Church & State

A Cultural Review Of Ireland And The World

Magdalenes:

Irish State In The Dock

The Great Eoghan Ruadh

John McGahern

Vichy Origins Of Modern France

Catholic Wealth And The Making Of Protestant Imperial England

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Editorial

Irish State In The Dock

The Irish State has been brought before the Torture Committee of the United Nations on a charge of engaging in torture in the conduct of the Magdalene Laundries where unmarried mothers were given refuge from society in an era when marriage was generally regarded as an important social institution. It has been ordered to investigate the torture it practised in the Laundries, prosecute itself, punish itself, and make redress to its victims. The possibility that it might not have engaged in torture is not seriously entertained.

A curious point about this is that the State is required to investigate its torture practices from 1922 onwards. Why 1922? Why not 1919, for example? Both dates are so long ago that nobody subjected to torture in Ireland on either date is likely to be around to give evidence, and torture is certainly not less likely to have been inflicted in 1920 than in 1922.

It might be said that 1922 was when the State was founded, so it would be silly to press the investigation beyond 1922.

But *what* State was founded in 1922? We do not recall any 1922 Declaration of Independence.

Was 1922 not the year when the democratic *Declaration of Independence* of 1919 was set aside by the 'Treaty', and a Government that was not independent set up in its place by the Treaty War?

But, it is said, virtual independence was established under the regime set up by the Treaty War, and the assertion that it was not formal independence is a metaphysical quibble.

Did British democracy then insist on war in Ireland over a quibble, and indicate that it would fight that war itself if the Irish did not fight it among themselves?

If the British democracy was conceding Irish independence in substance, why did it not do it properly in consultation with the Dail? What did it gain by insisting that the Irish should disown the Republic they had declared and replace it with a Free State which was independent in fact though making a submission to the authority of the Crown which was subsequently declared to be of no consequence, and to be merely token?

It gained two things. It weakened the Government set up under the Treaty, by insisting that it should make war on those who opposed the Treaty. Both sides to the Treaty dispute did their best to remain united during the first six months of 1922 and it is probable that they would have succeeded if Whitehall had not delivered a series of ultimatums to the Treatyite leaders which prevented them from making a workable compromise with the Anti-Treatyites. And if, finally, it had not insisted that the Treatyites should start shooting the Anti-Treatyites after a British General was assassinated in London, even though it was the Treatyite leader, Collins, who had ordered the assassination.

The breaking up of the Sinn Fein was a very solid political gain achieved by the British democracy when it was obliged to let go of the greater part of Ireland.

The other gain was that the Treaty party was set up in government in the 26 Counties on condition of accepting the position of a Successor-State within the British Empire.

The thing about a successor State, as distinct from an independent State, is that it takes on the obligations of the State which it succeeds.

There is no real doubt that Britain ran slave-labour camps and engaged in wholesale torture in Kenya in the 1950s. Some torture survivors have tried to get the British Government prosecuted for what it did to them. This British Government of today says, piously and legally, that this has nothing to do with them. The responsible body from which redress should be sought is the Successor-State in Kenya.

The Free State submission to Crown authority was far from token. It meant that the Free State took on legal responsibility for what its authorising body, the UK Parliament, had done in Ireland. It was in that very substantial sense a continuation of the British State. It could not have taken legal action against Britain for anything Britain had done in 1919-21 because that would have meant taking legal action against itself.

The Free State accepted the role of British scapegoat as the price of warding off yet another British re-conquest of the country.

(At the moment when the Free State was being formally installed, in the Autumn of 1922, Britain was being humiliated by defeat in its attempt to impose a humiliating 'Treaty' on Turkey. The British Empire was never the same again after that event. Imperial demoralisation, combined with failure to scotch the Anti-Treaty element in Ireland, led Britain not to press its rights too hard in Ireland. But by then the serious damage done to the Irish body politic by the Treaty affair was an accomplished fact.)

The Free State was a British State—a state existing by virtue of British authority. And the Magdalen laundries were British institutions established in Ireland long before 1922. And the Catholic Church was accorded a special position under the British Protestant State in Ireland for a British political purpose, and that special position was greatly enhanced by the way the British Successor-State was set up in 1922.

The elected Government of 1919-21 was not recognised by the Catholic Hierarchy as the legitimate Government. The Treaty Government was recognised as legitimate by the Bishops even before it was actually established. The Anti-Treatyites who resisted the imposition of the Treaty Government were excommunicated by the Bishops. But the Anti-Treatyites at their lowest ebb, when subjected to crushing defeat by British armaments, were never reduced to a negligible proportion of the population. The active support of the Church was indispensable to the Treatyites for securing internal consent to their regime, and therefore the Church established a very special position for itself in the Successor-State. The excommunications removed from the internal life of the Treatyites regime all those independent spirits who backed their own judgment against the decrees of the Church, and shepherded into the Free State regime the large body of 'ordinary decent citizens' who are essentially unpolitical and are guided by the Authority that is nearest to them.

It was a standard Protestant catch-cry during the long era of the Penal Laws that Catholics could not be admitted to the body politic of the state because they could not be bound by Oaths. The alleged reason why they could not be Oath-bound was that they recognised their Bishops as having the power to dissolve Oaths. In 1922 a substantial number of the soldiers of

the Army that had defended the Republic against the British Government in 1919-21 felt bound still in 1922 by the Oath they had taken to the Republic. The Bishops dissolved that Oath—and there was not a whisper of criticism by the Protestant body.

The Protestant body in the 26 Counties, which had not recognised the elected Governments of 1919 and 1921 as having any legitimate authority, immediately recognised the 'Treaty' as conferring legitimacy on whatever Government was set up under it by whatever means. It recognised British power as the only legitimate power in Ireland and it recognised the Free State as being constituted by British power. This is evident in the *Church Of Ireland Gazette* and in *The Irish Times*.

The Free State was actively supported by the Catholic Church and the Church of Ireland. The Catholic Church acted very much as a *Roman* Church in this instance—much more so than at any earlier time—but the Church of Ireland did not object.

Protestantism enjoyed greater representation in the Legislature in 1922 than it has ever had since. As Garret FitzGerald pointed out in his last book, Protestants were accorded almost half the representation in the Senate. Of course they could not have had anything like that representation in the elected chamber because they were a very small part of the electorate and they had pitted themselves against the Irish electorate during the preceding ten years (over Home Rule and Independence). Nevertheless, one senior member of the Free State Government was a Protestant, Ernest Blythe.

Hubert Butler complained that there was discrimination against Protestants in the South because they did not have communal representation in the Dail—in other words, because it was not a confessional State. The present Protestant Bishop of Cork, Bishop Paul Colton, seems to be trying to make good that defect by organising the Protestants into a distinct political body. But it would not have made a blind bit of difference to the women who fell foul of the morals of the time and found refuge in the Magdalene laundries how many Protestants were involved in the running of the state. The Magdalen institutions were British and Protestant in origin and in ongoing inspiration.

On many issues the ethos of the Free State is inadequately described as Roman Catholic. It was Roman Catholic/British Protestant. The Church of Ireland approved of many things the Free State did when they were being done, even though generations later an attempt was made to suggest otherwise.

When Yeats exalted the licentious humanism of the late mediaeval Papacy, and expressed regret that the Catholicism guiding the Free State was altogether different, he was not speaking for his people. His people were happy not to have Continental Catholicism in Ireland. And of course it was his people who, as active agents of the British Protestant State in Ireland, had helped to browbeat the disrupted and demoralised Irish Catholics into apeing their Puritan ways as they became respectable.

When Britain bribed the Irish Parliament into dissolving itself in 1800, Protestant Ireland lost its impregnable Legislative bastion, and it tried to secure its position under the Union by means of Protestant Crusades against Catholicism. Under the security of their Irish Parliament in the 18th century, they were relaxed about converting Catholics, to put it mildly. Converted Catholics would have been secure in their property while the property of those who persisted in living in Papist superstition

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Editor: *Pat Maloney*

All Correspondence should be sent to:

P. Maloney,
C/O Shandon St. P.O., Cork City.
TEL: 021-4676029

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could be *"discovered"* and seized. But the loss of the Parliament and its laws changed the situation and determined religious converting forays were made on Papism. All the loose and enjoyable ways of Irish Catholic life were sought out and publicised with a view to working up a sense of shame about them, e.g. Well Days and Stations. There were few lasting conversions, but some effect was had on the mores of Catholics. And this was consolidated and enhanced when Cardinal Cullen's regime got to work after the 'Famine'.

In recent years certain people have been discovering that the Ireland that separated itself from England was really very like England—so like, indeed, that it was hardly there at all. In the Magdalen institutions it was not just like England. It was a piece of England. At least as English as Dalkey.

There were parts of Ireland where the Protestant Crusades made no impression and where Cardinal Cullen failed to reach. This journal has its source in those backward regions. In the mid 1960s we found out about the Magdalen institution in Cork City and were astonished. We tried to make an issue of it but failed. The Magdalen institutions were not secret. They were part of city life. They were known about. They provided services that were widely availed of in cities shaped in the English mould, where amenities were not laid on by municipalities run by a socially-minded bourgeoisie, as was often the case on the Continent.

Women entered them voluntarily as the least worst option in the circumstances of the time. They were free to leave, but in institutions people tend to become institutionalised. If women who have been through them and feel aggrieved against them—really against the world—can screw compensation out of the State, good luck to them. Better them than the bankers and the judges.

But the torture referral is absurd. The fact that it could happen shows that in many ways the Irish state is still not a State. It is all on the surface. It is lacking in depth and resourcefulness.

In 1922 an indisputable war-crime was committed in Ireland. Prisoners who had been held in jail were taken out and killed by the Government as an act of public policy. One of the great atrocities of the French Revolution, held up to horrify us, was the killing of prisoners for political reasons.

Should we not have a War Crimes Trial to clear the air and let us know where the State came from?

Eoghan Ruadh Ó Súilleabháin

Aisling

Im leabaidh aréir trím néal do dhearcas-sa

Im leabaidh aréir trím néal do dhearcas-sa
Ainnir ba mhaordha taithneamhach clódh
'Na seasamh lem thaobh go gléigeal geanamhail
Béasach béal-tais banamhail óg;
Ba chasta cas craobhach dréimreach fada tuigh
Bachalach leí-se ó bhathas go bróig
A carn-fholt néamhrach péarlach camarsach
Slaodach faon-tais daithte mar ór;

Bhí luisne tré lonnradh an lile ‘na gnúis ghil
Shoineanda shúgach chlúmháil mhúirneach
Mhodhamhail mhiochais mhaiseamhail
A claon-dearc réidh-ghlas féigh lér treascradh
Céadta laoch i bpéin 's i n-ana-bhruid,
A braoi mar ruibe,
'S a séir shéimhe ná fionna-chruit ceoil ;
A haol-chrobh néata ghléasas beanna-phuic,
Éisc is éin, coin allta 'gus leomhain,
Cruinn-bharc dín is coimheascar machaire,
Tuitim cloinne Uishnigh,
Is éacht na Féinne, ar leathan-bhrat sróill.

A pearsa gan bheim 's a scéimh nuair d'amharcas,
Caithtear liom saoghada searca re seól,
Do shearg mo ghné is do léig mé i n-anacra,
Taodhmach, tréith, gan tapadh ná treoir;
Is abaidh do shléachtas féin don mhascalaigh
Aithchim don néamh-ghein freagra cóir,
An d'aicme na ndéithe a tréad nó an treabha don
Dréam chirt daonna ór eascair a pór.

In my bed last night through my sleep I saw / maiden of majestic pleasing appearance/ standing by my side, pure-bright, lovely / mannerly, soft-lipped, feminine, fresh / Folding, intertwining, red, long, thick / curling with her from the crown of her head to her shoe / her massy tresses—brilliant, pearly, curled / flowing, delicately soft, coloured like gold.

There was a lush through the shining of the lily in her bright features / serene pleasant, distinguished, amiable / elegant, gentle, comely / Her enticing eye, clear-lustrous, keen, by which was overcome hundreds of warriors in pain and great trouble / Her eyebrows slender as a hair / And her voice more gracious than the fair harp of music / Her neat limewhite hand that prepares (embroiders on tapestries) horned bucks / fish and birds, wolves and lions / perfect defensive ships, and battles on the plain / the fall of the children of Uisneach / and the exploits of the Fianna, on broad banners of satin

Her person without fault and her beauty, when I saw it / well-aimed arrows of love were thrown at me / My appearance withered and I was left in trouble / fretting, feeble, without energy or direction / Hastily I deferred to the maiden / I ask the lustrous being for a true answer / Is her race of the nature of the gods, or is it from the tribe of / the true human crowd that her kin descended from / Or was she, without denial, the fair lady who lowered herself / to fall in wicked adultery (and) directed to us / the swarthy bucks to Ireland

Nó ar bhisi gan diúltadh an an fhinne-bhean d’úmhluigh
Tuitim i ndrúis chuil chugainn-ne stiúruigh
Crón-phuic do Banba;
An bhé ón Ghréig don Trae noch d'aistrigh
Déirdre shéimh nó Céarnait cheannasach,
Nó gile na mbruinneall
Bhí ag aon-mhac Éason sealad ar bórd ;

D'fhreagair, ní haon don mhéid sin chanais mé,
Acht airgtheach aonair easbuidhtheach bróin,
Gan bhuidhin dom dhíon acht dríodar fanatics,
Cuimriosc mioscaiseach,
Méirtneach claon gan taitneamh don Órd.

Is dearbh i réimheas Gaedheal gur chleachtas-sa
Ceannas is scléip, le seascaireacht shoghmhail
Gradam is glaodhach is aol-bhruigh fairsinge,
Caomhna tréin-fhear, aiteas is ól ;
Taisteal is téarnamh laoch dom amharc-sa,
Flatha is éigse, dragain is leomhain,
Meanma shaor is réim gan achrann,
Féasta réics seacht seachtaine ar bórd.

Seinm ar chiuil-chruit, iolar do thrúpaidh,
Imirt ar phunncaibh, fiontas, flúirse
Cumhdach is macnas ;
Féach 'na n-éagmais cé go mairim-se
Féin im mhéirdrigh strae fé dhanaraibh,
Is cineadh Scuit ionnarbtha
Ar Éirinn d'éis mo shnadhmuighthe leo ;
A chara na ríogh, do ríomhas go fhreastalach
Ranna 'gus laoidhthe i bpratainn na gcómhad,
Is fíor go bhfillfidh tré gach anacra
An ruire seo d'imthigh
I gcéin, 's go mbéidh i mBreatain faoi choróin.

(Or was she) the beauty from Greece who went to Troy, gracious Deirdre or noble Cearnait / Or the brightness of fair maidens whom the only son of Jason had for a while to himself / She answered: It is not any of all those you related to me / but a lonely, needy, sorrowful, despoiled person / without a band to protect me, but the dregs of fanatics / spiteful rabble / treacherous, deceitful, without (any) liking for (sacred) Orders.

It is certain in the reign of the Gael that I was accustomed to / friendship and enjoyment, with merry conviviality / respect and regard and spacious lime(white) mansions / the protection of strong men, merriment and drinking / travelling and approaching of warriors to see me / chieftains and bards, heroes and champions / freedom of spirit and authority without dispute / kingly feast seven weeks at table.

Playing on musical harps, abundance for troops / debating of fine points of chess, plenty / neighbourliness and good nature / See, in their absence, how I live myself as a vagabond concubine under (the rule of) savages / and the Irish race banished / out of Ireland after my being married to them / O friend of maidens, I composed plentifully verses and poems in the parchment of poetry / truly, (he) will return despite every hardship / this sovereign who went / far away, and (he) will be in Britain crowned.

Cíodh fada treibh Ghaedhil Ghluis faon fé tharcuisne,
I n-easbadh, gan r'eim , gan rachtmas, gan sógh,
Ag treabhadh go tréith do dhaoscur Cailbhinists,
Céim d'fhúig daol-dubh daithte mo shnódh,
Is gach calmach craosach léidmheach lannmhar
Feargach fraochda i dtreasaibh na dtreon,
Go dealbh, mo léan, gan féis mar chleachtadar,
Séise téad ná beath-uisce ar bórd.

Is gach duine do chomplacht chuiripe Lúiteir,
Suidhte go súgach trúipeach trúmpach
Fórsach i bhfearannaibh
Saor-shleachta Éibhir éachtaigh is calm-Chuirc,
Saesar glé bhuaidh réimeas Chaisil Luirc,
Tuigidh go dtiocfaidh
An té le faobhar do scaipfidh bhar mbrón ;
Ní bladar ná bréag mo scéal mar tharngair
Éigse dréacht na bearta so romhainn,
Gan moill béidh deillt re saidhbreas seasmhach,
Milleadh 'gus dailleadh
Ar gach béar nár ghéill do bheartaibh na hÓighe.

Though long the tribe of illustrious Irish are weak and insulted in want, without power, without wealth, without ease / in lowly service to the rabble of Calvinists / A case that left my countenance coloured jet-black, / and every stout warrior, wrathful, valiant, battle-ready / manly, fierce, in the ranks of the chiefs / destitute, my sorrow, without feasts as they were accustomed / the music of strings or whiskey on the table.

And every man of the vicious company of Luther / settled contentedly, well-defended, victorious / forceful in the lands / of the noble seed of heroic Eibhear and brave Corc / The bright Caesar who won the sovereignty of Caiseal Luirc / understand that (he) will come / The person with arms who will scatter your sorrow / My report is not flattery or lies, as you prophesy / you poets—in verse these facts before us / without delay there will be separation from lasting wealth / destruction and blinding / on every bear that does not yield to the title of the Virgin.

I Mainistir Naomh béidh céir ar lasadh againn,
Is Eaglais Dé go salmach fós,
Ag canadh Té Deum gan baoghal ná eagla,
Cé do bhéir gur searbh an sceol ;
Is gach mangaire méith don tréid seo d'aistrigh
Fearta an tSoiscéil, le taitneamh don phóit,
Gan fearann ná féasta , fé charadar,
Tréith fá léan ag grafadh 's ag rómhar

Béidh teine gan mhúchadh i rith na gcúig gcúigeadh,
Is sinne-ne go súgach cungantach cúrsach
Dó-bhriste i gcaismartibh ;
Taoscaidh daor-phuins éil is beath-uisce
Is léigeadh gach éigeas dréacht im fharradh-sa,
Ag guidhe chum Muire
Séarlas Réics do chasnamh i gcoróin,
'S an Rí seo suidheadh le díomas d'ionnarbadh
Ar saoirse ríoghachta Breatan na slógh,
Gan mheidhir gan greidhin gan radhairse cumais nirt
Go singil gan chiste,
Gan caomhna laoch 'na seasamh 'na chomhair.

In holy monasteries we shall have wax (candles) alight / and the Church of God full of psalms besides / singing Te Deum without danger or fear / though to bears it is bitter news / And every fat jobber of that tribe that changed / the miracles of the Gospel, from attachment to drink / without land or feasting—a state they were unaccustomed to / weak and sorrowful, grubbing and ploughing;

There will be fire without quenching the length of the five provinces / and ourselves playful, disposed to help, well-travelled / unbeatable in battle / Drinking punch of great price, ales and whiskey / and let every poet read his verse along with me / praying to Mary / to protect King Charles in his reign / and to expel this King, who sits in pride / from the tenure of the kingdom of Britain of the hosts / without merriment, without love, without abundance of the power of strength / wretched, without treasure / without the protection of warriors standing in attendance on him.

Séamas Ó Domhnaill

Eoghan Ruadh Ó Súilleabháin
1748—1784
Aspects of his Life and Work
Part 4

The Great Eoghan Ruadh

Hello again dear reader, *conas atá tú?* * Do you remember the bicycle ride we took in Killarney National Park a while ago? Well, lets go back now to collect the bikes so that we can go for another trip. This time we'll be going backwards in time to meet someone who may have had an indirect influence on Eoghan Ruadh's *Aisling* poetry. The character in question lived in Italy shortly after the time of St. Patrick, hence my use of a historical cycle trip to build an imaginary bridge back to that time. I'd also like to introduce you to some historical characters whose names who will crop up later on in relation to Eoghan. Now, you had better bring a cloth because it has been raining overnight and the saddle will be a bit wet.

We'll start off in 1746, two years before Eoghan Ruadh was born. On 16th April in this year was fought *Blàr Chùil Lodair*, the Battle of Culloden. We can see Eoghan Ruadh's cousin, Sir John O' Sullivan of Cappanacusha, riding away from Culloden Moor alongside Bonnie Prince Charlie. It was a disaster sure enough. As Sir John himself said, everything was going to pot. Up the road a bit, in 1683, you can see the Polish King Jan Sobieski beating the Turks from the gates of Vienna. A good bit further along, in 1521, we see Ferdinand Magellan landing on Macktan Island to fight with with the Filipino chief Lapu Lapu. Watch out Magellan, he's behind ya!

