems to spit in the eye of Matcham's masterpiece. Carbuncles and much-loved friends come to mind. Strange that, long after the fall of the Iron Curtain, architectural brutality has now become entrenched at home.

The Belfast glitterati weren't looking their best either. As I watched the audience coming in, I was struck by the number of middle-aged men with sour expressions, grey stubble and no ties. Modern Belfast man may have more money these days, but he certainly doesn't look as if he does, or as if he's getting much fun out of life.

Still and all, our sophisticated Belfast audience was laughing its collective head off at all the coarse language and double (and single) *entendres*. For me, I laughed spontaneously only once, at a stupid Welsh joke, despite my Welsh ancestry. Why is it so right on to be beastly to the Welsh?

I didn't find the play funny, witty, or all that interesting, for all its length and media billing. Maybe Bennett was writing about things that lay too close to his heart and in the process he lost his dramatic instincts. On the evidence of *The History Boys* he would need to spend

some time sitting at the feet of Tom Stoppard, or even our own Brian Friel.

Many of the classroom scenes were like *Groundhog Day*, without much progression. In the context of the tragic and deliberately telegraphed climax, the smart one-liners were rather thin and metallic. Unlike those other two, Bennett doesn't know how to embed his humour in the tragic narrative.

If this is a play that raises searching questions about the purpose of education and the meaning of history as an academic study, it takes its time about it, and offers only snippets of real debate. It's as if Bennett's scared the audience might not be able to take too much ideological fencing, and so he keeps shying away from this theme.

His main vehicle for doing this is to portray life in this Yorkshire Grammar School of 1983 as a hotbed of homosexual intrigue. The eponymous Boys have come back for a seventh term as an advanced sixth form to be coached for the Oxbridge entrance exams, under their much-loved Hector. I imagine Hector must be Bennett's idealized Mr. Chips figure. The other film which is a reference point for Bennett is *Dead Poets' Society*, although Robin Williams is maybe more like the new history master, Irwin.

Hector introduces the boys to Gracie Fields and George Formby songs, which they can reel off at the drop of a hat, a bit like the Oxford Aesthetes of the 1940s. His sexual interest in his boys is a matter of record among them and a fertile subject for knowing jokes, until he's spotted by the Headmaster's wife groping one of them, after which his days are numbered.

Irwin, who is brought in to beef up the teaching, is more of a closet homosexual and ends up as a sort of TV

celebrity historian. Only one of the boys is definitely homosexual, but even the most heterosexual of them apparently has his homosexual side, and that is the prevalent atmosphere of the play.

Apart from this the boys are so unspeakably clever in every sense of the word, like junior Oscar Wilde figures, that their society begins to pall.

Insofar as Bennett is having a go at anything, it's historical revisionism. Irwin comes along with the laudable aim of trying to earn his salary by getting the boys through the entrance exams. His attitude to an essay he doesn't like is that it may be historically accurate, but it's boring. The idea is to be memorable, to grab the examiner's attention by tackling the question in some controversial way. This may involve taking up a position which is indefensible on the basis of the accepted understanding of the issue, but if the boys don't do their best to challenge the orthodoxy of the day, they won't get in to the prestigious Universities. So scholarship is to be sacrificed to Scholarships.

I couldn't see anything to object to in Irwin's approach. After all, what is being tested is the boys' capacity to sustain an argument. They aren't being asked to write a volume in the *Oxford History Of England*.

But Irwin is cast in an unsympathetic light. His method is uncongenial to Hector and to the boys. Yet, when it comes to what was the *status quo ante*, Bennett is very reticent. He more or less implies that there's nothing new under the sun, so why bother looking?

Irwin wonders if the origin of the Great War can be seen in Britain wanting to set Germany and Russia at each other's throats with a view to the pickings, but no one else wants to explore that. For someone who is so non-dogmatic in his views, Hector is very dogmatic indeed, shutting off discussion. His largeness of mind conceals a refusal to think effectively about anything very much, a bit like the archetypal English rustic who says, "*I were never much of a one for booklarning*". No need for rigorous study of the English classics when we have Gracie Fields. The sensible woman teacher suggests at one point that history's a random series of events without rhyme or reason, so it's not a fit subject for serious study at all. Stuff just happens.

Irwin's fate is to become a wheelchair-bound TV celebrity historian. I saw him as a parody of

Professor David Starkey, of whom my experience is limited. I find Starkey's radio manner very irritating, but I've no doubt as to his ability. As an *enfant terrible* he succeeded in tearing down G.R. Elton's complex structure of Tudor government. I'm not sure if Starkey really is Bennett's target. Andrew Roberts has suggested that the targets are Niall Ferguson and himself. Maybe John Charmley is another. (As an afterthought: could it be David Irving—with the word-play on Irwin? This thought came to me as I listened to the news about Irving possibly going to get parole on his Austrian 'Holocaust-denial' prison term. Could it be that Irving represents the revisionist historian par excellence? There is some discussion of the Holocaust in the play and Irwin speculates about providing explanations for it in an academic answer. He was opposed by others who thought that to explain implied to excuse. Certainly some aspects of Holocaust denial have given revisionism a bad name. It's easy for Bennett to imply that revisionists turn out like Irwin.)

On this analysis *The History Boys* is a protest against the new generation of historians who are predominantly from the Right, but from that position are able to offer a trenchant critique of the conduct of the British state in the last century. They're a much more interesting lot than their predecessors, with the possible exception of A.J.P. Taylor. They may not always be right, but without them there would be no debate. Without a debate history is dead, so revisionism is an ongoing process.

Whatever new information does come to light, it takes the British establishment a long time to come to terms with it. It was long insisted upon, in the teeth of the evidence, that the Polish officer class had been murdered by the Germans in the woods at Katyn in 1940, when of course the Russians were responsible. For reasons of state, the British population was shielded for many years from any real knowledge of the nature of Stalin's Russia, especially because the plight of the Poles was ostensibly the reason for the declaration of war, and also because the British had forcibly repatriated thousands of Cossacks to try to appease Stalin. And only now, thanks to Jung Chang, is the true nature of Mao's China beginning to percolate through.

The revisionist debate has a particular piquancy in Ireland and has been constantly ventilated in the pages of

Church & State. I keep banging on about how it was Brendan Clifford's revisionism, his *splendida vitia*, that opened the door into Irish history for me. Despite having been a star student at "A" level, I found I hadn't really been thinking about what I was supposed to be studying. Ever since then I've been bravely following Brendan on his long march as he's been revising his revisionism, while concurrently Irish historiography as a whole has been realigning itself rather ponderously on the ground that he has vacated. Anyway, revisionism in Ireland is the new orthodoxy.

Bennett's implicit view does for the Whigs and the Marxists as well, of course, but we should surely be able to look for meaning while avoiding ideological straitjackets. If history has no meaning, then human existence has no meaning.

Facts and documents are the raw material of history, but they have to be marshalled if anything coherent is to emerge from the stew. This necessarily involves an editing process. I'm not a historian of any kind, but I wonder whether this can be done properly without a hypothesis, akin to a scientific hypothesis. The historian doesn't approach the materials *tabula rasa* but, consciously or otherwise, is trying out various assumptions, to see if they're going to fit. "*What if. . . ?*" Depending on the assumption adopted, certain hitherto unremarked events will assume sudden significance. This requires an imaginative effort which hasn't been very noticeable when it comes to analysis of Britain's role in the catastrophes of the past century. The Hectors of this world have stopped looking for things and so have lost the ability to see.

I only wish Alan Bennett had given us more than a few husks to chew over as we perish with a hunger of the imagination.

New Patriotism

We need a type of patriotism that recognizes the virtues of those who are opposed to us. We must get away from the idea that America is to be the leader of the world in everything. She can lead in some things. The old "manifest destiny" idea ought to be modified so that each nation has the manifest destiny to do the best it can - and that without cant, without the assumption of self-righteousness and with a desire to learn to the uttermost from other nations:

Francis John McConnell

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**Many Are Called,
Not All Are Chosen**

Jehovah's Witnesses

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**Many Are Called,
Not All Are Chosen**

RELIGIOUS faith came before diplomatic protocol for Austria's Chancellor on July 18, 2006, when he declined to break a monastic retreat to meet President Mary McAleese. Breaking with the traditional courtesy shown to a visiting head of state, Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel delegated his deputy to meet the Irish President.

When the *Irish Independent* raised the issue with the Austrian President, Heinz Fischer, in the Hofburg Palace yesterday, he seemed deeply uncomfortable. Reverting to German, rather than speaking in English as he had previously done, Mr Fischer said he wished to give a "frank and true" answer.

"Our federal chancellor is, as you all know, a convinced Catholic and is on a retreat and he asked for my understanding and her understanding that he does not want to interrupt this."

President McAleese, graciously, came to the defence of Mr/ Schuessel. *"I am one of a small number of heads of state who make the same kind of closed retreat every year, that nothing on earth would drive me from. So, perhaps, more than anybody, I fully understand. I hope Chancellor Schuessel gets all the peace he needs on that retreat."*

Jehovah's Witnesses

MEDICAL professionals and Jehovah's Witnesses have clashed over whether or not the intervention by the High Court in Dublin on September 23, 2006, to save the life of a seriously ill African woman undermines their long-standing consensus on declining blood transfusions.

The 23-year-old Congolese woman, who suffered a major haemorrhage after giving birth to a healthy baby boy, had refused the treatment on religious grounds because she is a Jehovah's Witness.

Believed to be the first case of its kind involving an adult in Ireland, the court ruled the Coombe Hospital must put the interests of the child first and save the mother's life.

Anaesthetists, who administer all blood transfusions, said the High Court decision was in keeping with best practice. In contrast the Jehovah Witness community feels the ruling "*flies in the face*" of what has been agreed with the profession and amounts to a court sanctioned "physical assault".

The Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland yesterday said from its initial reading of the case it was one of the exceptional situations where a Specific Issue Order could be sought from the courts.

Dr. Michael Ward, the chairman of its working group on the management of Jehovah's Witness patients, says the rights of the child "outweighed the rights of the mother to deny" that child a sufficient chance of life.

"The situation must have been a desperate one and I can understand the difficulties for clinical staff, caring for themother, who approached the law."

However, Dr. Ward added that it was the policy of the AAGBI that an SIO "*should only be applied for when it is felt to be entirely necessary to save the child in an elective or semi-elective situation*".

The AAGBI advises its members that by forcing blood transfusions on Jehovah's Witnesses medical professionals are leaving themselves open to civil and potentially criminal proceedings.

However, in the "Irish Examiner" (26.9.2006), Colin Maxwell of Cork posed the following:—

"Unknown to many Jehovah's Witnesses in Ireland, Jehovah's Witnesses in Bulgaria took their government to the European Court of Human Rights in 1998 to gain religious recognition.

"A deal was struck whereby any Jehovah's Witness in Bulgaria could have a blood transfusion if they so desired: 'The applicant undertook with regard to its stance on blood transfusions to draft a statement for inclusion in its statute providing that members should have free choice in the matter for themselves and their children, without any control or sanction on the part of the association.' The full ruling can be accessed through the ECHR website at <http://www.echr.coe.int/echr>.

"If a Jehovah's Witness in Bulgaria can have a blood transfusion without incurring any sanction by their organisation, then surely the Jehovah Witnesses in Ireland should be able to enjoy the same liberty?"