There is Christopher Columbus setting foot in the new world in 1492. We arrive at May 1453 just in time to see the army of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II storming through the broken walls of Constantinople. Did you notice the bundle of Imperial garments lying over there in the dust? They were thrown off by the last Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI before he threw himself for the last time into the thick of the battle. In 1445 we can just about make out on the horizon, the sails of the ships of the Portuguese Prince, Henry the Navigator. They are rounding Cape Verde for the first time in the hope of establishing a Christian kingdom in tropical Africa and turning the flank of Islam. Henry was the last Crusader and the first Conquistador.

Come on now we'll put on a sprint through the Renaissance to get a good run at the uphill road ahead into the high Middle Ages. In 1321 we pass Dante Alighieri on his death bed, completing the third part of his *Divina Commedia*: *Paradise*. At 1264 we'll take a break to catch our breath and have a look at what can be seen from this height. In your saddle bag you will find some ham sandwiches and crisps and a carton of orange juice. For dessert we have a couple of chocolate rice crispie cakes left over from the 1st birthday party of my lovely niece and God-daughter, Claire.

There's a grand view from this height. The heavy chap over there in Oviento is Thomas Aquinas who is putting the finishing touches to *Panis Angelicus* for the new feast of Corpus Christi. Further on around 1250 we see Thomas, his master Albert the Great, and the rest of the Scholastic philosophers at the University of Paris, bringing the great Greek philosophy finally into the system of Christendom—the Baptism of Aristotle. In 1187 we can see the brilliant general Salah ad-Din, 1st Sultan of Egypt and Syria, capturing Jerusalem. His great opponent is the English crusader King Richard the Lionheart (Robin Hood's goodie). Richard's younger brother, John (Robin Hood's baddie), would later succeed him as king. John was also the 2nd Norman Lord of Ireland. These are the Plantagenet boys, the sons of Henry II and the formidable Eleanor of Aquitaine. Eleanor also tried her hand at crusading alongside her first husband Louis VII of France. In 1150 you can see Adelard of Bath translating Euclid's Elements from the Arabic. The cultural developments of these Middle Ages are quite a cosmopolitan affair with Jews and Arabs and Greeks cooperating with Spaniards and Italians and Englishmen.

There are interesting times indeed but we're still only half way to our destination so we'll push on now. Taking advantage of the steep down slope, we can freewheel right into the very foundations of Europe. At 1014 we catch a glimpse of Brodir the Manx Viking sneaking up on the tent of the High King of Ireland, Brian Ború, during the battle of Clontarf. Watch out Brian, he's behind ya!

In the year 850 we come to the Palace School of the Carolingian King of France (and future Holy Roman Emperor) Charles the Bald. Do you see the head professor? John Scottus Eriugena is his name and, yes you've guessed it, he's Irish. You may remember that his picture appeared on the Irish £5 note from 1976 to 1992. Not only do the Irish have the best hurlers in the world, the best stout and the best US Presidents, we also have some of the greatest ancient Greek scholars in the universe, ever.

At 611 A.D. we come across a gang of monks singing as they row their boat upriver all the way to Switzerland:

En, silvis caesa flucta meat acta carnia
Bicornis Rheni et pelgus perlabitur uncta.
Heia viri! Nostrum reboans echo sonet heia...

State animo fixi, hostisque spernite strofas,
Virtutum vosmet armis defendite rite.
Vsetra, viri, Christum memorans mens personet heia!

See, cut in woods, through flood of twin-horned Rhine
Passes the keel, and greased slips over seas—
Heave, men! And let resounding echo sound our 'heave'...

Stand firm in soul and spurn the foul fiend's tricks
And seek defence in virtue's armoury—
You men, remember Christ with mind still sounding 'heave'.

The abbot cum skipper is a Leinsterman called Columbanus. He has been expelled from France for giving grief to King Thierry (Theodoric) II of Burgundy and Austrasia over his concubines. Now Columbanus is planning to preach the Gospel to the Suevi and Alamanni. Later he will preach to the Lombards in Milan.

In the year 570 we see a young widow named Aminah bint Wahb just after giving birth to a baby boy six months after the death of her husband, Abdullah. The name she gives to her child is Muhammad ibn Abdullah. That momentous event took place at Mecca in the Arabian desert.

Now dear reader you'll be glad to hear that we are nearly at the end of our

* How are you? [Ed.]

cycle trip. We'll just peddle over to Italy in the year 523 AD. This is about 30 years after the death of St. Patrick. The Italian roads are not as well maintained in the 6th century as when the Roman Empire was flourishing. Since the Ostrogoths took over the place road maintenance has not been a priority. It just so happens that your wheel knocks off a stone on the road and you go head over heels onto the road. Luckily for you the verge of the road is now overgrown, grassy and soft so your landing is not too hard. So, what did the Ostrogoths ever do for you, eh?

We'll tie up our long suffering bikes outside the prison in the town of Pavia in Lombardy. We have come a long way from Muckross Friary. Well maybe not so far, maybe. Look inside the prison cell there an you will see a man aged forty something who is writing at a stone desk. This is the man we have come all this way to meet and his name is Anicius Manlius Severinus Boëthius. I would like to explore the possibility that the 18th century Irish *Aisling* songs, especially those composed by Eoghan Ruadh Ó Súilleabheáin, were influenced by one of Boethius' books namely, *The Consolation of Philosophy*. I know, dear reader, that I'm going out on a bit of a limb here but come with me for a while and see what you think yourself.

Boethius (480 – 524 AD) was a high government official and served as Consul in the Government of Theodoric who was the Ostrogoth King of Italy. He was both a committed Christian and an enthusiastic student of the old philosophy of Greece and Rome. His writings are said to form a bridge between the pagan classical philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle and the Christian philosophers. He has been called the last Roman and the first Scholastic.

In spite of his work for the purity of government and the welfare of the people, Boethius was charged with treason without his being allowed to defend himself. His property was confiscated, and he himself condemned to death. The poor fellow was thrown into prison, tortured, and eventually murdered.

While he was in prison he wrote his best known work: *De Consolatione Philosophiae*. The theme of this book is, why do good people suffer while bad people are not punished but are instead very successful in life? Now, dear reader, I'm not going to bluff my way through this as I have only read a few pages of the *Consolation* and in any case I wouldn't be able to understand the meaning of most of it. Luckily enough though, *Il Papa*, Benedetto XVI, who is a handy enough scholar, has read it and here is his quick summary of Boethius' thought:

> "Through this work, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, he sought consolation, enlightenment and wisdom in prison. And he said that precisely in this situation he knew how to distinguish between apparent goods, which disappear in prison, and true goods such as genuine friendship, which even in prison do not disappear. The loftiest good is God: Boethius—and he teaches us this—learned not to sink into a fatalism that extinguishes hope. He teaches us that it is not the event but Providence that governs and Providence has a face. It is possible to speak to Providence because Providence is God. Thus, even in prison, he was left with the possibility of prayer, of dialogue with the One who saves us. At the same time, even in this situation he retained his sense of the beauty of culture and remembered the teaching of the great ancient Greek and Roman philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle—he had begun to translate these Greeks into Latin—Cicero, Seneca, and also poets such as Tibullus and Virgil" (BXVI 2008).

Among the links I would notice between the ancient Boethius and a relatively modern Irish writer such as Eoghan Ruadh, are the description of the writer's depressed psychological state, the metaphor of a woman appearing to the writer at a time when he is downcast and in despair, the question and answer dialogue, and the oppressive political background.

De Consolatione Philosophiae takes the form of an imaginary dialogue between Boethius and Philosophy, who appears in the form of an awesome woman. The following extract gives an idea of the writer's dejected state of mind at the time of his vision:

> "To pleasant songs my work was erstwhile given, and bright were all my labours then; but now in tears to sad refrains am I compelled to turn. Thus my maimed Muses guide my pen, and gloomy songs make no feigned tears bedew my face. Then could no fear so overcome to leave me companionless upon my way. They were the pride of my earlier bright-lived days: in my later gloomy days they are the comfort of my fate; for hastened by unhappiness has age come upon me without warning, and grief hath set within me the old age of her gloom. White hairs are scattered untimely on my head, and the skin hangs loosely from my worn-out limbs…."

Then the writer describes the vision:

> "My dutiful pen was putting the last touches to my tearful lament, when a lady seemed to position herself above my head. She was awe-inspiring to look at for her glowing eyes penetrated more powerfully than those of ordinary folk…
>
> "Her robe was made from imperishable material, and was sewn with delicate workmanship from the finest thread. She had woven it with her own hands, as I later heard from her own lips. But because it had not been brushed up for so long, a film of dust covered it… At the lower edge of the robe was visible in embroidery the letter ∏ (Pi), and the neck of the garment bore the letter 0 (Theta) … But the robe had been ripped by the violent hands of certain individuals, who had torn off such parts as each could seize…"
>
> "Philosophy, still wearing and dignified expression, had just ended this gentle and sweet song, and was rehearsing some further words when I cut her short, for I had not yet forgotten my deep seated sense of grief..."

There follows a long conversation in in which the writer puts questions to the Lady and she teaches him and in the end he achieves consolation in his troubles.

To my mind at least, those images of Boethius compare very closely with those of an *Aisling*, for example *"Im leabaidh aréir trím néal do dhearcassa"*. The poet is a depressed state; the woman is awe-inspiring, even though she has been roughed up in her day; there are questions and explanations . I'll say no more on this for the time being but you can have a look for yourself.

But could it really be that the ancient Boethius had a hand in the development of the Aisling? Vision poems and prose have been common in Irish literature for over a thousand years. For example the vision poem *Baile Chuinn Chétchathaig* dates from the 7th century. In it the future kings of Ireland are named in a prophetic dream. In the 10th century *Aislinge Oengusa* tells how Oengus see a vision of a beautiful maiden with whom he eventually falls in love and marries. Another early *Aisling* supports the claim of the poet's patron to the kingship. Visions occur in love songs and in stories

of the *Fianna*. As Daniel Corkery has pointed out however, the Jacobite political *Aisling* was new to the 18th century. This new *genre* relates directly to the tyrannical conquest of Ireland and to the suppression of the religion, the laws and the language of a national culture rooted in European pre-history.

De Consolatione Philosophiae was a very influential book right down to modern times. In England a translation was made by King Alfred the Great which is said to have influenced J.R.R. Tolkien when he was writing the character of Tom Bombadil in *The Lord Of The Rings*. Queen Elizabeth I also made a translation.

While there is no manuscript record of the *Consolation* being circulated in Ireland in the Middle Ages, there is however a hint that Boethius' work was well regarded among a certain class of Irish scholars in the early 17th century when the religious and cultural attack on Ireland was well under way. In 1606 King Philip of Spain established the Irish Franciscan College of St. Anthony at the University of Louvain. This University was a major centre of the Catholic Counter Reformation. Many Irish scholars such as Flaithrí Ó Maoilchonaire, Aodh Mac Aingil and Gille Brighde Ó hEodhasa were members of this College. The first school of modern Irish was established at Louvain and the Franciscan College was to site of great literary activity. The *Annals of the Four Masters* were compiled there. Also books were printed in Irish and many prose and poetic works were composed.

Now it happened that the name Boethius was common among the Irish Franciscans at this time. It seems to have been used as the Latin form of the Irish name Baoth Galach, especially among the MacEgan clan. The Mac Egans were were a famous legal family and over the centuries they had served as Brehon Law judges and lawyers in various parts of Ireland. The Franciscan, Boethius Mac Egan, was born at Cill Bhrain (Kilbrin) in the barony of Duhallow in County Cork around the year 1600. His family had been hereditary Brehons to the McDonough McCarthy Lords of Duhallow. Our Boethius Mac Egan was educated in Cork and Bordeaux. He had a reputation as a great preacher and was well regarded in the Order. In 1645 he joined the Irish Confederate Army and heard the confessions of Eoghan Ruadh O'Neill's men before the battle of Benburb. In 1648 he was consecrated as Bishop of Ross. In 1650 he was captured by English forces acting under Lord Broghill near Carraig an Droichead, Co. Cork. A small number of Irish soldiers were holding out in Carrigadrohid Castle and the Bishop was hung from one of the arches of the bridge in order to intimidate them. With his last shout he urged the garrison to hold out to the last, but the men were terrified by the method of his execution and they surrendered immediately. People at the time considered Boethius Mac Egan to be a martyr. The stories of such people as these would give come context to the words of Eoghan Ruadh Ó Súilleabháin:

I Mainistir Naomh béidh céir ar lasadh againn
Is Eaglais Dé go salmach fós
Ag canadh Té Deum gan baoghal ná eagla...

And so dear reader, we have come a long way on this trip. Thank you for staying with me so far. I would be interested to hear your views of my theory regarding Boethius and the *Aisling*. There is no evidence that *De Consolatione Philosophiae* was ever translated into Irish and it is doubtful that Eoghan Ruadh would have been able to read it in Latin. It is possible however that Boethius' writings held a particular attraction for the Irish Scholars at the Franciscan College in Louvain. This may in turn have led to the work being discussed in wider Irish literary circles. The link could also be made via the hundreds of priests who were educated on the Continent during the Penal times. Throughout the 18th century there was a close link between the poets and the priests of Ireland. Eoghan Ruadh was a school friend of Fr. Ned Fitzgerald and various other priests. Fr. Ned was educated at the Irish College in Nantes in Brittany. The Irish scholar Bishop John O'Brien was educated at the Sourbonne in Paris and at Toulouse. It is therefore possible that Boethius was discussed at gatherings of the *Cúirt Éigse*—the Court of Poetry.

Trinity, Its Works And Pomps (3)

The following is from *Report,* published by the Workers Union of Ireland (General Secretary, James Larkin Junior, TD). The paper was edited by Christy Ferguson, and the item appeared in July 1954. We are indebted to Manus O'Riordan for bringing it to our attention

Trinity College—Seat Of Higher Learning—But Low Wages

Universities are intended not merely to be centres of learning and mediums through which young men and women acquire education in the learned professions, but also custodians of the achievements of human thought and development of the human mind and spirit. They have particularly prided themselves on their efforts to protect and raise the dignity of man and to secure recognition for the real worth of the individual. For these and other reasons Universities would normally be expected to provide fair rates of wages and conditions of employment for the lower, non-professional grades of workers in their employment.

All this leads up to the fact that recently the Workers' Union of Ireland organised the staff of porters, gardeners (or groundsmen), attendants, etc., in Trinity College. When their wage rates were checked it was found that as in the case of the ordinary private employer, whose employees are unorganised, their wages were low and their conditions of employment poor. The majority of the porters were receiving from £4 17s. 6d. to £5 17s. 6d. per week; gardeners (or groundsmen) were paid such rates as £4 6s.; £5 3s. 6d. and up to £6 5s. with some on £1 15s. 0d. and £3 5s. 0d. The top rate for a library attendant was £5 1s. 0d. while one special group of employees known as "skips" or better described as house attendants (probably the nearest analogy would be an officer's "batman" in the army) had a wage of £5 6s. 0d. per week, for which they worked seven days a week.

The Union, as a beginning, sought an all round increase of £1 per week, and certain improvements in conditions, including a day off each week for the "skips". The claims were modest, particularly the wage claim, as in

University College, for example, the porters rates were from £6 10s. 0d. to £8 2s. 0d. for the senior porter. But little or no progress was made in the direct negotiations with the College authorities who pleaded that the financial position did not allow for any real improvement, and finally after much delay, offered an increase of 5/- per week to the porters. This offer was only made after the case was referred to the Labour Court and a conciliation conference had been presided over by an Officer of the Court.

Finally, the case was heard publicly by the full Labour Court, which has now issued a recommendation that the existing rates be increased by 15 per cent., subject to a maximum sum of 20/- per week. Apparently, the Labour Court saw little merit in the plea of the College authorities that if any reasonable improvement was granted the College fees would have to be increased, and took the view that the education of the young ladies and gentlemen would have to be at someone else's expense other than the ordinary workers who attend to the comfort of the students and maintain the common amenities of the Institution.

Wilson John Haire

The French Lady From Up The Falls

I often wondered what the old lady meant:
a photograph of Kaiser Wilhelm the Second
and this statuette below him
of St Therese of Lisieux—the Little Flower,
as a compliment.
Back to the early 20th Century,
yesterday's thinking I reckoned.

So what did it mean to this French lady
when all around her war was wrecking
Belfast City, and a convulsed Brit baby
saw a sectarian nanny packing.

Fifty years before, as an artist of the trapeze,
in a visiting circus at the Grand Opera House,
she flew to her lover and lived like Diogenes.

Over the years her lifejacket
became a straitjacket.
Time was the devil who tightened the straps.
He was in the Crum
on a one-way ticket.
She waited but he never came out,
died there from some mysterious mishap.

Dusts the Little Flower, wipes the face of the Kaiser,
(her mother was French, her father German)
listens to the third bomb go off
that morning,
and then another chastiser.
Still longs for her man,
kisses the snap of this long-dead felon.

Two countries to reconcile,
two nationalities,
two nations once at war,
(one wrongly reviled)
two cultures of intangibility,
two races, two languages,
nothing of which she abhors.

When living in two nations
it's not wise to love one too much
at the expense of the other one's patience.
Nor wise to hate one too much
for anger is too heavy a burden to carry
down a long road.
Just halt halfway, to exchange hate for love,
though it's still a load.

4th February, 2011

Brendan Clifford

Part One

The Little World Of John McGahern

"McGahern held up a mirror to society", according to the Cork *Evening Echo* (May 13) in a review of *The Church And Its Spire: John McGahern And The Catholic Question*. by Eamon Maher, published by the Columba Press this year. The reviewer, Vincent Kelly, says:

> "It was a hallmark of McGahern's bravery that he dared to deal with issues and subjects that others at the time were afraid to highlight because of the suffocating and all-encompassing power of the Catholic church…"

I read McGahern's first two novels soon after they were published. *The Barracks* in 1963 and *The Dark* two years later. *The Barracks* is the story of a Garda sergeant's wife who is dying of cancer. It was not banned as far as I recall. *The Dark* was banned and Mc Gahern took his place among the martyrs of the Irish Censorship. He wrote later about the banning:

> "I think every writer imagines he writes in complete freedom, within the limits of language and talent; and the people I knew in the Dublin of the time acted as if they had complete freedom to read and think whatever they wanted. So it was a sharp shock when my own novel, *The Dark*, ran foul of our authorities. For me it brought in something unpleasant, something alien, for all that mattered to us was whether the work was good or not" (*The Solitary Reader*, in *Love Of The World: Essays* p93).

The stifling medium of Irish life generated by the dominant influence of the Church is a theme of most of his novels, which seem to be heavily autobiographical. And he writes in his autobiography, *Memoir* (2005):

> "The Catholic Church was dominant and in control of almost everything, directly or indirectly. In a climate of suppression and poverty and fear, there was hardly any crime and little need of a barracks… other than as a symbol" (p32).

The Dark is about a brutal, domineering father and his son. The father pounces on the son for letting slip the four letter word:

> "'Say what you said, because I know.'
> I didn't say anything.
> 'Out with it I tell you.'
> 'I don't know I said anything.'
> 'F-U-C-K is what you said, isn't it?…
> Now do you think you can bluff your way out of it?'
> 'I didn't mean it, it just came out.'
> 'The filth of your head came out you mean. And I'm going to teach you a lesson for once. You'd think there'd be some respect for your dead mother…'
> He took the heavy leather strap he used for sharpening the razor from its nail on the side of the press.
> 'Come with me upstairs. I'll teach you a lesson… Into the girls' room. This'll have to be witnessed'…"

He is taken into his sisters' room and made to strip.

> "'Off with the trousers, I said.'
> He just moved closer. He didn't lift a hand, as if the stripping compelled by his will alone gave him pleasure."
> "They all got beatings, often for no reason."

But:

> "The worst was having to sleep with

him the nights he wanted love…

'You don't have to worry about anything. There's no need to be afraid or cry. Your father loves you' and hands drew him closer. They began to move in caress on the back, shoving up the nightshirt, downward lightly to the thighs and heavily up again, the voice echoing rhythmically to the movement of the hands.

'You don't have to worry about anything. Your father loves you. You like that—it's good for you—it relaxes you—it lets you sleep. Would you like me to rub you here? It'll ease wind. You like that?… You'll kiss your father good night?

The lips closed and breath went as arms crushed…

'Good night, sleep well', he said and it was unimaginable relief to be free to suck breath in and to wipe his track off his lips…"

The father gropes the son while masturbating against him. Homosexual incest? Is it conceivable that this was written in the early 1960s, by an author living in Dublin, under the misapprehension that in literature in Ireland anything goes? And, not only living in Dublin, but teaching in a National School there? And an author whose literary theme was the oppressiveness of Catholic clerical control of life in general?

Is it not more believable that *The Dark* was written to affront the culture of the society, and to be banned?

And was it unreasonable that the author of that notorious book was not allowed to continue in his job as a National School teacher?

I had very slight experience of the education system, but I know that National teachers were pillars of the society in Ireland then, much more than they are today, and much more than they were in England. It was their task to reproduce and develop the national culture. If the national culture needed to be subverted, it was not the business of the teachers to do it. And, if somebody saw it as his vocation to subvert the national culture, it was not unreasonable of the teaching profession to require him to step aside and find another position to do it from.

The incest theme recurs in heterosexual form in *The Leavetaking* (1974), which is about a teacher being sacked. But he is not sacked for writing a scandalous novel. The issue is that he married a foreign divorcee during a sabbatical year in London. In the novel the divorcee is a rich American, with a number of ex-husbands and abortions and a jealous father. She reveals that she had a relationship with a rich Brazilian as—

"a cover for that with my father… I felt I was betraying him . This led back to my father [in analysis]. And in particular to one thing that happened. When I was twelve and living with my father outside New York, one night he came into my bed and masturbated against me. I asked him about it in the morning… He said I must have been dreaming. I knew he was lying but I hid it from myself. Then, shortly before I was married, as most young girls do, I fell in love with him. He encouraged me, but it was a guilty love… I felt my whole wedding night was a betrayal of my father, though he had arranged it all…"

I do not recall if there are other variants of the incest theme in any of the other novels.

The teacher has an argument with the Headmaster who is sacking him. Can he teach the Catechism while living in sin? Of course he can:

"All you need to teach is knowledge and skill. If I refused to teach it on a point of principle, then I'd resign, but I don't refuse. It is written down in black and white in the official Notes For Teachers on history that the cultivation of patriotism is more important than the truth. So when we teach history Britain is always the big black beast. Ireland is the poor daughter struggling while being raped, when most of us know it's a lot more complicated than that. And yet we teach it…"

The Pornographer followed in 1979. It is about a writer of stories for a soft porn magazine, published in Dublin! The moral is banal. The porn writer has difficulty about forming personal relationships. Porn is not seen as one of the most influential art forms of the 20th century on the living of ordinary life—and Marquis de Sade as one of the most influential writers of the French Revolution. Things that were intended to be destroyed by the progress of civilisation were kept alive in the undergrowth by pornographers dedicated to their art, and during the past sixty years they have become part of ordinary urban life, which became unbearably arid in its propriety.

Amongst Women (1990) seems to be the most celebrated of McGahern's novels, and the one which is taken to be an image of the awfulness of Catholic and nationalist Ireland. Again there is a tyrannical father, the browbeaten son (though not sexually abused, I think) and the second wife dying of cancer.

I assume McGahern was working over something in the experience of his own life in these novels, but as images of Irish life in the De Valera period they are absurd. That is, they are absurd as images of rural life, and their setting is rural. Perhaps they serve as an urban fantasy which explains away the urban inadequacy of a generation as the effect of a narrow Catholic and nationalist dominance pressing on the city from the country. But I lived in the country in those times and I know very well that the ultra-zealous Catholicism was generated in the towns and pressed on the countryside through missionary activity. I left Ireland because of it in my early twenties. I saw Dublin for the first time a few years later and found it an appallingly constrictive place. My first impression of it was of one vast Church.

I am not suggesting that McGahern misrepresented rural life. He probably described what he saw honestly enough. But what he saw was largely determined by his vantage point. Elizabeth Bowen was sometimes in the countryside. But, being in a Big House, she saw little of it and experienced nothing of its life.

McGahern lived in the countryside for much of his youth but he was not of it. He had a police view of it. He lived in a series of Garda Barracks. His father was a Garda Sergeant. And Garda Sergeants, because of the way the Republic was broken up and the Treaty State imposed, were hardly more a part of the life of the community than the RIC were. Guards and their families were transients. During my few years at school I was put sitting with a Guard's son and got to know him to some extent but I never knew his family. McGahern observes somewhere that in rural Ireland families lived in seclusion from each other, that there was very little *"visiting"* between them. That is the reverse of the truth in my experience. But it is true that the Guards did not visit and were not visited. In Boherbue they lived in a forbidding Barracks that appeared like a garrison at the centre of the village. It was, I suppose, built as such when Slieve Luacra was opened up by the military around 1840 after the last Whiteboy rising and an attempt was made, with little success, to incorporate it into West British civilisation. It was a big building surrounded by a wall that extended into the

crossroads around which, I assume, the village was built at that time. With only three Guards, it could hardly be said to have been *"garrisoned"* in the 1940s, though it may have been in the 1920s. But garrison relations existed between it and the community. Of course, with the rise of Fianna Fail, the community had become dominant, but it was still wary of the Guards and kept them at a distance. It circumvented them with the result that, little though there was for them to do, what they were able to do was even less.

The Guard's son that I knew in passing soon moved on, in the usual way, to some other Barracks, and it was as if he had never been.

There was very little criminal business for the Guards. McGahern is right about that. But was it because of *"a climate of suppression and poverty and fear"*? Life in the country around Boherbue Barracks was very lively indeed. If there was poverty—and it is difficult to establish an objective criterion of what poverty is which can be applied between societies of very different kinds—there was plenty for poor people to do that did not involve the spending of money. I cannot recall any family that might be considered poor that did not have the means of feeding itself. Rent was not a factor because of the land war. The GAA, a sociable centre of rural life that does not appear in McGahern's world, was not in the least like a Golf Club. And the Rambling Houses, which were widespread, were not, as I recall, usually the houses of the better off. De Valera's much-ridiculed ideal of rural Ireland, expressed in the 1940s, never seemed to me anything but a description of what existed. No doubt it could not continue if Ireland was destined to throw itself heart and soul into the market, but it did exist. And it was an extraordinarily lively place, not explicable in terms of suppression and fear.

An entirely unrealistic feature of McGahern's world is the picture of men as the authoritarian upholders of the practice of religion. Though the sexes were much more equal in the rural Ireland I knew in the forties and fiftees than they were in London when I went there in the late fifties, there was this difference between them, that religion was women's business. On the whole men, though not anti-religious in principle, were not much inclined towards the practice of it. They went to Mass on Sunday morning as a customary and sociable activity. And they attended the Station Masses in the townlands, which were very sociable occasions. Beyond that most of them dragged their heels.

But here again McGahern is probably describing life in the Barracks. A Garda Sergeant was a pillar of the State. His father seems to have had some involvement in the IRA in 1920-21, but to have gone directly into the Guards when they were set up by General O'Duffy with the purpose of enforcing the Treaty State, with the very active support of the Hierarchy of the Catholic Church, which had not recognised the Republic of 1919-21 as the legitimate Irish Government The authoritarian features of the State obviously derive from its enforced establishment on the insistence of the Imperial Government backed by the Church Hierarchy. The Anti-Treatyites were excommunicated.

A generation later, in the forties and fifties, Fine Gael was the party of religious piety and practice while Fianna Fail was the party of religion as a custom of the country.

The Guard's son that I knew briefly and in passing around the age of eight gave me no insight into the Garda mentality. But Pat Murphy, whom I later got to know very well, was the son of a Dublin Guard whose influence on the family seems to have been much like what is depicted by McGahern, but without the sex abuse. But Pat, who was a resourceful person—a modern Odysseus, not at all like our miserable *Ulysses*—contrived to spend much time with his mother's family in County Limerick, and developed a unique understanding of both urban and rural Ireland.

All through my teens I lived amidst the *"climate of suppression and fear"* of De Valera's Ireland as a sceptic. I had an extreme intolerance of religious practice which expressed itself as scepticism when it wasn't let be, or as atheism if provoked. It wasn't that I thought I knew about these things. I just wasn't interested in them.

I would say the basic view of the backward part of that society—the non-urban part—was that Catholic practice was sociable and pleasant up to a point, and that the fact that England had done its damndest to stamp it out was a good enough reason for persisting in it. Beyond that point it was resisted.

When I was a child, there was a man who on certain occasions used to disrupt the Mass by marching up the aisle to the altar rail and denouncing the priest. When I asked about this, I was told it was because of the conduct of the Bishops over the Independence War and the Treaty War. As I recall, I was told this matter-of-factly by my mother, who was averagely religious. In my teens I used to discuss the affairs of the world with him in Christy Sullivan's blacksmith's forge.

The other day I heard a Radio Eireann programme about Frank Duff by the sanctimonious John Bowman and it put me in mind of the attempt to set up a branch (or was it a regiment?) of the Legion of Mary in Boherbue parish. I gathered from the programme that the Legion was a world-wide organisation and was the only such body established by a lay person—Frank Duff. But Boherbue Parish warded it off in the 1950s.

It seems that where two or three houses are gathered together the urban mentality begins to germinate and sociability begins to give way to networking. There were, maybe, thirty houses in Boherbue village then. It was not a traditional village, I think. The houses seemed new. Only the blacksmith's forge seemed out of place, as if it had always been there. I guess the village was established as a base of operation in Slieve Luacra after the Whiteboy rising.

Anyhow, the village developed a bourgeois element that was actively pious, and a platoon of the Legion was established there to conduct missionary activity in the countryside and modernise its religious practice. And the countryside sabotaged the effort. When the Legion group set out on its good work in the evening, word was passed on about its line of advance and few people were found at home. And the project was abandoned.

I left about then, during the great surge of urban religiosity that was trying to penetrate the country.

I have a first cousin who said she would become a nun. Her parents said they wouldn't let her. But she was as stubborn as I was. She was locked in her room for a while, in the hope that she would change her mind. But she had her way, and the last I heard is that she's still a nun. So, in that climate of 'fear and suppression', people could have very different impulses and act on them.

That region, which kept religious zeal within limits then, seems to keep it up close to those limits now.

The countryside was not a

nondescript stretch of territory between towns. It was a series of townlands. I have no idea how townlands came about, or why they had that name. I only know that you did not live in 'the country' but in a townland. I lived in Gneeves—which means either *"action"* or a measure of land. It was a different place from Ruhill or Umerabue or Doon if you lived there, but I suppose not if you were passing through.

In those backward times there were two townland holidays a year, connected with the Stations, which were survivals from Penal Law times and were abolished by the modernizations of Vatican 2.

An institution which enhanced the sociable character of the country was the Co-operative Creamery. I worked as a labourer in one for a couple of yeas. It was owned jointly by about 120 farmers, who took the milk there every morning, read their various newspapers (*Press, Independent, Examiner*) and discussed the affairs of the world. The Co-op farmers were then the major class in the country. They had taken the place of the gentry, and seemed to have forgotten that there ever had been gentry. They had it in common with the gentry that they were independent owners of property and had a fair degree of leisure. Unlike the gentry, they engaged in labour and were the motive power in society. I don't see how the history of either the independence movement or the two generations after independence is comprehensible if they are left out of account.

They were a large class of property owners, widely spread around the country. They were literate and thoughtful and they met in a kind of daily assembly. I do not recall even a mention of them in McGahern's novels.

It might be said that McGahern did not set out to write social realist novels. That he worked his own family experience under a tyrannical father in a Barracks into a series of novels, and thereby worked himself free of the traumas of his childhood and youth, and that his sketchy social observation is marginal to this and should not be dwelt upon.

But that won't do. His novels are taken to be a reflection of life in De Valera's Ireland, and adulatory literary criticism of them has been published around the world. And it cannot be said that he did not encourage the view that his novels reflected social life.

All of his books were published by Faber & Faber. And, as far as I can gather, the first of them was solicited by Faber before it was written. And I have to take it that the second was written in order to be banned. They are British regional literature for the Irish.

In his last novel (*That They May Face The Rising Sun*), which is a kind of escapist/Utopian everyday story of country folk, the picture of society cowed by the Church into submission through fear is discarded and replaced with the idea that it never really became Catholic at all, but was always freely pagan in itself. But an episode is intruded to show that he is attuned to the disparaging of the War of Independence that was then becoming fashionable. And we are told that *"the priest, the single man, was the ideal of society"*. And he repeats that the people of the countryside hardly ever met one another.

What I recall is a kind of impressed amazement that anyone should want to be a priest. There was some jibing about the priests being in it for the money, but that did not signify that the giber would become a priest for the money. Life was about regaling the senses.

Report

A.N. Wilson recalled his schooldays in a *Daily Mail* article, which appeared on 11th June. We reproduce extracts below but the article can be read in full (for free) on the paper's website

The paedophile headmaster,

his sadistic wife and the schooldays that scarred me forever

Why exactly my parents selected Hillstone School, Great Malvern, as a suitable place for my education remains a mystery to me. It was one of hundreds of preparatory schools in England — perhaps someone had recommended it to them.

…

The headmaster, Rudolf Barbour-Simpson, wrote a book called Notes For Boys, telling us all the things a gentleman did or did not do.

"A gentleman uses a butter-knife even when eating alone", was one of his observations.

He was a self-consciously old-fashioned man, teaching us to read the imperialist novels of G.A. Henty, whose views were forged in the Crimean War, even though James Bond books had started to appear, and making us study maps of India, as if that great nation were still part of the Empire.

The school day started with cold showers. Then a horrible breakfast. Then lessons were, for the most part, very poorly taught. Another nasty meal followed, then organised games every day, come rain or shine.

…

What my parents did not know, or chose to ignore, was that Mr Barbour-Simpson was a paedophile, who was extremely skilful at hiding his proclivities from other grown-ups.

Nor did they know that his wife was a sadist, whose waking hours were devoted to torturing the little boys on whom her sad husband had formed his attachments.

Barbara knew how difficult it was for me to contain my tears when my parents left me on a Sunday evening in her sinister care. She enjoyed seeing me cry.

'Her aim was to torture the little boys that her husband took a fancy to'

One weekend, when my parents visited the school, they drove me for lunch in the tourist village of Broadway in Worcestershire.

When we got out of the car in the High Street, I started not just crying but sobbing, eventually screaming that I hated Hillstone, that it was horrible being away from home, that?.?.?.?that?.?.?.?

I could not explain why I was so upset and have since learned that it is extremely common for the victims of any kind of abuse to be unable to speak of it coherently.

My mother and I, both in tears, implored my father to let me come home at once. I do not know why he was so implacable.

He perhaps felt that it would be bad to give in to a child. Perhaps he was afraid that if I left one school, I would sob my way out of another.

In any event, I was driven straight back to my equivalent of Dachau concentration camp. Grey-faced and hiccoughing with hours of grief, I no longer cared that other children might see and mock my tears.

Only when I had been at the school about five years did one of my close friends tell his mother what had happened to him.

The headmaster, Rudolf, had invited my friend John into his study and began to talk to him about sex. What began as one of Rudolf's famous introductions to the facts of life clearly developed into pure smut.

He asked John to lower his trousers.

This was standard procedure. Usually, Rudolf did no more than peer at the boy's nakedness, sometimes he would fondle. Other times, he would open his trousers — but more usually not.

If having gone through these strange little rituals, which were always accompanied by smutty talk, he felt especially attracted to the boy, he would then try to find the child out in some misdemeanour in order to beat him.

In the mad world of Rudolf's dictatorship, more or less anything was a beating offence: walking on the wrong garden path; not walking on the path; talking after lights out; or being milliseconds late for a lesson or for games. I was once thrashed for being shy.

There were nearly always little boys waiting outside Rudolf's study after breakfast, listening intently at the door. Swish, swish, swish. That meant the previous boy had only 'got three' strokes of the cane.

If Rudolf was in an excited state of mind it could easily become six.

Once Barbara knew that Rudolf was fixated on a boy, she would start her torturing.

'The head's wife had a cage where she kept her husband's victims'

There was a cage, shown to prospective parents as the place where we kept our rabbits and guinea pigs. In fact, it was used by Barbara to imprison Rudolf's victims.

Sometimes they were left in there all day, until they wet themselves. They were not allowed to change.

If she found out that a boy was frightened of water, he would be frogmarched to the high-diving board and pushed, fully clothed, into the pool with sharp jabs from Barbara's umbrella.

If she spotted there was a particular food you disliked, you were for it. Leaving food, or choosing not to eat it, was never an option.

…

In grown-up life, I suffered from anorexia and other eating disorders, which were only cured by hypnosis and a brilliant doctor. I'm convinced it was because of my prep school.

Sometimes I meet a boy who was at school with me and, although we hardly ever discuss our schooldays, it usually turns out the man in question has had to undergo therapy of some sort or feels he has been scarred for life.

…

Niall Meehan

Minister for Education Ruairi Quinn has refused to include Bethany Survivors in Redress Scheme

Bethany Survivors In The Cold

Bethany Home was a Protestant Evangelical Home for Unmarried Mothers, as well as being a Children's Home. It also housed women convicted of infanticide, prostitution, and petty theft—who were referred there by the Courts from the 1920s to the 1960s. In 1945 it was also recognised as a place of detention under the Children's Act 1908. It was opened by the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin in 1922 and closed in 1972. Its assets were distributed in 1974: 85% to the Church of Ireland Magdalen Home on Leeson Street and 15% to Miss Carr's Home, North Circular Road, Dublin.

In letters to Joe Costello TD and to Bethany Home Survivors Chairperson, Derek Leinster, Ruairi Quinn, Minister for Education, has turned down the survivors' request to have the Home included in the Schedule to the Residential Institutions Redress Scheme. They met the Minister on 24 May last, accompanied by other survivors from the Home, and by Niall Meehan from Griffith College Dublin. Inclusion is necessary in order for survivors to apply for compensation for the neglect they suffered while in the Home, which they say the State ignored.

Spokesperson Derek Leinster, who was in Bethany Home between 1941 and 1945, said,

> 'In his reply to me and to Deputy Joe Costello, Minister Quinn ignored the arguments we put to him. He regurgitated the tired excuses of his Fianna Fail predecessors in turning down Bethany survivors.
>
> "We gave him documents proving that state officials, in particular the then Deputy Chief Medical Adviser, Winslow Sterling Berry, ignored evidence of neglect and of the record numbers of deaths in Bethany Home in the late 1930s. In answer to internal and external criticism of the Home's standards of care, Sterling Berry said, *"It is well recognised that illegitimate children are delicate*". Berry then forced the Home, in his presence, to cease admitting Roman Catholics, so as to give him and other State officials a quieter life. We discovered 219 unmarked graves of Bethany children in 2010. Over a third died in the five-year period (1935-39) before Sterling Berry entered the Bethany Home. That was five years after the State took on statutory powers in 1934 to inspect and to regulate maternity homes like Bethany.
>
> "Ruairi Quinn has refused to address the then State's decision to regulate the sectarianism of the welfare system, but not the actual welfare of neglected and abandoned children. Ruairi Quinn is condoning official sectarianism today in this republic, as a result.
>
> "Ruairi Quinn has rejected not just Bethany survivors but his own party colleagues Joe Costello and Kathleen Lynch who have been campaigning for years on this issue. Junior Minister Kathleen Lynch was thrown out of the Dail last October while trying to raise the issue of Bethany survivors with the then Fianna Fail Minister.
>
> "Junior Minister Kathleen Lynch is currently examining whether another rejected group, the Magdalene women, should be given compensation for the appalling abuse they suffered, which the State has also so far ignored. At a parliamentary Labour Party meeting last week Joe Costello asked her to also examine the Bethany Home issue. She said she would."

Derek Leinster and Niall Meehan have sent the following letter to Minister for Education Ruairi Quinn:

"Thank you for your letters of 17 June 2011 to Joe Costello and to Derek Leinster in response to points put to you by Bethany survivors, Níall Meehan and Joe Costello TD, who met you on 24 May last.

"Bethany Home, a Protestant evangelical institution, was, to cite the statutory basis for insertion into the Schedule to the Residential Institutions Redress Scheme, a 'children's home… in which children were placed and resident… in respect of which a public body had a regulatory or inspection function'. You have decided not to include Bethany Home, though it meets the stated criteria.

"Possibly, this is because your letter does not address the reasons put by the Bethany delegation for inclusion within the Schedule. Your letter raises issues that, while important, did not constitute the basis of the argument put to you and which, consequently, your reply has failed to address.