Peter Brooke

**An Orthodox Christian
Looks At Benedict XVI's
Lecture, Faith, Reason And
The University**

Is the Word
in the beginning
the Logos, the Reason, just
a process of reasoning?

Is it through a long
process of reasoning

the Word, the Reason
for everything
gets to be known?

Is all that tortuous
rationalising anything
to do with the Reason?
the Person?
Second Person of the Trinity, existing
from the beginning?

No, Pope Benedict,
clean-shaven patriarch,

the Rationale
isn't rationality, yet
all that struggling
of the fly in the jamjar yielded
surely something?

Tension of enormous longing
cut off by a misunderstanding
in the head of the Church has given us
all those marvellous substitutes.

We will call it the Renaissance.
It will overcome the world.

Paddy Heaney

The dispute about the deaths of Protestants near Cadamstown, Co. Offaly during the War of Independence continues. Here is a local view

Coolacrease:

A Place with a Tragic History

Coolacrease is a border townland which extends from the village of Cadamstown to the county river which is the border between Laois and Offaly. This ancient boundary river had many names. The Annals refer to it as the "*Abha Dine*" or "Deep River". It was also known by the beautiful name of "*Glasheensheorna*"—*The Little Stram of the Barley*. Coolacrease or *Cúl a' Chraois* is thought to mean The Hill Back of the Gluttony. There are many Gaelic placenames in the townland: Knockroe, Glendolan, Ardora, Cushuaid, Cannora, and the old town of Baile Mac Adam was also situated there.

The area is also rich in archaeological remains, such as two souterrains, and there was a mass-rock situated near one of them which was perhaps used during Penal times.

Coolacrease townland was part of the lands of the O'Carrolls of Baile Mac Adam Castle. Domhnall O'Carroll settled in Leitir Lughna, Cadamstown, in 1227 according to O'Riordan, and was descended from Fionn O'Carroll, styled as the King of Ely in 1205. He was also tenth in descent from the O'Carroll who led the troops of Ely at the battle of Clontarf in 1014 according to Dr. Lanigan. The castle was situated half a mile west of Cadamstown village and is still known as Castlefield.

In the following centuries the area was steeped in history, with notable hostilities between the O'Carrolls and the Le Fays until the O'Carrolls were dispossessed of their entire lands in 1611. They refused to take an oath of allegiance or conform to the Established Church.

Baile Mac Adam Castle and 8,463 acres were regranted to Adam Loftus, the first Protestant Archbishop of Dublin. He never came to live there. Coolacrease changed hands several times, and the immediate area was the scene of several well-documented atrocities. In the 19th century some notable archaeological discoveries were made by the owner John Benwell who died around 1890.

His sister was left to run the farm. She eventually sold the farm to William Pearson who came from Queen's County (now Laois). The Pearsons were good

farmers and good neighbours. The Pearson children attended the local school in Cadamstown village. Dick Pearson was a member of the school hurling team during his schooldays.

When the War of Independence was in progress the second half-company of the Offaly Brigade {of the IRA} was formed. Twenty four men from Cadamstown joined, and they drilled and paraded openly. A branch of Cumann na mBan was also formed, comprising of twelve local girls.

It was during this period that the Pearsons of Coolacrease began to distance themselves from the local people. The people knew that they were in sympathy with the establishment. Prior to that the Pearson boys, Dick and Abe, attended house dances all over the area. In the early Spring of 1921 a young stranger came to live at Pearsons, and he socialised with the locals. He introduced himself as Jimmy Bradley and was the Pearsons' workman.

During that time the local people noticed that the police from Birr often visited the Pearson house, as well as the military from Crinkle Army Barracks {a couple of miles south of Birr}. Three local men who were also frequent visitors to Coolacrease were warned by the local IRA: two heeded the warning, the third continued to visit the house.

In the Spring of 1921 the first confrontation took place between the local people and the Pearsons. A Mass-path came down from the mountain to the local Church, and it passes through part of Pearsons' land. This path had been used since 1842 when the local Church was built in the village. On a Sunday morning as the people came to Mass they found the Mass-path closed. Trees had been felled across the stile, the path was completely blocked, and there were about twenty Mass-goers present. The men returned to their homes and later returned to the site and began removing the obstacles. William Pearson arrived and accused the men of trespassing. Nobody replied to his remarks. He returned later with his three sons, and his workman Jimmy Bradley,

and a stranger with an English accent. As the people were leaving the Church after Mass they heard of the incident, and one hundred men, women and children came to help clear the pathway. Words were exchanged between the two parties as the work progressed. At one stage Dick Pearson and John Dillon threatened one another with revolvers. Eventually peace was restored and a pathway was cleared and the Pearsons returned home. On the following day the police and army arrived in Cadamstown and arrested J.J. Horan of Coolacrease and John Dillon of Seskin. Both were conveyed under heavy armed escort to Tullamore Jail.

A month later the local company of the IRA received orders to block the road between Cadamstown village and Coolacrease House. Six men arrived at the appointed place and they selected a beech tree near the roadway. At midnight they commenced operations. Mick Heaney and Tom Donnelly were armed with revolvers. They took up their positions on the roadway while Tom Horan, Joe Carroll, Joe Manifold, and Jim English began the operation of cutting the tree. At half past twelve footsteps were heard approaching from the direction of Pearsons. Mick Heaney cried out "*Halt, who goes there*". Shots rang out from the direction of Pearsons, Mick Heaney was shot in the stomach, a rifle bullet passed through his left side, a shotgun was discharged at close range and he received pellets in the face and arms. He was wearing a heavy scarf around his neck and but for that the wounds would have been even more severe.

Tom Donnelly was on guard one hundred yards away on the Cadamstown side of the roadblock. He arrested Bert Hogg, who was on his way to Pearsons. {Bert Hogg's father was RIC Sergeant William Hogg.} The firing started as he marched him down the road to hand him over to Mick Heaney on the Coolacrease/Tullamore side. Hogg received gunshot wounds in the legs, from the direction of Pearsons, and also back wounds (from which he lost a lung) as he attempted to flee. Tom Donnelly fired towards the attackers and had the satisfaction of hearing somebody shout "*I am hit*". A bullet grazed Tom Donnelly's head as he went to the aid of Mick Heaney. The roadblock party departed, Mick was carried to a local house and was later brought by pony and trap to a secret ward in Tullamore Hospital. After six months he recovered and returned home. Bill Hogg also

received medical attention. This incident, and many more, came to the attention of the OC of the Offaly Brigade, and action was taken against the Pearsons on 30th June 1921.

The Flying Column of the Offaly Brigade was in a training camp at Dowras in Eglisish parish near Birr. The OC selected nine men and told them to be ready in one hour. In the meantime two motor cars arrived. The men got on board and the OC rode in front on a motorcycle. On arriving in Kilcormac the men dismounted and some of them smoked or walked around. They then headed up the road for Lackaroe. John Grogan who was working on Cush Bog described to me what he saw, in the following terms:

"At about 10.30 I saw a motor bike and two cars travelling up the road for Lackaroe just opposite where I was working. The convoy halted and the first car stalled. The men dismounted. After some time the second car hauled the first car away, with the motor bike positioned behind one of the cars. The men came across the bog. There were nine men and an officer in front. All the men had rifles slung over their shoulders. The officer carried a revolver. The officer was dressed in a green jacket, knee breeches and leggings, and all the men wore ordinary coats, collars and ties." John Grogan also said: "I knew the commanding officer and he spoke to me. I did not know any of the men. It was later on in the afternoon I saw smoke rising in the Coolacrease area, and I knew what had taken place."

In later years the commanding officer gave a full account to me of what happened on the day: "*We were informed that the Pearsons were making hay in a field, not far from the house. We approached and observed two men making hay. They were Dick and Abe Pearson, and another man was working a horse. He was known locally as Jimmy Bradley.*" His real name was William Stanley, a relation of the Pearsons, and a native of Carlow. When he saw the Column entering the field he began running towards a stile, a hundred yards away. The CO fired as he ran in a stooped zigzag fashion, and he was shot in the arm. Several shots were fired at him as he ran. He escaped but was captured at Mountbolus where he was held overnight. He was released the following morning and made his way to the RIC Barracks in Tullamore.

The Column, consisting of nine men and their Commanding Officer, brought the Pearson brothers to Coolacrease House. A court martial verdict was read

out to them and they were executed by firing squad. A further twenty local IRA members were deployed in the surrounding area to provide look-out and cover for the Flying Column operation, and these did not go onto the Pearson property.

The townland of Coolacrease is peaceful once more. The ruins of Coolacrease House stand on the hill of Knockroe, a symbol of years of oppression and hate. Now peace reigns supreme. Many young people are building houses and settling in the area. Tourists come to the area to take part in walks; as the Offaly Way and Slieve Bloom Way pass near the townland of Coolacrease. The tragic events of 30th June 1921 are now part of the history and folklore of bygone years.

But there is another version of this event, written by Alan Stanley and entitled *I Met Murder On The Way: The Story Of The Pearsons Of Coolacrease*. In this book the author received his information from his late father William Stanley, who lived at Pearsons—under an assumed name—during the episode mentioned above. He was also related to the Pearson family. I have met the author on several occasions during the past two years, and he informed me that he would like to write his version of the story. I have read his book which is well researched, but has, I feel, some notable inaccuracies. I have already published my version of the episode both here and in *At The Foot Of Slieve Bloom*.

My own information was gleaned from the men and women who took part in the War of Independence, and who gave their information willingly to me. Since the publication of the book *I Met Murder On The Way* I have received phone calls and letters from people all over Ireland and overseas whose fathers or grandfathers were involved during that period. I was fortunate to have met and interviewed many of the men and women before they passed away, including the OC of the Offaly Brigade on that day. Mr. Jack Carter, who wrote the Foreword for the book, ends his column with the following:

"We shall never recapture the past and it is not for the historian to invent. Alan has brought a mature desire to look into the truth of Coolacrease and, before it faded into the mists of time, has revealed it as something far less than patriotic idealism. He may not win much affection—lack of reverence for sacred cows can cause resentment, and others may give a different and sanitised account of the same events. Yet Alan has deployed original material from those with intimate

knowledge of the sordid episode in June 1921, and has written a balanced work of historical illumination."

The people of Cadamstown would not agree with Carter's idea that Alan Stanley wrote a balanced account of the events. They do not have a "*sanitised account of the same events*". They lived through that period, and they did not invent history as stated above. There were six Protestant families living in a two-mile radius of the village of Cadamstown during that period. Not one of them was ever molested; they were held in high esteem by everyone. The families were the Jacksons of Kilnaparson, McAllisters of Cadamstown village, Hoggs of Lackroe, Ashtons of Pigeonstown, Droughts of Lettybrook, and Biddulphs of Moneyguineen. I was asked by the people of Cadamstown to address some of the questionable parts of the book so that future generations will know a more complete version.

Here are some of the inaccuracies which deserve mention:

Page 12: "... a dispute with some neighbours who claimed a "mass-path" ... damage being caused to crops ...". There were no crops involved as the mass-path passed through shrubbery and uncultivated land.

Page 13: "... on 30th June 1921 a band of thirty, perhaps forty, armed and masked men descended on the house, torched it, then ... shot the two eldest sons ...". There were not thirty or forty armed and masked men involved in the actual executions. Nine men and the CO were involved.