"Since 1917, according to Mary Raftery (writing in 2004), 'Protestant children in need of care' were 'essentially dealt with by private institutions'. She suggested that the state's attitude was

one of 'hands-off'. As a result, she went on, 'It is difficult to find any State records relating to the Protestant children's homes'. Our research into Bethany Home indicates that it is precisely this policy decision not to interfere which is the reason for neglect and death in the Bethany Home and the reason why the state is culpable.

"There are in fact state records explaining why the state decided not to interfere when confronted with evidence of severe neglect in the Bethany Home. We supplied these records to you and you have not addressed them. We summarise here.

"Record numbers of children died in Bethany between 1935-39, buried in unmarked graves in Mount Jerome cemetery. Over a third of the 219 unmarked graves discovered for the period 1922-49 originated in this period.

Statutory inspection of maternity homes began in 1934 and Bethany registered in 1935. In January 1939 specific criticism of Bethany's standards of care was reported within the Department Local Government and Public Health. In August 1939 public criticism of Bethany was raised at a meeting of the Rathdown Board of Guardians and published in the *Irish Times* and *Independent*. The Board of Guardians asked the Minister to report back to them on sick children removed from Bethany who required hospitalisation.

"The Deputy Chief Medical Adviser, Winslow Sterling Berry, entered Bethany once in February and twice in October 1939. The evidence shows that he engaged in a damage limitation exercise.

"In February he dismissed criticism from a departmental inspector who wanted a Bethany nurse mother prosecuted for severe neglect. In October, after the August meeting of the Rathdown Board of Guardians, Sterling Berry entered Bethany twice. He wrote in relation to criticism of standards of care in Bethany, 'it is well recognised that a large number of illegitimate children are delicate'. He then went on to assert that Bethany's problem was that it was a proselytising institution and that he proposed, as Deputy Chief Medical Adviser, to end the practice of attempting to convert Roman Catholics by banning their presence. On his third and final visit he reported being present at the special meeting he initiated, where it was agreed to cease admitting Roman Catholics.

"You, as Minister in this Republic in 2011, must address the Deputy Chief Medical Advisor's use of his statutory power in this manner in 1939. It is regrettable that you have not done so in your reply.

"Our CONCLUSION, which the evidence shows to be irrefutable, is that in southern Ireland's sectarian welfare system state officials were concerned to regulate sectarianism but not welfare. Levelling the playing field in this way gave prejudiced officials an easier life. It also fatally compromised the inspection regime in Bethany. Children continued to die and to become ill in significant numbers. Nearly two thirds of the 219 unmarked graves originated in the 10 year 1935-44 period. This needless slaughter ended when Bethany was given a Maternity grant in 1949, something originally expected by Bethany's management in 1940, after the Catholic ban.

"Sterling Berry's exercise in prejudice was as illegal in 1939 as it is today. What should have happened?

"On one other documented occasion a senior medical adviser entered a mother and babies home. Newly appointed (in 1944) Chief Medical Adviser James Deeny visited Bessbrook, Cork, arising from reports of unusually high mortality. Just as Sterling Berry said of Bethany, Bessbrook seemed 'clean' and 'well run'. However, unlike his deputy, Deeny physically examined a number of children. He found them to be suffering from a range of preventable conditions that were causing the unnecessarily high mortality. According to Deeny, 'The deaths had been going on for years. They had done nothing about it'. He, 'closed the place down and sacked the Matron, a nun, and also got rid of the medical officer'.

"Had Sterling Berry been less fixated on private denominational matters that were none of his statutory business, and more concerned with his statutory responsibility for public welfare, children's lives might have been saved. Sterling Berry soon retired, while Deeny authored Mother and Child legislation that Noel Browne failed to have enacted in 1949-50. Doctors and the *Church of Ireland Gazette* saw it as 'communist' interference in the family. The Roman Catholic Church weighed in, condemned and effectively killed the legislation for similar reasons. Religiously and privately run welfare on the cheap continued.

Raftery's conclusion from her analysis in 2004 bears repetition, 'The fact that the Government uses its past neglect of this section of the community to argue that it now has no responsibility to even hear their case for redress is shameful and unjust. The number of children in this category was always small. However, the abuse some of them suffered was no less real or damaging than that of their Catholic counterparts.'

In relation to your point about 'exclusion of the Bethany Home for religious grounds', you fail to address the fact that originally in 2002, no Protestant institution was included in the Schedule to the Redress Scheme. Mary Raftery again, who also pointed out that the 2002 Redress scheme originally excluded mother and baby homes like Bethany. However, one of the State's largest, St Patrick's, was one of 13 institutions added in 2004. As it was Roman Catholic, she continued, 'Consequently, the exclusion of similar Protestant institutions does indeed begin to appear worryingly sectarian'. Raftery went on: "A further Church of Ireland institution excluded is the former Smyly's Boys' Home... A number of ex-residents have alleged that they were severely abused there as children... this group feels that it has been sidelined because of its religion".

As a result of this and of complaints made by Derek Leinster, Smiley's was then included. Also included was the Protestant run Miss Carr's home, said to have been one of the best run children's homes in the state. One puzzled former resident of Miss Carr's home we have spoken to threw away his Redress Scheme invitation to apply for compensation. Yet Bethany Home, from which hundreds were sent to unmarked graves, was still not included. To paraphrase James Deeny, it had been going on for years and nothing was done about it.

Just as with the Magdalene institutions, the state argues that women referred to Bethany by the courts from 1924 to 1965, entered there voluntarily. Leaving that spurious argument aside, the point is that the state has regulatory duty of care that it abandoned. It abandoned it in an institution where it was deemed acceptable to lock up women charged with infanticide and petty crime with unmarried mothers and their abandoned and then neglected offspring. The state's washing of its hands of its responsibility is a further abandonment. That is not acceptable in this Republic.

Please, in the name of decency and of justice, withdraw the letter issued in your name, possibly by someone in the civil service, and to get to the heart of this matter.

Bethany survivors deserve redress. We would like you to address the points made here that are central to the case for including Bethany Home in a scheme of redress."

http://gcd.academia.edu/NiallMeeham

Stephen Richards

Part Two

Style And Substance

For those *Church & State* readers who haven't been following the argument all that closely, let me recap. In the last issue I took rather a long time to make the point that the *Authorised Version* of the Bible (i.e. the translation that somehow neglected to be actually authorised and is more accurately described as the *King James Version*) represented a backward step in terms of both learning and language from the *Geneva Bible* of 1557 to 1599. The latter was no longer printed in England after 1610 but the Geneva Bibles continued to flood in, and didn't lose their ascendancy till after 1660. No doubt the KJV was better suited to the more reflective non-contentious Anglicanism of the Caroline divines.

That's not to say that the KJV was a bad translation; but it has been adopted into the pantheon as one of the glories of English literature, together with Chaucer, Shakespeare and Milton, in a way that in my view is unhelpful to our understanding of both the Bible and English literature. It's almost as if the Bible itself is not so much the word of God but rather a classic English text, like Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam*. I see in the *Daily Telegraph* of 11th June that the British Establishment, in the shape of the New Labour peer and sage, Melvyn Bragg, is at it again.

> "Apart from anything else the King James Bible in its language, its stories, its morality (at its best) has been a massive part of our national identity for several hundred years. Like no other nation, we had a national book, and it was the King James Bible.
>
> If people want to turn their backs on their faith, that's one thing. To turn our backs on our history is to embalm ourselves in the superficialities of the present."

Shockingly Boring

In exploring this theme further my emphasis is different from that of Brendan Clifford in the last issue. Brendan's quarrel is with the Hebrew text one might say, and in particular with the wars of the Lord recorded in the *Book of Joshua*. Bible translations of all kinds have exposed a dark vein of ancient Semitic *"frightfulness"* or, in the alternative, have revealed a God of such psychopathic tendencies that he should be shunned by all right-thinking people. Unfortunately, because of the reckless project of translation, these narratives somehow got themselves embedded into the DNA of the English-speaking peoples, and explicitly or implicitly have been used as the justification for all kinds of massacres of lesser breeds from Cromwellian times on. I'm not sure if Luther's German translation is deemed to have had an equally catastrophic effect.

Now I'll resist the temptation to engage with Brendan at this fundamental level, and will return to my less sensational ruminations. I would just say in passing that I'm sorry if Brendan was rather bored by the bits of the Bible he wasn't shocked by. Without even venturing on the New Testament I would have thought most newcomers would find most of the Old Testament (with the exception of parts of *Leviticus* and *Numbers* and *Chronicles*) an exciting read.

Establishment—Religious And Literary

The ascendancy of the KJV was accompanied by the reissue of the *Book of Common Prayer* in 1662 (the same year the two thousand recalcitrant clergy were expelled from the Church for not complying with it). The new prayer book was based on Cranmer but was less of a Protestant production. It did of course encapsulate large chunks of the Bible as readings for whatever Sunday it was. So the KJV and the Prayer Book were like mutually supporting pillars which also between them supported the whole edifice of the English Church, and underpinned the liturgical year with a satisfying mix of word and sacrament.

The elevation of the KJV didn't begin until the second half of the 19th century, as the faith of the educated classes was being pummelled by evolutionary biology and higher criticism. By that time the KJV had become very much the property of the Dissenting Churches as well. Even if the majority of the English middle class had concluded that the Bible had been fatally undermined as a historical record, as the word of God, as the rule of life, there was always the KJV to seek refuge behind. This was an English achievement that nobody could take away. So, as confidence in the Biblical text waned, the cult of the KJV grew.

Coincidentally we saw the great period of the gothic revival in Church architecture, and the fame of Macaulay at its apogee. The KJV became one of the legacy issues which the Victorians were obsessed with. And for the first time we begin to note a sort of stylistic homage to the KJV in the writing of Carlyle, Macaulay and Dickens. In a debased form this 'high' style is characteristic of the history writing of Churchill, and later still, the speeches of Ian Paisley, for whom Macaulay was a formative influence.

Just to illustrate Paisley's attachment to the very language of the KJV there's a funny story about him when he was in his fifty-year-long stroppy phase, in the early days of the Blair premiership, before Tony had charmed him down from his tree. Paisley had been in for a meeting with Blair and came out of Downing Street in a state of dudgeon, saying that Blair had refused to discuss anything with him *"except I told him I would agree"* to something or other. This was *"except"* used as a synonym for *"unless"*, as in *St. John's Gospel*, where Jesus in discussion with the Jewish teacher Nicodemus says: *"Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God"*. This reminds me too of the occasion when Paisley on Radio 4 used the quaint Ulster phrase *"when hardy comes to hardy"*, which I don't think is in the KJV, or in Brewer's *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*.

The Style Gurus

I think we have to make a distinction. Without doubt the KJV has made a huge contribution, if only on the back of Tyndale and Geneva, to the stock of English sayings, which used to be used with an implied reference to the context, but are nowadays often used without any awareness of their origin. To concede that is not to accept that the KJV has had a huge influence on English 'as she is wrote'; and such influence as it has had is perhaps to be lamented.

Around the close of the seventeenth century we first come across Steele, Swift and Addison, for whom the KJV would have been the only English Bible. One looks in vain for any common denominator linking them with this great monument of English literature. The explanation can only be that their style was formed elsewhere. That 'elsewhere'

was the Universities where they had studied exclusively the classical authors, with maybe some maths on top of that. The discipline of translating from English to Greek and Latin prose and poetry was exacting, and precision and economy of expression were prized above everything else. Even when they were reading the New Testament they were probably reading it in the original Greek. The Latinate style was a bit heavy in Milton but the eighteenth century was perhaps the high water mark of the English language in terms of clear muscular unfussy expression. Among the Evangelical Anglican party there are men like John Newton and Thomas Scott whom it's a delight to read; and also the less Christian Lord Chesterfield. However much some of these men might have revered the Bible, there is no sense that they were using the KJV as their model.

Nobody could accuse John Bunyan of having had an expensive education, and indeed Spurgeon commented that his very blood was bibline. His writing is full of Scripture, but his own style is still very different from the KJV which he is quoting from. It probably didn't occur to him that the KJV was something he should be emulating himself. Defoe falls into that same category, formally uneducated but with a literary spring to his step.

Bunyan was a post-Ejection preacher, so comes in as one of the later Puritans, along with the likes of John Owen, Thomas Goodwin and Thomas Manton, who all wrote monumental treatises. Owen managed to be one of Cromwell's chaplains, and one wonders how the vast architecture of his mind coped with the Irish massacres. Many of the other Puritans, whose theology was more or less identical to Owen's, looked on the Stuarts as very much the lesser evil compared with Cromwell, who was like the monster that had risen up in their own pond. The earlier batch of Puritans date from the reigns of late Elizabeth, James I and Charles I, and their most famous names are Richard Sibbes, John Preston, and William Perkins. There are some who straddle the divide, like Richard Baxter, Thomas Brooks and William Bridge (no pun intended).

At Home With The Puritans

I used to read the Puritans quite a bit and still dip into them. Some are more heavy going than others but the readability quotient is mostly high, even if some of their expressions can be quaint. Once again there are no obvious connections with the stately prose of 1611; and probably once again they were going straight to the fountain head of the original languages. The only way to get a sense of the English Puritans is to read what they wrote when they were in pastoral mode, which was most of the time. I don't know if the same can be said for some of the Scottish ones, who perhaps shouldn't be defined as Puritans at all. But even Rutherford had his pastoral side. We have had instilled into us this caricature of the Puritans as being always on some kind of rant, whether about politics or public morals. I have found none of the former and very little of the latter. Instead there are carefully crafted expositions of Bible texts and earnest explorations of the work of God's grace in the heart. I don't suppose the KJV hindered the rise of the Puritans but I can't see that it helped it much either.

The Meaning Of Meaning

Instead of talking about the impact of the Bible in English we have exalted one particular translation to, literally, iconic status. To that extent I agree with Brendan Clifford, that it's the Bible and not the KJV that is the important thing. That the Bible continued to dominate the imagination of the English people was really despite the archaic format of the KJV translation and not because of it.

I think I would go slightly further than this though, and argue that the influence of the KJV on English and American literature has not been totally benign. It has led to an unhealthy obsession with stylistic effect and, in America, to a certain portentousness. This stems in part from the assumption that the KJV is a great monument of English literature irrespective of what it says. We then begin to look for all kinds of aesthetic truth, especially in the novel, which means that literature gets treated as a sort of religion, but with no compulsory creed. This tendency in the English novel began with George Eliot, who saw her work as a vehicle for raising the moral consciousness of the reader.

Of course this is nothing to do with the promotion of what one might call conventional morality. In direct line of descent from Eliot is E.M. Forster, for whom the English are a culturally impoverished race. In both Forster and Lawrence we come across the search for some kind of authenticity which transcends the platitudes of conventional morality and religion. Given that the function of the novel is no longer to edify or entertain, the focus increasingly is on the style of the writing. It has to convince us by its style. The novel becomes a work of art, with the verbal texture having the same significance as the textures of an oil painting. Instead of style being an emanation of sense, it becomes purely decorative.

It might be unrealistic to expect fictional characters in search of meaning all to find it in the same way. Their circumstances and personalities are different, and this is the part of the appeal of the novel. Yet one might expect there would be some sort of universal standard to which they might be straining in their different ways. This expectation will be disappointed because the whole point of the modern novel is that every person is his or her own cosmos, and each cosmos, like these multiverses we hear talked about, operates according to its own laws without any necessary reference to any other. The novel is worshipped as the ultimate source of meaning, even when it doesn't purport to offer any. To paraphrase, it has been said that the novel used to be about ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances, whereas now it's about abnormal people in normal circumstances, if we only knew what 'abnormal' is supposed to mean. The standard of ordinariness has disappeared in our fragmented world of personal fulfilment. Never mind the meta-narrative, there aren't any narratives any more.

The KJV can't be held responsible for the decline of the novel, but its adulation as great literature in its own right has had something to do with it. We've taken to seeing literature as a great end in itself, disconnected from any coherent moral framework within which to view the world.

Quiet Americans?

My more specific stylistic complaints are about the 'high style' of the KJV, which has had a disastrous effect on Anglo-American prose. This is most marked in the novels of Dickens, and in the 'shouty' style of Carlyle's *French Revolution*; and, in America, in the stories of Hemingway (such as *The Old Man And The Sea*) , Steinbeck and Cormac McCarthy. I've noticed this as well with that highly-acclaimed but (to me anyway) unreadable novel of Marilyn Robinson's, *Gilead*. In Dickens the fault is a grandiose overblown rhythmic style, whereas among the Americans the fault is more that of 'underwriting', an

irritating flatness, an absence of complex sentence structures, sub-clauses etc.

It's a big thing to say of an author, indeed of any human being, that they don't annoy you. Quirky authors, like quirky people in general, might be all right in small doses, but one gets very fed up with a constant diet. The pared-back style which seems to be *de rigeur* in American letters owes a lot to the KJV and it is very affected, a sort of inverse literary snobbery. Here we are, it seems to say, we're plain-spoken folk, full of integrity: what have we do with the effete artifice of high octane English Literature? These writers, in their efforts to avoid what they may see as histrionics, slip into the laconic speech patterns you might associate with a 1930s Midwest farmer on diazepam. Every sentence tends to bomb, and there seems to be a total inability to create any kind of narrative momentum. It's the short story elongated to novelistic form, as with our own Michael McLaverty, who produced a stream of impressive short stories but couldn't write a novel to save his life.

I also find the Biblical and sub-Biblical imagery that runs through the American novel to be strained and unconvincing, whereas it courses through American popular music like its life blood (see Dylan, Springsteen, Jackson Browne). That is where the portentousness comes in. This biblical language is like a common currency and authors feel they have to use it, but its novelistic use is often pointless. This may be linked with something that has increasingly intrigued me about American culture as a whole. There's a sort of deification that goes on of their leading politicians, musicians and sports people. We could call it 'Mount Rushmore syndrome'. Lincoln is a colossus in a way that Gladstone isn't; and Jefferson certainly eclipses William Pitt the Younger. At least the Romans waited till their Emperors were dead, but the apotheosis of Bob Dylan probably happened around 1966.

What seems to happen is that every once in a while some American produces a decent or interesting novel, he or she becomes the subject of a nationwide cult, and then becomes a recluse. It's as if the reading public in America is so excited that there can be such a thing as a goodish American novel that it generates a ridiculously over-the-top response. (One is reminded of Dr. Johnson's jibe about female preachers.) As a result Harper Lee, whose *To Kill A Mockingbird* was a very good novel, ended up being silenced at the age of 24 because she felt she could never produce a follow-up novel that would match up. Something similar appears to have happened to the late J.D. Salinger.

And as for Thomas Pynchon, he continues to write fiction of great complexity and incomprehensibility but refuses to be seen in public. The most recent runner in the Great American Novel stakes is called *Freedom* by Jonathan Franzen. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the world of Eng. Lit. studies. Novelists on both sides of the Atlantic aren't writing for the public any more but to impress academics and other novelists. Members of the public continue to buy these books but only out of misplaced humility.

Faulks v. Wodehouse

For instance I don't know why anybody would willingly read *Engleby*, which I got sent by a cousin. I appreciated the generous gesture but that was all. Faulks's novel told me absolutely nothing about life, the universe or human nature. All it did was cast a nasty shadow over some pretty parts of Cambridge. The story, if it could be called that, is told in such an oblique, backhanded way that I lost patience with it. Contrast with the novels of Paul Torday, whose debut novel was *Salmon Fishing in the Yemen.* Torday's skill and subtlety are every bit as well-developed as Faulks's, but in this and his subsequent novels he subordinates whatever pyrotechnical tendencies he might have to the demands of the story. For my money he and Alexander McCall Smith are among the few considerable novelists writing in English. I don't think either is highly regarded in the English faculties.

One of the truly great novelists of the last century was P.G. Wodehouse, and he was also the supreme stylist, which maybe upsets my applecart somewhat. But in humour it's the style that counts. *"It's the way I tell them"*, said Frank Carson, the Belfast comedian. And with Wodehouse it was perhaps more a craft than a matter of artifice. He did things with words, he was a wordsmith. Most novelists these days would consider that to be a mechanical gift. O'Casey summed up Wodehouse in a witty but revealing way as English literature's performing flea!

Getting Bank Up To Date

From 1881, the date of the Revised Version (which was little more than a more accurate version of the KJV assisted by the textual work of Hort and Westcott), there have been many further translations of scripture. In the 1970s there were two in particular that became leaders of the pack, the *Good News Bible* (GNB) which came out in 1973 or so, and the *New International Version* (NIV!), completed around 1978. For people of my generation this became the Bible of choice as it was pacy and direct while retaining a bit of a scholarly edge, whereas the GNB had a bland, functional vocabulary and sentence structure. I believe that both these translations, have been 'updated' in recent years. The main purpose of this updating has been to remove what is known as gender-specific language, which of course is a huge and contentious subject all on its own, one for another time.

To end on a positive note, as I always like to do, let me commend a Bible translation that isn't really a proper translation at all but a terrific exhibition of verbal artistry. This is *The Message*, a full-length paraphrase-style translation by Eugene Peterson. Peterson is a pastor, author and academic, lately of Regent College Vancouver, having been raised in an American-Norwegian Pentecostal community in the wilderness of Montana. David Daniell (see my last article) is a bit sniffy about Peterson; and from time to time indeed Peterson does fall flat on his face, which is only to be expected given the risky nature of his project. The text is turned into memorable colloquial American English, full of unexpected jolts, and with a total absence of the stained glass effect. Peterson takes the concept of dynamic equivalence to new levels. He hits the reader right between the eyeballs just as Tyndale must have done. You could open Peterson at random and be amazed at his turns of phrase. Here is the last section of Psalm 44, a la Peterson:

> Get up God! Are you going to sleep all day?
> Wake up! Don't you care what happens to us?
> Why do you bury your face in the pillow?
> Why pretend things are just fine with us?
> And here we are—flat on our faces in the dirt,
> Held down with a boot on our necks.
> Get up and come to our rescue,
> *If you love us so much*, Help us!

Did I say I was ending on a positive note? *

VOX

Abp. Martin On 1916
Rates And Charges
Protestant Church Elections
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PAT

Abp. Martin On 1916

"We celebrate and remember those who gave their lives in 1916 for a better Ireland… independence for a purpose, independence based on values", Archbishop Diarmuid Martin said in his homily addressing the Annual 1916 Commemoration Mass in the Church of the Sacred Heart, Arbour Hill, Dublin, on 4th May 2011.

He recalled how his uncle, Martin Mullen, and aunt, Mary Mullen, had participated in the Rising.

> "As a child I was always fascinated when I heard my mother speak about Easter week 1916. She recalled the excitement in her house in inner-city Dublin over that Easter weekend… how she watched her own mother as she prepared the bandolier for her eldest son as he set out to take up arms in Jacob's factory and how she embraced her eldest daughter as she set out to go to Liberty Hall."

The Archbishop said that a Republic is not indifferent to the faith of its citizens, but recognises the role of believers in contributing to the common good. A real republic was one in which people care, where basic needs are *"the concern of all"*.

The Archbishop said the economic situation and the dramatic social costs that this will entail should forewarn against any haughtiness about who we are and where we stand.

The economic climate at the time of the Rising was disastrous and there was much poverty and deprivation, but Archbishop Martin said that those who fought and died in 1916 realised that with *"courage and vision things could change"*, a vision *"in which all care, in which all participate and to which all contribute"*.

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Rates And Charges

Churches, farmers, state buildings and B&Bs should pay the same Local Authority rates and water charges as businesses, according to the Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association (ISME), chief executive Mark Fielding stated on 15th May 2011.

ISME are demanding that Local Authorities spread their net further to share the burden of funding Local Authority services in a more *"equitable"* manner.

Mr.Fielding accused Local Authorities of being *"lazy and inefficient"* in repeatedly raising the Commercial Rates, which have jumped by 47% over the past 10 years, twice the rate of inflation.

> "Business is the only sector of society that is compelled to pay commercial rates, essentially a local business tax, which penalises enterprise and suppresses local job creation. Commercial rates are a significant burden on small enterprises, with business contributing 27% of the total revenue stream to the local authorities. In the last 10 years these rates have increased by a massive 47%, over twice the rate of inflation, as a result of Government's failure to properly fund local government", stated Mr. Fielding.

ISME members started an organisation in Wexford entitled Employers Against Rates (EAR), which has mandated Friends First economist Jim Power to come up with an alternative to Rates as a source of Local Authority funding. One EAR study suggested that a local Sales Tax of 0.5% could replace the money gained by Local Authorities via Rates, and which Mark Fielding also believes would spread the burden of funding local services more equitably.

Mr. Fielding is demanding a reform of Local Authority funding to make it more equitable and reduce the overwhelming burden of Rates on the business sector.

ISME also want the re-introduction of Agricultural Business Rates, the introduction of metered Water Charges, Commercial Rates to be extended to state buildings, Church property and unregistered B&Bs, along with a 20% reduction on all local charges on businesses for 2011/2012.

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Protestant Church Elections

Two new leaders of the main Protestant Churches were elected at separate ballots in Dublin and Belfast in February.

Dr. Michael Jackson (54), the current Church of Ireland Bishop of Clogher, was elected as the new Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough in succession to John Neill, who has retired.

Born in Lurgan, Co Armagh, Bishop Jackson was elected Bishop of Clogher in 2002. He attended school at Portora Royal School in Enniskillen before studying at Trinity College, from which he graduated with first-class honours in Classics and later a Masters Degree. He was awarded a Doctorate in Theology at Cambridge and a Doctorate in Philosophy at Oxford.

He pledged to work in close partnership with the Anglican Primate of All Ireland, Alan Harper, who presided over the electoral college at which he became the first Northerner since 1969 to be chosen as the senior Anglican prelate in the Republic.

The Church of Ireland Bishop of Meath and Kildare, Richard Clark ruled himself out of the running for election, he had been widely regarded as hot favourite for the position.

Dr. Jackson, a theologian, said that one of his first priorities would be to meet the clergy and people of his new diocese, as well as abuse survivors from the Bethany hostel, which was associated with the Church of Ireland. He also stressed the importance of maintaining the ethos of Church of Ireland schools.

Presbyterian Moderator

In Belfast, the Rev Ivan Patterson (61), Minister of Newcastle Presbyterian Church in Co. Down, was elected Moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly on February 1st, and will take office in June when the annual General Assembly of Ministers and lay people meets.

He has been Minister of Newcastle Presbyterian Church in Co Down for the last 20 years.

Election Process

The Church of Ireland primate Archbishop Alan Harper chaired the Episcopal Electoral College at which the Archbishop for the Church of Ireland's Southern Province was chosen.

The College is made up of 12 clerical and 12 lay members from Dublin and Glendalough dioceses and three of each from the other Southern Dioceses of Cashel and Ossory; Cork, Cloyne and Ross; Limerick and Killaloe; and Meath and Kildare.

The House of Bishops nominated Bishop of Kilmore Ken Clarke to represent the Northern Province and the Bishops of Cashel and Limerick, Michael Burrows and Trevor Williams respectively, to represent the Southern Province at the college.

In theory, any priest of the Church of Ireland, male or female, aged 35 or over, is eligible to be proposed for consideration.

Should a candidate fail to get the necessary two-thirds majority from each of the Houses of clergy and laity, the appointment passes to the House of Bishops.

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DeV's Ireland

> "There has been a tendency in recent years to depict de Valera"s Ireland as a priest-ridden bog, but while the Long Fellow may have been almost physically blind, he had more vision than the leaders of the coalition which ousted him in 1948" (Ryle Dwyer, *Irish Examiner*, 9.1.2010).

One of the initial acts of the first Inter-Party Government (1948-1951) was to send a telegram to the Pope desiring "*to repose at the feet of Your Holiness the assurance of our filial loyalty and our devotion to your August Person, as well as our firm resolve to be guided in all our work by the teaching of Christ and to strive for the attainment of social order in Ireland based on Christian principles*."

Ryle Dwyer writes that—

> "Maurice Moynihan, the cabinet secretary, strongly advised against the telegram on the grounds that '*no civil power should declare that it reposed at the feet of the Pope*', but he was overruled and promptly banned from future cabinet meetings. That was the government that formally proclaimed the Republic in 1949".
>
> "It also provided firm proof that Home Rule did amount to Rome Rule in those years. William Norton, the Tánaiste and leader of the Labour Party, backed down on a Social Welfare Bill when faced with ecclesiastical opposition and Seán MacEoin, Minister for Justice, abandoned an adoption bill under orders from Archbishop John Charles McQuaid. '*He won"t allow it*', MacEoin told the cabinet. That was that" (*Irish Examiner*, 9.1.2011).

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Maynooth?

> "Maynooth College may soon cease to function as a Catholic seminary marking the end of a 200-year-tradition, The *Irish Catholic* has learned" (*Irish Catholic*, 24.3.2011).

The national Seminary, which has educated Irishmen for the priesthood since 1795, may be set for closure after the recent Apostolic Visitation by New York's Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan. It is expected the report will recommend that Pope Benedict XVI move all Irish seminarians to a reformed and restructured Pontifical Irish College in Rome.

The historic shift would bring an end to concerns about falling academic standards at Maynooth and claims by some that the College in no longer 'fit for mission'.

> "One senior academic told *The Irish Catholic* that the Apostolic Visitors were 'appalled' by some of the standards in Maynooth. Rome would give access to heavyweight universities under direct scrutiny from the Vatican."

It is understood the plan would include the Irish College in Rome dramatically reducing the number of non-Irish students enrolled in the seminary to make way for the seminarians from Maynooth.

During his visitation to Maynooth, Archbishop Dolan requested from moral theology lectures copies of class notes and presentations to students to assess the suitability of the content. A wholesale move to Rome would address concerns that some of the theology taught at Maynooth is not sufficiently orthodox for future priests.

It is understood that the Apostolic Visitors are of the view that the current low number of seminarians at Maynooth makes the college's future as a national seminary untenable with a concentration in Rome offering a better use of resources and seminary staff. Most seminarians would go to the Irish College while some others would join other Irish students at the Pontifical Beda College in Rome which specialises in training older men for the priesthood.

Meanwhile, in Rome, Rector of the Irish College Msgr Liam Bergin is due to step down at the end of this term. Msgr Bergin—a priest of the Ossory diocese—is expected to take up an appointment teaching theology at Boston College in the US. The new Rector of the Irish College will require the approval of the Vatican before an announcement can be made.

There are currently 66 seminarians for Irish dioceses at Maynooth, 18 at the Irish College in Rome, seven at the Beda College in Rome and seven at St Joseph's Seminary in Belfast. Two Irishmen are also undergoing preparatory studies at the Royal English College in Valladolid, Spain.

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One Church?

A thousand years ago, 1111, the Synod of Rathbreasail saw the first formal establishment by a single authority of a comprehensive network of Catholic dioceses. Assembled under Muirchertach Ua Briain, King of Munster and High King, and attended by numerous ecclesiastics, the Synod divided Ireland into two Provinces, headed by the Archbishops of Armagh and Cashel, with Armagh the primatial Church. This, as well as the twelve Dioceses into which each Province was divided, reflected both the model of European diocesan structures and contemporary Irish political realities.

The Synod of Rathbreasail was attended by 50 Bishops and 300 priests.

The site of Rathbreasail is not certain: possibly near Thurles or Templemore in Co. Tipperary but many claim the actual site was near Banteer in North Cork.

Representatives of the party favouring the reform of the Irish Church met in 1111, under the presidency of Giolla Easpuig (Gillebert), Papal Legate and Bishop of Limerick. They issued *"many good decrees"*, which, however, were omitted, for the sake of brevity, in the source from which Geoffrey Keating derived the information concerning the Synod which he incorporated in his *Foras Feasa ar Eireann*, compiled between 1628 and 1640. But the main work of the fathers of Rathbreasail was the restoration of the diocesan episcopate.

The scheme was that Ireland should have two ecclesiastical Provinces, Armagh and Cashel; and each of these metropolitan Sees should have twelve suffragan bishoprics subject to it.

The Danish See of Dublin held aloof from the national reorganisation of the Irish Church, preferring to continue in its allegiance to the See of Canterbury, but the Synodal fathers left a place in the scheme to be filled by Dublin when that See would abandon Canterbury and would become incorporated in the native ecclesiastical system.

The diocesan division projected at Rathbreasail did not work out smoothly; indeed the Synod had foreseen that its scheme might be found impracticable or undesirable in certain parts of the country. But at least a great step forward had been taken; time would show what adjustments were required, and, many of these changes took place at a later Synod, held in Kells, Co. Meath in 1152.

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Catherine Winch

How the Vichy Government superseded traditionalism and promoted modernity

The Vichy Origins Of Modern France

Overview

The popular view of Vichy is in part the outcome of the post-War purge trials, which, to say the least did not produce a dispassionate assessment. It is time to look at the period again in some detail. It should be remembered that Pétain's Government enjoyed national support at the start, even from those not politically sympathetic to it; that the character of that Government—established it was thought as a temporary, short-term measure, and not meant as something sustainable—changed with the course of the War.

After the earthquake of the French defeat by Nazi Germany, an Armistice was signed on 22nd June 1940, a temporary measure intended to be the prelude to a comprehensive peace between the warring parties. Since Britain had left the field of battle, repatriated her troops in disarray, and refused to lend France the support of her air force during the final battles, it looked as if Britain would have to make a settlement also, allowing an all-round peace to be signed. This did not happen and a situation meant to be temporary had to be sustained willy-nilly over time.

The Armistice provided that France would be divided into an occupied zone —the North including Paris and the Channel and Atlantic coasts—cut off from an unoccupied zone in the rest of the country. (In addition, Alsace and Lorraine were annexed by Nazi Germany, and the region around Lille and Arras considered part of the Belgian occupation zone.)

France would keep a Government. This Government settled in the non-occupied spa town of Vichy. The laws promulgated at Vichy applied to the two zones, occupied as well as non-occupied.

Life continued as before, in the sense that people continued to live from their employment. The economy functioned, albeit distorted by many factors, such as the payment of occupation costs, German requisitions and orders, the absence of one and a half million men in POW camps and the lack of the raw materials that used to come from the colonies (petrol, oil, rubber, foodstuffs). The Government functioned too, by Decree, without Parliament and without parties, appointing a succession of different men as Ministers—ministerial turnover turned out to be worse under Vichy than under the notoriously unstable previous regime.

The Vichy Government set about reform immediately, of its own initiative. Legislation by decree simplified change.

Vichy was many things. This article will focus on two of its reforming strands, the traditionalist and the technocratic.

One source of knowledge about Vichy comes from the press of the period and one famous magazine, *L'Illustration*, is a rich example of the Establishment press of the time.

Founded in 1843, *L'Illustration* pioneered the use of engraving and lithographs and later of photography. It is now classed a national treasure by the State, and has been partly republished as an Encyclopaedia since 1984; a complete reprinting in 45 volumes is planned by the great-grandson of the 1930s owners. Before the Second World War it was based in Bobigny, near Paris, where the magazine had its own printing plant, which was then the biggest in Europe; it produced around 300 000 copies per issue and had subscribers in over 130 countries. In mid-1940 it relocated briefly in the provinces before settling back again in Bobigny, with the same Editors, the proprietors René and Louis Baschet. During the War the magazine continued its coverage of international news, the arts, politics and the economy and its occasional special issues on specific topics. It was an expensive magazine, intended for a well-off readership, judging from the snobbery apparent in the few chatty articles; it cost seven Francs, when newspapers cost less than one Franc.

It gave voice to very divergent views under the Occupation.

Farming

Let us take agriculture as an example. In keeping with Marshall Pétain's traditionalism, the covers of the magazine showed a painting of a peasant sharpening a scythe in a cornfield (July 1941 special issue), a photo of a woman helping to heave wheat onto a cart at harvest time, a photo of women reaping corn using sickles; inside, photographs and drawings showed men ploughing with horses or oxen (for example, 28.9.40). Articles advocated the family farm as the basis of society and a return to the land as the solution to France's decadence. If everyone tilled his plot, there would be no social unrest, and no food shortages! These articles however always ask: how can this be achieved? After all it was no use ignoring the inexorable trend toward urban living. Writers suggested measures to encourage a return to the land, such as increasing agricultural wages, providing old age pensions and improving housing and living conditions. The Government should bring entertainment to the countryside: theatre, cinema, circuses and libraries (2.8.41). What is striking about these articles is the lack of conviction in their tone, as if the writers knew this return to the land was only a dream. Folk music and dancing, as well as artisan craftwork (cow-bell makers 19.7.41) feature hesitantly in a few issues, as something distant and foreign.

Then the text of special issue on Agriculture of July 1941 opens a completely different window: Articles about fertilizers, mechanisation and productivity compete for space with a dozen adverts for tractors and farm machinery, a far cry from oxen, sickles and scythes. At the time, these machines could not be used, because there was no petrol to run them; the alternative fuels were not sufficient. But the magazine, and the farmers, were looking forward to better times.

A third strand on this topic of rural France came from Jacques de Lesdain, a pre-War contributor to *L'Illustration* who in 1940 had been imposed by the Occupier as Political Editor. He thought that France, contributing a rich agriculture, would play an equal and honourable role in a united Europe under German leadership. Lesdain favoured a modern agriculture rather than small self-sufficient family farms.

This third, pro-German, strand earned a ban for the magazine in 1945. The first strand, the nostalgic rural France, vanished from sight forever after the war. What remained was the trend towards modernised large-scale farming, which, while not part of the overt Vichy programme, is part of its legacy.

An authority on Vichy, the American Robert Paxton, wrote an influential book on the period, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order—1940-1944* (1972, 2001). He is currently (2011) co-curating an exhibition in Paris on *Writers and the Occupation*. In his book he developed the argument that modern agriculture, and other aspects of modern France, were given an impetus at the time of Vichy. Put in a nutshell, inter-war Governments and more generally the Third Republic, hobbled by parliamentary procedures, had been unable to take decisions and modernise the country. Vichy, governing by Decree, and under the necessity of a war economy, was able to let the experts plan an economy for times of prosperity, as well as for times of want.

One problem the State needed to tackle was that, from the time of Napoleon, all children of land-owning farmers inherited an equal amount of land on the death of their parent, and consequently plots had become ever smaller and scattered. Vichy's law of 9th March 1941 made it easier to regroup scattered parcels of land into unified farms. A previous law of 27th November 1918 required that at least two-thirds of the villagers concerned agreed before lands could be transferred. Vichy's law, according to Paxton,

> "permitted consolidation by majority vote and gave the state a proposing role as well. This law was retained after the war with slight modifications, and the Commissariat du Plan {state planning after 1945} used it to promote a major program to regroup 500 000 hectares in 1947 alone."
>
> "In addition, {Vichy's} legislation eased credit for rebuilding farmhouses, modified inheritance laws to make it easier to pass a farm on intact to one son who wanted to farm it, {…} encouraged better education in agronomy, and encouraged tenants to make improvements by obliging the owner to reimburse the tenant for value added if the lease were ended (ending sixty years of agitation for this provision)."

Paxton concluded that:

> "In agriculture, as in industry, the evolution at Vichy was away from nostalgia toward modernization and toward power for the well-organised and efficient."

Power went to the directors of pre-war groupings of the most capitalized and easily organised sectors of agriculture, the producers of sugar beet and wine. It is a *leitmotiv* in Paxton's book that Vichy favoured the rich.

Milk production was not specialised: for example many farmers, even if they mainly grew cereals, had a cow and made their own butter. *L'Illustration* (31.1.42) carried adverts for dairy machinery, one with a picture of a smiling farmer's wife in a spotless dairy, chatting with a well-dressed friend and activating with one finger an electric butter-making machine. The farmer's wife was making butter for her family, not to sell. You could not be further from a concentrated, capitalised dairy industry. The main article on the subject of dairy in that issue agreed that each farmer should have at least one cow for all the mouths he had to feed, including pigs, but also pointed out the drawbacks of home production and the advantages of co-operatives. Other articles in the same issue described the workings of two such coops. To put the agriculture of the time into perspective,according to the information in the magazine, only 10% of farms had more than 10 cows and the total number of cows was 8 847 000 (in 1937). {For comparison, the number today is 3 794 000.}

A law of 27th July 1940 reorganised the milk industry, decreasing the production of cheese and increasing that of butter and requisitioning milk for schools and hospitals.

Regime of Experts

The Vichy law of 9th March 1941 (about the regrouping of plots etc) was promulgated by an engineer trained in agronomy, Pierre Caziot. He made his career in the *Crédit foncier*, the one mortgage bank of the time, and he was a civil servant as well as a farmer all his life; between the wars he had opposed Jacques Le Roy-Ladurie, another leading agronomist, who favoured self-administered agricultural corporations of leading producers and stressed productivity. Caziot preferred labour-intensive, socially-stable, non-specialised production. During the War, because of scarcity, Caziot had to concern himself with productivity. *"The family farm was safe, but it could also improve its yield*" (Paxton). Le Roy Ladurie succeeded Caziot as Minister at Vichy, a modern succeeding a traditionalist.

A contributor to *L'Illustration*, Hervé Budes de Guébriant, in the *Illustration* special issue of July 1941 devoted to Agriculture, explained the role of the Agricultural Corporation, created by the Caziot law.