Page 21: "... at 4 o'clock while the two men were making hay in a field ... they were surrounded by about forty armed and masked men ...". There were three men in the field: the Pearson brothers and William Stanley alias Jimmy Bradley. There were not thirty or forty masked men involved. There was no need for the men to be masked. They were mostly unknown to the Pearsons. Two of them were from the North Tipperary Brigade.

Page 33: "A variant of the myth suggests that they were actively engaged, on the side of the authorities...". The shooting of Mick Heaney and Tom Donnelly when the local battalion were cutting a tree to block the road could not have been a myth. Both men carried their wounds to their dying day.

Page 36: "My father said that Dick was somewhat hotheaded...". John

Dillon warned Dick on two occasions in regard to his conduct. Dick threatened to burn his house. During that period there was IRA intelligence to the effect that six local houses were planned to be burned by the police and the military: Donnellys of Curragh, Nolans of Deerpark, Dillons, Ryans and Dalys of Seskin, Heaneys of Glenlitter.

Pages 36 and 53 (page 68 in 2nd edition): I have been approached by nephews and a niece of the late James Delahunty to state that James Delahunty was not a postman. He did not join the Postal Service until 1926 and he was a prisoner during the dates mentioned, and was also imprisoned during the Civil War.

As a matter of interest no postman ever delivered letters during those years—for certain reasons. {The Pearsons collected their own letters from the post office, so their mail was less likely to be intercepted. In fact their post was intercepted by the IRA and they were found to be passing information to the British authorities.} There was no official postman in Cadamstown at that period (cf. page 46). Pearsons collected their mail at McAllisters Post Office in the village. Bess Grennan, who was a young girl at the time, delivered the letters to various houses, although she was not officially sanctioned.

Page 46: Jim White was the son of an RIC sergeant. He was warned on several occasions to keep away from Pearsons. Also on page 46 the following appears: "At approximately 11 a.m. a man by the name of Hoban or Honen arrived in the hay paddock and asked us if we had seen his horses...". This statement is also inaccurate. J.J. Horan farmed land beside Pearsons. They were not on speaking terms. J.J. Horan and John Dillon were in Tullamore Jail during that period as they had been arrested by the Birr police after the mass-path incident. The information leading to these arrests can only have been provided by the Pearsons.

Page 47: "The Rebels came back next day and stole cattle, horses and harness." The afternoon of the incident the military arrived from Birr. They set up camp on the lawn and kept a round-the-clock guard on the property until the Pearsons returned some days later. After the surviving Pearsons returned to Coolacree two pigs were stolen and sold in Roscrea and an iron gate was taken from the property. The man who stole the gate was made to leave it back; the two men who stole the pigs were brought before a Sinn Fein court and were made to compensate the Pearson family.

Page 48: "When Syd [Pearson] came back to the farm 12 months later and started ploughing, next morning he found a note on the plough advising him to stop or he would be shot. So it is evident their main object was to take over our land." I have never heard of this incident. We have to understand that there were myths on both sides. It may or may not have happened.

Page 53 (67 in 2nd edition): The author mentions Tom Mitchell. Once more there are inaccuracies with regard to James Delahunty, attributed to Tom Mitchell. Tom Mitchell would have known that he was not a postman during that period. James Delahunty also held the rank of Quartermaster in the second half company of the Offaly Brigade.

I was a personal friend of Tom Mitchell and we often discussed the Pearson episode. He told me his father advised the Pearson family on many occasions to keep a low profile. Tom had a balanced view of the situation at the time. The Mitchells were Protestants, and his uncle, also Tom Mitchell—a soldier trained who served in the British army—trained the local IRA battalion during the War of Independence; and their house in Roscomroe was used as a safe house for men on the run.

Page 55 (69 in 2nd edition): I will not go into detail in regard to the author's comments regarding the felling of the tree. He might consider interviewing the people of Cadamstown and the surrounding areas, and they will provide the details. The day after the mass-path incident an Crossley Tender and two army lorries arrived in the village and proceeded to Pearsons that afternoon. J.J. Horan and John Dillon were arrested. It is reasonable to ask who was in a position to identify them and point out where they lived. Dillon's house was situated three miles up the mountainside.

Another element of the local intelligence struggle: Two RIC officers used to come on their bicycles from Birr on alternate Sundays, to attend Mass in Cadamstown Church. After Mass they proceeded to Pearsons. They received a warning that they would be shot. They never came afterwards.

Page 56 (71 in 2nd edition): The author claims the IRA used dum-dum bullets. The same accusation was falsely levelled at General Tom Barry, IRA commander in the Ambush at Crossbarry where a whole English unit was wiped out.

Page 73: "Susan Pearson was brought

to a house in Kinnitty where a number of men were paraded before her ... she failed to identify any of the men." This is not correct. After the Pearsons were executed, the police and military arrived in Cadamstown (not Kinnitty) at 7 o'clock in the morning. They arrested everyone in the village and placed them along the bridge in the village, where names were taken. The women were allowed to return home, and the men and boys as young as 10 years old were held until Mrs. Pearson arrived from Birr. She failed to identify anybody.

That was the morning my late mother Bridget Dillon, aged 17 years, was fired on by British soldiers while she was bringing in cows to be milked. She carried a head wound till the day she died.

Page 85 (99 in 2nd edition): Tom Donnelly is mentioned as having been interviewed by Tom Mitchell in 1981. But Tom Mitchell passed away in 1976.

Page 86 (101 in 2nd edition): {A story of a lorry careering over a ditch at Coolacree, the occupants—supposedly the Pearson execution party—all killed.} Those people were killed at Coolacree in 1948, they were guests returning from a wedding and had nothing whatever to do with the execution of the Pearsons.

Page 90 (105 in 2nd edition): {The shooting at the police in Kinnitty. The attackers were said to have hidden behind the Catholic Church building.} The police were ambushed from the ruins of the police barracks one hundred yards from Giltrap's public house, and from the corner of the grounds of the Catholic church building.

These are not all the errors I have been asked to correct by numerous people. Alan Stanley has written an account sympathetic to the Unionist views of that time, as well as a revisionist perspective. I have revealed and recorded the incident as told by those who actually participated in the events.

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Jack Lane

The Irish Distress Committee records clarify a mystery about D.D. Sheehan of the Land And Labour League

A Eureka Moment—Thanks To Robin Bury

Eureka moments are rare and one of life's little pleasures and should be savoured. I must thank Robin Bury for provoking Seán McGouran to follow up the claims made by Mr. Bury that the records of the Irish Distress Committee in London prove his allegations of persecution of Protestants as Protestants before and after the War of Independence. (*Church & State*, No. 86, Autumn 2006). Sean's initial researches garnered up a little nugget that throws a torchlight on the type of 'victims' that this Committee helped and why.

This was Seán's reference to the fact that Captain D.D. Sheehan got support from this Committee to ease his alleged distress. D.D. Sheehan was not only Catholic, but his family were real live Fenians. How and why did such a person apply and get support from this Committee that was allegedly only looking after Protestants? And how many more Sheehans were there at the receiving end of this Distress Committee, I wonder?

D.D. Sheehan was a MP for Mid-Cork for over 10 years, also a barrister, journalist, author and a Captain in the British Army during the War.

I have a personal interest in 'D D'. I may not have existed without him. He effectively created and led the Land and Labour League in Munster 100 years ago, and one of its enduring achievements was the building of forty thousand Labourers' Cottages, or 'Sheehan's cottages', dotted all over the Province and now 'very desirable properties' approaching a quarter of a million Euro on a good day. This movement was the basis for the rural Labour vote in Munster down to the present day. The cottages were perfect examples of one-off houses that transformed social life for a whole class of people—it has been calculated that at least a quarter of million people's lives were transformed by this one achievement of the LLL.

Both my grandfathers supported D D and William O'Brien in politics and one of them got one of these cottages as a result. I suppose that by today's *Irish Times*' moral standards such a massive building of one-off houses and allocation by political selection would be about as corrupt a thing as anyone could imagine. There probably should be a Tribunal about it. Well, so be it, I exist because of

this 'corruption' and I won't complain about it. Sheehan's League was the source of the rural labour vote in Munster down to when the Smart Alecs took over in the 60s and that vote then disappeared. They talked a lot but Sheehan and his movement built a lot.

But D D made a terrible misjudgement over the First World War. He recruited, fought in it, got shell shock, went AWOL, and escaped the consequences of a court-martial by doing a deal to intensify his recruiting efforts—after 1916. He lost two sons in the War. But he never doubted that what he did was right and became a leading light in the British Legion in Ireland later on. He was effectively the Chief Whip for the British Labour Party MPs towards the end of the War and he wanted to continue in Westminster, standing for British Labour in the 1918 Election. Getting a good vote in Limehouse but failing to get elected, he created the base for Clem Attlee who won the seat and held it from the next Election.

He did not believe that an independent Irish Republic could be established and Dominion Status was the most likely and desirable option with real power remaining in Westminster, where he hoped to continue and thrive. Naturally enough he and his family left Cork when he chose to stand in and represent a constituency in England. All this is perfectly understandable.

However, for as long as I can remember it is said he was driven out of Cork in 1918 and could not continue in politics there because of harassment and threats to his life. The charge is that he and his family's lives were ruined because of these threats—and obviously the blame is laid at the door of Republicans. Kevin Myers regaled us on a few occasions with lurid stories about this alleged happening in his hey day at the *Irish Times*, the last being on 16th February 2001. Myers clearly did not have a clue as to who Sheehan was or what he stood for, and cared less—but the allegation that he was an early victim of Sinn Fein harassment was quite sufficient for Myers's purposes.

Sheehan's grandson. Niall O' Siochain, has almost made it his lifetime's work to establish the case and

now uses the Internet to put it forward. There he says: "*In the changed political climate, D.D. Sheehan and his family found themselves forced to abruptly abandon their Cork city home and exile to England.... In 1926, after being assured that the threats made against him in Cork were now lifted, he was allowed to return to Dublin*" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D.D._Sheehan).

This is pure assertion. No evidence whatever is provided. I have spent many years looking for any evidence of this harassment and threats and none can be found. Sheehan himself never mentions it; the papers of the time in Ireland or England don't mention it; and no other contemporary source has ever been found for the allegation. The newspapers would have been more than delighted to have even the hint of any harassment of an MP by Sinn Feiners and the propaganda experts in Dublin Castle would have made hay with it.

Sheehan himself was no shrinking violet and it would have been totally out of character for him to have succumbed and remained silent when threatened. After all, he had plenty experience of street-fighting, for years, against the Molly Maguires and he was a front line commissioned officer in the Great War! Whatever his faults, he was no physical or moral coward. He was also articulate, voluble, a well known journalist for a variety of newspapers and a Westminster MP who had plenty to say in Parliament when this is supposed to have happened to him. In other words, he had every opportunity to mention such harassment—yet not a word ever appeared by him or others at the time. How curious?