He said the basis of agriculture was the family, but farms should be grouped in cooperatives and mutual associations, such as had been recreated since 1884, after the destruction by the Revolution of 1789 of Guilds and Trade Associations.

The Agricultural Corporation was there to help relations between farmers and their employees, recognising that their interests are not antagonistic but parallel; the economy must be directed, not by the State but by the Corporation. The role of the Corporation was to protect the farmers, organise their education and retirement and contribute to their leisure by reviving the folk tradition. Liberalism was finished. The Corporation would give peasants social advantages as good as those that existed in towns.

Hervé Budes de Guébriant (1880-1972) came from a Breton aristocratic family. Trained in agronomy, he was a social Catholic. Like Caziot, involved in finance, he founded a society of rural insurance which still exists and is now a large insurance company. In 1941 he was President of the Union of Agricultural Syndicates of two *Départements* of Brittany. On 22nd January 1941, he was named President of the National Organisation Commission of the Agriculture Corporation (*Commission Nationale d'Organisation de la Corporation Agricole*).

Incarcerated in November 1944, he was liberated in August 1945 and in 1952 received compensation for wrongful imprisonment.

He was awarded the *Légion d'Honneur* later on in life. When he died, the regional press was unanimous in saluting his life's work: he had created the foundations of modern agriculture in Brittany.

We should note that the version of Corporatism explained by him in *L'Illustration* was a version imposed by the necessity of the moment; the lack of manpower with hundreds of thousands of farmers in POW camps in Germany (36% of the million and a half French prisoners of war were farmers and farm workers, according to Paxton), the lack of petrol for machinery, lack of fertilisers, lack of colonial imported animal feed, all necessitated intensive labour to compensate. The partisans of Corporatism really favoured mechanised production in bigger units and price-fixing cartels. After the war, according to an academic specialised in the politics of agriculture, Isabel Boussard-Decaris, in her book, *Vichy et la Corporation paysanne* (1980), the influence of the Agriculture Corporation reforms continued.

Traditionalism

The bourgeoisie was having a hard time liking the peasants.

L'Illustration had a sprinkling of chatty articles, not all written by women; indeed the co-owner and Editor René Baschet wrote about the art of carrying parcels elegantly, if you are a man, now that the war had made that unaccustomed manoeuvre unavoidable. One Parisienne marooned in the provinces by the war wrote (10.5.41) that, if one had to make do without servants, handling a frying pan or a broom did not stop one being a lady. Since she, presumably, supported Pétain and his régime, she was aware that she ought to think the peasants around her were heroes and the foundation of society, but her impression, expressed politely, was that they were uncommunicative, and kept their chickens to themselves.

Traditionalism *à la* Pétain, that is, the return to the soil, the family farm as the social and economic base of French society, is heard marginally in *L'Illustration*. There are thinkers however who articulated the case strongly, for example Lucien Romier, Gustave Thibon, and Simone Weil, the great French philosopher of the period.

They were a minority within a minority, but I would like to mention them here because some of them were close to Pétain, and because of the contemporary resonance of their writing. Following the economic crisis of 1929 in the US, which had progressively affected Europe, eventually coming to France, some thinkers saw the relatively low level of industrialisation in France as a bulwark against economic and political disruption. As Paxton put it: according to these thinkers, such as Lucien Romier (an economic observer, close to Pétain),

> "French balanced society, with its large elements of self-sufficient small farmers, was much more resilient than the overspecialized British, American, and German economies. Those more highly industrialized economies, with their heavy reliance upon credit, advertising, and mass consumption, fell victim to speculative excesses and wild fluctuations. {…} “Progress” was a will-o' the -wisp, more likely to make a society sick and vulnerable, just as enticing people into debt for new consumer products made an economy vulnerable."

Gustave Thibon, a friend of Simone Weil and a frequent guest of Pétain at Vichy, drew upon Proudhon to support a return to pre-capitalist days. He admired—

> "the Proudhon who wanted to replace state authority by free associations of independent artisans. The trouble was that replacing the state by self-regulating economic associations led not to the guilds of printers or carpenters of 1840 but to the Organisation Committees of giant corporations in 1940. Ironically, the very devotion of such traditionalists to the liberties of a simpler society left them defenceless against the craftier businessmen who quickly turned Vichy to privileged cartelization" (Paxton).

The name of Proudhon appears also in connexion with Henri Moysset, another architect of the Vichy labour charter and other constitutional instruments, who had edited his collected works.

Thinkers like Thibon were a minority among the traditionalist minority.

Defeat of Traditionalists

Pétain, a traditionalist, enjoyed a lot of support nationally, to the extent that he was still cheered by crowds in Paris on 26th April 1944, but it was amorphous support, which remained on a personal level. He did not enjoy the support of a political party. No existing political party was ready in 1940 to step in and support Pétain. None was created, if it is ever possible to create a party out of nothing to support a providential man suddenly promoted, without ever having had a power base or a programme or an organised following of any sort. The political extreme right-wing Guilds of the Thirties were marginal at their highest point, and further marginalised during the War. They had no sympathy for Vichy. Their leaders were kept at arm’s length both by Vichy and the Germans, at least until the last throes of the war in 1944. This absence of organised mass support meant that Pétain the traditionalist was in fact isolated.

Hence the wailing tones of Pétain's speeches: no one is doing what I want! And the gnashing of teeth at *L'Illustration*: no one is following Pétain's orders! There was no transmission belt for his ideas, unless you count the youth camp organisations, which were meant to spread the Marshall's words but were disconnected to the rest of society and powerless. The amalgamated Veterans' Association tried to exercise some influence but came up against the powers of the departmental *préfets* and was told to desist. The tone of Pétain's speeches from the beginning was of guilt and atonement for the failings of France, the very opposite of positive modern dynamism.

Traditionalists, although a minority, were the public face of Vichy, especially at the beginning. Their influence waned and disappeared. French anti-modernism lost its influence as early as 1942 and was a thing of the past by 1945.

Paxton remarks that traditionalists were more severely purged at the Liberation than the experts whose actions had been more effective.

Modernisation of Industry

Industry followed a similar path to agriculture, that is, a movement towards concentration: for example, the first Minister for Industrial Production, an ex-Trade Unionist concerned with full employment and worker participation, was soon replaced by men who came from the leadership of the steel and the automobile industry, whose concerns were *"rationalisation, concentration and modernisation*" (Paxton).

As early as 16th August 1940, Vichy created *"Organisation Committees"* (there were 321 in all) to organise production and economic activity for each branch of industry and trade; this applied to both zones of France. The heads of powerful branches of industry got posts as Ministers of Industrial Production. Under the necessity of the war conditions, they went beyond the *"corporatist"* idea of individual branches governing themselves, and instead they moved towards a directed economy.

The French automobile industry was weak before the war, according to Jean-Louis Loubet (*Citroen And Peugeot 1944-1951*, in *Histoire, Economie et Société*, 1990), working from unpublished archives of these two firms. In 1939 its production was half that of Britain, and six times less than that of Germany. There were a relatively large number of makers and models. Some models were made in small numbers in short runs. Exports were limited.

There had been discussions pre-War about rationalising production. Citroen was already making its famous *"Traction Avant*" almost as its one model, with few variations, and in black only. *"The war accentuated a move that was already happening*" (Loubet).

The Vichy *Organisation Committee for Automobiles*, presided over by a nephew of Louis Renault, drew up a *"Ten year plan for national equipment*" that allocated the manufacture of prescribed quantities of different types of vehicles to different makers, and grouped together some manufacturers, for example Peugeot with Hotchkiss, Saurer and Latil. J.P. Peugeot accepted this, thinking ahead that the directed economy could not be avoided post-War. The

head of Citroen on the other hand was not happy about State intervention. As J.P. Peugeot had expected, the post-War 5-year plan was a continuation of the 1942 plan, with some of the same amalgamation of manufacturers. Loubet pointed out that this post-War plan was able to be developed quickly thanks to the work done by the *Organisation Committee* of Vichy.

A fourth Minister of Industrial Production at Vichy, J.D. Bichelonne, saw that war-time planning was more than a temporary necessity; in September 1940 he was appointed head of the *Office Central de Répartition des Produits Industriels*, a body that determined how raw materials would be divided between the *Comités d'Organisation*. Later he collaborated with the German Albert Speer on organising the wartime economy. Here is Paxton's account:

> "These developments reached their height during 1943, when Laval's minister of industrial production, Bichelonne, struck a happy partnership with Hitler's new economic tsar, Albert Speer. Bichelonne was one of the few people at Vichy to perceive clearly that wartime planning was more than a temporary necessity. He looked forward, as an engineer and a bureaucrat, to the application of planned state direction to the post-war economy. Speer, his equal in youth, bookish brilliance, and political naiveté, reversed the policies of Goering and Sauckel in 1943 in order to increase French production at home, away from Allied bombing, instead of bringing French workers to Germany. One more tool for combing out the inefficient was created. {…} The future was with bigness and the state."

Reign of Academic Elite

Considering the intellectual power of some of the men in charge, Paxton described the technocratic, modernising period of Vichy, as *"a regime of double firsts or brain trust*". Bichelonne was the best man ever to come out of the most prestigious Napoleonic school, the *Ecole Polytechnique*. Jean Berthelot also was the best of his year at the same school. Other technical experts were also highly competent.

> "The influx of experts and professionals brought impressive talents into the new regime. There was nothing marginal about the new expert ministers. They had been important men before 1940" (Paxton).

Their influence became less after the return of Laval as Prime Minister in April 1942, as he tended to recruit Ministers among personal acquaintances.

The post-War administration recognised the influence of men from the top schools in the Vichy regime and reformed the *Grandes Ecoles* to democratise, as they thought, the training of the elite.

Miscellaneous Modernising Reforms

The one reform everyone might know about in France today because it came up recently, when the Sarkozy Government was trying to dismantle it, was the creation on 14th March 1941 of Retirement Pensions by repartition, or *"pay as you go"* pensions, whereby the contributions paid today by workers and employees pay the pensions of today's retired people. The rationale of the scheme is a promise that the same will be done when today's contributors are old. (This is in contrast to the individual saving a pot of money for his retirement, which Sarkozy's Government wants to have instead of the universal solidarity of the *"pay as you go"* scheme.) It is not that the IIIrd Republic had not thought of Old Age Pensions: twenty-four proposals had been put to the Chamber of Deputies and Senate between 1936 and 1939, and all had failed.

The other reform was the creation of the integrated Paris transport system, with the initials still used today, and which can be seen today (2011) painted on the front of some London region buses: R.A.T.P. (*Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens*); this is how Paxton described it:

> "Railroad engineer and Communications Minister Jean Berthelot, who had been frustrated by entrenched bureaucrats in his efforts to rationalise the Paris municipal transportation agencies in the late 1930s, recalled in 1968 how satisfying it had been to create the unified Paris municipal transit system (the R.A.T.P.) in 1942 by the unfettered application of technical good sense" (p138).

One could also mention the laws against alcoholism, some of which are still in effect today; to remove tax exemptions from home distillers (pre-1940 an all-powerful lobby); to forbid some types of strong alcohol; and to have age limits for alcohol consumption.

Paxton concluded this topic as follows:

> "Another measure of the intensity of those pre-war frustrations and resentments that emerged in 1940 in a geyser of change can be found in a comparative look at other occupation regimes. No other defeated state set out as ambitiously during World War II on fundamental changes" (p139).

But other occupied countries did not have a State left. Paxton is not a Vichy apologist. On the contrary, he thinks the French made a big mistake in continuing to try to have a State when they were occupied—although it is hard to see how his book supports this conclusion. Paxton states baldly that the French made a mistake, a geopolitical mistake, but he does not say how France could have put itself 'on hold' for an indeterminate period (there was no end in sight in 1940). This question goes beyond the scope of this article, but a few words might be in order here.

Germany had neither the desire nor the capability to take over the running of a country like France. An example will bear this out. A few years ago, in a small village in France, my mother's neighbour came out of his house carrying a hunting rifle: *"It's your grand-father's rifle*", he told my mother, *"I got it when his house was looted at the end of the war"*. But my mother's family had not spent the war in fear of looting. The citizens still had the protection of the police. The French police naturally, the Germans did not provide public services. The Pensions were not created because civil servants had nothing better to do, but because there was dire poverty, on top of rationing. Employment had to continue, and, because of scarcity, had to be centrally organised. This could perhaps have been left to the Germans for the sectors that interested them, but what about the rest? There was also the fact that hope, and the desire to prepare for an independent future, were never extinguished, even in those war years.

There was surprise in 2010 in France during the campaign on Retirement Pension, when the Vichy origins of the present socially equitable law were mentioned, or should I say, whispered shamefacedly. Vichy fairer to the less well off, more concerned with the fair treatment of all than a modern Government! That didn't fit the popular view.

As Paxton says, Vichy was not a *"bloc"*. This article attempted to fill out the picture of Vichy by outlining the strength of its modernising, technocratic aspect and the weakness of the dominant Pétain ideology. Previous articles in this magazine and in *Irish Foreign Affairs* have described the Parliamentarians and the vote of the 10th July; the prisoners' movement and Mitterrand's place in Vichy; the Vichy Show Trial of 1942 at Riom; the right-wing thinker Maurice Bardèche and the Nuremberg trials. Forthcoming articles will deal with collaborationism; the Church; poverty; specific writers; the French Empire. ✻

Eamon Dyas

Part Two
(Part One appeared in issue 203)

Catholic Wealth and the Making of Protestant Imperial England

The first part of this article explored the initial impact of the release of Catholic wealth on the English economy in the aftermath of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. This wealth took the form of fixed assets like land and buildings, precious metal assets (gold and silver, Church plate, etc.), and fiscal assets like Church taxes (tithes, fishing rights etc.). The sudden injection of such wealth into the economy created a distortion that was dramatically expressed in the Great Debasement of the coinage between 1542 and 1551. It was called the Great Debasement because it resulted in a degradation of the purity of the coinage. Although it helped to refill the Exchequer of Henry VIII's Government, its real purpose was to double the coinage in circulation to facilitate the increased commercial transactions resulting from the sudden injection of wealth into the economy. Because the coinage was one based on gold and silver and because there were insufficient quantities of bullion in the country, the amount by which the coinage was increased necessitated a degradation in the purity of the gold or silver in each coin. But the extent to which this was socially acceptable (given that the face value of the coin was meant to express its intrinsic value as a precious metal) inhibited the amount of base metal that could be used in each coin. This restriction meant that, besides recalling the existing coinage in circulation and re-minting it with less precious metal content, the surviving gold and silver plate confiscated from the Catholic Church also needed to be called in by the Mint. Such was the scale of this operation that the number of Mints in the country was temporarily increased from one to seven.

As the new wealth was the result of a sudden artificial expansion of land in private hands, and not the result an organic growth in the economy, there was no immediate alternative outlet for this wealth within the economy. Consequently, at least initially, it flowed along the traditional investment channels, which, in Tudor England, mainly related to the wool trade. The increased investment in this area created a situation where, by the time of Elizabeth's arrival, wool, in its processed form as cloth, dominated the country's exports. Additionally, that element of the wealth that was not invested was spent on luxury goods to serve the growing appetite for such things among the expanding gentry and merchant class—a situation that resulted in an unprecedented increase in the importation of luxury goods.

The injection of such wealth also had an impact on social manners and the demographic structure of society. One of its manifestations was that the growing wealth of the gentry and merchant class created a change in marriage patterns. The ambitious merchants and gentry now had the wealth to provide sufficient dowries to enable their daughters to compete in the marriage stakes for entry into the aristocracy. Consequently, by 1570 inter-aristocratic marriages began to decline until by the end of the century it had fallen by two-thirds and the pressure from the growing elevation of wealthy merchant families and lower gentry into the aristocracy by marriage resulted in a doubling of the aristocracy within a generation. The main impact of this was the erosion of the social boundaries between the aristocracy and merchant class at their outer edges and, reinforced by family connections, a significant increase of financial interaction between both classes—a fact that was to have profound implications for the evolution of English commerce.

The Great Debasement—
Internal Solution and External Problem

When Elizabeth assumed the throne in 1558 she hit the ground running. Within a year she had signed a Peace Treaty with France and set about reorganising the English State along modern lines. The gathering of statistical information on social and economic trends was given a priority by her Minister of State, William Cecil, and the information thus gathered was used to inform Government policy. The central plank of Government policy under Elizabeth was to strengthen the State, to enable it to challenge the existing powers of Europe in the aftermath of the Habsburg/Valois War (which had left both Spain and France bankrupt). Two of the main reforms that were necessary to achieve this were designed to deal with the distorting effect on the economy caused by the extensive circulation of a degraded currency and the over-reliance on a single export product (cloth), operating mainly through Antwerp (a problem coincidental with the excessive importation of luxury goods).

With regards to the currency problem, the effect of the Great Debasement was that, although it had originally facilitated the growth in domestic commercial transactions, in terms of external trade it had led to a flight of gold from the economy.

> "If Henry had confined this operation to gold there would have been comparatively little harm in it. The debasement of the standard was not very great, and the purity of it was still greater than that of many of the current gold coins of Europe. But the debasing of the silver was a fatal expedient when gold and silver were alike legal tender to any amount. The gold was now two-second three-quarters fine, i.e. one grain of gold was valued at 1.252 pence. The silver, being only five-sixths fine, one grain of silver was thus valued at 0.12 of a penny, or almost exactly one-tenth the value of gold. But all over Europe at the time gold was worth more than ten times its weight of silver: in France in 1540 the proportion was 1 to 11.82, in the Low Countries 10.62, in Germany 11.38. The fact was that the influx of silver from America was just beginning to make itself felt, silver was growing appreciably cheaper than it had been of old, and the fact was beginning to register itself in all the continental currencies.
>
> "The immediate consequence of issuing a coinage in which too little silver bought a golden sovereign was of course that gold began to pour out of England. The English merchant found himself obliged to pay his bills abroad with the comparatively fine gold, since the over-valued silver was refused by his continental correspondent, to whom it was only worth ten-twelfths of its nominal value. Of course the export of gold was privy and secret; English kings always frowned on the sending over seas of the noble metal, and laid all sorts of pains and penalties on the exporter, when he was unfortunate enough to be caught. Nevertheless, the gold went,

for no Government can ever be so Argus-eyed as to detect and prevent the merchant's well-laid plans for shipping off the commodity.

"The chief result, therefore, of Henry's debased silver coinage of 1543 was that the current gold money of the realm began silently and imperceptibly to vanish away over seas, and be more and more replaced in ordinary use by over-valued shillings and groats with their one-fifth of …" (*The Tudors And The Currency, 1526-1560*, by C.W.C. Oman, published in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* new series, Vol. 9, 1895, pp.177-178)

The conventional explanation of the Great Debasement (and one which the author of the above article appears to subscribe) was that it was undertaken for no other reason than to feed Henry's financial profligacy. According to the above author, Henry was a dishonest ruler whose treatment of the currency and the English economy stands in marked contrast to that of his father, Henry VII. Also, unlike his father, Henry VIII followed an aggressive interventionist policy abroad which led to military conflicts requiring vast amounts of money from the Exchequer. As a result of this dishonesty and irresponsibility he was compelled to devalue the currency by diminishing the precious metal content of the circulating coinage in order to siphon off the difference to his Exchequer. Yet, while war finance undoubtedly played a part in Henry's decision to devalue the coinage it fails to take account of the fact that the amount of coinage was doubled in the process of the devaluation he initiated. A simple debasement of existing coinage would have provided him with the means of accessing the precious metals in their content. That, together with the significant amount of gold and silver Church plate from the Dissolution, which he could have retained without recasting it as coinage, would have produced more by way of bullion than was gained by his actions in the Great Debasement. No, the real significance of the Great Debasement is not the degradation of the precious metal content of the coinage, but that it resulted in a doubling of the coinage in circulation. Something that was done not only for the purpose of feeding Henry's financial profligacy, which could have been achieved by a simple degradation of the precious metal content of the existing circulating coinage, but can only have been done for the purpose of facilitating the greater volume of commercial transactions in the domestic economy resulting from the stimulus provided by the injection of Catholic wealth in the aftermath of the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

The Antwerp Money Market

To help finance his domestic and foreign agenda, and to solve the problem of the movement of English gold abroad caused by the loss of foreign confidence in the debased English coinage, Henry went to the Antwerp money market. During the period under discussion Antwerp was part of the Spanish Seventeen Provinces (an area which roughly covered the present Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, a good part of northern France and a small part of western Germany) and was ruled ultimately by Charles V. As the first monarch to rule Castile-Leon and Aragon simultaneously in 1516, Charles V, known as Carlos I, became the first King of Spain, and in 1519, on the death of his paternal grandfather, Maximilian, he became Archduke of Austria and ruler of the Holy Roman Empire. The main preoccupation of his reign was the wars in Italy (known as the Habsburg/Valois Wars but which also for a time included the Ottoman Empire as the ally of France). These wars, which Charles fought against his fellow Catholic French Kings, Francis I and Henry II for control of Italy, lasted on and off until 1559 and during which he had post-Reformation England as an ally (the Catholic Queen Mary being the wife of his son Philip II). Towards the latter part of his reign he was also occupied with the struggle against the Reformation but, aware of the benefits of a peaceful realm, sought to establish a loose accommodation with Protestantism within the Holy Roman Empire. As a result Antwerp, like the rest of the Spanish Seventeen Provinces, although ruled by Catholic Spain, managed to accommodate Protestants and Catholics in relative peace at least until the early years of Philip II's rule (Lord of the Seventeen Provinces since 1556).

For most of the sixteenth century the Spanish Netherlands was directly governed by three women, starting with the Governorship of Margaret, Duchess of Savoy (daughter of Maximillian and aunt of Charles V) from 1507 to 1530, and then from 1531 to 1535 under the Governorship of Mary of Austria (sister of Charles and widow of King Louis of Hungary), and then under Margaret, Duchess of Parma (illegitimate daughter of Charles V and sister of Philip II), who governed from 1559 to 1567 and again from 1578 to 1582. Because of the relatively light touch under which the Provinces were governed until the mid-1560s, Antwerp, despite some upheavals, continued to act as the main market in international trade. During this time it also performed the role of the world's major financial centre where Catholic Italian financiers and German Protestant bankers could rub shoulders with Portuguese Jewish spice traders and merchants from all over Europe in an atmosphere of relative toleration and accommodation. This is how one commentator described it:

"This city, in the first part of the sixteenth century, was Antwerp, which rose as the medieval port of Bruges declined. There have been, of course, greater cities and greater markets since that time, but never before or since, it is said, has the world seen such a concentration of the trade of different peoples in a single place. The town owed its development almost entirely to the foreigners who flocked there to trade, and though it saw less of Italians and Hanseatics than Bruges had done, it was the one great gathering place for the Portuguese, Spanish, English, and German merchants who were now the leaders. It is said that over five hundred vessels sailed in or out of the port in one day, and that the English merchants alone employed over 20,000 persons in the city. The poet Daniel Rogiers said of the Antwerp exchange, "'One heard there a confused murmur of all languages, one saw there a motley mixture of all possible costumes; in short the Antwerp bourse seemed to be a little world in which all parts of the great were united." In contrast with Bruges, trade in Antwerp was almost entirely unrestricted, and this was perhaps the chief reason why the merchants of the time selected it as the place in which to develop the new forms of business.

"Antwerp presented in the sixteenth century the first case of a great bourse or exchange, that is, a place in which men meet daily and effect their exchanges without displaying and transferring the wares themselves, by the use of paper securities representing the wares. Such an institution cannot exist until the volume of trade is large enough to cause a steady and continuous flow of wares, in contrast to the spurts that marked the period of the fairs. It requires, moreover, that the objects dealt in be of such a kind that they can be represented at the exchange by some document or sample, so that the buyer can learn the quality of the ware without actually inspecting it. This is possible when a ware can be *graded*, put into a certain class the

characteristics of which are so closely defined and so well known that the buyer needs only to decide whether he cares to take a certain quantity at a certain price..." (*A History Of Commerce*, by Clive Day. Pub. Longmans. Green & Co, New York, 1914 edn. pp.154-155).

The city was the gateway through which the restricted Guild system of medieval trade was eventually to lead to the modern world of free trade and finance. However, at the time it still only represented itself, and the world at large continued to function within the constraining shackles of the Guilds and the Hanseatic League. Henry VIII, like the rest of the European monarchies, used the Antwerp money market for the simple purpose of financing his Government's policies. It was left to Elizabeth to see that Antwerp offered possibilities for the future of English trade not only as a centre for raising credit but in the manner in which it did business.

In the meantime however, as has been stated, the main financial problem that continued to plague English foreign trade was the one caused by the debasement of the coinage. The debasement which caused the slow haemorrhage of gold from the English economy also brought in its wake an additional problem for English merchants and that was a reluctance of foreign traders to accept the degraded English silver currency on terms commensurate with that coinage's face value. Foreign merchants insisted in calculating prices not in terms of English face values but in terms of the value of the coinage calculated by its actual silver content. This meant that English goods were overpriced when trading in foreign markets. Consequently, the value of goods (as reflected in its face value on the coinage) existed at a higher level while circulating in the English domestic economy then when those goods became manifest on a foreign market.

The problem also had implications for the circulating coinage when it came to the importation of foreign goods. In those circumstances the face value had no bearing on the actual value that was charged for such imports by foreign merchants who, when they even accepted the English coinage demanded an amount of coinage whose face value was higher than the transaction price (which was based on the silver content rather than the face value). This resulted in a diminution of the amount of coinage in circulation in the country as more coinage was required to facilitate the higher transaction charge of the imported goods. Some of the discrepancy was offset by bartering goods, but the substance of the problem meant that the level of English coinage needed regular topping up from bullion that had to be borrowed abroad. The level of required borrowing was compounded by Henry's military ambitions but, again, that was not its sole reason. We can see the first manifestation of this in the year after the inauguration of the Great Debasement when in 1544, Henry was compelled to borrow 100,000 crowns from the financiers at Antwerp. This borrowing relationship established by Henry between the English Crown and the Antwerp financiers was to continue for the next 30 years:

> "The Antwerp era was a thirty-year phenomenon arising out of the exigencies of imperfectly organized royal finances. The story of the English Crown's courtship of the Antwerp financiers begins in 1544 when Henry VIII, pressed by the exceptional demands of war finance, negotiated successfully through his agent at Antwerp, Stephen Vaughan, a loan of 100,000 crowns from the Welser {a wealthy German merchant family who loaned money on the Antwerp exchange—ED}. From the time of this initial entry into the Antwerp money market to the moment in 1574 when the last overseas obligations were cancelled, the Crown exhibited an almost exclusive dependence upon this city when raising large-scale loans…" (*The Trials Of Foreign Borrowing: the English Crown and the Antwerp Money Market in the Mid-Sixteenth Century*, by R.B. Outhwaite. Published in *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 19, no. 2, 1966, p.289).

The reasons why the English Crown continued to depend on the Antwerp money market for so long had to do with the fact that it was also the central market through which most English goods were traded and the fact of the Crown's reluctance to borrow excessively from the English money market. Outhwaite in the above article claims that the English money market was incapable of sustaining the type of loans which the English Crown required but the sums borrowed from Antwerp could easily have been raised within the English economy—a fact that is admitted in other parts of the same article by the author. A more likely reason why Henry sought to borrow from Antwerp is probably a reluctance on the part of the Crown to remove significant sums from circulation at a time when it was necessary to maintain the increased levels of commercial transactions in the wake of the injection of Catholic wealth into the economy. To do so in such circumstances would have had the effect of dampening internal trade. In tandem with this was Henry's political reluctance to press too heavily on his constituency of supporters, whom he only recently enriched through the Dissolution, for fear of them regressing into positions of opposition.

In the three years from 1544 to his death Henry's total borrowing from the Antwerp financiers had amounted to almost a million pounds sterling and although this had been repaid with the exception of £75,000 outstanding at his death, it gives some idea of the reliance of the English Crown on the Antwerp money market. It should be added here that the Antwerp financiers insisted that loans to the English Crown be ultimately underwritten by the English merchant companies, the Merchant Adventurers and the Staplers Company and, in the case of Henry VIII's early loans, the Antwerp money men provided such loans on condition that they had *"guarantees from the London houses of the Bonvisi and Vivaldi, who were "men know and abled on their bourse here (Antwerp)", and the Italian merchants were in turn indemnified by the Greshams, Richard and John, and by members of the Privy Council…*" (ibid, p.295; we will hear more of the Gresham family later).

The reigns of Edward and Mary continued this reliance on the Antwerp money market, albeit not on such a scale: the situation was complicated during the reign of Queen Mary, who, because of her relationship with the Spanish Crown, sought to put an end to English sharp practices that had proved so profitable in Antwerp (see below). The declining use of the Antwerp money market by the English Crown after Henry can be seen in the fact that Elizabeth's total foreign borrowing over the 14 years between 1558 to 1574 amounted to less than half that accumulated by Henry in the three years between 1544 and 1547. However, this disguises the fact that, in the early years of her reign, Elizabeth's determination to restore the coinage to its standing prior to the debasement involved her, at least temporarily, in significantly higher levels of borrowing from the Antwerp money market than any of her predecessors—a project that was critical in establishing English foreign commerce on a firmer foundation

and which, in the process, also helped to reform the English financial system.

Purification of the Coinage

Efforts had been made in the later years of Edward VI's reign and in Mary's reign to undertake a re-coinage with the object of removing the base coins from circulation and replacing them with good coins.

> "The Edwardian and Marian settlement of the coinage thus represents a not too unsatisfactory compromise. The mass of base coin was largely 'neutralized' and prevented from thwarting the gradual build-up of satisfactory circulation of good coins in the larger denominations. But equally, the Government was unable itself to subsidize the reminting of the base coin, and apparently lacked the wit or the resolution to take the measure which would cause this to be possible without a subsidy…" (*The Great Debasement: currency and the economy in Mid-Tudor England*, by J.D. Gould, pub. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1970, p.58).

The problem with any attempt to replace the debased coinage with good coins was that the face value of the coins in circulation was higher than the real value of its intrinsic silver content. Thus, in order to introduce a new good coinage the Government would have been compelled to put more silver in the new coins than was present in the old debased coins—effectively subsidising the difference in terms of the value of silver bullion, between the old and the new good coinage. In the absence of such a subsidy, any Government wishing to undertake the task would be compelled to devalue the existing debased coinage to a level approximate to its actual silver content before re-calling it:

> "This is what Elizabeth did. Calling down the base silver to three-quarters of its 1551 fiat {face—ED} value, or three-eighths of the original (three-eighths and three-sixteenths respectively in the case of the 3oz. coins), she caused the *de facto* mint equivalents of these coins to fall for the first time below the mint price of current sterling issues and thus made it possible, and indeed profitable, for the Crown to remint them without subsidy. The public holding these coins were in effect made to pay for the job (together with a typical rake-off for the Crown) by a ruthless reduction of their fiat values not only below those which had prevailed for more than nine years, but for the first time below their intrinsic value…" (ibid. pp.58-59).

Elizabeth's re-coinage of 1560-61 resulted in the face value of the reminted base coins being reduced to £668,000 from a face value of £954,000 before the re-coinage. Also, as part of this re-adjustment the amount of coinage in circulation was radically reduced. In order to purify the coinage, it was necessary to top up the precious metal content but as there was a finite amount of this metal available it inevitably meant that the number of coins in circulation would have to be decreased. Where Edward and Mary failed, Elizabeth succeeded with her programme of recoinage because she had the ruthlessness and authority to carry it out. The impact of her coinage purification project on the economy appears at least in part to have been mitigated by the increased use of credit raised on the Antwerp market:

> "the foreign debt outstanding at any one moment of time was in the early years of her reign far in excess of any previous level of royal indebtedness; in 1560, for example, no less than £279,000 was owing at Antwerp, an amount greater than the Crown's ordinary revenue and—to add further perspective—somewhere between one-half and one-third of the value of the Merchant Adventurers' annual cloth shipments to Antwerp…" (*The Trials Of Foreign Borrowing: the English Crown and the Antwerp Money Market in the Mid-Sixteenth Century*, by R.B. Outhwaite. Published in *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1966, p.290).

The man who organised the movement of money between the Antwerp financiers and first Queen Mary and then Elizabeth was Sir Thomas Gresham. It is worth a detour at this stage to explain his significance. Sir Thomas Gresham was a member of the Mercers Company (the City of London Livery Company which related to the cloth trade), a merchant adventurer, and founder of the Royal Exchange in London. He was part of the House of Gresham, one of the most influential and powerful commercial families in Tudor England. The founder of the House, Sir Richard Gresham, and his brother, Sir John Gresham, began their accumulation of wealth as mercers trading English cloth at Antwerp and the Brabant for Italian silks and Netherlands woollens and tapestries, as well as the importation into England of armour and weaponry. However, Sir Richard Gresham made his real wealth as a property speculator in the aftermath of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. This is how his *Dictionary Of National Biography* (DNB) entry describes it:

> "Yet already by that date {1547—ED} Gresham was making far more money from his speculations in monastic property than his exchange dealings. Between 1538 and 1545 he poured tens of thousands of pounds into the purchase of monastic properties in Suffolk, Norfolk, Kent, Cheshire, Hertfordshire, Surrey, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire, most of which he resold at a considerable profit… These transactions were accompanied by the wholesale asset-stripping of the properties concerned. Thus Sir Richard and his brother Sir John were both profitably involved, in a private and a public capacity, in the burgeoning trade in monastic lead. Indeed it was probably his involvement in the monastic property market which ensured Sir Richard a high income during his latter years…" (*DNB* entry for Sir Richard Gresham c.1485-1549, mercer, merchant adventurer, and mayor of London).

Throughout this time the Gresham family continued to trade cloth on the Continent and Sir Richard continued to have an interest in such activities, albeit a declining one in his latter years. His son, Sir Thomas Gresham, (the one who was eventually so useful to Elizabeth), while acting as an independent mercer, had been in service to the Crown since Henry's time when he was employed on royal errands in the Netherlands, took charge of the Greshams' family commercial operations in the Netherlands in 1546:

> "This involved him, as it had his father, in the normal mercers' trade, buying silks such as velvet, satin, taffeta, and sarsenet, which together with fine woollen cloths and tapestries commanded a ready market in London. Also like his father, Gresham's other specialty was the importation of armour and weaponry, which was designated in his accounts as 'harness'. To pay for these wares he continued, moreover, to follow the time-honoured practice of either putting over the necessary moneys on the exchange or exporting English woollen cloth…" (*DNB* entry for Sir Thomas Gresham c.1518-1579, mercer, merchant adventurer, and founder of the Royal Exchange and Gresham College).

Sir Thomas, in common with other English traders abroad had suffered from the effects of the Great Debasement on foreign trade. Again, this is how his DNB entry describes it:

> "Yet Gresham's situation during the

> years 1546–51 was a very different one from that in which his father had found himself some twenty years earlier. Successive debasements of the English silver coinage by the profligate Henry VIII and his son had led to the emergence of a system of bimetallic premiums on the Anglo-Netherlands exchange which, in enhancing the cost of commercial credits, had resulted in the overpricing of English textiles at the Netherlands marts… Gresham accordingly had to resort to other means to generate the necessary cash flow for the purchase of mercery and harness at the Netherlands marts. Like other members of the family he dabbled in the monastic lead trade, the very low price of the base metal at this time ensuring its ready sale on continental European markets. Moreover, when in 1548–9 a consortium of bankers was able to monopolize Bohemian tin production and, with the support of King Ferdinand, to exclude Saxon and English competition, thereby raising tin prices to a level some 40 per cent higher than those prevailing on the free market, he responded rapidly to the new situation. His servant John Elliot stepped up his acquisition of Cornish tin, which was shipped to London for export to the continent, supporting a trade which for some eighteen months, before the collapse of the German consortium and resultant fall in tin prices, made a significant contribution to the company's coffers. He also performed during the years to 1549 small services for his father and his uncle John in their continuing operations for the crown on the Anglo-Netherlands exchange. By such means for some five years (1546–51) he secured for the House of Gresham a leading place in Anglo-Netherlands commerce…" (*DNB* entry for Sir Thomas Gresham c.1518-1579, mercer, merchant adventurer, and founder of the Royal Exchange and Gresham College).

Thus, the son, like the father, accumulated a significant part of his wealth as a direct result of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. However, it is not this which makes him unique—in many ways his relationship with plundered Catholic wealth was typical of the English merchant class which stood in a direct or indirect relationship with such wealth. What makes Sir Thomas Gresham unique is the role he played in managing the Crown's foreign debt and in developing monetary devices that laid the basis for the further development of the English financial markets. This was achieved in the context of his appointment in December 1551 as Royal Agent in the Netherlands under Edward VI, where his main responsibility was to arrange and manage loans on the Antwerp money exchange for the English monarch. Like others of his time his career suffered from the uncertainties of the religious struggles at court and when Catholic Mary ascended the throne in July 1553 he was removed from office. But, due to the incompetence of his replacement he was restored as Royal Agent in November that year. However, he found Mary's administration incapable of acting in ways that he felt were in English interests as far as managing the Crown's foreign debt was concerned.

> "Gresham was in Antwerp during most of Mary's reign doing business for her. In 1555 she owed £148,526.5s.8d in Antwerp. Dansell {Sir William Dansell, Gresham's forerunner as Royal Agent—ED} and Gresham had been engaged in smuggling munitions of war through to England when no passport could be obtained, and specie, too, when they could. It was contrary to the laws of the Netherlands to export either gold or silver. Sometimes when an English agent had borrowed money at great trouble and cost it was found difficult or even impossible to convey it to England even by exchange. Gresham packed specie as harness, sending as much as 100,000 marks weight away in this manner in one year without it being discovered, and in January 1554 he expressed himself confident that he could convey to England most of the gold in Antwerp by the end of the year. He built a furnace to melt down all the Spanish reals he could procure, for they were better silver than English money, and when melted down were easier to transport, but Mary was then on the point of marrying Philip, and the English Council wrote to him that he must only melt down Spanish reals if to do so was in accordance with law—which it was not. In February 1554 leave was given him by the Brussels Court to export 10,000 marks weight of bullion, and he sent it through Gravelines facilitating its progress by a 'New Year's present' of twelve ells of fine black velvet to the Captain of that town and eight ells of black cloth to each customer and searcher. Sir John Mason, the English Ambassador, brought it to England…" (*Antwerp 1477-1559: from the battle of Nancy to the treaty of Cateau Cambresiis,* by Jervis Wegg. Pub. Methuen & Co., London, 1916, p.303).

Here we have the depiction of the Royal Agent at Antwerp engaging in the illegal exportation of bullion to England on an almost industrial scale, even to the extent of him constructing his own furnace for the purpose of melting down Spanish currency. But Gresham's main long-term contribution to the greatness of England was not so much in his illegal activities but in the fact that he also studied the workings of the financial market in Antwerp at close hand—a study that would enable him to establish the foundation stone of what became the London financial market. It was only after the death of Mary and Elizabeth's accession that his real talents in this regard were given free expression.

> "Only under her successor, Elizabeth, was Gresham again able to resume the task, which he had set himself some six years earlier, of reducing English royal indebtedness abroad. Under the tutelage of his friend Cecil, and secure in the confidence of both Elizabeth and her council, he now operated, largely free from constraint, on an Antwerp market which, in the aftermath of the imperial bankruptcy {both Spain and France had bankrupted each other in the course of their war—ED}, had been transformed. Antwerp's financial prosperity was no longer subject to the depredations of the Habsburgs, who henceforth secured their funds from dealings on the Sevillian–Genoese financial axis. Its driving force was now the provision of commercial investments, and as trade boomed from 1559 to 1565 these could be funded at interest rates which fell rapidly from 12 to slightly more than 9 per cent. In these circumstances Gresham could hardly fail, and by deploying a part of the sterling balances reserved for scheduled payments at the higher interest rates to the end of loan redemption he henceforth reduced the level of royal indebtness to around £280,000 sterling in 1560, and to a mere £20,000 in 1565, some two years before he departed from Antwerp for the last time…" (*DNB* entry for Sir Thomas Gresham c.1518-1579, mercer, merchant adventurer, and founder of the Royal Exchange and Gresham College).

Gresham managed to do this through an astute use of his position which combined that of a continental merchant with that of Royal Agent. By the time Elizabeth came to the throne he had also added a sound understanding of the ways of the Antwerp bourse to his array of talents. His main challenge was to ensure that Crown borrowing occurred at times which avoided adverse exchange movements and repayments took place when the exchange rates were favourable.