But why would the threat to him have arisen in 1918 in the first place? It is alleged that it happened because he had recruited for the British Army. Naturally there was opposition to such activity, but his party leader William O'Brien also recruited, and there is no allegation that he was ever harassed or prevented from standing in the Election or continuing to live happily in Cork until he died years later. In fact O'Brien was asked to stand for Fianna Fail in 1927. Moreover, Sheehan, O'Brien, and their Party, the All for Ireland League, explicitly supported Sinn Fein in the 1918 Election and issued a Manifesto in support and one of Sinn Fein's posters carried a quotation from D D Sheehan to make its case. In many parts of Cork Sheehan's party essentially became the Sinn Fein Party.

In his book written in 1921 he is lavish in his praise for the IRA and Sinn Fein. He said:

"So far as Ireland is concerned the public mind is occupied at the moment of my writing with the question of "reprisals". Various efforts have been made to bring about peace. They have failed because, in my view, they have been reluctant to recognise and make allowance for certain essential facts. The whole blame for the existing state... is thrown on the shoulders of the Irish Republican Army by those who take their ethical standard from Sir Hamar Greenwood. It is forgotten that for two or three years before the attacks on the Royal Irish Constabulary began there were no murders, no assassinations and no civil war in Ireland. There was, however, a campaign of gross provocation by Dublin Castle for two reasons: (1) by way of vengeance for their defeat on the Conscription issue; (2) as a retaliation on Sinn Fein, because it had succeeded in peacefully supplanting English rule by a system of Volunteer Police, Sinn Fein Courts, Sinn Fein Local Government, etc. The only pretext on which this provocation was pursued was on account of a mythical "German plot", which Lord Wimbourne never heard of, which Sir Bryan Mahon, Commander-in-Chief, told Lord French he flatly disbelieved in, and which, when, after more than two years, the documents are produced, proves to be a stale rehash of negotiations before the Easter Week Rising, with some sham "German Irish Society" in Berlin. On this pretext the Sinn Fein leaders, Messrs. de Valera and Griffith (whom there is not a shadow of proof to connect with the German plot), were arrested and deported, with many hundreds of the most responsible leaders. Furthermore, an endless series of prosecutions were instituted and savage sentences imposed for the most paltry charges—such as drilling, wearing uniform, singing 'The Soldiers' Song', having portraits of Rebel leaders, taking part in the Arbitration Courts which had superseded the Petty Sessions Courts, and such like. All this, with suppression of newspapers and of all public meetings, went on for many months before Sinn Fein, deprived of its leaders, was goaded at last into attacking the Royal Irish Constabulary. Whatever the juridical status of the guerrilla warfare thus entered upon (which it is not improbable England would have applauded if employed against any other Empire than her own), it was conducted on honourable lines by the Sinn Feiners. The policemen and soldiers, including General Lewis, who surrendered, were treated with courtesy, and not one of them wounded or insulted. Their wives

and children were also carefully preserved from danger until the police "reprisals" in the Thurles neighbourhood—the wrecking of villages and the savage murders of young men—ended by producing equally ruthless "reprisals" on the other side. In Dublin, since the Dublin Metropolitan Police declined to go about armed, not one of them has been fired upon." (*Ireland Since Parnell* by Captain D.D. Sheehan, 1921, Barrister-at-Law. Late MP for Mid-Cork)

Does this sound like a person who believed that his life had been threatened and ruined by Sinn Fein? Yet the allegations persist unhindered by any credible evidence whatever.

Sheehan's political life was undoubtedly ruined after 1918, but it was of his own making, his own misjudgements. He was not alone in this. His personal financial life also appears to have been subject to serious problems in the years after the War, like millions of others who were ruined by it.

He was made bankrupt as reported in *The Times*:

"Bankruptcy of a former MP

"In the Bankruptcy Court yesterday, Mr Daniel Desmond Sheehan, formerly MP for Mid-Cork, attended before Mr. Register Mellor for public examination on the statement of his affairs in which he claimed a surplus in assets of £10,388 after payment of his liabilities, returned at £718. Mr V. Armstrong, Assistant Clerical Receiver, attended. Mr Kingham represented the debtor and Mr Barry Cohen was a trustee for the bankruptcy.

"The debtor, examined by Mr Armstrong, said that he was formerly a journalist. In 1901 he was elected MP for Mid-Cork, which he represented until 1918. In 1911 he became a member of the Irish Bar and until the outbreak of the War he served in the Munster Circuit. He was afterwards engaged in a recruiting campaign in Munster, and in January 1915 he obtained a commission in the Royal Munster Fusiliers, but he resigned three years later because of ill-health. In the meantime he had become interested in certain mineral rights in Achill Island, and has since been trying to raise capital to develop the property. Should a company be formed to acquire and work the rights, he became entitled to a half-share—£2,500 at least—of the vendor's profit. Mr Registrar Mellor ordered the examination to be concluded." (31 October 1923).

The Times reported in its obituary of D D that, "After the reduction of his

pension he was adjudged bankrupt in 1923, but was discharged during the course of the next year" (29.11.1948).

This was in clear conflict with the reasons given at the hearing above.

Moreover, in November 1924, when he actually succeeded in having the bankruptcy order lifted, he came up with yet another reason for his bankruptcy:

"Mr Vernon Armstrong, Official Receiver reported that the bankrupt failed in October, 1922, with liabilities of £934, and assets which were expected to realise £11,106, but which had only yielded £9. The applicant attributed his insolvency to the political unrest in Ireland during the last few years. His Honour granted a discharge, subject to a suspension of three months" (*The Times*, 24 November 1924).

Ah ha! Had D D come up at last with the magic formula for explaining away all his problems and being the perfect victim? One wonders if there is a record somewhere of how exactly the 'unrest' in Ireland caused him to go bankrupt from a business failure in Achill, or how it caused his pension to be reduced? Sinn Fein were not in charge of British Army pensions! I am sure there is not such a document as it would be too absurd for him to actually declare something like this. But there was really no need to do so. Only the impression had to be created that he was a victim of the change of state in Ireland. Any ex-MP, journalist, and barrister could easily string the necessary 'case' together and put it in the appropriate sympathetic ears. Seán McGouran has established that the terms of reference of the Committee were very broad and flexible and no doubt Captain Sheehan was well known to the people concerned. They knew a friend down on his luck who had served them well and gave him a helping hand—and he could be of future use.

Until it is proved otherwise this is the only credible origin of the yarn about D D Sheehan's persecution. The origin must lie in his appeal to this Committee and it clears up what has hitherto been something of a mystery. Can I thank Mr. Bury for pointing us in right direction in this matter—or should the thanks go to the *eminence grise* in the background, Dr. Fitzpatrick? Thank you all in any case and keep up the good work.

The incident also speaks volumes about the type of people this Committee helped. One thing it proves absolutely is that religion had nothing to do with it. There were more important factors at work. Loyalty and Loyalism is what

Relief Of Distress Or A Power Base?

mattered. And people like Bury who see religion in it are only exposing their own fixations and simple-mindedness about religion and the issues of the day. Seán McGouran indicates that some of its behaviour would not be acceptable if it saw the light of day, hence the destruction of papers regarding some of the Irish applicants. It seems that some of the claims were a bit of a racket. But also a racket with a purpose.

It is easy to forget these days that 1920s Ireland was an unstable place—just like many other places in the world because of the anarchy created by Britain's launching of WWI and its 'peace to end all peace' at Versailles.

The future was not at all predicable and there were many who had realistic hopes of reversing recent developments—not least in Ireland. After all Mr. Bury sincerely believes that such developments can still be reversed in Ireland and has been given many reasons to feel hopeful. So imagine the confidence of those in the 1920s who sought a reversal of fortunes.

See also:

**D.D. Sheehan: Why He Left
Cork In 1918**

—A Correspondence from *The Corkman*.
20pp (A4). 1 903497 14 0. E5, £4.

and

**The 'Cork Free Press' In The
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168pp. Index. ISBN 0 9521081 06 10.
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The Irish Distress Committee was under pressure to change into something other than a temporary body to help Loyalist refugees from 'Southern Ireland'. Looking through the papers, it is clear that there were moves to politicise the Committee, win it extra funds, and move from a position where it was manned largely by civil servants to one in which its members would have a political profile and by following a political agenda.

A major element in the thinking of many of the persons concerned (including Sir Samuel Hoare, chair of the Committee) was a lack of genuine refugees, which is to say a lack of people who had fled to England on account of the Irish troubles. While some landlords and large farmers had to leave their farms and estates temporarily, mostly they went to live elsewhere in Ireland, usually in Dublin, for periods in 1922 and 1923. They complained of being out of pocket and of not being able to collect rents, or dispose of the lands as they saw fit. But, under the terms of reference which I quoted last month, and which were set by Lionel Curtis, they did not qualify for relief, because the Irish Distress Committee could only help people in Britain.

A summing up of this quandary was received by the British Prime Minister, Andrew Bonar Law, in a letter dated 28th March, 1923, sent from 2, Millbank House, Westminster SW1. This was the address of an organisation called the "*Conservative and Unionist Movement*", of which I know nothing. It may have been one of a number of possibly phantom groups set up by Southern Irish Loyalists' allies to plead their cause in Great Britain. The author of the letter was "*Mr. W. M. Jellett K. C. ex-MP Dublin University*": he makes much in the short letter about having to keep his Dublin address secret. This document is in the [British] Parliamentary Archives (also known as the House of Lords Records Office) in the Bonar Law Papers (BL 114/I/42). There is included with this a "Memorandum", *Bolshevism In*

Southern Ireland, which contains 'sound bites' to the effect that the Provisional Government was unable to control the twenty six county area. He also claims that the Free State Army is as infected with "*Bolshevism*", as is the IRA. This had become the substance of Unionist propaganda about the Free State. (Lord Midleton insinuated such in letter, dated "Nov. 24.22" (BL 114/I/24).)

(This allusion to 'sound bite' is appropriate. After all, in a letter to *Church & State* No. 73 (Summer 2003), in his capacity as Secretary of the Reform Movement, Robin Bury quoted from the *Church of Ireland Gazette* (22nd June 1922). What I have now discovered is that that quotation is in parts word for word the same as his 'quotation' from *The Witness* (Belfast, July 17, 1921) in the *Irish Examiner* on 10th July 2006, replying to Niall Meehan (see last *Church & State*, p22). For example "*...the small Protestant minority is at the mercy of local bands of lawless men... farmers whose industry and character have developed prosperity... 'fair game'... Covetousness and personal dislike.*" I cannot at the moment say whether there is a genuine overlap in the original material, but this matter clearly merits further investigation.)

Jellett's Memorandum has three Appendices: A, B and C. Appendix A is a list of "*Mansions and houses burned or otherwise destroyed in Southern Ireland as reported in the press... since the date of the Treaty, 6th December 1921*". He gives the date, "*House or Place*", county, and "*Owner or Occupier*", of 178 incidents, and another twenty one, "*From private information... exact dates unknown*". Some of the items drawn from the press (he does not give any indication of where these reports were published) are of multiple incidents, and surprisingly few involved ex-RIC personnel. There are a number of commercial premises, two condensed milk factories in Tipperary, a sweet factory in Dublin, and a Sawmills (Rokeby Hall, Louth). There are also public buildings, Kingstown Orange

Lodge, Galteemore Creamery, Dundalk Boathouse, and the Golf Pavilion, Tullamore. Houses belonging to the Earl of Arran and the Marquis of Lansdowne were destroyed. Jellett is careful to describe a number of schools and rectories destroyed as "Protestant", including the "Old Protestant School House" in Sligo, which presumably had ceased to be an actual school. Appendix B consists of two anecdotes about "Appropriation of private property" in Westmeath and in Carlow. C is a printed map of the Great Southern and Western Railway with colour-coded indications of types of damage.

The Irish Claims Compensation Association (ICCA) published Jellett's list in a ten page pamphlet (BL 114/I/45), with a multitude of titles. *"The Irish Free State / The Campaign of Fire"*, is at the top of the front cover. The following headings are: *"A Record of Some Mansions And Houses Destroyed 1922-23"*, then, in smaller print, *"Why Irish Mansions are Destroyed"*.

There are some reprints from *The Morning Post*, a fanatically anti-Irish journal, which was absorbed by *The Daily Telegraph* in the late 1920s. *"The Campaign of Fire in Ireland"* headlines the first reprint, followed by *"A Striking Record"*, and *"Increased Burnings under Free State"*.

There is a map with the Six Counties shown as a blank (and described as "Ulster"). The incidents referred to are designated with an 'x' for burnings between *"the date of the Treaty (6th December, 1921) and the establishment of the Free State (6th December, 1922);* those after the "evacuation by Great Britain" are indicated by a large dot. It is clear from the map (which indicates the boundaries of each of the 26 Counties), that the burnings were fairly isolated. Some Counties have none, while Cork, Waterford, Wexford, and Kildare, have more after the Free State was set up. But the numbers are small—Tipperary seems to have been most enthusiastic about burning. Louth had one before the establishment of the Free State and six afterwards: the Belfast Unionist papers claimed that this was entirely sectarian in origin.

Pages 7 to 10 of the pamphlet consist of the Bolshevik bogey, quoting *"The Watchword of Labour, the organ of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, allied to the Third International of Russia..."*, to the effect that Ireland was England's Achilles Heel.

There is more on the Democratic Programme of the First Dáil and its use

by Liam Mellowes, as publicised *"on September 21st, 1922, [by] the Irish Provisional Government"*, using *"captured documents"*. It is a well-argued pamphlet. As this group has disappeared from history, I am not in a position to say whether or not its material was for general distribution or was aimed at MPs and journalists. The back page carries the following legend, headed *"The Irish Claims Compensation Association"* which is worth reproducing in full:

"This Association was formed in 1922—

"To organise all British subjects having residence or property in Ireland;

"For mutual assistance and defence of their right—especially in relation to the payment of their just claims for compensation for damage to life and property.

"The affairs of the Association are managed by an Executive Committee appointed at a General Meeting which was held at the Surveyor's Institution on October 27th 1922, presided over by Sir William Davison, K. C., M. P., and attended by about three hundred British subjects in Ireland whose homes and properties have been destroyed.

"All who have similarly suffered are requested to forward particulars of their claims to the Secretary if they have not already done so.

"Membership of the Association is also open to sympathisers of the loyalist sufferers.

"Subscriptions are voluntary and will be applied by the Executive Committee to the legal and other expenses of the Association."

October 1922 was the month when the Conservative backbenchers in Westminster broke up the Coalition government led by Lloyd George. This 'Carlton Club' revolt brought about the 1922 Committee by which Conservative backbench (meaning those with no job in Government, or in the running of the parliamentary party) MPs keep a check on the Party leadership. Sir Samuel Hoare played a large part in this 'revolt', which led to Andrew Bonar Law forming a Conservative Government. The following month a General Election was called, in which the Conservatives won 345 seats, Labour 142 and the Liberals 117 (the later were split between Lloyd George's followers and the 'Asquithians').

The various 'Southern Loyalist' support groups (and Hoare) probably

hoped Bonar Law would speed up the move from merely handing out money to actual refugees to compensating the remnants of the Ascendancy, their hanger's on and the ex-RIC. Bonar Law had been a vigorous supporter of the Ulster Unionists and the UVF during the 'Home Rule Crisis' of 1912-14. Though he was extremely ill, and resigned in May 1923, they may have got their way because while he was Prime Minister, the Irish Distress Committee's terms of reference were changed in March 1923, as was the name: to the Irish Grants Committee. The original terms of reference, drawn up in May 1922 by Lionel Curtis (a high-flying Imperial 'fixer') referred to refugees resident in Great Britain. Those of March 1923 were to do with compensation under the terms of various Acts of the Free State Dáil, and of Westminster. It also came under the control of the Colonial Office (the Irish Office and its civil servants having been absorbed by the CO).

These claims were dealt with by Sir William H. Davison, KBE, DL, MP, in a pamphlet *"Report of Meeting held at Caxton Hall"*, dated February, 7th, 1923 published under The Irish Compensation Claims Association. [BL 114/I/45—three items are bundled under this code]. Davison starts by (implicitly) comparing the *"...Southern Irish loyalists assembled to-day"* with Armenian or Greek refugees. The latter would *"...get large sums paid on our behalf"* from public and private sources, while those gathered in the Caxton Hall were *"...only British citizens"*. He reckoned the pre-Truce claims amounted to £10 millions, and the post-Truce ones to £30 millions. However, the County Councils in the Free State had refused to co-operate with the Courts or the compensating Commission under Lord Shaw. Davison points out that—

"...the British Government entered into an agreement with the representatives of the Free State as damage had been done in Ireland by the Forces of the Crown that damage should be made good, and compensation paid by the British Government. It was also agreed that as far as personal injury had been suffered by the supporters of the British Government in Ireland, those injuries should also be compensated by the British Government but that all other claims should be met by the Free State."

That is a reasonable (if slightly lawyerish) interpretation of the

agreement—the Free State did not give blanket assent to all claims. The Provisional Government was particularly irritated by commercial enterprises demanding compensation, particularly the railway companies, which it intended to make a State monopoly. The legal and financial underpinnings of these matters will be dealt with in the next part of this study—it is relatively straightforward, but couched in 'legalese'.

Edward Carson spoke at this meeting, but was pretty incoherent. He demanded that the Free State Government should be forced to pay out on the claims of persons driven out, or unable to live off their rents. He then claimed that the Free State was essentially bankrupt—so the British Government should underwrite this compensation.

In 1923 the Southern Irish Loyalists' Relief Association was also putting pressure on the Prime Minister. In letters dated 23rd February, 16th March and 9th April. It was particularly concerned about persons who were unable to collect rents due to them. The letter of 9th April (BL 144/I/ 148) insisted that,

"if the Crown failed to provide adequate protection, *then there can surely be no question that the Crown's obligation is to pay compensation*" (emphasis, underlining, in original, though it might have been done by someone in a Downing Street office).

This letter suggests that the sum of £1,100,000 (for "approximately 1500 claims") would be an "insignificant sum for a Government...". This group had a position from which to press its point, namely the House of Lords, and it did so until the last days of the Irish Grants Committee.

There were a number of MPs associated with SILRA: Major A. Boyd-Carpenter was on the Executive Committee, others included Neville Chamberlain and five more.

Sir Samuel Hoare (after whom the Irish Distress Committee was usually called) was exerting pressure to change the Committee from a reactive to a 'pro-active' or even advocacy body. (This material is from the Templewood Papers [TP] held by the University Library, Cambridge—Hoare was made a Viscount in 1944, and took the name of the family home. The title died with him in 1959, because he had no male children.) A question arose in May 1922 whereby a 'refugee' from Ireland asked the Committee for a loan of £100 to

start a business in Britain. This exercised Sir John Anderson who wrote a letter to Hoare (TP I:13 (3)), in which he noted that a re-interpretation of the terms of reference was needed. Lionel Curtis (who had drawn up the original terms of reference) was asked to attend the Committee's May 23rd meeting. Curtis, who was about to attend a meeting of "the signatories to the Irish Treaty", suggested that "the Committee should approach the Government for further instructions". He noted that ex-service men could make the same sort of claim, and he clearly unhappy found the initiative unappetising. (TP I:13 (7)).

(The man in question, a Mr. Longhurst, "...owned a Fish shop and a house, which was let to tenants, in Fermoy, Count Cork"—memo to Neville Chamberlain, Chancellor of the Exchequer (TP, I:13 (13)), undated but after June 23rd, 1922. It goes on: "*He had served 20 years in the Army and was in receipt of a long service pension. Owing to the assistance which he is alleged to have given to the Military officers in Fermoy, Longhurst was sentenced to 10 years banishment from Ireland...*". There follows the details of his business, carried on by his wife, dwindling away after the British Army left Fermoy. He attempted to sell the business, but "*no bid whatsoever was made*", due to a boycott by "the R. I. A." (?). Longhurst had £250 in hand and needed the £100 to purchase a similar business in Aldershot.)

The next relevant item is a letter to Churchill from Hoare dated June 23rd 1922, in which he claims the Committee had—

"been pressed by the War Office to agree to an extension of our terms of reference so that they should enable us 1) to deal with the men of the disbanded Irish regiments, 2) to provide the travelling expenses for Army pensioners who wish to leave Ireland" (TP I:13 (12); it should be mentioned that RIC personnel were given generous travel and resettlement grants).

Hoare goes on—

"The present Committee is a small departmental body set up to deal with a definite kind of urgent case. If our work is to be extended, we must become a much more comprehensive body with a bigger organization at our disposal..."

He had been prepared to but up with the "*rather haphazard methods*" of the Committee. But the War Office and Irish Office were making demands which

such a group could not meet.

Hoare's main problem was a severe lack of actual refugees in England.

In addition he pressed Churchill, the Colonial Secretary, to extend the membership of the Committee, saying that he is going to say as much in an upcoming "Irish debate" in the Commons. (He was MP for Chelsea). There is a second letter to Churchill in a similar vein on July 1st (TP I:13 (13)),

A letter from the Treasury (unsigned—presumably a carbon copy) refutes the notion that the Distress Committee needs to be enlarged and be given a new set of terms of reference. The Treasury notes "*...that, of the £10,000 allocated to the Committee it has not, in fact, been found necessary to expend more than about £1,200*" (TP I:3 (16); these figures are at odds with the Distress Committee's, and there is no indication of how they were arrived at.)

The Treasury letter also refers to the Shaw Commission, which collapsed for a variety of reasons later in the year. The Commission was an attempt to expedite the payment of claims for pre-Truce damage—Shaw suggested that all compensation claims should be dealt with by the County Courts. But the Courts were reluctant to deal with the matter.

(In the Longhurst case mentioned above, he had "*made an application to the Provisional Government for the decree of banishment for be rescinded o enable him to return to his home and business in Fermoy. He received in reply a communication from the Ministry of Home Affairs that the "Minister" had considered his case and was not prepared to recommend the remission of the sentence passed on him*". This is a very odd view of the situation in Ireland: the Minister (with or without quotation marks), and the Courts' personnel, had been involved in what they perceived as a War of Independence. Longhurst had connived with the enemy. The Minister's decision was probably based an assessment of Longhurst's chances of survival: exile was probably the safest option for him in the circumstances.)

The Distress Committee, and other organs of the British Government had problems in dealing with the reality of an Irish Government in a situation of dual power. There was the 'Irish Government' based on Dublin Castle, along with the Vice Regal Lodge, during the period of the Provisional Government.

The Treasury letter pointedly ends on the view that "...an early settlement of such claims would be hindered rather than expedited by an indication on the part of the British Government of distrust on the Provisional Government's good faith in the matter".