> "Gresham's most famous answer to

both these problems, however, was his 'device', the use of which entailed employing the Merchant Adventurers and Staplers to deliver money at artificially fixed exchange-rates. By this means he was able to avoid not only the losses which would have resulted from the Crown's using a market exchange-rate which was currently unsatisfactory, but also those stemming from the exchange moving against him while actually transferring funds. The best-known examples of the device relate to Gresham's using the Merchant Adventurers to repay the Crown's debts maturing at Antwerp. By pressure and persuasion—"and for licence of long cloths, the Queene's Majestie to grant them liberally, and to let them suffer another way", as Gresham put it on one occasion—promises were extracted from the merchants that a part of the proceeds of their overseas sales would be handed over to Gresham in Antwerp to be used by him to repay the Crown's debts in that city. The amount which the company was to pay to Gresham in Antwerp was stipulated in advance and the Crown in return arranged to repay the company in London at an artificially high exchange-rate. Less well known, however, is Gresham's use of the companies to deliver money to the Crown in England in return for sums paid to them abroad: a process we might call Gresham's device in reverse. In this case the principle remained similar except that the merchants were required to transfer funds at an artificially low, rather than an artificially high, rate of exchange. Gresham deserves credit in so far as the device enabled him to deliver money for the Crown when the exchange-rates were unsatisfactory and to avoid losses stemming from the exchange-rate moving against him while transferring funds, but it did so at the expense of the merchants, as Gresham partly admitted, for these forced and unprofitable payments did nothing to ease the troubles of the Merchant Adventurers at a difficult period in their history…" (*The Trials Of Foreign Borrowing: the English Crown and the Antwerp Money Market in the Mid-Sixteenth Century*, by R.B. Outhwaite. Published in *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1966, pp.298-299).

In other words he used the Merchant Adventurers and the Staplers as a kind of holding bank, which gave him time to dictate when Crown funds could be moved to the best advantage. This gave him the flexibility to exploit the exchange markets—to arrange a reloan of an existing debt or to repay a debt entirely at times when the markets were most favourable. Given that he has such an option available, it is no wonder that he was highly successful in getting Elizabeth's foreign debt under control in such a short period. However, this could only have been possible with the active connivance of the English merchants with the Crown in circumstances where the former were prepared to carry a financial loss for the sake of the Government and the latter was prepared to stretch sharp practice to the edge of legality. It is interesting to see how Elizabeth managed to 'convince' the Merchant Adventurers to be so generous in the cause of the Crown.

> "the Merchant Adventurers did not willingly subscribe to this plan, for they were liable to lose heavily on the difference in exchange rates. In order to implement it, government pressure was necessary. When the Merchant Adventurers were about to transport their cloth overseas, an order was issued to stop the ships sailing. As soon as the company agreed to the wishes of the government, this embargo was raised. Satisfaction of its credit demands was obtained for the government through its control of ship movements and foreign trade…" (*The Privy Council And The Spirit Of Elizabethan Economic Management, 1558-1603*, by Vincent Ponko jnr. Published in 'Transactions of the American Philosophical Society', new series, vol. 58, part 4, 1968, pp.45-46).

While the forging of an alliance between the Crown and the merchant class in bringing down the foreign debt was his substantive achievement, the thing that Sir Thomas Gresham is most famous for is what became known as Gresham's Law. This states that bad money drives out good and it was a rule that he witnessed (and indeed contributed to) while having to work with the debased English coinage as the Royal Agent in Antwerp. He articulated this sentiment to Elizabeth on her accession to the throne in 1558 and Elizabeth duly took note. Consequently, when she decided on the purification of the coinage in 1560-61 in order to establish English foreign trade on a sounder footing, she insisted that Sir Thomas Gresham be given a significant role in that enterprise. She also ensured that he became involved in the reorganisation of the London Custom House in 1561-62 which involved the modernisation of the tax and revenue collection system of the Crown.

After his retirement as Royal Agent at Antwerp Sir Thomas was also responsible for initiating and organising the building of the Royal Exchange or London bourse in 1566 as a centre for the trading activities of the London merchants. However, his more important significance was his role in facilitating the relationship established at Antwerp between the Crown and the English merchants, as this was to point the way for the future of Elizabethan England where the energy for ensuring that it became a world power would come from trade backed by military might rather than by Government military might alone. Also, the financial devices learned at Antwerp by Sir Thomas Gresham were quickly evolved in ways that meant the English money markets were equipped to handle the sophisticated demands of financial services and insurance products that came to be required for the further development of English international trade.

New Commercial Outlooks

The successful restoration of the coinage by Elizabeth was made possible through the forging of an effective relationship between the Crown and the English merchant class, but a sound coinage is not in itself enough to propel a country into the arena of a world power. If Elizabeth was to take the country to the next level of commercial prominence, it could not be done along Spanish lines where the State was the main patron in providing the resources for colonial expansion. The English State could not emulate Spain in this regard but the country did have, thanks in large part to the stimulus provided by plundered Catholic wealth, a class of merchants and aristocrats whose instinct and need to trade could be tapped as the engine to drive the expansion for markets. Elizabeth knew that it was necessary to expand the reach of English trading beyond the traditional European markets. But she was confronted by two problems. Firstly, the existence of an outdated mercantile shipping fleet with a limited trading outreach, and secondly, a traditional mercantile outlook that for too long had restricted its vision to the cross-channel path to and from the Antwerp commodities market. The former was easily solved. The Government embarked on a policy of subsidising new commercial ship-building (no doubt partly paid for through the loans from the Antwerp money markets), in an effort to create a merchant fleet capable of reaching beyond its traditional markets.

The latter problem was more complicated. The creation of a new mercantile mind-set was not something that could be subsidised into existence. If we look at the way traditional trade and commerce was organised at this time, we can see the constraining remnants of the old Guild system still holding sway but crucially within that system the Crown now had the ability to influence their activities.

> "New Companies took the place of the old guilds, and though these were formed on the models of the earlier guild organizations, there was this difference, that the guilds had been authorized by the towns in which they operated, whereas the companies were created by the by and were under the regulation of the crown. *Five reasons* are given for the monopolies which were thus formed: first, to get revenue; second, as a reward to court favourites, and those to whom it was desired to render service; third, to control the material for war, such as gunpowder, saltpetre, and ordnance; fourth, as a reward to inventors, and as an encouragement to new industries; and fifth, to control trades which were regarded as dangerous to health and morals.
>
> "Companies in England were of two sorts, known as joint stock and regulated. As the names indicated, the joint stock companies were those the shares of which were held by different investors, who participated proportionately in profit and loss; regulated companies were those under the direct control of the Government, with their trade activities defined, and open to any merchant who conformed to the regulations.
>
> "'Merchant Adventurers' was a term given in general to early traders. This term appears to have been used in three ways; first, it was applied to merchants who shipped goods abroad to new fields at a risk, and were in truth adventurers; second, to a group of merchants in a given town who traded together for mutual protection; and third, to a larger association of merchants who were organized and incorporated for export trade. Earlier grants and privileges were given to these merchants, but in 1505 they were incorporated by royal charter, with a Governor and twenty-four assistants with powers to make regulations, and to punish offenders if the regulations were not complied with. Another charter was secured in the year 1564. The Merchant Adventurers organization was typical of the English trading company. This organization of merchants existed in England in some form from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, but the time of its greatest activity was from 1485 to 1689. Its decline after 1689 was due to the withdrawal of certain privileges by William and Mary. The Merchant Adventurers engaged in foreign trade only, so their chief centres were in foreign parts. The organization was known as a "fellowship of merchants". And membership was based upon an eight-year term as apprentice. The merchants each had his own capital, and traded at his own risk, providing he was a member of the company and conformed to its rules. The Merchant Adventurers were thus not a joint stock company, but a regulated company…" (*History Of Commerce And Industry*, by Cheesman Abiah Herrick. Pub. Macmillan & Co., New York, 1917, pp.214-215).

As was seen in the way that Elizabeth compelled the Merchant Adventurers to cooperate with Gresham's scheme at Antwerp, the Crown, while being forced to accept the monopolistic nature of the trading companies, did not hesitate to exert pressure on them to comply with what it deemed to be the national interest. However, Elizabeth's ability to dictate to the trading companies was not absolute. She depended on them and their trading methods to furnish the taxation revenue for her treasury and knew just how far she could press them. She also knew that it was not possible to legally compel them to assume a more energetic role in the pursuit of new markets. This could only be done by first revealing the existence of such markets to them and showing that such markets would be sufficiently profitable to act as an inducement. This is where the less legal activities of piracy and profiteering came to play an essential part in the grand scheme of Elizabeth and her Government.

The conventional history of Elizabeth's role in establishing the basis for England's commercial achievement is the one provided by H.A.L. Fisher. His *History Of Europe* was the basis for English secondary school history teaching from before the Second World War until at least the 1960s (it had gone through 14 reprints up to 1957). Herbert Albert Laurens Fisher was appointed President of the Board of Education by Lloyd George in the middle of World War I and was responsible for the 1918 Education Act which made school attendance compulsory for children up to the age of 14. He remained President of the Board of Education until 1922 and resigned altogether from politics, to concentrate on an academic career, in 1926. Essentially an old-fashioned Liberal, from the time he had been appointed to Lloyd George's Coalition Government in 1916 he argued for a negotiated settlement with Germany and, in the lead-up to the Second World War, was accused of adopting a pro-Appeasement position. Fisher was a quintessential English academic, the son of the Private Secretary to the Prince of Wales, and could count Virginia Woolf, Sir Francis Darwin (Charles Darwin's son), and the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams among his relations. He died in 1940 in after being hit by a bus. Here is his account of the role of Elizabeth's Government in England's rise to supremacy over Spain:-

> "During the twenty years succeeding the Treaty of Edinburgh, {signed in 1560 it establishment the Anglo-Scottish accord which eventually led to the decline of official Roman Catholicism in Scotland—ED} nothing is more remarkable than the contrast between the caution of the English Government and the venturesome audacity of the military and seafaring section of the nation. While the official history of the Government is singularly devoid of event, the unofficial and unauthorized activities of the people open up a new chapter in the history of the world. The object of the queen was to prevent religious disruption and to stave off a foreign war until such time as loyalty to her person had become a settled habit among all her lieges. Her policy, therefore, was to deprecate excessive vigour, and to disclaim responsibility for compromising adventures. To ardent Puritans like Sir Francis Walsingham such a course appeared to be a humiliating betrayal of the Protestant cause. They would have fought the enemy, not surreptitiously and on a system of limited liability, but openly and on every front, in France, in the Netherlands, and on the high seas. The Queen's unheroic but statesmanlike avoidance of precipitate risk was little to their liking. For England had now become the first naval power in the world. She had the best shipwrights, the best ships, the best sailors. She had learnt the lesson of naval gunnery and the value of the broadside. Her ships, which were smaller than the Spaniards', could sail closer to the wind, and were easier to handle. Though the Royal Navy was small, amounting only to twenty-two ships of 100 tons and over in 1559, and to twenty-nine ships in 1603, there was always a large pirate and commercial navy in reserve which could be relied upon to co-operate with the queen's ships at a crisis. The growth of

the nation's sea-power owed little to official encouragement. It was the result of the strong natural appetite of an enterprising marine population, who suddenly found themselves in the surprising position of being able to compete for the dominion of the world…" (*A History Of Europe*, by H.A.L. Fisher, pub. Edward Arnold Ltd., London, complete edition in one volume, 1957 edn., pp.600-601).

Here we have a version of the 'sleep-walking into empire' account of England's destiny. A people *"suddenly found themselves in the surprising position of being able to compete for the domination of the world"*. Of course, to sustain this 'sleep-walking' account, the actual role and ambition of the Government has to be diminished: hence the statement that all of this owes little to Elizabeth's strategy. Fisher does supply a relatively factual account of the period, but his conclusion is one that is serving the political purpose of ensuring that the English student retains the false belief that somehow all of what happened just happened and England remains disassociated from the fallout from all the history swirling around it. Of course, this distinction between official and unofficial England, although a useful device to aid analysis, has no real application when it comes to understanding the actual events. Conclusions, in order to make any contribution to understanding, have to be based on the narrative. In Fisher's case, the narrative is fine, up to a point, but he draws conclusions that fail to remain consistent with that narrative—then again, that is probably the purpose of the thing.

Basically, the Elizabethan Government of England was one which energetically pursued a policy that fed *"the strong natural appetite of an enterprising marine population"* and led that country to assume the mantle of the foremost commercial and maritime country of its age. It did this through the skilful use of control over the established traditional trading companies while at the same time providing encouragement and, when necessary, logistical support to those 'trading' elements which were prepared to engage in semi-legal and illegal activities in order to advance their monetary and commercial interests. Fisher himself offers a good description of the motivation behind this:-

"The mariners of England in the Elizabethan age, though all were not cut from the same pattern, were apt to possess certain common qualities. Sailorwise, they believed in an over-ruling Providence, governing the waves and winds and the fate of men. They were proud of England and their queen. They despised foreigners. They hated the Pope, the Turk, and the Devil, but perhaps most of all the Pope, who had allotted the East Indies to Portugal and the West Indies to Spain. Of international law, either as a need or as a fact, they had not the slightest suspicion. They regarded the high seas as a kind of no man's land upon which they might pillage and murder to their hearts' content…" (ibid, p.601).

Elizabeth realised that what was required to make England great was a combination of the trading instincts of the merchant and the spirit of the pirate-privateer and what made this possible was the coherence provided by their shared anti-Catholicism. Some of the more ambitious merchant adventurers were prepared to explore new markets through activities that were at the edge of legality. But, while in the past they did this of their own volition albeit with the tacit approval of the Crown, since Henry's time many of them had a close affinity with privateering activities either through sponsoring others to do the privateering or, on occasion, indulging directly in such activities themselves. But it was in the time of Elizabeth that such activities reached a new level:

"Piracy was a venerable institution which Christian morality had not yet learnt to reprobate. The annals of mediaeval England abound in illustrations of the depredations wrought by the galleys of the Cinque Ports under the traders of Yarmouth and other places, and the jealousies and reprisals consequent thereupon; and, when these and others like these were to some extent restrained by the growth of national feeling, similar depredations, causing similar reprisals, were followed with all the more zeal upon the trading vessels of foreign countries. In war-time piracy was openly sanctioned; in peace-time it was only denounced when it seemed likely to issue in fresh and unwelcome war. So it was in Elizabeth's time. Under Elizabeth, indeed, owing to the great increase of seamanship and the great increase in trade, whereby there were always floating upon the seas rich prizes which there were always plenty of men ready to try and make their own in the way of sport, and in the way of business at the same time, piracy became more prevalent. The great enterprises of such men as Hawkins, Drake, and Cavandish, in the Spanish Main and in the Southern … were only piracies on a grand scale…" (*English Seamen Under The Tudors*, by H.R. Fox Bourne. Pub. Richard Bentley, London, 1868 in 2 volumes, vol. 2, pp.17-18).

Privateering in this context can be seen as just another word for piracy. However, Elizabeth was not just a by-stander in a situation where *"piracy became more prevalent"*. As was shown in the first article, her involvement with Sir William Gerrard's second expedition to West Africa in 1561, through the direct involvement of members of her administration and the loan of her naval vessels, was a new departure. For the first time in a period of peace, the English State was providing open moral and logistical support for activities that it knew were deemed illegal by the main European powers. That the earlier expedition in 1556, with the same goal and organised by the same patron, Sir William Garrard, did not have Queen Mary's approval did not in any way inhibit Elizabeth. Nor did the fact that the 1556 expedition had been met off the coast of Africa by the forcible interception of Portuguese naval vessels protecting their country's trading interests. Through Elizabeth's very public association with the Garrard expedition of 1561 privateering in peacetime was given a Royal endorsement irrespective of the sensitivities or trading interests of the other European powers.

[Part three will explore the evolution of English Government policy in its support of slavery and piracy and the development of 'forced trade' as a weapon against Spanish interests.]

ON A VISIT TO EDINBURGH

High up on the sandstone walls of Cowgate
the plaque with a photo of James Connolly,
safe from the hands of drunken loyalist
hate,
though not from cold-sober state felony.
The invading tourists file past below,
sunny pub forecourts, the night club their
goal.
With scarcely a glance upwards they ignore
the martyred with whom they cannot
condole.
Princes Street, The Royal Mile of bazaar
brand.
Less industry means little unrest,
money-markets pay chavs to be becalmed.
Illegals let in swamp tradition best.
Born Cowgate's Little Ireland of the
crammed
he detonated Ireland's freedom fest.

Wilson John Haire
6th July, 2011

VOX

Dorothy Day and the *Catholic Worker*

PAT

"A conversion is a lonely experience"

GREAT CATHOLIC CONVERTS:

Dorothy Day (1897-1980) was an American journalist, social activist and devout Catholic convert; she advocated the Catholic economic theory of Distributism. She was also considered to be an anarchist, and did not hesitate to use the term. In the 1930s, Day worked closely with fellow Catholic activist Peter Maurin, a French immigrant, to establish the Catholic Worker movement, a non-violent, pacifist movement that continues to combine direct aid for the poor and homeless with non-violent direct action on their behalf.

Dorothy Day was also a member of the *Industrial Workers of the World* ('Wobblies').

In March, 2000, the Vatican gave formal approval to the Archdiocese of New York for the opening of the cause for the beatification and canonisation of Dorothy Day.

Dorothy Day was born in the Bath Beach neighbourhood of Brooklyn, New York, and raised in San Francisco and Chicago. She was born into a family described by one biographer as *"solid, patriotic, and middle class"*. Her father, John Day, was a Southerner of Scotch-Irish background, while her mother, Grace Day, a native of upstate New York, was of English ancestry. Her parents were married in an Episcopal Church located in Greenwich Village, a neighbourhood where Day would spend much of her young adulthood.

By 1913 Dorothy Day had read Peter Kropotkin, an advocate of anarchist communism, which influenced her ideas in how society could be organised. In 1914, Day attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign on a scholarship, but dropped out after two years and moved to New York City. Day was a reluctant scholar. Her reading was chiefly in a radical social direction. She avoided campus social life and insisted on supporting herself rather than live on money from her father, a characteristic she was to maintain for the rest of her life, to the point of buying all her clothing and shoes from discount stores to save money.

Settling on the Lower East Side, she worked on the staffs of several Socialist publications, though she smilingly explained to impatient socialists that she was "*a pacifist even in the class war*". She also engaged in anti-war and women's suffrage protests, and spent several months in Greenwich Village, where she became close to the playwright Eugene O'Neill.

Initially Day lived a bohemian life, with two common-law marriages and an abortion, which she later described in her semi-autobiographical novel, *The Eleventh Virgin* (1924)—a book she later regretted writing. She had been an agnostic, but with the birth of her daughter, Tamar, she began a period of spiritual awakening which led her to embrace Catholicism, joining the Church in December 1927. In her 1952 autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*, Day recalled that immediately after her baptism, she made her first confession, and the following day, she received communion. Subsequently, Day began writing for Catholic publications.

The Catholic Worker movement started with the *Catholic Worker* newspaper, created to promote Catholic social teaching and stake out a neutral, pacifist position in the war-torn 1930s. Her new newspaper was seen as a Catholic alternative to the Communist *Daily Worker*, and reached a circulation of more than a 100,000.

This grew into a *"house of hospitality"* in the slums of New York City and then a series of farms for people to live together communally. The movement quickly spread to other cities in the United States, and to Canada and the United Kingdom; more than 30 independent but affiliated CW communities had been founded by 1941. Well over 100 communities exist today. Members of this community attacked a US aircraft in Shannon Airport a number of years ago as an anti-war gesture.

By the 1960s, Day was embraced by a significant number of Catholics, while at the same time, she earned the praise of counter-culture leaders such as Abbie Hoffman, who characterised her as the first hippie, a description of which Day approved. Yet, although Day had written passionately about women's rights, free love and birth control in the 1910s, she opposed the sexual revolution of the 1960s, saying she had seen the ill-effects of a similar sexual revolution in the 1920s. Day had a progressive attitude toward social and economic rights, alloyed with a very orthodox and traditional sense of Catholic morality and piety.

Her devotion to her Church was neither conventional nor unquestioning, however. She alienated many US Catholics (including some clerical leaders) with her condemnation of Falangist leader Francisco Franco during the Spanish Civil War; and, possibly in response to her criticism of Cardinal Francis Spellman, she came under pressure by the Archdiocese of New York in 1951 to change the name of her newspaper, *"ostensibly because the word **Catholic** implies an official church connection when such was not the case"*. The title *"Catholic Worker"* was not changed.

In November, 1917, she was arrested while picketing the White House with a group of suffragettes. In jail, she read the psalms from a Bible given to her by a guard. She felt a sense of shame turning to God in difficult times.

> "There was in my heart that insinuation of my college professor that religion was for the weak and those who needed solace and comfort, who could not suffer alone but must turn to God for comfort—a God whom they themselves conjured up to protect them against fear and solitude."

Dorothy once said: *"Don't call me a saint. I don"t want to be dismissed that easily"*.

She died on 29th November 1980, in New York City.