This point was clearly made against the Irish Claims Compensation Association and the Southern Irish Loyalists' Relief Association (SILRA), in particular because the former in particular, was keeping up a shrill campaign on the 'anarchy' in the Free State. The ICCA also repeatedly claimed that the Free State Army was in cahoots with the "Irregulars" in, not so much ethnic cleansing, as in expropriating farming and grazing land. The ICCA issued a set of reprints from the *Morning Post*, entitled *What the Irish Treaty has done for County Cork* (BL 114/I/45). The headlines alone indicate what was the 'spin': *Back to the Dark Ages, Two Armies which are One, Republicans fed and equipped by Free State, Siamese Twins*. This sort of thing in a widely-read journal (almost the official journal of the Unionist / Conservative Party) was not conducive to stabilising relations between the new Irish State and the UK.

Hoare had been one of a small number of Tory / Unionist MPs who had supported Irish Home Rule, largely for the same reasons as the Liberal Imperialists—viz., that Redmond's Party was imperialist by 1912, and would not rock the Empire's boat. And it was demonstrated in the course of the Great War that that analysis was entirely accurate, see *Imperial Ireland*, Pat Walsh, Athol Books.

Now Hoare was lining up with the Southern Loyalists who did not want the Irish State to survive. He not only advocated the expansion of the Distress Committee into a substantial body with real money and powers, he suggested to Churchill that MPs should be seconded to it. The MPs he suggested included Lord Eustace Percy (the brother, of the 8th Duke of Northumberland, a member of the Committee of SILRA, and a fairly vocal advocate of its policies, not his son as I said in my last article). When Percy took over the Chairmanship of the Irish Grants Committee, SILRA seemed become more vocal. In other words, a new power base of opponents to Irish freedom was trying to get itself established. There is more to be written about these matters.

Desmond Fennell

PART TWO

About Behaving Normally In Abnormal Circumstances

2

At the outset of this essay I mentioned another recurrent feature of my writing which emerged in the 1960s and which—I now realise—also was a deviation from the nationalist view of things. It emerged when, after nine years spent mostly abroad, I began to focus my attention on Irish affairs. I had been observing the human condition in various nations, and the nations themselves as functioning entities. I had become familiar with both, and it was with that familiarity present in my mind that I addressed myself to my own nation.

I did not then have the considered understanding of the Irish nationalist self-image that I have since acquired and that I outlined in Section 1. I regarded our nationalism simply as a 'movement' that we had inherited from the Revolution, a movement with 'two national aims'. These were proclaimed intentions to revive the Irish language and to bring about a politically united Ireland. Throughout the 60s, I listened, intermittently, to the public discourse. Even in learned circles, I heard no discussion of man. In particular I listened to what was being said, and not said, about the nation and its history, and about the circumstances which the two national aims were meant to correct. The accounts of these matters which were being given differed from what I saw with my own eyes or from what I knew to be the case.

Looking at the Irish, I saw human beings, but the language that referred to them either suggested they were non-human or, when reference to their humanity was relevant, suggested by silence that they lacked this quality; were merely 'Irish' beings. Two instances struck me forcefully. There was a constant suggestion and assumption that, while widespread abandonment of Christianity had occurred in many European nations, Irish Catholics were inhumanly immune to such change; Catholicism was part of the Irish nature. Had not St Patrick wrestled with the Archangel Michael on the summit of Croagh Patrick and, having won, received from him the promise that the Irish would always remain true to the Faith? And there was the matter of the Revolution. Because the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising was

approaching, there was much discussion of the Rising and of the Revolution generally.

Reading the writings of the leaders of the Revolution, I found abundant evidence that they saw their enterprise as having, like the American or French revolutions, a human as well as a national dimension. James Connolly, to cite one example, wrote of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union: "*It found the workers of Ireland on their knees, and has striven to raise them to the erect position of manhood; it found them with the vices of slavery in their souls, and it strove to eradicate those vices and replace them with some of the virtues of free men*". Padraig Pearse wrote: "*One loves the freedom of men because one loves men. There is therefore a deep humanism in every true Nationalist*". Man, during the revolutionary years, was present in Ireland! But the current public discourse was treating the Revolution as a merely Irish struggle for merely Irish objectives, and its leaders merely as Irishmen, not also as the human beings and conscious humanists I knew they were.

Regarding the circumstances surrounding the 'national aims', there was a thicket of eccentric language use which hid the realities from view. 'Language revival' and 'reunification' were responses to two circumstances which nationalism saw as disorders. These were the fact that, while the overwhelming majority of the descendants of the Gaels spoke English, the Gaelic-speaking communities—collectively the Gaeltacht—had been shrinking or had disappeared; and the fact that a fifth of Ireland existed as a separate unit under British rule.

The public discourse regarding these disorders stated or implied as follows. While not as much as one pub had changed from English to Irish speech, 'the language revival was progressing!' The Republic of Ireland had no language minority, only a religious minority, the Protestant one, which, as if to stress its uniqueness was referred to as 'the Minority', with a capital M. The Gaeltacht, far from being a minority was the majority-in-waiting, the Real Ireland that temporarily English-speaking Ireland was on the way to becoming. The Gaeltacht, moreover, while it continued to shrink, was continually, by

a succession of schemes, being 'saved'. And speaking of minorities, neither did Ireland contain a national minority; from shore to shore its inhabitants were Irish to a man. The close on a million people in the North who celebrated their historic victories over the Irish, honoured the Union Jack, sang 'God Save the Queen' and called themselves British, suffered from a false consciousness. When Britain departed, that would dissolve. True, they differed from the other Irish, the nationalists, with whom they shared the North, but only in a 'sectarian' way. By implication, they adhered to a Protestant 'sect', the nationalists to a Catholic 'sect', when in fact they were simply Protestants of various kinds and Catholics. Working on the basis of such descriptions of the relevant circumstances, the Irish nation hoped to achieve its two national aims.

Clearly, I had to do with a nation that, in the description of itself and its circumstances, used unreal language: language that misrepresented the phenomena in question. It was here that the passage from Daniel Corkery that I have used as an epigraph came to help me. I read it in 1962 in *Synge And Anglo-Irish Literature*. The Irish Revolution, Corkery made me realise, had been, and in its continuation was still, an attempt to repair the damage done to the nation by making it once more a "normal nation". A state, language and culture of its own, and a self-sustaining economy, were elements of such normality. But Corkery added "a normal state of mind" and indicated its "establishment among us" as a main aim of the revolutionary process. That fitted what I had observed: the abnormal, reality-missing language that the nation was using to describe itself and its circumstances resulted from the abnormal state of mind—out of touch with reality—which it had inherited from its abnormal history.

It follows from all this that, when I took to writing about Irish affairs, two factors influenced what I wrote and how I wrote it. Nothing else being possible for me, I described the Irish and their affairs in the real and linguistically normal terms in which I saw them. But at the same time, I wanted, by so writing, to contribute to situating the nation in reality, so that it might possess reality and be strengthened by that. This was both an instinctive patriotism and, after reading Corkery, part of my adherence to the Revolution. The net result was that I took to challenging the prevailing ways of representing the Irish and their circumstances by representing both in real terms.

I started with 'the Irish'. 'Will the Irish Stay Christian?' I entitled an article for the Dominican journal *Doctrine and*

Life in May 1962. It began:

"There is no reason to suppose that the Irish Catholic people will continue indefinitely to be believing Christians. In Europe during the last one hundred and fifty years the majority of people have abandoned Christian belief and practice; there is no reason why the same should not happen here. Sweden is often cited as an extreme example of modern paganism. But eighty years ago it was the scene of impassioned public controversy about the nature of Christ's Redemption and the proper ordering of the Communion service; wide sections of the people believed these matters to be of urgent concern."

The subtext was clearly: The notion of Irish, and specifically Irish Catholic immutability, is a delusion. Irish Catholics are human and therefore mutable. The title I had given the article was considered so shocking that, on the magazine's cover, it was altered to '*Ireland and Christianity*'.

For *The Capuchin Annual* of 1964 I wrote an essay entitled '*The Failure of the Irish Revolution—and its Success*'. As an epigraph I chose a line from Padraig Pearse's poem *The Rebel*: "I that have a soul greater than the soul of my people's masters". The first lines were as follows:

"As I understand it, the revolution which took place in Ireland forty odd years ago was an attempt on the part of the Irish Catholic people to gain material and spiritual conditions of life more favourable to their fulfilment as human beings.... On the highest level of need and of aspiration, the revolution was a rejection of the twentieth-century English gentleman in favour of a prototype of higher humaneness which would be more magnanimous and more in accordance with the twentieth-century Irish (Catholic) mode of being. It was a rebellion of the Irish best against the alleged English best and the point at issue was *how to be human*."

In that same year, in October, I had a long article in *Doctrine and Life* entitled '*What I Miss in Sermons*'. The message this time was for the core of the Irish Catholic self-consciousness, the Catholic clergy. Targeting the prevalent notion that our priests and monks were a race apart from men, it began:

"What do I miss in sermons? First, *a man talking*. I know what it sounds like and feels like when a man talks—I have heard it happen on the radio, I have friends who talk to me as men talk, I have even heard priests who talked as men talk when they were addressing gatherings of their Christian brothers and sisters."

This article was much appreciated

by the clergy. It came to be referred to as the article that says '*A sermon is a man talking*' and was reprinted in an American magazine.

In '*Cuireadh chun na Tríú Réabhlóide*' (Invitation to the Third Revolution) (*Comhar*, Nollaig 1965); in '*Irish Catholics and Freedom since 1916*' (*Doctrine and Life*, January-March, 1966), and in my long, unsigned articles on Irish matters in *Herder Correspondence*, 1964-68, I continued to treat the Irish Revolution and Irish ecclesiastical themes in their human dimension. In other words, I dealt with them as the thought and action of human beings, who happened to be Christians, involved in modern and Irish circumstances. While so doing, I hoped I might induce my readers to see themselves in such terms, thereby anchoring themselves in reality, achieving normality, and acquiring the power and effectiveness that would give them in tackling their circumstances. It was not an entirely altruistic hope: I wanted the company of human beings; and they are that, really, only when they know they are.

However, for the successful tackling of our circumstances, we would require real perception of these also. One such circumstance was the fact that we were inheritors of the Revolution. That this did not only mean commitment to completing it by achieving the two national aims—a common view—but also meant completing it in the spiritual and intellectual spheres, had been the theme of '*Cuireadh chun na Tríú Réabhlóide*'. Now, a few years later, in 1969, the 'national aims' themselves, or rather, the circumstances that motivated them, presented themselves sharply to my attention. First, arising from my move for personal reasons to Irish-speaking South Conamara, I found myself up against the fragile condition of the Irish language. Then, because the North erupted violently, I felt called on to respond to the Northern Ireland problem.

Although my reaction in both instances was instinctive, I can see now that there was logic in the form it took, as if it were extracted from some manual. First, the shock tactic: 'The Emperor has no clothes'. So with regard to the 'language revival':

"We are today much further away than 70 years ago from achieving the minimum aim of the revival movement. Not only has the Gaeltacht diminished drastically in area and population: it has shrunk also with regard to 'social spread'. Many trades and occupations which were then represented within the Gaeltacht are no longer represented there.

"As for the 'Galltacht' [English-speaking Ireland], not a single street, not a single pub or shop or café in Galway—not to mention Dublin or any other city—has become even predominantly Irish-speaking during the past 50 years."

On 21st January 1969 I wrote that in an article, *'Revival or Not?'* in an *Irish Times* supplement commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the First Dáil.

And similarly, with regard to the Northern problem, under the title *'A Plea for Realism'*:

"The first basic fact that needs to be recognised is that Northern Ireland contains two historic peoples, or rather, one such people (the Ulster Protestants) and part of another. Only the accident that both of them speak English obscures the fact that they are peoples as real and distinct as, say, the Austrians and Czechs... But language apart, they have different origins, histories and historical mythologies. They are, moreover, very conscious of their respective histories; they honour different and opposed heroes." (*The Irish Times*, 19 August 1969.)

Once it has been declared that the Emperor is naked, the second step follows logically: one enlarges on the shockingly new and real definition of the problem, and in accordance with it, one proposes appropriate methods of solving the problem. That initial article on the language revival was followed by proposals for the Gaeltacht problem and by the 'Gaeltacht revolution', which in turn transformed the Irish language movement. The article on the North contained *in nucleo* both what I would write about the Northern problem during the next fifteen years and the solution ultimately arrived at through the recognition that there were two distinctive ethnic communities involved, Irish and British. (Given that I was a dissident from the nationalist orthodoxy of Catholic Ireland, it was probably inevitable that any support, public or private, I received during those years was almost exclusively from patriotic Protestants, both in the North and in the Republic).

Finally, as an encouragement towards the appropriate action advocated, one makes a link—best if surprising—between it and action elsewhere of a similar kind. I had done this in 'Cuireadh chun na Tríú Réabhlóide', where the link was with a recent essay by a Yugoslav writer Mihailo Mihaelov. Writing about his visit to the Soviet Union, he had identified at work there a 'third revolution', in the spiritual sphere, which was following on the social and economic revolutions that were approaching conclusion. This linkage had lent strength to my proposition that

a similar revolutionary 'completion' was called for in Ireland. Now, in 1969, I led off my advocacy of a realistic method of tackling the Gaeltacht problem with the slogan 'A New Israel in Iarchonnacht!' (the successful revival of Hebrew followed the gathering-in of the Jews in their sacred land). And as I went on, in the early 70s, to outline possible solutions for the North, solutions for variously similar problems in Sudan, South Tyrol, Switzerland and Belgium were drawn on to provide encouraging examples. {This method was repeatedly employed in our 'Gaeltacht revolution' in Conamara 1969-74 in an attempt to smash the image and self-image of the Gaeltacht as a life outside contemporary Ireland and humanity, and to replace this with a perception of the Gaeltacht as what it was: a community of contemporary people who happened to speak Irish and whose special circumstances, as a language minority, had many parallels in Europe and further afield (see *Beyond Nationalism*, pp138-51).}

The immediate aim of all this writing was the dissolution of the colonised unrealities of perception that remained lodged in Irish nationalism. But because of my sympathy with the underlying purpose of that nationalism—the Revolution's purpose—the ultimate result was not to discredit Irish nationalism but to reformulate it in real and realisable terms. {With regard to my revised nationalist view of the Northern problem, which ultimately won general acceptance, see my *The Revision of Irish Nationalism* (Dublin, Open Air, 1989), pp21-3.}

3

As it happened, in the 1960s my work for a real Irish self-perception was on two fronts. In those years the assault of our new American-style liberals on Irish values as embodied in our Catholic-Gaelic nationalism made its first tentative forays. The Lemass Government offered these neo-liberals a basis to start from by opening the Republic to free trade and foreign investment, ending the (nominal) effort to replace English with Irish, virtually abolishing the censorship of publications and pursuing conciliation with the Northern unionists. Building on these measures, the aim of the liberals was to replace the entire body of national values inherited from the Revolution with a recolonised Irish mind that would accept sex at will; repeal of the honorary 'special position' of the Catholic Church in the Constitution; all women (not only of the working class) into the 'workforce', with pay equal to men's; the sale and use of contraceptives; divorce and so on.

This recolonisation was to be conducted by Irish men and women, backed by business interests and acting as the agents of foreign power centres. They drew their values and moral principles, and the related practical agenda, from the new liberalism of contemporary London that had its main and imperial source in the US, and was being preached from San Francisco to Vienna. It was the bearing ideology of what came to be known as consumerism, and as such, the ideology considered most effective for countering the Communist indoctrination of Eastern Europe. In its impact on nations, it was the western equivalent of that.

However, the new preachers knew that in the Republic, for a start, their approach had to be soft. So they confined themselves to nibbling at the nationalist ideological edifice, and to presenting a much watered-down version of the new system of values and interpersonal morality that was winning supremacy in London.

On 21st October 1965 one could read in an editorial in *The Irish Times*, which led the vanguard:

"Young people of today are, in their own phrase, tough-minded..."

"Young people coming up, no matter what allegiance their fathers had, can look at the evolution of other countries from the British Commonwealth and wonder honestly if 1916 was absolutely necessary. They can ask if, with Home Rule on the statute book, we would not today have a united Ireland with or without some tenuous links to the British Commonwealth."

And again, in an *Irish Times* editorial of the following year, on 13th January 1966, one could read:

"Young people want things in a hurry, and want to forget the past... The young man sees himself appearing in the pages of *Paris Match* or *Life* magazines... Without any trammel of the past, whether Protestant/Catholic or Separatist/Unionist, the differentials are disappearing in our country. Our young people want to forget. Boys in Dublin gravitate to coffee-skinned girls... The past is not only being forgotten by the young; it is being buried with great relish, and even with disdain."

Note the repeated appeal to the younger generation, the hope for the future! And note, too, the shop-soiled technique of discouraging memory and attachment to the past so that the present might be rendered more easily manipulable.

In the initial dissemination of the new doctrine, the recently established television station formed an axis with *The Irish Times*. Ten years after those

pieces I have just quoted, all the Dublin media organs had conformed. As in East Berlin or Prague, but in consumerist-liberal rather than communist terms, the 'Dublin media', speaking with one voice, had become the principal teaching force in the land. And just as Gaelic-Catholic nationalism had implanted unreal images of Irish self and circumstance, so now, in pursuit of its objectives, the new doctrine attempted the same. Neo-liberal fiction tried to replace reality in the following manner.

Reality: Independent Ireland, since the 1920s, had maintained constant contacts with other countries (but mostly with England) in every sphere of activity from politics and commerce, the arts and professions to universities and horse-racing. State censorship boards had banned many foreign films, and—ineffectually—many foreign and some Irish novels, on grounds of their alleged indecency. Foreign books presenting the world's philosophies and ideologies had unhindered entrance. Extending over the four decades, the largest organised intervention of Irish people in the outside world, in all of Irish history, took place. That enterprise by thousands of missionary priests, brothers, nuns and lay volunteers had affected much of Africa, Asia and South and North America. Tens of thousands of Irish families were directly involved with the missionaries' work or supported it.

Liberal fiction. The Ireland of the decades since Independence was 'inward-looking' (a bad thing), in contrast to the Ireland of the 60s which, because it was paying more attentive heed to London than previously, was becoming 'outward-looking' (a good thing).

Reality: The Irish who, in the course of their modern history, had abandoned almost all their ancestral culture, had in the twentieth century carried through an anti-colonial revolution, and, in the 1950s and 60s, were taking with alacrity to all kinds of modern technology from farm machinery and air travel to television.

Liberal fiction: The Irish are a very conservative people, 'the most conservative people in Europe' ('conservative' meaning in effect not subscribing to the proposed neo-liberal values and agenda and therefore not as human beings ought to be). Proper human beings welcome 'change' (a code-word for the new values and legal measures being advocated).

Reality: Irish countrypeople were in the twentieth century more literate, included more well-read persons, and were more politically alert than their counterparts elsewhere in Europe. Rural Ireland supplied most of the action in the War of Independence, most of the

government ministers and leading civil servants of the new Irish state, and many of its leading writers and intellectuals.

Liberal fiction: Rural Ireland, with its rural values and vicious ways, has been and remains a zone of mental darkness and moral depravity—the heart and core of Irish conservatism.

Reality: Liberalism, including the affirmed right of subject nations to struggle for independence, had been the secular creed of Irish Catholics since the mid-nineteenth century and, modified by Catholicism (as in Britain by non-conformist Protestantism), had shaped their Constitutions after independence.

Liberal fiction: Liberalism is a new and much-needed arrival on Irish shores. Liberal versus Conservative, the centuries-old antagonism marking the highroad of Progress, is the essential conflict of Irish society, rendering all other loyalties and divisions meaningless. People are either for or against change.

Reality: In the first half of the twentieth century, the sexual ethics of Catholic Ireland were those of Catholicism generally. Catholic sexual ethics coincided with those upheld throughout the West, except with regard to divorce and, latterly, contraception. In the English-speaking countries, the surviving heritage of Victorianism meant that the jocose slogan, 'No Sex, Please, We're British', represented more than a merely British attitude. Another inheritance from the nineteenth century, but this time in all the languages of the West, was the use of the words 'morality/immorality', 'moral/immoral' to refer to sexual behaviour exclusively. Finally, in Ireland, as in other countries and regions where Christian faith was strong, and pressure to conform with the sexual rules accordingly, these were observed more commonly and more strictly than in less religious societies.

Liberal fiction. The Catholic Church in Ireland, unlike other Catholic countries, has taught an inhuman sexual puritanism derived from Jansenistic influences in the early nineteenth century. As a result, in Ireland, as nowhere else, sex is regarded as sinful and the word itself is a dirty word. In Ireland, too, as nowhere else, moral teaching has been obsessed with sex, so that 'immoral' has come to mean sexually immoral only.

The tendency of the liberal propaganda, both in the 60s and subsequently, can be seen from those few examples. While perpetuating the myth of Irish exceptionalism, it aimed to persuade the Irish to accept a self-image that delivered three messages. First, 'Our manner of living since Independence has been seriously and uniquely flawed to the point of being inhuman'. Second,

"Contemporary", in the style approved by London and New York, is the proper way for human beings to be. Inasmuch as most of us fall short of being that, we fall short of being properly human'. Third, 'Because our nationalist and Catholic preachers have made us the way we are, they cannot redeem us into proper humanity; but those who instruct us daily in *The Irish Times* and on Telefís Éireann (later in the entire, homogenised "Dublin media") can do that if we heed them, for they are in daily touch with London, where "contemporary" is defined.'

That the new liberalism was sharply opposed to the post-Independence Irish is obvious. More specifically and increasingly, it was opposed to the moral and historical construct of Irish nationalism which had held sway during that period. But unlike my own critical opposition to that nationalism, the liberal opposition was not to its Irish exceptionalism, its definition of the nation and its consequent approach to the Northern problem, but rather to its underlying moral principles and judgements as applied in the present and to the past. In the 1970s, as this anti-nationalism exploited for its purposes the IRA campaign in the North, it passed from journalists to historians and deepened its thrust. Anti-nationalist 'historical revisionism', reaching back through the centuries, became a fact and a term, as well as an added element of the Irish liberal stance on matters Irish. Years later, in the late 1980s, in my contribution to a debate on 'revisionism' with Ronan Fanning which has been widely published, I described it as follows:

"A retelling of Irish history which seeks to show that British rule of Ireland was not, as we have believed a *bad* thing, but a mixture of necessity, good intentions and bungling; and that Irish resistance to it was not, as we have believed, a *good* thing, but a mixture of wrong-headed idealism and unnecessary, often cruel, violence. The underlying message is that in our relations with Britain on the Irish question we have been very much at fault." {See *Irish Review* 4 (1988), pp20-26. Ciaran Brady, ed., *Interpreting Irish History*, Irish Academic Press, 1994, pp183-190; Seamus Deane, ed., *The Field Day Anthology Of Irish Writing*, etc.}

It was not normal that a considerable number of Irish men and women, employed by the Irish mass media or promoted by them, should be pouring scorn on the inherited life and values of the Irish; diminishing the real wrongs and oppression suffered by their ancestors; and discrediting the efforts of many of them to right the wrongs and

end the oppression. But that state of affairs, along with the teaching of the 'revised' history in our state-funded universities, became increasingly the case as the 1970s passed into the 1980s.

The human and European abnormality of this self-colonisation, rather than the legislative content of the liberal agenda—which in large part I found acceptable but within rational and respectful limits—repelled me. Irish abnormality in a new form, it offended, along with my Irishness, my sense of what was right. But what impinged on me directly as a working writer was that this abnormal set-up was inculcating new fictions about the Irish while I was committed to depicting them and their circumstances, as they really were, so that we could live in reality and draw strength from that. Consequently, my writing in these decades tried to counter the liberal fictions along with the nationalist ones.

Almost all my publications of the 1960s which I have mentioned were double-edged in this sense. Likewise double-edged was the pamphlet *Art for the Irish* (1966). And this continued to be the case in much of my journalism in the 1970s and 80s in *The Sunday Press* and elsewhere, and in my books *The State of the Nation* and *Beyond Nationalism* in the 1980s. In the latter book, referring back to the start of it all in the 60s, I wrote:

"A priest {Ronald Burke-Savage SJ, editor of *Studies*} said to me that I must settle down and 'plough one furrow'. He, no more than anyone else, realised that I was, indeed, trying to plough one furrow, and that my scattered sallies had as much method in them a man who, resisting an attack by a battalion on the house in which he is trapped, fires now from one window, now from another."

In that book I describe that 'one furrow' as being an attempt, after my Swedish crisis {see *The Turning Point: My Sweden Year And After* (Sanas Press, Dublin; 2002, distributed by Veritas.)} to reconstruct, in the face of unreal images, a real image of the contemporary world centred on Ireland. That was indeed the case. What I have been doing in these pages is to single out and describe the central part of that attempt. However, while my writing continued into the 80s to have the two-pronged edge I have just mentioned, the gradual decline in adherence to the old nationalism and the rise to power of the recolonising doctrines dictated that I found myself increasingly engaged on that front.

There was one field of my writing in the 70s where I found myself battling, along with others, against the old nationalism and the new liberalism

combined. I mean my writing and map-making in favour of a decentralised (that is, territorially devolved) reorganisation of Irish government. This related to my basic concern inasmuch as I believed that Ireland was inhabited, as is any national territory, by a community of communities; that this was what the nation was in human terms; and that its self-government should reflect this reality. Once again, what was at issue was living in, and in accordance with, the real! But in this instance, more particularly, it was a matter of making, besides the public language, also the structure of government, *depict the reality*, so that it *could* be realised and lived in. In common with others, and above all my teacher in these matters, Tom Barrington, I knew that the British arrangement of government in Ireland, which we had retained intact, was not designed to accommodate the Irish human reality, but rather to suit imperial administration. The old nationalism had simply ignored the matter, taking the British arrangements as a given. It had even strengthened them by enshrining the British county system in the structure of the Gaelic Athletic Association; and when it proposed how

Ireland might be reunified, its standard idea was simply, while retaining the British-made entity of Northern Ireland, to transfer to Dublin Westminster's sovereign powers. The new liberalism, for its part, was committed to the existing structure of government because of its extreme centralisation in Dublin, where the liberals were establishing their parallel power base. It was from there, once the central government was converted, that they believed they could best, like Jacobins or like the British, keep recalcitrant 'rural Ireland'—their term for 'outside Dublin'—under control. It was an interesting tacit alliance, which said something about the old nationalists as well as about their successors.

4

Of course, trying in one's writing to depict reality is nothing new. Even trying with one's writing to replace an unreal representation with real representation is nothing unusual. I have tried to do precisely that in my *The Revision Of European History*. Such a book, moreover, is written in opposition to previous treatments of the subject, and those who disagree with it will oppose it in their turn. So one man's passion to depict the real is always to some degree combat, and capable of provoking combat. Nevertheless, the recurrent features of my writing that I have outlined here differ, in their nature and circumstances, from most one-man

attempts to depict the real. The writer in question was trying to present the reality, not of something external to him, but of his own nation. He was doing so, intermittently, in opposition to two other versions of that reality which were being proposed continuously by powerful groups within the nation. At stake was the quality of the perceived basis on which the society in question would function; whether that basis was to be real or fictional or to what degree either of those. Consequently, for all those involved, the matter at issue was not merely of academic but of existential concern; and the combat was, correspondingly, more than usually passionate.

Irish people of the chattering classes feel a need to label in party or ideological terms anyone who says anything publicly. Their hope is that by so doing they will know how to feel about him or her and whether or not they should attend to what he or she is saying. In the light of the account of my writing which I have given here, it is obvious why such people have found it very difficult to find a fitting tag for me. In the effort, they have used many tags which ended up being contradictory. My writing, while following a consistent course, has simply not displayed consistent adherence to any contemporary Irish party or ideological line.

What kind of man, in terms of mental slant, has my writing shown? On the one hand, a human being curious to know what being human means, and how things have been and are with mankind in the West; on the other, an Irishman working in the spirit of the Irish Revolution, so that his nation might, like a normal nation, realise its humanity in the dual sense of knowing it for a fact and being it, and as part of being it (that is, human), rationally identify its circumstances and live successfully in the light of that. I think 'a humanist' would be a reasonable description of such a man. Heidegger in his essay *On Humanism* defines the term as 'taking thought and care that man live humanly, and not inhumanly'. Some, referring not to my slant on life but to my occupation, have called me a 'philosopher'. Plato in his *Euthydemus* suggests that the two terms are effectively synonymous. Philosophy, he says there, is 'the use of knowledge for the benefit of man'. Call that 'investigation, perception and writing for the benefit of man'. And what can be more for man's benefit than his restoration to being where he has been separated from his being? A humanistic or a philosophical enterprise? Both at once.

But are 'humanist' and 'philosopher' acceptable ways of defining oneself in contemporary Ireland?

Tom Doherty

The Imperial Left is alive and well and campaigning to undermine an African State which attempts to remain independent of the Globalist straitjacket

Zimbabwe

ACTSA (Action for Southern Africa) is the successor to the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM). When apartheid was defeated over a decade ago it might have made sense that, job done, the AAM should be wound up. Instead it decided to continue as ACTSA "*campaigning with the people of southern Africa as they strive to build a better future, working for peace, democracy and development across the region*".

Of course this project is less straightforward than the struggle against apartheid, where there had been an overwhelming consensus among the left and the popular movements in southern Africa, the only differences being on tactics. But, power achieved, it is natural that debate, often quite vigorous, opened up within the liberation movements about the way forward.

ACTSA, as far as I am aware, has avoided taking sides in the most important debate: the future economic and social direction of the South African Government, which will set the context for the entire region. But it has intervened on other issues. Some of these are relatively trivial: e.g. the current edition of ACTSA News reports Desmond Tutu's criticism of ANC Deputy President Jacob Zuma, and the South African press's opposition to a new media bill; others are more significant e.g. its support for the Treatment Action Campaign which has achieved changes in Government policy on HIV/AIDS and the removal of responsibility for this area from Health Minister Manto Tshabalala Msimang.

But it is in relation to Zimbabwe that ACTSA has been most interventionist, expressing open hostility to the ZANU/PF government. While ACTSA verbally acknowledges the British Government's historical responsibility for Zimbabwe's problems, its active campaigning is directed solely against the Zimbabwean Government.

Currently this activity consists of a campaign to maintain the EU's sanctions on Zimbabwe (it is afraid that some European Governments may be

weakening on this) and a campaign called *Dignity! Period* to provide sanitary products to Zimbabwean women. The amazing story of this campaign features in the current ACTSA News:

"At present unemployment in Zimbabwe sits at around 80% and the average monthly wage is £8.00. With inflation at around 1200% and with sanitary products costing £6 per pack of 10 pads, it is nearly impossible for even employed women to afford sanitary products (even cotton pads).

"In February ACTSA flew to South Africa and with the help of the local media, including SFM radio, 1 million sanitary products were donated from individuals and pharmaceutical companies, loaded into lorries and transported ready for distribution to Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean government even agreed to withdraw the 40% importation tax on the products. This was a brilliant success. However when the shipment was about to leave, the government reneged on the promise on the grounds that the products were to be distributed by the ZCTU, which is a trade union, not a charity and therefore a tax of \$10,000 USD was required. All those involved in the campaign are strongly opposed to this tax as the campaign is purely a humanitarian issue and not politically motivated.

"However the duty was paid and the 40 tonne truck drove towards Zimbabwe, only to be held up at the border and a further \$13,000 tax demanded to cover inflation. Although we continue to get kind offers of products from people and companies, we can no longer accept these donations as the cost of transportation and taxation is too high. To overcome this issue, ACTSA has established a partnership with the one existing manufacturer in Harare. This means that products are distributed, without incurring import costs and ACTSA is supporting small Zimbabwean business and local people. The partnership is proving to be successful as we have recently managed to produce and distribute over 1.5 million sanitary

products to the women in Zimbabwe."

I haven't attempted to find out the Zimbabwean Government's official response to this initiative, but it seems clear that it would be easy to describe it as an attempt to discredit the Government, boost the Opposition, and undermine the economy.

Why import the items if they were capable of being produced locally? It's a bit cheeky to claim credit for supporting local businesses when ACTSA's preferred method would have undermined them.

If the campaign was "*not politically motivated*", why distribute through the ZCTU? It may be a legitimate Trade Union, but for several years it has vociferously opposed the Government and was the key originator of the MDC Opposition. The Opposition has accused the Government of abusing aid by channelling it to its own supporters. That may be true, but by this account the Opposition could itself be suspected of channelling aid to its own supporters. At the least it would bring helpful publicity to the ZCTU and be a stick to beat the Government with. It would be interesting to know whether ACTSA were honest about this when they applied to have the import tax lifted.

However, I'm sure that all 'right-thinking' people would congratulate ACTSA for this contribution to the welfare of the women of Zimbabwe. Certainly they are gaining support from some interesting quarters:

"Meanwhile here in the UK the campaign has gained much media attention. We have featured in the Times and Sunday Times, Big Issue, This Morning, Sky news and a two page spread in Grazia magazine."

Is this a case of: by their supporters ye shall know them.

Editorial Note

Due to pressure of space we have had to hold over several articles including pieces on the *Fighting Irish* and a Commemoration of the Spanish Civil War in Belfast.

We hope to include these in the Spring issue.